



# Seeing Through Music

## Songwriting Project Issue #1

Presented by: [TAFFY Presents](#) & [Small Kin Music](#)

### Project Committee:

Paul Avgerinos  
Beth Blenz-Clucas  
Mike Greenly  
Jimmy Hammer  
Dirk Joseph  
Mary Kincaid  
Dave Kinnoin  
Oliver Kinnoin  
Irene Light  
Sahffi Lynne  
Kabir Sahgal  
Barbara Silberg  
Valerie Leonhart Smalkin  
Mark Stocker  
Susan Vanderhoff  
Rob Hair

### Donors:

Anonymous  
Bernard Family Foundation  
Nancy Caton  
Child's Play Charity  
Mike Greenly  
Smalkin/Leonhart Family  
Reyes/Maligaya Family  
Irene Light



**Maryland School for the Blind State Outreach Chorus**

## Seeing Through Music

### Songwriting Program at the Maryland School for the Blind

Students at the Maryland School for the Blind, as well as blind students from other area high schools, were invited to take part in a workshop designed to encourage their self-advocacy - to help them express their needs to the sighted world. Song-writing was selected as the means to that end. The project started with one song-writing session provided by TAFFYpresents, a subsidiary of Theatre Arts Festival for Youth, a 501(c)(3) charity. TAFFY sent Valerie Smalkin, a Maryland State Arts Council award-winning artist, to conduct one such workshop. The results of that workshop were so stunning that an anonymous donor immediately offered to pay for 4 additional workshops and to help produce a CD of the songs. From this beginning musicians, engineers, artists, and performers across the country have donated their time, talent, and treasure to see that the words of these students reach as wide an audience as possible.

# Synergy!

## Collaboration begets Collaboration

- New York Lyricist, [Mike Greenly](#) - publicity, CD manufacturing
- [Beth Blenz-Clucas](#) publicity
- [Dave Kinnoin](#), Jimmy Hammer, [Sahffi Lynne](#), and [Val Smalkin](#) - time and talent to write and arrange accompaniments
- Mark Stocker of [4:30 Entertainment](#) and Rob Smith of [Stages Music Arts](#) - studio time, engineering
- [Kabir Sehgal](#) - CD liner notes, advisor
- [Dirk Joseph](#) - CD artwork
- [Paul Avgerinos](#) - Grammy award winning music for spoken word pieces
- [Barbara Klaskin Silberg](#) West Los Angeles Children's Choir/MrsMusic.com – vocals for the Dance of Freedom mix
- [Child's Play Charity](#) – 20 sandisk mp3 players accessible to blind students



## Latest News

### West Los Angeles Children's Choir

After one phone call (and a few emails) from Irene Light and Val Smalkin, Barbara Silberg, the director of the West Los Angeles Children's Choir, agreed to teach her choir *The Dance of Freedom*, with lyrics by the teens at the workshop and Val Smalkin; and music by the famous Dave Kinnoin and Jimmy Hammer. Not only did Dave and Jimmy write the music, they also arranged and performed it, and

on the day of the choir's recording they opened their homes and hearts to 25 children and parents. Dave's son, Oliver Kinnoin, provided the studio and recording expertise; his wife, Mary Kincaid, helped supervise; while Dave Kinnoin entertained the children with games outside! Mark Stocker is currently working on mixing *The Dance of Freedom*.

The West Los Angeles Children's Choir is well known for recording *Prayers for the World* with Cher (for the documentary *Cries from Syria*), appearing on the current Hoiliday GAP commercial, among others!

## For More Information Contact

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Valerie Smalkin  
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**Music Grows the Heart**



Meeting with Maryland School for the Blind Statewide Outreach students at C. Milton Wright High School.

## Old News

### Read this to catch up:

Our amazing students have finished three songs, as well as several spoken word pieces that will be included on the CD. One song, *Not With My Eyes*, was originally a poem written by Tatyanna Ditzenberger about a girl at her high school who pretended to be her friend just to get kudos for being “nice to the blind kid.” The main idea of the poem, now a song, is “I see your truth, but not with my eyes.”

*Lifeboat to Sanity* started when [Val Smalkin](#) asked the students, “What is music to you.” Raiven Everett said quietly, “A lifeboat to sanity.” Raiven later worked with [Sahffi Lynne](#) and together they developed the lyrics (as well as the music):

## Lifeboat to Sanity

Words & Music: Raiven Everett and Sahffi Lynne ©2017 Small KinMusic

### chorus:

Music is a lifeboat to the world of sanity.  
 Away from the tragic realm of reality.  
 Where ev-'vry thing fits,  
     and fearsome thoughts submit  
 To the universal patterns of harmony.

### verse one:

I feel your stare as you  
     stand on the shore.  
 Darkness takes over I feel so insecure.  
 The walls close in,  
     the shadows grow long.  
 But, I save myself with the words of my  
     song. (chorus)

### verse two:

Sometimes alone, alone and scared,  
 An island of fear,  
     yes, I feel stranded there.  
 But the songs of the world float over me,  
 Calming the waves of insecurity.  
     (chorus)

[Lifeboat Vocal Guide Mp3](#)

## Not With My Eyes

Words & Music: Tatyanna Ditzenberger and Val Smalkin ©2017 Small Kin Music

[Not With My Eyes Vocal Guide Mp3](#)

## Dance of Freedom

Words: Song Writing Workshop  
 Music and Arrangement: Jimmy Hammer and Dave Kinnoin © 2017 Small Kin Music

### chorus:

We will dance the dance of freedom,  
 Whether blind or whether sighted.  
 We will dance the dance of freedom,  
 And our hearts will be united.

### verse one:

I feel your distant stare.  
 I know that you are there.  
 Please come and talk with me.  
 Let's try things differently  
 We like to say we are, we are not  
 blind,  
 We see with our hearts, our souls, our  
 minds  
 Our ears work overtime, you see.  
 We hear and see things differently.

(repeat chorus)

### verse two:

You see with your eyes;  
 I see with my mind.  
 I see with my ears.  
 I see, though I'm blind.  
 This lack of sight does not,  
 Does not make me weak.  
 This lack of sight makes me,  
 Makes me unique.  
 But you, too, have that special thing  
 That gives you your own song to sing.  
 Our differences can make us strong.  
 Our differences have built this song.

(repeat chorus)

### bridge:

The Dance of Freedom is dignity.  
 The Dance of Freedom is energy.  
 So, come and join the dance with me,  
 Though we may do it differently.  
 Join the dance with me,  
 And where it takes us, we will see.

**(repeat chorus)**

[Dance of Freedom Vocal Guide MP3](#)

[First Rehearsal MSB Chorus](#)

[West Los Angeles Choir Rehearsal](#)