

Songsmith – Austin February Critique Session
April 19, 2021

The Songsmith – Austin February Critique Session was held via Zoom (moderated by Tampa’s Queen, Tara Heflin) from 7:09 pm to 9:21 pm on April 19, 2021. We had 12 Zoom attendees and heard 10 truly excellent works in progress.

Joe started the meeting by describing Robin Frederick’s April analysis of Beyonce’s “Halo” (see below). He also presented an optional songwriting challenge for May – write a song based on a letter written to someone – extra bonus points if you don’t include a salutation (e.g., Dear John) in the first line of the song.

Michael Wesley Stinson again started the session with “Three Quarter Time”, a song describing a stoic personality amidst personal conflict with an Irish feel. With great music, images and descriptions, listeners felt that they needed a bit more information and offered a few lyric possibilities. Thanks, Michael!

John Stearle continued his quest for new songwriting boundaries with “Penises Are Shrinking”, John’s retort to a comment from a Greta Thunberg tweet regarding the effects from global warming. John’s point of view was from a non-believer and provided some great laughs and a few lyric comments. Very funny, John – thanks!

Stewart Moser sent his song “Go On”, an excellent song with great chords describing the singer’s attitude (and determination) after being challenged with one of life’s setbacks. Suggestions from the group included a few minor lyric adjustments, but again, another cool song from Stewart.

Joe Strouse sent his song “Something ‘bout These Words”, about coping during (and the upcoming end of) the pandemic with a list of famous movie lines as reassurance that things will be okay. Several lyric and production changes were suggested.

California’s Mary Ann Daugherty and Arkansas’ Brian Ramsey sent in their wonderful co-write “Highway 106”, describing a long life in the country. Great images, melodies and production, Brian’s voice really lent this song great authenticity, including a great twist at the end. A few small lyric suggestions came from the group – great work, y’all!

Dori Weaver sent her song “Feel Joy Rising”, a great effort concerning how songs affect us. Everyone really appreciated the great contrast between the verses and the powerful chorus - and the overall feel of this song. There were a few suggestions, but again, super work from Dori – thanks!

Zooming in from DC, Kevin Mallory’s “Fine Line” is a Nirvana-inspired tune about trying to convince a teenage child about ignoring electronic screens and appreciating the great things we have in life. There were a few lyric possibilities offered from the listeners. Very, very good work, Kevin!

Greg Livingston played his song “Cherry Blossom Moon” (with inspired cameo comments from Amy Guentzel) concerning a conversation between a man and woman and the loss of friendship. This very sweet song was appreciated by all and comments were very positive. Great work, y’all!

Tyler’s Scott Badger sent his song “Hopelessly In Love”, a well-written effort concerning the singer’s changed attitude with respect to a romantic interest. Once again, Scott’s great guitar playing and vocals helped this song move well. Suggestions were minor and generally concerned a few lyrics. Really enjoyed this, Scott!

Amy Guentzel (with an assist from Greg Livingston) presented her first song “Love You Love You Love You” which happily described comparisons of things to love. Very sweet and humorous, the group really liked it and offered a few potential lyric changes to help make it even stronger. Great work, Amy (and Greg)!

Finally, Joe described Robin Frederick’s latest analysis of Beyonce’s outstanding hit song “Halo”. Robin did a superb job of describing what exactly Beyonce did to make this song so appealing (besides her vocals). Robin has a regular (free) newsletter and you can always sign up at: <https://robinfrederick.com/>.

Songsmith meets three out of four Monday nights using the same link - if you’d like to be included in the May Songsmith-Austin critique session, 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 (Central time) on Monday, May 17th.

See you on Monday, May 17, 2021 or sooner!