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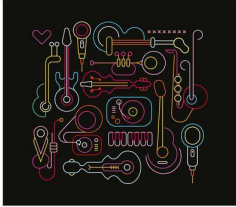
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“POET-COMPOSERS”

Art and Legitimacy in the Singer-Songwriter Movement

Christa Anne Bentley

In 1968, *New York Times* critic William Kroman profiled newcomer musician Leonard Cohen, describing Cohen as a “poet-novelist-composer-singer.” Kroman declared that “this is the age of the hyphenate, a sign... that a renaissance is afoot.”¹ The renaissance Kroman observed was the beginning of the singer-songwriter movement, a growing circle of artists in the United States and Canada that cohered around a confessional lyrical style, acoustic musical accompaniment, and a vulnerable presentation of their songs. The moniker for this persona, however, did not emerge in the music industry until the 1970s.² Instead, in the early stages of this movement, critics described this new cohort of artists in varied ways, but frequently labeling the songwriters as “poets” or “composers.” For example, in a 1969 *Rolling Stone* review of Cohen’s sophomore album, *Songs from a Room*, critic Alec Durbo described the artist as a “singer-poet,” a designation he assigned to a new wave of artists who attempted “to reach a heart of meaning” and who performed by “pouring out [their] life before you.”³ Writing for the *Washington Post, Times Herald*, Min S. Yee explained that newcomer Joni Mitchell was “less singer than songwriter, less songwriter than poet.”⁴ In the *Chicago Tribune*, critic Robb Baker placed Mitchell on a list of the top “composer-performers” of the year.⁵ An advertisement for Neil Young’s first solo album in *Rolling Stone* likewise proclaimed that “[it] is rather an underestimation to simply call Neil a *songwriter*. More accurately, he is a *composer* and a *lyricist*, and both his words and music are poetry.”⁶ The early descriptions of these singer-songwriters reveal that critics perceived the music as high art more than popular song.

This chapter explores the songwriting style developed by the United States singer-songwriter movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, demonstrating how changes in songwriting practices—and the consequent marketing and critical reception of those songs—used connections to Western classical performance and literature as a legitimizing discourse. During this time, connections to “art” allowed singer-songwriters to eschew notions of craft typically associated with American songwriting traditions in favor of artistic personas that appeared to be removed from the commercial music industry. I use the term “art” here in ways that reflect the assumptions of this discourse, which position works that connote seriousness and complexity against the idea of entertainment perceived to be frivolous or mundane.⁷ In the context of the twentieth-century United States, this concept

of art relies on binaries that accept the opposition of highbrow and lowbrow culture that frequently manifest in debates about the aesthetic superiority of classical music.⁸ Similarly, these assumptions position art above craft and rally against the notion of "selling-out." This claim is often used to accuse popular musicians of performing trendy music solely for profit rather than pursuing something challenging at the expense of their pocketbooks, implying that a "real artist" would starve for the sake of their work.⁹ Using a discourse that constructed singer-songwriters as poets and composers, marketers and critics convinced audiences that singer-songwriters were motivated by something other than commercial gain, despite the movement's place at the center of the music industry in the early 1970s. Thus, the "poet-composer" identity created to describe singer-songwriters in the nascent phase of their movement encapsulates how lingering cultural biases about art in the United States continued to inform the construction of popular song in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

In the first part of this essay, I locate the origins of the poet-composer persona within the tensions between the commercial music industry and the North American folk revival. In the second section, I turn to the marketing of Leonard Cohen's first two albums to show how his status as a poet informed the critical reception of his work. Finally, I investigate how Joni Mitchell's songwriting style, which transitioned from communal folk ballads to complex, soloistic melodies, helped perpetuate the idea that singer-songwriters composed art songs rather than pop songs. I further analyze how this transition in songwriting style resulted in differentiated listening practices between the folk revival and singer-songwriter movement. Taken together, the new songwriting style, marketing, and reception formed a reinforced poet-composer identity that perpetuates in the discourse surrounding singer-songwriters even today, cementing concepts of cultural hierarchy deeply entrenched in Western art music within the sphere of popular song.

Origins in the Folk Revival

The first singer-songwriters grew from the North American folk revival, a musical culture invested in maintaining American vernacular music practices.¹⁰ By the late 1950s, the folk revival became intertwined with the commercial music industry, epitomized by The Kingston Trio's 1958 bestselling recording of the traditional song "Tom Dooley."¹¹ During this period, traditional music gained widespread popularity in the United States, which also inspired a wave of artists interested in contributing original compositions to the folk canon. It is from the latter branch of the revival that the singer-songwriter movement emerged.

In the mid-1960s, folksinger Judy Collins made a conscious effort to record newly composed songs instead of the traditional songs featured on her earlier albums.¹² Searching for new material, Collins discovered two Canadian songwriters: Leonard Cohen and Joni Mitchell. Collins recorded several songs by each writer, including Cohen's "Suzanne" and Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now." The success of Collins's versions of these and other songs was influential in helping Cohen and Mitchell secure recording contracts: Cohen with Columbia Records and Mitchell with Reprise Records.¹³

Following the initial wave of songs recorded by Collins in 1966, a recognizable movement of singer-songwriters coalesced in Laurel Canyon, an eclectic neighborhood in Los Angeles, California. Laurel Canyon became home to a group of performers who began to write in the same confessional mode as Mitchell and Cohen, a group that included Jackson Browne, Carole King, James Taylor, Bill Withers, and Neil Young. On the surface, the label

ascribed to this new branch of musicians indicates the artist's dual-role as a composer and performer, emphasizing the value the singer-songwriter movement placed on both authorship and presentation.¹⁴ The phrase, however, signals much more than a musician who writes and performs original music, as the term has accrued layers of meanings based in audience perceptions of intimate performance, personal story-telling, an artist's display of vulnerability, and a sense of immediacy between the listener and the artist's persona.¹⁵

With a fan base firmly rooted in the folk revival, the singer-songwriter movement had to reconcile a disdain for the commercial music industry, an anxiety that folk traditionalists had battled since The Kingston Trio brought folk music into the popular mainstream. In response to the explosion of folk music, the revival positioned itself as a movement interested in political progress that, through a discourse based upon leftist political ideas, disavowed music made solely for entertainment or commercial gain. In his book *Rainbow Quest*, historian Ronald Cohen explicitly defines the genre as "non-commercial people's music," contending that, "while popular (that is, commercial music) has generally avoided overt political content, particularly of a left-leaning sort, certain musical subcultures [such as folk music] have not shied away from complaints about controversial subjects."¹⁶ American Studies scholar Michael Scully similarly explains that those who believed in folk music's potential for social change "grew furious at the specter of capitalist interest co-opting their ideals for the purpose of profit."¹⁷ As such, the definition of folk music espoused by traditionalists and the historians of the genre uncovers an opposition between music perceived to entertain and music that was committed to its radical political stance, even at the risk of monetary success.

Commercially successful folk artists could navigate this quandary by actively renouncing the music industry's influence, thereby assuring their audience that their left-wing agenda was sincere. Joan Baez, for example, perpetuated the idea that the folk tradition should value political commitment above financial success. *Time* magazine reported that as Baez grew in commercial appeal, her response was to "turn down \$100,000 worth of concert dates in a single year. 'Folk music,' says she, 'depends on intent. If someone desires to make money, I don't call it folk music.' To ensure that she does not make too much, she tours only two months a year, mostly on college campuses."¹⁸ For Baez, the perception that she remained engaged in her political advocacy—at the expense of personal profit—was a critical aspect of her legitimacy as a folk musician. This contrast between standing-up for values and selling-out for profit influenced the perception of the singer-songwriter movement, whose mainstream appeal and music-industry backing stood in opposition to the folk revival's left-wing narrative.

As the singer-songwriter movement transitioned away from the communal folk songs popular in the 1960s folk revival, the movement traded the folk revival's overtly left-wing rhetoric for a discourse that claimed the movement's proximity to classical music and literature, which simultaneously asserted the movement's aesthetic worth and separated singer-songwriters from negative perceptions of the music industry.¹⁹ Like the folk revival, the ideas of art and commerce existed in tension for the singer-songwriter movement. This is especially palpable in the early marketing for Leonard Cohen and Joni Mitchell because both had started their careers through songwriting royalties. As such, their income mimicked established structures used within the music industry, epitomized by Tin Pan Alley in the early twentieth century and the Brill Building in the 1960s. In these models, dedicated teams of composers and lyricists churned out songs to sell: first, as sheet music, and eventually, as recordings made by performers who did not, typically, write their own songs.

Discussions of these songwriting models often demean its craftsman approach to music. For example, reports that Brill Building songwriters wrote in cubicles conjured images of a sterile office–environment perceived to be void of artistic inspiration.²⁰ When Mitchell first ascended to fame, reports that she made \$500,000 a year from royalties threatened her credibility in the folk world.²¹ Invoking art, therefore, Cohen and Mitchell could demonstrate to the commercially weary folk fan base that, in spite of their income from royalties, their intention was not monetary gain.

A famous rift in the narrative of left-wing politics and the folk revival—Bob Dylan’s release of *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964)—provides an early case-study for understanding how the poet-composer persona could combat accusations of commercialism. When Bob Dylan pivoted from the topical songwriting championed by revivalists to confessional songwriting, critics attempted to redefine Dylan’s music as poetry. Topical songwriting, which made overt references to current events and called listeners to take a side on a political issue, helped create a buffer between folk artists and outcries of commercialism. Dylan, however, transferred the subjects of his songs from explicit critiques of society, as heard in songs such as “Only a Pawn in Their Game,” to more personal stories, as heard on “To Ramona.”²² Certain strains of the folk revival resisted this change, criticizing Dylan’s new songs as indulgent for their lack of overt political content. *Sing Out!* editor Irwin Silber penned an “Open Letter to Dylan” that accused him of losing “contact with the people,” selling-out for fame, and focused this fault on new songs that “[seemed] to be all inner-directed, now, inner-probing, self-conscious—maybe even a little maudlin.”²³ Yet other critics defended the artistic value of Dylan’s new style, claiming that it was actually poetry. Reviewing Dylan’s performance at Philharmonic Hall in the *New York*, critic Robert Shelton extolled his literary talents and named him the “poet laureate of young America”:

After a half a year of detours, Mr. Dylan seems to have turned his enormous musical and literary gifts to a forward course. His developing control of those gifts and his ability to shape a meaningful program added up to a frequently spell-binding evening by the brilliant singing poet laureate of young America.²⁴

Legitimizing his music as poetry, Shelton elevates Dylan’s music as art and claims this as a step forward in his work, even though other critics from the folk revival saw the lack of political lyrics as a step towards commercialism.

Singer-Songwriters as Poets

The singer-songwriter movement similarly established its legitimacy through its opposition to the commercial music industry by likening its songs to poetry and classical music. Following Dylan’s coronation as “poet-laureate,” Leonard Cohen became a key figure linking the singer-songwriter movement and poetic tradition. This stemmed both from Cohen’s former career as a poet, as he repurposed his previously published poems as songs, and from the marketing of his music, which relied heavily on his reputation as a poet to convince audiences of his artistic credibility.

Before gaining fame as a songwriter and performer, Cohen had published four collections of poems (including the critically acclaimed *The Spice-Box of Earth* in 1961) and two novels (*The Favourite Game* in 1963 and *Beautiful Losers* in 1966).²⁵ Cohen’s novels and poems received hostile criticism due to their graphic sexual content, and the harsh

reception of *Beautiful Losers* eventually drove him away from the literary world.²⁶ In his first albums as a songwriter, however, Cohen set his extant poems to music, transforming his own literary work into a sung tradition.

There is no consensus on exactly what prompted Leonard Cohen to turn to songwriting, but the two most prominent legends surrounding this decision outline the tensions between art and commerce that Cohen needed to navigate during his early career. According to some accounts, Cohen became a songwriter after his exposure to Bob Dylan's recordings, convinced that Dylan was the greatest poet in America and that sung poetry was the future of the genre.²⁷ Others claim that Cohen turned to songwriting to make money because *Beautiful Losers* was selling poorly.²⁸ The first narrative extols the virtues of Cohen's poetic and musical sensibilities, while the second undermines his artistic ambition. The second narrative additionally neglects the risky realities of turning from one precarious profession to another, and those who object to this story claim that Cohen was not that naïve.²⁹ Yet after recording his initial album, *Beautiful Losers* was re-released in paperback, and Cohen's publishers printed a collected volume of his most popular poems. Cohen and his label needed to maintain the perception that artistry—not personal promotion—was the driving force behind his songwriting to ease the anxieties about commercial ambition that plagued the folk revival, the locus of his initial fan base.

Columbia's marketing promoted Cohen based on his literary reputation. For example, a full-page advertisement for *The Songs of Leonard Cohen* (1967) placed in *Rolling Stone* claimed that "James Joyce is not dead... He lives in Montreal under the name of Leonard Cohen."³⁰ Equating Cohen with the modernist novelist, Columbia declared their artist's literary merit as an important aspect of his value as a musician. Advertising for Cohen's second album, *Songs from a Room* (1969), created a similar equation between Cohen's musical and literary work. Another advertisement placed in *Rolling Stone* read:

Is your name Leonard Cohen? From time to time you get the feeling that you want to disengage yourself from your life. Because you're no different from anyone else. And because your life is filled with the same love and the same hate and the same beauty and the same ugliness as everyone else's. You want to withdraw into some kind of solitary contemplation—a locked room or a quiet corner of your mind—just to think about everything for a while... If you put it all down on paper, according to a form of meter and line, you're called a poet. And if you're a poet who sets it all to music, then your name is Leonard Cohen. And this is your second album of—for want of a better word—songs. And these are your songs from a room.³¹

This advertisement places greater emphasis on Cohen's work as poetry, only ceding to call the tracks songs "for want of a better word." Both advertisements demonstrate the degree to which poetry was framed as an important piece of Cohen's persona for first-time listeners.

As Cohen transformed his works from poems to songs, the marketing solidified the importance of Cohen's status as a poet for American audiences. This strategy also helped boost the sales of Cohen's *Selected Poems 1956–1968*, a collection of poems published by Viking in the wake of his second album release.³² The volume sold 200,000 copies in the United States and made it onto the *New York Times* bestseller list.³³ However, the concept of "lyrics" as poetry also prompted skepticism from rock critic Karen Murphy and poet Ronald Gross, who co-wrote an eight-page polemic about the influence of rock music on poetry in the *New York Times*.

The authors bemoaned the assumption that “purveyors of the fine arts have dutifully decided that if rock lyrics have meaning and importance to young people they must then be something more than just lowly entertainment.”³⁴ The authors pointed out that, unlike poetry, song lyrics cannot be separated from the music and that the melody acts as an important subtext for the meaning of the words. However, the authors also reprinted the full lyrics of Cohen’s “Suzanne,” a decision that belied their own point about sung poetry, implicitly suggesting that the text was, indeed, a poem worth reading on its own.

Murphy and Gross cited Cohen’s own analysis about the relationship between his music and poetry, describing how he sees the two as intimately connected: “There is no difference between a poem and a song. Some were songs first and some were poems first and some were simultaneous. All of my writing has guitars behind it, even the novels.”³⁵ This view remains a popular understanding of Cohen’s work among his fans, showing that audiences have been convinced by the persona constructed through this discourse. For example, in her 2012 biography of Cohen, Sylvie Simmons described the intertwined relationship of music and poetry in his output, writing how “[in] the same way that the poetry he wrote had an implied melody, his melodies had an implied poetry.”³⁶ Simmons’s comment articulates how Cohen has managed to fuse verse and music for the singer-songwriter audience.

Singer-Songwriters as Composers

In addition to being promoted as poets, many singer-songwriters were viewed as composers. While both songwriters and composers are titles for those who write music professionally, the former label is most frequently used in connection to the popular music industry, whereas the latter signifies artistry, complexity, and training, most often in a system of Western classical music. By assigning the composer label to commercial artists, critics and audiences bestowed a certain type of legitimacy on these creators, one based in classical music’s status as high culture.³⁷ Critics began recognizing singer-songwriters as composers when changes in songwriting broke with practices maintained by folk traditionalists away from songs meant for participatory communal singing.³⁸ The singer-songwriter’s new approach to songwriting, which involved greater melodic complexity and personal storytelling, consequently influenced the listening culture of the movement, creating an atmosphere of intent listening often observed in the classical concert hall.³⁹

Joni Mitchell’s output between 1967 and 1971 exemplifies these songwriting shifts, and the reception of her work demonstrates how comparisons to Western classical music contributed to the poet-composer discourse used to legitimize singer-songwriters. Beginning with Judy Collins’s version of “Both Sides Now” in 1967 (which won a Grammy for Best Folk Performance), audiences in the United States were introduced to Mitchell’s songs through recordings by several prominent folk performers, including Tom Rush, Dave van Ronk, and Pete Seeger, and Mitchell had an overwhelming repertoire of songs to record when she signed her contract with Reprise Records in 1968. Across her first three albums—*Song to a Seagull* (1968), *Clouds* (1969), and *Ladies of the Canyon* (1970)—Mitchell included her own interpretations of tunes from her time in the folk scene alongside newly composed material inspired by her life in California following her move to Los Angeles. Two songs on *Ladies of the Canyon*—“The Circle Game” and “Conversation”—demonstrate the transition in her compositional style from folk ballads to confessional songs.

First recorded by folksinger Tom Rush in 1968, Mitchell wrote “The Circle Game” in 1966 during her time in Toronto’s folk scene. Mitchell’s song is a coming-of-age story

about a man who longs for the simplicity of childhood. In the chorus, the personal plural pronoun “we” and the simple melody worked well within the folk revival’s ethos of communal singing. In fact, on the recording that appears on *Ladies of the Canyon* (1970), backing vocalists join Mitchell to sing the chorus, enacting the communal participation of live folk performances. When Mitchell included the song on her 1974 live album *Miles of Aisles*, she stated that the composition was intended to encourage amateur group participation and made a point to invite the crowd to join her. “Let’s sing this song together, okay?” Mitchell asked the audience as she introduced the song. “This song doesn’t sound good with only one voice,” Mitchell explained, “the more voices on it the better, and the more out-of-tune voices, the better. No, it was really—it was made for out-of-tune singing.” Mitchell’s explanation implies that the melody’s simple character would be possible to sing by participants at any level, an example of how her songwriting reflected the principles of the folk revival.

The songs Mitchell wrote specifically for *Ladies of the Canyon* move away from such group participation and, instead, exhibit traits of the singer-songwriter movement’s confessional songwriting mode. The song “Conversation” is about Mitchell’s affair with a married man, a decidedly more personal and intimate experience compared to the story of “The Circle Game.” In her lyrics to “Conversation,” Mitchell abandons plural pronouns, telling the story through the first-person singular. Furthermore, “Conversation” contains a more complicated melody that parallels the individualism of her story. Mitchell makes use of her wide vocal range, includes melismatic vocal fills that are difficult for the untrained singer to replicate, and employs a freer sense of rhythm. Each of these idiosyncrasies make the song more difficult to execute through communal singing, and the song comes across as a virtuosic achievement rather than a participatory ballad. Thus, the songwriting itself embodies the individualistic quality of the confessional story.

This confessional style became Mitchell’s predominant method of songwriting across her early albums, culminating with her 1971 release, *Blue*, which featured exclusively personal material.⁴⁰ The album did not include any tunes from her back catalog of folksongs, and none of the tracks invite participation from the audience. This transformation in Mitchell’s output was met with skepticism from *New York Times* critic Don Heckman, who wrote:

I suspect this will be the most disliked of Miss Mitchell’s recordings, despite the fact that it attempts more and makes greater demands on her talent than any of the others. The audience for art songs is far smaller than that for folk ballads, and Joni Mitchell is on the verge of having to make a decision between the two.⁴¹

Heckman labels these more complicated tunes as “art songs,” distinct from Mitchell’s earlier folk ballads, a choice of words that places Mitchell’s works more in line with Schubert than Pete Seeger. Heckman’s language implies that Mitchell’s music is less commercially viable—or commercially motivated—than folk music, a comment that inverts the argument that the revival typically launched against singer-songwriters.

When singer-songwriters started to perform predominantly confessional songs, it changed the listening environment for folk audiences into a concert culture that mirrored classical performance spaces. Whereas folksongs encouraged communal forms of participation—singing along, clapping, and dancing—confessional songs were designed to create an introspective environment for the listener. Audiences engaged these “art songs” with different listening practices, including sitting quietly and listening attentively, and critics frequently commented on the captivated attention of Mitchell’s audience. When Mitchell

performed at the Troubadour in July of 1968, *Billboard* described how her audience “sat attentively as she spun stories based on human experience and personalities which have inspired her writing.”⁴² Critic William Rice compared Mitchell’s set at the Cellar Door in Washington, D.C. to the classical concert hall, writing that “[hers] is not a nightclub act in the accepted sense. It is a concert, and not even Vladimir Horowitz commanded a more rapt or appreciative audience.”⁴³ By elevating Mitchell’s relationship with her audience to the level of respect displayed at a recital by classical pianist Vladimir Horowitz, Rice made a claim for the singer-songwriter’s legitimacy beyond the realm of popular song.

After releasing *Blue*, Mitchell performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City in 1972. The venue was considerably larger than the clubs where she began, which indicated the growth of her audience throughout the late 1960s. Don Heckman, the critic who had predicted the unpopularity of the “art songs” on *Blue*, reviewed the performance. Instead of commenting on the apparent broadening of her appeal based on the size of the audience, Heckman re-asserted Mitchell as both a poet and composer:

What makes Joni Mitchell really special is the great esthetic density of her music. Starting from a base that is rooted deeply in her own psyche, she builds metaphoric excursions-through-life, trips that are common to us all. And she does it with a brilliant harmonic sense, lyrical melodies and almost effortless poetry...

I suspect that in her own way Joni Mitchell may be one of the most genuinely gifted composers North America has yet developed.⁴⁴

Heckman placed Mitchell’s music among the ranks of the finest American composers, and this language validated the music using the cultural status of classical music and poetry to assert Mitchell’s artistic worth.

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The “poet-composer” identity described in this chapter shows how a discourse espousing the ideals of high art has served as a legitimizing strategy for singer-songwriters. Despite the fact that these artists created music that succeeded in the commercial mainstream, the persona has persisted, and Cohen and Mitchell are consistently constructed as poets and composers—not pop stars—in their biographies even today. Initially used to elevate their work above music written for commercial consumption, this strategy, in turn, has established a new hierarchy for songwriters in this segment of popular song, one that favors the notions of complexity and the listening practices that mirror the biases of the Western classical canon.

Notes

- 1 William Kloman, “I’ve Been on the Outlaw Scene Since 15’: Leonard Cohen,” *New York Times*, 28 January 1968, D21.
- 2 David R. Shumway, “The Emergence of the Singer-Songwriter,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter*, ed. Katherine A. Williams and Justin Williams (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 11.
- 3 Alec Durbo, “Review: Songs from a Room, Leonard Cohen,” *Rolling Stone* 33, 17 May 1969, 16.
- 4 Min S. Yee, “Songwriting and Poetry,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, 14 September 1969, F4.
- 5 Robb Baker, “The Sound: Music and Radio: For Young Listeners,” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 April 1969, C15.

- 6 Advertisement: Neil Young, *Rolling Stone* 46, 1 November 1969, 33. Emphasis in original.
- 7 Lloyd Whitesell discusses the assumptions of the high/low binary in music in *The Music of Joni Mitchell* (New York: Oxford University Press: 2008), 7–8.
- 8 Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988). See specifically Levine’s discussion of elitism and popularity in opera during the nineteenth century in “The Sacralization of Culture,” 86.
- 9 Theodore Gracyk uses this concept to show the influence of nineteenth-century romanticism on popular music in *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 175–200; Jason Lee Oakes discusses the interaction between “selling out” and constructions of authenticity in rock ideology in “‘I’m a Man’: Masculinities in Popular Music,” *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, ed. Derek B. Scott (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 221–240.
- 10 Understood in its broadest sense, the folk revival stretches back to nineteenth century ballad collectors and extends to traditional music performance in the twenty-first century. See D.K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1959); Ronald Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Revival and American Society* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); Michael Scully, *The Never-Ending Revival: Rounder Records and the Folk Alliance* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008); and Gillian Mitchell, *The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).
- 11 Cohen, *Rainbow Quest*, 132.
- 12 Judy Collins, *Trust Your Heart: An Autobiography* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 82. For representative recordings, see Judy Collins, *A Maid of Constant Sorrow* (1961), *Golden Apples of the Sun* (1962), and *Judy Collins #3* (1963).
- 13 Judy Collins, *Sweet Judy Blue Eyes* (New York: Crown Archetype, 2011), 200–201.
- 14 This is the definition used in *The Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter* and in Praeger’s Singer-Songwriter Collection, a growing series edited by James Perrone with volumes devoted to the lyrics and music of a single artist, ranging from Carole King to Ice Cube.
- 15 Bentley, “Los Angeles Troubadours: The Politics of the Singer-Songwriter Movement, 1968–1975” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016), 3–5.
- 16 Cohen, *Rainbow Quest*, 19, 264.
- 17 Michael Scully, “American Folk Music Revivalism, 1965–2005” (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2005), 93.
- 18 “The Folk Girls,” *Time*, 1 June 1962, accessed 30 September 2017, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,938392,00.html>.
- 19 As I have argued, the turn away from overt political content did not mean singer-songwriter movement was apolitical, rather the artists articulated their political views through their personal language that was in line with the social shifts, of the 1970s. See “Los Angeles Troubadours,” 2, 5–10.
- 20 Ken Emerson, *Always a Magic in the Air: The Bomp and Brilliance of the Brill Building* (New York: Viking, 2005), xv; Barney Hoskyns, *Waiting for the Sun: A Rock ‘n’ Roll History of Los Angeles* (Milwaukee, WI: Backbeat Books, 2009), 227; and Carole King, *A Natural Woman: A Memoir* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2012), 90.
- 21 Yee, “Songwriting and Poetry,” F4.
- 22 “Only a Pawn in Their Game” appears on *The Times They Are a-Changin’* (1964) and “To Ramona” appears on *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964).
- 23 Irwin Silber, “An Open Letter to Bob Dylan,” *Sing Out!* 14 (November 1964), 22–23; Cohen, *Rainbow Quest*, 221–223.
- 24 Robert Shelton, “Bob Dylan Shows New Maturity in Program of his Folk Songs,” *New York Times*, 2 November 1964, 62.
- 25 Cohen’s other volumes of poetry include *Let Us Compare Mythologies* (Montreal: Contact Press, 1956), *Flowers for Hitler* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1964), and *Parasites of Heaven* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966).
- 26 Sylvie Simmons, *I’m Your Man: The Life of Leonard Cohen* (New York: Ecco Press, 2012), 139.

- 27 Liel Leibovitz, *A Broken Hallelujah: Rock and Roll, Redemption, and the Life of Leonard Cohen* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), 114–117.
- 28 Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 144–145.
- 29 Leibovitz, *A Broken Hallelujah*, 113.
- 30 Advertisement: Songs of Leonard Cohen, *Rolling Stone* 1, no. 6 (24 February 1968), 3.
- 31 Advertisement: Songs from a Room, *Rolling Stone*, 33 (17 May 1969), insert page 13.
- 32 Advertisement: Selected Poems, 1956–1968, *Rolling Stone* 39 (9 August 1969), 38.
- 33 Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 205.
- 34 Karen Murphy and Ronald Gross, “‘All You Need Is Love,’” *New York Times*, 13 April 1969, SM36.
- 35 Murphy and Gross, “‘All You Need Is Love,’” SM36.
- 36 Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 153.
- 37 Lloyd Whitesell, *The Music of Joni Mitchell*, 7–8.
- 38 Thomas Turino discusses participatory singing in the folk revival in *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 157–158 and 215–219.
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