

Music In Our Souls

Have you ever found yourself tapping your feet to a pulsing beat as it played on your iPod, Kindle, Pandora, or just simply on the radio?

Then you have music in your soul.

Have you ever felt a thrill, maybe even a chill, when the harmony blend was just right?

Then you have music in your soul.

Have you ever been brought to tears when the words and melody you hear express perfectly what you felt in your heart?

Then you have music in your soul.

Have you ever been comforted by the gentle nudge of notes that called your name and soothed your pain?

Then you have music in your soul.

We all have music in our souls,
Every child, man, and woman
It's a gift from up above
It's the thing that makes us human

So go ahead and clap your hands
Pluck a note, or beat a rhythm
Go ahead and blow that trumpet
Sing a song -- don't keep it hidden!

We got music in our souls!
It's that thing that gives us drive
It makes us glad to come together
It makes us glad to be alive.

Consider Yourself

From the English magazine Belgaravia, 1866.

We who go forth of nights and see without the slightest discomposure our sister and our wife seized on by a strange man and subjected to violent embraces and canterings – the only apparent excuse for such treatment being that it is done to the

sound of music –can only scarcely realize the horror which greeted the introduction of this wicked dance.”

The wicked dance in question? The Waltz. Tame, as it may seem to our standards today it was positively scandalous when compared to the traditional minuet that kept gloved partners at arms length. The waltz was the first dance where the couple moved together in a closed position – with the man’s hand around the waist of the lady. My, scandalous indeed!

Religious leaders regarded it as a vulgar and sinful affront to the soul, and warned parents against exposing their daughters to so fatal a contagion.

But it didn’t matter. The Waltz was simply too fun to remain condemned for long, especially when Queen Victoria herself declare she had a special love for it.

Tonight the band will play “The Emperor Waltz” by Johann Strauss. Now, should you find the impulse to seize your partner and twirl around the room, well -- perhaps a little scandal is good for the soul after all.

The Emperor Waltz

I’ve known rivers:

I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I’ve known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Langston Hughes

Peace like a River

John Newton’s mother was a devoutly religious woman who hoped her son would become a clergyman. Unfortunately her early death left the young John mostly unsupervised and he developed impulsive, irreverent, and even scurrilous habits.

Following in his father's footsteps he began a seagoing career where he quickly gained a reputation for, among other things, creating obscene poems and songs. He was often admonished by the Captain for exceeding the limits of verbal debauchery.

One night, while serving aboard the Greyhound a violent storm seized the ship, washing overboard a crew member who had been standing where Newton was just moments before. To avert capsizing the crew fought furiously to empty water from the ship's hull. Newton tied himself to the ship's pump to keep from being swept into sea. After battling the storm for hours Newton said to the Captain "If this will not do, then Lord have mercy on us!"

Two weeks later the Greyhound with its battered and starving crew limped into port. John's memory of what he uttered in that desperate moment haunted him. He began to ask if he was worthy of God's Mercy, or if he was in any way redeemable. In time his mother's hope came to pass. John became a clergyman, but was unlike any other of his time. Where others preached as if they had always lived exemplary and sinless lives, John was passionate and honest about his own imperfect journey. And if he was a little unpolished his parishioners loved him all the more for it.

His hymn "Amazing Grace" reflects the profound and personal redemption he felt and his absolute confidence that any soul can be delivered from despair through the mercy of God.

Amazing Grace

If music heals the soul, then surely Broadway is one of America's leading Doctors.

First emerging in the mid 19th century, the district that became known as Broadway really hit its stride in the beginning of the 20th century when electricity lit up every theatre, cornice, nook and cranny earning it the nickname the Great White Way.

Over the years Broadway has made us sing, made us think, made us laugh, and when I went to see Les Mis I bawled like a little baby. What could be more healing than that?

Tonight, I'm happy to tell you, the doctor is in.

Opening Night on Broadway

One

In spite of what you may think from their titles, "The Lullaby of Broadway" and "42nd Street" are not originally from Broadway Musicals. In fact, they hail from the other entertainment capital clear on the opposite coast – Hollywood.

“The Lullaby of Broadway” is from the movie “Gold Digger” and won the 1936 Academy Award for Best Original Song. It starred a very young Gloria Stewart. You might know her as Rose from a little movie called “Titanic”.

42nd Street premiered in 1933 and was among the nominations by the Academy for best picture of the year.

Both of these popular films from the Golden Era of Hollywood feature an elaborate Busby Berkely production number with a cast of thousands tap dancing across the screen. I don't know if our lovely ladies will be tapping for us tonight, or at least not where we may see it? Well I'm sure we'll enjoy listening to them all the same.

The Lullaby of Broadway

An important element of Broadway during the early 20th century was Vaudeville. Typically a Vaudeville show was made up of a series of separate, unrelated acts that featured everything from singers, to magicians, to trained animals. A particularly beloved Vaudeville comedy sketch was called “The Arkansas Traveler” which was based on the popular folk song of the same name.

If you've ever sung “I got myself a baby bumble bee”, then you already know this tune. But what you may not know are the original lyrics that go something like this;

Far and far away down in Arkansas,
There lived a squatter with a stubborn jaw.
And when the rain came down on the cabin floor,
The squatter only fiddled all the more.

Why don't you mend your roof? said a traveler bold.
How can I mend my cabin when the rain is wet and cold?
Squatter pick a sunny morning when the air is dry and nice,
Patch up your cabin, now that's my advice.

The squatter shook his hoary head,
Then answered with a stubborn air,
Silly traveler, cabins never leak a drop
When days are bright and fair

Travelin' Music

The music of rivers speaks to the soul. Who can stand by and listen to its cadence and not be moved, not feel somehow God is near. No wonder, since John the Baptist first called out from the River Jordan's stony bed, have Christians gathered by the river, to pray, to worship, to be baptized, to sing out their souls in praise to God.

Gather by the River

Deep River

“What is a soul? It’s like electricity – we don’t really know what it is, but it’s a force that can light a room.”

Nobody could light up a room like the father of soul music himself – Ray Charles. While legendary crooners such as Nat King Cole, or Bing Crosby were merely masters of words his extraordinary variety of slurs, glides, turns, shrieks, wails and hollers made him the master of sound itself. It was as if mere words alone could not adequately express the music that was in his soul, he had to cry out to you...

Frank Sinatra called him “the only true genius in show business.”

Tonight this blend of his most unforgettable hits are sure to electrify your soul.

The Genius of Ray Charles

Folk music is the music of people who had no money for food let alone music lessons, yet still had an irrepressible need to voice their joy and sorrow through song. Whether the anguish of earthly suffering or the hopeful joy for a life to come on the other side, folk songs lay bare the human soul.

Poor Wayfaring Stranger

Born Anthony Dominick Benedetto, he was 18 when called to serve in the Army during the final stages of WWII. He would be involved in some of the most bitter final battles, only narrowly escaping death several times. He later wrote, “Anybody who thinks that war is romantic obviously hasn’t gone through one.” In spite of the hardships he continued to serve until honorably discharged at the war’s end.

When he returned to the states he used his GI Bill funds to study at the American Theatre Wing where he began to develop a singing style that would become uniquely his. He was invited by an impressed Bob Hope to join him on tour. The young veteran accepted, but decided at that time to shorten his name to Tony Bennett.

Mr. Bennett is only one of several famous musicians who decided to serve in our military. From Elvis Presley to MC Hammer, just maybe because they had music in their soul it inspired them to wear khaki for the red, white and blue. We honor them for their service.

You don’t have to be a rock star for us to honor you if you also served in the military. Tonight during the Armed Forces Salute we invite you to stand up when the theme for your military branch is played. Anyone with family members who have served is

welcomed to stand in honor of them as well. We also invite you to join in the pledge of allegiance when prompted.

Armed Forces– Pride of America - with band

Carpe Diem was first printed in “Odes” a book of lyrical poetry by the ancient Roman writer Horace. In his poem, the epicurean gives this advise to a dear friend he calls Leuconoe:

Ask not ('tis forbidden knowledge), what our destined term of years,
Mine and yours; nor scan the tables of Babylonian seers.
Better far to bear the future, my Leuconoe, like the past
Whether Jove has many winters yet to give, or this our last;
This that makes the ocean billows spend their strength against the shore.
Strain your wine and prove your wisdom; life is short: should hope be more?
In the moment of our taking, envious time has ebb'd away.
Seize the present; trust tomorrow e'en as little as you may.

Seize the Day

Eric Coates, an English composer had a profound dislike of writing film music and turned down numerous requests. But the producers of the British war movie “Dam Busters” persisted telling Mr. Coats this film, based on the true story of Operation Chastise, was of national importance. Out of a sense of loyalty to his country he conceded and concluded that a march he had just finished would be the perfect overture.

The film would go on to be the most popular film of 1955 and Coates' music would become a favorite at English football games where fans have been known to sing the song with arms outstretched imitating aircrafts after their team scores.

So if any children in the audience are feeling a need to stretch now is a good time to reach those arms out and fly to your soul's content. And if anyone with an English football game background just happens to be in the audience, we welcome you to be the lead flyer.

Dam Busters

We'd like to finish this evening with this poem by Jamaican political leader, publisher and journalist Marcus Garvey.

There's music in my soul today,
A joy of heart not there before:
This state of conscience I relay
To rich and proud and meek and poor.

There's music in my happy Soul:
From Heaven's realm doth truly flow
This music in my happy Soul,
My conscience tells me rightly so.

My song of joy I sing to you:
Let peace and love forever be
Among ye men of every hue,
Of every land and charted sea.

I crave no other fortune great,
But joy to live in peace with God;
My hopes are fixed on His Estate,
In faith so true as prophets had.

This music in my soul today
I spread in truth with love unfurled;
On waves of cheer it goes, I pray,
To reach around the belted world.

We know this is true for us, we hope it is for you as well.

And if you find yourself whistling a tune or singing a song from tonight's concert,
then you know, you've got music in your soul too.

Thank you all for being here tonight and in the words of Backstreet Boy's AJ McClean
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Music is love, love is music, music is life, and I love my life. Thank you and
good night.

United We Stand (An American Medley) With Band

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