*Wok & Roll by Peter Kwong, (Frederic) Inter-County Leader*

**More than just another love song**

I heard this song by Gerry and the Pacemakers many times while growing up in Hong Kong. A catchy tune, I liked it a lot, but never thought much about it then.

I had sung the song a few times with my band, but again, it was just another nice song. Yes, I did sing with a band a while back. Well, as a matter of fact, a long while back.

Everyone deserves to have some crazy fun times when they’re young, right? I was the lead singer and the only member from the States, the rest were from Toronto.

We were serious about our music and had performed numerous times at special parties, in front of hundreds. The name of our band? The Band with No Name — is that original?

Before each gig, the band members would send me a list of songs that we would be performing, then a CD of their practice. Yes, they would get together and practice without me, pretending that I was there singing. Then I would practice on my own with their music.

A day before our gig, I would fly up to Toronto and we would rehearse, playing all the songs together for the first time. Sounds strange, but it worked. Many times, just one practice session was all it took.

We all seemed to know our parts and our partners’ parts. When you’re connected, music just flows. Of course, the beers helped.

Goodness, a case of beer cost more than $50 Canadian currency, which is about $45 U.S. It was $45 for a case of 24 cans! I’ve been drinking beers that cost less than $10 for a case of 30 cans here in Wisconsin. Oh well, that’s life.

We sang the song “You’ll Never Walk Alone” many times, but the words kept growing on me each time. I like singing the song more and more. It has a deeper meaning than just being another love song.

I love football, which is called soccer here in America. It is strange that while football is a game that’s popular in all parts of the world, in America we are stuck with using an olive-shaped ball in a game that requires pounding on your opponents in order to score.

How on earth one earns six points after scoring instead of just one point — it’s mind-boggling. Same with tennis. It is called “love” when you have nothing. So very true, when you have nothing, that’s love, my dearest; that’s what life is all about.

Anyway, a while back, while I was at a sports bar having a beer and waiting for my buddies to arrive, the TV was showing a football (soccer) game, and it was a championship game between two British teams. I think it was Manchester against Liverpool.

Growing up in Hong Kong, football was the game to play. All we needed was a goalie, someone to play defense, someone up front to play offense and that’s it.

We could play the game in any open space. The goal could be marked with a piece of rock, our book bags, clothes or whatever was around.

Of course, we would need a ball. Our parents never figured out how we wore out our leather shoes so often. Another mystery in life.

Anyway, before the championship game started, the Liverpool fans all joined in and sang their team anthem, which was “You’ll Never Walk Alone.” Can you imagine a stadium filled with 95,000 spectators singing with one voice? I was mesmerized then.

I don’t remember which team won, but the song stuck in my head, and my heart, for the longest time. Just read the words:

When you walk through a storm

Hold your head up high

And don’t be afraid of the dark

At the end of the storm

Is a golden sky

And the sweet silver song of the lark

Walk on, through the wind

Walk on, through the rain

Though your dreams be tossed and blown

Walk on, walk on

With hope in your heart

And you'll never walk alone

No matter how dark the sky, there is always a beam of light at the end; and with hope in our hearts, we will always reach the other end that is peaceful and calm, the golden sky.

Though our dreams might be broken, blown and tossed along the way; yet with hope in our hearts, we will get through, as we’re not alone, and never alone the whole journey. I don’t want to get too religious or spiritual here, but isn’t that the truth?

It is our belief, our faith, our trust and our hope that carried us through all the tough times. Look at our forefathers, when times were tough, and things were rough, they never gave up and threw in the towels and claimed, “I’ve had it, I’m done and I’m through.”

Over and over, they would pick up the loose ends and start all over and over again.

The song “You’ll Never Walk Alone” was actually written by Rodgers and Hammerstein in 1945 for a musical called “Carousel.” It has a very touching storyline. Then Gerry and the Pacemakers, a band from England, recorded the song in 1960, and it became an instant hit in the States.

From 1964 to 2010, Jerry Lewis would sing this song each year on his Labor Day MDA Telethon. The famous rock band Queen was inspired by this song and wrote “We Are the Champions” and “We Will Rock You” that have almost become must play songs in all sporting events. Wow!

Never give up, no matter what tough times you’re going through. The golden sky is not that far away; and you can hear the sweet silver songs of the lark. Most important, you are not alone, and you’ll never walk alone.

Once you believe in yourself, there’s hope. Have faith, and all dreams will come true. What a great song indeed. I hope you all will sing that with me some day soon.

Just in case, I sing in E flat.