

Judy Rodman



“ *All Things Vocal* ”

Tips & insights on the voice from professional vocalist, vocal coach and author of "Power, Path & Performance" vocal training method

Friday, February 13, 2009 Songwriter Rand Bishop on writing from artist point of view

The voice is more than its physical components... it is also the messages it carries from and to the heart. An artist's voice is not only their throat... it's also the song.

I was delighted to hear successful songwriter and author Rand Bishop speak on this at a recent Indie Connect meeting. Rand is the author of a book called "Makin' Stuff Up", a book on songwriting that I bought and highly recommend for a realistic look at professional songwriting with great stories, tips and wisdom liberally sprinkled throughout.

I took notes and as he talked, Rand focused on four basic themes:

- \* An artist must create a unique brand.
- \* They must write and/or choose songs that reveal their point of view.
- \* Then must always be aware that they are both artist and commodity.
- \* They must know their fans.

He suggested that an artist needs to...

- \* ... know who they are, what they stand for, how they experience life and how the world views them.
- \* ... be genuine, not just trendy unless they truly resonate with the trend, mindful that the audience has a great B.S. detector.
- \* ... either fit a genre well or be groundbreaking, willing to create their own genre (grunge, rockabilly, pop-bluegrass, metal, etc. were at first created by individual artists like Kurt Cobain, Elvis, Krauss, Metallica, etc.)
- \* ... truly know their fanbase and why their fans love them.
- \* ... have a unique brand both visually and sonically.
- \* ... walk the fine line between artistic temperament and product/commodity, which is also reflected in Seth Godin's blogpost about music vs music business.
- \* ... understand the modern strategies of marketing music and how to use their branding to effectively find and connect their music to new audiences
- \* ... write and/or find songs that consistently reflect all these factors. Songs are logos, calling cards, revelations of who the artist is.

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Rand stressed a writer has to not just write about an experience, they have to replicate one! His point reminded me of what my old friend Dave Loggins (Hall of Fame writer of classic songs like "Please Come To Boston", "Pieces Of April", "She Is His Only Need") used to hammer home: that one must write from the vantage point of participant, not just spectator.

I love the way Rand summed a lot of this up: he said that we as songwriters must tell the truth. To quote him, "When you tell the truth, there will be an audience for it."

Do check out his book and songwriting coaching service.  
And tell him I sent ya!

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