

## Chapter 5

### SONGS FOR IMMIGRANTS

“Music is a traveler, crossing our world, meeting so many people, bridging the seas.” So said The Moody Blues in their hit song *I'm Just a Singer (in a Rock and Roll Band)*. Rock and roll singers often are heard around the world and sell millions of albums in many countries. Their songs rarely contain messages like “My country's better than yours, so stay out” but instead sometimes contain nice phrases that a variety of people will want to hear.

Immigration songs are not as numerous as love songs, but some of the world's most famous musicians have directly expressed their affection for the immigrant and not for the governments who stop immigrants. Those stopped may want to shout or sing “let me in, immigration man” along with Crosby and Nash in their 1972 song *Immigration Man*. Refugees should plan ahead and bring along loud speakers with which to blast the song *Gimme Shelter* by the Rolling Stones into the nation of their choice.

Some people can't wait to immigrate. Those who move without a permit may find, like the group Genesis in their song *Illegal Alien*, that “it's no fun being an illegal alien.” Other people can't wait to get away from it all with a ticket to *Katmandu* or to *Kashmir* or *Two Tickets to Paradise*. A few people would rather be *Walking on the Moon* than on the earth.

Some migration songs tell sad stories. An immigrant may find himself a *Long, Long*

*Way From Home* and never manage to settle down to find out what a good wife someone like *Brandy* would be. *Wooden Ships* by Crosby, Stills, and Nash, tells about bad things that can happen when ships sail and people mix, but asks anyway that immigration be free and easy.

“Maybe I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one” said John Lennon in his song *Imagine* describing a world shared by peaceful people with no more need for country borders. The music video for this song shows his own example of a British man with a Japanese wife living in America. Entry into the United States was difficult for Lennon even as one of the most famous people in the world (see Editorials for Immigrants). His life as an immigrant was cut short in 1980 by a violent native. Lennon's dream lives because he shared it with so many others.

Immigration songs are popular even with some politicians, as Michael Dukakis proved in 1988 by selecting *America* by Neil Diamond as the theme song for his presidential campaign.

Songs that support the title and idea of this book are listed on the following pages. Only songs played on local radio stations were chosen, so all are fairly popular. In fact, 12 of these 33 immigration songs were listed among the top 500 rock and roll songs of all time according to WCXR radio in Washington, DC.

## The Right to Migrate

The earliest song is a direct attack on U.S. immigration policy by Arlo Guthrie in 1961. Most songs are from the 1970's and 1980's and a few may be older than shown because the year was obtained from a "live" or "greatest hits" album rather than the earliest release.

The songs listed fit onto two cassettes and have a total playing time of about two hours. Hopefully soon such cassettes or compact discs (CDs) will be available for purchase for about \$20 at a music store near you. The albums containing these songs are available for a total of \$300. The listed songs can then be copied onto a blank cassette or CD. After listening just a few times, you, too, might become a concerned, patriotic citizen of the world like the musicians who create and sell such songs.

To save money, you may want to buy only the songs or albums that match your musical tastes. The softer songs include *Bridge Over Troubled Water, America* (Simon and Garfunkel), *Mexico*, and *Imagine*. The harder songs include *Immigrant Song, Kashmir, Love Walks In*, and *Gimmie Shelter*. Local radio stations may play these songs for free if you call in a request. Then, lots of other people will enjoy the songs too.

*Message in a Bottle* by The Police is the first song listed. Its title and story could be metaphors for this book and the search for others who believe in a right to migrate. A man hopelessly alone on an island puts his message for help into a bottle and throws it into the sea. Nothing happens and he feels lonelier until finally a hundred billion bottles wash onto the shore, sent by other lonely castaways also hoping for help.

Some writers of the listed songs may not have wanted to argue for open immigration; their words just happen to say that we should all be free to move. The last song, *I'd Love to*

*Change the World*, doesn't really mention immigration but provides a nice conclusion and some great guitar solos.

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**Table 6. Songs for Immigrants**

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**Side One**

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<b>Song / Group</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Key Words from the Song</b>
1 <i>Message in a Bottle</i> The Police	1979	I'm sending out an S.O.S. to the world Hundred billion castaways looking for a home
2 <i>America</i> Simon and Garfunkel	1972	I've come to look for America They've all come to look for America
3 <i>Border Song</i> Elton John	1974	Holy Moses, I have been removed Holy Moses, let us live in peace
4 <i>Mexico</i> James Taylor	1977	Oh, Mexico. I've never really been, but I'd sure like to go. I forgot to go home, I guess I'll have to go now
5 <i>Immigration Man</i> Crosby and Nash	1972	Let me in, immigration man Let me in, irritation man
6 <i>On the Turning Away</i> Pink Floyd	1988	Just a world that we all must share. Is it only a dream that there will be no more turning away?
7 <i>Chicago/Change the World</i> Graham Nash	1988	We can change the world, rearrange the world. Rules and regulations, who needs them? Open up the door
8 <i>I'm Just a Singer</i> Moody Blues	1972	I'm just a wandering on the face of this earth Meeting so many people who are trying to be free
9 <i>Gimmie Shelter</i> Rolling Stones	1969	If I don't get some shelter I'm gonna fade away War ... is just a shot away, love ... is just a kiss away
10 <i>Love Walks In</i> Van Halen	1986	Some kind of alien waits for an opening, then... comes walking in
11 <i>Goin Mobile</i> The Who	1971	Keep me moving. Watch the police and the tax man miss me. The world's my home when I'm mobile.

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## The Right to Migrate

**Table 6. Songs for Immigrants (cont.)**

Side Two			
_____	Song / Group _____	Year _____	Key Words from the Song _____
12	<i>Illegal Alien</i> Genesis	1983	Over the border, the promised land, everything is easy I don't trust anyone, it's no fun being an illegal alien
13	<i>Imagine</i> John Lennon	1975	Imagine there's no country, imagine all the people living life in peace, sharing all the world
14	<i>Come Sail Away</i> STYX	1977	I'm sailing away, because I've got to be free We'll search for tomorrow on every shore
15	<i>Breakfast in America</i> SuperTramp	1979	Take a gamble, cross the water. I'm hoping it's going to come true, but there's not a lot I can do
16	<i>Bridge Over Troubled Water</i> Simon and Garfunkel	1970	I'm on your side, like a bridge over troubled water I'm sailing right behind, like a bridge over troubled water
17	<i>America</i> Neil Diamond	1981	On boats and on planes, they come into America Never looking back, they come into America today
18	<i>Proper Stranger</i> The Guess Who	1969	Take my hand and show me where to go I'm a proper stranger, all alone with a million others
19	<i>Share the Land</i> The Guess Who	1970	I'll shake your hand, I'll share the land that they'll be giving away when we all live together
20	<i>Deportees</i> Arlo Guthrie	1961	They chase you like outlaws, like rustlers, and thieves And all they will call you will be deportees
21	<i>Long, Long Way from Home</i> Foreigner	1977	I hope we'll be here when they're thru with us. Millions of faces, still I'm alone. I'm a long, long way from home
22	<i>Wooden Ships</i> Crosby, Stills, and Nash	1988	If you smile at me, I'll understand, that's the same language everywhere. People on the shore let us be free

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**Table 6. Songs for Immigrants (cont.)**

Side Three			
_____	Song / Group _____	Year ____	Key Words from the Song _____
23	<i>Two Tickets to Paradise</i> Eddie Money	1977	I'm gonna take you on a trip so far from here. Pack your bags. I've got two tickets to paradise.
24	<i>From Silver Lake</i> Jackson Brown	1972	She'll find him waiting for his boat in some city far away. He wanted just to be on his way across the sea.
25	<i>Rock Me on the Water</i> Jackson Brown	1972	The road is filled with homeless souls. I'm gonna leave you here and get down to the sea. The wind is with me.
26	<i>Love Train</i> O Jays	1972	People all over the world join hands, get on board, start a love train. The next stop will be ...
27	<i>Brandy</i> Looking Glass	1972	Lonely sailors talk about their homes. He couldn't stay, no harbor was his home. My life, love, and lady is the sea.
28	<i>Goin to California</i> Led Zeppelin		Made up my mind to make a new start, I'm going to California. I took my chances on a big jet plane.
29	<i>Immigrant Song</i> Led Zeppelin	1970	We'll drive our ships to new land Peace and trust can win the day
30	<i>Kashmir</i> Led Zeppelin	1975	I am a traveler of both time and space. I will return again. We'll move into Kashmir. Let me take you there.
31	<i>Katmandu</i> Bob Seger	1975	I want to go somewhere where nobody knows my name. I'll miss the USA but nobody loves me here anyway.
32	<i>Walking on the Moon</i> The Police	1979	We could walk forever walking on the moon. We could be together walking on the moon.
33	<i>I'd Love to Change the World</i> Ten Years After	1971	I'd love to change the world, but I don't know what to do, so I leave it up to you.

## **The Right to Migrate**