
Thank you, Terry Allen

1 message

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To: terry@terryallen.com

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Dear Terry,

Thank you for enhancing society in general, and enhancing my life in particular. Your life and my life are quite different in many many ways. Yet there are little things that tether my experience to yours; things that have already come to pass, and perhaps some things that are still to come.

I know that your life and professional career are quite diverse; however, it was your music that first surfaced into my world. I was born and raised in Houston TX. Even though I still have family in Houston and I visit regularly, I haven't lived in Texas full-time since 1986 when I went off to a Northeastern boarding school. Nevertheless, to this day, I fancy myself a Texan based on this formative experience.

Since 1986, I have tried to keep my tenuous Texas connection alive. Songwriters, such as you, really capture sights and feelings which resonate with my actual and fanciful Texas memories. It wasn't until about 1998 when I discovered your music. I was in the United States Marine Corps stationed in Monterey CA while attending the Naval Postgraduate School. Not far from there, North along Hwy 1, past the twin stacks of the Moss Landing power plant, there's a great radio station out of Santa Cruz called KPIG (formerly KFAT), with which I'm sure you're familiar. I believe I first heard "Flatland Boogie," with Lucinda Williams in accompaniment, on KPIG at about this time in the late 1990s. That song's lengthy piano outro fades like a drive along a desolate farm to market road towards an ever darkening sunset horizon while still being able to see the "caliche glow." Though I've not spent much time in the Texas panhandle, some of your tunes help keep this expat tethered to the Lone Star State. My romps around Texas as a boy and young adult were mainly in the Hill Country and to the East--although I do have vivid memories of the smell of the cattle feedlots around Amarillo.

So, in terms of similarities, I observe that you and I are both Texas expats with a California higher education connection.

As I learned more about your career, I was infinitely impressed that you're an accomplished and diverse artist. As such, you've influenced me to forge a new path. Since retiring from the Marines back in 2010, I've been searching for my second act--a v2.0. Thanks to influences like you, this means being a self-proclaimed Renaissance Man or polymath--a constant student and creator. Heretofore, my academic and career endeavors have been highly analytical; yet, I've always had a calling to the arts as well. I am still searching for a way to merge my internal analytic and artistic propensities into something creative and interesting. For example, I'm considering a sculpture series called "Techaeology" (technology & archaeology). The series will present modern technology in a simulated fossilized state or future found state (like at an archaeological site). Additionally, I'm writing poetry, as well.

At the very bottom of it all, life is a very personal experience. So is art. People spend their time on things which matter to them. Things that catch them up somehow. Things that intrigue them. Things that resonate. I'm no different. To a large degree, your well-rounded artistic career is inspiring a new chapter in my life. You have influenced me for the better.

Thank you and godspeed, Terry.

John Bicknell

PS: And, just for kicks, here are some of my favorite songs:

- "What of Alicia"
- "There Oughta Be a Law Against Sunny Southern California"
- "Night Cafe"
- "What a Dangerous Life"
- "Blue Asian Reds (for Roadrunner)"
- "My Amigo"
- "The Pink And Black Song"
- "The Thirty Years Waltz (for Jo Harvey)"