

Songsmith – Austin
October 19, 2026 Critique Session

The Songsmith – Austin Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:05 to 9:09 pm on Monday, October 19, 2026, moderated by Joe Strouse. We had ten attendees and heard ten boss songs in various stages of creation.

During the August meeting, Kevin Mallory mentioned an optional songwriting challenge for the “Untrustworthy Narrator” in which the listener doesn’t believe what the singer is saying.

True to form, Kevin Mallory started the session with his “untrustworthy narrator” song “No Matter” - a rant from the point of view of a person with many prejudices. Great inner rhymes and rhythmic changes supported the singer’s point of view. Minor lyrical comments were offered. Great work, Kevin - thanks!

Stewart Moser sent his song “Out Of Practice”, which described the singer’s songwriting challenges after not writing for some time. As always, cool chords and near rhymes, which the listeners enjoyed. Suggestions included some minor lyric possibilities. Thanks, Stewart!

Long-absent John Stearle provided one of his 2026 FAWM songs “Drunken Alien”, as Suno-generated song using John’s lyrics concerning the singer’s interactions with aliens from outer space. This song was very funny and everyone enjoyed hearing about what transpired. Welcome back, John!

Phil Fielder sent his song “Empty Bar Stool Whiskey Straight Up And Neat”, a Suno-generated song using Phil’s lyrics about possible romance in a bar. Comments included reconsidering lyric repetition and possible alternative rhymes, as well as a suggestion for a shorter song title. Thanks, Phil!

GrAmy sent in a 6/8 instrumental for the end of their play’s Chapter 27. Great narration and acting on this one (the last!) accompanied by a soulful violin duet with a piano background. Suggestions were basically production-oriented and everyone enjoyed this. Super effort, y’all!

Mitch Lobrovitch sent in “Wheels Up”, a Suno-generated song (using Mitch’s lyrics and chords) about discovering love on an exotic vacation trip. This song had a great Brazilian sound and the prosody was awesome. Comments were few and related to a few lyric choices. Outstanding, Mitch!

Bill Basinski sent Halloween song “I Died Yesterday Or Was It The Day Before”, a description about elements within the singer’s dream/nightmare. At times scary, this song had great near-rhymes and was very funny. The listeners offered only a few lyrical comments. Thanks, Bill!

Mary Dawson sent in her 1980’s song “Above The Clouds”, where the singer is describing the differences between issues on the ground contrasted with being above the clouds. This song utilized impressive internal rhymes and was very well done. Suggestions included an updated genre. Nice work, Mary - thanks!

Scott Badger provided “Being There”, a demo of a singer’s pride in watching a loved one experience life and growing up. As always, very heartfelt hearing this one performed by Scott and poignant. Comments were few, mainly a slight lyrical clarification. Excellent work from the man from Tyler!

Joe Strouse provided his song “Waiting For No” about the uncertainty of a second date during a blind date with a possibly intimidating woman who wouldn’t commit. The group had no issues with the minor verses and major choruses.

Joe mentioned outstanding songwriting tips from songwriter Andrea Stolpe (www.andreastolpe.com) and that occasionally appear on Facebook.

Songsmith generally 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 persons to moderate the DFW and Salado meetings. If you're interested, please contact Mary Dawson at Mary@MaryDawson.com.

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