



CHRIS SKINNER

Sometimes deeply personal music can speak in a universal way. This certainly has been the case for me as a songwriter, and answers in part the question regarding the spiritual significance of music. I have often written songs from my own experience, and found they have touched into the soul of other people. It is hugely satisfying to know that a song which began with a simple idea, or reaction, or feeling in my own life, has encouraged, inspired, and uplifted someone else. For example, I have written songs about this country, "*God Of Our Island Home*", and "*Sons Of Gallipoli*", and found the songs have spoken to our identity as New Zealanders and our sense of belonging. Numerous people have described being moved to tears. I have written songs about acceptance, giftedness, friendship, family, and loss, and again received letters from people who share with me a story and experience in their own life evoked by a particular song. People have been encouraged out of depression, celebrated their giftedness, grown in acceptance, and felt comforted in dying. The beauty of a melody and the power of the lyrics in a song like "*You Raise Me Up*" are so completely at one, the song can't help but speak to the spirit within, especially if sung with feeling and sincerity. If authenticity and something of the human story and struggle is present in a song or a piece of music, then there is for me a huge spiritual significance.



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