

Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session  
Monday, October 21, 2019

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held in the conference room of Congregation Beth Israel on Monday, October 21st from 6:59 to 9:54 pm. We had six attendees and heard six wonderful works in progress.

As we've done of late, we started the meeting with a brief discussion (and ensuing *optional* challenge for November) of examining what separates choruses from verses, pre-choruses, and bridges. We listened to Camila Cabello's song "Easy" while labelling the parts (verse, chorus, pre-chorus, bridge) and we discussed what distinguishes these parts. Some of these facets include change of melody, change of rhythm/chords, title repetition, as well as the *idea* in the chorus is strongly supported by *details* in the verses. Of course, the optional challenge for November is to create a song with a strong chorus. Easy, right?

Greg Livingston (Austin's very own Steve Perry) started the session with a recording of his song "Raspberry Rain", a great blues ballad about a woman who's capable of turning heads. This song had partial rhymes (from last month's optional challenge) and a very strong chorus. Suggestions were few and included some minor lyrics changes. Good job, Greg!

Stewart Moser played his guitar and sang "Use It Or Lose It", a cool statement encompassing (possibly) several opportunities we get in life. Comments from the group included some lyric changes that considered other potentially-missed opportunities, as well as considering either first person (or third person) to expand the song's appeal. Excellent, Stewart!

Scott Joffe played guitar and sang his new creation "The Way You Make Me Feel" – an ode about a teen's ability to hide certain facts from the parents. Scott employed excellent internal rhymes and the story was well told. Listeners offered several lyrical suggestions, including perhaps a few detail/motivation clarification. Great work, Scott!

Mitch Lobrovich played a recording of his song "Sweet Charlike", a relationship story that turns out quite positive. Mitch's chords and melody well-supported the sentiment in this song. Comments from the listeners were few but included some melodic/vocal in the chorus and clarifying a few small details. Nice work, Mitch!

Joe Strouse brought a recording of his most recent tune, "She's Here", (also using the September optional writing assignment), describing being reassured during a difficult time. Comments included some small lyric changes to make the song smoother.

India Taylor brought five (yes, *five*) possible modifications to her previously-critiqued song "Light". The group listened to every version and provided comments, which surprisingly included an additional two-beat measure (thanks, Stewart!) that all preferred. This slight rhythm change really enhanced her song, which was based on a poem by Kahlil Gibran. Super idea, India - thanks!

Again, the November optional writing challenge is to create a song with a very strong chorus.

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 November 18th. We hope you can join us!