

WE MADE IT THROUGH!

Stewart Hendrickson

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For many reasons, it was a rough year, and Covid was only a part of it. Living alone, tending to my wife's progressing dementia, and all the political chaos just added to it. After a quiet New Year's day, talking to my daughter and sister, both in California, I had a simple dinner and cleaned up the kitchen. Passing by the couch where my cat, Igor, was peacefully reclining, I stopped and said to him, "We made it through this year, and next year will be better." Then it hit me. I cried uncontrollably. Yes, it was a rough year, we survived, but what will the next year be like?

New Year's Day is a time to reflect and hope. Music is big a part of my life. I spent the day practicing some new pieces on my violin and finding some new/old songs to sing for our Zoom music jam the following week. I gravitated to some old gospel songs. I am not religious by any means, but I find these songs comforting and full of hope – just what I need now. Many of the violin pieces I like to play alternate between minor and major keys – sadness and joy.

There are some YouTube music videos I find myself listening to again and again. For pure joy, I listen to [Tuba Skinny](#), a traditional New Orleans street jazz band. Their instruments include cornet, clarinet, trombone, tuba, tenor banjo, guitar, washboard, and vocals. They play music from the early jazz, ragtime, and blues era of the 1920s and 1930s. Playing on the street with people watching, some dancing, I find myself involuntarily applauding along with their audience. It will brighten up any day.



Here is a beautiful hour-long living room concert, which I find myself watching for its beauty and calming effect. [Guitarist Miroslav Tadić and American violinist and singer Yvette Holzwarth](#) perform arrangements, compositions, and improvisations based on the rich treasury of Balkan folklore from Tadić's new album "Luka" (Harbor).



Now, what do I hope for in the new year? In one word, LOVE. After a year of too much hate and raucous political chaos, I look forward to reconciliation, respect for all people, and belief in reason and science. These are not just words, but we have to live and act on them as well. Get to know people you may disagree with or who are different from those you already know. And see the beauty in life, science, and the arts. With love, all other good things will follow.

May you find happiness, joy, and a good life in this coming new year.

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