

**DAVE DOBBYN**  
**The Songbook**

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# Introduction

One, two, three, four...!

**WHAT FOLLOWS** is where my work begins. It's playful work but demands full presence, and the need to build a better song becomes an obsession. Songwriters are always looking for their best three minutes—at least that's my experience. There's a need to connect with an audience—heart, mind, body and soul—without that getting in the way of the music. The song must always transcend the players on stage or in a studio performance. A good song should create a good audience; a great song will ensure it.

06 / 07

As I write, I'm working on a song that is yet to be fully formed. It's been a constant distraction, and the rest of my world is in service to this song and that distraction. It's a passion, really, and it drives me bonkers. I feel like I'm only as good as my next song. The antidote is performing a song to an audience. Suddenly a weight is lifted, a connection made, and you find yourself in a brief equilibrium before moving to the next obsession, another song. It's like launching a new boat—there's a degree of hope in exposing her to the ocean and the elements, then off she goes over the horizon, all by herself, at the mercy of the deep.

Songs inhabit people and vice versa. Maybe a song can take you to a familiar place, or one you've never been to, or do both simultaneously. Like déjà vu, good songs transcend and mix the senses. They have to move your heart. Otherwise they become wallpaper, and wallpaper just disguises a wall. It's a bit of a lie.

A good song is authentic and built on good ground; it's made to last, with enough enticing hooks to catch a good many ears and hearts. Real emotion, amplified in a song, connects people because it's true. But whatever you may want to convey in a song, it may not be the ultimate focus for an audience, because songs have a life of their own beyond the writer. Songs live among friends and family, sports teams and school halls, pubs and community halls, theatres, wineries and festivals, but especially in people's hearts. It seems that the richer the provincial culture is at heart, the more the songs travel.

It can only be the songs that keep bringing people back, and I do love them for it. So here we have a songbook for you and them. I hope you all find it useful.

Yours truly  
*Dave Dobbyn*

# Just Add Water

The Beach Boys' 'Do it Again' was influential when 'Just Add Water' insisted itself upon my piano one day while I was working on songs for the *Hopetown* album.

**I THOUGHT OF** Brian Wilson's vocal brilliance and harmony. There's a clarity and innocence to his harmony singing that always appealed to me. It's an American tradition that invites you to sing along. The mighty Leon Russell affected me deeply as a piano player but also as a singer and performer. He would go into a rave over a riff and wind everybody up in a gospel style.

I couldn't avoid the phrase 'just add water' any longer and thought that a snake-oil hawker and part-time preacher would be a good character to write for. Either way, it's a song of assurance — yet another water song. You never run out of water songs.

The mighty Leon Russell affected me deeply as a piano player but also as a singer and performer. He would go into a rave over a riff and wind everybody up in a gospel style.

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## Just Add Water

just add water  
it's a crying shame  
you know you left your lover  
out in the rain

you just add water  
it's a crying shame  
you know you left your lover  
out in the rain

you're standing in it  
like you knew you ought to  
like southern california  
with a lot more water

your life is shaking  
since you started quaking  
and your house is burning  
while your heart's in heaven

don't move an atom  
don't change a thing

you just add water  
just add water and dissolve baby

your temperature's climbing  
cos your rivers are dry  
your businesses buying up  
a hole in your sky

you're walking in unarmed  
you know you're bound to fail  
when the price of freedom  
is to want for nothing more

don't move an atom  
don't change a thing

just add water  
just add water and dissolve baby  
just add water

just add water and dissolve baby  
you just add water  
just add water and dissolve baby

your world is clanging  
like a liberty bell  
people divining  
long-abandoned wells

your air feels thicker  
and a weight is upon you  
like babylon burning  
up in california

don't move an atom  
don't change a thing  
you just add water  
just add water and dissolve baby  
you just add water  
just add water and dissolve baby

calling all stranded  
calling all thirsty  
I'm calling all taxis  
to a town called mercy

we're gigging up a choir  
with a song called love  
many millions in the band  
raining pennies from above

and anyone unable  
play the tambourine  
forget your every burden  
in a stream of pure water

# Maybe the Rain



‘Maybe the Rain’ is an anti-nuclear song.

**THE FRENCH WERE TESTING** nukes and the US was transporting nasty stuff to Johnston Atoll that year.

It was déjà vu for a lot of people. I’ve always wondered about the arrogant treatment of the Pacific as a shooting range and dump. There are ruins of empires colliding still, from such a colonialist past. It’s inexpressible, the damage done long-term.

Thank God for strings and wood and a few chords. I never had any problem with singing about what bothered me alongside the love songs. A man’s gotta have a good vent every now and then.

I had the pleasure of working with Pete Thomas and Bruce Thomas from Mr. Costello’s Attractions that year. Couldn’t help but be influenced by that experience, big time.

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## Maybe the Rain

well this is horror show time  
in the heart of the pacific  
the french and the cavalry  
are dealing deadly wares  
and you can stand back in anger  
or totally despair  
or you can raise your voices up  
maybe move some air

maybe the rain will wash your  
tears away  
into the stream with autumn leaves  
that some other spring may grow,  
sometime  
some other spring may grow

maybe the rain will wash your  
poison hands  
into the open belly of the  
ocean wide  
that some other child may grow  
sometime some other child  
may grow

well there is no getting out of this  
the damage is horrific  
while they’re tattooing chromosomes  
from bikini to the marshall islands  
they made your front yard a urinal  
during r&r  
yeah this is some kind of suicide  
beyond the mere bizzare

maybe the rain will wash your  
tears away  
into the stream with autumn leaves  
that some other spring may grow  
sometime  
some other spring may grow

maybe the rain will wash your  
poison hands  
into the open belly of the ocean wide  
that some other child may grow  
sometime some other child may grow  
in the future  
some other child may grow  
get outta here  
some other child may grow

maybe the rain  
maybe the rain  
maybe the rain