

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

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held in the conference room of Congregation Beth Israel on Monday, February 17, 2020 from 7:18 to 9:21 pm. We had eight attendees and heard eight incredible wonderful works in progress.

We started the meeting with a brief *optional* challenge to re-write any (or all – if you're particularly ambitious) of a well-known song to make it even better.

Stewart Moser played his guitar and sang "What They Needed." This song started with the chorus and described how the Astro's World Series win helped Houstonians deal with the ravages of Hurricane Harvey. Suggestions from the listeners included making it a bit clearer early on in the song that it was about the Astros. Great start, Stewart!

Michael Stinson played guitar and sang his song "Things Break Down", which aptly described how nothing lasts. This song had vivid lyrics that wonderfully described situations in life. Comments were lyric-based and included suggestions for deciding on the big-picture - relating to the song's focus in the third verse. Great work, Michael!

Rose Gabriel played guitar and sang her heartfelt songwriter's lament entitled "Listen", which definitely described challenges when playing a solo gig. Suggestions included possibly moving verses around as well as some melodic change between the verses and choruses. Super work, Rose!

Greg Livingston played a recording of his song "Because of You", an outstanding song about loss of love. This song had great prosody and the vocal, as always, was superb. The group made several suggestions concerning the third verse and the melodic break, but all in all, a great effort by Greg.

Christy Moore played guitar and sang her wonderfully optimistic song, entitled "I Can't Quit". This very well-constructed lament displayed the singer's outlook that love was near. Comments from the listeners included some minor lyric possibilities that could keep the magical metaphors going. Outstanding, Christy!

John Stearle brought a recording of one of his FAWM songs, entitled "Doctor Pimple Popper", based on the TLC channel's series. Graphic and funny, John did a great job making everyone laugh and squirm just a little bit. Suggestions included some lyric changes to keep the chorus consistent. Time to send this one to TLC, John – thanks!

Aaron Clift brought a recording of his song, "Weight of the World", a Prog-Rock tune that described the singer's challenges about life. Aaron's lyrics were well constructed and comments from the listeners were few – mostly small clarifications. We definitely want to hear the guitar solo on this one, Aaron - thanks!

Joe Strouse brought a recording of one of his FAWM tunes, entitled, "I-35", a humorous song about aging and its parallels to the construction along Interstate highway 35. Suggestions included some very small lyric changes in the verses.

And as always, the Songsmith - Austin monthly critique session meets on the third Monday of each month in the most excellent and spacious conference room at Congregation Beth Israel, 3901 Shoal Creek Blvd, Austin, TX 78756. It's located on Shoal Creek Blvd, just north of 38th Street (near Central Market, Seton Hospital, etc...), and just west of Lamar. Our next session is Monday, March 16th. We hope you can join us!