

Aching to change the world . . .

Sometimes anticipation is almost unbearable. The young people I see around me every time I teach a class or give a speech about social enterprise are palpably vibrating, aching to change the world . . .

I know that hunger. I felt it once, long ago, with all the passion of youth . . . and the other night I felt it again when the intoxicating music of The Doors erupted from my speakers shortly after midnight . . .

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June, 1968: Pacific Palisades, California

A cluster of huts and small buildings colonize a campground in Temescal Canyon, nothing but craggy hillsides between them and the Pacific Ocean half a mile away.

The huts are gathered around a grass and dirt courtyard, temporary homes for a group of Peace Corps trainees, most in their early to mid-20s. A loudspeaker on the roof of one of the huts periodically blares announcements across the compound.

After nearly three months, we're all emotional wrecks. Martin Luther King has been murdered. Robert Kennedy has been murdered. We've been thrown against the walls in Watts and screamed at for hours by black activists. The Vietnam War consumes us. And India awaits, just a few days away . . .

More than 30 of us. And every night, as music blasts over the loudspeaker, we rage against the assassinations and the war and feverishly prepare for departure, wondering what we'll discover about ourselves when we're dropped into a village in the middle of nowhere, alone.

Then, at some point each evening, it's time for The Doors album *Strange Days* -- and the music becomes something more than background noise. The title of one song, "People are Strange," has been our mantra for weeks -- but that isn't the song we're waiting for each night. We love it as Jim Morrison and the rest of The Doors take us through the first nine songs on the album . . .

. . . but when we hear the irresistible opening notes of the last song . . . and Morrison's invitation to "Yeah, come on" . . . there we go, all of us, our feet tapping and our bodies beginning to sway as we emerge from our huts into the courtyard . . .

When the music's over

When the music's over

When the music's over

Turn out the lights

Turn out the lights

Turn out the lights

For the music is your special friend

Dance on fire as it intends

Music is your only friend

Until the end

Until the end

Until the ennnnnnnddddd

The song lasts for nearly eleven minutes and little else matters to the people in the courtyard. The simple beat mesmerizes as we sing and sway and dance . . . *dahdah ditdit dee, dahdah ditdit deedeede* . . . over and over and over again . . .

Before I sink

Into the big sleep

I want to hear

I want to hear

The scream of the butterfly

And then, at about the six-minute mark, we fall silent and stop moving, every other sound in the campground erased, and two minutes pass as we wait for the magic one-word answer that electrifies us every night . . .

We're gettin' tired

Of hangin' around

Waitin' around

With our heads to the ground

I hear a very gentle sound

Very near yet very far

Very soft, yeah, very clear

Come today, come today

What have they done to the earth?

What have they done to our fair sister?

Ravaged and plundered and ripped her and bit her

*Stuck her with knives in the side of the dawn
And tied her with fences and dragged her down*

I hear a very gentle sound

With your ear down to the ground

*We want the world and we want it . . .
We want the world and we want it . . .*

(Now)

Now?

Then the pause. That miniscule but incredible pause.

We hold our breaths.

NOWWWWWW!!!!!!!!

And the scream blasting from the loudspeaker unleashes all the pent-up frenzy in our lives
. . . and we scream with The Doors . . . night after night after night . . .

Until we leave for India. . .

The recording we listened to can be heard at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gTpvcSVWFU>