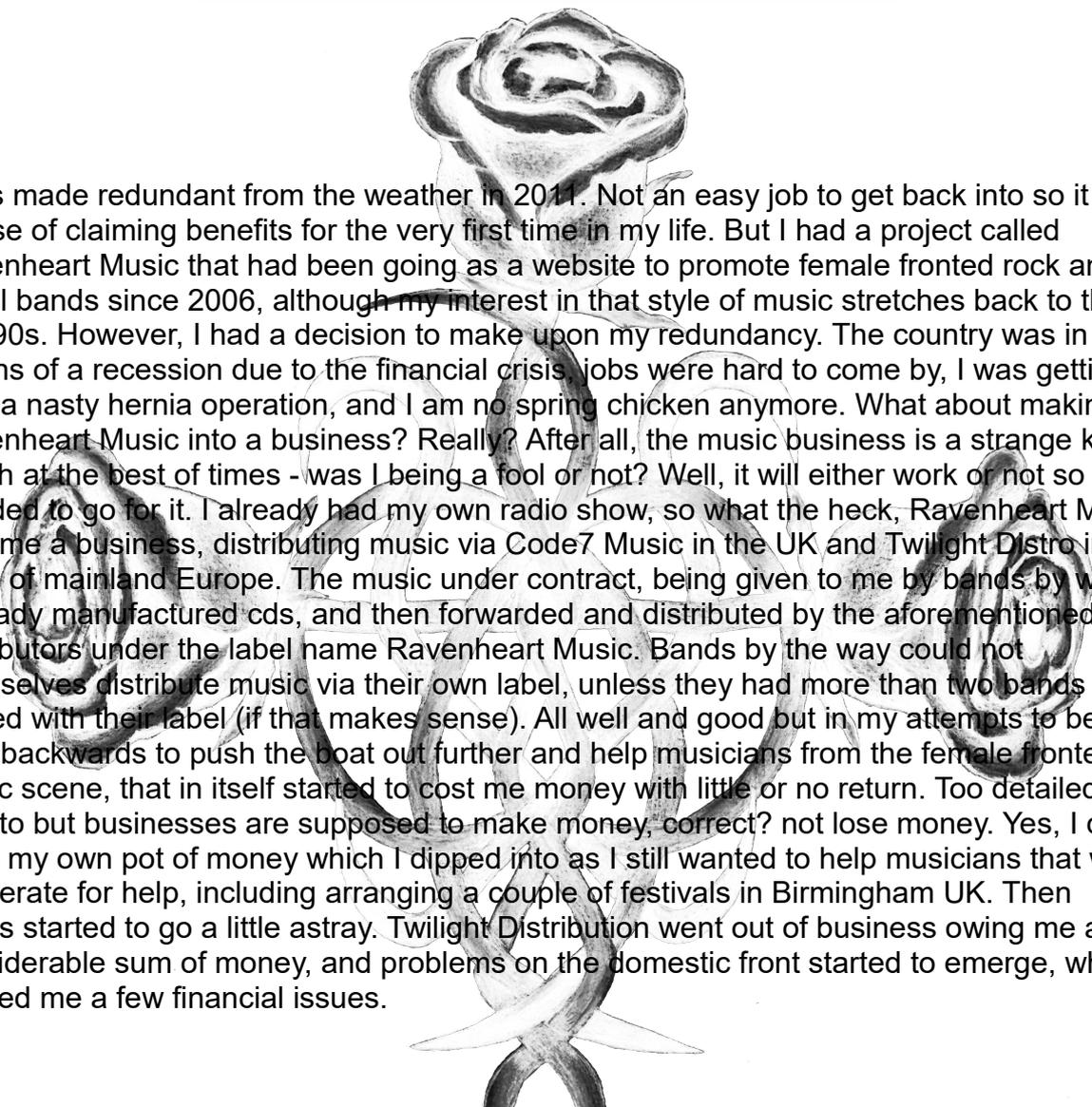




LIFE CAN BE A DOWNER BUT MY MUSIC PULLS ME THROUGH



I was made redundant from the weather in 2011. Not an easy job to get back into so it was a case of claiming benefits for the very first time in my life. But I had a project called Ravenheart Music that had been going as a website to promote female fronted rock and metal bands since 2006, although my interest in that style of music stretches back to the late 90s. However, I had a decision to make upon my redundancy. The country was in the depths of a recession due to the financial crisis, jobs were hard to come by, I was getting over a nasty hernia operation, and I am no spring chicken anymore. What about making Ravenheart Music into a business? Really? After all, the music business is a strange kettle of fish at the best of times - was I being a fool or not? Well, it will either work or not so I decided to go for it. I already had my own radio show, so what the heck, Ravenheart Music became a business, distributing music via Code7 Music in the UK and Twilight Distro in parts of mainland Europe. The music under contract, being given to me by bands by way of ready manufactured cds, and then forwarded and distributed by the aforementioned distributors under the label name Ravenheart Music. Bands by the way could not themselves distribute music via their own label, unless had more than two bands signed with their label (if that makes sense). All well and good but in my attempts to bend over backwards to push the boat out further and help musicians from the female fronted music scene, that in itself started to cost me money with little or no return. Too detailed to go into but businesses are supposed to make money, correct? not lose money. Yes, I did have my own pot of money which I dipped into as I still wanted to help musicians that were desperate for help, including arranging a couple of festivals in Birmingham UK. Then things started to go a little astray. Twilight Distribution went out of business owing me a considerable sum of money, and problems on the domestic front started to emerge, which caused me a few financial issues.

I lived on my own with my dog Jubba in a spacious apartment above a shop in Kidderminster UK. The proprietor of the shop lived behind his shop in effectively the store room after his marriage broke up, even though in the UK that is actually a civil offence - you cannot use your business as a place of residence, so he kept it from the local authority that he was living there. Then in 2015, the UK had a general election so the guy in the shop gave them an address that would legally enable him to vote - my address!! And unknown to me too. I will not be ashamed to say that as I was single and a sole earner at my apartment, I was claiming benefit to supplement my Ravenheart Music income. When the local authority were given the (wrong) impression that I had a 'flat mate/partner', they cut all my benefit - he had already informed the local authority that he was earning in excess of £350 a week. A long story in itself but my lawyer became involved. To cut this long story short, things became mighty complicated - I was accused by the local authority

of fraudulently claiming benefit while living with someone earning in excess of £350 a week. Of course I wasn't living with anybody and hell I wouldn't live with him anyway, I am as straight as a steel pole, and even if I was gay, no way would I live with him. The local council eventually withdrew their claim that I had been fraudulently claiming benefit while living with someone, although they seemed in no hurry to do it, including sorting my benefit out after they discovered the truth. So on the advice of my lawyer and after lots of deliberation, I decided to get out before matters became even worse.

Meanwhile, I kept Ravenheart Music going as a website while I moved to temporary accommodation in Dudley, West Midlands UK. I am ever grateful to my friend for offering me a room (two in-fact), but the place was so hideously untidy and dirty I could not stand it. The kitchen was a disgrace, although I did keep my rooms tidy and tried my best with the bathroom. But I could not stay there so after approx a year, I moved to an apartment near Stratford upon Avon. This was arranged with the help of my youngest daughter who lives nearby now as does my eldest. But the move put a strain on my finances and this has meant that all things Ravenheart were put and are still currently on hold including my beloved pride and joy - my website.

My beloved dog meanwhile has recently passed away here at my new home and my Mum has been serious ill, having to have emergency surgery regards a blocked intestine, but she is on the mend. However, despite these further knock backs, I would like to resurrect Ravenheart Music in due course, perhaps in a different format - I love my music, and I am extremely passionate about my music, so who knows. I have already been told by someone in the music business that I am more than partly responsible for the rise in female fronted rock and metal music. I am not sure about that but I am grateful for his comments. I love my music, I am still here so let's see how it goes.

Story courtesy of Dave Ravenheart Smith, a true Nina Rose Music fan.
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