

Sue Ennis

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[00:00:17] **Bryan Smith:** Bryan Smith here and welcome to the DreamPath podcast, where I try to get inside the heads of talented creatives from all over the world.

[00:00:26] My goal is to demystify and humanize the creative process and make it accessible to everyone. Now let's jump in. Sue Ennis on the show. Sue is an internationally recognized songwriter, best known for co-writing more than 70 songs with Ann and Nancy Wilson of the platinum selling rock band *Heart*. Sue has more than 35 million records sold, including 10 gold for platinum, one triple platinum and one quintuple platinum album.

[00:00:56] Sue is also a member of the band, *The Lovemongers* with Ann and Nancy Wilson and recently co-wrote and performed on Nancy's first solo album, "You and Me", which was released last Friday. When she's not writing or recording, Sue teaches songwriting workshops, and her craft of songwriting class sells out every quarter at Shoreline Community College.

[00:01:16] She also helped develop a songwriting interactive experience for the experience music project with Paul Allen and is on the faculty at the Pacific Northwest Film Scoring Program where she teaches songwriting for film. This is one of the more wide-ranging interviews I've done on the podcast. Not only because she has such an amazing career, but also because I have a personal connection to Sue through my dad who was *Heart's* tour pilot for many years in this interview.

[00:01:42] Sue and I talk about how she met Ann and Nancy as a teenager, and how that friendship blossomed into a decade's long songwriting collaboration. We also talk about her adventures, flying with my dad and Europe and discuss the origin story of *The Love Mongers*. And if you stick around until the end of the interview, you'll hear Sue gave me some songwriting tips, after I play her part of a song, I wrote in high school more than 40 years ago, but never finished. So, without further ado, let's jump into my chat with the incredibly talented and multi-faceted artist, Sue Ennis.

[00:02:13] Well, Sue, welcome to DreamPath podcast.

[00:02:18] **Sue Ennis:** Thank you, so fun to finally meet you and be with you after lots of misplaces and lots of, lots of schedule juggling. Here we are.

[00:02:28] **Bryan Smith:** Yes. Thank you for making time. I know you're so busy with your teaching schedule. It's been a couple of months since we first tried to connect and how's your sister doing by the way?

[00:02:40] **Sue Ennis:** Thanks for asking Brian. Yeah, she's in, she's in really good shape. Yeah. Had a little bit of a, of a scare there, but, but everything went well and she's on the mend, so thank you.

[00:02:50] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. Well, I first want to say congratulations on this solo album that you collaborated with Nancy on. It's called "You and Me" and Nancy Wilson's first solo album since starting her music career in the late sixties, early seventies. So yeah, I listened to what I could it's I don't think it's fully released yet that I could see.

[00:03:14] **Sue Ennis:** No, I think it's Friday. So, it should soon be available.

[00:03:18] **Bryan Smith:** Nice. I listened to what I could. "You and Me" is the song that I really connected with for obvious reasons you are featured on that track.

[00:03:58] What a touching song.

[00:03:59] **Sue Ennis:** Oh, thank you. You know, I can tell you a little bit about how that song came to be. And, you know, I had no idea that, you know, Nance would want it to be the title song for the record, but I think, I had written a song a while back, you know, a year and a half or so.

[00:04:16] That was just a personal song for me, little bit of a disguised song about my mom and about her death, but it had a lot of imagery and it was called follow me and I was going to keep her safe and I don't need to go into the first iteration, but I played it for Nance and she really loved the music, and she said that she thought that the words really weren't for her, but that it's, it was crazy that she actually had- she had been writing a song about her mom. She had been really missing her mom. And so she sent me those lyrics and I was able to tinker and, you know, put a little screw in here and put a syllable there and, it just fit really nicely with my melody and, added to it quite a bit too.

[00:05:03] So it was a true collaboration on the lyrics. And we both were of one. I was going to say mind, but really one heart, wanting to, conjure up a scenario where we could meet our moms again. And I don't mean in any kind of, you know, weird way, but rather that impulse that sometimes we have, you know, when our moms are gone, you know, when you're in a hard place or a lonely place or whatever it may be.

[00:05:27] And you think "if I could just call my mom right now", those of us who were lucky enough to have poor relationships, you know? So, in any case, that was something that we both had experienced. That "if only I could just talk to her" and we put sort of a, you know, a nicer spin on it and. And it was so cool to have Nat sing it.

[00:05:47] I mean, I was just, I was so thrilled that the song turned into something that she fully embraced and saying with so much sincerity, you know.

[00:05:56] **Bryan Smith:** It's really nice to hear her voice. I know she sang on a, was it "These Dreams" or, yeah, "These Dreams" back in the mid-eighties and had that turned into a number one hit demonstrated that she has the chops for sure, but just hasn't been featured as a vocalist. So, it was really cool to hear this.

[00:06:15] **Sue Ennis:** That's what happens when you share a band with Ann Wilson. Not to be Shelly, but you know, I mean, she, she certainly, yeah. I mean, one of, I think Rock's greatest voices and I will say that as her friend and a fan and. And then Nance always had a few moments, a few sort of spotlights in the live show where she could sing whatever she wanted, you know, and she often opted to sing covers.

[00:06:41] I think she's she sang, , Mona Lisa's and Mad Hatters at an old Elton John tune that just really beautiful melody. And then on the last tour, "The Boxer" and, you know, so something a little more acoustic focused and-

[00:06:55] **Bryan Smith:** with Sammy Hagar, right?

[00:06:56] **Sue Ennis:** Yeah.

[00:06:57] **Bryan Smith:** That's an interesting collaboration there. I was not expecting to see his name.

[00:07:02] **Sue Ennis:** No, he's an old friend of a very long-time friend of Jeff, Jeff Bywater, Nancy's husband. And so Nancy is of course gotten to know him and, , they have a really fun, playful relationship, you know, in Instagram and they Josh around it's. It's great. And I think she originally had a song that was a big, big rocker.

[00:07:23] That was a contender for the record. And she sent it to Sammy, and he said, "you know, this is kind of the obvious move." You know, "this is exactly what everyone would expect me to sing on this kind of hard rocking thing. What else do you have?" And, you know, she said, well, "The Boxer". And he said, "Oh, I love that song." and so that's how it came to be. They wanted to make a little bit of a surprise that you wouldn't imagine, you know.

[00:07:46] **Bryan Smith:** I'm looking for hearing it on Friday. I wasn't able to find it online because it's not out yet. Yeah, it's a, I was able to just to listen to maybe two or three songs, just little teasers. but I listened to that Mark Marin interview with Nancy, by the way that you posted on Twitter and learned a lot about Nancy and also heard a little bit about how this solo album came to be, and it sounds like the isolation of the pandemic and the downtime of the pandemic allowed for Nancy to create this thing without the distraction of being on the road all of those other pressures is that your understanding?

[00:08:22] **Sue Ennis:** Oh, for sure. I'd say, you know, Nancy, Nancy is my, you know, my true, truly my best friend. And, you know, it's been an amazing thing to have, you know, she was 12 when I met her and, you know, we just, we're just two likeminded souls.

[00:08:36] And so, you know, I know where she is, , emotionally and spiritually, you know, usually, as we move through life and, you know, she really was at a place I think, you know, kind of exhausted and turned inside out from all the touring and travel, and then was stuck at home and thought, you know, "what am I going to do? I'm not just going to sit here." And she started to, she started to, you know, just put it out there, do a couple of covers and enjoyed the experience. It was like really fulfilling and brought some purpose into being

quarantined. So, I think that was actually a big part of it in some ways, you know, I'm not sure she would have had the same kind of focus, if she weren't housebound.

[00:09:17] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. Yeah. So, I'd like to go back in time with you too. I know you've told this story before, because I've heard other interviews with you, but I'd like to hear it directly from you, how you met Anne Nancy and how that relationship flourished into what it became in the seventies and eighties.

[00:09:38] **Sue Ennis:** Yeah, well, yeah, it's my go-to story because it's what really happened. And the scene of the meeting was, it was in a high school class in high school, German class. Actually, I was a pretty new girl from, having moved to Seattle from Denver, or actually Bellevue is suburb of Seattle as you know, and so I really didn't have too many friends, but I did have the Beatles.

[00:10:02] And that was sort of the thing that I was such a Beatle fanatic. And they, they, they really buoyed me during a time when I was kind of disoriented. And so they had played in town and I'd gone to the show and, you know, it was way in the back and just saw these little tiny guys on stage. And really just, I mean, I thought there they are, but everyone's screaming.

[00:10:24] So in any case, I didn't have, you know, a super amazing experience there. I was glad I was there, but in any case, the Beatles were fresh in the air. And my dad, one morning I was reading the paper and he said, Oh, look, here's a girl from your school Sammamish, who won The Beatle essay. So, there was some kind of contest, which is "what the Beatles mean to me."

[00:10:45] And, so she'd written her, her paragraph and it won. And so there she was, and she had one of those little, super eight cameras. That was her prize as she posed for the photo. And there was this girl Ann who sits in front of me in the German class. We were not friends at all. I just knew of her, but I thought there's a commonality, there's someone who knows the Beatles. Okay. This is someone in my tribe. So, I, so that day I, I think the Beatles had a new record out called "Revolver". And so, I thought, "well, I'll see if she's a real Beatle fan." So, I sat behind her and I, before class started, I started humming the most obscure song on that record, just to sort of throw her a line and see if she'd take the bait. And, if she could recognize it and it was called "Love You Too", by George Harrison. And I just kind of went.

[00:11:38] And she, man. She just took it and ran. She was just like, "I've got a fish." I mean, I, I was, I was so excited, but I didn't know how to say, "Hey, I'm, you know, my name is Sue." And I just thought, I'll just see if the beetle thing is a connection. And it really was. She whipped around in her chair and we just started talking and she said, "do you have the record?"

[00:11:58] And "yes." And "what's the best song on there?" And did you go to the Beatles show? Yes. And all of a sudden it just was, I found my person. So then, I was just really, really happy to find someone that I could share this music with. and I remember, I, you know, I was a teenage girl and so I was like, well, I'll call you and we can talk some time.

[00:12:18] So I, I called her and, we talk on the phone and, in the background, there was this commotion going on, and I have to say I kind of got irritated because I really wanted to get to know her and have her attention, but in the background, there was all this laughing and this, it sounded like a kid tumbling on these beds trying to distract her.

[00:12:37] And that was Nancy. And Ann was laughing the whole time and they were just having a blast. So, I thought, well, you know, this is weird cause I have a younger sister and we have no, there's no real commonality there. So, I eventually met Nance and really hit it off with this kid. I mean, she was such an amazing, and she already played guitar.

[00:13:00] She was just this twelve-year-old, hilarious. I mean, I just had never met anybody like her. So, that was the beginning of, a friendship. They already had a number of, as you know, from the interview with Mark, they had a number of groups already going and immediately asked me to join when they saw that I had a guitar and I could not imagine doing that, I was way too, introverted. And could not go to the performer place at all in the beginning. So, we just started playing in the bedroom and they showed me lots and lots of chords and I knew how to harmonize a little bit, but they got me deeper into it. One of the things that was so cool about both of those young ladies was that they had had a lot of experience in choirs, and they had really good ears and they also had sung a lot in their family, and so they had a natural harmony besides the fact that they were sisters as well. So, it was really, really fun to have them help me find my place in a three-part harmony. They certainly guided me there. And that was just a revelation to me.

[00:14:06] So, that's where it all started was kind of a fan approach to music. And then the fact that they were already, you know, really working on something and kind of brought me in, as far as I could go, but I could not go onstage.

[00:14:21] **Bryan Smith:** Now, were you self-taught at this point? And were they self-taught?

[00:14:25] **Sue Ennis:** Yes, absolutely. I think that her mom had bought them a, what was it called?

[00:14:30] Oh, Melba. I think that was an, sixties guitar book with all the chords in it. I had a chord book as well, but I, I mean, I really have to say I was a very amateur guitar player. And once they showed me, you know, how the E went with the A, and it was just, they really opened a musical door for me. I already had, I played piano.

[00:14:52] I had had a number of piano lessons along the way. And I remember when I was moving away when I was, in eighth grade from my home and actually in San Diego, I remember the teacher said, "you should continue playing you have something." And I never forgot that. And you know, it made me feel like I might have someone recognize something in me, which I hadn't seen. So, that was a little bit of something that gave me some confidence to sing the songs with them so.

[00:15:20] **Bryan Smith:** That's awesome. I find that collaboration and just playing and singing with other people is a portal into somewhere that you just cannot go on your own through these self-teach books I started with, I think Alfred's self-teach book one for guitar. In fact, I did that. This I'll show you the guitar behind me. Cause it's the one.

[00:15:44] **Sue Ennis:** That's some nice-looking guitars there, Brian.

[00:15:46] **Bryan Smith:** Well, this one here, this one was given to my dad by I believe Howard Leese.

[00:15:53] **Sue Ennis:** No kidding.

[00:15:54] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah.

[00:15:55] **Sue Ennis:** And so what's the make on that?

[00:15:57] **Bryan Smith:** This is a limited-edition Ovation, classical guitar.

[00:16:03] **Sue Ennis:** Classical look at that. Yeah, look at that wide neck.

[00:16:06] **Bryan Smith:** It's got the nylon strings. And so, my dad had that laying around and because he was obviously, you know, the tour pilot for *Heart* and had a love for music at a young age and he played and I looked up to him. So, I picked up that guitar. And I learned from that book, Alfred self-teach book, number one, and that's, as far as I got, it's just that book. But the rest of my musical knowledge came from playing with other people in bands and just fireside acoustic sessions and that type of thing. And I tell you, it's like a university course when you work with the right people and-

[00:16:42] **Sue Ennis:** yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think that's the truth, songwriting collaborations that I've been in. I did a bunch of songs with a guy who's a film composer and who was Berkeley school of music. And it was the first time that I'd ever sat down in the same room with someone who actually got out staff paper and wrote the notes that we were writing. And usually, you just put on the old cassette and recorded it.

[00:17:06] And that, that made me think "I've, I'm kind of out of my depth here, but I feel it's good for me." You know, it's just above where you are and it makes you, it makes you rise up.

[00:17:17] **Bryan Smith:** My understanding is you went off to college after high school and Ann and Nancy had a couple of albums under their belt and were touring. How did you reconnect with them? And what was the impetus behind that reconnection and that collaboration that started at a, I think dog and butterfly.

[00:17:34] **Sue Ennis:** See the dog butterfly. That's right. So, I was actually in Berkeley, California at Cal there getting my master's in German literature of all things I just loved lit. And I was, I was pretty good in German. So that was my focus for a while. But I should say that I had kept in very close touch with Anna Nance, as things started to take off for them with "Dreamboat Annie" and then "Little Queen". It wasn't as though, you know, we split off and then the reunion, came back many years later, it was, we saw each other at Christmas. I remember in my apartment in Berkeley, they'd be on the road and they'd call me at three in the morning and I'd be, I'd get really irritated with them, like, "you know that don't you see that not the whole world is a Rockstar." I mean, it was all in fun, but in any case, you know, we certainly had kept in touch and they would always play me early versions of the songs,

but I was on a different path. And so they were coming to play in San Francisco. *Heart* was playing at a place called The Cow Palace, which was a venue back then.

[00:19:11] That was the equivalent to the arena in Seattle. And, and I remember that they came over to Berkeley in a limo and I hadn't seen them for a while. They were just coming off nine months on the road straight and, two women and 30 men, I'll never forget that. And I just can't tell you how much they earned, where they got to, you know, the small little places, the nine months on the road, you know, bless the guys, but still, you know, day in day out, amazing, amazing fortitude and dedication to what they wanted to get to.

[00:19:49] And so they came to my little place and they got out and I remember they, they were all dolled up. They had these perms, you know, it was some new look, and they had these beautiful jackets and I saw them through new eyes in a way, because they were very glamorous and they looked beautiful. I mean, of course I always knew they were beautiful women, but this was stunning they had boots on. And they look like rock stars. And when I saw them, I, you know, they probably saw the surprise in my face. I'll never forget. And they just said they started laughing. They go, "I know, look, I know this is, this is what we kind of have to do."

[00:20:23] **Bryan Smith:** Right.

[00:20:23] **Sue Ennis:** But I mean, not that they minded it, but it was really fun, you know, to know they were still in there. They hadn't completely become a sassy rockstars. So we went and started playing guitars that afternoon. They had about, I guess, four or five hours with me before they had to go play their show, and the limo guy waited outside and we just had the best reunion you can imagine, you know, I was deep into German literature and all of a sudden this sort of, , incredible golden thing washed over me, the beauty of making music, as you said with other people it's just indescribable, and I think that what they got from it, if I may be so bold is just, you know, a connection with somebody who really knows them and isn't treating them like rock stars. Also, maybe because I am a woman, and we, you know, we laughed so hard. It was just an amazing reunion. And at one point they brought out some notebook paper and they said, "Epic records wants us to deliver a complete album." so, I think at that time it was nine or 10 songs in two months and we haven't started writing and we have no ideas because all we've done is go on stage and see hotel rooms, but we have this little idea and so they showed it to me, and it was actually pretty well along. I mean, I could tell they had a verse and a chorus, and I helped him with the bridge, and it was just all for fun, we were laughing the whole time and then we'd sing it and we go, "that's fun. That's pleasant". In any case, I just thought it was fun. And suddenly there was a song Dog and Butterfly, and, you know, I helped with some lyrics here and there and they went back to Seattle and played it for Mike Flicker, their producer right away, 'cause he was saying, "we've got, we've got to get songs. And we got to go with this." They already had studio time booked. And he said, "why don't you go back there next weekend and see what else you can come up with." And so it started a very surreal as I look back on it, a time of writing this record where, you know, they had a big advance at that point from their label. And so they, they would fly down there. We would go to, this penthouse suite at the top of the at Knob Hill and, you know, fancy San Francisco for the weekend. The limo would come pick me up

from my little hovel, you know, like Cinderella. I would go go to this incredible, incredible place, at the Mark Hopkins, at all these different, beautiful hotels.

[00:22:55] And we'd stay in all weekend and write a song. And on Sunday, the limo dropped me off. You know and I was when I went back to reality and off, they went to Seattle and they'd call me during the week and say, "the song is really coming together. We made this change, or they've just love it." But I mean, it seemed like we were on a roll, you know, and it all came from the spirit of kind of fun and love of music in those days, without any sense of what a label was looking for, you know?

[00:23:26] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. I'm looking at the track list for "*Dog and Butterfly*" and what an album. Who was in the room during these sessions, I assume just everyone, was there collaborating and contributing in some way. Was it mainly you Ann and Nancy and then. Roger and Howard would sit in on a few songs or was everybody there for every song?

[00:23:49] **Sue Ennis:** No, I would say that, you know, so, let me just, choose a song. So Mistral Wind, for example, Raj had a riff for that, that Nance had recorded *electric guitar sounds* I think Nancy spoke about that in the interview and she brought it to Ann and me and just said, can we build something around this? You know, this was the foundation, but Roger was never there. We went to the band with a completed song that had been built around that one, a signature riff, but we fleshed it out and it went in all kinds of. You know, different directions, but that was his, so it was sort of like that. They'd sometimes give this used to really get us in. Sometimes, you know, it's really, to their credit, their job is to rock out and make up riffs and do stuff, they'd go in and record maybe a soundcheck and give us up a cassette tape of, you know, eight minutes of a jam and had it to us and say, "here's the song we wrote." And we listened to it and it would be eight minutes of, you know, a riff here, a false start, sometimes something kind of cool would happen, but not a song.

[00:24:54] And they'd go "put a singing part on it." And we'd go "a singing part?" But that that's the lyrics and the melody? That's what the song is about. I mean, it was all sort of in fun, but it was also through their lens. It was like, this thing really rocks. And you guys go do whatever you do to put the singing part thing, so. Nowadays they call it top lighting, but that's how we wrote. Most of them was just three of us.

[00:25:20] **Bryan Smith:** So, then there's songwriting credits there, right? I mean with, sorry to interrupt you Sue, but I'm still unclear on it. I'm trying to figure out over time as I interview more musicians and songwriters is the, the legalities of it. So, when you're writing a song, I guess it's an understanding that's reached as to how the songwriting credits and royalties are going to be split, and then there's a separate performance credit or a royalty that is assigned to that song. How does that work legally?

[00:25:50] **Sue Ennis:** Okay. Yeah. So, we have a song, and it is a composition. We call it a comp call. It it's called composition legally, meaning, you know, lyrics, chords, melody. Okay. That's, that's a song. So, let's say in the case of *Dog and Butterfly*. There are three writers on that, that the three of us wrote that song. And so, we own the composition and we split up what we considered, what percentage of the we contributed, you know, so that, so the a hundred percent of the pie would be split up however we determined that to be in terms of

each of our contributions. So that's, that's that side. There's also another side. That's one copyright that's for the composition. The other side of things is for the re sound recording or the master, and that's where the performers are, are part of that, the actual performance that has been recorded. That is also a copyright that you have on a song. And that typically this, the master is owned by a label if you're signed to a label.

[00:26:52] **Bryan Smith:** Okay.

[00:26:52] **Sue Ennis:** So, and then the artists receive a royalty according to their contract with the label. So before they signed, they say, yes, we'll agree to, you know, 14% royalty, whatever, it may be 18%. And that's how, that's how the players are paid, with that participation from the sales of that recording, what they have, but unless they wrote on the song, they would have no piece of the composition side. Hmm. Are you following me?

[00:27:19] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. So, that makes sense. Okay. I've heard artists before say just. Kicking themselves. "I wish I had not given up the masters." And I think now I understand what they mean by that.

[00:27:32] **Sue Ennis:** Yes. And particularly today in the world of streaming, the masters side gets about three times as much as the composition side from the streaming services. So that's really where the gold is for, you know, I mean, again, streaming, payments are crazy and small, but the much larger percentage is, is with those masters. That's the value in the streaming world.

[00:27:57] **Bryan Smith:** So before "Dog and Butterfly". So, Dreamboat Annie and Little Queen, my understanding is that Ann and Nancy followed Roger and Michael Fisher up to Vancouver, and there was songwriting and recording and performing in Vancouver, were you pretty tuned into what was happening and did you know how special that band was at the time? Because if they're up there in Vancouver, maybe they're flying under the radar in the United States, and then they just come down and make this huge splash, but what were you thinking at the time?

[00:28:33] **Sue Ennis:** Well, the earliest days of *Heart*, and this would be before Ann met Mike Fisher, they were in clubs around town and they were starting to get a following. And so there wasn't awareness. I wouldn't say they were the top band in town, but they were playing out a lot. So I had seen them a number of times and, Nance wasn't, she was in high school, but when they really got serious and they moved to Vancouver because, you know, Ann wanted to be with Mike, but also I think Mike had sort of masterminded, a vision for what they could be and was a very hard worker. And one of, you know, one of them to work really hard.

[00:29:10] And so they did, and they just committed. And so they started to rise up and become a draw for the bigger clubs in Vancouver. So, I was aware of that. And then I'd go up there occasionally and see them and, you know, be really surprised at how excited people were to see them at that time. I think they were called little Led Zeppelin because they were doing a lot of Zeppelin covers, in the band.

[00:29:36] And they were really good. Raj was really nailing those; Jimmy Page riffs and Ann was for a time as she was developing. Her voice was an amazing Robert Plant soundalike, in terms of how she was approaching the rock.

[00:29:52] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. Yeah, I saw that 2000. Was it 2006 or eight tribute that they did for led Zeppelin? And I forget what song?

[00:30:01] **Sue Ennis:** Oh, is that at the, at the hall of fame at the, I'm not sure. What's it called?

[00:30:05] **Bryan Smith:** What was like the, It was a center for perfect Kennedy center because the Kennedy center's honor. Yeah, yeah. That, that performance, I think on YouTube has millions and millions of views. It's just incredible to see the members of Led Zeppelin, like tearing up as they're listening to that song.

[00:30:22] **Sue Ennis:** It was amazing, wasn't it?

[00:30:23] **Bryan Smith:** Standing ovation. Yeah.

[00:30:24] **Sue Ennis:** You know what was funny about that was they came to them and said, would you like to do this? And you know, the crown jewel stairway to heaven and close the show. Yes, yes, yes. And so they said, "well, we'll have the music director call you, you know, about where you want to be in the band, you know, do you want to have a guitar, and she said, "do you know how many times I've played stairway to happen in clubs like thousands literally." And, and so he called her up and he said, "you can do what you want, but we're, you know, very comfortable having our lead guy shadow you." And so you would pretend to play and the guy. Whoever he is, would, would be playing the real thing and suggested that that might be their comfort level since they didn't really know *Heart* that well.

[00:31:13] And that's when she said, "I can handle it, thank you." And, I tell you when I saw that I was just, I knew they could do it, but it was such a big moment and they just nailed it. Like the pros they are. I mean, I just, I saw no nerves. I just saw, you know, steel, iron will and, and professionalism and confidence. And I think that's what made it special. They did it.

[00:31:43] **Bryan Smith:** In terms of your songwriting and your collaboration with Ann and Nancy over the years when they started with the big labels in the mid-eighties. And I think it was the *Heart* self-titled album where I noticed maybe your name wasn't on as many tracks or I don't know if that's correct, but were the labels starting to push their own agenda on Ann and Nancy at that point?

[00:32:08] **Sue Ennis:** Yes, they sure were. The thing is Ann and Nance went along with it, but what happened really was that there had been. Two underperforming records by the band, *Private Audition* and *Passion Works*. And so, they had their fans and they did okay, but they didn't do what previous records had done. And of course, those metrics are what the label looks at. And so, you know, a guy came, they were not in a negotiating place of great power. A guy came from Capitol, a really terrific guy named Don Grierson and he loved Ann's voice so much. And he loved the band and he said, "you know, we want to take you from Epic." I think Epic was ready to say goodbye. "But part of it is going to be that we're going to

want to work with you on this." And we're going to find the very best songs and we're going to suggest a producer and Ron Nevison was his name. And so I don't know if they were iron clad in terms of "here's your offer, you have to take these things" or if it was, "we have suggestions". I'm not sure how it went down, but they did do that and go with it.

[00:33:17] And Don Grierson was an incredible ANR person for them on the phone with them all the time, making sure that this was going to be the right record and the record that Capitol wanted as well. And so part of that was going outside for the songs that they thought would be radio hits. You know, because rock was really changing. The rock that, had made the first iteration of *Heart*, you know, what it was, was no longer really that sound was not really selling. So, that's yeah.

[00:33:49] **Bryan Smith:** I mean, that's just a fact of the eighties, is that it, it changed dramatically from rock to more synthy sounds.

[00:33:58] **Sue Ennis:** Yeah, right? It did. I mean, I think it had to do with, you know, many, many changes in the industry have to do with tech developments right. And new things and yeah.

[00:34:09] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. And they rolled with it and did, okay.

[00:34:37] I'm so pleased that "These Dreams" was a number one hit, and the lyrics were written by Bernie Taupin. And what a cool collaboration to be able to work with Bernie who was as any Elton John's lyricist.

[00:34:51] **Sue Ennis:** Yes, indeed. And you know, such a, such a hero for us. We were massive Elton John fans and knew those records intimately every syllable, and so that song actually was written sort of existed and was out there in the "this is available at university." You know, they didn't work directly with Bernie if with a wonderful writer named Martin Page. And I think they had pitched it to the Starship at that time. And they actually, they wrote, *We Built This City*, the, Bernie and Martin page.

[00:35:23] So, that was around the same time, you know? And so I think that Nevison brought that song. I actually was there the night that they were going through songs and he played that one and Ann was not that interested. It was very synthy, the demo and she just was not vibing with it at all. I that's an overstatement, she just, she just couldn't find her place in it. It was, there were just, there was not rock and didn't have guitars, but Nance heard something in it. And she, I remember she went up to the speaker and put her arms around it, and just said, "that's mine" and.

[00:36:00] **Bryan Smith:** Physically took possession of that.

[00:36:03] **Sue Ennis:** Physically took it.

[00:36:04] **Bryan Smith:** That's great. What a great story. As you may have noticed, there are great resources and advice mentioned in all our episodes and for many of them, we actually collect all of these resources for you in one easy place. Our newsletter, you can go to

dreampathpod.com/newsletter to join. It's not fancy, just an email about each week's episode, featured artists and resources to help you on your journey.

[00:36:31] Now back to the interview. So, at this time, in the eighties, at the same time in the Pacific Northwest, there was this grunge scene that was developing and morphing into something that really became sort of a signature sound in the early nineties that resulted in Mother Lovebone and Nirvana and Mudhoney, where you tuned in to what was happening in the Seattle area at that time?

[00:37:01] **Sue Ennis:** Not only was I not tuned in, but I remember, that. I think Nancy mentioned her dear friend, Kelly Curtis, who was her, you know, I think he was 10 when they met a lifelong friend. And of course, I, I knew I knew Kelly very well too. But I remember I got a call from Kelly who at that time was still trying to find his way in music, he knew he wanted to be in music. He had been the publicist for *Heart*. He traveled a lot. And then he was back in Seattle feeling his way. And, and I remember he called me one night and said, "you have to come down to the central in pioneer square." You may still there central Tavern. And I knew that it was sort of a grungy, to use that word place that I'd know I don't think so, and he said you " I'm going to send a taxi for you." I mean, he was so he was so adamant that I come, and you've got to see this band. " Mother-in-law no, I think they were called. Bookie Blaylock at the time. No, they were, they were Mother Lovebone. I'm sorry, Mother Lovebone. And so, I, you know, I really okay. Okay. I mean, he just kept after me and to his credit. I mean, that's what you do. And so I went down there and lo and behold, there were a bunch of my friends around. And so clearly Kelly had called everybody and done the same sales job on them. "I will send a taxi to bring you down here."

[00:38:22] So here's all these people and here comes Mother Lovebone and okay. They're, they're kind of loud and I, I just thought, okay, well they're, they're not, they're not bad. But then the lead singer, Andrew was, I thought Andrew Wood, I just was sitting, you know, sort of in the back, just taking him in going, what is this? You know what, okay, what is this? And. And he started to swing the microphone out over the crowd, you know, almost in like a Roger Daltrey move. Daltrey used to swing the mic. And, and I thought, "oh no, this is like a guy in his bedroom pretending to be Roger." That was my association. But Roger Daltrey yeah.

[00:39:06] Derivative like, "Oh, and then you have to swing the mic." And so, so he's swinging it and it started to come way low, you know, like it became dangerous. And I thought, this guy, what is, what is this about? And so I, I thought he was a jackass and then he took a full pitcher of beer and just threw it over the crowd.

[00:39:28] Oh man. I went, you know, I I'm out, I'm out. I I'm too old to appreciate what this is saying. I mean, I don't know what it's not for me. And, and I remember, leaving, not in a Huff or anything, but just like, I don't get it. And-

[00:39:43] **Bryan Smith:** Kelly's like "isn't this great?"

[00:39:47] **Sue Ennis:** He did come up. "What do you think?" And, you know, I was kinda just about hurt people with the mic and he goes, "Oh, well, you know, he's just trying to find

him, he's trying to find his persona, but the main thing is the music, right?" And, you know, I could, I could sort of see it, but I never, I mean, your question was, you know, D did I see it? Did I know about it? What did I think I did not, I could not get it. And, this was, and I do think, that he was experimenting that Andrew did finally find a really cool stage persona, you know, there was early days and he was trying to try to, but yeah.

[00:40:22] **Bryan Smith:** And then that morphed into Pearl jam, right?

[00:40:25] **Sue Ennis:** Yes, it did. After Andrew died. Yes. And that was really interesting. I guess the one thing that I could tell you about my observations, I was really on the periphery of this, not so much, you know, center, but certainly at a Nance were invited into the fold a little bit because of Kelly. And I remember that when Andrew OD'd it was devastating naturally to his band and to Kelly who had started to manage them. And they all got together for this. I think Nancy mentioned this to be together as a family would in, in their grief and. Nance, I think went to that and she told me something that I, I never forgot. She said, "this is something special in this band. It's more than professional. These guys are family and they are completely loyal and bonded to each other."

[00:41:17] They've been through this really heavy thing. And Kelly is a part of it. And Kelly is leading them almost like a, you know, he was in the youth group, all of a sudden, one of their youth group leaders from the church way back when, you know, opening his house up. And I, and I was really touched by that. And then when I learned that Kelly never had a written contract with them, that they worked on a handshake, you know, their whole career with him, I thought that's where it started, you know.

[00:41:44] **Bryan Smith:** That speaks volumes about Kelly and also those band members.

[00:41:48] **Sue Ennis:** Doesn't it? Yeah. They're, they're really excellent people.

[00:41:52] You know.

[00:41:52] **Bryan Smith:** Shep Gordon is the same way. I don't know if you've ever met Shep before, but

[00:41:56] **Sue Ennis:** I've heard so many great interviews with him and, and seen, that Mike Myers documentary.

[00:42:01] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, *Supermensch*?

[00:42:02] **Sue Ennis:** Yeah, have you seen that?

[00:42:03] **Bryan Smith:** I did. Yeah. I was so impressed with that documentary and with Shep. And I reached out to Shep because, it was a stupid thing in the documentary, he talked about this flight that he had with Alice Cooper, Shep did. Where he said there was an emergency landing, or they thought they were going to crash. And that was the real-life incident that inspired Cameron Crowe to write the scene in "Almost Famous", which made it into the film where they almost crashed, and it was a comical scene. But the reason I reached out to him and this is so dumb, I don't know why I even cared, but after my dad died in 2003, Ann and Nancy through Carol Peters, their manager at the time emailed my sister

and I expressing their condolences and telling stories about my dad. And one of those stories was on a flight, there was a near crash landing where they had to land in a field somewhere. And Cameron used that as inspiration for "Almost Famous". And I watched the movie and. You know, sure enough, the pilot's name was Craig, not Greg. And it all made sense. And I confirmed that recently with Greg Meriotti, who is Cameron's partner in vinyl films and yeah.

[00:43:20] And he told me, so, "Oh yeah, that was based upon the flight with your dad not Shep" anyway, that's how petty I am. I emailed a ship, or I messaged him on Facebook, and I asked him about that. He's like, "no, no, no. That was really the flight I had with Alice Cooper" then I was like, okay, well, but anyway.

[00:43:38] **Sue Ennis:** Well, I had always heard, you know, I'd been on, so some of those flights on those, on that small plane with your dad at the helm, and some of those flights were really bumpy and really scary, you know, and that little plane you feel everyday and King air, it sure was. And, and I remember, you know, Howard Leese was the least comfortable flyer and nothing against Howie, you know, he's the most brilliant guitar player, and, you know, none of us was really, but Howard really didn't like it. And, and I remember one time, Cameron being on there and he looked pretty white too, because we were just, we were going every, which way in the South, I think, through a tornado. And that's when I thought, "Oh, that's where he got the idea" because he had actually been there with looking at Howard's face just, it was amazing as very scary. And I, so I will, I will, vote for vote for the *Heart* story for sure.

[00:44:34] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. So, how, how much did you travel with *Heart* on tour and how much did you see my dad?

[00:44:40] **Sue Ennis:** You know, not that often I do have a Greg Smith story. So, I would say when I wasn't in school, I would go out on tour with them and then I got really tired, you know, on the road. I mean, I just was not made for that kind of pace. And so, I, I started to just be one of those people, because I was not in the band who had sort of sit back and say, "Oh, you're playing LA, I guess I'll come to that."

[00:45:06] Or "you're playing Chicago." So I would choose those dates and, come in and see them. So I did, I did see many, many shows, but I did not do the sort of grind. I did a couple of the grind day in, day out, you know, two-week kind of things. But I remember that they were going to play outside of Frankfurt, Germany.

[00:45:25] And, so they put together a small tour that had a number of dates in the UK. I remember they played in Leeds and I'm just remembering this, with The Who. And that was fun. That was fun to see the who up close backstage. That was really a thrill. And so, Greg was the. Pilot for that tour. And I remember also just a little, I'll also preface was that Ann, Nance and I went over early before the band came over and took a little Beatle tour.

[00:45:53] And so, you know, they were, they rented a nice car in London and we drove up to Liverpool, you know, on the left side of the road. And it was, I'll just, you know, I remember, but it was, it was great. Cause it was just the three of us. We had an amazing

time. We finally met up with the band, I think in Edinburgh it was, it was just a great, great time.

[00:46:14] And I think we actually flew from Edinburgh to Frankfurt and came in at around 11:30 at night. Well, the airport was closed and so, Greg said "the airport's closed", so we're driving it drive, we're flying around and everybody's like, what are we going to do? And, and he goes, "well, you know, there's a number of things we could fly to, you know, it's not at Hamburg. We can fly here, fly here. And then the manager was real, you know, Ken Kinnear was nervous, and you know, okay, we've got to go to the next spot. And Greg said, "I'll just land it here." And so, and they were good. Yeah. But there's no run by lights and he goes, I mean, because he'd had so much experience, right.

[00:46:57] Wasn't didn't he fly in Vietnam?

[00:46:58] **Bryan Smith:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:47:00] **Sue Ennis:** And he was so confident. "So, I'll just, I'll just put it down here. No one has to know." So, everyone went really, and, and of course the management was happy about it because of the next day we, you know, we had to be certain places. So, we land on a dark runway and just fine.

[00:47:18] And we are way the hell out at the end of a dark runway. There's nothing. So what are we going to do? So, Greg goes, well, "I'll just start walking toward the terminal. We'll see if we meet somebody and we'll. Tell them to come out and get the bags." So Ann and Nance said, well, take "Sue, she speaks German." And so, I said, "okay, come on."

[00:47:40] So, here's Greg and I walking across this, you know, the tarmac in the dark. And he was kind of jogging. And I think he was, you know, pumped up or he was like the guy who gets up and going here, you know, this is kind of a weird situation. And so, I remember kind of running after him and, and, and he said, "Oh, look, there's a, like a little, uh, looks like a little trailer with a light on halfway to the big terminal up ahead."

[00:48:06] And so we went over there and there was a guy in there snoozing. It was just like in a movie, you know, sitting at his desk. And so he knocked at the door, Greg starts saying, "Hey, we've got, you know, Oh, we've got a plane out here and can you get some transportation?" And the guy said, "um, Ish like a kind English, no English."

[00:48:26] And so, Greg goes, "tell him, tell him that we have," so I, you know, so I did, I said in my best German, which you know, was okay, but enough to be understood, you know, *German*. So, and sure enough, the guy understood and called and pretty soon they had a couple of buses coming out to pick us up with the luggage and they dropped us off in front of the building.

[00:48:53] Everything closed, knock, knock, nothing. That's dark. And so now what do we do? We're illegally in a country. There's no passport control. There's no customs. And so, we were peeking into this huge room that I think was customs clearly. That's where they dropped us off. And somebody opened a door in the far corner and I screamed, and I said, *German* and it was a cleaning woman. So, I said, and everyone was going "say it louder."

And so she started to come and she came up and, you know, I, I mean, I wish I had a huge, great ending for the story, but she actually, you know, opened the door and said, buses does. And she was Turkish. She didn't speak German too well, I didn't speak German too well, but I was able to, we opened the door, and she goes, no, no, no noise, noise, noise. Good. And, and I said, no, no, no, honestly, honest good. And so, it held it and all the band members went under my arm with their bags and duct into this place. And, and I, as I talked to her and tried to keep her from, blowing the whistle and we got, yeah, we got in and, you know, we just didn't, I don't know how we got out because we never had the, you know, the entry stamp.

[00:50:12] So we just went to our hotel and everyone went, "it's good thing you speak German." And, and, you know, it was great. It was actually a really, you know, an unforgettable adventure, but your dad was such a go getter. So fearless.

[00:50:24] **Bryan Smith:** This is great. That's awesome. That's a great story. Thanks for sharing that. I don't have a lot of stories of his adventures on the road, but the ones I do have are very much like that, where he, he just kind of blazes his own path and, and is fearless.

[00:50:41] And that's actually, you know, closed airports are no, he was no stranger to closed airports because that's how he learned to fly when he was 16. He actually, he hopped the fence at airports and would steal planes and just take off in, Lake Tahoe I believe. And he would just take planes and he was self-taught.

[00:51:03] And then of course, when he went to the military and officer candidate school, and that's when he got his official training to become a helicopter, assault helicopter, pilot, and later, learning how to fly a commercial aircraft and whatnot. But yeah. So thank you for that, Sue. That's great.

[00:51:20] **Sue Ennis:** Oh, my pleasure, I love that story because I really, without him, you know, I don't know. I mean, no other pilot would have done that. You know, it's like, we're not gonna, we're not landing on a black runway, but, he saved the day and everybody made it to the gig the next day. So that was terrific. Yeah, it was fun.

[00:51:38] **Bryan Smith:** So, let's go back a little bit. Lovemongers. Tell us about Lovemongers, because that's a project that I think was a mid-nineties, maybe 97 or so. And that's where you were actually in the band with Ann, right?

[00:51:52] Yeah.

[00:51:53] **Sue Ennis:** So, that started with an offer for a benefit to Ann and Nance. And at that time the band was off. There wasn't sort of a, the band was not solid. They, you know, they had made a record that didn't do that. Well. People were doing other projects and I think Ann and Nance were very tired. And so they were very much a duo at that time, trying to figure out what the next thing was. And they wanted to strip things down after the big production, the hair, the MTV of it all.

[00:52:25] And that was sort of their mindset at that time, that was underscored and really supported by what was happening really in the, the aesthetic of the scene in Seattle, it was to be, to do it yourself and none of the trappings of the big spectacle with grunge. And so that's kind of where they were when this benefit offer came in to play at the Paramount, just a couple of songs.

[00:52:48] And so I remember we were out at Nancy's farm in Woodenville, just for fun with our friends, Frank Cox, and some others, a bunch of people one night. And as it got later, and said, you know, "we should really try to figure out what we're going to do for the show, what kind of songs?" And so, we started singing some old sort of folk tunes and, Peter Paul and Mary song, and, you know, it was all over the map. And Frank Cox, our dear friend, I had this beautiful tender, and they were singing great harmonies. And I think Ann or Nance said, you should come on stage with us. You know, let's just, you know, you guys can back us up. They want Ann and Nancy Wilson, but we can deliver kind of a beautiful vocal thing with all of us. And so let's, let's do that. So that's really where it started just at the farmhouse late one night and we all thought it was a one-off and. It certainly seemed to be that way, but then it was so much fun and, Ann knowing Ann, any chance to get a group together and to sing, you know, so this is all of a sudden, we're a group and we were, I remember that night we were laughing and said, this is this almost like a little band.

[00:53:59] And we said, what do we call ourselves? And we were thinking about different things. Someone said the hatemongers and someone "no, the Lovemongers" we laughed with them. This is really silly name, but fun. And, especially for the occasion. So that's where the name came from as almost like a joke. And then it seemed pretty fun. And soon enough, we had a couple of people come forward, a little label through Fred Meyer of all places that was starting up and a huge *Heart* fan, Brent Barry, what a great guy. And he said, "I want to make a Lovemongers record. I have a budget from the company. And so we started writing songs and made a record and released it on this little tiny indie label.

[00:54:42] And no one really thought that it was going to become anything, and it found its fans. But, what it really was, was a wonderful, I see it as a great reprieve for Anna Nance to get back to their roots in a sense which work, who stick and were of vocal, harmony based. And I think they were really refreshed by all that.

[00:55:02] And we were sort of there to Frank and I to support them and to lend our, you know, and we wrote, we actually wrote songs all of us together. So that's the story of the Lovemongers. We did a couple of little tours and played some clubs up and down the West coast just had a ball, you know, and I think it was, you know, friends on the road. Yeah. And it was just great. Lots of jokes came from that.

[00:55:26] **Bryan Smith:** The harmonies were great. I, I just listened to *Miracle Girl* before the interview. And that song sounds a lot like, I mean, it's so full and robust in terms of the layers and the harmonies.

[00:56:14] It sounded like a Broadway tune almost. I don't know if you've seen *Springtime*. Is it spring awakening? It kind of reminded me of like a spring awakening, really joyous, harmony driven song.

[00:56:28] **Sue Ennis:** You know, I haven't heard that in so long, but I remember it being really musical and melodic and those harmonies. Yeah, that's fun. That's right.

[00:56:36] **Bryan Smith:** So, a couple more questions. I know we've been going over an hour here and I appreciate your time. So, I remember listening to another interview with you where you said that the baby looked strange was the first album where you had publishing. And I don't know what that means, can you tell us what publishing is and what it means to an artist?

[00:56:55] **Sue Ennis:** I can, you know, I just taught a class earlier today on publishing. So I think I can, I think I can pull that out. I'll put on my teacher hat here for just a minute and ask people to bear with me. It's not very difficult and it's not very long, so here's the idea. You've got a song. You've got the songwriter and every song has to have a publisher associated. So, first thing to do is forget everything. You know, about the word publishing, like book publishing, newspaper publishing. This is something very different. The, the term actually arose out of, you know, going way, way back to the thirties, the idea of sheet music that was published, and that's how people, you know, got their music, so that's where the word publishing comes from. But music publishing now really just means a sort of overseeing this copyrighted song or a number of them, right. So, there's a publisher associated with every song and they kind of do the paperwork around that. So, they issued licenses. If someone wants to cover your song, they'll write that light, suss out, they'll get the, they'll get the, the contract going and someone will pay the publisher. The publisher collects all of the money that comes in. If you get, let's say a song placed in a movie that fee will come to the publisher, all of the streaming fees, all of that comes to the publisher and the publisher splits it right down the middle. They take half and they pay their song writer half.

[00:58:19] And if you've got a bunch of songwriters, you're going to be sharing, what's called the writer's share, which is 50% of that total income. So, the more writers you have, the less. The less good it is for your bank account. But I only laugh because I was at the Grammy's once and there was a song up for song of the year and it had 19 writers on it, and, and, you know, and I just thought "wow at a different age, right?" You know, because those 19 people they're sharing 50% of something. So, but anyway, so that's really what it is. So your publisher, if you have a publisher, someone interested in representing your songs as a songwriter, they take half your money, but they do a lot of things for you.

[00:59:02] Not only that paperwork, I mentioned, they register your copyrights and so on, but also, they push your, your songs for you into the hands of people who might want to cover your song or do something with it that generates money. And that might be something that you, as a writer in Seattle can't really do.

[00:59:19] You don't have those contacts. So, the publisher will put you in touch with maybe co-writers, they will open avenues and doors for you that you wouldn't necessarily have. So it's great to have a publisher in that way. If no publishing company is interested in you, very often the case, then you are your own publisher, but every song has a publisher.

[00:59:41] **Bryan Smith:** Professor Ennis, thank you for that.

[00:59:44] **Sue Ennis:** That's why they pay me the big bucks. No, I, you know, I, I love, I actually love talking about this stuff and it's, it's a concept that very few people, you know, get, you gotta, gotta kind of learn it.

[00:59:55] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. And I heard on the Nancy Wilson interview with Mark Marin, or was it. No, I think it was another podcast interview she did called record store day.

[01:00:05] I believe with Paul Myers. I'll have to send you the link to that because he specifically asked about you and your relationship with Nancy. Yeah. He talks about you and yeah, I'll send you the link to that today, but. I think Nancy said that she gave you one of her signature Martins that you were the one, one of the folks that she gave that guitar to.

[01:00:29] So, where does that guitar sit and do you play it?

[01:00:34] **Sue Ennis:** Very good. Yes, she did. I was lucky enough to, you know, it was, and she didn't tell me it was just one day the ups guy or FedEx comes and there's this big, heavy thing. And I open it and it's like, "she sent me a Martin?" You know, and then it's this incredibly beautiful guitar, as you can imagine, designed by her with all this personal touches, beautiful wood she chose.

[01:00:56] I mean, it is Nancy's wish and creation. So, in any case, it is in the next room. I don't play it as much as I should because the action needs to be lowered a little bit. So when I play it, it's like, "Oh" I, you know, in order to make a pure cord so that I have to have just a little bit of tweaking done on it, but it is a beautiful thing, and I cherish it. You know, I just I'm, I'm, I'm nervous to even play it almost in some ways. Yeah.

[01:01:24] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. If you need a good, good. You probably already know about, about Michael's guitar shop. Mike passed, I think last year, but his son is carrying on and that shop is still at it and I've taken my guitars in since Mike passed and they're doing a great job.

[01:01:43] **Sue Ennis:** That is great to know I'm going to go there because I'd love to, you know, carry on the tradition. Yeah, that's great to know. Thanks.

[01:01:50] **Bryan Smith:** I got Michael's name from Roger actually, cause I interviewed Roger. He was like one of the first guests my pod.

[01:01:56] **Sue Ennis:** Oh wow. How long have you been going with this?

[01:01:59] **Bryan Smith:** Couple of years, I started in March of 2019. And I think Mike Fisher and Roger Fisher, I interviewed them at the same time. They were episodes four and five, I believe, early on such a long interview. I had to split it into two episodes.

[01:02:15] **Sue Ennis:** They had a lot to say.

[01:02:16] **Bryan Smith:** They did.

[01:02:17] **Sue Ennis:** Yeah. I hope they hope they said nice things about me. No, I'm kidding. I'm sure I didn't even come up, but yeah that's great. Good, good. That's good. Have you interviewed any of the other guys in *Heart*?

[01:02:27] **Bryan Smith:** No, I reached out to Howard and he wasn't interested at all in, you know, it wasn't anything personal. He just isn't, it's not style. Yeah. He's down in Vegas. I think doing, you know, doing his thing at those shows. Yeah, the vault and I haven't had a chance to talk to any of the other folks like Derosier or, you know, Ken Kinnear can connect me I'm sure. Ken's still around by the way. So yeah.

[01:02:53] **Sue Ennis:** Yeah. Good to know. I haven't heard about him in years. Good.

[01:02:58] **Bryan Smith:** I wanted to finish off with a little discussion about your current profession. You are teaching at Shoreline Community College, right? And you have a out songwriting classes, and I'm fascinated by the concept of teaching someone how to write a song, because I heard an interview with Chris Martin from Coldplay and I was, I think it was during the Beegees documentary.

[01:03:25] I don't know if you've seen the Beegees documentary.

[01:03:27] **Sue Ennis:** Yes, I have. I just ate up every second of it. I mean, I almost, it was almost like a kid. I just couldn't get close enough to take in every, you know, it was just fantastic.

[01:03:38] **Bryan Smith:** The way Chris Martin from Coldplay described songwriting on that documentary. He said something like "songwriting is more like capturing energy that's out there" you weren't creating it, but you are, and I'm probably butchering this, but you're channeling something that's just out there and you have to be able to listen and understand what you're hearing so that you can properly memorialize that energy into the song that you're writing.

[01:04:12] I thought that was a beautiful way of describing it. Almost like we're a vessel and we don't have as much to do with creating a great song as we think we may do. So when you are teaching songwriting. How do you approach it mechanically and also the more spiritual part that Chris Martin's talking about in terms of like that energy?

[01:04:39] **Sue Ennis:** Well, I think that there are plenty of songwriters who don't necessarily have that channeling, but there is a craft to writing, right? And there are things you can teach, song structure, you know, the architecture of putting a song together that'll keep your ear, your listener engaged, and lyric writing the idea of capturing something in a way where it hasn't been said before.

[01:05:04] The things like that. We talk about having a song that has a North star to it, a central concept that sometimes is encapsulated in a title. I mean, some people write songs just by collecting titles and be jamming out something some night and go, what should I call this? Go look at your title list and go, Oh, that's exactly.

[01:05:24] What this one is called. And so, you know, there are different ways to get something going, but I think when you do have that moment, when you're so lost, or maybe not, maybe it's the found in the moment of, you know creating something, this stuff is going through your head and then something lands. You maybe you sing a melody and you think, "where did that come from?"

[01:05:45] That's, you know, that's the magic, isn't it. That's probably what he's talking about. And you're really grateful for that. And that's the thing that keeps you coming back more than anything else it's like, "will I be able to", it's not something that you set out to do. It's something you make yourself available for if it happens.

[01:06:02] And, and, and it doesn't have it, you know, it doesn't necessarily happen with everyone, but I'd say the more songs you write, the better, your chances. Yeah. So right now I can practice.

[01:06:15] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah I can see that. I mean, the craft, just like with acting, there's a craft of acting and then there's the art or the, the thing about acting that.

[01:06:23] You know, Robert DeNiro can't teach someone else how to be Robert DeNiro. I mean, there's some magic there to what he does. And, I would imagine in songwriting, there's something equivalent to grammar you just their do's. And don'ts about the craft of songwriting, especially if you're cranking out like Willie Nelson, 10,000 songs and not all of those are coming from a magical place.

[01:06:51] **Sue Ennis:** No, they're not. No, they're not. And there are some people I've met along the way who are successful writers, one guy that's great guy, Daryl Brown. Who's had a ton of success in the, in the country world, especially with Leah and rhymes. Yeah. He's just a great guy. And, I met him through the Grammy's, organization, and he told me once that he had to write 120 songs before he wrote a good one. And that's the part that it can be fun, but it's like any other skill you get, the more you practice the next time you write a song, you're just a little bit better. I think it really is like that. Unless you're a protege and then, you know, good for you. But then you're Paul McCartney, you know, where Yesterday just appeared to him.

[01:07:34] **Bryan Smith:** So, if I were to hire you to give me private songwriting lessons, how would that lesson start? So let's say I hire you for this lesson. And I have like a chord progression and that's like a D C G chord progression.

[01:07:58] And then, I maybe have some lyrics. Like I wrote some lyrics in high school a long, long time ago. I believe, that people change for the better. Yeah. Winning went our separate ways. I hoped it wasn't forever. No, it's not the end of though where life goes on.

[01:08:37] Okay. So, that's a high school, little Diddy that I wrote. It sounds like a high school Diddy, right. but there's no, there's no bridge. I have another set of lyrics that are kind of cheesy, but where would you take me from there? What would the process look like in an hour long lesson to try to flesh out where to go and how to refine whatever was created there?

[01:09:02] **Sue Ennis:** So, what I would do is I, and I'll commend you on the fact that you knew that there needed to be a change in the melody after the first two lines, right? Like you, you sang them the same and you know, it was like an, a section. And if you, your first thought line, then your second one is the same. And the third one you gave us a little changed up, which was great.

[01:09:23] And then the fourth one was a, it was a different one, all that goes on. So that's great. You have an instinct, there for when the changes should come and then I would think the song is called. Life goes on. Because you said it three times or four times three to three, and that's almost like I start to get a sense of structure, I guess that's how I would first approach it. And I'd say, is this a verse in a way it's storytelling? Is it a chorus? Not really. It's, it's, it's a storytelling song. It's a singer songwriter song. Not that it has to fit into a category, but I'm trying to figure out where do we go from here?

[01:10:00] **Bryan Smith:** And, and if it's not, if it doesn't have a course, does that means that it's a ballad?

[01:10:05] **Sue Ennis:** Okay. Yeah. It's storytelling. That's right. Yeah. And so, I mean, your hook, your is, is your tag is life goes on. And so that puts us into like a folk ballad style. And so I would then do the same thing again, times two, a, this would be like an, a section of four lines and then a B, and then an, a, another one, a section of four lines.

[01:10:29] So the next part you have to further your story and you have now bumped up against the second verse curse, which is a joking way that songwriters talk about. And then now what do I do? Okay. I've got the, I've got the right. So I got this far and I've got a little idea going. So the second part. The second verse, the second stance, you know, needs to advance the story in some way you need to, what else about this?

[01:10:56] So a good way, a good approach there is then what happens? You ask yourself. Okay. So you're going to write one more of those same formula, same format, same standard, same melody, and, hopefully get a little bit further with your story. I'd probably go into something more personal instead of general observations about life.

[01:11:19] I would start to go personal and say, the first time I met you, I don't know what it is, but you know, I took a walkout this morning and saw this. So, that would be a contrast that you're looking for. And those contrasts are important because again, your job as a good writer is to keep the listener engaged.

[01:11:38] So, after two of those, let's call them a sections. They're identical a now we need a b, we need to contrast. Okay. Got to go somewhere else. And so what I, what I would have you do or suggest that you follow is, how can we do something that contrasts with what we have in a, in a big way? So maybe it's almost becomes a bridge in a sense.

[01:12:02] Some people might call it that b section a departure. And so. It should contrast in every possible way and still belong to the song. So, lyrically, maybe you shift perspective there and, you know, the, I song becomes a little bit of a different, you know, a memory, for example, you can go back in time, you could get introspective in that section a little bit more than you have been anything lyrically that contrasts with where you've been, and then also musically.

[01:12:32] So, you know, you've got those rhythms going in your, a sections. I would probably links in the lines to contrast. So make, you know, and, uh,

[01:12:47] I'm just making that up, but you see what I'm saying that contrast, and then go back to that a section and it feels really good after that departure into the b. So just in a way it's a callback, it's a return home, something that you've set up and, yeah. And, you know, and, and maybe you want to elaborate on life, goes on in your b section, you know, talk about that because that's what the song's about.

[01:13:10] So, what can you say about that? Yeah. You know, I don't know.

[01:13:16] **Bryan Smith:** I love how just instantly the wheels started turning. I didn't tell you that I was going to do this and you immediately saw and heard what needed to be explored after just a few seconds of hearing, you know, lyrics in a couple of chords. That's fantastic.

[01:13:33] **Sue Ennis:** Oh, you know, it's so fun to do. And who knows if that would work for you, but I'm at a place, you know, and having done it enough where I, I certainly can throw ideas at a collaborator and say, maybe this, maybe this, maybe this, maybe this, and then you can run with it.

[01:13:48] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. Well, Sue it's been. A huge pleasure to talk to you and thanks for sharing.

[01:13:54] **Sue Ennis:** Right, and I'm so glad we finally got to, got to meet it's. It's really great to meet you. And, you know, I love telling these stories they're fun and it's fun to reminisce and think about how lucky I've been, you know, re be reminded of that. So, thank you for inviting me.

[01:14:10] **Bryan Smith:** Absolutely, and I will be heavily promoting this Nancy Wilson's solo album, which features you on the You and Me track.

[01:14:19] **Sue Ennis:** Yeah. Yes. I've got two other songs on there, which is, once called I'll find you. And the other one is called walk away, which has got some strings on it. And boy, it got much bigger than we imagined in the production. Very happy with how it came out. So I can't wait to hear those songs. I can't wait for you to hear them.

[01:14:35] **Bryan Smith:** I'm going to buy a physical copy of this album.

[01:14:37] **Sue Ennis:** Are you really?

[01:14:38] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah.

[01:14:39] **Sue Ennis:** That's so cool.

[01:14:40] **Bryan Smith:** It's just, it's very nostalgic for me. Anything, *Heart* related, anything related I'm going to pick up. So, thanks again for talking to me. I will let you know when the, episode launches so you can share promote promoted for you.

[01:14:54] Yeah, definitely. Listeners who want to connect with Sue on social media, it looks like you have a Twitter account @Sueennis right. Hello. And also a website, Sueennis.com, S U E E N N I S dot com.

[01:15:12] **Sue Ennis:** Thank you so much, Brian, for promoting my, I don't say too much on Twitter, but when I do it's about Nancy. No. Yeah.

[01:15:19] **Bryan Smith:** I noticed that. I noticed that you're a good friend.

[01:15:23] **Sue Ennis:** Yeah, she's a good, she's my she's my girl. We were so lucky to have that, to have each other. So, again, thanks so much, really fun talking to you.

[01:15:32] **Bryan Smith:** Really fun talking to you, Sue you take care.

[01:15:34] **Sue Ennis:** Good. I wish you the best. You too. Bye bye.

[01:15:39] **Bryan Smith:** Hey, thank you for listening and I hope you enjoy today's episode.

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