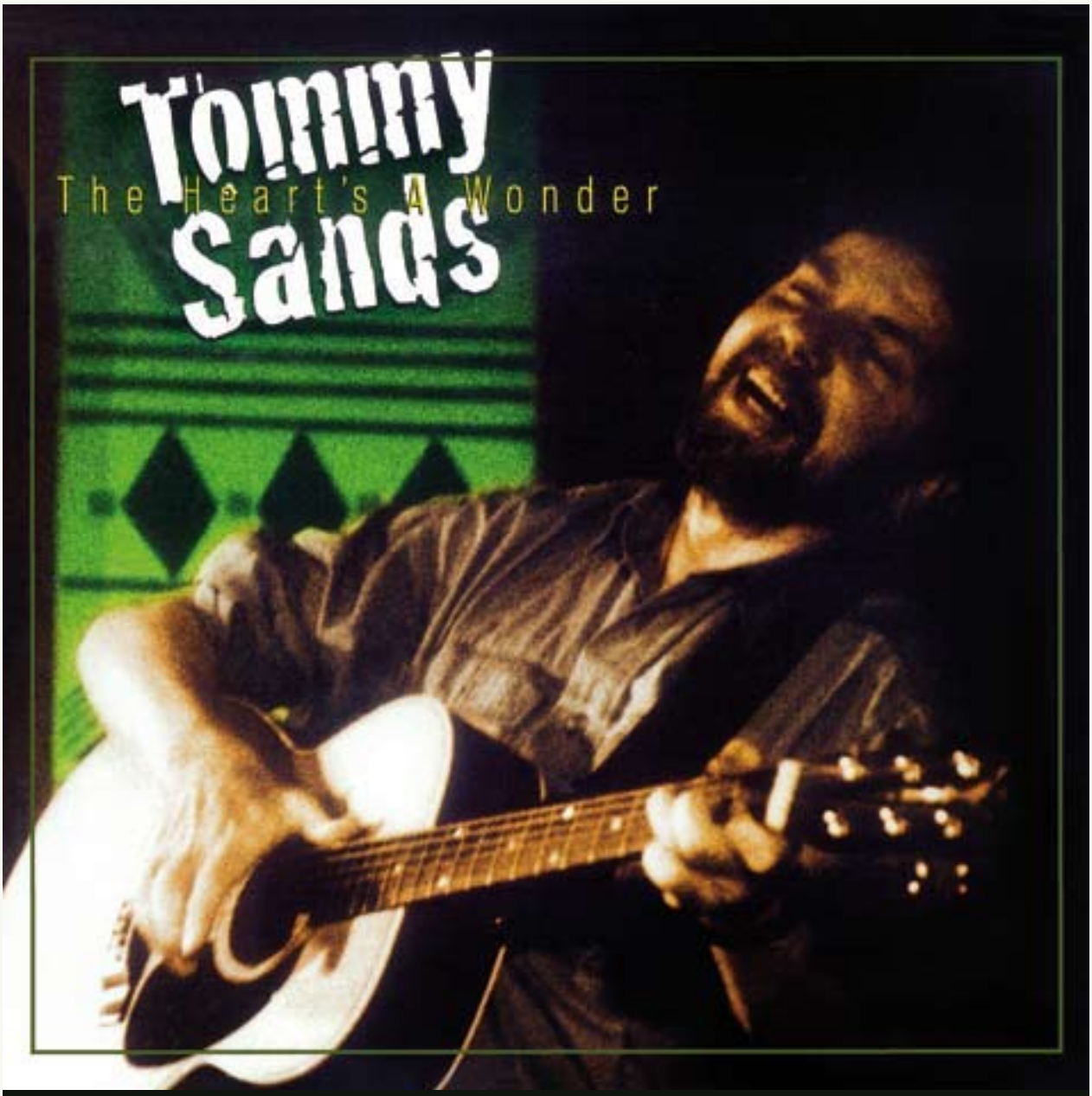

TOMMY SANDS

The Heart's *a Wonder*

Songs, stories & musicians

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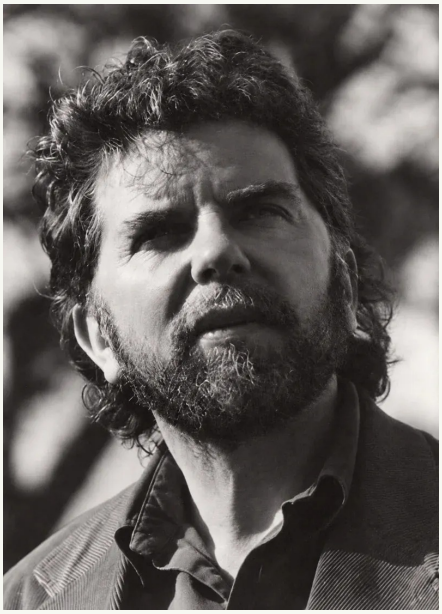
A message from Pete Seeger

If there is a world here at the end of the 21st Century, one of the main reasons will be that songwriters and musicians around the world have decided to be more than "mere entertainers". Not that they won't still be entertainers, but they'll use their abilities as entertainers to help pull this cantankerous human race together before we blow ourselves apart. And what Tommy Sands and his friends are doing right now is setting a good example, not just for Bosnia and Rwanda, but for human beings everywhere. The musicians of old Ireland created some of the world's greatest songs. If they are listening somewhere right now, these musicians are intoning a Gaelic prayer and a cheer for the great music being carried on and being re-created now in partnership with the tangly contradictory English language. The twinkly toes of children today will be dancing tomorrow. Dancing together.

Pete Seeger

4 August 1995



Tommy Sands

01 The Music of Healing

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music · With Pete Seeger 3:44

The cease fires in Northern Ireland brought a great sense of hope to us all. No matter what the eventual solution is to be, ordinary people will have to learn to live together. Sometimes music can help to heal some of the wounds.

I wrote the second verse using some words from an old friend of mine, Pete Seeger, and some words he quoted from his father, so I'm delighted that Pete and his grandson Tao were able to join me on this recording. Thanks to Greg and Lisa for setting up the session in New York and to Vedran Smailovic for joining us on cello. Every day in his native Sarajevo, the lone figure of Smailovic, dressed in full evening suit could be seen, walking past his bombed out orchestra theater and in the street amidst shell and fire, he sat down and played his cello for peace. When a CNN reporter asked him if he was not crazy for playing his cello in the middle of the shelling. the famous Smailovic reply that went all around the world was, 'You ask me am I crazy . .. why do you not ask those people on the mountain are they not crazy for shelling Sarajevo while Smailovic is playing the cello.'

THE MUSIC OF HEALING

Don't beat the drum, that frightens the children
Don't sing the songs about winning and losing
Sit down beside me, the green fields are bleeding
Sing me the music of healing
Sing me a song of a lover returning
The darker the night, the nearer the morning
Bring me the news of a new day that's dawning
Sing me the music of healing

CHORUS

Ah, the heart's a wonder
Stronger than the guns of thunder
Even when we're torn asunder
Love will come again

Sometimes the truth's like a hare in the cornfield
You know that it's there but you can't put your arms around it
All we can hope for is follow it's footprints
Sing me the music of healing
Who would have thought I could feel so contented
To learn I was wrong after all of my rambles
I've learned to be hard and I've learned how to tremble
Sing me the music of healing

Somehow the cycle of vengeance keeps turning
Till each other's sorrows and songs we start learning
Peace is the prize for those who are daring
Sing me the music of healing
Time is your friend, it cures all your sorrows
But how can I wait till another tomorrow
One step today and a thousand will follow
Sing me the song of healing

02 Who Knows Where the Wind Blows

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 3:20

I wrote this song after hearing a story at home about two brothers who ended up on different sides in the American Civil War, just because the wind literally blew them in different directions. I thought how often coincidences, as simple as a breeze, can determine our station and our never-to-be-surrendered convictions.

WHO KNOWS WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

Back at home I heard them say
Two brothers sailed to America
And they sailed away on a different day
From the shores of emigration
But in between the wind turned round
One blew north and one blew south
And that was in the terror times
When civil war was raging

CHORUS

Who knows where the wind blows
Where will you be in the morning sunshine
Who knows where the wind blows
Where will you be in the morning

Johnny was the younger one
He found a home near Richmond
Till a sergeant handed him a gun
To fight the Yankee Union
His brother tried to settle down
Some place north of Boston town
Until he heard that bugle sound
Behind the flag of Lincoln

And when the time it came to fight
Each believed that he was right
And just as morning turns to night
Two armies started marching
And memories drifted back to home
And boyhood days in old Tyrone
And brothers parting on the foam
Of the dark and stormy ocean

And so it came to Gettysburg
In golden corn, the blood ran red
In blue and grey, they fought and bled
For different kinds of freedom
And when it came to man-to-man
Kill or be killed was the plan
A brother died in a brother'S arms
On a sunny July morning

03 Sudako (And the Paper Cranes)

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 3:55

Sudako Suzaki was just a baby when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. She survived but later developed leukemia as a result of the radiation. There's an old belief in Japan that if you make a thousand paper cranes (the crane being the symbol of health and long life), you can have any wish that you want. This is the true story of what happened. Today there is a statue of Sudako in the Peace Park of Hiroshima and children still go there with paper cranes. (I thank Patti Mohr from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania for bringing this story to my attention, and Fred Small for a beautiful song on the same subject).

SUDAKO (AND THE PAPER CRANES)

Sudako was a baby when the cruel bombs were burning
And the homes of Hiroshima turned to hell
But somehow she kept living and she seemed to laugh and play
Just like any little girl of ten
But lately she's complaining of dizzy spells and headaches
And she's praying for an end to all these pains
And she hears the old folks whisper
Your wishes will be granted if you make a thousand paper cranes.

CHORUS

Sudako, let me make a paper crane for you
Sudako, let me help to make your dreams come true

She doesn't wish for chocolate cakes or dolls with colored dresses
As lovingly she folds each paper crane
The only prayer she whispers, may this sickness go away
And poison bombs don't ever come again
Her hands are growing slower, but her hopeful heart is racing
She has made six hundred cranes and forty-four
But the headaches keep returning,
her fingers they are burning
She whispers, "I just can't make anymore."

The children leave the classroom, they are crowding 'round her bedside
They are making paper cranes with loving speed
Soon there'll be a thousand and your wishes will come true
Sudako, are you smiling in your sleep
The pains of life are leaving and the only dream she's dreaming
Is a dream that bombs will never fall again
And that's the dream they carry as they gather at her graveside
And gently place a thousand paper cranes

04 The Age of Uncertainty

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 3:21

"Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, Reaching for apples, searching for freedom."

THE AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

I still can hear the master saying, singing two and two are four
Walking up and walking down and walking 'round the floor
And that was in the good old days when poetry did rhyme
And we couldn't wait for three o'clock and the freedom bells to chime

CHORUS

But in the age of uncertainty, freedom doesn't set you free
Feeling doesn't feel the same and I think of you and me again

And someone, surely somewhere, somehow, can recall the time
When people didn't lock their doors to strangers in the night time
And we were neighbor's children then and dancers danced in time
And we couldn't wait for twelve o'clock till our parents said good night

There was comfort in the garden, in the apple blossom time
The golden book was black and white, it kept us all in line
But when the walls come tumbling down, like castles made of sand
It's time that we were going back to where it all began

05 Irish Molly-O

Traditional arranged by Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 4:00

When digging through some old songs in the snowy Poconos of Pennsylvania with my good friend, folklorist Mick Moloney, we came across this Scots-Irish gem. Irish Molly-O, widely popular in North America in the early 19th century, was first published by A.W. Auner in Philadelphia around 1830 and later in New York by Kennedy. Both The Hat My Father Wore and The Sash My Father Wore were adapted from this song. The other Irish Molly-O, a different song completely, was recorded by the Flanagan Brothers in the 1920s and by Maura O'Connell and others in the 1980s. It was written by the Tin Pan Alley duo of William jerome and jean Schwartz in 1890.

IRISH MOLLY-O

Tell me who is that poor stranger that lately came to town
And like a pilgrim all alone, he wanders up and down
He's a poor forlorn Glasgow lad and if you would like to know
His heart is breaking all in vain for Irish Molly-O

CHORUS

She is young and she is beautiful and her likes I've never know
The lily of old Ireland and the primrose of Tyrone
She's the lily of old Ireland and no matter where I go
My heart will always hunger for my Irish Molly-O

Ah but when her father heard of this, a solemn vow he swore
That if she wed a foreigner, he'd never see her more
He called for young MacDonald and he plainly told him so
I'll never give to such as you my Irish Molly-O

MacDonald heard the heavy news and sadly he did say
Farewell my lovely Molly-O, I am banished far away
Till death shall come to comfort me and to the grave I go
My heart will always hunger for Irish Molly-O

06 Back to School Again

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 3:20

"My father used to say with a smile "The more you learn, the more you know, the less you know. And the less you know, the more you know, the less you learned. Therefore, why learn? . . . The best days of our lives!

BACK TO SCHOOL AGAIN

He's gone to school Wee Hughie and he is hardly four
I saw the fright was in him when he left that door
But he took a hand of Dinny and he took a hand of Dan
And with Joe's old coat upon him
Ach, the poor wee man
(Do the best you can)

CHORUS

Back to school again, where's my coat and where's my pen
Back to school again, and what did you put in my sandwiches?

Well, the teacher he did teach me with his teacher's rhythm stick
Reading and writing and a-rhythm-atic
But when it was all over, sure his final words for me -
"You'll never get a job, for you've got no degree."
(it's the university)

Well, I went to the University and studied Modern Art
I picked up on Picasso and I learned to paint like mad
But when I graduated, sure the only job at hand
Was painting a computer for a silicone man
(What a silly man)

Back I went to night school like a lot of silly mugs
All infected by computery and binary and bugs
I entrusted to a robot all the knowledge I had known
But a dog ate the floppy disc and I was on my own
(He thought it was a bone)

Well, the good old ten times tables, sure I tried to sing once more
I still recalled the melody, but not a single word
But at least I've got a job now and I shouldn't really fuss
For I am the driver of the old school bus
(I've really got it sussed)

07 The Short Cut Through the Fields

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music · With Dolores Keane 3:21

The short cut through the fields, over hedges, ditches, fields and streams, may not have been all that quicker at the end of the day, but it certainly seemed more romantic, unforgettable, softer on the heels, and unwrinkling for the mind.

THE SHORT CUT THROUGH THE FIELDS

CHORUS

Let me take your hand and we'll walk along together
Over the river and under the trees
We'll talk about the times we were making plans together
Taking the short cut through the fields

Tell the taxi man there's no need to come further
I'm tired of the highways and the hard city streets
Tell the taxi man let us off at the corner
I want to feel the grass beneath my feet

I know every bush and every berry in the valley
I know every thrush and every blackbird's loving song
And there's that old oak tree, where we carved our love forever
Coming from the dancing in the hall

And there's that same old moon, let it shine on forever
Lighting up the laughter and the loving in your eye
And do you mind the time when we sat down here together
And tried to say good-bye

08 The Day We Won the All Ireland

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 3:23

I stood with my son Fionan watching with admiration and wonder as the county team trained for the All Ireland, Faster and faster they ran, panting, sweating, shouting encouragement to each other, up the side of the Mournes, I couldn't help but admire the great force that motivated them and drove them upwards towards the Mount Olympus called Cloch Mor, In a sense, they seemed to be suffering for the very hills and valleys they would represent with such pride in Croke Park, Later when they would return in triumph to their home village and county with the Sam Maguire Cup, those same hills would cheer without ceasing. Dedicated to all the great sportsmen and women who reach for the sky and bring the rest of us with them,

THE DAY WE WON THE ALL IRELAND

Remember that September, it's never far away
Rising up early in the morning
Sandwiches all ready from the night before
And now the final hour is dawning

CHORUS

And the cheering like thunder rolled
The flags they flew on every pole
And we sang and danced the whole way home
On the day we won the All Ireland

The Dublin women crying, "Hats and colors for the game"
Hill Sixteen is going crazy
The Artane Band are playing, we're ready for the fray
The ball is in and now the battle's raging

I can see the neighbors, their heads have gone astray
For years they haven't spoken to each other
Now they both are crying, they're in each others arms
I can't believe my eyes, we are the Champions

The years keep rolling onward and the new ones come along
But these are the days we will remember
The game it passed so quickly but the memories carry on
And somehow it has changed us all forever

09 I Hate to Hear People Cry

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 2:46

If we don't listen to what the other one has to say, maybe we're only half of what we could be. This is one of the very first songs I ever wrote and was recorded in 1966 by the Brian McCollum folk group. 'Round a late night camp fire at the Kerrville Festival in Texas, 1993, it came back to me. My friends liked it, so here it is.

I HATE TO HEAR PEOPLE CRY

Weeping and walking and silently talking
Turning away from the sun
The night time is falling and nobody is calling
To talk about what can be done

CHORUS

I hate to hear people cry
One is for sorrow, two is for joy
And love is a dove
That needs two wings to fly

Walking in circles, talking of miracles
Watching the future pass by
Like a child on a seesaw without any partner
Longing to fly in the sky

Here on the island, there's fighting and dying
It seems we can never agree
There's so many answers, but where is the question
Maybe it's just you and me

10 A Little Bit More

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 3:18

My father used to say that the best sleep is between the time you are called and the time you get up. It's that little bit extra that seems to give the most pleasure, be it in the pub after closing time or an extra fraction of an inch in the Olympic high jump. It's also good for an encore, both for the audience and the performer.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

When I was young my father said
It's time that children went to bed
But we would always cry and roar
I want to stay up just a little bit more

CHORUS

A little bit more, a little bit more
Not very much, just a little bit more
A little bit more, a little bit more
Not very much, just a little bit more

And when the morning came along
You could hear that same old song
When there came a knocking on the door
I want to lie on, just a little bit more

I met a girl called Mary Rose
I says, "Young girl, can I kiss your nose "
She says, "I've met your likes before,
All that you want is a little bit more."

The barman cries out, "There's no more beer,
Drink up your drinks and get out of here."
Still you see them hanging 'round the door
Hoping to get in for a little bit more

And when your days are nearly done
Before you cross that Rubicon
The doctor says your time is o'er
But you pray to the Lord for a little bit more

11 Sailing Through the Sky

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 3:52

Recently I was playing and recording in Maghaberry Prison outside Belfast. Most of the prisoners were there on political charges, from both sides of the divide; many were serving life sentences. After the concert, I was speaking to one of the men and remarked that it must be very sad and lonely, having to spend so many years in such surroundings. He put his head to one side and smiled, and his eyes seemed to focus far beyond the walls that hemmed him in. 'Sure I'm never here at all,' he said, "most of the time I'm far away, maybe at a football match in Newry or a dance in Belfast or talking to the girls close to Banbridge town.' I knew what he meant for he was already on his way, sailing through the sky.

SAILING THROUGH THE SKY

I'll sing you a song of a lark in the morning
Sailing through the sky
Sailing forever above the Black Mountain
Sailing through the sky

CHORUS

Sailing, sailing, sailing through the sky
Sailing, sailing, sailing through the sky

The jailer comes 'round and bids me good morning
Sailing through the sky
But already I've gone to the fair in Rathfriland
Sailing through the sky

Sometimes I go down to the bridge on a Saturday
Sailing through the sky
Stand in the sunshine with wee Tarry Flanagan
Watching the girls go by

Do you still miss me, will you still wait for me
Sailing through the sky
Will you give me a reason to wake in the morning
Sailing through the sky

The jailer comes 'round to lock up in the evening
Sailing through the sky
But I've gone out walking with young Katie Houlahan
Sailing through the sky

12 Good-bye Love (There's No One Leaving)

Tommy Sands, Elm Grove Music 4:28

I couldn't help but feel a sense of betrayal as I led my mother out through the door of the family home for the last time. She had Alzheimer's disease and we weren't able to look after her anymore. I could feel the fear in her hand, just as she must have felt the fear of uncertainty in mine the first day she led me out to school. Early the next morning in the unfamiliar surroundings of the residential home I sat with her, not wanting to, or knowing how to, leave. She was the one who came to the rescue as usual. "You must go and take your wee ones to school,' she whispered suddenly. She had done her duty, now I must do mine. We still wave good-bye nearly every day as she drifts with dignity further and further away from the pains of the earth towards the perfection of the heavens. My thanks to the great people in Kennedy's Home, Rostrevor, for being so good to her.

GOOD-BYE LOVE (THERE'S NO ONE LEAVING)

Now is the moment of parting, I can feel all the fear in your hand
Leaving a home full of memories on the verge of a strange new land
It doesn't seem so long since the last time, the first day you took me to school
Searching for words that are gentle, being brave, so the tears don't come through

CHORUS

Good-bye love, there's no one leaving
Good-bye love, there's no one leaving

How swiftly the years seemed to follow, but I never could see you grow old
We both turned the hay in the summer and we sang when the winter was cold
And the stories I tell to my children are the ones that you told me before
But the story now slowly unfolding is the saddest story of all

I don't know how much you can hear me, but you seem quite content on your own
Are you drifting away like the summer to the days of your childhood at home
And just when I feel I've betrayed you, I am lost and I don't know what to do
You smile and you whisper, "My darling, you must go and take your little one to school."

The musicians

Tommy Sands — vocals, guitar, five-string banjo

Pete Seeger, Dolores Keane, Ben Sands, Ann Sands, Moya Sands, Tao Rodriguez Seeger, Rod McDonald — vocals

Arty McGlynn — guitars

Vedran Smailovic — cello

Rod McVey — keyboards, accordion

Nicky Scott — bass

Liam Bradley — percussion

Brendan Monaghan — uilleann pipes, whistle

Ann Sands — bodhrán

Ben Sands — mandolin

Pete Seeger — five-string banjo

Stephen Cooney — nylon string guitar, all musical arrangements on Sudako and Good-bye Love

Mairéad Nesbitt — fiddle on Sudako and Good-bye Love

Ciarán Tourish — fiddle on Molly-O, The Day We Won The All Ireland, A Little Bit More

Dermot Byrne — accordion on Molly-O, The Day We Won The All Ireland, A Little Bit More

Michael Beattie — harmonica on Molly-O and I Hate To Hear People Cry

Lisa Gutkin — fiddle on The Music Of Healing

Greg Anderson — bass on The Music Of Healing

Credits & acknowledgements

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Tommy Sands in East Berlin, before the wall came down

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