



SONGWRITING

Sananda Maitreya's Songwriting Survival Kit



17 March 2021

By Duncan Haskell

Pen, paper, pot and beer are all necessary requirements for a songwriter who's followed his own path for five decades

Throughout his career, now in its fifth decade, Sananda Maitreya has ignored genre limitations in order to make music with a broad appeal. A child prodigy inspired to make music by his love of The Beatles, Maitreya's potent mix of rock, pop, soul and R&B has seen him earn the hearts of fans across the globe.

Maitreya now returns with his 12th studio album Pandora's PlayHouse, 28 tracks that cast a songwriter's eye on themes such as love, passion and the fragile nature of mortality. There's a constant thread of myth and folklore weaved throughout, one held together by Maitreya's rich voice and songcraft.

Here he reveals some of the tools behind the trade...



Sananda Maitreya's guitar: "As long as I have a guitar near me, I feel safe. I love writing with an instrument that always threatens a new surprise."

1. GUITAR

When I write, I listen to the wind. And then I determine whether the song is more of a 'keyboard' song or a 'guitar' song. The decision comes pretty quickly simply by listening to the music being imagined and sculpted by time. I rarely spend any time away from access to the guitar.

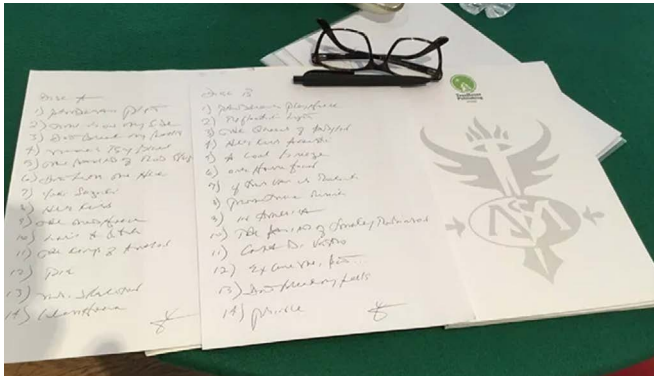
As long as I have a guitar near me, I feel safe. I love writing with an instrument that always threatens a new surprise. And to hold a guitar against your body to feel the vibrations being created is one of the most beautiful sensations I know.



Sananda Maitreya's keyboard: "Piano, electric piano, synth, organ, it doesn't matter as long as it makes sound."

2. KEYBOARD

Piano, electric piano, synth, organ, it doesn't matter as long as it makes sound. For many songwriters, keyboards and guitars are the left and right hand of arranging. So as long as I am near these tools of the trade, I never feel far from inspiration's call. Another proud instrument that the more you get to know it, the more still that there is to know.



Sananda Maitreya's pen and paper: "Writing with my fingers on a pen seems to bring me closer to my heart."

3. PEN & PAPER

I use iPads and computers to document the work, but when I am writing I ALWAYS USE the old-fashioned method of writing ideas out longhand. It's quicker and allows me more flexibility when capturing the moment I am collaborating with.

We rarely get to write out things anymore because we use our digital instruments so much, but some processes need a more immediate, visceral approach. Writing with my fingers on a pen seems to bring me closer to my heart, with much less second-guessing.



Sananda Maitreya's rings: "They assist me in getting my 'work mind' together and getting the work done."

4. MY WORK RINGS

I have two rings that I always use when working on material or am in meditation about material. One for the left hand, one for the right. Both blue stones that keep me focussed and steady, while opening my deep mind and making better connection with my working mind.

And since I've had them for decades' worth of production, they are magnetized to helping me complete tasks as well as holding a tremendous amount of memory from past endeavours. They also provide some physical stamina to my energy field. They assist me in getting my 'work mind' together and getting the work done.

5. POT (& BEER)

The beer for the energy and the pot because IT'S F*CKING POT. HELLO! Allows me to direct my imagination towards a goal and progress through it with gratitude for the work and joy for the opportunity. A wonderful companion on the journey of self-realization through art. And reconciliation through meditation on the task at hand.

And pot and music seem to like each other very much and appear to be old friends who know how to bring the best out of one another. While the beer aids courage and curiosity. ■