

TOM CHAPIN

TOM CHAPIN "70" - Track Notes

Track 1. **Wreckage**

My son-in-law Mike Wodkowski used the phrase "dwelling in the wreckage of the past." I said, wow, can I steal that line? He said sure. So I did. Though the lyric came quickly, not so the tune. I tried several over a month or two, and then one day when jamming on the banjo I found this modal tune that seemed to fit the tone, that all-too-human dilemma of worrying about stuff that's out of our control.

6 string banjo, guitar, piano, bass fiddle, vocal

Track 2. **Put A Light In Your Window**

I found the start of this lyric in a 30 year-old spiral bound notebook of mine. Si Kahn helped craft the chorus and Jon Cobert helped with the rocking feel, the chords and the tune. Yes, it's the great Guy Davis blowing that killer blues harp.

Acoustic & electric guitars, bass, piano, harmonica, organ, tambourine, drums, vocals

Track 3. **The Riverkeeper**

There are two boats which have become symbols of the rebirth and reclamation of the mighty Hudson River. First, the Clearwater, with Pete Seeger as a founding member, has had dozens of songs written and sung about it. The other, the Riverkeeper, now has at least one. Skipper / Captain John Lipscomb is a longtime friend and I am such a fan of his and his organization's work, doing "the good, hard, heavy job of keeping the river clean."

Guitar, mandolin, banjo, piano, bass, whistle, accordion, vocals

Track 4. **Down There**

Like many people, I have become more and more concerned about hydraulic fracturing, one of the hot-button topics of our time. The more we know about this violent technique for recovering natural gas the worse it seems for everyone, except perhaps those who are making big money. John Forster came up with this great "just 'cause it's down there" lyric idea.

6 & 12 string guitar, mandolin, banjo, bass, piano, organ, fiddle, drums, vocals

Track 5. **Guitar Child**

A solo ragtime guitar rumination on what I do, and a musical shout-out to some of those who inspired and taught me. John Guth added his lovely touch to the second guitar.

2 acoustic Guitars and vocal

Track 6. **Autumn Rain**

You can tell from this song that I'm from the Northeast, where the end of summer is always bittersweet. This is one of those songs which springs from the guitar part and whose lyrics seemed to write itself.

Guitar, piano, bass, vocal

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Track 7. **Ride Out Any Storm**

Si Kahn has been instrumental in alerting the music community about an ecological disaster about to happen in Alaska. Bristol Bay is the site of some of the last wild salmon runs in the world. The proposed Pebble Mine, a giant open pit copper and gold mine, threatens the salmon and the rivers in which they spawn. The fisheries, the fishermen and the native peoples whose lives and livelihood depend on the salmon are threatened as well.

This song and **Prayer For Bristol Bay** were written about this beautiful area and the danger they face.
Banjo, 12 string guitar, piano, bass, vocal

Track 8. **Old Dogs & Old Friends**

This is a remembrance and celebration of Holly and Otis, two wonderful dogs from the pound who grew from puppy-dom to old age in our house.

Banjo, guitar, fiddle, piano, harmonica, bass, vocal

Track 9. **Myra Jean**

I wrote this the night my first granddaughter arrived. She is now 5 years old, brings joy to everyone she meets, and deserves to have her grandpa include her song on an album.

Guitar, mandolin, piano, bass, whistle, accordion, vocals

Track 10. **Smart Without Art**

Michael Mark, Jon Cobert & I wrote this on a plane the day before I was scheduled to testify at a NY State hearing about Arts in Education. Thank goodness, because I then testified as one should but seldom does: guitar in hand, singing a song.

Electric guitars, bass, piano, percussion, vocals

Track 11. **Prayer For Bristol Bay**

Autoharp, 12 string guitar, bass, piano, whistle, accordion, vocal

Track 12. **City Of New Orleans**

I have long loved and sung this, and in 2004 won a Grammy for narrating a children's book based on it's words. Steve Goodman's classic train song somehow manages to both celebrate America's railroads and articulate the sadness of their decline. Listen for Jon Cobert's beautiful piano solo.

Banjo, guitar, bass, piano, vocals

Track 13. **Muhheakunnuk**

John Forster and I wrote this in 1998 for my *In My Hometown* recording. I've been singing it a lot lately, with this rolling fingerpicking pattern on guitar, and decided to re-record it. I like how this poetic history of the Hudson River (that Pete Seeger loved so much) fits with the next tune.

Guitar, fiddle, pan flute, piano, bass, shakers and tom tom, vocal

Track 14. **Quite Early Morning**

We lost Toshi & Pete Seeger within 6 months of each other. In the celebrations and memorials that followed, I learned this lovely song of Pete's and sang it with my daughters, Abigail & Lily, The Chapin Sisters. We recorded this track live in the studio – a classic Pete Seeger lyric that manages to be both personal and universal, part warning and part message of hope, and a quiet, powerful call to action.

Banjo, guitar, mandolin, guitar/mandolin, bass, vocals