

HOLLY NEAR

SINGER ✦ ACTIVIST ✦ TEACHER
AUTHOR ✦ PRODUCER ✦ ACTOR

Holly Near is a unique combination of entertainer, teacher, and activist. An immense vocal talent, Near's career as a singer has been defined by an unwillingness to separate her passion for music from her passion for human dignity. She is a skilled performer and an outspoken ambassador for peace who brings to the stage an integration of world consciousness, spiritual discovery, and theatricality.

Although she sang in public from the age of eight, Ms. Near's professional career began with numerous performances in film and television, and a run in the Broadway production of *Hair*. Torn between a career as an actor or a singer, Ms. Near chose to pursue her love of music, especially that music which articulated the social conditions of the world community.

Throughout her lengthy career, Ms. Near has used her performances to educate audiences. The unifying and healing nature of her work explains the diverse nature of the groups who call on her to speak and sing. She presented the 2004 Ware Lecture for the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in Long Beach, California; delivered the keynote address for Women Change America, a conference presented by the National Women's History Project at Smith College; spoke to participants at HerbFest in Iowa and the Bioneers Conference in California; and led a Martin Luther King Day celebration in Northern California. She participated and performed at the March For Women's Lives in Washington, DC and at the Stop The War demonstration in New York, NY.

In 2004, Holly joined Eve Ensler, Jane Fonda, Sally Fields, Christine Lahti, and noted Mexican performers in the V-Day march in Juarez, Mexico to protest the uninvestigated killing of hundreds of young women. In Toledo, Ohio, she sat witness to the testimony of women reporting rape and other violence against women. Holly helped raise funds for 10,000 Kites, a collaborative anti-war project between young people from Israel and Palestine who flew kites over the wall that separates them in May 2005.

Holly participated in a two-day filmed discussion with Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, Harry Belafonte, and Pete Seeger that focused on political song, responsible citizenship and the effect that protest music has had on public policy. The film, produced by Dr. Amy Horowitz, is in progress. Near's portrait hangs at The Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio along with those of other social change artists including Paul Robeson, Marion Anderson, Pete Seeger, Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, Joan Baez, Harry Belafonte, and Woody Guthrie.

Fiercely independent, Holly Near was one of the first women in the U.S. to go it alone when she founded Redwood Records in 1972. Her vision was to promote and produce music by politically conscious artists from around the world, a mission that Redwood Records fulfilled for nearly 20 years. Often cited as one of the founders of the "women's music" movement, Holly found herself not only leading the way for women into the music world, but working for world peace, multicultural consciousness, and feminism. The world is her university and social change movements inform her songs.

ARTIST REPRESENTATION:

Tam Martin, Beachfront Bookings

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www.hollynear.com

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A natural teacher, Holly presents master classes in performance craft and songwriting to a wide array of audiences. Laughing, she says “I’m old enough now to be an expert!” Both as a participant and a leader, she bears personal witness to the hugely important role that music plays in political action movements. Holly’s unique personal perspective, which makes the subject matter leap out of the books and into the classroom, draws praise from college faculties around the country.

Holly has received numerous accolades for her work for social change. Most notably, she is part of the nomination for “1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005.” She has also received honors from the A.C.L.U., the National Lawyers Guild, the National Organization for Women, N.A.R.A.S., Ms. Magazine (Woman of the Year), and the Legends of Women’s Music Award. And her strength and versatility as a performer has led to creative collaborations with such artists as Ronnie Gilbert, Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, Mercedes Sosa, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Inti-Illimani, Bonnie Raitt, Cris Williamson, and Linda Tillery.

A prolific writer and recording artist, she has released 26 recordings of her own, including the seminal *Imagine My Surprise*, and performs as a guest on many others. In the past few years, Near has been busy re-releasing much of her early material as well as new works on her own label, Calico Tracks Music. Rather than resting on her laurels at this point in her career, Holly continues to write and sing political songs with grace and humor, and her integrity earns her the reputation as one of the most articulate political artists of our time. Her latest recording, *Show Up* (2006), demonstrates that she continues to sing with a power and maturity that may only come from decades of love and fear, despair and inspiration.

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"It is a tribute to a movement, a music and a time to have in our midst artists who carry with them 30 years of experience and activism. Holly Near holds global vision and artistic integrity with grace and wisdom. Her music is a collective memory of a time when we changed the world forever."

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, 2002

"Holly spoke about those difficult areas in life, how to dream our dreams, theorize our concepts, pursue our own talents and interests, and somehow integrate the whole into the action of our lives. Moreover, she has the ability to draw her listeners into active interchange with her. She displayed that rare gift of speaking to several hundred people and touching them individually. The audience was captivated. She was truly a high point in our lecture series."

Linda Jean May, Ph. D., Program Coordinator

Institute for Research on Women and Gender, Stanford University

Students were clearly impressed that in Holly they were dealing with the real thing, that is, with someone who not only professes her beliefs but who has also lived them and continues to do so. They listened attentively as she recounted her own struggles to make a meaningful life without compromising more than she had to. I think we all came away inspired by the story of someone who, with humor and humility, has tried to do something fine, and managed to sustain it over a very long haul."

Eileen Bresnahan, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor and Director, Women's Studies, Colorado College

"I can't imagine a lecture program that wouldn't be greatly enriched and enlivened by Holly Near. I bring her to UC Santa Cruz every chance I get. Students, staff and faculty beat down the doors, for they appreciate her not only as a great performer but a stirring educator and radiant human being. I always learn from her"

Professor Marge Frantz

University of California, Santa Cruz

"It's a deeply moving inspiration to be in an audience that spontaneously stands up, en masse, and chooses to be counted among the growing numbers of people who, like Holly, thrive on the personal satisfaction and joy that come with living our lives on the cutting edge. I've watched her do it time and time again, her powerful presence is a call to courage; combined with her personal warmth, she's irresistible."

John Mifsud, Coordinator

Thirtieth National Conference on Men and Masculinity, Seattle University

"Very few have the ability to blend courage and talent so well. She talked & sang about issues that ring true to many people all over the world. I am not American, but for the first time I felt like I've truly understood two hours of anything an American has ever said...completely."

Berea College, Kentucky

Senior student from India (Tibetan)

"I thought I was coming to a workshop on song writing. I found I was at a workshop on life and love. And of course, my song writing improved immensely. I was writing shallow. Holly showed me how to write deep."

A workshop participant

"Holly is a delightful combination of Judy Garland and Pete Seeger!"

A fan

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CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

SHOW UP

Calico Tracks Music, 2006

CRIS & HOLLY *with* Cris Williamson

H&C Records, 2003

LIFELINE EXTENDED

Appleseed Recordings, 2002

CRUSHED!: THE LOVE SONG COLLECTION

Calico Tracks Music, 2002

AND STILL WE SING: THE OUTSPOKEN COLLECTION

Calico Tracks Music, 2002

EARLY WARNINGS

Selections from *Sky Dances* and *Watch Out!*

Appleseed Recordings, 2002

HARP: A TIME TO SING

Appleseed Recordings, 2001

EDGE

Calico Tracks Music, 2000

SIMPLY LOVE: THE WOMEN'S MUSIC COLLECTION

Calico Tracks Music, 2000

MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS *from the play* Fire In The Rain

Calico Tracks Music 2000

WITH A SONG IN MY HEART *with* pianist John Bucchino

Calico Tracks Music, 1997

THIS TRAIN STILL RUNS *with* Ronnie Gilbert

Abbe Alice Music, 1996

ARCHIVAL RECORDINGS

SKY DANCES

Redwood Records, 1989

DON'T HOLD BACK

Redwood Records, 1987

SINGING WITH YOU *with* Ronnie Gilbert

Redwood Records, 1987

HARP *with* Arlo Guthrie, Ronnie Gilbert and Pete Seeger

Redwood Records, 1985

SING TO ME THE DREAM *with* Inti Illimani

Redwood Records, 1984

WATCH OUT! *with* John McCutcheon and Trapezoid

Redwood Records, 1984

LIFELINE *with* Ronnie Gilbert

Redwood Records, 1984

JOURNEYS – A Retrospective, 1972-1983

Redwood Records, 1983

SPEED OF LIGHT

Redwood Records, 1982

FIRE IN THE RAIN

Redwood Records, 1981

IMAGINE MY SURPRISE *with* Meg Christian

Redwood Records, 1978

YOU CAN KNOW ALL I AM

Redwood Records, 1976

A LIVE ALBUM

Redwood Records, 1975

HANG IN THERE

Redwood Records, 1973

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