

Songsmith – Austin
January 19, 2026 Critique Session

The Songsmith – Austin Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:13 to 8:45 pm on Monday, January 19, 2026, moderated by the well-insulated Christopher Meyer, way up there in Wheaton, Il. We had nine attendees and heard eight excellent songs in various stages of creation. Joe also briefly talked about the upcoming FAWM (February is Album Writing Month).

GrAmy sent in “Purr-fect Love”, a sensual Great American Songbook-style tune about an amorous feline, Subra (for their play), and vocals explored using AI. While the group generally thought the song was a bit slow, the song was very well done with a lot of rolling RRs and very good story telling. Great work - thanks!

Stewart Moser sent “Here It Comes Again” an almost radio-ready lament about how political history/atrocities are being repeated. This A-B style song had no bridge but the it really didn’t need one because the message was clear, accompanied by great (hook-y) guitar picking. Super, Stewart!

Gerald Lucas sent in his rewritten version of “I Should’ve Got Her Name”, an AI song (with Gerald’s lyrics) about a one night stand (video available also on social media). It had some very nice images and the listeners especially liked the overall sound of the production. Another hit from Gerald!

Joe Strouse sent “Older Than Mr. Wilson”, a humorous lament about the singer and three Dennis The Menace comic strip characters. Comments included some combination of the pre-chorus and chorus and a few lyric change possibilities.

Scott Joffe sent a revision of his song “Little Bird”, which describe the singer’s ennui and the hope/distraction that a yellow bird outside his window provides. As always, this song was very well written and performed, and comments included a few minor lyric/structural possibilities. Great work, Scott!

Bill Basinski sent in his 0:54 long song, “Tarantula”, describing the singer’s distain of these wooly spiders. The listeners offered a variety of constructive possibilities for making this song a little longer and having a complete story (as Bill explained after it had been played). Cool start, Bill - thanks!

Mitch Lobrovich submitted “I Hear Hallelujah”, a definitely Leonard Cohen-style 6/8 tune about how the singer’s religious philosophy differs from his love interest’s. There was a great feel to this song and there were several comments about how well it was done. Thanks, Mitch!

Mary Dawson provided “Love Knows”, a co-write with Brian Wooten about the paths (thanks, Stewart) that love takes in any relationship - good and not so good. There were a number of suggestions concerning the lyrics and chorus structure, but all in all, very good effort from this dynamic duo - thanks!

Joe reminded everyone that FAWM (February is Album Writing Month) starts on February 1st and ends on February 28th with the goal of writing 14 new songs during this time. He also said that while this exercise/effort is on the honor system, FAWM.org says that AI can be used and songwriters are encouraged to have some original major element that is not AI, such as lyrics, music and/or melody. If you’re interested in participating in this year’s FAWM, please let Joe know of at strousongs@gmail.com.

Songsmith meets three out of the four Monday nights each month. As always, Songsmith has a Salado meeting (2nd Monday of each month), the 3rd Monday for the Austin meeting, and a DFW meeting (4th Monday of each month) where your songs can be heard and you can get feedback - always free – no dues, spam, or other obligations.

As always, we’re looking for Zoom-knowledgeable person to run the audio and visual portions for the DFW and Salado meetings. If you’re interested, please contact Mary Dawson at Mary@MaryDawson.com.

We hope to see you next year on Monday, February 16, 2026 or sooner!