

Psychological Dimensions of Songwriting

On the face of it, the writing of songs can appear to be a very simple activity but underneath a lot can be going on that we are not even aware of.

Because we are human beings we bring many of the different dimensions of our lives to whatever activities become involved in and this includes Songwriting.

One way of classifying these dimensions are body mind heart spirit and shadow. In this article I want to explore these dimensions and how they pertain to the activity of songwriting.

Body

It is the body gives us our rhythms and our pulses and it is the most natural thing in the world for us to tune into the rhythm of our hearts and the pulsations of blood coursing through our bodies. These rhythms in time were transferred to drums and other percussion instruments and in turn come to be reflected in our songwriting.

Mind

We rely on our mind to give structure to our songs. To give meaning to what we want to express. To find the intricate or the simple rhyming schemes that goes to make up a good song. We also rely on mind to learn our instruments and to retain a reservoir of knowledge which we will draw on when we are writing. On the other hand when we write only with our minds our songs can be one dimension and clever and may not succeed in touch in the hearts of others.

Heart

We need to bring our hearts into play in order to achieve this. It is the heart dimension which brings emotion and empathy into our songs and into our singing of our songs. So songs written from the heart and performed from the heart are likely to have a more powerful impact us than songs that have been only written with the power of the mind.

Under the heading of the heart, we also have relationships. It is important that a songwriter gets on well with his or her co- writers, with musicians and recording engineers who may be working on their songs. It's not an absolute rule but a person gets on well with other people is likely to be more successful songwriter than those who do not.

Spirit

The highest level of songwriting is achieved when we become inspired, when we can tune into our source which is also source of our music. Many songwriters will say to you that they do not know where they get their ideas come from and this can apply to both the melodies and the lyrics. They are not unlike other artists, be they painters, actors writers or poets in that respect. Good

songwriter's recognise that sometimes they are in the flow and it is as if they are being asked to channel the music to channel the song. This is a privileged position to be in and if it happens to you treasure it. This is not something that can necessarily be learned although it is something that can be encouraged. Sometimes the playing of music is sufficient to bring you to an altered state of consciousness where capacities or gifts that are not normally available to come into play.

Shadow

The final dimension, which can creep into our songwriting, is shadow. Shadow in the that I use it here, is a psychological term which relates to that part of our personality which we do not acknowledge and wish to suppress and which can then express itself in inappropriate ways. So for instance, a songwriter may be repressing anger and not acknowledging that there is anger in his make-up may end up writing angry songs. This may or may not be a good thing. But do not be surprised if themes torn up in your songs that you would normally not think about or address.

This is a brief introduction to certain psychological aspects of songwriting. Our songwriting will be more vital the more dimensions of our personalities are brought into play.

Tony Bardon