

Songsmith – Austin
March Critique Session
March 18, 2024

The Songsmith – Austin Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:19 to 8:51 pm on Monday, March 18, 2024, moderated by our most-modest moderator, Christopher Meyer. We had nine Zoom attendees and heard eight great songs in various stages of creation. Joe also talked about a wee bit about alliteration (see below).

Stewart Moser started the session with his co-written song (with Sharon Patterson) “Picking Up Rocks”, a gospel-inspired commentary about a recent exercise where they helped create a commemorative garden with other volunteers. Great chords and cool story. Comments included some tempo/phrasing thoughts- thanks, Stewart and Sharon!

Joe Strouse sent “Coffee”, his #6 FAWM song about not being able (or desiring to) overcome his favorite addiction, in the style of a happy Tom Waits. The listeners enjoyed and laughed about this tune and a couple of basic suggestions were offered.

Kevin Mallory provided his song “Mary”, a nearly Christian grunge rock song that explores the title’s various meanings. A slightly different effort than we’ve come to hear from Kevin and very well created and produced. Comments included a few slight lyrical changes and clarification of the bridge and final verse. Great work, Kevin!

Chris Meyer played his song “The Vortex Of Entropy” which described the singer’s disdain for mess around the house - especially relating to teenage children. Everyone really liked this song and offered only a few lyrical and musical suggestions to make it even stronger. Thanks, Chris!

Michael Wesley Stinson sent in “No Easy Way”, a ballad about the things that the singer loves in life and the restlessness underneath everything that instigates a yen for change. Comments included some very minor musical suggestions and there was an appreciation for Michael’s unpredictable rhyme scheme. Nice, Michael!

GrAmy provided another spoken-word song entitled “Drive Him Insane”, from their upcoming play about mythological characters. This chapter was between new characters deciding which tricks to play on the others. Comments from the listeners included some minor background musical and tempo changes. Heal thy voices, y’all - thanks!

Bill Basinski's sent another protest song entitled (and accompanying video of his live performance) "You Drive Like An Asshole From Dallas", describing, of course, the singer's disdain for those from you-know-where. With some very clever rhymes (and a good open-mic performance), this song was very enjoyable. Good work, Bill!

Mitch Lobrovich provided his song "Everything But Me", describing the singer's sadness over a dear parent's mental and physical decline due to illness. This heartbreaking song was sung by a woman whose voice totally captured our hearts. Very few comments were provided, except for a few lyrical possibilities. Wonderful, Mitch - thanks!

Joe talked a short bit about using alliteration (matching consonants) to help glue the song a bit more, such as Crosby, Stills and Nash's "Helplessly Hoping". No challenge was offered this month but it's always a good tool for the toolbox. Oh yes - four attendees said that they wrote this month's songs by creating the chorus first, per last month's optional songwriting challenge.

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, guilt, or other obligations.

As always, we're looking for Zoom-knowledgeable maven 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 (and not tax) you on Monday, April 15th, 2024 or sooner!