

APRIL 2014

The next meeting of the SVSA will be held **Wednesday, April 23** at Third Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke, Virginia. Doors will open at 7 p.m.; the 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, or you can perform it live) 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.

April Feature Article

Chord Progressions for Starting Songs

By Mike Pearrell

We get all sorts of advice on how to write songs.

Once in a class with Pierce Pettis I said I had heard it was good to write without an instrument. Mr. Pettis, who writes perfect songs, said “Why would you do that?”

Today’s take-off point for starting songs is probably the way most of us start most of the time – using chord progressions.

In the key of C major the notes are C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C.

The corresponding chords are C (major), Dmin (minor), Emin (minor), F (major), G (major), Amin (minor), and Bdim (diminished).

In numbering systems the chords are 1-7 or I-VII.

The same chord relationships apply to all keys.

That’s enough theory.

One of the most basic chord progressions we have all learned is the 12-bar blues/rock progression.

One version of that is:

C C C C | F F F F | C C C C | C C C C |
(I) (IV) (I) (I)

F F F F | F F F F | C C C C | C C C C)
(IV) (IV) (I) (I)

G G G G | F F F F | C C C C | G G G G |
(V) (IV) (I) (V)

So there is one starting point. Try playing a progression like this several times and see what different melodies can be created. Sing the melody and then try to identify the note (1-7) that you are singing. Write them down. You may find that you are singing notes that are not in the major scale (for example, a Bb instead of a B natural in the key of C). That is absolutely all right.

Another chord progression that is used in many songs style is the II min (or II min7) - V (or V7) - I. This progression moves through the scale and resolves nicely back to the I chord. In the key of C this progression would be Dmin - G - C. This progression, like the chords in the blues/rock progression above, contains all the notes in the scale. The Dmin has the 2, 4, 6 notes, the G has the 5, 7, and 2 notes, and the C has the 1, 3, and 5 notes. All seven accounted for.

The great thing about this progression (or its shorter version V-I) is that it can be used as a lead-in to any chord.

Let's go back to the 12 bar blues progression. In the fifth bar we are going to the F chord (the IV chord in the Key of C). Let's pretend for a moment that the F is now a I chord. The II min of F is Gmin (Gmin7) and the V chord for F is C7. So now the first five bars would look like this:

C C C C | F F F F | C C C C | Gmin7 Gmin7 C7 C7 | F F F F

... and the progression could go on as originally charted.

You can also alter the chord quality (major to minor, minor to major) to mix things up a bit. In our example we could change the F in the sixth bar to an F minor. The new progression is now

C C C C | F F F F | C C C C | Gmin7 Gmin7 C7 C7 |
F F F F | Fmin Fmim Fmin Fmin | C C C C | C C C C |
G G G G | F F F F | C C C C | G G G G |

Another chord progression that has been used a million times in the 50's and 60's is the I - VImin- IImin-V. We could use this as a turnaround (a way to

get back to the top) by plugging it in measures 11 and 12.

C C C C | F F F F | C C C C | Gmin7 Gmin7 C7 C7 |
F F F F | Fmin Fmin Fmin F min | C C C C | C C C C |
G G G G | F F F F | C C C C | Amin Dmin GG7 G7 |

By this time we've strayed away from the feel of the original progression so we may want to adjust some of the changes.

One final table. In his book *How to Write Songs on Guitar*, Rikky Rooksby puts together a table of chords that go with songs in any key (not that all the chord combinations work in every genre.) But considering these chords when developing your own progressions will give you a lot of ideas.

His table looks like this:

I maj- IImin - IIImin- IV maj- Vmaj - VImin - bVII - bVI- bIII - II maj - IIImaj - IV min
For example:

C - Dmin - Emin - F - G - Amin - Bb - Ab - Eb - Dmaj - E maj - F min

The first six we recognize from the above discussion. In pop and rock music the 7th diminished scale chord is rarely used and the bVII is used instead (Bb instead of B dim in the key of C). The other chords used add additional color.

Try some of these ideas to spice up your current songs or get new ideas.

SVSA President's Message – April 2014

As a songwriter or performer, you'll often hear the phrase "one-four-five." If you see it in print, it will look like this: I-IV-V. So what does it mean? Learn about it at our workshop at this month's meeting. We'll include some listening exercises that will help make sense of it all.

One of Darren's songwriting tips: "Be fearless with your songs. It's okay if you write a crap song. What is not okay is to try and convince everyone that it's a great song! Get feedback and allow people to be honest, that way you will start to learn what really works." Read more here:

www.musicthinktank.com/blog/top-10-rules-for-better-songwriting.html.

Is it "A flat minor" or "A flat miner?" If you drop a piano down a mine shaft, it's the latter.

Make sure you check out our website, svsasongs.com. Send comments, suggestions, etc. to me at larrysak3@yahoo.com.

- Larry Sakayama

Monthly Meeting Notes – April 2014

At last month's regular SVSA meeting, a total of 19 SVSA members attended along with two guests. Our workshops and our regular 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 lively March meeting, various topics stirred up a lot of enthusiasm and a sharing of information. We use this information to better ourselves as songwriters and performers. As a part of the information exchange, SVSA member Larry Helms gave a concise and informative workshop on "Copyright For Songwriters." Larry acknowledged that there is a lot of confusing and conflicting info out there concerning music copyright -- and his presentation went a long way to clear away a lot of the misconceptions and outright falsehoods. His helpful handout, along with including contact information for the U.S. Copyright Office web site, began with this no-nonsense start: "The good news: Copyright is free and it is automatic as soon as the music or lyrics are 'fixed' or made 'tangible' in a writing or a recording. The bad news: Copyright is worth little or nothing unless you pay for it and register it."

The March meeting also saw 10 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 full advantage of this opportunity.

And, as always, the pre- and post-critique 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're a member and 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.

- David Simpkins

Items of Interest *(contributed by Andrew Smiley)*

- **Concert May 13, 2014:** Willie Nelson & Family and Alison Krauss & Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas, Roanoke Civic Center, 7 p.m.
- **NSAI Song Camp** will be held July 25-27, 2014 at the Holiday Inn Vanderbilt, 2613 West End Ave., Nashville, TN 37203. For more information call 615-256-3354 or 800-321-6008 and check out the NSAI website. According to it, Song Camp includes “lectures, pro song breakdowns, and group critique sessions.”
- **Concert August 16, 2014:** Crosby, Stills & Nash, Roanoke Performing Arts Theatre, 7 p.m. Tickets go on sale Sunday, April 20, 2014.
- During a recent Internet search, I discovered **another songwriting group in Virginia** based in Richmond. It is called **VOCAL** (Virginia Organization of Composers and Lyricists). Their website is <http://www.vocalsongwriter.org/>. Their monthly meeting is usually the second Monday of each month, and they have a Songwriters Showcase on the third Monday of each month. Their website has some helpful information and includes a link to a “Listening Room,” which has a playlist of some of their members’ songs you can listen to.
- **Another source of information about music and songwriting** I came across is **M Music & Musicians magazine**; the website is <http://mmusicmag.com/m/>. According to it, “M Music & Musicians is a celebration of music and the people who make it, from instrumentalists and vocalists to producers and other technical wizards who make our favorite sounds a reality. M aims to entertain and enlighten professional musicians onstage and in the studio, amateur musicians playing for the joy of it and passionate fans eager to learn how their favorite music is made.” One relevant topic for songwriters can be found by clicking “Features” to go to a “Behind the Classics” page for back stories about the inspirations for classic songs and how they were written.

SVSA-ers at Third Street Coffeehouse, 04/18/14

photos by Larry Sakayama



Headliners for the evening: Dan Hildebrand (left), Mike Franke (top right), and Chuck Schaeffer (right).



Open Mic participants Britt Mistele, Greg Trafidlo, and Marc Baskind.



SVSA Performing Members' Upcoming Gigs

Marc Baskind

Friday and Saturday, April 25 and 26: with The Walter Scott Trio, The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, WV, 7-10 p.m.

Friday and Saturday, May 23 and 24: with The Walter Scott Trio, The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, WV, 7-10 p.m.

Saturday, May 31: with Caravan, Annie Moore's Irish Pub, Roanoke, Virginia, 7:30-10:30 p.m.

Greg Traftidlo

Monday, May 5: With Ken Slauf, Cab's Restaurant, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Saturday, May 10: Americana Afternoons at Floyd Country Store, Floyd, Virginia, In the Round with Britt Mistele, David Simpkins, and Ron Ireland. Noon to 3 p.m.

Friday, May 30: Third Street Coffeehouse, backing up David Simpkins

Friday, June 13: With David Simpkins and the KGB, Spirit Gallery, Marion, Virginia.

Friday, June 27: With Laura Pole, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland

Barbara Martin

Sunday, May 18: Barbara Martin and Vince Lewis, Grace Episcopal Church, 1934 Crabtree Falls Highway, Massies Mill, Virginia, 2 p.m. Free admission; donations welcome. www.gracemassies.dioswva.org.

Sunday, May 25: Barbara solo, 3-3:50, Barbara solo, Art in the Park, Gypsy Hill Park, Staunton, Virginia, 3-3:50 p.m. Free admission. www.saartcenter.org.

Aspen Black and Alice Black

Saturday, May 3: PHSC Cowboy Church, Bassett, Virginia, 10 a.m.

Saturday, May 10: Cowboy & Western Gathering, Heard Co. Arena, Franklin, Georgia.

Monday, May 12: YMCA Essig Center Western Music Concert and Sing-Along, 12:00 p.m.

David Bowen

Friday, May 9: David Bowen and Jerry Gilmore (Acoustic Reset), Palisades Restaurant, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 20: Acoustic Reset, Ronald McDonald House (Roanoke), 7-9 p.m.

Friday, May 23: Acoustic Reset and G4Vets Students, Third Street Coffeehouse, Roanoke, Virginia. 8:30-10 p.m. (Open Mic 7:30-8:30 p.m.)

David Simpkins

Saturday, May 10: In the Round with Britt Mistele, Ron Ireland, and Greg Traftidlo. Floyd Country Store's Americana Afternoons, Floyd, Virginia, noon-3 p.m.

Friday, May 30: With the KGB. Third Street Coffeehouse, Roanoke, Virginia, 8:30-10 p.m. (Open Mic 7:30-8:30)

Friday, June 13: With the KGB. Appalachian Spirit Art Gallery, Marion, Virginia, 6-8 p.m.

Saturday, September 27: In the Round with Greg Traftidlo and Britt Mistele, Vinton Farmers Market, Vinton, Virginia, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

UPCOMING AT THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

- April 25 Jazz Consultants (Newberry, Greenstreet, Nichols)
- May 2 Mary Roach
- May 9 Rivertown Gypsies
- May 16 SVSA Showcase (no Open Mic)
- May 23 Acoustic Reset & Friends
- May 30 David Simpkins
- June 6 Meadow Street Band
- June 13 Jared Minnix
- June 20 Paul Rucker
- June 27 John Tracy
- July 4 Dan & Marian McConnell
- July 11 Bob Grubel
- July 18 Lauren Lapointe
- July 25 Chris Shepard
- August 1 Randolph Walker
- August 8 Ryan Scarberry

Third Street Coffeehouse is a non-profit coffeehouse established in 1987. 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 contact Marian McConnell at 540-309-4707; or email marian.mcconnell@gmail.com.

SVSA Classifieds

FOR SALE

KORG CR4 4-track Recorder.

Used once. Easy to use, great for songwriting! \$175. Contact **Dan Hildebrand**, (540) 765-9104 or danhildebrand@hughes.net.

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.

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.

AUDIO RECORDING, GUITAR LESSONS, MUSIC VIDEOS

Randolph Walker Music.

randolphwalker@cox.net
www.randolphwalker.com
(540) 588-5826

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SVSA Members' Recordings



eyes on the horizon



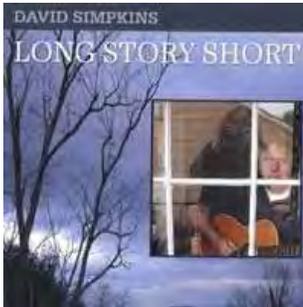
kaleidoscope



crossing over time



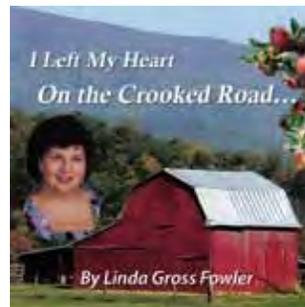
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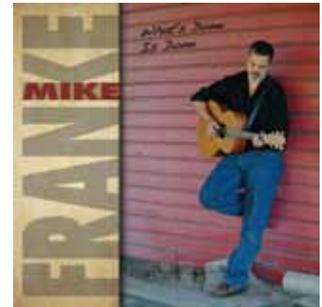
long story short



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..

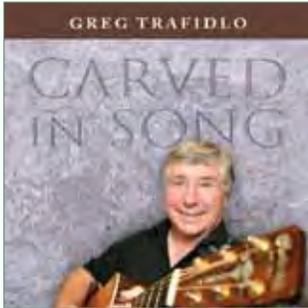
Linda Fowler

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



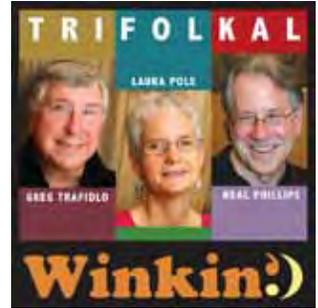
carved in song



folksingular



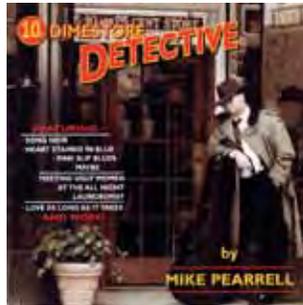
dog joggin'



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:

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Greg Trafidlo – Treasurer
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Seen on the Musical Scene

photos of music performances in Southwest Virginia

Dan Navarro, who was partner of the late Eric Lowen in “Lowen & Navarro,” at Kirk Avenue Music Hall in Roanoke on April 4. Photo by Leigh Littleton.



Eric Brace and Peter Cooper at Kirk Avenue Music Hall in Roanoke on April 4. Photo by Leigh Littleton.



Husband-and-wife team Linford Detweiler and Karin Bergquist, who perform together as Over the Rhine, at the Lynchburg Academy of Fine Arts on April 5. Photo by Leigh Littleton.



Georgia songwriter Levi Lowrey at the opening night of the Harvester Performance Center in Rocky Mount on April 11. Photo by Leigh Littleton.



Charlottesville songwriter Thomas Gunn, opening a concert presented April 13 by the Washington-area folk and acoustic music group “Focus.” Photo by Leigh Littleton.



Songwriter David Mallett headlined the April 13 “Focus” concert in Alexandria, Virginia. Photo by Leigh Littleton.