

Odetta at Carnegie Hall (1960)

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1. *"If I Had a Hammer"* (Pete Seeger, Lee Hays) 2. *"Red Clay Country"* 3. *"When I Was a Young Girl"* 4. *"Gallows Pole"* (Traditional) 5. *"God's A-Gonna Cut You Down"* 6. *"John Riley"* 7. *"John Henry"* (Traditional) 8. *"Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho"* (Traditional) 9. *"All The Pretty Little Horses"* 10. *"Prettiest Train"* 11. *"Meeting at the Building"* 12. *"No More Auction Block"* 13. *"Hold On"* 14. *"Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child"* (Traditional) 15. *"Ain't No Grave Can Hold My Body Down"* Personnel Odetta – vocals, guitar Bill Lee – bass

This is a good, straightforward recording of Odetta's April 8, 1960, Carnegie Hall concert, which featured support from Bill Lee on string bass. (Incidentally, Lee -- father of Spike Lee -- is surely one of the unheralded heroes of the 1960s folk revival, contributing session work to many recordings and helping to expand the parameters of folk's sound from basic solo acoustic guitar accompaniment.) She's joined on the last four numbers by the Choir of the Church of the Master. While it's not certain that Odetta's versions of "If I Had a Hammer," "John Riley," "John Henry," and "No More Auction Block" (all done here) were the most influential of the folk revival, certainly she was an important popularizer of these and similar songs. The album is also available in its entirety, paired with a live recording at New York's Town Hall from the same era, on Vanguard's double-LP *Essential Odetta*, although the CD version of that release omits a few songs from each disc. --- Richie Unterberger, Rovi

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