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“Green Pop:” A History of the U.S. Environmental Movement through Song.

Protest songs are a well-documented aspect of many social movements in the United States of America. From “We Shall Overcome” to “Blowin’ in the Wind,” popular music has accompanied, mobilized and perhaps, at times, even driven movements such as civil rights and the peace movement. The American environmentalism movement capitalized on many of the strategies and ideology of both the peace and civil rights movements of the 1950s. Yet, despite the plethora of “green” songs and albums from the 1960s onwards – from Pete Seeger’s album, *God Bless the Grass*, in 1966, to Michael Jackson’s “Earth Song” in the 1990s, to the Live Earth concerts in 2007, the intersection between green music and green movements in the United States has been largely overlooked.

From the first “green” song, “Woodman, Spare that Tree!” (1830), popular music has had an important role in various environmental movements in the U.S.A. How has “green pop” reflected changes in the American attitudes (and policies) towards the environment? Has a “green pop” song actually spurred a major policy change or environmental movement? How closely has “green pop” worked with other aspects of the popular culture environmental movement – public service announcements, films, etc.? This dissertation will chronologically follow the interaction between environmentalism and music in the USA, focusing on major songs and movements and how they have worked together.