

Interview with Benjamin Gabbay

Mr. Benjamin Gabbay is currently pursuing his studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Canada. He is a novelist, writer, and riddle creator and solver.

Conducted by Albert Gianatan

- Considering you have a fantasy novel published, *Wingheart: Luminous Rock*, it's clear you're really interested in writing. How did you first get started? Did you always enjoy writing?

Story-plotting has been a hobby of mine since even before I could write, so, naturally, I was very eager to get my ideas down on paper, and began creative writing at a pretty early age. *Wingheart* was a unique development in the way that the seeds for the entire trilogy have been with me for just about as long as I can remember. Though their names have changed and personalities matured, my characters have been with me for just as long. The earliest incarnation of *Wingheart: Luminous Rock* was an approximately 30-page “manuscript” that I typed when I was 10, which spawned from a few individual scenes I wrote between the ages of 7 and 9. I completed a longer draft when I was 12, another when I was around 14, and a final one when I was 16, peaking at the 680 printed pages it is now. About the same time I finished *Luminous Rock*, I completed my outline drafts for the remaining two books in the trilogy, so I could be sure they formed one cohesive plot.

- Why is writing your passion? What about it just makes you keep on doing it?

I have always loved words—particularly written words, which are, in essence, recorded thought, and I can think of few things more fascinating. When you get to the level of a story or novel, that thought has the potential to become something even more powerful—a gateway to another reality, another world, another mind, which we often experience more vividly than we could through any other creative medium. In writing, we have the ability to build nations, topple empires, change lives, and alter the course of history, all in a few keystrokes (or, more often, many, many keystrokes). This, along with the thrill of creation, is what makes writing so magnificent to me.

- In addition, I notice that you created a popular online riddle game called Cipher. What are some of your personal tips on solving riddles in general? Or do you think that is something no riddle expert would tell?

Are we talking about good riddles or bad ones? A good riddle is a simple one; when you solve it, you smack your forehead and laugh for being so blind to something that was in plain view. Bad riddles are generally the convoluted ones, the ones that go beyond the realm of logic and into guesswork based on how well you know the psychology of the person who thought it up.

You can tell a good riddle—a clever one—when you feel like you already know the answer, but you don't quite. It means your subconscious already has a hunch, and figuring out the answer is just a matter of applying simple logic in an unfamiliar context or a purposely obfuscating environment. In short, it's always less complicated than you think it is.

You can tell a bad riddle when it makes no darn sense. It's like you were given a puzzle with most of the pieces missing and are expected to guess how the end picture looks. Maybe you can solve it if your brain happens to follow the same thought patterns as the creator, but if it doesn't, the riddle becomes a game of intellectual roulette.

- Where do you see yourself in five years? Twenty years?

In five years, I see myself having completed my Wingheart trilogy and enjoying the fruits of my labour...and still penning other stories and novels, of course. I also would like to have finished some years at university in the study of music theory and composition, another passion of mine that I would very much like to pursue professionally.

In twenty years? Oh boy—I have to admit that my foresight gets pretty blurry after the five-year mark. I think my answer will have to be: I see myself aged thirty-eight, living happily ever after.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



U.S. Federation of
UNESCO Clubs, Centers
and Associations



Member of the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centers and Associations
