

Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session
Monday, December 16, 2019

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held in the conference room of Congregation Beth Israel on Monday, December 16th from 6:58 to 9:29 pm. We had nine attendees and heard nine diverse works in progress. We also enjoyed an abundance of goodies for the 12th Ever Annual Holiday Pot Luck and Critique Session (TEAHPLACS) to celebrate the impending holidays. And yes, John Stearle brought his famous eggnog (and *accessories*).

We started the meeting with a brief discussion about poetry vs music lyrics. Of course, the optional challenge for January is to bring written (non-original) works for the others to determine if they are song lyrics or poetry.

Mitch Lobrovich started the session with a recording of his song “Dad’s Getting Lit For Christmas” – a parody of I’ll Be Home For Christmas, also sung by his daughter. Very clever and visually excellent work! Comments from the group included some minor lyric changes – especially related to some phrasing. A fun song, Mitch – thanks!

Bill Evans (a/k/a William Aaron) brought a video of his song “Jingle Jangle Jubilee”, a fun upbeat Christmas tune about the party that’s held once Santa’s completed all of the deliveries. This song (also on YouTube) used great drawings by Chuck Roush and is part of a children’s book that Bill has created. A very fun song, very well done – thanks, Bill!

John Stearle didn’t miss a beat from last month and brought a new recording of “Dude Got Rear-Ended By His Girlfriend”, a bluesy-rocker about a friend’s auto accident (*and more*). While the group laughed a lot with this song, suggestions included bringing up the vocal level some, considering a slightly different phrasing. Thanks, John!

Stewart Moser played his guitar and sang “Little Nicola”, a well-written tune about one of the characters in the Beatles’ Magical Mystery Tour. The repetitive chorus was outstanding and met the December optional writing assignment. Group comments included some minor lyric suggestions, as well as some chorus phrasing – nice work, Stewart!

Rick Cates played guitar and sang his song “Staring At The Stars”, a co-written (with Bill Evans and Joe Strouse) ode to those simpler moments in life after time changes everything. This song had great images and seemed to have two distinct choruses, so the listeners made several suggestions which way it could possibly go. An excellent start to what will be a great song, Rick!

Greg Livingston played a recording of his song “Angel Wings”, a nicely-grooved song about how the singer and his female companion were going to change the world for the better. Greg’s voice soared (as usual) and suggestions included a few phrasing considerations as well as a few minor lyrics changes. Super, Greg!

Sue Young played guitar and sang her SWARFA prompt-inspired song “Get It Right”, an ode to the pressure that teachers face every day in education. Sue’s lyrics were, as usual, excellent and spot on – especially in the twist for the bridge. Comments included a few slight melodic and lyric changes. Great work, Sue!

Aaron Clift brought a rough demo recording of his work-in-progress, entitled “L.I.A.R.”. This very cool prog-rock tune described the singer’s frustration with politics and offered a solution. The

group liked this song and offered some minor suggestions. We're looking forward to hearing the full band version of this, Aaron – thanks!

Joe Strouse brought a recording of his most recent tune, "Kiosk Gnomes" (using the November repetition option), a funny tune about being accosted in the mall during the holiday season. Comments included some small lyric changes to help clarify the song.

Again, the January optional challenge is to bring written words to either a poem or song (non-original) to see if the listeners can determine the difference.

And as always, the Songsmith - Austin monthly critique session meets on the third Monday of each month in the most excellent and spacious conference room at Congregation Beth Israel, 3901 Shoal Creek Blvd, Austin, TX 78756. It's located on Shoal Creek Blvd, just north of 38th Street (near Central Market, Seton Hospital, etc...), and just west of Lamar. Our next session is Monday January 20, 2020 (yes, Martin Luther King Day holiday). We hope you can join us!