

RIP, Richie Havens

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/23/arts/music/richie-havens-guitarist-and-singer-dies-at-72.html?hpw>

One of the great rock and roll films is “Woodstock,” the 1970 documentary that grew from the 1969 event. Another great movie is about the event, “Taking Woodstock,” the Ang Lee film made in 2009, about how the event took over the town of Bethel, in fictional fashion. Its greatest moment is when the lead character is walking toward the stage, still some distance away, and you hear the strumming in the distance of Richie Havens—who inadvertently became the opening act, simply because he arrived first. (He was to have gone on several hours later.) That original strumming on “Minstrel From Gault” is instantly-recognizable to anyone who knows his music or that of the times, even though it was not Havens’ actual music in the 2009 film. (Tina has always hated it that when a song comes on the radio, I can identify it almost immediately by the opening riff.) “Here Comes the Sun” is my favorite George Harrison song, and while it has been covered many times, Havens’ cover is the very best.

He passed yesterday at the age of 72, and his strumming and voice will be missed. I have been listening to his *Greatest Hits* cd all afternoon, and each time I love his music more. One more great one leaves us.

While we are on the subject of Woodstock guitarists passing, I note the death last month of Ten Years After’s Alvin Lee:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/arts/music/alvin-lee-guitarist-of-ten-years-after-dies-at-68.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/arts/music/alvin-lee-guitarist-of-ten-years-after-dies-at-68.html?_r=0). Their performance of “I’m Going Home,” is one of the “Woodstock” movie’s many wonderful songs.

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