

# Songwriter Profile - Peter Aston (1)

*Inspiration is something that most songwriters search for before they start the creative process of writing a song. However, it can be elusive, and difficult to define, but it can often be discovered in the most unusual of places, as ISA member Peter Aston, a singer-songwriter from Dorset in England found.*

*Peter has based a whole CD on 'dream' themes, and one song in particular was inspired by a very unusual dream. Here's what he told Patricia Knapton who interviewed him exclusively for the ISA.*

**First of all Peter, can you tell me who your musical influences were during your early years?**

Well my great-grandfather actually played the harp in a dance band in villages along the Worcestershire and Warwickshire borders, and the thing is, they had to walk and carry their instruments. As he was the harp player that must have been fun, I should imagine!

My first professional engagement, if you like, was when I was about four. It was while on holiday in Great Yarmouth and I sang "Coming Round The Mountain" to the people in the next beach hut. I got a fee of sixpence!

In terms of musical influences, Buddy Holly was my first real influence although I do recall my little brother sitting on a 78 of Elvis' "Heartbreak Hotel". That pretty well broke my heart at the time so I must have been a bit of an Elvis fan too. A little later on it was the Everly Brothers, Roy Orbison, then on to The Beatles. I was about eleven when "Love Me Do" was released. I remember the first time I heard it was on a little Dansette record player, when we had a little beat group called **Pat's Patriots**. We were pretty hopeless but we built up a following, miming to the hits of the Saturday mornings pictures.

**When did you start writing songs?**

In terms of real songwriting, I suppose it was in the early seventies when I first started to string together some ideas of songs. At the time I thought they were pretty good, but they never saw the light of day. Looking back now, I can see they were part of a learning curve...a sort of notepad for later. The first real song came along in 1984. It was a Christian song called "Father And Son" and was a sort of imaginary conversation between God and Jesus in the run up to the crucifixion. That song was really inspired - the lyrics just seemed to flow out of the pen all by themselves. Eventually it was included in my album "Name In The Sand" which was released Christmas 2003, and was very successful in this part of the world.

**Do you write mainly Christian songs?**

Yes, that's the bulk of my writing. I suppose you would call the music "folk-rock". Some of the pieces have a slight country feel to them, other pieces are more choral, but most of it is folk rock.

If I was to say it has a Rickenbacker feel, many guitarist readers will know what I mean! My band, **Cottage Industry** is a ceilidh band where I play guitar and call for the dancing.

The record label for the C.Ds grew out of Cottage Industry really. I've just recently spent a week in Scarborough in the north of England at a Christian event called Easter People playing guitar with the worship band who had travelled from Dorset, and playing to five or six hundred people a night, which was very encouraging.

**Talking of inspiration, can we fast forward for a moment to your latest CD "Horton Tower" as there's a very interesting story behind one of the tracks. Can you tell me about it?**

Yes, that's "Fly With Me". What happened is I dreamt I met the spirit of John Denver in a part of London that I'd never been to at all, in Cricklewood, North London. Goodness knows why, but in this dream, John gave me a master class in songwriting and taught me the song "Fly With Me" which he said was a song that in life he'd never had the opportunity to complete. When I woke up, I simply wrote down the song which was virtually finished in my head. Only the middle eight came along later. The melody, lyrics and the overall structure of the song were all there. At first I was convinced it was a song that John had written and that I'd heard somewhere before, but no, it was original - how spooky is that?

**Have you tried to get a major artist to cover it and perhaps get it to a wider audience?**

Everyone who has heard it - without blowing my own trumpet too much - thinks it's a bit special so I guess there must be a future for that song.

Promoting "Fly With Me" will be my next project! Part of it is on my website as an MP3.

**What about the other songs on the "Horton Tower" CD?**

My other songs are love songs based on dreams in one way or another. They've either come to me in dreams or have been inspired by dreams. The title track "Horton Tower" is based on a local legend of a grey lady - a ghostly lady. In the dream I imagined she helped bring together a young couple who had been separated by lust and death...a sort of folkie Lord of the Manor story.

**How is the CD doing?**

It's been out for a couple of months now and doing well, but I'm just about to re-launch it to hit the tourist industry as Horton Tower is quite a landmark in this part of the world, and it's featured in all the local tourism publicity etc. A few years ago, with Cottage Industry, we brought out another song called "We're All For Swanage" which was all about Swanage Steam Railway. That did very well with national and local radio and TV coverage.

**Copyright Patricia Knapton & Songwriter Magazine: All Rights Reserved**

*This interview concludes in the July issue*

## UK Music Publisher Roster

UK Hits Achieved Since January 1996

### EMI Music (Continued From Page 2)

Faith Evans  
Faith Hill  
Farm  
Fastball  
Fat Les  
Fatboy Slim  
Fergie  
Fierce  
Filter  
Fine Young Cannibals  
Finley Quaye  
Fire Island  
Five  
Five For Fighting  
Flaming Lips  
Flickman  
Floetry  
Foo Fighters  
For Real  
Foundations  
Fountains Of Wayne  
Foxy Brown  
Freak Power  
Freestylers  
Fugees  
Fun Lovin' Criminals  
Future Sound Of London FSOL  
FYA  
Gabrielle  
Gala  
Garbage  
Gary Numan  
Gary Barlow  
Gay Dad  
Genius  
George Michael  
Georgio Moroder  
Geri  
Get DeCor  
Ginuwine  
Girl Thing  
Girls Aloud  
Girls Of EHM  
Glamra Kid  
Gloria Estefan  
Goldie Lookin Chain  
Goldtrix  
Goo Goo Dolls  
Good Charlotte  
Goodfellaz  
Gorillaz  
Grace  
Graham Coxon  
Groove Generation  
G-Unit  
Guru  
H & Claire  
H2O  
Haddaway  
Hal  
Harvey  
Hatiras

*Continued Next Month*