

MUSIC TO MY EARS



In 1978, a college friend came into the dorm room with a debut album from a new group – Dire Straits. He was tired of listening to the same ol' music, good as it was (Bruce Springsteen).

Dire Straits became a Hall of Fame group with some phenomenal albums.

Stepping out of one's comfortable routine may pay off.

Humans are driven by a need to be comfortable. We find solace in our routines because we tend to fear the unknown. This acceptance of one's routine because it's a known quantity leads us to be careful (such as staying with the mediocre bands of the 70's such as The Outlaws).

We have lost sight of being good and replaced it with being careful. Injustice flourishes when citizens become too careful, complacent and accept the status quo. Do you want justice? Then you need to intentionally become uncomfortable. You need to make society intentionally uncomfortable. You need to move from careful to good. We need new music that breaks the old molds and ventures into new territory.

We live in a massive, complex society where its systems and structures have a louder voice than its citizens. The average person barely makes a difference. Even a collective mass of average persons – we call that “democracy” – is hopelessly outmatched by the structures of power that have gathered momentum for centuries. Sometimes this is by default – centuries of unjust cultural norms (think slavery) and sometimes it's by design – laws that limit the participation of the average worker in favor of the owners of production.

The average person cannot give up hope. Hopelessness is the off-key note of injustice that mars the hymn of justice and peace.

Thirty-three years after the debut album of Dire Straits, “21”, the 2011 album by Adele, became the first album in over a decade to sell more than ten million copies. Americans have lost their taste for an album with both popular tunes and the complementary songs that complete the artist's vision. We want just the hits and we download the hit songs. We have moved from the elevator music of complacency to the musical version of sound bites. Can we find an alternative between complacency and the sound bites to catch our attention?

What the average person can do:

1. Oregon's primary election is Tuesday May 20. First read up on the candidates and then **vote!**
2. Catholic Bishops in the United States have long supported increases in the federal minimum wage to ensure that no full time worker and their family lived in poverty. The current federal minimum wage falls short of this standard for its failure to provide sufficient resources for individuals to form and support families. **Call your representatives and urge them to increase the federal minimum wage.**

The Senate has passed a temporary extension of emergency unemployment benefits. Now the House of Representatives needs to act to restore this basic financial security for the most vulnerable job seekers. **Write to your representative today and urge them to extend emergency unemployment compensation.**



Office of Life, Justice, and Peace