

Play to the Size of Your Heart, Not the Size of the Crowd

A band recently taught me an incredibly simple truth about being awesome.

Their name is [Seryn](#) and they're from Denton, TX. They kind of remind me of Mumford & Sons with more instruments and less British accents. Each member plays approximately 37 instruments and they constantly switch them out in the middle of the songs.

I first saw them play at the Catalyst Conference in front of 13,000 people. I was blown away by the energy they filled that arena with that day. They were unbridled with their passion, as if they couldn't believe they got to play music in front of people.

I wrote about them on Facebook. A few days later, someone in the town next to ours emailed me. He said, "I saw you liked that band Seryn. They're playing a house show in my living room. Do you and your wife want to come see them?" We did. So we did.

And it was an awkward experience at first. We just walked up to a small ranch house in the suburbs and knocked on the front door. Everyone there knew each other, except for us. We stood in the kitchen, having one of those really intense conversations you launch into with someone when you're trying to pretend you're not uncomfortable.

"What do you think these cabinets are made of? Pressed wood? Is that right? I would have thought they were another kind of wood. Interesting."

An hour later, Seryn drove in from New York and set up all the aforementioned instruments in Larry's living room. They tuned everything, had a sip of water, and then launched into their set.

I expected they'd play at a 3 or a 4, whatever the appropriate level of music is for a corner of taupe carpet next to a loveseat. I was wrong.

They didn't play to the size of the crowd, they played to the size of their heart.

And it's apparently huge.

The same joy I saw them dominate a stage of 13,000 people with weeks before was on display that night in a room full of 60 friends and two weird outsiders who seemed inappropriately interested in the cabinets. It was like Seryn couldn't help to play that way. That was what was inside their heart.

Awesome doesn't let the crowd determine the size of the performance. Awesome gets up for 2 people or 200. Awesome writes great books even if no one is going to read them. Awesome sweeps store floors when no one is looking.

Awesome can't help itself.

Awesome has a huge heart. And that's what it always plays too.

The size of the crowd doesn't matter.

The applause of the audience doesn't matter.

The money you make singing doesn't matter.

And I hope you get all those things. I hope you have huge audiences and screaming fans and more money than Scrooge McDuck in his money bin. But, long before any of that, I hope you'll learn the simple lesson Seryn taught me:

Play to the size of your heart, not the size of your crowd.

More from Jon Acuff [here](#).