

Erik Sanden, Artist Statement

I have always been drawn to the sadness lurking within happy tunes. To my ear, this blend of beauty and hurt is a drug. I've found a connection with the music of Roy Orbison, Neil Young, John Lennon, Morrissey – plaintive voices smiling through distress. I've tried to strike this balance in my own songs.

The songs I write speak of longing and loss. But they have catchy melodies.

I care deeply about performance. To me, a live musical performance is a written work, echoing the structures of the song itself. Really it's no different. The performance needs intros, uplifting swells, repetition, unexpected turns, and a narrative. And these are the components of a good song.

I've strived to make my performances innovative, quirky, dramatic, memorable, and most importantly, *personal*. My goal is to reset the relationship between audience member and performer, and more importantly, between audience member and the song. In short, I want the songs to dig into the audience members' hearts and to reside there. I'll do whatever it takes to make that happen.

I've sung my songs in a wide variety of contexts, many outside the usual music venues: long distance over the phone, one on one in a back room, from a moving parade float, in front of a boardroom full of businessmen. Always with the same purpose: I want to share a real emotion in real time. This desire to connect has always run through my work, and continues to shape what I do and who I am.