

From: Kipp Kahlia <kippkahl[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, August 6, 2014 5:45 AM
To: ATR-LT3-ASCAP-BMI-Decree-Review <ASCAP-BMI-Decree-Review@ATR.USDOJ.GOV>
Subject: Re: I am a songwriter and this is important

I wasn't finished. :-)

Here's the proof-read and edited version.

On Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 2:30 AM, Kipp Kahlia <kippkahl[REDACTED]> wrote:
To Whom it May Concern,

It has taken me years and years to become a good songwriter -- I wrote my first song in 1976. There are a lot of ways to learn to write songs, but a song is a puzzle that requires an extremely broad skill-set for a writer to put together well. Somehow, a writer has to take all these pieces like chords, melody, bass lines, drum parts, string parts and LYRICS to create magic. A song has to make a listener FEEL something, not just THINK something.

So I studied music. I was already a good writer -- I was one of those people who was able to get A's on nearly everything I wrote, from grade school to university (yes, I graduated -- with a B.A. in politics -- and then went straight to music school). It took SO MUCH WORK to hang on by my teeth in music school. There were so many different equations and formulas to memorize and with which to become conversant. On top of that, there were fine motor skills and technical abilities that had to be developed in order to even use all the conceptual information.

On top of gaining those skills, I had to learn to make my music be a work of art, instead of the a dry sum of formulas and equations, and technical expertise. I had to figure out how to "arrange" -- i.e., how to write parts for instruments that would make a song take *flight* for a listener.

Then the world changed again, and I had to learn how to RECORD. People work for decades to learn to record well, and now in order to be self-sufficient, I had to add audio recording to my bag of tricks. I wasn't done with the other stuff, and now I had to become a recording engineer TOO? More school, more time home alone working while people with 9-5 jobs took a break. I worked almost ALL THE TIME. Yes, I love what I do, but it is often difficult, often frustrating, and always challenging. If people knew how many variations of a song is generated, and how painstakingly we go through each iteration to find the best parts to put together for the end product, they'd be astonished.

This is not what they show on a TV show about musicians: this part is too tedious to include in a show. The viewing audience would be bored out of their minds. BUT THIS IS THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF THE WORK. Many non-musicians can't imagine that people who "look like musicians" are this focused, this diligent, this disciplined, and this tenacious when it comes to their work. But it is what is *required* to do good work.

Not everyone can do this, and it's NOT just a talent. It's a skill that's developed. It's a skill that is *difficult* to develop. I graduated from U.C. Santa Cruz, and when I got to music school, my undergraduate work at UCSC seemed like a walk in the park compared to everything that was being thrown at me at music school. Writing and creating music can be amazingly complex.

Just as any professional in any field expects to be well-compensated for their level of expertise, I expect to be

well-compensated. I didn't party or indulge in any sort of regular recreation through my young adult years because I was always STUDYING, always practicing.

If I am doing work that affects the world positively because I've spent most of my life developing the skills to do so, I want to be paid for my work. Music is a soundtrack to most people's lives -- whether we intend to listen to music or not, it's always there. It's in the restaurant, and the elevator, and on the phone when we're put on hold, and part of the video games and movies and TV shows. It's EVERYWHERE. Apparently then, there is a strong and steady demand for it, or it would not be there to enhance everyone's life experience.

Songwriters need to be paid for what we do. We need to be paid for the hours in a row that we spend working on music. For the time that we spend between sunset and sunrise, finding that perfect little sound that makes the lyrics have more impact, or figuring out what is wrong with our equipment when there are technical difficulties and the ear won't give us what we need or want. When we find it takes a WEEK to find *one little word* that makes the whole lyric fall into place. When we re-write, and re-write, and re-write so that a song can make hundreds, or thousands, or millions of people from different walks of life of people feel like it was written *just for them*. This is WORK.

We deserve to be paid for our labor.

thanks,
Kipp Kahlia

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Kipp Kahlia

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