

In Celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day 2020  
Annotated Playlist since 1970 (with YouTube links) by Jim Couture, MA, MT-BC

These are Earth Day songs of a different kind, not the usual environmental destruction songs – what humans have done to spoil our planet – but rather lyrics representing the shift in thought & practice since the first Earth Day that considers natural wonders as diverse, interdependent subjects rather than isolated objects. Included are Pop, Show, Folk and Religious genres.

Easy on the Ears

Bound By The Beauty, Jane Siberry 1989

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ly8QB0bDsI>

This is one of the most eloquently inspiring songs addressing our web of relationships on Earth in a profound and poetic way. We are integrated by sunsets, rivers, music and beauty.

Colors Of The Wind, Alan Menken & Stephen Schwartz 1995

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9MvdMgKvpU>

This Oscar-winning song is one of the best for reminding us of the importance of what our indigenous cultures are able to contribute to the understanding of a cosmology that is intimately bound with Earth, a meaningful universe and the interconnectedness of all things.

Season Suite, John Denver, Mike Taylor & Dick Kniss 1972

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfR1FNUe7QI>

This is a grand collection of songs that adds up to an overview of the cycle of seasons and our relationship with them on many levels. We become aware of the communion of subjects around us and the reflection of the universe in us. Other notable selections from John Denver are included at the end of this list.

On This Lovely Day, Donovan Leitch 1972

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glXcaD-Zz7M>

Ecotheologian Thomas Berry stated, “Whatever preserves and enhances this meadow in the natural cycles of its transformation is good; whatever opposes this meadow or negates it is not good.” It is in the meadow where all is balanced in right relationship that peace is found, and once found wants to be shared.

Big Beautiful Planet, Raffi Cavoukian 1982

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z23KEHEt0dE>

In this song Earth is identified as our home kept bright and warm by a gift from a star - the sun - where nature can help us when we feel its power - its spirit - in our lives.

The Garden Song, David Mallet 1975

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m0LewjkO4s>

A song reminding us of our connection to the land and the relationship between soil, seeds, water, sun, cultivation and food. By caring for Mother Earth we ensure that we will be healthy and strong.

Sky Dances, Roy Brown & Jimmie Durham 1987

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWss-sB-tto>

Written by a Cherokee poet this song includes wonderful images about our Earth home and the life giving elements all around us, specifically rain, storms and the often-violent weather processes that can nurture life.

All You Works Of God, Marty Haugen 1989

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEezurdfzak>

A great song focusing on the subjectivity or special interior dimension of all things.

The Blue Green Hills Of Earth, Kim Oler 1981

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fN7iPUVJfqI>

This song is part of composer Paul Winter's "Missa Gaia" - a passionate encomium to planet Earth, our place in the universe. (I like to add the magnificent rivers of the Olympic Mountain bioregion to the lyric: the Sol Duc and the Elwha, the Hoh and Dungeness, "in our joy we sing returning home" to our holy wilderness.)

Have You Seen Jesus, My Lord? John Fischer 1970

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvhpYIH3ubE>

The lyrics eliminate the perceived boundary between our natural world and the spiritual and show us spirit in nature and nature in spirit. The twentieth century priest-mystic Teilhard de Chardin defined all of Earth and the cosmos as one glorious sacrament and theologian Matthew Fox envisions a Cosmic Christ alive in and throughout our universe. For the believer you have only to open your eyes and look; "he's here in plain view."

Song At The Center, Marty Haugen 1993

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zt-cHRRTzGg>

This song alludes to indigenous wisdom traditions that honor Earth as our mother who gives of herself so her children may live. Drawing from creation spirituality we are shown a vision of the world where all is sacred and connected.

This Is My Father's World, Maltbe Babcock 1901 (1972 Earth Day verse)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3ZVL0LMRMw>

This traditional hymn shows us that the world we inhabit is filled with beautiful wonders and that God, in the historical image of Father, shines through all of them making everything holy. The sanctity of all things, especially living things, is what is driving the current discourse of caring for Earth in the area of religion and ecology. The knowledge that humans are contributing to the poisoning of Earth compelled the author's granddaughter, Mary Babcock Crawford, to add a new lyric: "This is my Father's world, oh, let us not forget that though the wrong is great and strong, God is our Father yet. He trusts us with his world, to keep it clean and fair, all earth and trees, all skies and seas, all creatures everywhere."

### A Bit on the Edge

Flesh And Blood, Johnny Cash 1970

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cy0LBSTEPBI>

We are flesh and blood. Earth is flesh and blood. The universe is flesh and blood. This song affirms the fact that we are woven into nature that is all around us. We procreate, experience cycles, and renew ourselves with water and food grown by the sun. We are subject to changes in weather and replenish the soil through entropy. We are reminded that we need the whole package, that all the connections are important for a full life, and that love is a seed to be sown.

Jungle, Jeff Lynne & Electric Light Orchestra 1977

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKw6BZUZts>

Here's a wonderful song with great rhythm and instrumentation aimed at illuminating a moonlight gathering of animals who invite a human to join them in singing about our planet sailing around the sun and wishing "joy to everyone that rides along!"

Sleep Out Under The Stars, Spooner 1978

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvWk1u-ri90>

This is a perfect song for use in Ecotherapy. It is a powerful reminder of the simplicity with which we can recover our sense of self by spending time out in raw nature. "A people who climb the ridges and sleep under the stars in high mountain meadows, who enter the forest and scale peaks, who explore glaciers and walk ridges buried deep in snow - these people will give their country some of the indomitable spirit of the mountains." -William O. Douglass.

Womb, Toni Childs 1994

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CI0pEErBrnw>

A rare and unusual song that reminds us that we are animals, children of the universe, and very special creatures born of flesh and blood, living organisms involved in a life process that took eons to evolve. As with all living things, Earth is our mother and father. In this way everything is related. All things are a part of the same family.

Down To Earth, Peter Gabriel & Thomas Newman 2008

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWOLkCb5zo8>

Though this Grammy-award winner is set on the destroyed planet Earth of the future, it invites us to reevaluate the beauty of the world around us today that can inspire a quality of life that integrates and sustains rather than excludes and exploits.

The Beauty Of Days Gone By, Van Morrison 2002

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybsBTnZJd7w>

Images, like those in this song, can relax us, calm our breathing, and remind us of our connection with Earth and our inner healing power. The beauty of our experiences can sustain us through difficult times.

Other notable songs from John Denver

Calypso 1975

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuO5PCgaaTM>

Jacques Cousteau and the other pioneer explorers of the deep sea revealed what science can teach us about spirituality by showing us the marvels they discovered and telling stories that connected us to our environment, other creatures and to our cosmos.

To The Wild Country 1977

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7duBXExqqX0>

This song reminds us that we are home, we are a part of Earth and that Earth is primary, we are derivative. It is also a warning that to the extent we destroy our wild places we also destroy our spirit because our spirit is wild, too.

Children Of The Universe, Earth Day 1982

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ke\\_kYJ7qBb8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ke_kYJ7qBb8)

In this song we see the communion of life and the great cosmic diversity so prevalent in the universe.

The Flower That Shattered The Stone, John Jarvis and Joe Henry 1990

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TV0j6vGdl6I>

Love as an aspect of nature in the universe is bound up in the beauty of our Mother and Father Earth that surrounds us, connected, whole and strong.

If you are looking for a few more . . .

A Bit Of Earth, Marsha Norman & Lucy Simon 1991

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMfWrojQi58>

A little girl learns that her connection to the earth helps her, her sickly cousin and uncle to heal and bond as a family. This is the idea behind Ecotherapy.

Home Grown Tomatoes, Guy Clark 1983

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tj4wlKMqEE>

Yes, indeed, what would life be without our favorite fresh local fruits and vegetables? Having juicy, flavorful, varied and delicious edibles grown in our own bioregion and ripened in the sun is best and adds to the quality of our lives.

Nothing But Flowers, David Byrne 1988

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2twY8YQYDBE>

Funny and serious at the same time this song poses a compelling question: What if the new version of our sustainable society drives us crazy? Any alternatives need to be attractive and fulfilling for real change to be embraced.

God Of All Creation, David Haas 1987

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRDAGNXgllg>

This song calls on God to help us live in a way that embodies the perceived positive qualities of natural phenomena. By incorporating nature more fully in our lives we are better able to be present to each other, to build the "city of peace."