



WOODSTOCK HELPED US GET THROUGH 'NAM

Author and Vietnam Veteran Tim O'Brien tells how the Woodstock festival let American GIs know they were not alone.

London July 2009: Award-winning author and Vietnam veteran Tim O'Brien has revealed the role music played in the lives of American GIs serving in Vietnam and how the Woodstock festival boosted their morale. In an interview published as part of a limited edition box set entitled *Woodstock Experience*, he says:

TIM O'BRIEN: To know there were all these people who felt the same about it as I felt, as I was in it... It felt good. Music helped us bounce to that war. It gave us a soundtrack. One of my strongest recollections of Vietnam – over all the horror and dead people, even stronger than those memories – is the memory of the whole company of us, 100 men, shifting across the rice paddies, right before dusk had settled in and the whole company singing 'Hey Jude'. 'Anytime you feel the pain, hey Jude refrain, don't carry the world upon your shoulders...' That's what the world felt like to us. We were carrying the whole damn war on our shoulders.

O'Brien, a pioneer of 'creative non-fiction', first won literary acclaim for his 1973 memoir *If I Should Die In A Combat Zone* and, in 1990, his book *The Things They Carried* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. His work is famous for its conscious confusion of fact and fiction on the premise that art illuminates reality.

TIM O'BRIEN: Songs like 'White Rabbit' by Jefferson Airplane. I can remember listening to that song in a rice paddy in the middle of nowhere. It captured that hallucinatory, upside-down, inside out, distorted feeling of the war we were fighting. It wasn't about the war but it was how the war felt. You fell down a rabbit hole and all the old values were upside down: thou shalt not kill became you should kill, you better kill. I felt like a white rabbit and so did a lot of the guys with me, just falling down this rabbit hole of war. While you're there your thoughts aren't of global communism and containment, they're about that rice paddy and that tree line and this gun in my hand.

Tim O'Brien's interview is published as part of a limited edition multimedia boxed set, *Woodstock Experience*, from UK-based publishers Genesis Publications. Celebrating the iconic music festival's 40th anniversary, the set approaches the cultural, musical and historical importance of Woodstock from a number of different angles. Tim O'Brien's position is clear:

TIM O'BRIEN: *In the end 'Nam was the centre of Woodstock. If there wasn't a war called Vietnam going on, recollections of Woodstock would be truly different – it would be one more jamboree. Because there was a war that the music was bouncing off, it made it an important social event in the history of this country.*

What's really cool is that, all these years later, after Woodstock and after 'Nam, the music endures. Somehow that's a kind of revenge. Who remembers the names of the admirals and the generals? Very few people, but the music endures.

Woodstock Experience is a two-volume boxed set limited to just 1,000 copies worldwide. Volume One is the definitive oral history of the Woodstock Music & Art Fair, in which nearly 70 contributors share their personal memories of the world's most iconic music festival. Contributors include Graham Nash, David Crosby, John Sebastian, Arlo Guthrie, Joe Cocker, The Band and Ravi Shankar, as well as audience members, photographers, artists and Woodstock producers Artie Kornfeld and Joel Rosenman. Woodstock's Executive Producer, Michael Lang, is also the project's Executive Editor and, along with his own story, provides letters, notes, contracts and more from his personal archive.

Volume Two features the previously unseen photographs of the late Dan Garson, taken as a 17-year old student. In addition there are loose-leaf essays, a specially pressed vinyl record featuring Santana and Jefferson Airplane live at Woodstock, a facsimile hand-drawn site map, a fine-art print by legendary Sixties artist Peter Max, and an original festival ticket with every set. This collection of artefacts is housed in a three-part folding box featuring two specially created screen-printed artworks by the world's leading graphic designer, Shepard Fairey.

Only 1,000 of these boxed sets are available worldwide, each one signed by both Michael Lang and Arlo Guthrie.

Editor's Notes

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Woodstock Experience signed by Michael Lang and Arlo Guthrie – the limited edition box set of 1,000 copies, is available only through Genesis Publications:
www.genesis-publications.com; tel: +44(0)1483 540970; price: £395.

About Genesis Publications

In 1974, Brian Roylance founded Genesis Publications with a vision to create limited edition books true to the arts of printing and craftsmanship, and to establish a community shared by authors and readers. In 1995, he found himself explaining the nature of hand-bound books in an interview with the New York Times. "I suppose to some extent I am stuck in a time warp. I don't know of many people who go to this much trouble to produce a book anymore. But I think there is a future for it." Today, Genesis is headed by Brian's son and daughter – Nicholas and Catherine – and continues to flourish, producing hand-signed, limited-edition volumes with outstanding authors that have recently included musicians such as Brian Wilson and The Rolling Stones, visual artists such as Shepard Fairey and Sir Peter Blake, and contributing writers such as Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg. Over 35 years publishing, Genesis's subscribers are to be found in over 50 countries across the globe. 'Woodstock Experience' is the latest offering from Genesis.

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