

Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session  
Monday, April 20, 2020

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held via Zoom (moderated by Mississippi's best -and the always-able-and-excellent Tara Heflin) from 7:04 pm to 9:29 pm. We had 13 Zoom attendees and heard 11.5 wonderful works in progress.

Joe Strouse started the session by singing along with his song “The Repair Shop”, which described watching this acclaimed BBC show with his grandson. Suggestions included checking the point of view to make sure it was adequately established.

Michael Stinson provide an mp3 and lyrics for his sweet song, “April Lee”, which described his long-lasting love for his wife. This song had wonderful lyrics which helped it soar. The listeners provided several comments, including having the chorus melody rise a bit higher to support the emotion. Super work, Michael!

Long-absent Brian Macleod provided lyrics and an mp3 of his recently-created heartfelt song “Dad”, which vividly described growing up and love for his father. Suggestions included considering a more visual title as well as some very minor lyric changes. This one's a keeper, Brian – outstanding - and welcome back!

Rick Cates sent an mp3 of his rocking, recently-written love song (for his wife), entitled “Slow Dancing on the Beach”. This warm tune described their courtship (with a great twist at the end). The listeners provided a bit of lyrical input as well as possibly changing the key to lift the song higher during the chorus. Super, Rick!

John Stearle gave Tara his lyrics and an mp3 of his rap song “The Impeachment of Donald John Trump”, which nicely highlighted voter's pro and con arguments (using two singers). This song was provocative, very well done, and the biggest agreement was including the tiny refrain more often (and earlier) within this song. Very cool, John!

Also long-absent David Stewart provided lyrics and played his song “Nothing To Do”, which humorously described current rural life and sounded a lot like a Steve Earle tune. David also had an interesting twist at the end which fueled the group's discussion further. Nice, nice work, David – welcome back!

Stewart Moser sent lyrics and an mp3 of his song “The Worst Part of Writing A Song”, which (as always) had great and interesting chords, while describing the songwriter's angst. The group really enjoyed this song and provided some minor lyrical comments. Perhaps the best part of writing a song is finishing it, Stewart? Thanks!

Scott Joffe sent lyrics and an mp3 of his ballad “Every Now And Then” which warmly described loss and how the past often visits. This universal song was beautifully written and everyone seemed to enjoy it. Suggestions were minor – relating to story clarity and some very minor lyric/melody movement in the pre-chorus. Wow, Scott – excellent!

Mary Dawson provided lyrics and an mp3 of her co-written song “The Darkest Hour”, inspired by a church billboard. The production was upbeat and gospel, which everyone enjoyed, and was incredibly sung. Some very minor verse, chorus, and lyric changes were offered by the listeners. Super work, Mary!

Aaron Clift provided lyrics and an mp3 of his song “Age of Misinformation”, a Prog-Rock tune that described each of our challenges in life. Aaron’s production was outstanding and lyrics were well constructed and comments from the listeners were few – mostly small clarifications. Great work, Aaron!

Our third long-absent attendee, Pattie Stuart, provided an mp3 and lyrics for her mesmerizing song “One Prayer”, which beautifully described the diverse miracles in life and expressed the singer’s appreciation of. Listener’s suggestions included having the title a little more often and some minor lyric clarification. Super, Pattie! Welcome back!

Greg Livingston joined in from Marble Falls and experienced significant connection issues, so we didn’t get to hear his song – but what we could hear was excellent. We hope he’s able to resolve the buffering issues and we get to hear it next month.

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 May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you’d like to be included please contact Tara Heflin ([tara.incognito@gmail.com](mailto:tara.incognito@gmail.com)) and she’ll help get you in! Send her your lyrics (Word format, please) and if you’d prefer we hear a recording, please also send an mp3 of your song.

See you on Monday, May 18th!