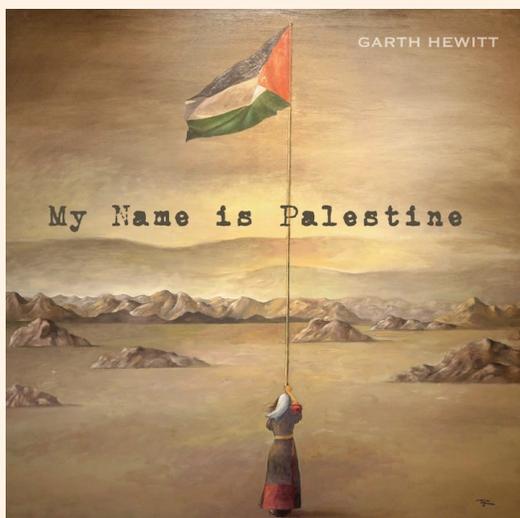




from Garth...

The single that grew up to be an album...



The story of the new album – painting, poems, protest and prayers

The single is out! I told the story in the last newsletter of the single [My Name Is Palestine](#) – now you can get it on vinyl! See the end of this newsletter for details. It is a beautiful cover, because of the very emotive painting by Suleiman Mansour.

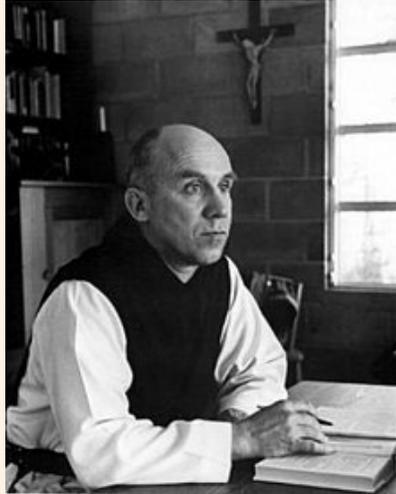
This is a limited edition, there won't be a reprint.

If you order a copy you'll be helping us cover the costs of putting it all together – and get started on our next project for justice.

However, if you are hesitating because you don't have a record player, a CD is also coming out which starts with the two songs from the single - and I will tell you the story of how the single first grew into an EP, and then became an album.

The first issue after having written *My Name Is Palestine* was, what would be the B side of the single? I thought it would be good to have something that reflected justice and reconciliation, and then I remembered that in 2015 Canon Edward Pruen had put a tune to some words that I'd written for the book *Making Holy Dreams Come True*. The words are about Bethlehem - Ed wrote a lovely tune that I think enhances the words, and so that became the B side.

Recognising that not everyone has a vinyl player I decided to do an EP on CD for the two songs, and add three other songs that I had been working on – one was called *To the God Whose Name is Mercy* sparked off by the title of a book written by Pope Francis, and the verses echo some writing of Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk who wrote in the '60s and was particularly concerned about the problem of war and nuclear weapons. The verses reflect his understanding of the God who calls us to a pathway to peace and the rejection of the arms trade and war. This one beautifully arranged by producer Kevin Duncan has lovely backing vocals by Abbie Goldberg and Pete Banks.



Thomas Merton



Aaron Neville

The second song that I had handy was called *Sing Aaron Sing*, about the remarkable soul singer Aaron Neville. Gill and I went with our son Joe, who lives in New York, to a Christmas concert that Aaron gave – it was a remarkable evening that had an interwoven spirituality which I tried to capture in the song about him. Our good friend Dave Perry plays guitar on the album and does a fantastic guitar solo in this song.

The third song was one called *This Place*. Our daughter Abi used to go to St Augustine's Church in Nashville and that church produced various albums - on one of them was a track by poet and musician Tom Kimmel, a very beautiful song about church. The first time I heard it was in the car driving home just after Gill and I had come out of the church we go to in London, St Botolph's Aldgate, and the song seemed to underline the impact of that church.

We had more or less finished working on these songs when Kevin Duncan of GingerDog Records suggested that as it was going to take time to process particularly the 12" single, why not write some more songs – so we could turn the EP into an album.

So the single became an accidental album. I wrote two more songs, and then decided to include one or two by other people. One was a song I had written and recorded before on the album *The Road Home – In The Storms of Life* but then it only had a chorus and to me it felt unfinished, so I wrote various verses and a middle section, reflecting something about the state of our world today.



St Botolph's Without Aldgate, the church Garth & Gill attend in London

I also adapted a Taize song called *Let Nothing Disturb You* adding verses and a middle section. This song says something about the character of the God beside us.

I was looking at one or two other songs that I might write when Gill and I went to a Joan Baez concert and she sang the old Woody Guthrie song *Deportees* which I used to sing when I was at university – many years ago! Joan Baez related it to what was happening today on the border between the States and Mexico, and the song seemed to have taken on new life. I thought it was time to record it - for those who remember my song *When Johnny Cash Sang Man In Black* you'll remember that I had a verse in that referring to *Deportees*.

Just after that we headed to a Tom Paxton concert and his third song was *Whose Garden Was This*. I had sung this at various gigs in the '70s and again it seemed to come alive in such a fresh way, so relevant to the issues of climate change.

A Couple More Poets

The British poet Adrian Mitchell many years back wrote a poem about Victor Jara of Chile, the songwriter and musician who was killed when Pinochet came to power. Arlo Guthrie (Woody's son) put a tune to it and he performed it, as did various other artists. It's a very powerful poem and I decided to include that.

Then finally at the end of the album I record a song of Kris Kristofferson. It's called *Love Is The Way*, and it is without doubt a beautiful poem which starts off with these words:

**Deep in the heart of the infinite darkness
A tiny blue marble is spinning through space
Born in the splendour of God's holy vision**

And sliding away like a tear down his face.

It's a song that pulls together the themes of the dignity and value of each human being, with a strong rejection of the arms trade and war, ending with words that remind us that love is the way – because this is the way of God.

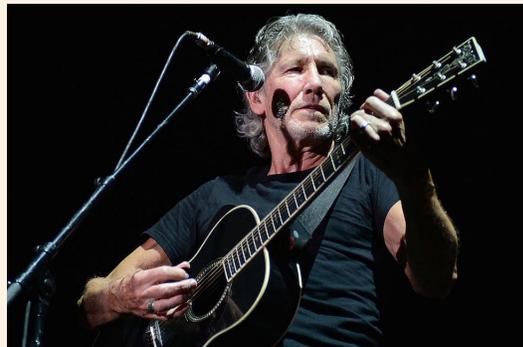
The Verse That Got Away

The album has a strong theme of companionship and justice. In *In The Storms of Life* I found I had written one verse too many, and so I chopped one. But with things that have been happening, particularly the comments that a certain President has been making recently about people of colour, I regretted leaving it out - and similar comments have been coming from other leaders around the world. So don't be surprised in my live gigs if you get an extra verse that's not on the album! This is the verse that got away:

**Got a white supremacist calling the tune
Using language of hate in these restless times
But the wounded God beside us shows a better way to go
And in the valley of despair, turns out we're not alone**



Pope Francis



Roger Waters

The Pope's Prayer

Some of you will have heard me in concert using a prayer of Pope Francis - I think it links in well with the album. Normally I say some words of Roger Waters (of Pink Floyd) before the prayer; they seem to work well together, though the Pope and Pink Floyd are not normally a double act! But I think these bring together some of the themes of this album.

Roger Waters: **“War isn't about ideology, it's not about religion. It's about**

money. It's always been about money. It's about money and power and it is devastatingly sad to see the human race feeling compelled to march further down the road towards ultimate destruction."

"The holy grail is love," Waters continued. "That is what we should be promoting and protecting with every ounce of energy we all have."

Pope Francis

May God change the hearts of the violent

May God change the hearts of those who seek war

May God change the hearts of those who manufacture and sell arms

And may God strengthen the hearts and minds of peacemakers
And grant them every blessing.

May God bless you all!

*From a service at the Latin Church,
Bethany beyond the Jordan.*



Garth Hewitt

To buy the vinyl single from Garth's website [click here](#)

To pre-order the album [click here](#)

To take advantage of our special offer of the 12" vinyl single and the CD together at £25 including postage and packing, email isobel@garthhewitt.org



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