



EMCEE LYNX

Human beings evolved as social animals, and social animals we remain. Despite our best efforts to pretend otherwise at the end of the day we are nothing more or less than highly intelligent bipedal Apes. That's not a bad or good thing, it just is.

One of the most remarkable things about humans is that we are not particularly strong or ferocious or great hunters when left to our own devices, but we have still managed to become the most visible and impact non-insect species on our planet in just a few thousand years. The thing that allowed us to do that and gives us our great competitive advantage is our ability to cooperate with each other, to work together for common goals and share our ideas. That sharing and cooperation is at the root of all the things that make us unique – from our unusually developed language skills that allow us to communicate to the technical know-how and technology that we have built up over the centuries by passing along one generations ideas to the next and slowly improving on them. And one of the deepest connections that we share across all cultures and climates is music.

Music is not unique to humans; of course, it's a common element of communication in virtually every social species from birds to whales. But for humans its place is truly special. Music is at the foundation of our species, it predates language and everything else. In the beginning there was the drum and the fire - the two great things that brought our ancestors together in the dark nights of our earliest existence, claimed the space around them as Human, and proclaimed the common bond of tribe, clan, and family. All else came after. Even today it resonates in a different and deeper part of our brains than any other form of human communication. Everywhere you find social cohesion among humans, people acting together for any common cause, you will find music. It is the universal cement of our societies, the most basic way we assert our common identity within a group.

The fact that music brings us together and strengthens those common bonds has made it an indispensable element of virtually every faith in human history. More than the dogma or the scripture, it is the sharing of song that holds such groups together. That's not to say that the actions of those groups will always be positive or easily reconcilable with anything I would recognize as Spirituality, only that any time people come together there will be songs. They may be songs about peace and harmony or songs of war replete with reference to *"the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air"* and so on. Ultimately it doesn't matter which gospel is *"true"* or if none of them are, religion isn't



about truth after all. It is about identity and belonging and common values and, most of all, about a shared experience and group identity. Looking at history that's often spelled disaster for those outside the group. Catholic conquistadors who raped and murdered their way across South America and Protestants who ruthlessly exterminated indigenous people all across North America; each had their hymns praising God, and asserting their right to butcher their fellow man in His name. So did the European faiths that sent them forth who had been butchering each other for centuries and the early Muslims who spread Islam at the edge of a sword. All of these events were done in God's name to the tune of hymns praising His greatness. One could keep listing indefinitely, but it's not really necessary. The point is that music can be used for good or evil, just like religion or science or anything else. Spirituality, however, remains more ambiguous. Would we, looking back today, see those movements as "*spiritual*"? They certainly did.

Because of all that history, I hesitate to even use words like "*spirituality*" because those who have come before have done so much evil in its name. So when I do use it I have to clarify that I mean something much deeper and more powerful than the worship of any of the various deities or religious dogmas men have created over the centuries. If spirituality is to be meaningful or positive it must be an acknowledgement that we all share a common bond with each other, with our planet, and with all of the other species we share the planet with. As a musician, part of what I try to do is create songs that can speak to that alternative and deeper type of spirituality in order to lay the foundations for a new movement, a different way of understanding and approaching the world we share. As James Connolly wrote so long ago:

"No Revolutionary movement is complete without its poetic expression. If such a movement has caught hold of the imagination of the masses, they will seek a vent in song for the aspirations, fears, and hopes, the loves and hatreds, engendered by the struggle. Until the movement is marked by the joyous, defiant singing of revolutionary songs, it lacks one of the most distinctive marks of a popular revolutionary movement; it is the dogma of the few and not the faith of the multitude". – James Connolly

I'm just one of the many musicians trying to sing those songs.



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HIP-HOP ARTIST