

Guthrie *from page E1*

on the ridiculous but always contain a glint of truth. Guthrie's sense of humor, political satire and wry delivery make him a storyteller for all time.

"A lot of it is just repeating, like the blind judge who walks in with his seeing-eye dog or officer Guthrie," said Guthrie. "But maybe the one that was exaggerated a little with the 27 8-by-10 color glossy photographs (with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one). They were really black-and-white. Of course as it went on with the real officer Guthrie and the blind judge, it gets even more ridiculous. Truth is stranger than fiction sometimes."

Guthrie is as witty today as in the lyrics for "Coming Into Los Angeles," "The Motorcycle Song" and "The Pause of Mr. Claus (the FBI song)." Asked how his music has changed over the years, Guthrie replies, "It's gotten better. Anybody who does the same thing for 40 years has to get better."

Guthrie left Warner Brothers after 15 years to start his own company, Rising Son Records, in 1986. He spends 10 months a year on the road with son Abe, 30, and daughter Sarah, 20, joining him on stage.

"I didn't encourage or discourage them," he said. "Abe started playing at a young age on his

own and started bothering me to show him stuff. Sarah only became interested three or four years ago because she was hanging around with people who were playing acoustic music. All four of my kids know how to play something, though not all of them pursued it but have gone on to do something else."

Next stop

Proceeds from his performance at the Ann Arbor Folk Festival will benefit The Ark in Ann Arbor, one of Guthrie's favorite stops whenever he's in the Detroit area. Guthrie began coming to the Ark in the late 60s when the venue was too small for him to play. "Alice's Restaurant" put Guthrie in the big time. It was not until the late 70s that the places he played became "smaller and smaller."

"I may have not always been famous, but I've continuously been on the road since the '60s," said Guthrie, who in 1995 published a children's book, "Moose Come walking," with Alice Brock (Alice of "Alice's Restaurant").

Underneath the humor is a man who cares as much about the suffering of other human beings as he did in those early days of marches and demonstrations for civil rights and the end

of the Vietnam War. It was a lesson Guthrie learned as a child. His mother, Marjorie, and father, Woody, who was in the hospital from the time Arlo was 7 until he died from Huntington's disease 13 years later, instilled a sense of responsibility.

"I was brought up that way," said Guthrie. "Mom and dad were two for whom singing was not enough. You also had to do something and you had to speak up about something. My mother's family was wiped out in the Holocaust, and dad had his problems with Wall Street. Their history led them to believe you have to say something and do something... not just be sensitive to people's lives but participate in them."

Guthrie continues to stand up and be counted through the center and foundation housed in the Old Trinity Church, the "scene of the crime" in "Alice's Restaurant." His Guthrie Foundation, which was recently instrumental in taking the AIDS quilt to Cape Town, South Africa. The Guthrie Center, a nonprofit interfaith church foundation named for his father, offers art and music programs for children recovering from abuse, supports people with HIV/AIDS and provides a variety of community services.

The re-release in 1995 of an updated version of "Alice's Restaurant" spreads Guthrie's anti-war messages to a new generation. And in between touring and working with the center, Guthrie tries to keep his fingers on the pulse of the folk music scene.

"Folk music today has branched off into a whole industry. But for me folk's always been the music you've learned from other people — by ear or written down. When I grew up, songs were not just for entertainment, something you'd do in the evening. It's only in the last 100 years that we've recorded music. Before that, it was passed down."

Coming to folk festival

Over the years, legends such as Donovan, Bonnie Raitt, Chet Atkins, Don McLean and Guthrie continued the tradition of passing on their particular style of music at the Ann Arbor Folk Festival staged by The Ark. This year David Siglin, director of The Ark, has once again scheduled acts so diverse that "if you don't like one of the acts, go out in the lobby for 15 to 20 minutes. The next act will be on. There's no time to get bored. Every one of these acts is highly

"We try to present a wide variety of musical forms," said Siglin. "Headliners have to be able to knock out 4,100 people and be able to draw. The rest of the people are the unknowns: Hot Club of Cowtown - they

play Texas swing. The work between the guitar and fiddle is amazing. Fred Eaglesmith, they're a roadhouse band. He's from Canada, but you'd think he's from Texas. They opened for three acts at The Ark and blew them off the stage. Beth Nielsen Chapman is best known as a song writer but is a tremendous

Hot Club of Cowntown

This Austin, Texas-based band swings. Jazz lovers, who attended the Frog Island Festival that The Ark put on in June, are familiar with the sound of the group's first CD "Swingin' Stampede." They'll find their newest CD "Tall Tales" even hotter.

Violinist Elena Fremerman grew up playing classical violin, but listeners would never guess that by the fiddlin' she does on "Joe Bob Rag," "Wildcat" and "Draggin' the Bow."

"Some people call it retro. What I call it is hot jazz and western swing," said Fremerman.

man. "I like it because it's happy music. It's dance music, so anyone can go and participate. It's not antiquated or a museum piece. It has to do with Americana heritage. The music from the '20s and '30s is everybody's heritage."

Fremmerman will be joined on stage by Whit Smith, guitar and vocals, and upright bass player Matt Weiner, formerly of The Flying Neutrinos.

Tradition at The Ark

The Ark celebrates its 35th anniversary in 2000. Founded as a coffee house by four churches, this Ann Arbor institution began by showcasing local bands playing traditional folk and grassroots music. Today, musicians ranging from Leon Redbone to the RFD Boys take to the stage with a wide array of musical styles.

"With The Ark being open six nights a week, you don't present one kind of music and make money," said Siglin. "A lot of the musicians are just breaking in, and on these nights there might be only 35 to 40 people. So we present everything but straight-ahead rock. The money we make on the folk festival allows us to continue to do that."

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"national treasure" and Watroba calls "the most important club in his life."

"It's the perfect event for WDET," said Watroba. "The lineup reflects the kind of stuff we play. It's brilliantly booked." The music is planned to attract folk fans young and old, and may even win over some new fans.

Watroba, the father of four, uses his music as a teaching tool. "We talk about the history of music in my class. I use music to teach the humanities." One of his goals in the classroom is to help students open their minds

to all styles of music and art.

It's that same mindset that serves him well on the air. Folk music, particularly, appeals to Watroba because it touches people's emotions. "It's real subjects, real people and real situations," he said.

Songs people sang

Jones loves the immediacy that folk music and traditional blues music have to offer. "You don't need to round up a band in order to play," said Jones. "Early traditional blues or black folk music came from people creat-

ing a story and sharing it with others. As a result of that, the songs also represent in pure form what people had on their minds."

He compared the direct quality found in folk and blues and more-polished music with the difference between drawing and painting. "A painting is a finished product. It's polished. A drawing sort of has these lines that show where the artist was going."

Watroba also believes in keeping the folk tradition alive. "It's a shared community event. I

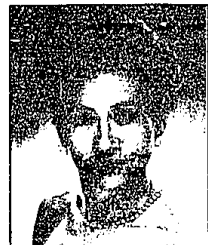
hope when someone hears one of my (live) shows, they feel like their part of it."

Watroba and Jones invite listeners to be part of the festival experience. "Support the arts and have a great time," said Jones. "There's nothing like live music."

Both can be heard on 101.9 WDET-FM. Robert Jones hosts "Blues from the Lowlands" 10 a.m. to noon. Matt Watroba hosts "Folks Like Us," noon to 3 p.m. Saturday.

Cimarelli never forgot singing the work for the first time with the Windsor Symphony. "It's difficult because of the range, besides which you're singing such a large orchestra work," she said.

The Livonia Symphony Orchestra continues its season 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 13 with "A Valentine's Concert" at the Livonia Civic Center Library Auditorium featuring the 12-member LSO Ensemble Group.



Soloist: *Maria Cimorelli sings the soprano role for "Ode to Joy."*

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