By Anna Neale

Recently I wrote a post on Twitter about songwriters, asking the question: ‘what good is a songwriter today?’ The post received 51 replies stating, ‘nothing’, ‘not sure’, ‘not sure what’s good about songwriting’ and these were just a few among the many replies I received. It’s the second time I asked myself, ‘can you separate the song and the songwriter, and if you do, can you still tell who the songwriter is?’ The post on Twitter and a few others got shared quite a bit, so I was encouraged to pursue the question further.

For me, it’s a strong, expressed desire to remain human. It’s why we have emotions and compassion. Why we value love and relationships? I believe it’s because we’re not sure how much time we have left on this planet. We all carry a song with us. From our first kiss, to a summer day in 1995. Births, deaths, and the weight of humanity. The power of song as a human and social being is down to our consciousness and capacity to imagine. We are the creators of our own journeys and the story of our lives. If you were to follow us, you would be following a song.

The music you create for yourself is your own story. It’s the one that means as much to you as any others. It’s true that we are all unique in our ways of thinking and feeling. But no-one else’s will. You are unique.

Can you separate the song from the songwriter? Yes of course you can, but there will always be an aspect of the songwriter’s identity in that song. A ‘DNA’ calling forward the composer’s concept, melody, harmony, rhythm, key, to the colouration of chords (Fadd9 instead of F? Colour, timbre!), where the song is structured. The creator will always leave their mark. That’s our purpose. While the consumer may demand more, the songwriter will always strive to achieve in three and a half minutes. It’s a novel, a feature film, only more condensed. This is why, while a song may move on, the songwriter’s identity remains. It’s their purpose.

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