

Christian Cappelluti

My inspiration

Since I started writing my own music, and being interested in any form of artistic expression in general, I more than once happened to come across people stating that what is commonly referred to as “the artist’s inspiration” is only a myth. According to these people, the greatest works of art of all time, from J. S. Bach’s chorales to Shakespeare’s sonnets, are nothing more than the superior craft of the skills of extraordinarily talented people. I remember reading in a book about poetry where the author explained that the popular image of a poet who is suddenly stricken with inspiration and can immediately recite his brand new verses was to be replaced by one of the same poet sitting at his desk for days, rewriting and revising his poem over and over, trying to make it as close to perfection as possible. What people erroneously believe to be the product of a single illuminating idea, is rather the product of training, experience, and craftsmanship. Every artist is so fully immersed in his or her own art, the author of the book concluded, that it is hard to believe that such an external and mostly uncontrollable factor as inspiration could really exist.

It has been about ten years since I started writing my own music, and I can say, by now, that I strongly disagree with those who do not believe inspiration exists. The reason is very simple: I have it, and it is as out of control and unpredictable as it can be. If I think back to all songs that I wrote, I guess that most times, just before writing the first note, I was probably thinking and doing things which had very little in common with music. Then, all of a sudden, there was music in my head, and, a few minutes later, I might have had a brand new song almost finished. In a way, the music always came to me when I was not really looking for it. I was never the one to make the first step.

I am sure that the reason why this happened has a lot to do with my inner-hearing abilities. As I child, long before knowing what a Do was, I always used to make up short melodies and hum them or whistle them to myself, just for the fun of it. I did not do my singing and whistling on purpose, nor did I regard it as something creative or musical at all. actually, I did not even pay much attention to what I was singing, I just sang. What is interesting is that in my head, for some reason, I could perfectly listen to myself singing, humming and whistling even if I was not making any sound. I knew it was just in my head, but it still sounded incredibly real. When I started learning how to play the guitar, quite similarly, chords kept ringing in my head long after my lessons, and I even began to use this ability to practice music without playing. It soon became like having a mental tape recorder: if there was a song that I was really familiar with, I could play it in my mind, and it sounded just about as enjoyable as on the stereo.

Now this strange ability that I have, when “creatively activated, constitutes the basic means through which my inspiration communicates with me: without any warning signal, when I least expect it, the verse or the refrain of a song that I have never heard before will pop into my head. The part of the song that my inspiration gives to me is always fully arranged and complete with lyrics, and, usually, it is not too hard for me to develop an entire song around that fragment. The “inspiration attack” is often very brief but, at times, if I am lucky, I can even listen to different parts of the song, like the verse, the chorus, the bridge, the solo, etc... I learned a trick: I just keep listening, as effortlessly as I can, and let my inspiration do its job.

And now I am about to make a revelation which, I am afraid, those who lose sleep at night trying to come up with original ideas, may take as a personal affront: most of the music that I produced in the last three years was composed while I was sleeping. I dream a lot, and, believe, it or not, most of my dreams have a soundtrack! Some original songs, that I have never heard before, are featured in

these soundtracks, and it often happens that those songs keep playing in my head, after I wake up in the morning. This gives me the opportunity to turn them into my brand new compositions. There are times, unfortunately, when I wake up after one of those dreams in the middle of the night. When that happens, even if I still can hear the music in my head, I am too tired to get up and write to get up and write it down. Then I fall asleep again, and, when I wake up in the morning, all I know is that I had very good song, but I forgot it, and it is gone forever.

All my closest friends know about these night visits from my inspiration, and they all consider the whole thing very strange. I cannot blame them, because, even if I grew used to it, I still think that composing music while dreaming is not really a common thing! However, even if I am sure that a scientific explanation of the phenomenon exists (it must be something that has to do with the unconscious and the subconscious), I personally like to think of my inspiration as something a little mysterious, which does not want to be grasped. I am afraid that if I started inquiring about it, might decide to leave me for good. After all, even if it not inspiration (and, if so, what is inspiration?), but it is just some kind of idiosyncrasy, I still think there is something very fascinating about it. I go to bed at night, wake up in the morning, and sing a song that was in my dreams. Isn't that something?

Christian Cappelluti

([visit the website](#))