

Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session
Monday, September 16, 2019

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held in the conference room of Congregation Beth Israel on Monday, September 16th from 6:59 to 9:51 pm. We had six attendees and heard six works in progress.

As we've done of late, we started the meeting with a brief discussion (and ensuing *optional* challenge for next month) to consider a variety of rhymes – perfect, family, additive/subtractive, assonance, and consonance rhymes.

Jacquelyn Fraley brought her guitar and sang her song “I Don't Need You”, a country tune about ridding her life of an abusive relationship. Jacquelyn's lyrics were thoughtful and the listeners offered a number of suggestions how the chords in the verse and those in the bridge might want to contrast more and provide a smoother transition between each. Nice work, Jacquelyn!

Michael Wesley Stinson wrote a song using the August optional writing assignment (three lines of similar stresses and the fourth with a different number of stresses) with his tune “Hooked On You” which described his love for his wife. Another well-written song which prompted a few minor suggestions from the listeners. Thanks, Michael!

Stewart Moser played his guitar and sang “I Can't Even”, yet another commentary on the state of our presidency, describing the singer's exasperation. Comments from the group included how much the great chords and melody were appreciated and an option for another version that doesn't directly refer to the current president. Good job, Stewart!

Greg Livingston (Austin's ascending heir to Steve Perry) played a recording of his song “Rock On”, another part of his group of songs concerning down-on-their-luck characters. This rocker was also reminiscent of Chris Rea's “Road To Hell” and moved quite well. Suggestions were few and included some possible vocal considerations. Excellent, Greg!

Joe Strouse brought a recording of his most recent tune, “Lydia”, (also using the August optional writing assignment), describing being pleasantly overwhelmed by a beautiful woman when he was six. Comments included some small lyric changes to clarify the subject and production.

Aaron Clift (also using the August optional writing assignment) brought a demo recording of his song “Málaga”, a description of the beautiful drive into Spain's southern-most city. Aaron's 6/4 polychordal writing and the overall production really gave the listeners a good sense of movement and group comments included a new title and a few minor lyric possibilities. Super start, Aaron!

So, the September *optional* writing assignment is to create a song with family and additive/subtractive rhymes somewhere in the song (see <http://songchops.com/2013/10/rhyme-families-your-secret-weapon/> and <https://wiki.grahamenglish.net/index.php/Talk:Rhyme>).

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 October 21st. We hope you can join us!