

Songsmith – Austin
June Critique Session
June 17, 2024

The Songsmith – Austin Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:06 to 9:12 pm on Monday, June 17, 2024, moderated by the steady and able Christopher Meyer. We had 11 Zoom attendees and heard nine wonderful songs in various stages of creation. A discussion concerning Artificial Intelligence (AI) in songwriting ensued and Joe also talked about writing a melody first, creating a chorus from it and writing a complete song..

Scott Badger sent a re-write of his song “You Happened”, which included a new bridge. This song was about an unassuming person’s meeting of a potential love interest and was very well crafted, as we have come to expect from Scott. Comments included making it a refrain style song and eliminating the choruses. Super work, Scott!

Kevin Mallory sent his song “It’s Critical”, a possible theme song for a Dungeons and Dragons-style fantasy heroes podcast. With great energy (and harmonies) and with a definite Metallica edge, this rousing song was enjoyed by all. Comments were generally few and included minor lyric changes to make it stronger. Good luck, Kevin - thanks!

Bill Basinski set in his stream-of-consciousness song “Sitting On My Seat”, a possible outhouse ode which had inventive lyrics, rhymes and descriptions. The listeners liked this song and recommended a few changes, mostly title repetition and to have a musical break between the verses. Nice work, Bill!

Stewart Moser provided his sobering song “Never Forget”, a 2019 song comparing the Holocaust with current political rhetoric and how we’re destined to repeat the past if we don’t remember and learn from it. As always, the song had great chords and vocals, as noted by the listeners. Comments were few and were lyric-related. Thanks, Stewart!

Scott Joffe sent in “Straight Line Down”, a relationship song vividly describing breakup/make up relationships. This seriously effective tune had everyone listening closely and there were only a few potential suggestions relating to the chorus and the verse lyrics. Outstanding, Scott - thanks!

Joe Strouse sent his optional songwriting exercise song “Curiosity”, describing the songwriter’s inquiry into an on-line ad and the possible results had he’d known sooner in life. Comments included a possible title change and some excellent lyric changes.

Mitch Lobrovich provided his song “God Bless Everyone”, a blues rocker anti-war song describing how life would be different if we were more open to respecting each other. The group liked this non-preachy song which drove at the heart of human nature. Comments were positive with very few changes offered. Good work, Mitch!

GrAmy sent a prologue to their upcoming play, entitled “Never Ending Blue: The Chase”, where the heroine Estrella is captured by evil forces. While this submittal was voice only (both Greg and Amy), the voices and the sound effects were outstanding and definitely had us curious for the next installment. Nice work!

Mike Couch and Mary Dawson sent their co-write (including excellent video), “Beautiful When You Smile”, describing, in general, how beautiful people of all ages are when they smile. This positive song was heartwarming and everyone enjoyed it very much, with few comments concerning possible changes from the listeners. Super, Mike and Mary!

Scott Badger began a great discussion concerning AI in songwriting. While there are many on-line possibilities for exploring AI in songwriting, there was significant agreement that it was possibly another great tool for crafting well-written songs.

Finally, Joe offered a July songwriting optional challenge - create an original melody, build a chorus with it and then create verses (and a bridge) with melodies that are not as strong as the chorus melody.

Songsmith meets three out of the four Monday nights each month. As always, Songsmith has a Salado meeting (2nd Monday of each month), the 3rd Monday for the Austin meeting, and a DFW meeting (4th 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 maven 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.

We hope to see you on Monday, July 15th, 2024 or sooner!