

Songsmith – Austin  
April 21, 2025 Critique Session

The Songsmith – Austin Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:05 to 9:06 pm on Monday, April 21, 2025, moderated by Mr Chicagoland, himself - Christopher Meyer. We had nine attendees and heard eight excellent songs in various stages of creation. Mary Dawson had solicited online opinions about why Jimmy Webb's "Wichita Lineman" was so effective, and while she had received several responses, she read Chris Cavello's eloquent response for the group.

John Stearle started the session with "Put It On!", a rocking admonishment to a female friend and car passenger who apparently didn't mind the incessant dinging when the seat belt wasn't fastened. Everyone liked this song a lot and comments were very positive, with no suggestions for change. Great work, John!

Joe Strouse sent his loop song "What's The Use?" (Loop based on Pat Benatar's "Love Is A Battlefield"). This song had the singer addressing a failing relationship with a partner. There were no changes suggested and the group appreciated this one.

GrAmy sent in "I Prefer To Be Me", a dialogue (with background music) between two characters in GrAmy's play. The song had great reverb, effects and voices and was very well done. Suggestions were few but included some minor mixing/compression so the music could be more forward in the mix and the voices not as prominent. Nice!

Long-absent Brent Torgrimson sent in two brief instrumental songs and solicited input from the listeners about possible lyrics. The music was excellent, which generated a number of comments from the group. Brent is interested in working with anyone who might be interested - contact Joe at [strousongs@gmail.com](mailto:strousongs@gmail.com) if you're interested. Thanks!

Bill Basinski provided his song "Heartburn 1.4", which was a work in progress about a relationship and had a great rambling descriptive format and interior rhymes. Lyrical comments included some consideration of an appropriate title as well as a structural lyrical progression in the song. Regardless, very good work, Bill - thanks!

Stewart Moser sent “Lisinopril”, and ode to a recent experience in Las Vegas concerning one of his medications. Great story, cool reverb, and twas rocking! Suggestions from the group included some very minor lyrical phrasing and other than that, we were interested in what actually happened in Vegas, which, of course, stayed there. Thanks, Stewart!

Mary Dawson provided her song (co-written with Beverly Houston) “Greater Than That”, a studio-recorded Christmas song about how great the holiday is but there is, in fact, more in life. Beautifully produced, everyone enjoyed this song and its excellent lyrics and music. A keeper, y’all -thanks!

Chris Cavello played his loop song “This Place Of Mine”, (based on this month’s loop challenge) where Chris created his own loop, lyrics and melody. This was an outstanding example of how loops can be used and manipulated to keep the listener’s interest. Comments were very positive for Chris’ work. Super, Chris - thanks!

As we did last month, a significant discussion continued concerning songs that are looped (same chords repeatedly throughout) with contrasting melodies for the verses, bridge and choruses. Another example is Earth, Wind, and Fire’s “September”. Additionally, Chris Meyer discussed a TED talk by Harvey Mason, Jr. about his dad’s (renown drummer Harvey Mason’s) confusion, then his embracing of this new technology, where he became one of the world’s best Linn drum machine programmers. Finally, we continued the discussion concerning whether AI-generated music is copyrightable or not, with differing opinions.

Songsmith meets three out of the four Monday nights each month. As always, Songsmith has a Salado meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month), the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday for the Austin meeting, and a DFW meeting (4<sup>th</sup> 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 person 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](mailto:Mary@MaryDawson.com).

We hope to see you on Monday, May 19th, 2025 or sooner!