

Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session Monday, June 17, 2019

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held in the conference room of Congregation Beth Israel on Monday, June 17th from 7 to 9:00 pm. We had eight attendees and heard seven interesting works. And we enjoyed some veggies.

We started the meeting by manipulating clichés using two different methods – some very cool results, indeed.

India Taylor started the critique session with a re-write of her song entitled “Make This Life A Dance”, an optimistic description of making the best of life’s situations. India’s work on this song was evident with great rhymes and a wonderful chorus. Comments from the listeners were minor and included utilizing the pauses some more. Great work, India!

Stewart Moser played his most-recently-written tune, “Usually”, a non-political song about challenges in driving home from work. Stewart’s chords were usually (!) excellent and the group’s comments included some minor lyric and minor phrasing changes – especially in the title’s repetition. Nice, Stewart!

John Stearle played a recording of his song “Nothing To Say”, yet another in a series of songs for an upcoming play that John is developing. This wonderfully cliché-riddled song was sung by Greg Livingston and sounded like something out of The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Suggestions were few but included changing the tempo just a bit. Excellent, John!

Michael Stinson played guitar and sang his song “America”, which described the paradox between what America stands for and how it treats immigrants. Michael’s vivid descriptions helped set the tone and the listeners felt that its message was very effective. Comments included a few minor lyric suggestions and contemplating some minor chord changes. Super work, Michael!

Joe Strouse brought another recording of one of his 52- week tunes, entitled “Midnight”, which described loss in a re-occurring dream/nightmare. The group suggested some small lyric changes in the last verse and the second line of the chorus.

Songsmith founder Mary Dawson played a preliminary demo of her co-written tune “All Shall Be Well”, an upbeat tune based on a 14th-century quite from Julian of Norwich. This song was very reminiscent of a great, dense production by Sting, which the listeners agreed was excellent. Comments included some very minor phrasing and lyric work. Thanks, Mary!

Michael Stinson closed out this evening’s session with a recording of “Looking For A Little More”, a demo recorded in Richard Paul Thomas’ studio in Salado on which Richard and multi-instrumentalist Chris Gage helped.

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, July 15th. We hope you can join us!