

Songsmith – Austin
November Critique Session
November 20, 2023

The Songsmith – Austin November Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:07 to 8:59 pm on November 20, 2023. We had 10 Zoom attendees and heard nine interesting songs in various stages of creation. Joe also reminded everyone about February's February is Album Writing Month (FAWM), the December SEAHPLSACS (Sixteenth Ever Annual Holiday Pot Luck Snack and critique Session) , and discussed a song title-writing challenge for the next month (see below). Joe filled in for the ailing Chris Meyers (get well soon, Chris!).

Mitch Lobrovich started the session with his song “Pray With Me”, a gospel-inspired song about repairing the world through prayer. With great production and feel in this song, listeners made several suggestions concerning the lyrics and phrasing in order to make it even stronger. Super first draft - this one's a keeper, Mitch - thanks!

Greg Livingston and Amy Guentzel (GrAmy) continued another song from their rock opera with “Queen Of Sting”, in which Amy carried the vocal (nicely!) and sweetly ad-libbed a bit in this boogie boogie tune about Tristan's challenges to free Estrella. Comments were very positive and offered a few lyrical changes. Great work - again!

Scott Joffe emailed his song “Only Words”, an upbeat ballad about the singer being disappointed in a loved one ignoring the singer's wishes during a time of need. There were great internal rhymes and couplets in these verses. Suggestions included a few small phrasing changes. Outstanding, Scott!

Stewart Moser sent his song “Hay”, a lament about the singer not following through with past opportunities and making plans to change those ways. Very well written (and, of course, cool chords), Stewart's song was appreciated by all listeners. Several lyrical questions and suggestions were offered. A keeper, SB - thanks!

Kevin Mallory provided his song “Take Me Down”, a very cool Nirvana-style song about the singer's want (and need) to connect with a loved one's dealing with depression. There were several comments for the lyrics (and one for the melody) to help make the intent of (and clarify) this heartfelt song. Thanks, Kevin!

Michael Wesley Stinson sent his guitar/vocal song “Shade Of An Elephant”, a metaphor for an introvert singer's need to not be in the limelight under varying circumstances.

Another Michael song with great chords and lyrics, there were only a few suggestions for making the song even stronger. Outstanding work, Michael - thanks!

Joe Strouse played his song “Pas Des Mouches Sur Moi” (No flies on me), inspired by his French speaking babysitter in the mid-1960s and dealing with/getting into mischief. Comments included a few lyric changes to this Vanilla Ice/Steely Dan-inspired song.

First-timer Gerald Lucas submitted his well-produced song “Love Happened To Me”, concerning how he met his wife of 39 years. This country rocker had great prosody and the listeners provided several musical and lyrical comments for helping make the song shine even more. Welcome Gerald - congratulations and thanks!

John Stearle sent in “Up Your Bunghole”(!), an almost scientific observation concerning what’s been found in (that) space. A true John original, if there was ever one. Apart from the disbelief and laughter, there were a couple of lyrical questions and suggestions. We agreed that the video will be very interesting - you public awaits, John!

Joe discussed a simple challenge for everyone - after getting up in the morning each day for the next month, write a possible song title in a journal (written or electronic) and no more. Only title per day for 30 days. We hope to share them during the December session.

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, December 18th or sooner!