

OCTOBER 2013

Next SVSA meeting

The next meeting of the SVSA will be held **Wednesday, October 23** at Third Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke, VA. Doors will open at 7 p.m.; meeting begins promptly at 7:30 and will last until the last song critique is finished, or 10:30 p.m., whichever comes first. Members may submit one song for critique (on cassette or CD) and should provide at least 12 copies of the lyrics. Critiques are limited to members only but non-members and guests are encouraged to sit in on the discussions and exercises.

At the September meeting, SVSA member **Greg Trafidlo** (and friends) will lead a workshop on performance.

October Feature Article

A Sad Commentary

By David Simpkins

For some people – for a LOT of people – seeing is believing. If there’s an honest-to-goodness monster in your closet, then the best thing to do is to ignore it, to act as if it doesn’t exist. Put as much emotional and physical distance as possible between it and you. “Whistle a happy tune” as you stroll past your own private graveyard. Tell jokes, make up silly rhymes, sign yourself up as the fourth Stooge.

Others, like myself, prefer to yank the closet door open, drag whatever is in there out into the open, and deal with it right then and there. You may lose the fight – in fact, you’re almost guaranteed to lose the fight – but at least you’re not masking anything, suppressing anything, running from anything.

For songwriters, that closet door – and the space inside that it hides – is the emotional content of their songs. Walk into Songwriter Bill’s room and you’ll find his closet door covered with happy-face stickers, with posters of Sesame Street characters, with day-glo hearts and flowers, and sports pennants. In Songwriter Tom’s room, the door is open, the closet is empty, and there’s a trail of tears and blood leading into the next room.

The emotional content of music is at both of those extremes. And, like

anything else, too much is too much and not enough is not enough. Even worse, the middle – the place where punches get pulled – is where everything is mediocre.

As a songwriter who tends to gravitate toward the sad and the melancholy, I nevertheless completely understand just how extraordinarily hard it is to write funny lyrics – I mean really funny lyrics. Great comedians are as rare as great Shakespearian actors. I also understand how extremely easy it is to be cute. And oh, how hard some of us try to be cute! Cute, to me, is like tickling a little kid. There's nothing really funny about it – but everybody laughs anyway.

Cute is safe. Cute is acceptable. Cute is mainstream. Cute is cute ... and, well, cute sells. I'll be the first to admit that the vast audience for original songs out there is not looking to be challenged by the music presented to it. Nashville and Top 40 Radio has made billions of dollars off the understanding that most people prefer piffle to substance. Movies, plays, magazines ... all based mostly on "cute."

But then there's the dark side. The place where heartbreak lives. That nether region where darkness throws shadows. Now, that's where the rubber meets the road. In the early 1950s, Johnnie Ray (in his hit song "Cry" written by Churchill Kohlman) explained to listeners that it was okay to "let your hair down and go on and cry" when things get bad. The message was that you had to get through the darkness in order to get to the light. The unspoken message was that you don't get to skip the sad in order to get to the happy.

And then there's Paul McCartney's "Yesterday," one of the most recorded songs in history – maybe THE most recorded song – and it's unrelentingly sad. "Yesterday / All my troubles seemed so far away / Now it looks as though they're here to stay / Oh I believe in yesterday ..." And that's just the first verse! There's a reason why one of the saddest songs ever recorded is also one of the most recorded songs ever. People respond to sadness and melancholy just as strongly and readily as they respond to funny and cute – but most people just

There's a reason why one of the saddest songs ever recorded is also one of the most recorded songs ever. People respond to sadness and melancholy just as strongly and readily as they respond to funny and cute – but most people just don't want to admit it.

don't want to admit it.

I could go on and on here but I think I've made my point. Songs need emotional depth. There are pitfalls when delving into the darker side, however. Just as there's "cute" on the substance-less side, there's "maudlin" on the darker side. "Maudlin" is easy. (Nashville has made a lot of money off "maudlin" also. Look up "Mama Sang A Song" by Whisperin' Bill Anderson on Wikipedia for a top-notch example.)

"Sad" – like "funny" – is extraordinarily hard. A fine example of some great "sad" is Tom Jones' recent version of Leonard Cohen's "Tower Of Song." See it on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JWiPFT0v2c.

I'll leave you with a quote from Americana performing songwriter Slaid Cleves: "I think I've always loved sad songs. I remember crying to the song 'Kaw-Liga,' the old Hank Williams song about the wooden Indian, which is a goofy little song. But it's heartbreaking to a little 5-year-old who hears about the wooden Indian that falls in love with the other wooden Indian across the way and then somebody takes the woman Indian away. ... But it didn't depress me. I think it's a good feeling to get a good cry out there, and hearing sad songs is somehow uplifting to me. I mean, the only depressing songs that I've ever heard are just songs that are bad, like badly written songs. Those depress me."

Monthly Meeting Report: September 2013

A total of 12 SVSA members attended last month's regular meeting along with one guest. Our workshops and our monthly meetings are of great value to songwriters at any level. And for new and long-term members, a steady influx of new membership keeps our meetings interesting, lively, and progressive.

At the September meeting, SVSA member Marc Baskind continued our "mini-workshop" series with an interactive discussion on the somewhat controversial topic "Play For Free?" Marc handed out some information that he'd collected from various internet sources discussing both sides of the issue and then gave a short talk on his own perception of the "problem." He then opened the topic up for discussion among members and a plethora of different viewpoints and perspectives made the issue clearer and helped members see the bigger picture from both sides. Our "mini-workshops" always generate enthusiasm and a sharing of information, tools we can use to better ourselves as songwriters and performers.

The September meeting also saw six original songs brought in to be given

the SVSA “treatment” in our regular critique session which features an open discussion of each song with comments, opinions, suggestions, and observations. From simple guitar/vocal demos to professionally produced studio recordings, original songs submitted for critique get a thorough and non-biased listen from our membership. Critiques cover lyrics and music; perhaps the most important observations deal with whether or not the song melds the two elements into a successful whole. It’s a proven fact: A song comes out stronger when it has gone through the “wringer” at an SVSA meeting. A popular new option gives members an opportunity to perform their submissions live and in person. Members have been taking advantage of this opportunity and several of the songs were performed live on the Third Street Coffeehouse stage.

And, as always, the pre- and postcritique discussions were lively, and a lot of interesting and helpful information passed around the room. The exchange of information, opinions, and ideas is at the heart of what makes the monthly SVSA meetings so worthwhile and interesting. If you haven’t been to a meeting lately, plan to make time and bring in a song for critique ... we’re always ready and willing to let you know what we think! Or just stop by and join in the discussions. Your two cents is always welcome!

Non-members are encouraged to attend as well. You can sit through a meeting or two and see for yourself whether or not you think the SVSA would be beneficial to your songwriting efforts. The pay-off might not be immediate -- but the long-run benefits are many and valuable. You’ll find SVSA members with nearly every level of experience who are willing to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with you on your songwriting journey. So plan to attend next month’s meeting and check us out!

- David Simpkins

SVSA MEMBERSHIP

Paid as of July 2013

Kathy Acosta
Marc Baskind
Aspen Black
Alice Black
Clay Blevins
David Bowen
Dee Bowlin
Steve Clark
Bob Coulter (Lifetime Member)
Sid Crosswhite (Lifetime Member)
Leo Cullen
Mike DeGiorgi
Mike Dittrich
Charlie Divers
Paul Douglas
Linda Fowler
Mike Franke
Jerry Gilmore
Mary Gordon Hall
Dale Hamilton
Larry Helms
Dan Hildebrand
Josh Jones
Mark Laperle
Leigh Littleton
Bob Lowell
Barbara Martin
Marian McConnell
Britt Mistele
David Motley
Mickey Nelson
Mike Pearrell
Neal Phillips
Larry Sakayama
Marlon Scott
David Simpkins
Andrew Smiley
Greg Trafidlo
Randolph Walker
Melissa Webb
Eddie Williams

Are You Getting Paid to Play?

By Susan Tucker, from the Songwriters Connection E-tip

Let's face it, it's hard to make money in the music business, so it pays to know about every income source available to you. As a songwriter you should already know about the performance rights organizations: ASCAP, BMI and SESAC. And if you are a performing songwriter, I want to make sure you know about ASCAP OnStage and BMI Live.

It used to be that, (according to their websites) ASCAP and BMI only monitored "all songs performed in the 200 top-grossing concert tours, as well as selected other major live performance venues, covering headliners and opening acts" and "live symphonic and recital concerts." That meant that if you were a smaller act, you would have found it impossible to seek royalty payments for your live performances. That is unless you were an opener on that large and monitored tour.

Until you are the opening act on one of those large tours, take advantage of ASCAP OnStage or BMI Live. Basically the performance rights organizations (PROs) are now collecting and paying out royalties for gigs at "any size" venue. All live music venues are required to pay a licensing fee for the use of music in their establishment and now you are able to receive royalties for a performance at even a small coffee shop.

It's really pretty simple.

The songs have to be title registered at whichever PRO you belong to. Title registering lists all the writers and publishers and their respective "share" of the copyright.

After your gig, you send information on the venue as well as your setlist, to your PRO. You can do this either through their websites or their mobile apps.

Your payment for that performance will be part of your next quarterly royalty check. Will it be a large amount? Depends, but hey, anything is good, right? Get registered at your PRO and start collecting what's due you!

Websites -

<http://www.ascap.com/members/onstage.aspx>

http://www.bmi.com/special/bmi_live



SVSA member Greg Trafidlo with Denise Jordan Finley and Daniel Pagdon at Unity Church in Roanoke on September 29. They're playing "Harmony," a song Greg and Denise co-wrote.

SVSA PERFORMING MEMBERS' UPCOMING GIGS

Greg Trafidlo:

Oct. 26 Vinton Arts fair on the market with David Simpkins and Britt Mistele, Vinton VA.

Nov. 2 The Birchmere with Tom Paxton (Tom's Birthday Bash). Alexandria, VA

Nov. 9 Americana Stage with David Simpkins and the KGB, Floyd Country Store, Floyd, VA.

Marc Baskind:

Tues. Oct 22: With the Marc Baskind Jazz Trio, River Laker Cultural Center, 16 West Church Ave., Roanoke VA, 6-9 p.m.

Friday, October 25: with the Walter Scott Trio, 7-10 p.m. Greenbrier main dining room, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

Sat., Oct. 26: The Bower, Bedford VA, w/Heat Of The Night Band, 7-9 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 1: India Garden Restaurant, Blacksburg VA, Solo, 6-9PM

Sat., Nov. 2: Leo Grand Vineyards and Winery, Goode, VA, 1:30-5:30 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 2: Annie Moore's Irish Pub, Roanoke VA, w/Caravan, 7:30-10:30 p.m.

Barbara Martin:

Friday, October 25, 7:30 pm, doors open at 7, Barbara Martin Trio with Vince Lewis-guitar, Victor Dvoskin-bass, The Barns of Rose Hill, 95 Chalmers Court, Berryville, VA 22611 \$15 advance, \$20 at the door, 540-955-2004 www.fanfueled.com/Venue/Details/1239-barns-of-rose-hill

David Simpkins:

Saturday, October 26, Vinton Farmers Market, Vinton Virginia, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (with Greg Trafidlo and Britt Mistele)

Saturday, November 9, Floyd Country Store (Americana Afternoons), Floyd, Virginia, noon-1 p.m. (with the KGB)

SVSA Classifieds

FOR SALE

Alvarez Yairi DY-70 6-string guitar. Solid aged Spruce top and flame Maple back and sides. Perfect condition. Has an under-saddle pick up system (9 volt) and comes with a Yairi hard shell case. \$450. Call **Britt**, 540-745-6771.

FOR SALE

PRICE REDUCED! 2003 Taylor 355 12-string guitar. Made on July 25th, 2003, this guitar is absolutely perfect! A 10 out of 10. It has a Spruce top and Sapele Mahogany back and sides. Comes with the original Taylor HSC. It has a pro set up and plays like a dream. \$700. Call **Britt**, 540-745-6771.

DEMO RECORDING AND PRODUCTION

The Shop in Fincastle, Virginia. Clean, high-quality multitrack recording and mixdown with an all-digital recording system. I can make MP3s and CDs from the mix. I'm a capable session player and can add guitars, keyboards, bass and percussion, as well as arranging and sweetening. \$25/ hour for SVSA members. Contact **Josh Jones**, thejonesgroup@rbnet.com, (540) 473-3598.

FOR SALE

Carvin MX842 Stereo Powered Mixer. \$200. Built-in spring reverb and effects input/ outputs for outboard effects unit. 2 band EQ, effects, gain and pan for each channel. **Barbara Martin**, (540) 886-2966, barbara@barbaramartinmusic.com.

SVSA Music News free classifieds may be submitted by paid members only. All classifieds must be music-related.

UPCOMING AT THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

- Oct 25 Poorhouse Pepsteppers (Vinton)
- Nov 1 The Panini Brothers (Roanoke)
- Nov 8 Dan & Marian McConnell (Catawba, VA)
- Nov 15 Meadow Street Band (Ashland, VA)
- Nov 22 Western Highways CD Release Party – Randolph Walker & Marian McConnell
- Nov 29 Closed for Thanksgiving
- Dec 6 John Sines, Jr. (Lynchburg, VA)
- Dec 13 TBA
- Dec 20 Closed for Holidays
- Jan 3 TBA
- Jan 10 Chris Shepard (Roanoke, VA)
- Jan 17 The Flying Davenports (Roanoke, VA)
- Jan 24 Tenbuckshoes (Mary Roach) (Roanoke, VA)
- Jan 31 John Powell (Fincastle, VA)

Third Street Coffeehouse is a non-profit coffeehouse established in 1987. We are open every Friday. Sign up for open mic 7-7:30; open mic performances 7:30-8:15; featured performer from 8:30-10. Third Street is a smoke-free, alcohol-free, no-cover-charge venue. For more information please contact Marian McConnell at 540-309-4707; or email marian.mcconnell@gmail.com.

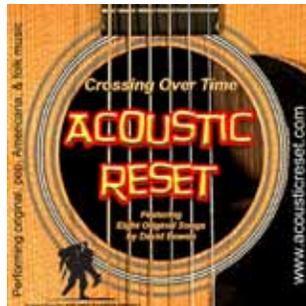
SVSA Members' Recordings



eyes on the horizon



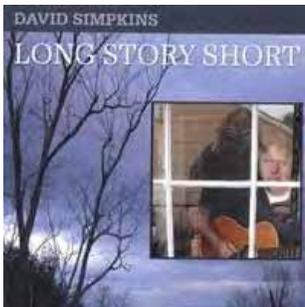
kaleidoscope



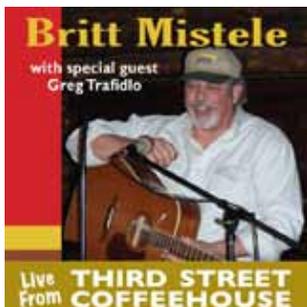
crossing over time



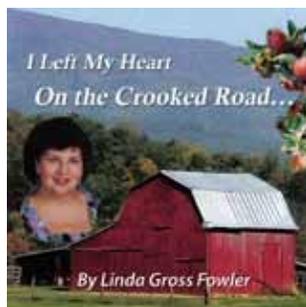
marc with a "c"



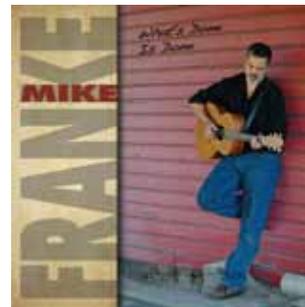
long story short



live from third street
coffeehouse



i left my heart on the
crooked road



what's done is done

Barbara Martin

EYES ON THE HORIZON — Jazz and all originals with Robert Redd on piano, Chuck Redd on drums and vibes, Steve Wolf on bass, Mac Walter on guitar, Bruce Swaim on saxophone, John Jensen on trombone, and Matt Finley on flugelhorn.

KALEIDOSCOPE — Barbara's jazziest CD. All original songs, with co-writes with Joel Evans, Mac Walter, and Greg Trafidlo.

David Bowen (Acoustic Reset)

CROSSING OVER TIME — Featuring folk-pop tunes. Eight originals and eight covers accented by solid guitar licks and accompanying instruments. Available at acousticreset.com.

Marc Baskind

MARC WITH A "C" — Sampler CD of covers and original songs offers a taste of the varied styles of this accomplished guitarist/singer.

David Simpkins

LONG STORY SHORT — Offers 12 original Americana tunes blending rock, folk, blues, and country.

Britt Mistele

LIVE FROM THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE — Four original songs and 11 covers, recorded live at Roanoke's Third Street Coffeehouse. With special guest Greg Trafidlo..

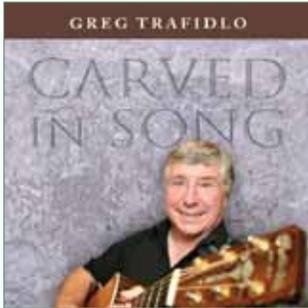
Linda Fowler

I LEFT MY HEART ON THE CROOKED ROAD — Features 12 original compositions.

Mike Franke

WHAT'S DONE IS DONE — A debut release of 14 original folk and blues tunes about everyday life and interesting people featuring Mike's fingerstyle and slide guitar.

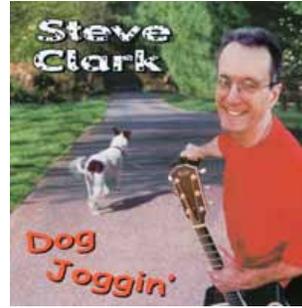
SVSA Members' Recordings



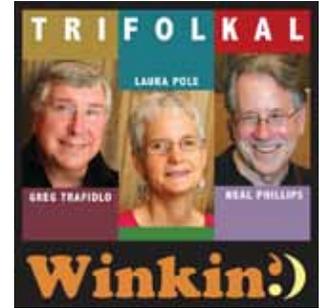
carved in song



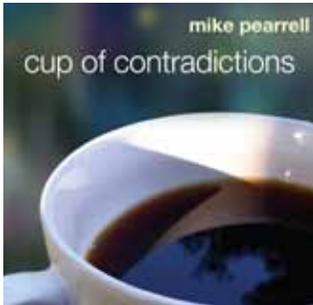
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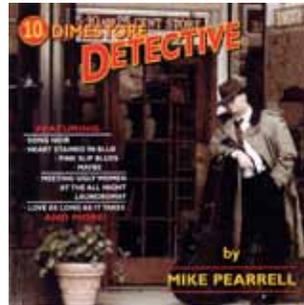
dog joggin'



winkin'



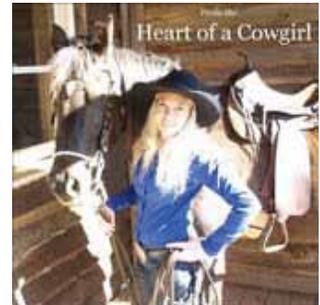
cup of contradictions



dimestore detective



horsegirl poet



from the heart of a cowgirl

Greg Trafidlo

CARVED IN SONG — Most songs co-written with some of Greg's favorite songwriters. Listen to audio clips and see the lyrics at gregtrafidlo.com.

FOLKSINGULAR — Greg's third solo CD reflects the diversity of his songwriting and production skills. With SVSA-ers on background vocals, and Marc Baskind on guitar and vocals.

Steve Clark

DOG JOGGIN' — Eleven sweet and true amusing tunes comprise this quirky singer/songwriter CD. Available at cdbaby.com.

Trifolkal

WINKIN' — Newest release from that "trio fiercely dedicated to fun" tempers the fun with poignancy and heart.

Mike Pearrell

CUP OF CONTRADICTIONS — 13 original songs. Lots of SVSA musicians singing and playing.

DIMESTORE DETECTIVE — Mike's first solo CD features 14 original songs. Produced by Greg Trafidlo; with a number of guest SVSA musicians. Available at Mike's shows.

Aspen Black

FROM THE HEART OF A COWGIRL — S28 original spoken word poems adhering to the Western Music Association guidelines for the cowboy poetry genre.

HORSEGIRL POET — Songs and poems about horses, cowboys, and rural life.

A HUNDRED YEARS TOO LATE — All original music for horse lovers and those who yearn to preserve the spirit and lands of the last American frontier.

About Classifieds:

SVSA Music News free classifieds may be submitted by paid members only. All classifieds must be music-related. Members, e-mail your classifieds to svsa.songwriters@gmail.com.

About articles and other written contributions:

SVSA members write feature articles for the SVSA Music News throughout the year. Members can submit other articles and features at any time. Non-members may also submit articles and other written contributions but their inclusion will be subject to time and space constraints. All articles may be edited for space considerations and will be edited, as time allows, for spelling and grammar. E-mail submissions to svsa.songwriters@gmail.com.

About Announcements:

SVSA members may list music-related announcements in the SVSA Music News. E-mail them to svsa.songwriters@gmail.com by the second Tuesday of the month. Announcements from members will be e-mailed to members as soon as they are received and, if still timely, published in an upcoming issue of the SVSA Music News. Announcements from non-members will be held for publication in an upcoming issue of the SVSA Music News.

About Members' Gig Listings:

SVSA members may submit their upcoming performance schedules for publication in the SVSA Music News. The submissions will be printed as submitted; the more information you provide, the more likely the response.

SVSA DISCLAIMER

The ideas and opinions contained in this newsletter are intended to be helpful to songwriters. The companies and organizations mentioned are believed to be legitimate; however, SVSA does not endorse any products or services and offers no guaranteed success based on the content.

We are always looking for articles about SVSA members and articles of interest to the songwriting community. Send articles and information to the Editor, Kathy Acosta, or svsa.songwriters@gmail.com. SVSA is a non-profit organization.

SVSA Board Members:

Larry Sakayama – President
Mike DeGiorgi - Vice President
David Simpkins – Secretary
Greg Trafidlo – Treasurer
Mike Franke - Board Member
Britt Mistele - Board Member
Kathy Acosta - Newsletter Editor



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