

Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session
Monday, October 19, 2020

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held via Zoom (moderated by soon-to-be Florida's most-excellent Tara Heflin) from 7:01 pm to 9:51 pm. We had 14 Zoom attendees and heard 10 excellent works in progress.

Michael Wesley Stinson started the session with a studio demo version of his re-written (originally heard August 2020) song “Back In Texas”, which described the singer's looking forward to being in this great state. Great production and the attendees offered a few minor lyrical changes. Great work, Michael!

Direct from San Diego, CA, Mary Ann Daugherty brought her co-write with Brian Ramsay “Take It Slow”, a sweet song about re-evaluating a relationship. Brian's voice and guitar were outstanding and the comments were very positive and focused on a few possible lyric and structural changes. Super - welcome, Mary Ann!

Stewart Moser sent his song “Paul McCartney” – originally produced in 2002, describing the singer's admiration for the ex-Beatle. This production included many George Martin-esque instruments and suggestions from the group were few. As always, great chords, vocals, and energy – thanks, Stewart!

Joe Strouse sent his song “Little Rules”, describing the singer's admonitions for keeping up with what needed to be done in life. Comments included some minor lyric and structural changes.

David Stewart sent his co-write with Brooklyn's very own Al Lama, entitled “Stray Dog”, a very well-written country tune which described how mankind treats those in need versus stray dog. Great images and rhymes, suggestions from the listeners included a few lyric, tense, and point of view suggestions. Great job, guys!

Greg Livingston sent his song “In My Dreams” which described the singer's reassurances to his love interest. Greg's voice and guitar really helped this song soar (as usual!). Minor comments from the listeners included the need for a little more title repetition. Regardless, nice, nice, nice, Greg!

Dori Weaver provided her studio-produced song “Magnolia”, which described growing up and the memories related to this wonderfully fragrant tree. Dori's choruses were stellar with internal rhymes, which the group totally enjoyed. A few lyric possibilities were suggested, but this one may be done. Outstanding work, Dori!

John Stearle steered the session's direction somewhat left with his re-written song and video “Dump Trump”, an ode to our president and the impending election. John added lyrics to the video and, of course, having over-the-top images and animation. A few comments were offered relating to lyrics stresses, but definitely classic John – thanks!

Songsmith Founder Mary Dawson sent her song “Love Conquers All” (another co-write with Bruce Greer) – with Bruce Hornsby’s double on the piano – describing no matter what else there is in our lives, love does conquer all. Suggestions included a blues re-make and simplification in the demo. Thanks, Mary!

Houston’s Leora Salo provided her song “The Waves Of Monterrey”, an evocative song about the call of the sea. Great instrumentation (tabula, and Jaco Pastorius-like bass) provided ideal prosody with her vocals. The group was duly mesmerized and very few comments were offered. Wow, Leora! Welcome back – it’s been a long time!

And as always, the Songsmith - Austin monthly critique session meets on the third Monday of each month. We’ll do this again by Zoom conference on Monday, November 16, 2020. If you’d like to be included next month, please contact Tara Heflin (tara.incognito@gmail.com) and send her your lyrics (Word format, please) and if you’d prefer that we hear a recording, please also send an mp3 of your song before 4 pm on Monday, November 16th.

See you on Monday, November 16th!