

Songwriting Article #10

Last month, Keith Caldwell, my songwriting partner talked about the importance of having someone to bounce your ideas off of, even if it is only YOU. This month, I want you to take a look at some other people that can help you in your songwriting; songwriters who have gone before us.

I'm not saying try to copy someone's style, but I am saying that having access to some good Dottie Rambo songs or Bill Gaither songs will help you to evaluate what you have put down on paper. Hopefully, it won't be toilet paper!

I know that we, (Keith and I) talk primarily to Christian songwriters when we write these articles, but don't just look at what is being written in Christian songs. Look at some of the masters from other realms of influence also, like Roy Orbison. The way these songs are crafted give the unique sound to the artist performing them, especially when the songwriter is also the performer. Look at James Taylor, Dan Fogelberg, Kenny Loggins, Alicia Keys and on and on. All different stylistically, but brilliant in their own right, these songwriters have given us mega-hits and have provided a frame of reference for the songwriter out there, whether beginner or seasoned professional.

All music has a message and whether or not you agree with that message, you have to realize that songwriters all have a unique way of looking at things. You have to find your own unique way of looking at things. Sometimes, you have to make a few mistakes before you are able to get the song to work for you, but you can only do that by writing.

This is the best advice I can give you, "Practice songwriting every day if at all possible." It is just like exercising, the more you do it, the more beneficial it will be. Also, remember, no matter how much you may admire these other writers and their songwriting expertise, God has given YOU a special gift to share and your perspective will always be unique. Compare your songs to some of the greatest songwriters and you will find help in structure and even the way those ideas of theirs are expressed, but don't simply copy the melody or chord structure. Get inspiration and then let the circumstances that life has put you through provide the fodder for your writing.

Until next time, KEEP WRITING!