
This is not easy to write... please read

Yesterday, my doctor confirmed that I do NOT have cancer. The biopsy was negative.

To put it mildly, that was a clarifying moment. Before I had reached my car for the trip home, I knew what I had to do: close the Author Brick Road project to pursue my passion for music. (More on this below, if you are curious.)

I am keenly aware that I have only recently invited you to come along on this author's journey. That makes this a particularly difficult thing to write — I do not want to disappoint you. If you will indulge me, I feel I owe an explanation.

I am nearly 65. When I was 50, while doing some writing I discovered I was hearing fully developed symphonic scores that I thought were coming from my John Williams mix. Imagine my surprise when I realized that the mix had long since stopped playing and that what I was hearing was not anything he had composed. I had composed it, somehow, from somewhere in the recesses of my mind and it was unmistakably mimicking his style — down to his penchant for using ascending fifths, as I learned later when I studied his works.

I could not read a note of music. I could not play an instrument. I could not tap out a rhythm. But I could imagine entire symphonic scores complete with ascending fifths, just like John Williams uses.

The next day, I bought a book and learned, over a couple of weeks, how to notate what I was hearing. I was writing out the full score in pencil as I moved across the staves of the notation pad, just as I heard it in my head.

I soon enrolled in some college music courses. I could not play an instrument. I could, though, jot down pretty much any music I heard, including the harmonies, in one go. I did not qualify for music theory, harmony, or composing courses because, to meet the course prerequisites, I had to play an instrument. I was given a waiver because I successfully demonstrated that my "instrument" was my ability to write down music.

One of my compositions from the college composing course won a competition and I heard my music performed by a symphonic orchestra for the first time. I was 51. And I was hooked.

This was all very strange, coming, as it did, so late in life. I was extremely busy in my law practice and with CharityChannel. So from then to now, nearly 15 years, I have not had more than a few hours a week to do music, if that. Sometimes weeks and months went by without my finding the time to do anything musically.

Last year I resolved to step back from publishing and from law practice to find more time for music. I launched Author Brick Road as a consulting practice, planning to work half-time and to use the other half for music. That worked to a point, despite the rapidly growing workload from Author Brick Road author clients. I've been working on my piano skills and have taken a deep dive into the study of harmony (did you know that Elton John's music gets much of its sound from the use of pedal notes?). Here's me

practicing in my studio. I have a long, long way to go to learn the piano, obviously:

To ramp up my composing skills, I've been arranging some popular songs for orchestra. Here are some of them, in case you're curious:

- [Hallelujah](#), by Leonard Cohen
- [Over the Rainbow](#), from The Wizard of Oz movie
- [Sound of Silence](#), by Paul Simon
- [Mary Did You Know?](#) by Mark Lowry

I was a researcher and private editor of what became a massively popular book called [The Purpose Driven Life](#), and yet here I sit, almost two decades later, not pursuing music. Is this my life's purpose? And am I missing it?

Frankly, lots of people can teach writing and publishing a book (including self-publishing). Just google these things, and you'll see what I mean.

But no one else in the world can write my songs. Only I can do that.

I need to find out. I want to start writing pop and maybe country songs. I don't know if they'll be good songs or bad songs, but they'll be my songs.

To do that, I need more time! Author Brick Road ramped up so quickly that I find myself once again with almost no time for music. I desperately need the phone to not ring and destroy something amazing playing through my mind before I can write it down. I need the time to study other songwriters and composers, to learn from their genius (did I mention Elton John?). I need time to become at least good enough at the keyboard to play my own songs and I need to resume my voice lessons.

So there it is. That's why I'm closing down Author Brick Road, the mailing list, and the Facebook Group despite their positive reception in the author community. I am grateful to my wife, Janet, who supports my decision.

Even if I am a great big flop, every minute I spend doing music is pure joy for me. I just have to do it. I hope you will understand and will forgive me.

Enough about me. I encourage you in your writing! If you have a book in you, write it! Or, if you're writing it, finish it! No one in the world can write your book with your particular perspective. No one.

Consider self-publishing but no matter how you publish it, see it through. The world needs what you have to say. Be intrepid in seeking out resources to help you along the way. If you need a writing coach, get one if you can. If you want to learn how to self-publish, google it. It's amazing how good the resources are to help you do that if you look for them.

Please know that, while I am taking a new path, I care deeply about your success. I've devoted decades to helping hundreds of authors. It's been a big part of my life's work.

And do drop me a note when your book is published!

Steve