

Lisa Dancing-Lights’ “The Song of Love” — Eight Years in the Making

OVERCOMING COMPOSER’S BLOCK



Photo by Doug Ellis Photography.



ARTICLE BRIDGET GREY | PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED

Local singer-songwriter Lisa Dancing-Light recently released her fifth album, *The Song of Love*. Called “an anthem for humanity,” the music was inspired by Anne Hillman’s book *Awakening The Energies of Love: Discovering Fire For the Second Time*, a book which in turns draws wisdom from Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

This new album was composed in a shower of creativity—one that came after a dry spell of eight years.

That’s not long compared to the 26 years it took Richard Wagner to complete *The Ring of the Nibelung*. Or the 22 years Johannes Brahms took to compose his *Symphony No. 1 in C minor*. Or even the 10 years that passed between Sting’s 2003 album *Sacred Love* and his 2014 premiere of *The Last Ship*. Writers as prolific as Leo Tolstoy, J.K. Rowling and Stephen King have suffered writer’s block, and the affliction is common enough among musicians to merit two names: composer’s block and songwriter’s block.

Dancing-Light’s quest to compose began in 2008 after she completed her CD *Sophia Songs*. After hearing that album, Rita Marsh, director of wellness nonprofit Davi Nikent, noted a synchronicity between Lisa’s music and Anne Hillman’s book. The connection was strong enough to prompt Marsh to act as yenta, introducing Hillman and Dancing-Light and prompting them to collaborate.

“I immediately read Anne’s book and found a deep connection,” says Dancing-Light. “Anne’s words *did* inspire me, yet no melodies sang within me. Nothing happened! Embarrassing as it was, after being a songwriter for three decades, I was completely blocked...”

In similar circumstances, composers have tried many remedies. Sergei Rachmanioff sought help from a hypnotist. Author Jeff Goins recommends cures that range from laughing and having a conversation “with the block” to dancing in front of a mirror. Songwriter Carole King recommends *not* worrying, saying, “when the channel wasn’t open enough to let something through, I always went and did something else... Whether it was an hour later, which is often the case, or a day later, or a week later, or sometimes a few *months* later, I just didn’t worry about it.”

Dancing-Light tried not to worry. “For three years, I wrote fragments of words and melodic phrases, but that was it,” she said.

Then in 2011, when Hillman was coming to Carbondale to lead a retreat, Dancing-Light signed up, thinking it might supply the inspiration she needed.

The week before the retreat, the muse threw obstacles into her path; Lisa fell and got a terrible puncture wound in her leg. She recalls, “I

could hardly walk. The doctors were worried about infection. I had to keep my leg elevated, and I was heavily medicated.”

Despite a fuzzy head and a throbbing leg, Dancing-Light limped off to the retreat. She privately shared some fragments with Hillman and received an encouraging response. But, wanting specifics, Dancing-Light asked Hillman, “What do *you* want the song to say?” Gesturing with outstretched arms, Hillman said, “I want it to say: Welcome, you are loved. Everyone is welcome. This is a song of inclusion.”

The muse, however, was not welcoming. That night, Dancing-Light’s neighbor was shooting off fireworks, and Lisa recalls, “I did not get any creative time to work on the song nor did I sleep well that night, worrying about a possible fire.”

But the next morning, as hot shower water washed away her pain and fatigue, Lisa asked the blocked song to come into her. “What happened next was something I cannot completely explain,” she recalls. “The song sang itself to me completely. It came through me as perfect as a newborn baby.”

Lisa rushed to her piano and wrote down the chords and melody.

Shortly after that, Anne Hillman told the retreat group that Lisa had something to share.

“I walked over to the grand piano and sat down to share this beautiful new creation,” Dancing-Light recalls. “After a deep breath, I started singing. I looked up after the first verse; everyone was in tears. I knew something significant was happening. When I was done, there was silence. Anne, herself a vocalist, declared, ‘Lisa, you did it!’”

As songwriter Jimmy Buffet has said. “Songwriters write songs, but they really belong to the listener,” and this song is an example of that truth. The CD is a single release with an instrumental track of piano, nine violins and cello, designed for use with live performances and singing. Those who wish to listen—and to gather *The Song of Love* into themselves—may do so at LisaDancingLight.com.