

Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session
Monday, August 17, 2020

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held via Zoom (moderated by Mississippi's most-excellent Tara Heflin) from 7:00 pm to 10:31 pm. We had 15 Zoom attendees and heard 13 excellent works in progress.

Stewart Moser sent lyrics his song “Living in a Quarantine”, describing the singer's perspective with the current pandemic, relating to those things one misses. Stewart's chords were, as always, very cool and nicely Beatlesque. Comments included some minor lyric changes. Great work, Stewart!

Odessa's Mike Whiteley sent in his song “Talkin' 'Bout Love”, a wonderfully written (and well thought-out) song about how there should be a universal lack of boundaries when it comes to love. The listeners enjoyed this song and provided some very cool ideas about making this song even better. Super, Mike!

Patti Stuart sent her touching song, entitled “Yellow Bird”, which vividly described the singer's difficulties contrasted with noticing and appreciating this bird's beauty. Suggestions from the group were few but included considering a title change as well as a few minor chord suggestions. Wonderful, Pattie!

Michael Wesley Stinson sent his song, “Back In Texas”, which (appropriately enough) described the singer's longing for great Texas things. Michael's lyrics and music were well done and a few folks felt that a little more detail was needed concerning the imagery for singer's love interest. Really nice, Michael!

Aaron Clift send his song “Shadowplay”, an outstanding prog-rock tune about the singer missing his love interest. This song reminded attendees of several bands, such as Yes, Pink Floyd, and others. Aaron also provided this Soundcloud link for a hifi version: <https://soundcloud.com/aaroncliftmusic/shadowplay/s-t3xGxTbStW?> Thanks, Aaron!

David Stewart provided his song “Me and You”, a country tune describing the trouble he got into as a kid. Very funny, very sweet, David's descriptions definitely rang true with the listeners. There were some very minor comments, including possible lyric changes. Very cool, David – thanks!

Richard Paul Thomas provided his song “Imagine”, which challenged the listener to imagine how much better this world could be if we all pitched in and worked together. Richard's chords, bridge, and melody were awesome and comments included a few lyric changes. Way to go, Richard!

Joe Strouse sent his song “Not Quite Then”, a description of a loved one not totally being able to cope with life's challenges. Comments included a few minor lyric changes in order to clarify who this person was.

Brian MacLeod sent his song “English Muffins”, a very funny ditty (with a British accent) about the singer’s love interest having no inclination in joining him in eating those delectable English muffins. The listeners absolutely enjoyed this tune and only a few lyrical suggestions were made. It’s a marathon hit, Brian!

Greg Livingston sent his very thoughtful song, “The Pages of Her Heart”, which described the broken relationship between the singer and his loved one. This song sounded like something Sting might create and Greg’s super guitar playing really helped this song soar. Comments were generally few concerning the lyrics. Super work, Greg!

John Stearle again switched the session’s direction with his video of “Ditch Mitch”, an eyeful of images (and original music and words), decrying Tennessee’s Mitch McConnell. John said that the images were all taken from YouTube. Several suggestions were offered regarding showing the lyrics. Thanks for the ride, John!

Rick Ritz (from Forth Worth) sent in his song “Ride This Train Alone”, a country tune about how the singer had to make some changes in his life and didn’t want any help. This song moved very well and listeners provided some lyrical comments which could make the song even stronger. Thanks, Rick – welcome!

Mary Dawson brought her song “Above the Clouds” which described how the sun was always shining when you’re above the clouds. This very clever title was well supported by the music and lyrics. Suggestions included updating the production and a few small lyric changes, but all in all, another great Mary Dawson tune – thanks!

And as always, the Songsmith - Austin monthly critique session meets on the third Monday of each month. We’ll do this again by Zoom conference on Monday September 21, 2020. If you’d like to be included next month, please contact Tara Heflin (tara.incognito@gmail.com) and send her your lyrics (Word format, please) and if you’d prefer that we hear a recording, please also send an mp3 of your song.

See you on Monday, September 21st!