

# PEACE AND JUSTICE IN WORDS AND MUSIC: An interview with *emma's revolution*

*"If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."  
— Emma Goldman*

Dancing on the edge of folk and pop, there's a revolution in the air — *emma's revolution*, to be precise. They've been called "bold, profound, moving, hilarious, and transformative," creating sounds of passion in "deftly-turned phrases" and songs imbued with hope, warmth, and the "power and drive" to turn tears into laughter, and cynicism into action.

A motivating force in intimate concerts and mass demonstrations alike, and infused with inspiration from the historical legacy of music for social change, Pat Humphries and Sandy O create dynamic harmonies that are multiplied by the shared experience of myriad raised voices. Emma Goldman stood for everybody's right to beautiful, radiant things, and this powerful duo keep that spirit alive and well today.

Their song *If I Give Your Name* won Grand Prize in the John Lennon Songwriting Contest, and their music has been featured on NPR's "All Things Considered" and Pacifica Radio's "Democracy Now!" Their signature song *Peace, Salaam, Shalom* is sung around the world and has been called the "anthem of the anti-war movement." As Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize winning author, recalls: "Across from the White House, we paused.... We were arrested several hours later, having sung *Peace, Salaam, Shalom* and *Give Peace a Chance* the entire time."

Randall Amster recently spoke with Pat and Sandy about their travels, how they stay inspired in these troubling times, and the legacy of their anthemic songs such as *Peace, Salaam, Shalom*:

**RA:** So where have you two been lately, and what sort of trouble have you been getting up to?

**er:** We were just in Vermont playing at an event that was completely solar-powered, which was great. People are really starting to understand that social and environmental issues are directly connected, that "peace and justice" is also about environmental sustainability. We can no longer overlook the full impacts of war, and how the costs, both economic and environmental, often fall upon the shoulders of the least powerful segments in society.



**RA:** Your music often inspires others; how do you stay inspired?

**er:** We stay inspired by staying involved, by getting our news from many different sources, and by being in direct contact with people who are making a difference. The wealth of creativity that movements call up in people always amazes us! And we in turn get to carry the news that there's a strong resistance out there, that people within and among communities are doing remarkable and ingenious things. In this way, we serve a "troubadour function" in bringing news from other locales and helping people connect.

**RA:** In that sense, tell me about the song *Peace, Salaam, Shalom* in particular — how is it sitting with you after all these years?

**er:** We wrote it right after 9-11, and sang it at the first peace rally in New York City after the attacks but before the invasion of Afghanistan; singing it broke through our despair and shouted down the voices calling for war. Over the years, the song has been sung all over the world: at peacekeeper trainings, in schools and churches and synagogues, and at the Women in Black International Gathering in Jerusalem. It's on a UNESCO website collecting peace songs, and has even been remixed into a dance version by a Russian musician! We've offered that song to anyone who wants to use it, and it has brought a sense of unity and possibility.

**RA:** So what's next for you, the musical "dynamic duo"?!?

**er:** We're playing at a festival sponsored by the Portuguese Communist Party, and we're writing a book about our songs and stories, which is fittingly titled *An Uprising of Hope!*

*{To bring Pat & Sandy to your community, to purchase some incredible CDs, and to be part of this emerging revolution, visit them on the web at: [www.emmasrevolution.com](http://www.emmasrevolution.com).}*

