

Ochs, Phil (1940-1976) Encyclopedia Article

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A contemporary of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, Phil Ochs achieved modest success as a singer/songwriter during the mid-1960s. After receiving a standing ovation at the Newport Folk Festival in 1963, he was signed by Elektra Records. A fervent activist who yearned for stardom, Ochs gained recognition for his topical songs about subjects such as civil rights and the Vietnam War. As a protest singer in the era of the urban folk revival, he was often overshadowed by Dylan. In the late 1960s, his interest in politics remained strong even as his compositions became more personal. Bothered by political events and his inability to write commercially successful songs, Ochs suffered from severe depression in the last years of his life. His career essentially ended in the early 1970s, and six months after his final performance in 1975, Ochs committed suicide by hanging himself.

Further Reading:

Eliot, Marc. *Phil Ochs: Death of a Rebel*. New York, Franklin Watts, 1989.

Schumacher, Michael, and Matthew A. Schumacher. *There But for Fortune: The Life of Phil Ochs*. New York, Hyperion, 1996.