

The Journeys of Susanne & Tory

Susanne Gervay the author and Tory Gervay the lyricist, song writer & singer



Susanne Gervay writes:-

My writing is such an intense, emotionally charged process. It comes out of a profound place where there's humour, love, hate, hope and those passions that make me who I am. Everyone's life is challenging in different ways. Mine is no different. Like many, my children intensify my challenges and passions, making the hard times harsher and the good times sweeter. When my daughter who was seventeen at the time, asked me to write a book inspired by her, it was such a deep request.

Tory and I had been through a great deal together. Illness has always been part of my life, which as a sole parent, has been at times very tough on my son and daughter. During my many surgeries, cancers, Tory was deeply affected. We laughed and had such special times as she dressed my wounds and helped me. So how privileged was I to write for her. Nothing could stop me writing this book and although it would be fictional, the spirit would be hers.



I kept thinking who is Tory? How can I find her through my words? I stood at the door of her bedroom looking around at the bits and pieces that are her. Her teddies lined inside her cupboard. The pin board filled with photos of family and friends. Eminem posters taped to the walls. Rows of sparkly ear-rings hanging like a jewellery display. Her computer crowded with songs. Her lyrics scribbled on paper and print outs of bars of music. Suddenly I saw it. Music wafted between the ear-rings and posters, her iPod, clothes and magazines. Tory has always loved music - singing, playing instruments, being in school bands, following bands and singers, writing her own songs. Music defines my daughter. Music is her voice, her emotional outlet, her way of making sense of life. I knew then that her lyrics and songs would become the driving force of our book.

Rock is a powerful form of youth expression as it reaches into the eternal quest of search for identity. That's what is intrinsic to Bob Dylan, Pink Floyd, Simon & Garfunkel, The Beatles, The Stones, Queen and the many other rock writers and singers over the past decades. Tory writes rock songs which reflect her search for identity. My books are always about search for identity in its many shapes and forms. I now knew how our book would connect.

It took three years to create 'That's Why I Wrote This Song' through a rocky, difficult yet joyous process. There were four key areas to tackle. Firstly the writing, where I had to access the youth music scene in an authentic way. Secondly there was working as a mother-daughter team. There were hilarious, loving and dire times. The third was that melding of music and literature through text, performance and technology. Fourth was the filming of Psycho Dad. Every stage was hard work, like a real rock band finally making it onto stage for that great show that defines them.



The first key area. The youth music scene was outside my experience. Tory had a serious task in introducing me to the real life of rock concerts, overnight camping



festivals, BIG DAY OUT, bands, singers and the music that seemed to be always plugged into her ears or on her computer or MP3 player. It took me a while to get into the culture. I watched DVD's of rock concerts, writing notes on every aspect from the audience raising their hands to the mosh pit to the bands smashing the stage. I became addicted to RAGE, the all night music programme that is programmed from midnight Friday to Saturday morning. 'Good Charlotte' rocked from my study as I wrote. I became engulfed in the world of youth music with Tory as my guide. It was fun and wild and meaningful. The lyrics of rock songs reached me, just as The Beatles had as I was growing up.

Second key area. Tory's stories and feelings were the bedrock of my words. Some of the stories were very funny, some sad. The vodka teddy bear scene is bitter-sweet and very young adult, filled with crossed love, betrayal, humour and naivety. Some of the stories are especially moving when the girls become trapped by family expectations and conflict. As Tory navigated her own search for identity during the years of writing this book, I tapped into her emotions. Sometimes the door was open. Sometimes she slammed it into my face and our household became tense. Was I an intruder? Had she really given me permission to enter private territory?



Third key area. Tory took the stage here. She wrote the music and the lyrics. Her lyrics are powerful driving the themes of father-daughter relationships and the characters' journeys to find their own power. When I listened to Tory's 'I Wanna Be Found' I was overwhelmed that my daughter felt this way:-

*Why do I feel all alone,
Like I'm standing here all by myself,
When there's people all around,
I'm lost but I want to be found.*

Her music brought us closer as we talked about everything, ultimately realising that we are here for each other.

Tory and I wanted her songs to be more than her written lyrics as the rock songs are central to the book driving the characters, themes and narrative. It became an imperative to include the actual music in the reading experience.

While there have been books published with music, the music has been an adjunct to the book, a value added product such as a CD tucked inside the back cover or a recital

of segments of the book or an extension of text. 'That's Why I Wrote This Song' is different. Tory's songs are entwined inside the story.

Tory and I searched for a producer for her songs, 'Psycho Dad' and 'I Wanna Be Found'. Young rock-hip-hop music producer Tony Buchen worked with Tory on the production. Tory didn't want to sing the songs initially. However as an authentic experience for the reader, it felt right that she did. The producer coaxed her into recording. So now when readers download the songs free from the web, Tory is singing. This crossing of mediums melds her songs into the reading experience in a way that enriches the literature.



Tony Buchen - <http://www.tonybuchen.com/>

Suddenly a fourth and unexpected area crossed into 'That's Why I Wrote This Song'. A young talented film producer who I had known all her life heard Tory's songs. Rachel Guerry felt the songs spoke to her. When she read the manuscript, she felt it was hers. So began the complex process of producing the film clip for the song 'Psycho Dad'. Rachel interpreted the book and songs. Producing a film clip was complex involving me and a team of young editors, camera people, actors and young people into developing the three minute film that encapsulates 'Psycho Dad' with virtually no budget.

Finally *That's Why I Wrote This Song* arrived with Tory's lyrics and music and with the video of Psycho Dad. What a journey.



Tory The Songwriter – Who Is Tory?

BIO

My passion is music as lame as it sounds. From as long as I can remember music has always been a huge part of my life – playing it, listening to it, watching it. I have always been a band nerd but I'm proud of it.

My family and friends mean the world to me. We have a very close family and get along MOST of the time. My brother Jamie is one of my best friends, as annoying as he is. We have been through everything together and can talk about anything. Then there are my cousins, especially Len who is like a brother to me since we grew up together. My mum knows everything about me, and they still love me anyway, even though I have done some really stupid things, haha.

My best friends Sarah, Maree, Soph, Kate, Caz, Loz, Skye always keep me going. There are always new dramas to gossip about, parties to attend, beaches and shops to visit, boys to meet and concerts to see. They make my life interesting and are the people who have always been there for me and are life long friends who I can trust with anything.



Tory's Journey – Q & A

What does music mean to you?

Music has always been important to me. It's always been my way of working out life especially when it gets hard. It's helped me through the worst of times and has also been with me at the best of times.

How long have you played music?

I've been playing music since I've been 5. But I've been singing since I could talk.

What do you play?

The piano, the trumpet and some basic guitar.

What do you really, secretly, privately want to be?

That's a really hard question to answer, but it's MUSIC. Whatever I can do with music. But it's so hard to make it.

Who do you admire most in music?

There are so many! Everyone from Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky to Bach.

I love lots of jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong. He plays a fantastic trumpet. There's Ella Fitzgerald, Miles Davis too. I've played the trumpet in jazz bands since I've been nine.

I love pop, rock, r'n'b and hip-hop, everyone from The Beatles to Scissor Sisters,

Good Charlotte, Green Day, Destiny's Child, Unwritten Law, Eminem, Pink.



Some of my best friends are amazing at music like Soph, who is able to pick up a violin and play any song without having even seen the music and give it her own style. Of course I love Dean's music and the band I play in!@!!!

What are your favourite foods, colours?

Foods: Well coming from a Hungarian background, yes I love my food. Favourites are olives, tomatoes, mangoes, cherries, sushi, and my mum's stuffed capsicum - that's the Hungarian in me again.



Colours: Black and pink. Black because it's good for everything. Pink because I just love the colour.

What do friends mean to you?

Everything! My best friends I consider to be my family and would always put them before myself and try to be there whenever they need me. I know I can always rely on them. My other friends I still consider important, but they're friends to have fun with.

What are your favourite movies, albums and books?

Movies: *Grease*, is such a classic. *Back to the Future*, even though it is so unrealistic, I used to watch it with my brother Jamie over and over, so I think that's why I love it. I also really like *Parenthood*, it was really funny.

Albums: There are so many that I love, but my favourite ten that I could listen to over and over again would have to be (in no particular order) – "Rubber Soul" By The Beatles, *The Eminem Show* by Eminem, *The Young and the Hopeless* by Good Charlotte, *Under my Skin* by Avril Lavigne, *The Ultimate Collection* by The Supremes, *I'm not Dead* by Pink, *What's the story morning glory?* by Oasis, *The Singles 1992-2003* by No Doubt, *Yourself or someone like you* by Matchbox Twenty and *From Here On* by The Living End.

Books

I of course love my Mum's books (Susanne Gervay), because even though they are fiction, they feel close to home. My most favourite one of Mum's is *The Cave*.

Why did you write the songs for the book?

I wrote the music first and my mum, used it to drive *That's Why I Wrote This Song*. I've always written lyrics and music. It's something that's inside me.

What do you think of *That's Why I Wrote This Song*?

Love it!!!!

Questions inside - That's Why I Wrote This Song

1. The composers' journeys:
 - research,
 - planning,
 - investigating,
 - interviewing of the music scene from punk concerts at the Pavilion to weekend festivals underpin *That's Why I Wrote This Song*.
2. *That's Why I Wrote This Song* is a fictional, imaginative text, yet the composer's purpose is to explore universal themes of father-daughter relationships, search for identity and youth culture.
3. The lyrics and text reveal the impact of father-daughter relationships in different ways through Pip, Karen, Angie & Irina.
4. The other keys relationships are part of search for identity
 - the relationship of mother and daughter,
 - Eddie, brother-father, brother-sister, brother-mother
 - the relationship of writer and lyricist/musician
5. The integration of the mediums of music and film, give added dimensions to *That's Why I Wrote This Song*.
6. *That's Why I Wrote This Song* integrates mediums and creative approaches through – lyrics, sheet music of Psycho Dad, music, film clip, film script with entry into story through the mediums of CD, DVD, website, myspace, youtube, podcast,

