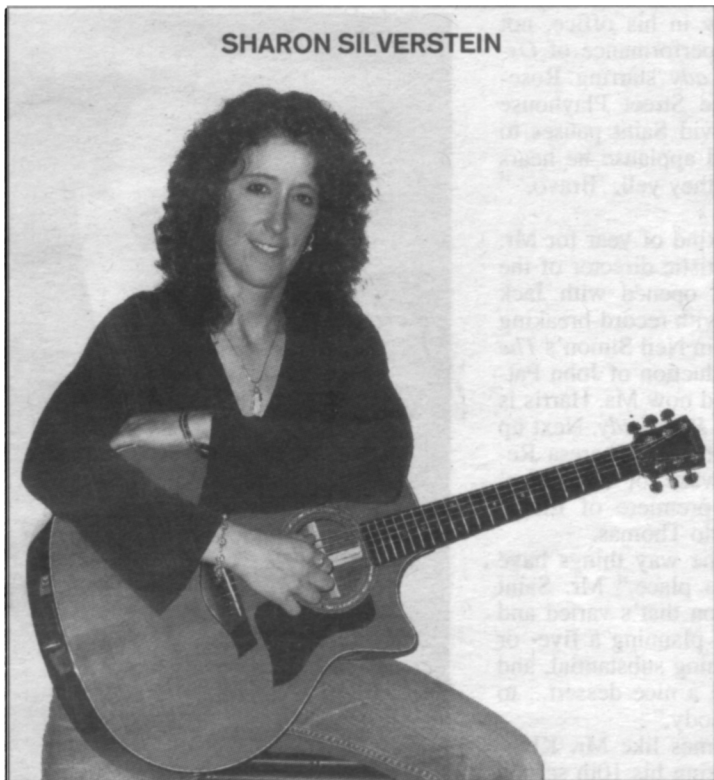


By Susan Van Dongen

Peace Train

Sharon Silverstein and the Peace Project want listeners to get busy living.

SHARON SILVERSTEIN



MAYBE it's the ingenious, methodical way Tim Robbins' character chips away at the wall of his cell and finally escapes in *The Shawshank Redemption*. Perhaps it's the calculated revenge that is exacted on the prison authorities. Or maybe it's the simple but inspirational line "get busy living, or get busy dying." People love the movie.

Singer-songwriter Sharon Silverstein was particularly taken by that line and incorporated it into "Get Busy," one of the 10 songs on her latest self-released CD, *Alive*.

Ms. Silverstein says that one line struck a Canadian fan struggling with alcoholism especially hard. The woman was so invigorated by the lyrics that she programmed "Get Busy" on her computer to wake her up in the morning, and start her day on a positive note.

"She said that song actually motivated her toward sobriety," Ms. Silverstein says. "I was honored that she listened to the song and got the message. That's all any artist would want from his or her writing — to move people to a deeper level."

Drawing from the writings and teachings of such life-changing teachers as Deepak Chopra, Eckhart Tolle, Carlos Castaneda and Wayne Dyer, Ms. Silverstein's lyrics hit you at a deep, almost subconscious level. Her resonant voice — a little bit Sheryl Crow, a touch Grace Slick and a smidgen Janis Joplin — gives her music a transformational quality.

Ms. Silverstein and The Peace Project will perform at Small World Coffee in Princeton Feb. 7.

Although she loves singing and playing, bringing a kernel of wisdom and transformation to her audiences of all ages is her true passion. A graduate of the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers, Ms. Silverstein taught elementary and middle school music in a variety of central New Jersey's public schools. She decided to make a life change and launched her business Living at Peace with the intention of bringing positive thinking to young people, facilitating new ways of parent-child and teacher-

child interaction. The overall mission has been to empower people of all ages to live life with greater self-awareness and a healthy mindset. Workshops, drum circles and, of course, concerts are just a few things she has created to help children and adults live their lives authentically, with enthusiasm and high self-esteem.

Now, anyone who listens to *Alive* gets a kind of Living at Peace musical boot camp. The recording was a labor of love and a real investment of time and capital.

"It's been out for a year now but I'm taking the time to promote it and give it its due," Ms. Silverstein says. "I've played at a few different places, Unity and Unitarian Universalist churches, yoga studios. People connected with the 'new consciousness,' if you want to call it that, seem to be really liking the message of the music."

Songs like "Unique Me," "Begin with the End in Mind" and "It's All Good" fit in perfectly with the visualization and manifestation "movement" — what used to be called "the power of positive thinking" but

has found a mega-audience through the book and film *The Secret*.

"I want to motivate (listeners) toward an awareness, awakening and knowing our true nature," Ms. Silverstein says. "Even if it looks like fear at the moment, all of our actions are motivating us toward love. A lot of artists try to teach these lessons through their music. I recently listened to John Lennon's 'Imagine,' and it really puts everything into a nutshell, the idea that religions and countries don't divide us, the hope that peace will prevail on the planet."

The Hillsborough resident is gratified to hear that her voice conjures Ms. Slick, Ms. Crow and Ms. Joplin, but she says the woman she would most love to sing with is Joan Baez.

"I've been listening to her since my early childhood," Ms. Silverstein says. "I love that she's been on the forefront as a peace activist for so long. Lately I've been listening to Snam Kaur, a Sikh artist who sings mostly in Punjabi. Her voice is so angelic and moving, it's the opposite of the roughness of Janis Joplin."

Ms. Silverstein deliberately set an intention to perform at Small World.

"I want people to hear the music and expand as they listen," she says. "My hope is that they'll hear something different in the lyrics that will awaken something in them, uplift them and motivate them to do whatever they desire in their lives, inspire them to be more than what they think they can be." ●

Sharon Silverstein and the Peace Project will perform at Small World Coffee, 14 Witherspoon St., Princeton, Feb. 7, 8 p.m. Free. (609) 924-4377; www.smallworldcoffee.com. Sharon Silverstein on the Web: www.livingatpeace.com