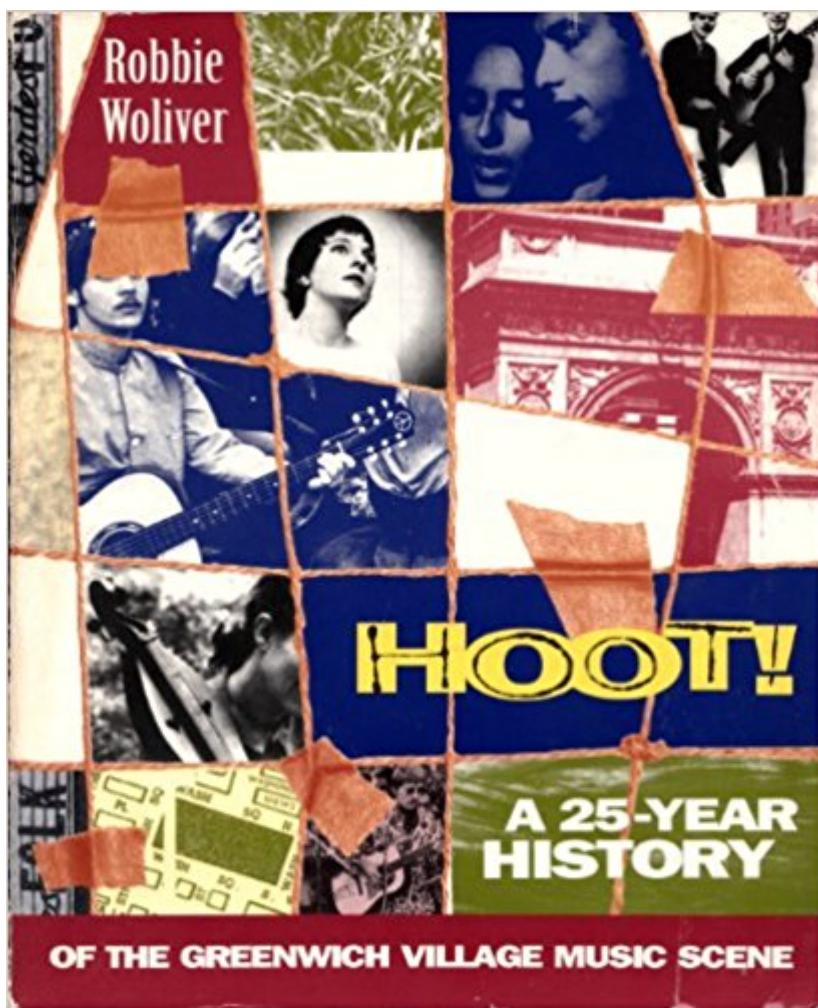


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# Hoot!: A Twenty-Five Year History Of The Greenwich Village Music Scene



## **Synopsis**

The folk scene of the 50s and 60s changed the way popular music is listened to today. The preeminent music showcase of the genre was Folk City in Greenwich Village, whose stage has featured performers as diverse as Dylan and Suzanne Vega. Woliver, owner of a Village music club, has collected an oral history of the New York music scene sure to delight music lovers of all ages. Photos.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

While New York City has long served as a cultural capital, the pocket of twisted, small streets known as Greenwich Village pulses with a unique excitement because there, especially for an unknown musician or singer, it seems anything can happen. The blossoming of folk music, as well as jazz and blues, from the late '50s to the mid-'80s is the topic of Robbie Woliver's *Hoot!*, billed as a paperback tie-in to the upcoming eponymous theatrical production. Woliver is part-owner of the book's central character, Gerdes Folk City, a nightclub through which the likes of Bob Dylan, John Lee Hooker and Peter, Paul and Mary passed, entering as young hopefuls and leaving to soon become commercial legends. Woliver approaches this worthy topic by letting his subjects use their own words to describe their experiences trying to make it as musicians in New York. But he muddles the telling by not knowing how to direct it. The subjects, many of whom will be known only to folk aficionados, often talk over each other, making the same comments about the same topic, time period or theory at hand and this doubling borders on monotonous. The chapter devoted to the

rise of Bob Dylan is well handled and the photos are wonderful and rare. *Hoot!* might appeal to those who were a part of this culture in this era or to students of modern music history, but a novice or general-interest reader finds himself bogged down in poorly edited interviews, wondering where the conversations will end. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

*Hoot!* is an oral history of New York City's musical greenhouse: the small clubs of Greenwich Village. Journalist and club owner Woliver has assembled the recollections of 160 Villagers--mostly musicians--into a series of 11 verbal mosaics. The first portrays the oil-and-water mix of beats and folkies in the late 1950s; the last, the Village's gasping resuscitation in the early 1980s. *Hoot!*'s impressionistic style is at once its charm and its weakness. Cognoscenti will surely find the newly gathered comments exciting, but with limited accompanying narrative, these same comments may leave the uninitiated lost and confused. Reminiscences sometimes bounce from subject to subject. More regrettably, Woliver devotes much space to such oft-biographed artists as Bob Dylan, at the expense of seminal but rarely sung Village heroes like Fred Neil and Tim Hardin. Despite these problems, however, *Hoot!*'s ambition and singularity recommend it to those collections emphasizing contemporary folk music and 20th-century American pop culture.- Bill Piekarski, Southwestern Coll . Lib ., Chula Vista, Cal. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Robbie Woliver's *Hoot!* is a superb overview of the Greenwich Village folk scene, rich with reminiscences by many performers and other people who were key players in the scene. It should be noted, however, that *Hoot!* is a retitled reissue of Woliver's book *Bringing It All Back Home*. If you've read *Bringing It All Back Home* and are expecting *Hoot!* to be a different book by the same author, it isn't. Except for the cover and title, the books are identical, page for page.

I've been doing research on the early years of the Folk Music Revival in Greenwich Village. After reading a number of books and articles it was wonderful to get my hands on a copy of Robbie Woliver's '*Hoot!*' that has been out of print for twenty years. Thanks for making it available online, and a special thanks to Woliver for capturing all these memories. The first 150 pages are stuffed with interviews and first-hand accounts by the people who were there in the early 60s. Combined with my other readings, their words and observations just came alive. *Hoot!* goes on to 1985 and the 25th anniversary of Gerde's Folk City, but my focus was only on the early years.

This well thought out and skillfully written assessment/history of the Village during the folk years and

beyond covers its material in a very readable fashion. Read in addition to Von Schmidt's 'Baby, Let Me Follow You Down: The Illustrated Story of the Cambridge Folk Years', you'll have the meat and potatoes of went down on the East Coast during the folk boom of the early sixties. Add another volume, 'Positively 4th Street : The Lives and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Farina, and Richard Farina', and you'll get savory gravy as well. While not quite as personable as Von Schmidt's book, it catches the flavor of its subject very convincingly.

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