

# Chris Hassett

# My Musical Journey



So what do you do when, at age four, you already know that singing is the greatest joy in life. Keep singing, right? And I have for six decades now.

Although I wasn't technically writing songs at age four, the few songs that I did know, I sang with great conviction. Singing with conviction has become one of my trademarks. I didn't write "Bring Him Home" from *Les Misérables* or "Could I Leave You" from *Follies* – but I try to sing those songs like I scribbled those notes and words myself.

I grew up with AM radio and heard a lot of incredible music at every stage of growing up. I still love to sing radio commercials that I heard in the 50s and 60s in small towns across America. But the real magic wasn't the commercials – it was the music of Elvis and Buddy Holly and Bobby Rydell and Tommy Roe and Ray Charles and Guy Mitchell and Marty Robbins and – yeah some girls in there, too – Patsy Cline, Leslie Gore, Brenda Lee, Connie Francis. And all the groups: The Coasters, Drifters, Temptations, Ronettes, Chiffons, Chirelles, . . . I know, it's all coming out in torrents. And all of that was pre-Beatles — and the arrival of those four lads was another watershed moment in so many lives. And then Woodstock. And the California sound. And, and, and — a constant barrage of life-giving music that shaped my young life.

There's another major influence that I can now bring up ('cause we're friends, right?) — and that would be showtunes. What a cliché, right? Well, Dad was a fantastic singer and a bit of an actor and he brought home all the cast albums of the great musicals: *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*. *My Fair Lady*, *The Music Man*, *Man of La Mancha*. These shows had so many great songs that were filled with story and emotion and character. Everything wonderful that music can be in a young boy's life was there for me. All of these influences (along with a moderate dose of Classical albums that Mom picked up at the grocery store) are now manifest in my eclectic musical personality.

Fast forward to college and I'm playing and singing in stairwells with buddies and loving it all over again but now I'm making the music! Another epiphany: Music isn't just FOR us, it's BY us. As an adult, I've sung nearly continually (ask my friends) — a million-plus songs, written a few, done some concerts, brought some fun and tears to some audiences and now — it's all I want to do.

The Friends & Lovers Concert series — from 1987 through 1996 — raised thousands of dollars for AIDS support organizations and other community-based non-profits and they gave me a chance to collaborate with so many fantastic musicians in San Diego — Mary Barranger, Kenny Ard, Peggy Watson, Kay Etheridge, and many more.

With the release of my CD, *Bring Love Home*, I embark on a new chapter in my musical journey — one that puts music at the very center of my life. The ten originals on the CD address topics of interest to the community I live in. They have a decidedly progressive point of view and I hope that the music can reach hearts and change minds on some of the critical issues of our day — homelessness, mental illness, marriage equality, loss of loved ones, and more.

For 2010, I am planning a packed musical calendar — church singing, benefit concerts, club appearances, and more. I need all of you to sign on as fans so I can tell you about the journey ahead.