

Meg Brookes

First

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heart of my songs come from
ideas or thoughts:
something that interested me,
something that made me cry,
something that made me
angry, but nobody will ever
know that.
For me, the feeling that
created the song, the essence
of it must stay within.
Just like our hearts, they
cannot be shared.*

When I was younger, maybe six or seven, I used to play Dusty Springfield's *I Only Wanna Be With You*. Strange, I know, for a six year old, but I loved the easy going, typical chord structure and the cheesiness of the topic and key change used to create a 'dramatic climax'. It just used to make me laugh as I strained to reach the highest notes, grinning madly, filling the kitchen with my belted out song. And I loved it. I used to prance around the house singing and singing.

So when the children's choir started when the new music teacher came to the village, I was delighted. It was what I looked forward to on a Tuesday evening. We sang all sorts of things, foreign songs, folk, traditional Welsh tunes, etc. After it started I really got into singing, so I started lessons.

Because I had been one of my teacher's students I was invited to become part of a senior girls' choir, about a year and a half ago, where as we developed and sang more and more together, members of the choir started to bring in their own songs, melodies, lyrics and ideas. We got one more member making us the staggering number of ten. It was such a huge step from being in a choir of twenty or so under nine year olds, that my ability to create harmonies and compose parts for myself increased rapidly. I began to enjoy it a lot more too. It's the same with anything, the better you get, the more enjoyable it becomes.

What I love about music, and song especially, is that it can go anywhere, any key, any lyric, any language. But sometimes I feel that I get stuck in a mediocre musical society, where if you place that note in the 'wrong' place then no one thinks it's any good.

Here in Wales we have the most beautiful songs about picturesque places, sung by the most beautiful sounding choirs that bring tears to your eyes. We have nursery rhymes to help teach children Welsh and song at the same time. I always loved those songs, flailing my arms around (scarcely missing the other children) trying to do



Meg Brookes. Photo: Mike Brookes

an accurate imitation of the sun I was 'singing' about. But I feel that it is difficult, and considered odd, if you venture out of the boundaries of a certain style.

In my school I have my own 'band' in which two of us (my best friend Erin B and myself) write most of the songs. We both have relatively the same style: using metaphorical lyrics and non-repetitive melodies. Our lyrics (usually written together) try to write themselves, in a way, without a 'full stop' to the meaning. To the composer the lyrics have a secret and an altogether different meaning to the performer of the lyrics, or the audience for the lyrics. We have had many people come up to us and ask "So what was that about?" We'd exchange glances and stutter a non-understandable answer. It is very hard to

explain even if you know exactly what the lyrics or/and the song in general were about for you, but maybe not for anybody else. For example, I once sang a song of mine to my teacher, and whenever I sang a certain line, (I do not remember it exactly), I always got the image of footprints in the snow. However when I sang it to her she said she got images of broken feet trailing blood with each step.

Usually, the very core and heart of my songs come from ideas or thoughts: something that interested me, something that made me cry, something that made me angry, but nobody will ever know that. For me, the feeling that created the song, the essence of it must stay within. Just like our hearts, they cannot be shared. From listening to a song, others may create their own images and core of the song and take those away with them. But the heart must stay within the song. For me the sense of mystery enables the audience to respond with something that happened to them, or something that made *them* cry or feel angry. If I do not feel that heart in a song, even without knowing what it is, there is nothing. Just an empty shell.

MEG BROOKES (Wales) is 12 years old, she lives in West Wales and goes to school in Newcastle Emlyn. Meg plays cello and is a member of the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain (under 13s). She also plays piano and sings. She is a member of Amazing Grace Girls' Choir and the Youth Theatre of Cardigan. Meg has performed in many Magdalena Project events from an early age.