



Smithsonian Folkways

**HOT JAZZ, COOL BLUES & HARD-HITTING SONGS**

**BARBARA DANE**

HOT JAZZ, COOL BLUES & HARD-HITTING SONGS

# BARBARA DANE

DISC ONE

- 1. I Am a Weary and Lonesome Traveler 4:19**  
Lee Hays-Walter Lowenfels/TRO-Folkways Music Publishers, Inc., BMI
- 2. Way Behind the Sun 3:51**  
Barbara Dane/Dreadnaught Music, BMI
- 3. Victim to the Blues 2:10**  
Thomas Dorsey
- 4. Working People's Blues 2:47**  
Kenny Whitson/Dreadnaught Music, BMI
- 5. Come by Here 5:33**
- 6. It Isn't Nice 4:08**  
Malvina Reynolds-Barbara Dane/Schroder Music, BMI
- 7. Deportees (Plane Wreck at Los Gatos) 5:48**  
Woody Guthrie-Martin Hoffman/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc. o/b/o Woody Guthrie Publications, BMI
- 8. I Don't Want Your Millions, Mister 3:35**  
Jim Garland/Figs D. Music o/b/o Stormking Music, BMI
- 9. Ballad of Richard Campos 4:09**  
Daniel Valdez/Daniel Valdez Music, BMI
- 10. Join the GI Movement 2:22**  
Barbara Dane/Dreadnaught Music, BMI
- 11. Song of the Coat Makers 2:53**  
Xuan Hong-English lyrics: Barbara Dane
- 12. Mill Worker 3:25**  
James Taylor/Country Road Music, Inc., BMI
- 13. Working-Class Woman 6:24**  
Peter Boyd-Jane Felczer-Barbara Dane/Dreadnaught Music, BMI
- 14. Truck-Driving Woman 5:05**  
Si Kahn/CMI America o/b/o Joe Hill Music, ASCAP
- 15. Sometimes I Believe She Loves Me 4:53**  
Samuel John "Lightnin'" Hopkins/BMG Bumblebee o/b/o Tradition Music Co., BMI
- 16. Let Me Be Your Rag Doll (Southern Blues) 3:17**  
Gertrude "Ma Rainey" Pridgett
- 17. Mother Earth 5:37**  
Peter Chatman-Lewis Simpkins/BMG Platinum Songs o/b/o Arc Music Corp., BMI
- 18. The Ones Who've Gone Before Us (When We Make It Through) 5:26**  
Dorie Ellzey Blesoff

**Produced by Nina Menéndez and Jeff Place**

**Compiled and annotated by Barbara Dane,  
Nina Menéndez, and Jeff Place**

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Smithsonian Folkways Recordings**

- 1. Trouble in Mind 3:02**  
Richard M. Jones/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP
- 2. Basin Street Blues 3:25**  
Spencer Williams/Kobalt Music Publishing  
America, Inc. o/b/o Edwin H. Morris & Co., ASCAP
- 3. Why Don't You Do Right? 2:41**  
Wilbur "Kansas Joe" McCoy/MPL Music  
Publishing, Inc. o/b/o Morley Music Co. Inc., ASCAP
- 4. My Melancholy Baby 3:52**  
Ernie Burnett-George A. Norton
- 5. Mama Yancey's Advice 4:33**  
Barbara Dane/Dreadnaught Music, BMI
- 6. Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None of My Jellyroll 2:22**  
Clarence Williams-Spencer Williams
- 7. Please Don't Lose Your Mind (If You Lose  
Your Money) 2:45**  
Sonny Terry-Brownie McGhee/The Bicycle Music  
Company o/b/o Cireco Music, BMI
- 8. Walking Blues 6:19**  
Gertrude "Ma Rainey" Pridgett-Lovie Austin
- 9. King Salmon Blues (Abridged) 4:50**  
Barbara Dane/Dreadnaught Music, BMI
- 10. Good Morning Blues 5:11**  
Arr. Osamu Menendez-Additional lyrics:  
Barbara Dane
- 11. Gipper Gate Blues 3:28**  
Barbara Dane/BMG Rights Management US LLC  
o/b/o Tradition Music Co., BMI
- 12. Boulevard of Broken Dreams 3:51**  
Al Dubin-Harry Warren/WB Music Corp., ASCAP
- 13. Study War No More 1:28**
- 14. This Little Light of Mine 2:56**
- 15. You Don't Know Me / You Don't Know  
My Mind 5:21**  
Arr. Barbara Dane-Arthel "Doc" Watson
- 16. Salty Dog Blues 4:24**
- 17. Only a Pawn in Their Game 3:36**  
Bob Dylan/Special Rider Music, SESAC
- 18. Solidarity Forever 4:41**  
Ralph Chaplin
- 19. We Shall Not Be Moved 5:45**
- 20. Oh, Had I a Golden Thread 4:32**  
Pete Seeger/Figs D. Music o/b/o Stormking  
Music, BMI)



# A NOTE FROM BARBARA

## **DEAR FRIENDS,**

I've never recognized borders: all music is a source of great wonder and revelation for me, and I suspect the same goes for you, since you have dared to step into my musical world for a visit. Welcome! I hope you find things here that will surprise you as well as some beloved old favorites that will comfort you.

When Smithsonian Folkways suggested bringing a few of my songs from each of the labels under their roof into the same virtual room together, it felt a little like reintroducing long lost brothers and sisters to each other. I'm deeply touched by their vision, making possible this family reunion to mark my 90th year.

But still, there were important parts of the picture that were missing. As it happened, we had recently unearthed a treasure trove of never-before-heard material on 7" tapes from dusty boxes in my basement. To my delight and surprise, we found a great deal of music worthy of sharing there, much of it made with beloved musicians who have been dead for years now. You'll find samples of some of it here, including collaborations with my dear musical partners Kenny Whitson and Wellman Braud, some informal teamwork with Doc Watson, a late-night jam with Willie Dixon and Memphis Slim, improvised harmonizing with the Chambers Brothers, and a rally in support of coal miners with Pete Seeger and Hazel Dickens.

With great pleasure I offer you these musical renditions unsullied by commercial concerns, made entirely by musicians opening our hearts and tendering our skills mostly to each other, in moments of abandon, inspiration, and joy. I take this opportunity to acknowledge all my musical collaborators and bow deeply in their direction.

I've been working on my autobiography for some years now, and there you will find many stories, some about my hometown of Detroit during the Great Depression, my improvised forays into the stages and backrooms of the jazz and blues world, mindful marches for peace and civil rights, clandestine tours in dangerous places, and my discoveries of people and music along the way, including friendships with folks like Mama Yancey, Lenny Bruce, Count Basie, Pete Seeger, and others whom you will meet there for the first time. And unavoidably, slices of my personal philosophy.

Many of these experiences are reflected in this musical collection. I hope my abiding love for this benighted country is also apparent, along with my steadfast support of the 99% of people who suffer and struggle every day to keep it going, and my determination to expose the hypocrisy, cruelty, and greed of the 1% who seek to profit from them.

You may also discover how a young white girl, taught to walk and talk with Jesus, followed a different path, to a secular world, working for the same peace and justice for humankind that he was willing to die for. And I hope you notice that it is possible to speak your mind in pursuit of that world and still survive. You may lose a few chances for fame and even fortune, but you will gain a priceless dignity and a seat on the train of humanity with destination justice.

In the end, it's all about respect and love, the communication and understanding that can bring peace to all that we love and respect. Keep your heart, hands, and mind wide open. Go well each day, and live a musical life.

All praises to the organizers of solidarity among the world's people. And remember the words of Muhammad Ali: "Impossible is not a fact. It is an opinion."

Hasta siempre,

Barbara Dane

Oakland, California, October 2017



“Barbara

Dane is a

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## BARBARA DANE: PEOPLE’S SINGER

Barbara Dane is a folksinger and a jazz singer, but most importantly she’s a people’s singer. When she was a girl in her teens in the 1940s, Pete Seeger drafted her to head up a People’s Songs chapter in her hometown of Detroit, where labor songs became her focus. When she began to sing blues and jazz with Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, and Earl “Fatha” Hines, critic Leonard Feather called her “Bessie Smith in Stereo” in his review for *Playboy*. Recognizing Barbara’s emphasis on social issues in her blues work, *Ebony Magazine* made her the object of its first feature story on a white woman (November, 1959). Unwilling to make the kind of compromises demanded by the music business of the day or to keep silent her outspoken views on race and social justice, she found many doors mysteriously closing in the cold war climate of 1950s McCarthyism. Inspired by the intensification of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and the growing opposition to the Vietnam War, she struck out on her own path, dedicating her life to singing for peace and social justice. She founded Paredon Records, a label that’s now part of the Smithsonian Folkways catalog, to document the music of the resistance movements of the 1970s. The scope of her musical life continues to expand.

This retrospective of Barbara’s music commemorates her 90th year. It was created by Smithsonian Folkways in partnership with the Barbara Dane Legacy Project (BDLP), which is dedicated to celebrating and increasing public awareness of the life work of this important artist. Other facets of the BDLP include the publication of Barbara’s autobiography, public events, media, a documentary film project, and the archiving and preservation of Barbara’s recordings, writings, correspondence, memorabilia, and photographs.

Barbara Dane was born in Detroit on May 12, 1927, after her young parents had moved north from a small town in Arkansas. Growing up during the Great Depression, she witnessed the hardships of the working people around her,





Barbara singing at an anti-Vietnam War march in San Francisco, 1963.

“Inspired by the intensification of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and the growing opposition to the Vietnam War, [Barbara] struck out on her own path, dedicating her life to singing for peace and social justice.”

whom the system had failed. One event when she was 10 years old impacted her view of the world. Her father owned a drug store where she was working, dusting the patent medicines and helping out at the soda fountain. On a steaming hot summer day, a WPA road gang of African American men was working outside under a broiling sun. One of them came in and ordered a coke, a simple request.

I opened it and set it on the counter, pouring it in a glass the same way my dad taught me to do it for everybody. My dad came rushing out of the prescription room in back, absolutely horrified and screaming at me. He began to scold me for what I'd done and told the man to get out of there, insisting that he should "know better." Later looking back on it, I saw it was fear on my dad's part because he had come up to Detroit, with empty pockets, and now he's got three kids and a wife, and every day was touch and go. And he was working in the store from eight in the morning 'til midnight literally every day. So the man was under tremendous economic pressure. He explained a little to me. He says, "Well, you know it, we might lose customers if people know that we would serve a black man in the store." But he had humiliated the man in front of me, and humiliated me in front of this other adult. It was unfair and unkind. (Interview, Dec. 1991)

The incident remained indelible, and deeply affected her sense of right and wrong. As a youngster, she felt the unsettling effect of race riots in Detroit. When she was 11, the boy across the street explained the difference among capitalism, socialism, and communism to her, and here again, she found injustice in a capitalist world where so many were in economic distress. It's unsurprising that right after high school, she turned her energies to fighting injustice and racism.

In 1947, she attended the World Youth Festival in Prague. As she remembered:

That '47 festival was my introduction to a whole world of music and musicians and a reason for singing, young people who had lived through World War II for whom the war was still very real.... Well, by the time I went to it, I had begun to get a clue. I got the sense that what I was trying to do in my little old way in Detroit was connected to a worldwide impulse of putting your musical abilities at the service of a worldwide movement toward peace and understanding, and you know just linking up the good guys in the world through their songs. And so quite a few years of my life were spent doing that kind of traveling around and singing. (Interview, Dec. 1991).

There was a strong tradition of topical songs generated by the social movements of the United States as well. Many people from the South had moved to Detroit to work in the factories there. During the years of the Great Depression, they had it hard. Many songs from their traditions were adapted by the growing labor movement as tools for agitation and encouragement. Many of the songs coming out of these struggles became part of Barbara's sustaining repertory.

In the years immediately after World War II, younger musicians including Pete Seeger, Bess Hawes, Sis Cunningham, Lee Hays, and Woody Guthrie formed an organization called People's Songs, designed to collect and distribute this kind of song. Chapters were developed, mostly through Pete's efforts, in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit, where Barbara became an organizer. Her Communist Party Club comrades chipped in to buy her first guitar, and she began to teach herself to play it. Soon, progressive organizations began to book her for fundraising affairs, shop-gate union rallies, hootenannies, and concerts.

The token amounts they could pay were hardly enough for survival, and Barbara began to look for ways to make a bit of income from more commercial venues. Someone referred her to a booking agent downtown, but the first thing he said was, "Take off your coat and turn around." "I realized right away that I was in the wrong place," says Barbara. These early experiences with the shady side of the record business and the overt sexism that a young woman faced colored her view of what it would take to be a pro. People kept saying she could have a career like Doris Day's, but that was far from her own vision: "I got an offer to go on the road with Alvino Rey's band, then pretty famous, but I quickly realized that I'd much rather sing in front of a shop gate for 3,000 people trying to make things better than to stand on a bandstand shaking the maracas" (Interview, 1991).

In 1949, she moved to San Francisco with her first husband, Rolf Cahn, and her baby boy, Nicky. She began hanging out and jamming with Billy Faier, Laurie Blakeslee, and others of the tight-knit San Francisco Folk Music Club. She worked in a department store, but continued to look for ways to make a living in music. Soon, she won a beauty and talent contest naming her "Miss U.S. Television," which resulted in a folk music series, the first one ever on TV. The pay was a pittance, but the exposure was helpful.



Barbara backstage at the Ash Grove in Los Angeles, 1960.

By the time she met second husband Byron Menéndez, her musical tastes were broadening. She had begun to explore the classic blues of Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, and with the traditional jazz revival in full bloom, she started sitting in with bands like Bob Mielke and his Bearcats and banjoist-cornetist Dick Oxtot's various bands, all of whom gave Barbara vital support and encouragement as she sharpened her abilities in this genre. She also performed with New Orleans musicians George Lewis and Kid Ory, when they came through town to play:

George Lewis was seeing his career resuscitated to the point where he could quit working as a stevedore and become a clarinet player full-time, so he started coming here a lot with his band, and Kid Ory was coming here regularly too. And of course Turk Murphy and the other revivalists were still around, playing great music. I mean San Francisco was the seat of a great jazz revival that had started in the prewar and continued on just after the war. (Interview, 1991)

Barbara recorded her classic blues album *Trouble in Mind* for Barbary Coast Records in 1957 and started to draw attention nationally. She relocated with her husband, Byron and three children to Los Angeles in 1958, playing the beat-era coffeehouse Cosmo Alley for an extended run before finding a home at the legendary Ash Grove, the happening place for folk music and blues on the west coast. Barbara played there on the club's opening night and regularly thereafter, sharing the stage with some of the greatest living figures of both the folk and the blues revivals. At the same time, she began working at jazz clubs around Los Angeles and got her first bookings in Chicago.

When Barbara appeared with Louis Armstrong on national television in 1959, he quipped in *Time Magazine*, “Did you get that chick? She’s a gasser!” That historic Timex All-Star Jazz show appearance can be found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x-U62JCF44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x-U62JCF44). Louis wanted Barbara, his latest discovery, to tour with him on his upcoming European tour. But the State Department sponsor apparently felt it would not do to have Ambassador Satch presenting a blond girl with a big mouth on race issues at the same moment that angry protests were in headlines all over the nation and the world.

Barbara’s career, however, was in full swing despite the obstacles. After her appearances with Louis were canceled, she toured the eastern seaboard with Jack Teagarden and sang with the great pianist Art Hodes at the Cafe Continental in Chicago. She appeared regularly at the Gate of Horn with the likes of Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon, Little Brother Montgomery, and Roosevelt Sykes. She shared engagements with Lenny Bruce, who became her friend and booster. There were national television appearances, an Alfred Hitchcock TV show with James Mason and Angie Dickinson, *PM East/PM West*, Steve Allen, Johnny Carson, and more.

Barbara recorded “Livin’ with the Blues” for Dot Records with Earl “Fatha” Hines, Benny Carter, Plaz Johnson, and others in 1959. Shortly after, she recorded *On My Way* for Capitol Records and scored a local hit with the title track. Barbara also continued performing folk music and recorded *When I Was a Young Girl* in 1962 at the height of the great folk revival. The quality of her live performances during this period is reflected on never-before-released recordings recently unearthed by the BDLP, samples of which are among the archival discoveries here on Disc 2.



“When Barbara appeared with Louis Armstrong on national television in 1959, he quipped in *Time Magazine*, ‘Did you get that chick? She’s a gasser!’”

In 1961, she opened her blues club, the Sugar Hill, in North Beach, San Francisco's main nightlife area and home to the beat poets. "My dream was always to bring out all these old-timers. Some of them had never had their last hurrah, and some had never even had their first hurrah. They needed to get on the stage while they were still alive and kicking." She booked some of the greatest names in the history of the blues: Jimmy Rushing, T-Bone Walker, Lonnie Johnson, Lightnin' Hopkins, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Tampa Red, and Mama Yancey. And she quickly developed a loyal following of her own, featuring her favorite blues pianist/cornetist Kenny Whitson and ex-Ellington bassist Wellman Braud. The *San Francisco Chronicle* headline was "The Whole Town Is Dane Conscious."

By the mid-1960s, Barbara had changed husbands, changed coasts, and redirected her work. Irwin Silber, a founder of *Sing Out! Magazine*, and its editor for 17 years, became Barbara's soulmate and partner. With the escalation of the Vietnam War, they began to put their full energies into the antiwar movement. Barbara sang at demonstrations worldwide and took to the road, performing with and for active-duty servicemen who opposed the war. Guitarist Pablo Menéndez, her son, often accompanied her, and the U.S. Servicemen's Fund underwrote this work, which went on for nearly five years, accounting for Barbara's absence from the commercial music world.

In 1966, Barbara traveled to Cuba, the first artist from the United States to defy the travel ban and perform there after the revolution. She and Silber returned there the following year to attend the Encuentro de Canción Protesta, a gathering of people's singers from around the world to form a network in support of peace and bringing their songs to the Cuban people. Through these singers, Barbara was invited to many countries—travels that exposed her to other political movements and their music.

In 1970, she and Silber founded Paredon Records, with Barbara as curator and producer and Irwin lending his years of experience having worked with Moses Asch at Folkways. Paredon documented resistance movements worldwide and the musicians who were part of them.

(Right) Barbara with Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon at the Gate of Horn in Chicago, 1959.



“Barbara’s  
music has  
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an end. By  
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she has  
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own course.”

Paredon Records was born because we saw the fact that all these singers existed and few people knew about them outside of their movements. I got home from Cuba and couldn’t wait to help get the word out. I was trying to sing all these songs, trying to learn them all, even trying to learn all the languages. I was just in an absolute storm of activity, but I realized very quickly that you can’t do everything yourself. Actually, the people in their own voices telling their own stories would be much more valid. (Interview, 1991)

Starting with a release of Latin American and Cuban musicians’ songs from the Encuentro, Barbara produced nearly 50 albums for the label, which, to assure their availability in perpetuity, she and Silber donated to the Smithsonian collections in 1991.

Barbara moved back to the Bay Area once again in 1981 and has continued to sing the music she loves, singing for causes she believes in, and performing to sold-out houses in San Francisco at age 90. In 2016, she released her latest jazz recording with Tammy Hall, Ruth Davies, and Bill Maginnis, an eclectic and elegant collection called *Throw It Away*, and has more recording projects in mind for the near future. Her autobiography will be published next year, and a documentary film about her is in production.

Barbara’s music has always been a means to an end. By remaining fiercely independent, she has charted her own course. As she said in the radio documentary *A Wild Woman Sings the Blues*, “If you know why you’re doing what you’re doing, and you really believe in it, then you’re truly free to go on and follow your bliss. Well, this has been my bliss.”

Nina Menéndez and Jeff Place  
July 2017





Barbara at Yoshi's jazz club, Oakland, 2016.



Barbara with the Chamber Brothers  
at the Newport Folk Festival, 1965.

# THE SONGS DISC ONE

## 1. I AM A WEARY AND LONESOME TRAVELER

Barbara Dane, vocals, Lester Chambers, harmonica; Willie Chambers, guitar  
*(From Folkways 2468, 1966)*

This song was composed by poet Walter Lowenfels and singer Lee Hays, who performed it as “This Old World Is in a Sad Condition.”

The Chambers Brothers (George, Joe, Lester, and Willie) often performed with Barbara at the Ash Grove in Hollywood. Throughout the 1960s, Barbara was singing the freedom songs fundamental to the civil rights movement on every occasion and felt that recording them with the Brothers would make an important statement. Originally a family gospel group from Mississippi, they later became a celebrated soul and psychedelic rock band.

## 2. WAY BEHIND THE SUN

Barbara Dane, vocal and guitar *(From Folkways 2471, 1964)*

Some verses by Barbara, some traditional but altered by the singer; taken from her only entirely solo album.

## 3. VICTIM TO THE BLUES

Barbara Dane, vocal and 12-string guitar *(From Folkways 2471, 1964)*

America’s first strong taste of women’s blues came from the songs of Ma Rainey (1886–1939), dozens of which she composed and recorded with her Georgia Band. This one apparently originated with blues and gospel legend Thomas A. Dorsey in 1928.

Barbara’s version here confirms her philosophy: “The blues is meant to be alive, growing and changing all the time. It’s a part of a live organism”

**“If you know  
why you’re  
doing what  
you’re doing,  
and you really  
believe in it,  
then you’re  
truly free to go  
on and follow  
your bliss.  
Well, this has  
been my bliss.”**





Barbara with Bob Mielke at the Barbecue & Blues Festival in Oakland, 2000.

#### 4. WORKING PEOPLE'S BLUES

Barbara Dane, vocal and guitar (*From Folkways 2471, 1964*)

Composed by Kenny Whitson, Barbara's beloved long-time piano partner. His expressed view of life excluded any aspirations to be like the wealthy, often complaining that he didn't like their way with women, and he didn't like their taste or their general dismissal of anyone not sharing their pretensions.

#### 5. COME BY HERE

Barbara Dane, vocals; The Chambers Brothers, vocals (*From Folkways 2468, 1966*)

In 1926, the Library of Congress recorded two versions from Gullah people, both in coastal towns: Alliance, North Carolina, and Darien, Georgia. Music historian Steven Winick points to early printed versions that were collected from non-Gullah African Americans (Winick 2010), originally called "Come by Here," but by then in the Gullah dialect it had already become "Come by Hyah," often written *Kumbaya*. Barbara sings the version developed by civil rights activists in the 1960s, calling the community to join in the struggle.

#### 6. IT ISN'T NICE

Barbara Dane, vocal; Willie Chambers, guitar; The Chambers Brothers, vocals  
(*From Folkways 2468, 1966*)

Malvina Reynolds (1900–1978) was an activist songwriter, best known for "What Have They Done to the Rain" and "Little Boxes." Barbara took Malvina's lyrics for "It Isn't Nice" and set them to her own tune just before carrying it to the Mississippi Freedom Schools in the summer of 1964.

Malvina's lyrics grew out of a sleep-in that blocked the lobby of San Francisco's famous Palace Hotel in which she had participated. Her forceful criticism of those who would caution "go slow" describes some of the other techniques used by protesters to further their agenda in what was a burning time of dissent against racism, injustice, and war.

## 7. DEPORTEES (PLANE WRECK AT LOS GATOS)

Barbara Dane, vocal and guitar (*From Paredon 1014, 1973*)

"Plane Wreck at Los Gatos," also called "Deportees," was written by Woody Guthrie but never recorded by him. A newspaper article about a plane crash in 1948 killing 32 Mexican migrant laborers who were being deported during the ill-conceived *bracero* plan especially angered him because it listed the Anglo crew-members by name, simply calling the Mexicans "deportees" as if they had no names. About a decade later, Colorado schoolteacher Martin Hoffman set Guthrie's lyrics to music and the song became one of Guthrie's best-known.

Years later, writer Tim Z. Hernández, whose family were migrant farmworkers themselves, brought the story to the community. In 2013, after managing to unearth their identities, he inspired history teacher Berenice Guzman's high-school students to raise the money to fund a memorial listing all the victims by name. "For many of us here, the people in that crash could have been family."

## 8. I DON'T WANT YOUR MILLIONS, MISTER

Barbara Dane, vocals; Pablo Menéndez, harmonica (*From Paredon 1014, 1973*)

Jim Garland (1905–1978), a coal miner, labor organizer, and composer from eastern Kentucky, composed this song in the 1930s after living through the coal strikes near Harlan County, using the melody of "East Virginia/Dark Holler/Greenback Dollar." Coming from a family of talented folksong composers, including his sisters Aunt Molly Jackson and Sarah Ogan Gunning, he was blacklisted from the mines in the late 1940s, and moved to the Pacific Northwest.

Before Barbara had even turned 20, she began singing this and other songs from the Harlan County miners' struggles, decades before discovering that her own grandmother was born there. Barbara recorded this version the same way she often performed it live: her claps and the stomping of her foot marking the rhythm and the soulful cry of her son Pablo's harmonica.

## 9. BALLAD OF RICHARD CAMPOS

Barbara Dane, vocals and guitar (*From Paredon 1003, 1970*)

Founded by Luis Valdez in 1965 on the picket lines of César Chávez's Delano Grape Strike, Teatro Campesino is a performing group associated with the United Farm Workers of America, bringing its educational and agitational skits to the fields and union halls of the region. Luis's brother, actor and singer Danny Valdez, composed this song, expressing his anger at how, during the war in Vietnam, young men of color were sent into combat with the false promise that they could overcome their status of second-class citizens and be accepted as legitimate Americans.

## 10. JOIN THE GI MOVEMENT

Barbara Dane, vocals and guitar; soldiers from the audience, vocals (*From Paredon 1003, 1970*)

For nearly five years in the early 1970s, Barbara, often with her son Pablo Menéndez, lent musical support to antiwar GIs who gathered outside military bases in fundamentally clandestine coffeehouses and storefronts across the US, the Far East and Europe. As an anthem, she repurposed 1930s Kentucky labor organizer Aunt Molly Jackson's "Join the C.I.O./Join the N.M.U." into a modern incarnation. "I wanted something that would give the GIs a sense of belonging, connected to our country's history of popular resistance."



Barbara singing for anti-war GIs at Oleo, Fort Hood, 1969.

## 11. SONG OF THE COAT MAKERS

Barbara Dane, vocal; Andy Pitt, guitar; Robbie Merkin, piano; Tim Scott, cello; Pablo Menéndez, guitar; Maidine Yee, violin; Dave Ellman, Chinese bell and tom-tom (*From Paredon 1014, 1973*)

Barbara found this song in a small "songbook," made of stout paper folded into four pages the size of a matchbox with colored artwork, the melody, the words in Vietnamese, and



surprisingly, an English translation. It described women with small hand-driven sewing machines, hidden under dense canopies of leaves, making uniforms for the soldiers of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF).

Barbara had been searching for just such a song, and set about making a singable English lyric. The music was exquisite, and needed only a small ensemble to do it justice. A young Brooklyn composer named Robby Merkin stepped forward, creating this delicate arrangement using a group of committed volunteers. Merkin later became well-known for his work with *Sesame Street*.

## 12. MILL WORKER

Barbara Dane, vocal; Pablo Menéndez, guitars, mandolin, vocals, synthesizer, percussion; Ele Valdez, synthesizer; Frank Padilla, drums; Leopoldo Pons, percussion  
(*From Paredon 1046, 1982*)

After hearing this song on a tape sent by a friend, Barbara, having no idea of its provenance, immediately introduced it into her repertory and recorded it in Cuba with her son Pablo and musicians from his circle. Only later, she found that singer-songwriter James Taylor had originally composed this song for *Working*, a musical based on a book by her old friend Studs Terkel and produced on Broadway by Stephen Schwartz.

## 13. WORKING-CLASS WOMAN

Barbara Dane, vocal; Robbie Merkin, piano; Andy Pitt, guitar; Pablo Menendez, guitar; Dave Ellman, drums; John Miller, bass; Tim Scott, cello; Maidine Yee, violin.  
(*From Paredon 1014, 1973*)

One night at the Ash Grove, a Los Angeles taxi driver and musician named Peter Boyd knocked on the dressing room door, asking if she could take a look at his new song, and possibly “do something with it.” She loved the title, but found the story just a little short of persuasive, and soon set to work revising it, basing her changes on situations experienced by her sister, Julianne Spillman, a unionized assembly line worker at the old Ford factory in Detroit.

#### 14. TRUCK-DRIVING WOMAN

Barbara Dane, vocal; Pablo Menéndez, guitars, harmonica, percussion; Roberto Menéndez, bass; Frank Padilla, drums; Leopoldo Pons, percussion (*From Paredon 1046, 1982*)

Si Kahn is one of the best-known modern composers of labor songs, and the founder and former executive director of Grassroots Leadership. He is especially known for songs about workers and their families, including “Aragon Mill” (1974). “Truck-Driving Woman” was composed with a folksong feel by Kahn, but Barbara turned it into a blues-style piece with a Memphis beat.

#### 15. SOMETIMES I BELIEVE SHE LOVES ME

Barbara Dane, vocal and guitar; Lightnin’ Hopkins, vocal and electric guitar  
(*From Arhoolie 451, 1996*)



Chris Strachwitz asked Barbara to record a few of her favorite songs as a farewell to the Bay Area before moving to New York in 1964. Barbara suggested a live recording at her favorite Berkeley music venue, the Cabale, and asked co-owner Carroll Peery to invite some friends to act as an audience. Unexpectedly Lightnin’ Hopkins came with them and when he noticed Barbara had her guitar in hand and was singing, he pulled his own out of its case and joined in what he assumed was a sort of jam. Chris, hidden away in back, kept his portable recording machine running. Things took a turn for the spontaneous and soon they were into a genuine blues dialogue, teasing and “insulting” each other, flirting and countering, all in a way that is rarely captured on record.

Barbara talking with Lightnin’ Hopkins in front of the Cabale in Berkeley, 1964.

## 16. LET ME BE YOUR RAG DOLL (SOUTHERN BLUES)

Barbara Dane, vocal and guitar; Lightnin' Hopkins, electric guitar (*From Arhoolie 451, 1996*)

This is Barbara's version of Ma Rainey's "Southern Blues," with vocal and musical inspiration provided by Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, supported and encouraged by appreciative friends.

## 17. MOTHER EARTH

Barbara Dane, vocal and guitar; Lightnin' Hopkins, electric guitar (*From Arhoolie 451, 1996*)

Blues pianist Memphis Slim (Peter Chatman, 1915–1988), first recorded his classic "Mother Earth" in 1951. Reaching number seven on the Billboard R&B charts, it was one of his only hits. This is Barbara's take on the idea, more timely every day.

## 18. THE ONES WHO'VE GONE BEFORE US (WHEN WE MAKE IT THROUGH)

Barbara Dane, vocals; Pablo Menéndez, guitars, harmonica; Jorge Reyes, bass; Frank Padilla, drums; Chorus: Pablo Menéndez, Nina Menéndez, Carlos Alfonso, Ele Valdez (*From Paredon 1046, 1982*)

As the founder of Paredon Records, Barbara was always thinking of ways to communicate more of what the activist artists around her were creating. One of her innovations was a song magazine on a record, called *What Now, People?* It featured songs hot off the griddle, speaking of current situations. Dorie Ellzey, a young singer from Washington, DC, wrote this prophetic and inspiring song, which proved to be a favorite of Barbara's sister Julianne Spillman, who often asked her to play it in her room at the nursing home where she was staying. You can hear Dorie herself singing it on *What Now, People?* #2 under the correct title, "The Ones Who've Gone before Us." Barbara Dane changed the song's title to "When We Make It Through" for her album of the same name released in 1982.

# THE SONGS DISC TWO

## DISC TWO

### 1. TROUBLE IN MIND

Barbara Dane, vocal; P. T. Stanton, cornet; Don Ewell, piano; Bob Mielke, trombone; Darnell Howard, clarinet; Pops Foster, bass (*From Dreadnaught 1601; recorded July 1957*)


This classic blues, from Barbara's first LP, was recorded in an old lodge hall in San Francisco by radioman Al Levitt. Grouping the musicians around a single microphone, in a room with ideal acoustics, the balance seems perfect and the clarity of each instrument is nothing short of astonishing.

"Trouble in Mind" is a blues so widespread that many believe it to be traditional, but it was jazz pianist Richard Jones (1892–1945) who created it based on his experiences in Storyville, the historical center of jazz and the fabled red-light district of New Orleans, where he played in the early 20th century.

### 2. BASIN STREET BLUES

Barbara Dane, vocals; Don Kinch, trumpet; Bob Seaman, piano; George Probert, soprano sax; Carl Granich, guitar; Ed Garland, bass (*Recorded at the Ash Grove, Los Angeles, January 1959*)

Spencer Williams was a young songwriter living near Basin Street, the main drag of the Storyville District in New Orleans. In 1928, almost as soon as Williams had written this tune, Louis Armstrong recorded it, and countless bands have now played it for nearly a hundred years. Legendary trombonist Jack Teagarden added to it musically, and the lyrics have been modified by singers, according to the times. Barbara often changes the words depending on the situation. On this recording she salutes the musicians who were pulled together for this one-time performance at a special Ash Grove event.

A black and white photograph of a woman with short, light-colored hair and bangs, singing into a vintage studio microphone. The microphone is a large, silver, cylindrical model with a black grille and a black shock mount. The woman is shown in profile, looking slightly upwards and to the left, with her mouth open as if in the middle of a note. The background is dark and out of focus.

Barbara recording "On My Way"  
at Capitol Studios, 1961.

### 3. WHY DON'T YOU DO RIGHT?

Barbara Dane, vocals, with Art Hodes and Orchestra  
*(Recorded at the Café Continental, Chicago, February 1960)*

The original title of this song was “Weed Smoker’s Dream,” a song about marijuana written by Kansas Joe McCoy and performed by him with the Harlem Hamfats. In the 1940s, blues singer Lil Green recorded this as “Why Don’t You Do Right?” with pianist Omar Simeon, Big Bill Broonzy, and bassist Ransom Knowling. “It was Broonzy’s brief but meaningful little solo that grabbed me when I first heard it in my teens,” says Barbara.

This recently unearthed recording gives us a rare glimpse of Barbara in her prime, fronting the band at Café Continental with pianist Art Hodes, dubbed “Hot Man” by his biographer. The tempo was indeed hotter than she usually chose, but as the excitement builds with her delivery, every player seems glad to be onboard. Their names are lost in the mist of memory, but their playing, especially that of Art and the trumpet man, are unforgettable.

### 4. MY MELANCHOLY BABY

Barbara Dane, vocal; Kenny Whitson, piano; Alan Frederickson, trombone  
*(Recorded in Denver at the home of Harney and Jean Peterson, October 1960)*

Composed by Ernie Burnett (1884–1959) with words by George Norton (1880–1923), this Tin Pan Alley song from 1912 was recorded by Bing Crosby in 1938, and was a favorite of Barbara’s parents. “It was just in my head all my life,” says Barbara. “There are so many songs that are about being a victim or a broken heart. But this is the opposite: it’s really sweet, comforting, and very loving, and that’s why I like it.”

### 5. MAMA YANCEY’S ADVICE

Barbara Dane, vocal; Kenny Whitson, piano; Wellman Braud, bass  
*(From Dreadnaught 1604, 2003; recorded at the Ash Grove, Los Angeles, December 31, 1961)*

Estelle “Mama” Yancey (1896–1986) first began to record in 1943 with her husband, the great pioneer boogie-woogie pianist Jimmy Yancey. Besides singing, Estelle was an activist, doing

her best to help neighborhood youngsters who found themselves in trouble. For years after Jimmy's death in 1951, she continued recording and performing on her own.

Barbara remembers: "Estelle was my real 'blues mama.' I made the song out of pieces of things she used to say. It was one of those spontaneous blues I made up on stage."

This recording, from New Year's Eve 1961–62, was discovered by former Ash Grove sound engineer Harvey Gerst in a box of dusty tapes in the barn in back of his double-wide trailer in Sanger, Texas. It is a rare example of the rich chemistry between Barbara's favorite musical companions, Kenny Whitson and Wellman Braud.

## 6. AIN'T GONNA GIVE NOBODY NONE OF MY JELLYROLL

Barbara Dane, vocal; Kenny Whitson, piano; Wellman Braud, bass (*From Dreadnaught 1604, 2003; recorded at the Ash Grove, Los Angeles, December 31, 1961*)

Another gem from the Ash Grove live recordings is this vaudeville-style song written by African-American composer and bandleader Clarence Williams (1889–1965), first released it in 1934. Barbara's favorite way of setting the tempo was to tell her musicians, "Play it as fast as you dare!" Here we have a virtuoso performance by Wellman Braud, then in his mid-70s, demonstrating why he was known as Duke Ellington's rhythmic driver since their first days together in the Washingtonians. Whitson is at his best, too, and we can only speculate what treasures he would have left us if he had not been so reluctant to play ball with the recording industry.

## 7. PLEASE DON'T LOSE YOUR MIND (IF YOU LOSE YOUR MONEY)

Barbara Dane, vocal; Kenny Whitson, piano and vocal; Wellman Braud, bass (*Recorded at the Sugar Hill, San Francisco, July 1961*)

Barbara learned this blues while producing a historic recording session for Fantasy Records by the celebrated blues duo Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee at Oakland's Jenny Lind Hall. This is just a sample of the recently discovered treasure trove of material recorded live at Sugar Hill in 1961, demonstrating the creative compatibility Whitson and Braud had with Barbara.

## 8. WALKING BLUES

Barbara Dane, guitar, Memphis Slim, piano; Willie Dixon, bass

*(Recorded at the Ash Grove, Los Angeles, 1959)*

Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon were Barbara's backup band for a year, playing Chicago's Gate of Horn, Boston's Ballad Room, and the Ash Grove in Hollywood together in 1958–59. This recently discovered track is one of the only recordings reflecting their collaboration. "Walking Blues" was first recorded by Ma Rainey in 1923 with Lovie Austin and her Blues Serenaders.

## 9. KING SALMON BLUES (ABRIDGED)

Barbara Dane, vocals; Tammy Hall, piano; Pablo Menéndez, guitar; Ruth Davies, bass;

Bill Maginnis, drums *(From Dreadnaught 1701, 2016; recorded in El Cerrito, California, October 2014)*

Barbara says this song nearly wrote itself: "I was going to sing at the fisherman's festival at Bodega over on the coast. I wanted to express my feeling about the growing devastation of the salmon and its effect on the lives of the fishermen, too. I thought about how the Native Americans had been able to survive for hundreds of years because of the plentiful salmon, and their custom of thanking the fish for this gift of life. I hope the song helps some people think deeper about what they eat and how they treat that privilege. I also thought of how much everyone loves to eat salmon today—which gives us some responsibility to see that they survive and flourish as a species."

## 10. GOOD MORNING BLUES

Barbara Dane, vocals; Osamu Menéndez, guitar; Pablo Menéndez, blues harp; Esteban Puebla, keyboard; Jose Hermida, bass; Oliver Valdés, drums *(From El Cerrito Productions,*

*Osamu Menéndez, 4ta Temporada, 2014; recorded in Cuba except for the vocals, recorded in El Cerrito, California, 2013)*

This track features Barbara as guest artist on her grandson Osamu's recording. Many people have recorded this song. Barbara picked it up from various sources, such as Jimmy Rushing and



Lead Belly, but over the years has made up her own verses and created her own version. “Been singing it all my life,” she says, “especially because I get to end up saying ‘I ain’t gonna’ be your dog!’ I usually ask the women in the audience to repeat that last verse with me.”

## 11. GIPPER GATE BLUES

Barbara Dane, vocals; Paul Mehling, guitar; Howard Simpson, trumpet; Bob Mielke, trombone; Richard Hadlock, soprano sax; Pete Allen, bass; Bill Maginnis, drums; Ray Skelbred, piano  
(*From Arhoolie 1600, 1986*)

During Ronald Reagan’s second presidential term in the 1980s, members of the administration secretly began selling weapons to Iran, even though an arms embargo was in place. The proceeds were intended to fund the anti-Sandinista Nicaraguan group known as the Contras, and the maneuver was allegedly meant to help free American hostages being held in Iran. In addition to the illegality of the entire action, the administration fell under criticism for trading guns for hostages. President Reagan was not indicted, but 12 staff members were. President George H. W. Bush pardoned six of them.

A few days before Thanksgiving in 1986, a ritual preholiday presidential photo op appeared on the front page of the *San Francisco Chronicle* showing Reagan “pardoning” a white turkey. It caught Barbara’s eye because right next to it was a routine description of a war incident involving US troops resulting in the killing of civilians. She was struck by the contrast, and immediately began writing verses mocking this evident hypocrisy. Next, she called Chris Strachwitz at Arhoolie to ask if he would be willing to issue a recording of her song. Then, she started calling her favorite musicians, all of whom agreed to a hurried session

“Been singing  
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at Mike Cogan's Bay Records studio. The short version of the result quickly became the theme song of radio station KPFA's daily war coverage. (The extended version is over nine minutes long and can be heard on the original 12" 45 rpm vinyl.) Nobody involved asked for or received any money from this recording, but everyone felt satisfaction from the opportunity to express their frustrations with US militarization.

## 12. BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS

Barbara Dane, vocals; Paul Mehling, guitar; Howard Simpson, trumpet; Bob Mielke, trombone; Richard Hadlock, soprano sax; Pete Allen, bass; Bill Maginnis, drums; Ray Skelbred, piano  
(*From Arhoolie 1600, 1986*)

First recorded by Hal Kemp's Orchestra in 1933 and featured in the 1934 film *Moulin Rouge*, this song has been recorded by both Nat "King" Cole and Tony Bennett, among others. Barbara took the lament to a different place, asking the musicians to think of it as a Hollywood tango and adding a narration describing a fashion show that features the fallen dictators Baby Doc Duvalier of Haiti, Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, the Shah of Iran, and more. Paul Mehling's beautiful opening obbligato sets the stage, and the others easily become coconspirators in this brilliant takedown, a cheeky companion as the flip side to the "Gipper Gate Blues" LP.

## 13. STUDY WAR NO MORE

Barbara Dane, vocal; Chambers Brothers, vocals; Willie Chambers, guitar  
(*Recorded at the Ash Grove, Los Angeles, February 1965*)

This song dates back to the early 19th century and was recorded by the Fisk Jubilee Singers in 1920 (published in 1922). It has been used as an antiwar song any time it has been needed. Barbara's version comes from the Vietnam War era. This fragment and the following song are examples of the spontaneous collaboration on stage at the Ash Grove between Barbara and the incomparable Chambers Brothers gospel quartet during the most intense period of American struggle for civil rights. These songs came, of course, directly out of the black churches, and were already part of their musical grounding.



Barbara with the Andrews Gospel Sisters at a civil rights rally in Berkeley, 1961.

#### 14. THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

Barbara Dane, vocal; Chambers Brothers, vocals (*Recorded at the Ash Grove, Los Angeles, February 1965*)

This great gospel song has carried people through many a storm, lighting the way to better times. Barbara also recorded it on her 1961 album titled *On My Way* in the Capitol Records studio in Hollywood with a group led by Kenny Whitson and Wellman Braud, assisted by the Andrews Gospel Sisters.

#### 15. YOU DON'T KNOW ME / YOU DON'T KNOW MY MIND

Barbara Dane, guitar and vocal; Doc Watson, guitar and vocal (*Recorded April 1964*)

This is an interesting interplay between Barbara and Doc Watson. They are simultaneously performing their versions of the same old blues standard: Barbara is singing "You Don't Know Me," and Doc is countering with his version of "You Don't Know My Mind."

#### 16. SALTY DOG BLUES

Barbara Dane, guitar and vocal; Doc Watson, guitar (*Recorded April 1964*)

The circle of fifths, a feature of Western musical harmony for centuries, has inspired generations of guitar pickers, and the lyrics of traditional songs are often circulated too, with many and frequent additions. The Morris Brothers, whose popular recording of this traditional old song was made in 1945, came from Old Fort, North Carolina, the same part of the state as Doc Watson. His path probably crossed theirs at some time. Barbara improvises her own lyrics over the standard chorus. The meaning of any of its verses changes depending on who is listening, but Doc's picking is beyond compare.



Bob Dylan sits in at Gerde's Folk City in New York, 1963.

## 17. ONLY A PAWN IN THEIR GAME

Barbara Dane, vocal and guitar (*Recorded at the Cabale, Berkeley, California, June 1964*)

Bob Dylan composed this song after the tragic assassination of civil rights leader Medgar Evers; his lyrics assert that the assassin was only a pawn in an otherwise larger evil game. Barbara first heard it when Bob Dylan sat with her on a friend's floor in Los Angeles and sang it into her little Wollensak machine, along with most of the other songs that later appeared on his monumental *Freewheeling* album. "He was just this kid who wanted to get his songs out there. He knew I would be open to his ideas, and had asked me to give them a listen. So that's where I got this one, right from the source."

## 18. SOLIDARITY FOREVER

Barbara Dane, vocal; Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (*Recorded at the Mine Workers' Benefit Rally, Washington Irving High School, New York, March 1, 1978*)

In a benefit rally supporting a series of coal miners' wildcat strikes, Pete Seeger, Hazel Dickens, and Barbara took the stage together at a jammed auditorium in New York City's Washington Irving High School on March 1, 1978. The audience, filled with hope and confidence, can be heard expressing their desires for unity through this anthem, the most beloved and best-known of all union songs. It was composed by Ralph Chaplin (1887–1961), an I.W.W. poet, artist, writer, and organizer, after he stood up for the coal miners during the great Kanawha Valley Strike of 1915. As they say, "If a union member knows only one union song, it is almost sure to be this one" (Fowke and Glazer 1973:13).

## 19. WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED

Barbara Dane, vocal and guitar; Pete Seeger, banjo (*Recorded at the Mine Workers' Benefit Rally, Washington Irving High School, New York, March 1, 1978*)

See the notes to track 18.

## 20. OH, HAD I A GOLDEN THREAD

Barbara Dane, vocals; Pablo Menéndez, Johnny Harper, Jesse Cahn, vocals (*Recorded at Fantasy Studios, Berkeley, California, 2007*)

This powerful lyric by Pete Seeger was the encore for Barbara's 80th birthday concert at Berkeley's historic Freight & Salvage coffeehouse, an event that was repeated three times by popular demand. She harmonized the song a cappella with her two sons, Jesse Cahn and Pablo Menéndez, along with Johnny Harper, who had produced the concert.



Anti-Vietnam War demonstration, New York City, 1975: Left to right: Peter Yarrow, Pete Seeger; Barbara Dane, Phil Ochs, and Joan Baez.

## SOURCES

Much of the information and quotes in these notes comes from interviews done by Jeff Place with Barbara Dane and Irwin Silber in December, 1991 [https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/paredon\\_interview.pdf](https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/paredon_interview.pdf) and in May, 2017.

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Barbara Dane's website:  
[www.BarbaraDane.net](http://www.BarbaraDane.net)

## CREDITS

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**The Barbara Dane Legacy Project** is dedicated to celebrating Barbara Dane's inspirational lifetime of music and social activism and to increasing public awareness of her work. Spearheaded by executive director Nina Menéndez, advisory board members include Carolyn Mugar (Farm Aid); Ed Pearl (The Ash Grove); artists Bonnie Raitt, Silvio Rodríguez, David Amram, and Judy Collins; Chris Strachwitz (Arhoolie); Kristy Edmunds (CAP UCLA); and others including James Early, Jane Fonda, Gary Giddins, and Mike Kappus. The goals of the BDLP include the publication of Barbara Dane's autobiography, the release of recordings both new and archival, the reissue of classic recordings, and the production of a documentary film directed by Maureen Gosling. An essential component of the work is the creation of the Barbara Dane Multimedia Collection, comprised of thousands of archival photographs, clippings, audio tracks, video, contracts, correspondence, and memorabilia. This includes digitizing and cataloging more than 150 unreleased reel-to-reel tapes from Barbara Dane's jazz, blues, and folk collaborations, as well as her field recordings and interviews of activists and musicians from around the world. For more information, see the Barbara Dane official website: [www.BarbaraDane.net](http://www.BarbaraDane.net).

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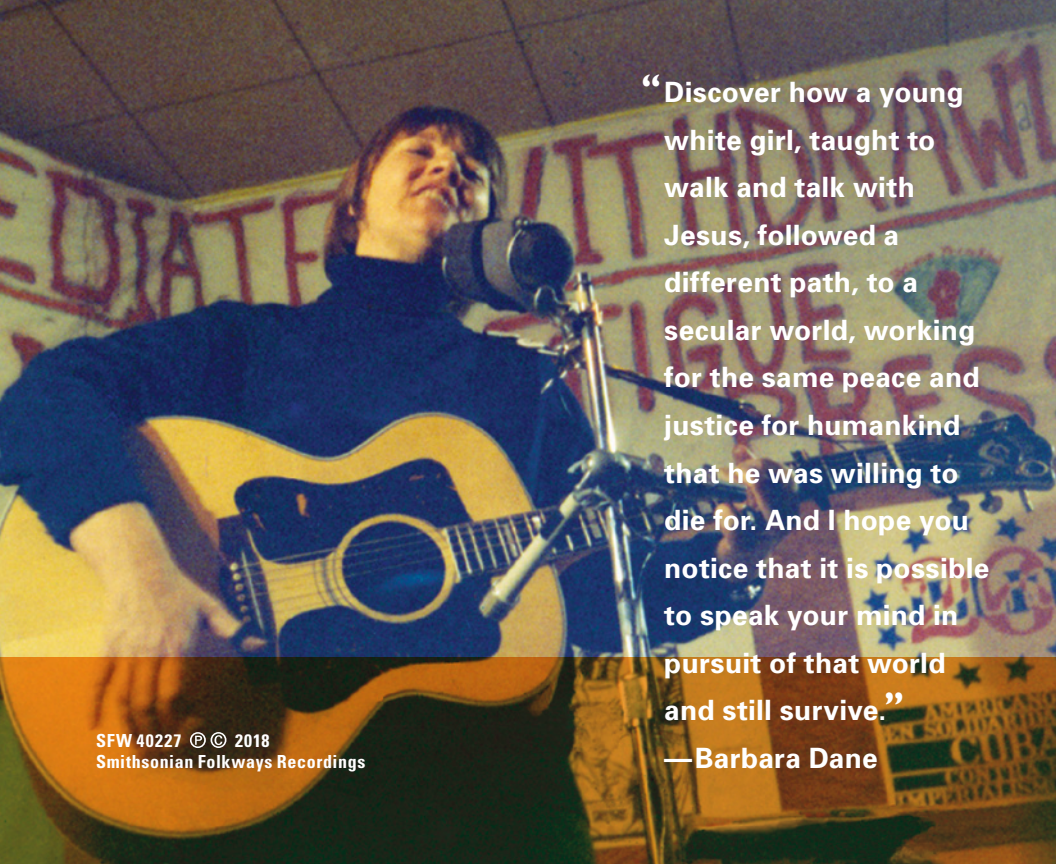
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—Barbara Dane









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**BARBARA DANE**

HOT JAZZ, COOL BLUES & HARD-HITTING SONGS

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