

TOM CHAPIN

In a career that spans six decades, 28 albums and three GRAMMY awards, Hudson Valley Troubadour Tom Chapin has covered an incredible amount of creative ground. In addition to his work as a recording artist, concert performer, storyteller and activist, he's performed on Broadway and worked extensively in television, radio and film.

The son of noted jazz drummer and teacher Jim Chapin and the grandson of author/critic Kenneth Burke and portrait painter James Chapin, Tom grew up in a family that encouraged artistic pursuits. He began performing professionally as a teenager in the early 1960s, playing in Greenwich Village folk clubs alongside his siblings Harry and Steve as The Chapin Brothers.

Chapin and his songs were featured in the seminal 1970 documentary film *Blue Water, White Death*, for which he spent six months sailing the Indian Ocean searching for great white sharks.

In 1971, he began a five-year run as the host of *Make A Wish*, an Emmy and Peabody Award winning TV show presented by ABC News. Chapin's latest project, "The Make A Wish Songbag," released in March 2025, is a "lost" CD of songs from *Make A Wish* which Tom recorded in 1976. Tom was the show's host, and he got his then unknown brother Harry the job to write the songs - 2 per episode. This is a selection of Tom's favorite songs from the *Make A Wish* years, the best-known being the "Chapin Anthem," *Circle*.

Chapin launched his solo recording career with 1976's *Life Is Like That*. It was the first of a string of albums that further established his reputation as both a gifted storyteller and a natural entertainer, winning him an uncommonly loyal fan base in the process.

In 1988, Tom released his first Family recording, *Family Tree*. His music was aimed at elementary school children, who understood language and humor. His songs were embraced by kids, parents, and teachers. This launched a whole new career for Chapin, and was the first of 13 albums that have received countless awards including 5 Grammy nominations. Tom's pioneering approach to a sophisticated style of storytelling filled a niche between songs for toddlers and teen rebellion music. Engaging the heart, mind and imagination with life-affirming songs which convey positive messages about relationships, family, good food and the green earth.

He continued to venture into other creative areas, playing the lead role in the hit Broadway musical *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, working off-Broadway as musical director of both *Cotton Patch Gospel* and *Harry Chapin: Lies and Legends*, and serving as host of TV's *National Geographic Explorer*. He's also written and performed satirical topical songs for National

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Public Radio's Morning Edition, and had a cameo role as the Vice Presidential candidate in Jonathan Demme's 2004 remake of *The Manchurian Candidate*.

Simon and Schuster has released three children's books based upon his songs: *This Pretty Planet*, *Library Song (The Library Book)*, and *The Backwards Birthday Party*. Chapin also serves as narrator of a series of children's books, three of which, *Mama Don't Allow*, *There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly* and *The Train They Call The City Of New Orleans*, have won GRAMMY awards in the Best Spoken Word Album for Children category.

Currently in development is "Grandfather Camp: An Orchestral Fantasy." This hybrid theater/orchestra piece for families combines the talents of Tom Chapin and John Forster, along with the SONOS Chamber Orchestra led by Erik Ochsner. It is inspired by the writings of the late Dr. Ruth Westheimer. Dr. Ruth believed that the grandparent/grandchild bond needed to be understood, valued and nurtured. The project will culminate with a live concert piece for 3 actors and an orchestra, a recording, as well as an illustrated book.

In addition to his musical and media endeavors, Chapin has long been an advocate for environmental causes, issues of hunger and social justice, and a supporter of music and the arts in public schools.

"I'm at that place in my life where I follow what interests me," Chapin concludes. "I still love the guitar, I still love to sing, and I still love the thrill of creation: a good song, a good recording, a good concert. I feel blessed to be my own boss, creating my own material and performing for so many different audiences, ages and generations."