

SING ME A SONG SOLANO

Ever have a hankering for some Neanderthal jams? No, not post Jurassic Period jellies. We're talking bone flute tunes. Circa 50,000 B.C., our ancestors wailed on bones fashioned as wind instruments. Yes sir, 'Grok' Galway probably laid down a hunting bird call or schmoozed Mrs. Grok and the Grokettes at the first fire pit Concert in the Cave.

Solano songsters can take a cue from prehistoric hipsters and stalagmite smacking aboriginal percussionists and enter the Artys theme song contest at www.artysthemesongcontest.org.

Solano is rich in music and the performing arts and the twenty three years old Artys Awards gala on Sept 9th (www.theartys.com – think Oscars) at Fairfield's Center for Creative Arts needs a tune. The prize package is killer. In addition to live recording, mixing and mastering the night of the gala, the winning tune will be played on KUIC, Brenden Theaters and Channel 26. The winner also gets up to five tunes professionally recorded, mixed and mastered at Biklops www.biklops.com studio in San Jose.

Melodies follow man as we are all connected to the symphony of life. There's music to our minds and rhythm to our life's walk. Sometimes life is a jive jitterbug, sometimes a sensual samba - but an undulating rhythm nonetheless. Notes can be sweet and at times the harmony dies in sad discord - but the music goes on.

Think that too artsy fartsy? When was the last time you got your groove on with incomparable shower dance moves? How about when Aaron Copeland, Steven Sondheim, Andrew Lloyd Webber, John Williams, Bill Conti and hosts of others teased you onto a soaring flight of fancy without ever leaving the ground. Our eyes mist and hearts ache when music stirs deep memories. Bolero, Irving Berlin or Babyface-ballads remind you when, if only for a moment, you were the world's greatest lover.

Music is powerful stuff. For some it is a way to impute sanity on a world they do not understand; for others it is a ladder to God. So Solano, put together a tune, pluck a guitar, tinkle the ivories, dither with a zither - whatever, just get it done and send it in.

Some ask, "A theme song, that's a tall order." Well it's no taller than you. Theater imitates life asking us to believe that the characters, turns and plot twists represent life, our emotions, ourselves. So an Artys theme song is a pretty broad brush with plenty of musical colors in the melody. Life's theme songs range from a crying in the beer ballad, 'I'm so lonesome in the saddle since my horse died' to hip twitching, libido itching funk.

There is more to this contest. Ever been part of a band or orchestra crafting a melody? I'm in one now watching many pulling together crafting a concerto of collegiality and community service putting this contest on.

Why did I pick up the baton this time? Let's just say it was my turn. Having a public voice is a privilege and responsibility. It's a heady and risky affair to proselytize and not deliver, evangelize yet evade personal commitment.

It's a worthy notion to see if we can create a magical melody of people working together by asking others to compose a tune. The Mayor, Community Services, City Managers Office, Channel 26 Fairfield and Vacaville, KUIC, the Daily Republic, School Superintendent Carter, Brenden Theaters and an incredibly generous Grand Prize sponsor all get it. You see, it's hard to destroy or sow discord when creating, isn't it Solano?

I don't know what kind or how many entries there will be but I know from Bo Diddley to Burt Bacharach, songsters are out there. I know it's important for communities to foster memories that bring a glint in our eye and a fond reminiscence. I know Neanderthal flutes still resonate in our bones. So enter the contest, Solano.

Kevin Ryan is a retired Colonel, physician, musician and author who lives in Fairfield.