

# Songs helped me to cope with difficulties

**GUESS who is top of the charts when it comes to music with a spiritual theme. U2? Enya? Iona?**

No, it's Patricia Todd, a 55-year-old mum from St John's Church, Newport, on the Isle of Wight. Her songs have been played more than 350,000 times on a music-sharing website. She's consistently number one on its 'spirituality' section.

The songs are often written from her personal experiences and delve deeply into her relationship with God, reminding listeners of his love or gently asking him why suffering has taken place.

And Patricia has many experiences to draw on – she grew up in Northern Ireland at the height of the troubles, and saw miracles of reconciliation and healing as well as suffering from ill health and separation from her husband.

"I've been through a lot of difficult things that I've found hard to cope with," she said. "So the songs have certainly helped me through those difficult times, and I think they've helped others who have been finding things tough."

She was brought up in a Christian family in Ulster and went to university at Queen's in Belfast. She started writing songs at university in autumn 1972 – a year after making a serious commitment to Christianity.

She'd been working at a playscheme in some poorer parts of north and west Belfast that summer, during one of the worst periods of bombing and shooting in the city. One bomb had exploded next to the bus she was sitting on as she travelled there.

One Sunday that autumn, she went back to the place she'd been working. There were no buses because of the bombing, so she walked the five miles there. As she praised God, she felt inspired with the words of a new song, which suggested that God's light was stronger than all the darkness in the world.

"I found myself starting to sing this, and by the time I got there, I had the whole song in my head," she said. "I wasn't really a singer and I couldn't play an instrument, so this was quite a miracle. The next day, I was at a meeting in the university chaplain's house and



**Patricia Todd: top of the charts on a music-sharing website**

was able to remember this song and sing it. It was very meaningful for the people in that group. I realised God had given me a gift."

After university, she helped to found the Christian Renewal Centre in Rostrevor, which works to encourage prayer, renewal and reconciliation. It also helps those with alcohol or drug problems, mental or physical illness, the bereaved and those affected by the troubles. Often, when guests were prayed for, Patricia would be inspired with words to a new song that would help to comfort them.

She trained to be a social worker in Edinburgh from 1976-78 and returned to Belfast to work at the Royal Victoria Hospital for four years. It was a stressful time, with bombings, hijacking, hunger strikes and marches happening and army personnel about the hospital constantly.

In 1982, she started working in a large council estate in East Belfast, where she was assaulted and threatened. She was involved in a series of accidents, including a car crash with an army vehicle and being knocked off her bike.

sang it at the child's funeral, and it has subsequently become one of her most popular songs.

Patricia married in 1987 and had a son, Andrew, in 1988, but her husband couldn't cope with her health problems. His first wife had died of leukaemia, and he feared he wouldn't cope if something similar happened to Patricia. They separated in 1989.

Her health problems meant that she lost her job, and then her house because she couldn't afford

sages to say how much the songs meant to them.

"I'm aware that my voice isn't the best, that my recording skills aren't great, and that these tracks just feature my voice and no instruments," she said. "If I'd had half a dozen people listening, that would have been great. But I've had people from Australia, Canada, the UK, and especially the USA saying how helpful they are. It is all very strange!"

She has also recently sung at

## my faith

**God inspires Patricia Todd with songs that she records and places online. Thousands of people from across the world have now listened to them – and been comforted by their lyrics**

it. She moved to the Isle of Wight in 1993 to be close to her father, who was quite ill. And in 2003, she had a breakdown after being the victim of a serious assault. But God kept inspiring her with songs that comforted her – and others – during these difficulties.

"I was concerned for my son, that he could be left on his own if I died of kidney failure, so I prayed and trusted God that I could be there for my son as he was growing up," she said. "The songs were certainly helping me, and I think they helped others because they really came from my heart. What probably touched other people was that they could sense that those feelings were real."

Then, last year, she discovered that the internet was one way of sharing her songs with others. She hadn't written any new songs for a while, but decided to load some songs onto [www.numberonemusic.com](http://www.numberonemusic.com). Hundreds of people from across the world started downloading them and leaving mes-

sages to say how much the songs meant to them. The Carisbrooke Priory, during a service for couples who lost children through miscarriages or abortions. And a couple of her songs also reached the semi-finals of a UK Songwriting Contest.

"When I put the songs onto the internet, I hadn't actually had any new songs from God for a long time," she said. "I thought that perhaps that was something from the past, and that God had stopped inspiring me. But then I was given a song about world poverty for Christian Aid Week and I've had quite a lot since then."

"I've also gone to prison with the Prison Outreach Network. Some of the men I sing to are on the verge of tears. I'm not a performer – it's quite nerve-wracking singing in front of people – so I have to trust God to help me to sing, as well as to inspire me."

● Listen to Patricia's songs for yourself on [www.numberonemusic.com/patriciamoore](http://www.numberonemusic.com/patriciamoore), or on [www.broadjam.com/patricia](http://www.broadjam.com/patricia). She can also be contacted via the former website.

### ONE OF PATRICIA'S SONGS: 'JUST THE TOUCH OF JESUS'

Judges in the UK Songwriting Contest rated this the best of Patricia's songs. She said: "It was given to me for someone who had been going through a difficult time and who was quite depressed. The words have been a great encouragement to me too over the years."

**Just the touch of Jesus, just His gentle touch,  
Just the touch of Jesus can effect so much;  
Just the touch of Jesus on a worried brow,  
Just the touch of Jesus, feel His presence now.**

**Just the word of Jesus, just His precious voice,**

**Just the word of Jesus makes the soul rejoice;  
Just the word of Jesus to a troubled heart,  
Just the word of Jesus bids all fear depart.**

**Just the love of Jesus, nothing else will do,  
Just the love of Jesus is enough for you;  
Just the love of Jesus ministering His peace,  
Just the love of Jesus makes our sorrows cease.**

**Just the touch of Jesus, just His gentle touch,  
Just the touch of Jesus can effect so much;  
Just the touch of Jesus on a worried brow,  
Just the touch of Jesus, feel His presence now.**