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Striking the write chord

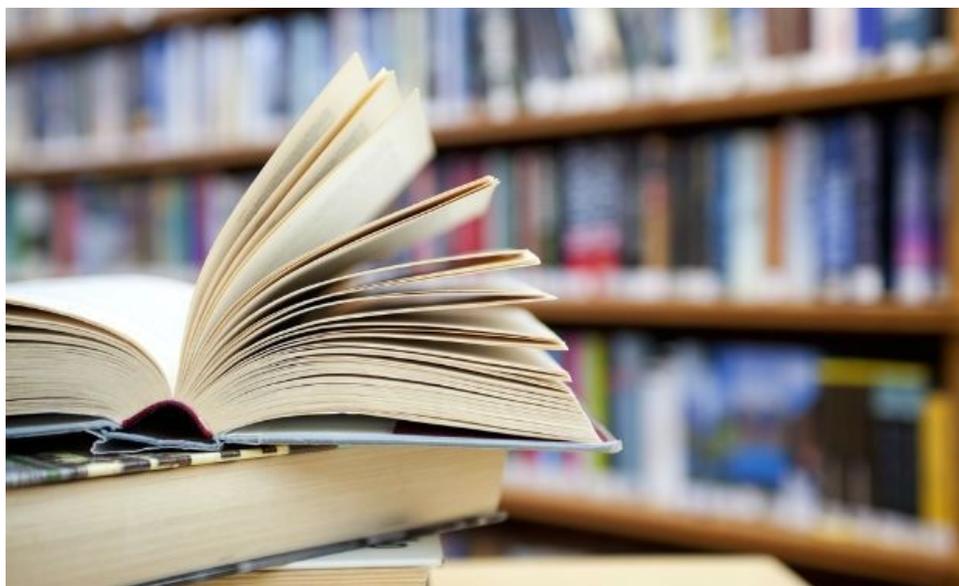
DC | Uday Benegal | 09th Oct 2013

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It's not just musicians who seek inspiration to better their work. Most people who love reading are deeply influenced by at least a couple of books — some of it reflects in their work and some in their personal space. As an avid reader and a person who constantly needs motivation to sustain a creative space, there are a whole host of books that get me ticking. Here are five books, not in any particular order, that influence my music:

Life by Keith Richards

I've hardly been a Rolling Stones fan but as far as my music went, I was more inspired by the works of The Who. Life is a memoir by the Stones guitarist Keith Richards, written along with journalist James Fox. First of all, I was taken in by the whole rockstar lifestyle that Keith so embodied. The beauty of the book lies in its writing. Keith, with assistance from James, has put together a very Gonzo style narrative. The book actually made me take another look at the works of the band and discover facets of their music I hadn't realised.

This is Your Brain on Music: the science of a human obsession

Daniel J. Levitin is a neuroscientist and this book is about the effect of music on one's brain, substantiated by anthropological studies. It is a very interesting read on how music influences a person, how culture moulds a person's ear towards a certain kind of music and how a person responds to different sounds. The book gave me a whole new perspective on the kind of reaction the audience may have to my works.

The World According to Garp by John Irving

There is nothing connected to music in this book but there is everything about pushing the limits of imagination. I read it at an age when I was reading Ken Follett and Frederick Forsyth. The content on the



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surface may seem funny yet ridiculous, but one needs to go beyond that to see the meaning of the book. It pushes you to think beyond narrow passages.

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Time Quake by Kurt Vonnegut Jr

Vonnegut uses the concept of determinism to reiterate that people really have no free will. It may seem like he goes off on tangents but his technique only underlines his thought process and how he wants to go about explaining it. I read it in my late 30's and it gave me a sense of morality, not in a conventional sense but a very conscientious sense. I wrote a song I Wish I Was Away with my then band Alms for Shanti that was inspired by this book.

Snow by Orhan Pamuk

Pamuk is a heavy writer, not just complex or complicated in theme, but weighty even in his prose. I have to prepare to read his works; I need to be mentally in that zone. Snow encouraged me to get under the layers and work beyond the obvious. I love a catchy song, but a song with multiple layers in composition and theme will impact me much more. Snow made me want to challenge myself and bring out the complexities in a song.

Uday is the vocalist of famous rock band Indus Creed

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