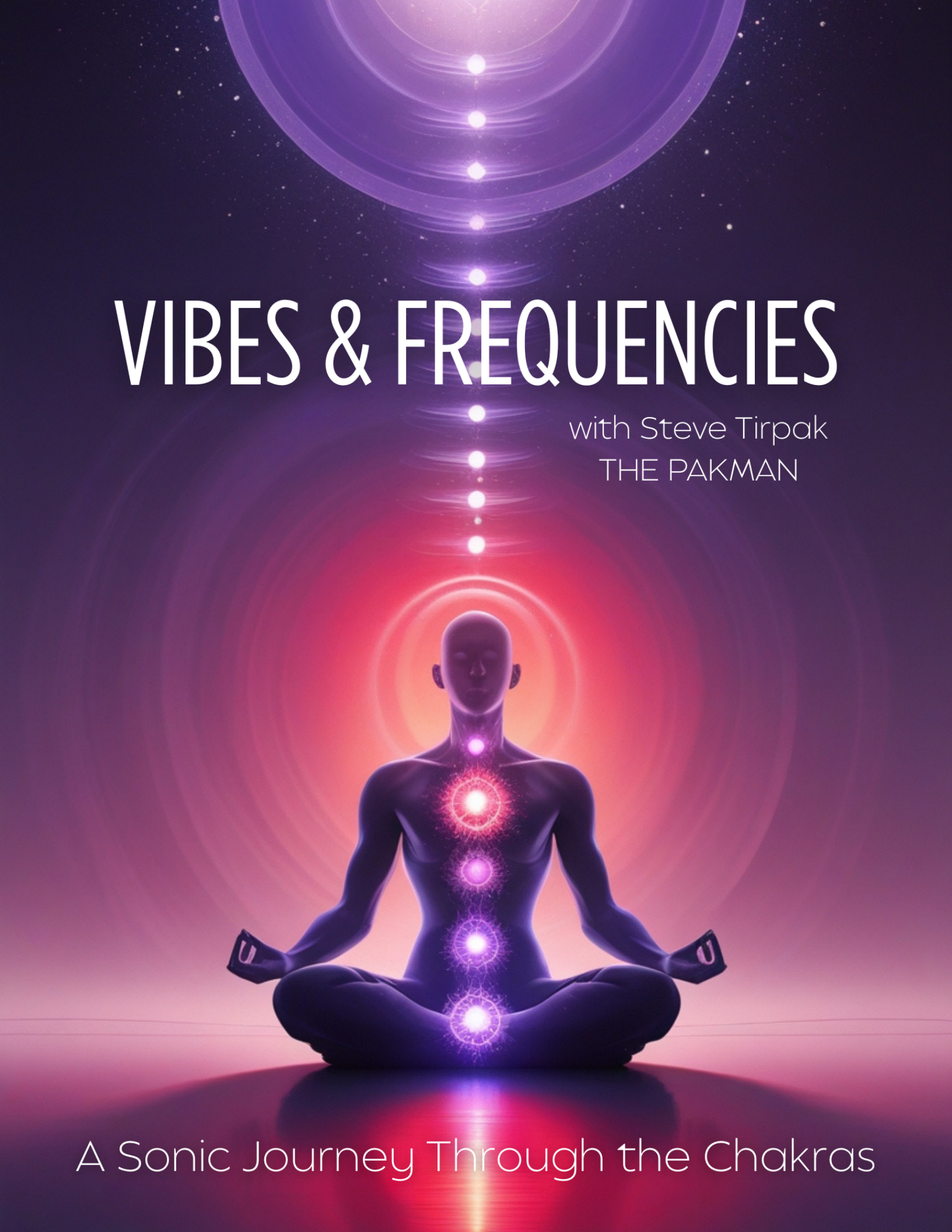


The image features a person in a meditative pose, seated in a lotus position. Their body is dark, and their chakras are depicted as glowing spheres of light along the spine. From the base of the spine, a vertical column of light extends upwards, passing through a series of smaller, glowing spheres that eventually merge into a large, circular, concentric ring of light at the top of the frame. The background is a deep purple and blue, with a subtle pattern of stars and a large, glowing, circular light source at the top, creating a cosmic and ethereal atmosphere.

VIBES & FREQUENCIES

with Steve Tirpak
THE PAKMAN

A Sonic Journey Through the Chakras

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Vibes & Frequencies: A Sonic Journey Through the Chakras

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Preface

Music isn't just sound. It's energy.

I didn't learn this in a classroom. I learned it in recording studios working with Larry Gold, arranging strings for artists like Lana Del Rey. I learned it playing trombone in arenas with John Legend. I learned it while playing organ at an AME church in Cocoa Beach where the preacher just starts singing random songs and we as a band figure it out on the fly. But mostly, I learned it by paying attention—to what music does to people, and what it does to me.

I've been playing since I was three years old. My parents, both music teachers now retired, made sure of that.

As a musician, I've spent decades capturing the right notes—on stage, in the studio, in solitude. But what I've found is that music is more than sound. It's frequency, intention, and emotion all woven together—a mirror of who we are and what we're becoming.

Each chapter of this book is a reflection—starting at the root, moving up through the body, and landing at the crown. Along the way, I explore the energy of each chakra not through textbook definitions, but through lived experience: bass lines and breathwork, spiritual downloads and beat drops, studio nights and sacred questions.

This is how I process life—through music, vibe, intuition, discipline, and divine curiosity.

You might be a musician. You might just be someone who feels deeply. Either way, if you've ever sensed that music was more than entertainment—that it was medicine, or magic, or something you couldn't quite name—this book is for you.

By the end, I hope it feels less like you read something and more like we sat down and talked. Not the perfectly curated Instagram version everyone puts on display—the real stuff, as life really is.

Let's take the journey together.

— *Steve Tirpak, The Pakman*

The Root



CHAPTER 1

The Root: Bass & Belonging

Vibe: Grounded • Primal • Confident

Frequency Zone: 20–200 Hz (The Earthquake Range)

Color: Deep Red

All my life I've loved the sound of the bass.

The low frequencies that rattle your body. Not your ears—your body. I remember standing next to the speakers at my first middle school dances, feeling the vibration move through me like something alive. Back then I was fearless. While most of my friends hugged the wall, paralyzed by adolescent terror, I walked up to every pretty girl in the room and asked her to dance.

Not all of them said yes. But plenty did. And in those moments, I felt like the man.

We were dancing to songs we used to record on tapes off the radio. Power 99 out of Philadelphia. The Quiet Storm. Late night slow jams with Jodeci and H-Town. And on the flip side—Naughty By Nature and Lords of the Underground getting us hyped. The '90s was a special time. '93 to be exact. For a young teenager going through puberty, trying to make sense of the world, that music was everything.

Coming home from school and sitting down to homework with hours of it ahead of me, I'd turn on the radio. Sure, silence would've been the studious way. But the music eased the pain and got me through.

Hip-hop and R&B focus especially on the deep bass. The low end. Pharcyde with its jazzy chords and subs that made the woofers in the speakers shake. I used to dream about getting older and having my own car. How I wanted to blast that music as loud as possible. Windows down, system knocking. That was my coming-of-age fantasy.

A white kid from the suburbs, so heavily influenced by urban culture. It was everywhere. Turn on the TV and Bill Bellamy was hosting MTV Spring Break. That was our TikTok

and Instagram. Except back then, the entire world of teenagers was watching the same channel at the same time. We were all on the same page.

That was real fame.

What we have now is diluted. People can't focus for more than ten seconds before scrolling past endless content. If you read this entire book, respect to you—these days you're a rare breed. Back then there was one channel, and we were all tuned in. Music ruled my life in every way. And I wanted to be part of the excitement.

One of my closest friends growing up was bassist and now music director mogul Adam Blackstone. Living just one town over, we became fast friends—constantly working on music together, visiting local music stores, buying new gear to build our own home studios. His tone and feel were unmatched. Before everything in music became so quantized, him laying down the bass part made every other element of the track come together like glue.

Growing up in a musical household had its advantages. But in those days, learning music meant classical notation or jazz in school. Or going back further to Quincy Jones's era—learning jazz in jook joints and strip clubs. And if you weren't in the clubs, you were in the church playing gospel music.

Interesting that the preacher and the pimp have the same energy.

Think about it. Both command a room. Both move people with rhythm and repetition. Both understand the hypnotic power of voice and presence. Gospel birthed the blues. The blues birthed jazz. Jazz birthed R&B and hip-hop. The church and the club share DNA. Sacred and profane—same family, different outfits.

And it all ties back to the bass. The foundation of the harmonic system. The root of each chord with all its possible substitutions.

My first instrument was drums—at three years old. A few years later I wanted to be part of the tonal side of music, so I took up violin at five, Suzuki style, learning to play classical music by ear. By ten I decided violin was too feminine (sorry to all the amazing

male violinists out there, LOL) and since my middle school band didn't have an orchestra anyway, I switched to trumpet.

I'm not sure why I never played bass. The thought never crossed my mind. Probably because it wasn't really a "band" instrument. But looking back, I realize I would have loved it. The bass was always in my soul—it just took a while to surface.

For the past few years I've been playing key bass and organ at an AME church in Cocoa Beach, Florida. What an amazing experience. Everything is subject to change. We play it a little different every time. Sometimes the preacher launches into a random song and we have no idea what he's singing, but collectively the band figures it out and puts some music behind him. Come Sunday, we have that place rocking.

When I first started playing, the other band members kept asking me to turn my volume up! I was shocked. Usually it's the opposite in other settings. But in that church, there's no holding back.

The bass brings a powerful dimension to the emotion of the music. It invokes a spiritual force that excites the congregation. Combined with the hypnotic words of the preacher, it creates something transcendent. Locking with the drums is essential—the bass drum and the bass instrument share the same low frequencies. The interplay between them establishes a groove that everything else sits upon.

In church, it's not just music. It's activation.

Tying this back to MTV and the modern music industry—those skills mattered if you wanted to function at a high level. To step foot in a major recording studio, you had to know your shit. It was a high bar. You needed connections. You needed mastery.

Things are different now. Anyone with a laptop can teach themselves on YouTube, throw some loops together, and create a banger.

Yes, I'm hating.

But it's also amazing. I've kept up with the technology. Producing music for myself at this point in my life and career is a natural evolution. I'm happy to support other artists in the studio and on tour. But each musician now is an artist in their own right.

It's taken me a long time to find my sound. I've experimented with so many genres over the years. Written in so many styles. But one thing remains continuous: the deep sound of the bass in all my music.

There's a pride in this work. Not the sinful kind—the healthy kind. The kind that lets the greats rise to the top.

"Blessed are the meek"? Nah. The meek never accomplished anything living on the sidelines. The ones who actually move culture—they had fire. They believed they had something worth sharing. And they put it out there.

When I sit at the piano and dig into the low end of the keys, I'm not just playing. I'm channeling something deeper than technique. Something primal. The instrument becomes an extension of my nervous system. And when I listen back to what I've created, that's when I truly hear what was inside me all along.

So when you play my music, turn the speakers up and let the bass knock.

That's the root, where it all begins.

The Sacral



CHAPTER 2

The Sacral: Rhythm, Desire & Creative Flow

Vibe: Sensual • Expressive • Raw

Frequency Zone: 200–500 Hz

Color: Orange

Let's get real for a minute.

At the essence of humanity—what it actually means to be human—lies sexual desire. The urge to bond, to connect and be wanted. Yes, there are higher spiritual aspirations, and we'll get there. But speaking from a purely humanistic level, so much of what drives us has to do with sex and sexual expression. This is where the sacral chakra lives. Part of the lower nature of man.

But lower doesn't mean bad.

To deny this truth, to hide from it, means stifling the very cause and purpose of human existence. We're here to experience. To grow. To propagate our DNA so that some part of us lives on after we're gone. Realizing this—especially as a man—means getting real about priorities. There are endless ways to use your time. Pursue goals, passions, hobbies. But if those things don't somehow lead to becoming more powerful, more desirable, more expressive and attractive... in my opinion, you're missing the point of life.

I know that's bold. But I believe it.

For me, music has been more than sonic enjoyment. It's been a vehicle to express parts of myself that words can't communicate. My music has conveyed so many emotions over the years. Had so many goals and reasons for creation. Practicing and composing is an isolating discipline. Focused attention. Self-reflection. Trying to connect with divine creativity so ideas can flow.

When I sit down to write music for myself, I'm trying to create something I genuinely like—as Rick Rubin advises. But I'm also trying to demonstrate my intelligence. My unpredictability. My emotional vibe and charm. I hope everyone feels those things when they listen. Whether you're dancing or chilling, sipping wine, cuddled up with someone—there's a certain sophistication that I believe all my songs channel.

A sensual intelligence.

In my younger years, raised Catholic, this need for sexual expression through music was essential. All that guilt and fear of going to hell was heavy to wrestle with. Being told that celibacy would make God happy felt like a strange distortion of the truth. Music became the only way I could demonstrate desire in a way that felt "holy" and respectable. Looking back, it's no wonder I threw myself in so deep—I had mentally attached my success with music to my very survival. My ability to thrive as a man.

As I got older, I experimented with these ideas—through the rise of nofap, through a more scientific understanding of biology, brain function, and hormones. Turns out serotonin, dopamine, and testosterone all play a part in a person's emotional state. Realizing this now, it totally makes sense. It's not about abstaining for fear of punishment. It's about controlling urges in order to achieve a desired mental state.

What's interesting is how different skills change in value over time—which relates to their sexual relevance. Strange to discuss. I don't hear many musicians talking about it. But deep down we all know that one of the reasons we got into this art is for the chance to experience a great life, with money, power, fame, and sexual abundance. Let's just be honest about it.

Here's the thing: at the root of attraction, it's not the instrument that causes desire. It's the energy you channel through it. The way you move with it. The way you inhabit the music. I've seen musicians who'd normally blend into the background completely transform when they take center stage. Suddenly there's presence. Command. The way they inhabit the music pulls every eye in the room. That's sacral energy at work—raw creative and sexual force flowing through the art form. And I've seen technically brilliant

players bore everyone to death. All skill, no fire. No pulse. No desire coming through the notes. The difference isn't talent. It's energy.

To me, the sacral energy of music is communicated through the instinctual rhythm of the drum. The beat. That monotonous, pounding rhythm that lies deep in our DNA from when our ancestors danced around fires at night. Bare feet on the earth. Bodies moving without thinking.

The beat is the foundation. And paradoxically—though the drums play no musical tones—it's the most important part of music. The drums make or break a record. In a live band, the skill of the drummer is the single most important factor in how good or bad the band sounds. You can have the most amazing musicians in the world on keyboard, horns, bass. Doesn't matter. If the drummer sucks, the band sucks. Period.

The beat doesn't lie. It connects the hips, the breath, the heart. It's the body's music. Primal, ancient and sexual.

Every culture on earth developed rhythm before melody. Before harmony. The drums came first because they speak to something older than language. Something encoded in us. When a groove hits right, you don't decide to move. You just move. Your body responds before your mind can catch up. That's the sacral bypassing the intellect. That's thousands of years of ancestors dancing around fires, encoded in your cells, waking up.

So when I produce, the drums are at the forefront of my mind. Because that's where the sacral lives. That's where desire begins. That's where the fire starts before it rises up through the rest of the body.

The low frequencies of the root chakra give you the foundation. The rhythm of the sacral chakra makes you want to move. And when those two lock together—bass and drums, root and sacral—music becomes irresistible. People can't help but nod their heads. Can't help but feel something stirring.

That's the pulse of life itself. The part of you that moves before you even realize.

The Solar Plexus



CHAPTER 3

The Solar Plexus: Power & Presence

Vibe: Confidence • Radiance • Inner Fire

Frequency Zone: 500–1000 Hz

Color: Yellow

Just above the sacral and below the heart, we have the solar plexus.

Most people don't call it that. But everyone knows this place. It's where that tight feeling lives when you're nervous. Where your gut clenches before you walk on stage. It's also where confidence radiates from when you're locked in. When cultivated, there's a certain presence that exudes from this center. Some call it chi. Some call it charisma. I just know it's a feeling—and when it's activated, people can sense it.

Music can help channel this energy. Massively.

Our states fluctuate throughout the day. Throughout the years. We ride highs and lows, stretches of clarity and stretches of fog. One of the most effective ways I've found to shift your mood—naturally, without drugs or alcohol—is through music.

As a listener, simply putting on a bold, resilient tune can bring that energy out of you. Pay attention to what you feel in the area just below your heart where your rib cage meets. That's the solar plexus, the center of your power.

As a performer—and for anyone who presents themselves to a room—controlling this energy is essential. To change nervousness into excitement. To transform fear into fuel. To find your voice and present the core of yourself with power. This is the game.

Through repeat exposure performing in front of huge audiences, I've managed to mostly eliminate my performance fears. Depending on the setting. In most cases now it's nonexistent. Though that doesn't mean it can't creep up on different occasions.

I remember one of my first performances as a ten-year-old trumpet player. We were performing at the mall with my middle school jazz band. The band was positioned in the center where a big waterfall normally was. Inside that mall was all tile and glass with very high ceilings. The sound of the water usually made it loud but soothing while people shopped. But with the water off and us playing music, the sound was completely different.

The sound of my trumpet swirled all throughout each corridor of the mall.

That was one of the first times I can remember performing and I was nervous. But I can confidently say I nailed my part. That feeling stuck with me. As the years went by, the nervousness gradually went away.

It wasn't until I found myself in ironically new, smaller settings—like playing trumpet exposed at a classical church—that I'd feel those feelings again. Intimate rooms can be scarier than arenas sometimes. Nowhere to hide.

And perhaps the first two or three shows with John Legend, I felt that feeling in my solar plexus again. That tightness. That flutter. But knowing how to deal with it, it soon went away. I found myself casually walking on stage, talking to fellow band mates like this was just a normal day at the office. Because it was exactly that.

It didn't matter if it was a theater, an arena, or a festival with people stretched as far as the eye could see. When you're well prepared, the power of owning the stage comes naturally. The nervousness transforms into presence.

The studio carries its own challenges. When the red light is on, sometimes it's hard to get in the zone. I've learned as a producer, when recording artists, to pretty much record everything all the time. Because you never know when that stroke of magic will take place. Can't be fumbling for the record button when lightning strikes.

When I'm recording myself, the pressure's different. I wrote the parts—I know the emotional intent, I know exactly what I'm going for. But recording alone at home can be almost too comfortable. Sometimes I need to pretend there's an audience so the

performance has some edge to it. Otherwise it's too relaxed. I'm literally in sweatpants at 2am. Gotta manufacture some stakes.

As we climb up the chakras, I've noticed that my personal security and fire is amplified when practicing abstinence. Just like a boxer preparing for a fight—whenever I have a big performance coming up, or something where I want to bring my A game, keeping my sexual energy and letting it exude through my solar plexus becomes an actual priority.

Is it placebo? Maybe a little. But placebos work. And biologically, the chemicals and hormonal compounds that accumulate in the bloodstream are real—no matter how small a change they may play. Miles Davis said the same thing in his autobiography. Before big shows, he'd hold that energy. Let it build. Then channel it through the horn.

When I hold it, I feel it. That pressure becomes power. And I let it flow straight through the solar plexus. Out into the room and into the music.

When this center is aligned, you don't just play music. You embody it. You don't try to impress—you impress upon. There's a difference. One is needy. The other is magnetic.

The ability to control your solar plexus energy—to flip nervousness into excitement and fear into fuel—is a sacred skill. It's what makes the difference between collapsing under pressure and rising into the light.

That's the solar energy. The golden glow of presence—where confidence becomes creative fire.

The Heart



CHAPTER 4

The Heart: Love, Harmony & Resonance

Vibe: Warmth • Emotion • Connection

Frequency Zone: 1000–3500 Hz

Color: Green

In the midst of everyday life and struggles, it's easy to lose sight of what really matters.

Life is complicated. But perhaps only as much as we make it. In reality, there's a version of existence where the only thing that matters—the most important thing of all—is love.

This love, this feeling, is often associated with the heart area of our chest. The heart chakra. It's where we feel our deepest emotions. Different from the solar plexus. This is softer. Warmer. More vulnerable.

In my ayahuasca and mushroom circles, the question often comes up: "What is the answer to any question?"

Love. Love is the answer.

I know that sounds like a bumper sticker. But sit with it. Of course everything is connected—health, money, confidence, purpose. All vitally important. But somehow love is the common thread behind them all. The thing that makes all of them possible. The fuel that keeps everything moving.

I remember studying the Law of Attraction around 2008 when *The Secret* first came out. I read so many books about it. Esther Hicks and Abraham explaining the importance of our thoughts. Visualization. Manifestation. Vision boards. I got really into it.

As I practiced, my mind's eye got sharper. My visualization skills improved. I could see things clearly in my imagination—goals, outcomes, the life I wanted. But here's the

thing: many things still hadn't manifested the way I was seeing them. I wondered why. Was this all a lie? Every now and then things did happen. But it was hit or miss.

Now I realize the real secret ingredient. The thing that makes visualizations come to life.

It's the power of emotion. And the most powerful emotion of all is love.

Not passive love. Not "yeah I love that" love. I'm talking about enthusiastic, excited love. The kind that makes you jump up and down in sheer joy. Love that radiates. Love that you can feel buzzing in your chest. By harmonizing your visualized intention with that feeling—that frequency of love—I've been able to manifest some amazing things in my life.

The mind and the heart must be in alignment for this to work. You can't just think your way there. You have to feel your way there too. The vision gives direction. The emotion gives power.

"When your praises go up, the blessings come down!" That's church wisdom, but it's also just true. Gratitude and love operate on the same frequency. When you're radiating that energy, things start moving in your direction.

And it's worth noting—you also need that sexual fire from the sacral to fuel it. The chakras work in a chain. Nothing exists in isolation. The root grounds you. The sacral ignites you. The solar plexus gives you belief. And the heart gives you the why. The meaning. The love that makes it all worth doing.

Musically, I feel the heart essence coming from warm pads and exquisite harmony. Deceptive cadences leading to interesting places. Not just the typical 2-5-1. Chord progressions that surprise you. That take you somewhere unexpected and beautiful.

The harmony sits on top of the foundation—the bass and drums—just like the heart chakra sits above the lower three. It's the recipe for love. Foundation plus warmth plus surprise.

Sometimes just practicing love-inspired chord progressions over and over on the piano helps me feel that loving feeling in my heart. And even in my fingers.

My fingers making love to the keys, stroke by stroke.

If the piano was a beautiful woman, she'd be mine. Can't nobody touch her the way I do. We have an understanding.

These warm chords echo throughout the day in my mind. Randomly. While driving in my car. While working out at the gym. The sound of music is always on in the background. It never stops.

At night when my head hits the pillow, I'll tell myself it's time to fall asleep. But my mind goes right back at it. Playing instruments in my imagination. Practicing songs in different keys. Analyzing the intervallic makeup of whatever I heard that day. Quite often it's difficult to turn off. I've tried. I'll be laying there thinking "okay, sleep now" and then catch myself fifteen minutes later mentally running through chord changes.

I practice my instruments on autopilot. Instinctually. Like I can't help it. My heart loves music that deeply. Sometimes I get tired, burned out and need a break. But after some time away, I can't wait to come back. And when I return, music welcomes me like I never left. No grudge or guilt trip. Just open arms. The difference, of course, is that music can't love you back. At least not in the same way a person can.

Love isn't simple—real love, human love. It's always in motion. Relationships ebb and flow, hearts open and close. But that's not a flaw—that's how it stays alive. People change. We change. And love, when it's real, learns to move with us.

Yet no matter how difficult things get, the saving grace is that feeling of love itself. It permeates all of existence. Transcends time and space. I believe it continues into the next realm. The afterlife. Whatever comes next.

The love we give echoes on. Like every chord I've played—still rippling somewhere, still vibrating forever in the infinite.

The Throat



CHAPTER 5

The Throat: Expression & Resonance

Vibe: Truth • Voice • Communication

Frequency Zone: 3500–6000 Hz

Color: Blue

The throat chakra. The center of expression.

Communication is vitally important. The ability to let someone know how you think and feel. Without it, you'd be completely isolated—even standing right next to someone. Yes, posture matters. Facial expressions. Voice tonality. All of it contributes. But physically, what comes out of the throat—the words and sounds—is how we speak our truth into the world.

When we were babies, before we could speak a language, our parents needed to detect our wants and needs from what seemed like the same sounding cry. A cry for milk. A cry for a new diaper. A cry because we were too hot or cold. Yet almost telepathically, parents who are tuned in to their babies seem to know exactly what each cry means. Even though to a random person, it all sounds the same.

That's the throat chakra at work. The power to transmit meaning through resonance.

Most people are born with a voice. The ability to talk, sing, make noise with our bodies. The voice truly is the first instrument. It's built in. And because almost everyone has one, almost everyone can relate. Which means almost everyone has an opinion.

This is what gave rise to that monster TV show American Idol. It reigned on prime time for over a decade and actually still exists today. All because people love to hear other people sing.

Especially the ones who think they're amazing but really suck.

Let's be honest—part of that show's popularity came from exactly that. Showcasing and making fun of people trying to have a shot at an amazing vocal career, only to get shot down and booed by the judges. Most nights I couldn't watch. It was too horrific to see someone who thought they were so good be so utterly bad. LOL it's actually hilarious, which is why everyone tuned in.

But the point is this: because the voice is so relatable, everyone instantly becomes a critic.

I've always had a disdain for critics. People who have an opinion about something they themselves can't do. If someone is going to be openly critical about something, well then that person better be able to back up their critique by demonstrating they can do it better. Sadly, this is not the way humanity works. But I digress.

Here's something most people don't know about me.

I used to sing in the Philadelphia Boys Choir.

Started young. And let me tell you—that choir was like the mob. You couldn't quit. The only way you could leave was when your voice changed. That was it. That was your graduation.

I remember trying to make my voice change faster so I could get out early! LOL. Of course that was impossible. Puberty doesn't take requests.

But looking back, it was a wonderful experience. I learned music theory. Intonation. Vocal support. How to blend with other voices. How to breathe deep and low from the diaphragm. We sang great literature—pieces that had been performed for centuries. And I got to travel all around the world, singing in some of the most prestigious venues.

As a kid, I didn't fully appreciate it. I just wanted to move on to other things. But now I realize how much that foundation shaped me. The throat chakra was being trained before I even knew what a chakra was.

Musically, on top of the bass, drums, and harmony, the cherry on top is the voice. The communicator. The thing that sings through the vocal cords of the throat chakra. The voice delivers the actual words of the song.

And here's what blows my mind: for non-musicians who love listening to music, the lyrics are mainly what they listen to.

As a musician, I'm paying attention to everything else—the horn parts, the piano voicings, the bass lines, the drums, the form, the harmony, the feel, the timing. So many things to listen to. The lyrics? Often an afterthought. If I want to learn the vocal of a song, I have to go back and pay attention specifically to the melody and words, because as many times as I've heard it, I wasn't really listening to that element.

I know the form, the changes, the groove. But the words? Had to force myself to hear what most people hear naturally.

To connect with the masses, musicians need to learn to listen like the common ear does. And the common ear comes through the voice. Through words.

Words can be saucy, deep, poetic. A different way of utilizing language. Things rhyme, have cadence and flow. Lyrics become "catchy"—resonating from the vocal cords—and people will be humming a song all day, saying it's "stuck in their head."

This is the power of words when connected to the power of music. Together it's hypnotic. It can prime and suggest people to behave certain ways. Good and bad. Music plus language equals spell work. Literally. That's not a metaphor. Words and rhythm combined have been used to influence human behavior since the beginning of civilization.

Looking back, I never really wanted to be a singer or rapper. I've done enough singing in my life. The Philadelphia Boys Choir handled that chapter. These days my energy is focused on assessing my strengths and maintaining focus. Focus is the name of the game now.

Would singing help me connect with more people? Probably. The voice is the gateway for most listeners. But it would also be a distraction from what I do best. I'm not ruling it out completely. Maybe down the line. Maybe some spoken word. A hook here and there.

But right now? I'm having fun playing in my lane of melody, counterpoint and chords.

The throat chakra isn't just about singing anyway. It's about speaking your truth. Finding your authentic voice—whatever form that takes. For me, that voice comes through my instruments. Through my productions. Through the choices I make in the music.

That's how I communicate who I am.



The Third Eye

CHAPTER 6

The Third Eye: Intuition & Musical Vision

Vibe: Insight • Taste • Flow

Frequency Zone: 6000–10,000 Hz

Color: Indigo

Sometimes intuition can be difficult to discern.

That voice inside your head—is it truly a divine message or something our mind is making up? It takes practice. Sitting with it long enough to recognize the difference. But when you develop that muscle, intuition becomes sharper and more reliable over time. It's less mystical than it is experiential—and in music, that intuition is everything.

Picking the right notes. Finding the right sounds. Combining all the elements together in just the right way. This is an intuitive process. Before I begin a writing session, I always say a prayer. I ask to be a channel for creative blessings from above to flow through me. I take five long deep breaths. And then off to the races I go.

Striking the balance between the commercial and the artistic has been something I've wrestled with my entire life as a composer. It started with my composition classes at The University of the Arts.

Getting into the school in the first place meant demonstrating knowledge of classical music and jazz. And the tendency—especially for young composers with something to prove—is to make things difficult to play. I modeled my work after music I loved, much of it complex, wanting to prove I could hang at that level. But while there's a place for that, when I started working on the popular commercial side of music in the recording studio, all of that went out the window.

Less is more. Simple and strong.

I first started working with Larry Gold in 2001 as his copyist. I was nineteen and still in college. I remember being at a writing session and suggesting an idea for a string line. I

believe it was a song for Jennifer Lopez. Having just come from my jazz arranging class at university, the line had more of a bebop flavor. Yes it sounded awesome—at least to me.

Larry listened to it and then suggested we delete a bunch of notes.

What remained were just three notes.

That was the beginning of our professional collaboration, bouncing ideas off each other. At first, I was upset at the easy and simple three notes. But as the years went on, I began to hear the strength in the simplicity. When writing music this way, there's a delicate sense of intuiting that happens when searching for the perfect, most tastiest idea.

Fast forward twenty-five years and I now have confident mastery and a clear sense of intuition about the complexity or simplicity of what my writing should be on a project-by-project basis. When I work for artists, I'm tapped into that Billboard sound that will swirl around in listeners' ears for decades to come. But when it comes to my own music as The Pakman, I throw restrictions to the side and just let 'em rip! Even then, I've been conditioned so much to hear things simply, I find myself preferring the catchy solid idea over something flashy.

Now consider the rise of social media, where the name of the game is to get and keep attention. Ironically, at least for musicians in the chops wars, doing the flashiest thing possible seems to be the way to gain fans. I guess at the end of the day there are no rules or that the rules continually change. The most important thing is to know your audience and the purpose behind what you're writing—and then having the discipline to stay there.

Art is completely subjective. There really is no right or wrong. As a matter of fact, it seems like when the rules are broken the right way—that's when the magic happens. That's creativity. Not following the formula. Finding the thing that shouldn't work but does.

I remember being in my composition lessons in college. Writing for big band. Thinking about how to voice things with all those instruments at my disposal. Should every chord be lush harmony? When should it just be unison? Or octaves? Or just thirds and fourths? Or a triad? Should the triad be voiced open as a tenth? What's the instrumentation? What doubles what?

In arranging class, there were all these rules. No parallel fifth movement. No this, no that. But then when I got to the recording studio, I noticed the pros didn't care about any of that. If it sounded good to them, that's what they did. Period. If thirds sound too sweet, don't use them. If parallel fifths sound powerful, use them.

I liked that. And gradually my taste began to develop.

There's a thin line between simple and corny versus simple and strong. Picking the right notes in the right order and combination is everything. I often refine things many times before landing on the final idea. Change this section and then the other section has to change too. It's a process. Every possibility needs to be explored until I feel like I've come up with the best possible part.

Sometimes I wonder if people realize this. On the surface, sometimes the final idea seems obvious. Like because it's so simple and catchy, it must have come quick. Sometimes that's true. A song will write itself in twenty minutes. And then other times it's a painstaking process. Days. Weeks. Tweaking one thing, then another, until everything fits together juuuuust right.

Both are valid. Both require intuition. Knowing when to stop is just as important as knowing what to add.

Later on, as I dove into electronic music, my ear wasn't as sensitive to different synthesizer sounds. Every square patch sounded the same to me. What did it matter? But over time, I learned to have preferences in sound design as well. Learning about attack and release. Making things flow so they didn't get cluttered. Making sure each instrument had its own section of the frequency band so things didn't fight each other.

In time, every producer has become an audio engineer out of necessity. It's wild how the recording process has evolved. I remember recording live at big studios. There would be a chief engineer. Assistant engineers. Sometimes these assistants would even get credited on albums. It was a legit job just miking up a drum kit. You had to be in the room to learn. This was before YouTube. Truly was another life.

Like it or not, I've learned to utilize all the latest plugins. Reverbs, compressors, delays, mic choices and placements. I have my favorite go-to compressors. My favorite chains that get the audio sounding great to my ears. When a record really has a budget, I'm happy to send it to an actual audio engineer for another mix perspective. That final polish makes all the difference.

Over the years, I've built a network of people in the industry. People who have toured with many famous artists. It's a lifestyle. A culture. You either get it or you don't.

And all of these choices along the way—every synth, every snare, every silence—come down to intuition. How well can you see the vision? Do you have a direction of where you want the song to go? Sometimes I do. I walk in knowing exactly what I'm building. Other times I just let things evolve naturally depending on my mood. That's perhaps the most fun, because you never know which direction the song is going to take.

But I'm confident that no matter what happens, I'll be able to turn it into something fly. That comes from experience. From having done it thousands of times.

Writing music is like matching clothes. Would you wear brown and black together? Perhaps, depending on the situation—though some people would say that's a no-go. But breaking the rules is where the magic happens. Throw in some deep forest green as an accent color and you might have something special.

The third eye sees what others can't. It's the part of you that knows before you know. The part that reaches for a chord before your conscious mind has decided. Trusting that instinct—developing it, honoring it—is the whole game.

The Crown



CHAPTER 7

The Crown: Sound, Spirit & the Spectrum of God

Vibe: Unity • Reflection • Transcendence

Frequency Zone: 10,000–20,000 Hz

Color: Violet or White

At the top of the chakras is the crown—the portal to the divine, our connection to something bigger than ourselves.

Whatever you want to call it—God, source, the universe, higher consciousness. In my first ayahuasca ceremony, it was presented to me as divine intelligent energy.

As a musician, I've spent a lot of time contemplating this stuff—God, life, purpose, creativity, the meaning of music in my life, why I do it, where it comes from. These questions don't have easy answers. But they're worth sitting with.

Studying the history of Western written music, it all goes back to the church. Gregorian chant, sacred spaces, monks singing in cathedrals. The melody itself evolved for a practical reason—it helped people memorize text. In the oral tradition, prayers set to melody were passed down from generation to generation, the music carrying the words forward through time.

It's fascinating that the music staff didn't always have five lines. In early scores there was just one or two lines, simply indicating if the pitch went up or down. That was enough. The complexity came later.

This development of musical art in the church also encompassed visual art. Statues. Paintings. Murals high on the ceilings. And of course the incredible architecture that's still a marvel to this day. To realize these structures and artistic works were created before electricity. Completely through human ingenuity. No power tools. No machines. Just hands and faith and time. That blows my mind.

Music and the arts represent the highest level of human expression. It's a luxury. It's entertainment. It's what we enjoy after survival is handled. The arts are nature's video game. We do these things for fun and fulfillment. We marvel at others who have achieved high levels of talent and competence. We celebrate mastery.

But here's the thing to remember: because art is a luxury, it's not essential. Not in the survival sense. Sitting atop Maslow's hierarchy of needs—if someone is hungry, unclothed, or needing shelter, music can't even be considered. There's a priority to life. What humans need versus what humans want. Nature is animalistic. Survival of the fittest. In the wild, it's real and raw. Species are in competition every single day just to take a sip of water without being eaten.

As humans, we seem to have transcended this to a degree—cooperation is essential for survival. Yet at the same time, competition when things are scarce will always remain the foundation. We can never fully escape it. Civilization is a thin layer on top of something much older and more brutal.

This is the reality of God and nature as well. It's interesting how at one end of the spectrum there's brutal savagery. And at the other end there's morality, idealism, and art. The way things are versus the way things ought to be. Both are part of existence. Both are divine, in their own way.

There are all types of music that correspond to this spectrum. Heavy metal—sometimes satanic in nature. War music. Throat singing. Moving up through every genre until you reach holy music, classical, lullabies, gospel. And yet jazz, R&B, and blues—though directly influenced by gospel—were considered devil's music in their application.

The tritone in jazz and modern gospel harmony? Literally called the devil's interval. And yet now it's everywhere. In the music we play at church on Sundays. Taking a step back to look at all this, it appears that God and the devil are two sides of the same coin. Light and dark. Cold and hot. And more often than not, these aren't binary situations. It's a complex and sometimes confusing mixture of both—like yin and yang. Nothing is purely one or the other.

What is the meaning of the music? What is the intention or purpose of the art? How does it make a person feel?

Our primitive understanding of this divine energy source causes so much division and misunderstanding. People fight over interpretations. Kill over beliefs. But perhaps that's the nature of nature in the first place. Perhaps conflict is baked in. Can balance or harmony ever be achieved? And if so, how long will it last? I don't know.

The great composers were commissioned by kings to create masses and great works for the people to adore. Music was used to elevate. To bring people closer to God. In modern times, music has also been used to destroy.

Ice Cube said something on Bill Maher's Club Random podcast that stuck with me. He claimed that the same people who have financial interests in record labels also have financial interests in private prisons. His point: the music that gets pushed—the narratives that get promoted—aren't random. There are guardrails. Certain songs make it through, certain songs don't.

"It's not about making somebody write the lyrics," he said. "It's about being there as guardrails to make sure certain songs make it through and certain songs don't... This, to me, is some social engineering going on here, to make sure those prisons stay full."

Now, I can't verify every detail of that claim. But the larger point rings true: music is a spiritual tool that influences human actions and emotions. It always has been. From worship to violence. From healing to destruction. Gangster rap glorifying prison, drugs, and gang culture didn't come from nowhere. Someone funded it. Someone promoted it. Someone benefited.

But here's the other important side of the story: that music also came from reality. Real people telling real stories. Expressing pain, frustration, and lived experience that needed to come out. There's value in that. Art as release. Art as testimony.

The tension is this: on one hand, it's healthy to be aware of your reality and let it out. On the other hand, dwelling on it—creating it and consuming it on repeat—can perpetuate the cycle. Keep you stuck in the frequency you're trying to escape.

Had I known the hypnotic effect of music back then, I actually might not have listened to all the rap I did growing up. I loved the beats and memorized many albums, rapping along in my car. But looking back, a lot of the messaging in those songs was quite rough.

These days I heavily curate the content I allow myself to be exposed to, realizing the effect it has on me. It's also why I largely stay off TikTok and Instagram—because you never really know what you're going to see. One swipe can mess up my mood, watching something I didn't ask for.

This all ties back to mental health, which America is in crisis with. About ten percent of the population is on some form of prescription drug for anxiety, depression, and related conditions. This ties into my work with psychedelics, opting for a more natural route which in my opinion is much safer and more effective.

The point isn't to demonize any genre. The point is to recognize that music has power. Real power. And that power can be wielded for good or for ill.

Although the crown chakra represents God and connection to the divine, here's what I've come to believe: God is in all the chakras. Nature is in everything and is everything. The root. The sacral. The solar plexus. The heart. The throat. The third eye. The crown. Divinity runs through all of it. Perhaps we'll discover a better way of organizing these truths someday. A framework that makes more sense. But for now, we work with what we have.

Pleasantville is quaint, but it's boring. The ghetto is miserable, but it can be exciting. This is the contradiction we live inside. And maybe we're not supposed to resolve it. Maybe we're just supposed to witness it. Experience it. Make art from it.

I believe deeply in the power of music—its ability to move people, to influence behavior, to heal and to hurt, to inspire worship and incite war. Music is not neutral. It never has been.

And for that reason, I approach the crown with humility, awareness, and responsibility.

Music is a mirror, a weapon, a prayer, a question—and sometimes, if we're lucky, an answer.



Conclusion

Conclusion: Beyond the Spectrum

So here we are. At the end. Or maybe the beginning.

We've moved through the chakras—root to crown—but honestly, this journey doesn't really have an endpoint. There's no finish line when it comes to vibration. No moment where you've figured it all out and you're done. I'm still learning. Still evolving. Still finding new connections between sound, spirit, and self.

If you've made it this far, you know more about me than most people do.

You know about the middle school dances. The bass rattling my chest. The fearlessness I had before I knew enough to be afraid. You know about the Philadelphia Boys Choir—trying to make my voice change faster so I could escape. Not realizing until years later what a gift that experience was.

You know about the Catholic upbringing. Channeling desire into music because that was the only "holy" outlet I had. Attaching my worth as a man to my ability to express myself through sound. You know about the AME church in Cocoa Beach. The preacher launching into random songs. The band figuring it out on the fly. Being asked to turn the bass up.

You know about John Legend. The first few shows where my solar plexus was tight. And then the moment it became just another day at the office. You know about Larry Gold. Three notes instead of thirty. Learning that less is more.

You know about the music that never stops playing in my head. Even when I'm trying to sleep.

This book wasn't meant to be a manual. It's not a step-by-step guide to anything. It's more like an invitation. Into my world. Into how I think about music, energy, creativity, desire, power, love, expression, intuition, and the divine.

I wanted you to feel like you know me by the end.

Do you?

Here's what I believe, having lived this life for as long as I have: Music is not just entertainment. It's frequency. Intention. Emotion. It's a mirror that shows us who we are. A weapon that can build or destroy. A prayer that reaches beyond words. A question we keep asking even when there's no answer.

Every note has a soul. Every frequency has a purpose.

And if you're someone who feels that—who has always felt that—then we're speaking the same language.

I don't know what your journey looks like. What chakras are open or blocked. What frequencies you're drawn to. What music has saved you or broken you or both. But I know this: the fact that you're here, reading these words, means something. It means you're paying attention. It means you're curious. It means you're not content to just consume—you want to understand.

That's rare and it matters.

So what now?

Keep listening. Keep feeling. Keep questioning. Pay attention to what moves you—literally. What makes your body respond before your mind catches up. That's information. That's your sacral telling you something.

Notice where you hold tension. Where you feel power. Where you feel open and where you feel closed. That's your system communicating with you.

And if you want to go deeper—this book is just the beginning.

You're now part of The Pakman Musik Collective. That means you'll be the first to hear new music, get behind-the-scenes insights, and stay connected as this journey continues. Check your inbox—I'll be in touch.

In the meantime, come find me on YouTube where I showcase most of my work, or visit pakmanmusik.com to explore everything I'm building. And if this book hit you in some way—if something resonated or sparked a question—I'd love to hear about it. Drop me a message through the contact page ~ I read every one.

Thanks for reading. Thanks for listening.

I'll see you on the other side.

— *Steve Tirpak, The Pakman*

What if the music that gives you chills is trying to tell you something?

Steve Tirpak has spent decades capturing the right notes—on stages with John Legend, in studios arranging strings for Bruno Mars, and at an AME church where the preacher starts singing random songs as the band figures it out on the fly.

Along the way, he discovered what most musicians sense but rarely say: music isn't just sound. It's frequency, intention, and emotion—a force that moves through the body the same way energy moves through the chakras.

From the bass that rattled his chest at middle school dances to the three-note string line that taught him "less is more," *Vibes & Frequencies* explores music, energy, and spirit through stories most artists think but never speak out loud. Part memoir, part philosophy, entirely honest.

"Music is a mirror, a weapon, a prayer, and sometimes an answer."