

Everybody Wins
When
Everybody Sings

Why we must sing better songs

A Manifesto

By Justin Hockey

Everybody Wins When Everybody Sings

I believe we must sing better songs,
because everybody wins when everybody sings.

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A Manifesto

Part I

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I believe everybody wins when everybody sings, so we must sing better songs. Great songs combine lyric and melody in a potent, memorable package. Sung together with others, they have the potential to create an unforgettable experience for all involved. Singing together creates bonds, cements memory, and encodes meaning. Putting words and music to voice is a powerful experience. When people sing together, they do so to celebrate, to commemorate, to create, and to declare - this we believe, this we are, and this we will be.

Life itself is a song, and singing better songs is more than melody, and longer lasting than lyrics - it's a physical, social, emotional, and organizational phenomenon that impacts people, tribes, cultures, and generations. More than mere music, it is about making things better by making better things.

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Dissonance

noun

1. lack of harmony among musical notes
2. a tension or clash resulting from the combination of two disharmonious or unsuitable elements

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Dissonance, it seems, is everywhere. From warring ideas and ideologies, to clashing concepts and expectations. Whether musical or mundane, cognitive or creative, dissonance is uncomfortable, confronting, and difficult.

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I believe dissonance is resolved and reformed by creating, cultivating and curating consonance. How? By singing better songs. Literally - and metaphorically.

A good song makes sense. Every note and every word fits in an inevitable flow. Likewise, a well lived life makes sense, especially in hindsight. A good book, a good movie, a good speech, a good conversation - each is shaped, crafted, and moulded into something of value, meaning, consequence, and import. Beauty, even.

A good song is a great idea in a nice vehicle. Like a message in a bottle. A set of ideas presented in an effective container of rhythm, melody, harmony, and lyrics.

Singing is the purest embodiment of sound and symbol, music and lyrics. Singing together with each other is a sure way to cement bonds, reinforce beliefs, and develop rapport.

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Why must we sing?

We must sing because we have a song.

With a song we make our voices heard.

With a song we make our stories known.

We sing with and for each other.

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Songs shape hearts - and hearts shape lives.

The mould that is cast by lyric and verse, by melody and structure, also has the power to seep into the consciousness - the mind, heart, soul, and yes, body of the listener.

Life itself is a song...

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The ancients understood the solemn, even awesome power of music.

Ancient philosophers knew that music had the power to shape thoughts and feelings across groups, tribes, and even whole societies.

When we sing, we activate the powers of breath, of respiration; of thought, of feeling; of imagination, of awareness, perception... in short, singing calls upon all the faculties of mind and body.

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When we sing together we activate all these and more - the power of the group to reinforce and bind, to call upon and cast asunder, to illuminate or to tear down - all the power attributable to a group, is amplified in song.

Of course, as with any group, there can be means for evil ends - one need only look to the past to see the power of the mob in times of war and oppression in those nations afflicted by leaders focused on dominating for nefarious ends.

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A song that is sung incorporates the power of language, the agency of meaning, direct crystallized thought with the sweet string of melody, the cadence and layering of rhythm, and concordant web of harmony.

Incorporated songs are literally thus: songs that are embodied as we sing; filling our lungs with air, our heads with thoughts, and our voices with song.

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Thank you for reading this manifesto.

To find out more, and to sign up for Part II, please visit
www.justinhockey.net/sing

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About the author

Justin is a music teacher, father, and husband. He loves learning and teaching, having done so professionally for over 12 years across two continents and three countries. He believes everyone can sing and that we are better when we sing together, given the right songs. He wants everyone to sing better songs.

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