

Being A Songwriter

I've written a little of everything. Books, plays, columns, articles, poems and songs. I will say without hesitation that the most challenging form of writing is songwriting. It's not even close. Sure the TV cameras will zoom in on Stephen King at a Red Sox game. Of course Norman Lear is readily recognized everywhere he goes. I know Dave Berry even had a TV sitcom tailored after his life. But if you are looking at the art of creating stories from ideas, the songwriter is by far the most challenging and least rewarding form of storytelling there is.

If you write a book, there is no limit to how many pages it is - as long as it's interesting enough to keep the readers turning the pages.

If you write a play, you tell the same story, but you have more visual tools to help build your story. But with your audience sitting for a couple of hours, you need to make it interesting enough to keep them in their seats.

If you're writing articles or columns, you are more constraint by space and there certainly are rules of the trade that need to be followed. You have to make your point and then spend the remaining space justifying that point.

When you write a song, you not only have to tell the same story as the guy writing books or plays, but you have to do so in fifty words or less. You also have to have a complete understanding of the many rules of music and singing. You must understand syllables, rhyming patterns, singable words vs. un-singable words, melodic boundaries, musical ranges and the list goes on. And when you're done, it has to sound effortless. It has to flow naturally. You *want* to hear people say, 'Oh that's easy - anybody can write that song'.

Songwriters may not be seen sitting in the stands at a Red Sox game, but as a person who has written a little of everything, I can say without question that I take more pride in writing a good song than I do anything else I have written. Without a doubt, writing songs is the most challenging creative form of expression there is.