SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

SVSA MUSIC NEWS

MAY 2023

WWW.SVSASONGS.COM

MAY FEATURE ARTICLE

In search of:

A songwriting topic

Editor's Note:
This is reprinted from the Oct 2018 SVSA Music News.

by David Simpkins

Those who know me will agree that I can be a non-stop talker. Get me cranked up on something and you'd best be prepared to find a comfy seat and some No-Doze — I won't stop until I'm done.

While it can be a definite negative as far as social interaction goes, having a stuffed-to-the-gills brain ought to be a big plus when it comes to songwriting. Well, it *ought* to be, anyway.

I haven't written a song that I regard as ready to be unleashed on the public for a long time. Yes, me, formerly the prolific songwriter who would often have to choose between three or four new songs before submitting anything to the SVSA "wringer" at a monthly meeting. Me, who would often knock out a song an hour before leaving for an SVSA meeting — just for fun.

I refuse to call it "writer's block." I don't feel blocked. I don't feel uninspired. I feel ... inadequate.

That's not quite the right word but it's as close as I can get. And that's part of the problem, I think. I can get close to saying what I want to say but I can't quite say it the way I'd like to say it — or, even more

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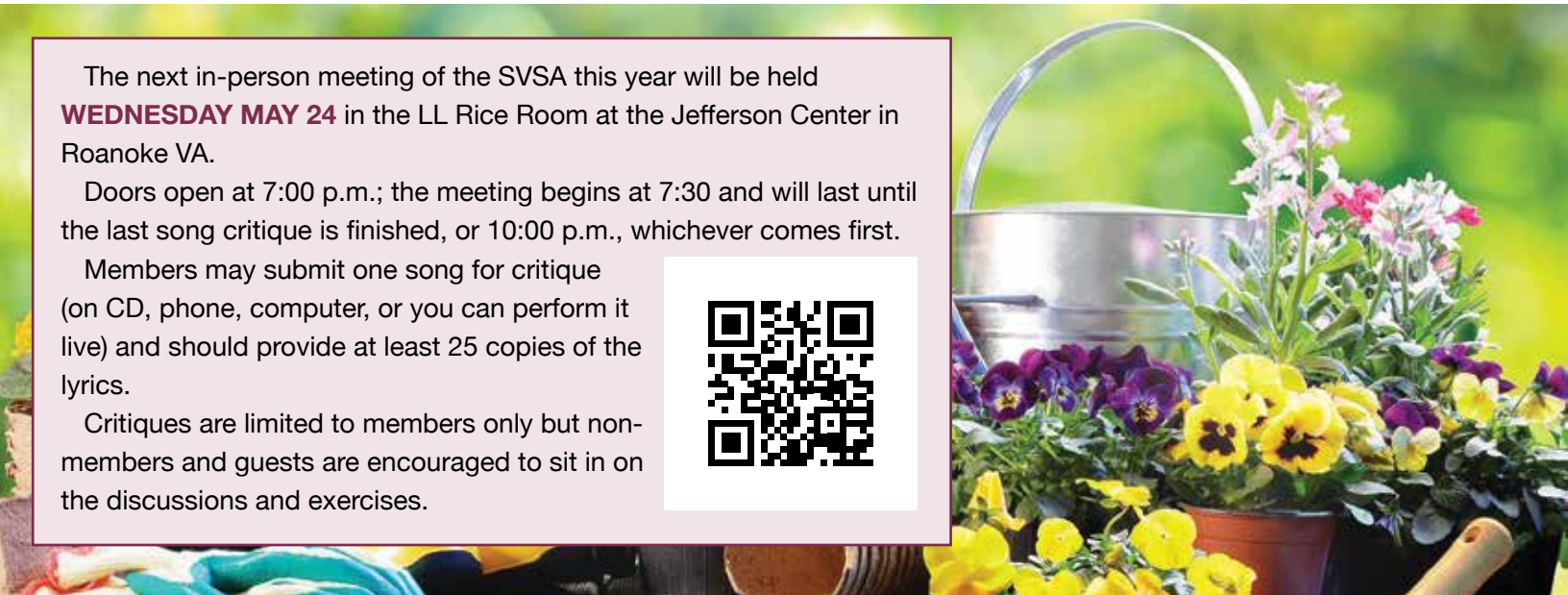
The next in-person meeting of the SVSA this year will be held **WEDNESDAY MAY 24** in the LL Rice Room at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke VA.

Doors open at 7:00 p.m.; the meeting begins at 7:30 and will last until the last song critique is finished, or 10:00 p.m., whichever comes first.

Members may submit one song for critique (on CD, phone, computer, or you can perform it live) and should provide at least 25 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.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I've been standing at the edge of this pool for too long. It's time to jump back in.

specifically, the way I think it should or ought to be said.

I'll hear a nice melody or an interesting chord progression in my head, sit down and write out some dummy lyrics, and then knuckle down to getting seriously involved in the song. And then everything shuts down.

The melody is still nice, the chord progression is still interesting, but the lyrics read to me like an idiot wrote them, or, worse, like they belong in a Top 40 pop song. I can talk a mile a minute for days — but nowadays I don't have a damned thing to say in the lyrics of a song.

It is, of course, frustrating. It's irritating. It's downright *evil*. I am a firm believer that songwriting comes from the soul. It's a process that starts either in the brain or in the heart, flows through both, and then exits out the fingers and the mouth. If the process skips any of the touch points, it sounds forced, incomplete, rote, or calculated.

So where can I find a lyric topic that will somehow cut through my self-consciousness and ring out as a true expression from my soul like so many of my previous songs have done?

Beats me. I know all the common methods; every songwriting "how to" article and book is full of them. Scan the newspapers (or online news sources). Read poetry. Listen to people talk. Find phrases and lines from other songs (or in books) and build the lyrics around them. Bruce Springsteen's classic *Thunder Road* has nothing to do with the movie "Thunder Road" — but that title sure gave him a starting point, didn't it?

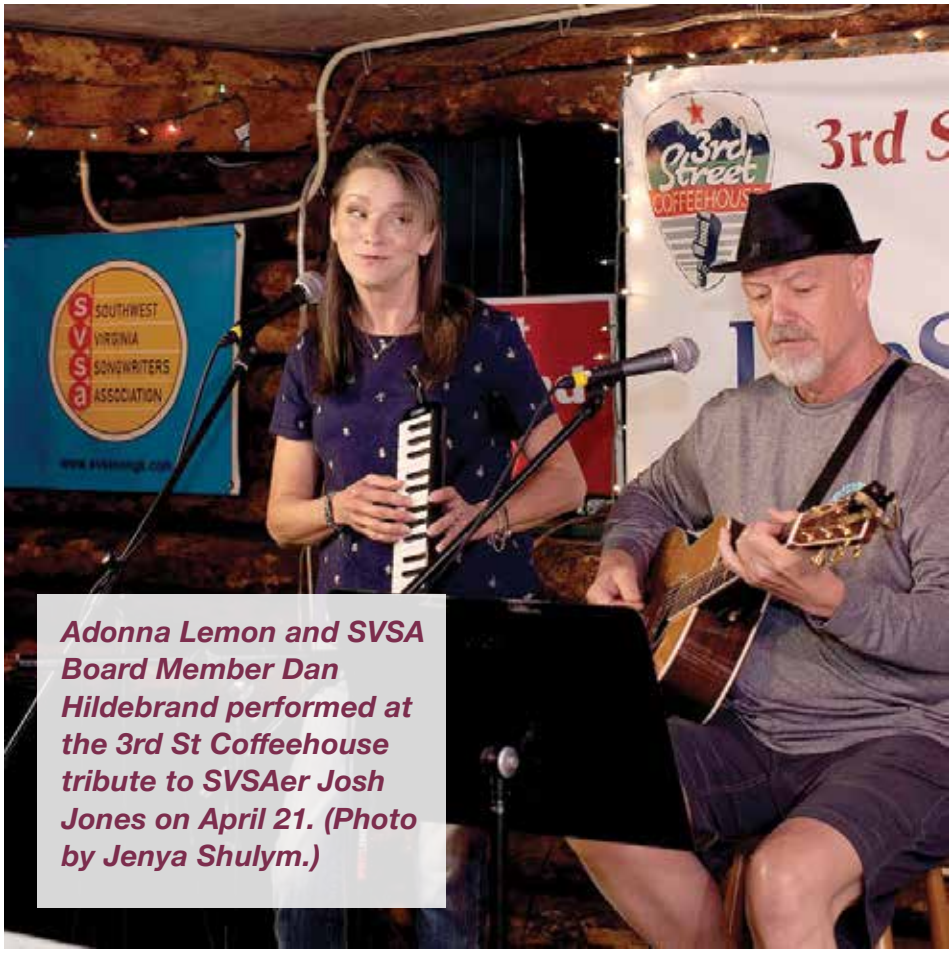
One of the first decent songs I ever wrote, *You Gotta Pay,* was snagged from a quote from a Springsteen interview. The Boss was talking about making it in the music business and he noted, "You wanna ride, you gotta pay." Voila! I had a workable lyrical starting place for a chorus:

You wanna ride, you gotta pay
You cannot hide, you'd better pray
I tell you nothing's gonna change
  until you learn to let go
You learn to sweat, you learn to bleed
You learn to want, you learn to need
You wanna ride, you gotta pay
But you've gotta let go

Those lyrics sound sophomoric to me now but at the time they were written (early '80s) they were exactly what I wanted to say and exactly how I wanted to say it.

So what now? I've been standing at the edge of this pool for too long. It's time to jump back in. That's the only way I'm going to get out of this ... uh ... this *slump,* for lack of a better word. I'm going to have to swim — er, write — my way out of this miasma I'm in.

And there ain't no other way to do it but to do it. *You wanna ride, you gotta pay.*



Adonna Lemon and SVSA Board Member Dan Hildebrand performed at the 3rd St Coffeehouse tribute to SVSAer Josh Jones on April 21. (Photo by Jenya Shulym.)

Next meeting is this coming Wed, May 24

The next meeting of the SVSA is this **Wednesday, May 24**.

As usual, we will open the doors at 7:00 p.m. and then begin the meeting at 7:30 in the L.L. Rice Room at the Jefferson Center.

Twenty-five copies of your lyric sheet and a CD or an mp3 on your phone are all you need — or bring your instrument if you want to perform your song live.

Members may submit one song for critique (on CD, phone, computer, or you can perform it live) and should provide at least 25 copies of the lyrics.

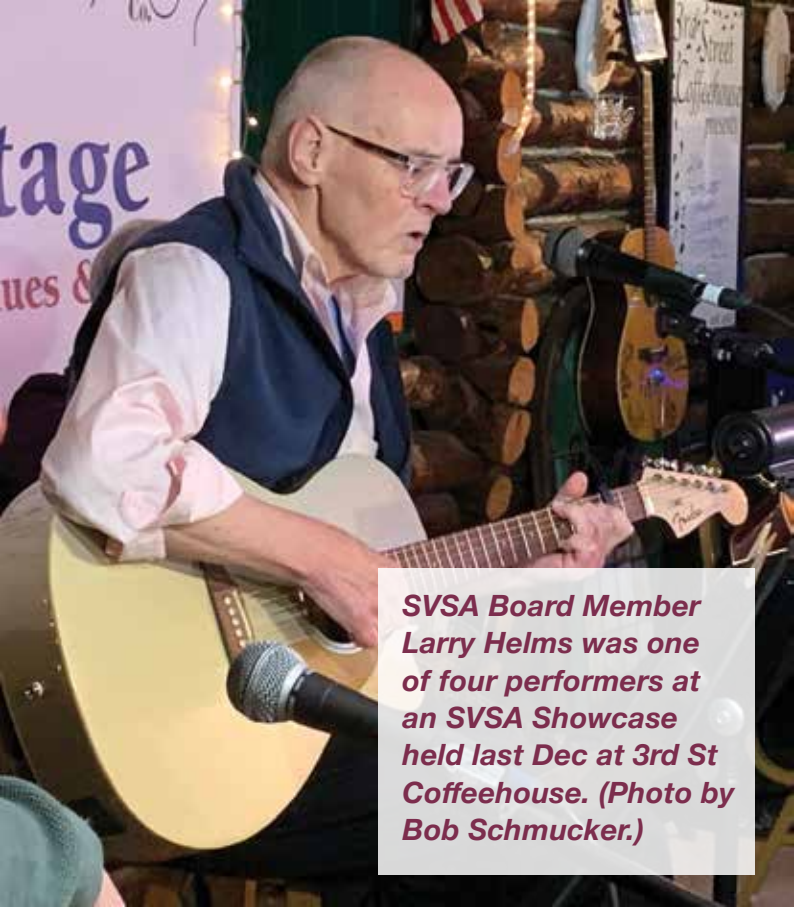
Critiques are limited to members only but non-members and guests are welcome to sit in on the discussions and exercises.

Kinnfolk wins Ontario showcase spot

The Goderich Celtic Roots Festival recently named the winner of the 2023 Robinson Emerging Artist Showcase. After consideration by a jury of industry professionals along with a public vote, this year's Robinson Emerging Artist is Kinnfolk. (**Julie Kinn** is an SVSA member.)

At this year's 31st festival, Kinnfolk will join international sensations, rising stars, and homegrown talent alike in entertaining audiences flocking to Goderich, Ontario for the annual event.

To learn more about Kinnfolk, visit their website: **https://www.celticfestival.ca/2023-robinson-emerging**



SVSA Board Member Larry Helms was one of four performers at an SVSA Showcase held last Dec at 3rd St Coffeehouse. (Photo by Bob Schmucker.)

SVSA Board Member Bob Schmucker, the "Big Cheese" at 3rd St Coffeehouse, is also a frequent performer there. (Photo by Jenya Shulym.)

On Sunday, August 20th, the Coopers Cove Community Center in Hardy VA will host this crew of SVSAers for an afternoon of "Songwriters in a Row." More info to come as the date nears. (Photo by Judy Larson.)

Left to right: Greg Trafidlo, Laura Pole, Britt Mistele, Marc Baskind, Kathy Acosta, Mike Pearrell, and David Simpkins.

Former SVSA President Steve Clark photographed at 3rd St Coffeehouse in April 2022 by Forrest Baldwin.

DIY

Make your own wireless headphones

by Josh Jones

RECORDING STUFF

Making recordings runs in my family. Granddad had both a cylinder recorder and a receiver in a huge console with a platter cutter that lurked menacingly in our basement (neither of which worked during my lifetime).

Dad had a wire recorder (perhaps the worst recording technology ever) and several pretty decent tape recorders.

I magnetized a lot of tape starting in the early ’60s before I went all digital.

Granddad and Dad were both very good with electricity and they passed that ability on to me, along with their fascination for gizmos in general.

THE SHOP: A HAZARD TO NAVIGATION

The Shop, my little homemade “studio” (a digital audio workstation (DAW) recording system and a recording area) is shoehorned into a cluttered 24’ x 14’ room with a workbench, cabinets, storage racks, instruments, furniture, family paintings, camping and astronomy gear, etc.

The Shop

Trip hazards abound and navigation is challenging.

INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

I live in headphones when I’m recording. Until a couple of months ago, I dragged a long cord around. That’s a pain when you’re both artist and recording engineer, shuffling back and forth across the room with a headphone

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

cable, and a guitar. Irritating, since most of the time I only need to push a few keys ("Record," "Play," "Stop," "Undo," and "Save"), all with shortcuts.

First, I bought a wireless keyboard I could carry back and forth, which was better. Then, I tried connecting two keyboards to the computer at the same time. I was pleasantly surprised to find it was quite happy to work with both.

I leave the wireless keyboard in the recording area and a USB keyboard at the DAW. I also laid my recording area cables (two mics and instrument) under some old carpets.

BUILDING WIRELESS HEADPHONES

I still wanted to get rid of the headphone cord because I often have to work at the PC with a mouse and monitor in the middle of recording a track.

Even semi-pro wireless earphone systems run several hundred dollars and up, but I started seeing ads for cheap, battery-powered guitar transmitter / receiver pairs (GTRs) and headphone amplifiers. That gave me an idea.

I bought a low-end wireless GTR ($35) with a 100' range and very good sound. I got a battery-powered stereo headphone amp ($20). They all run on batteries and charge from USB ports so there's no need for a power supply or a separate charger.

The wireless head-phone system

THE ADAPTER CABLE

I needed an adapter cable to connect the receiver's mono 1/4" plug to the headphone amp's 3.5mm stereo mini jack. I couldn't find a cabled adapter, so I made one.

I cut a 3.5mm stereo cable in two and connected both left and right signal wires to a mono 1/4" jack so the receiver's mono output goes to both the left and right sides of the headphones. In the picture, if you look carefully you can see both leads are soldered to one terminal and the ground is soldered to the ground pin.

The adapter cable

Wiring the mini-jack

FINISHED

I taped the receiver to the amp and hooked everything together. For now, I just stick it in my pocket. Eventually, I'll add a belt attachment (clip, Velcro) and shorten the headphone cable.

Wireless receiver and headphones

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HOOKING UP THE TRANSMITTER

In my setup, the recording signal chain is all digital and I use my old Yamaha mixer for the headphone mix. I plug the GTR transmitter into the AUX3 output and send the already-recorded tracks, and what I'm recording now, to AUX3 — but there are several other ways to do it depending on your equipment.

The transmitter in the mixer's AUX 3 output

VOILA!

While I was working on my current album, I used them for more than a month. Frankly, they're wonderful. I forget I have headphones on at all, and it's so much easier to move around. For me, it's been a big success.

ANOTHER USE?

I was surprised to find most GTRs allow pairing one transmitter with up to six receivers. With decent wired earbuds or headphones, someone could easily build a cheap in-ear-monitor system for a band, with each member having their own volume control.

BLUETOOTH

And, in closing, a word about Bluetooth: It's tempting to think about using Bluetooth for this, but don't waste your time. It won't work.

There's always a delay when you send a signal from point A to point B, called 'latency.' My cheap GTR's latency is about 10 milliseconds (ms), or a hundredth of a second. You can hear it when you talk — a little like you're talking into a barrel, but fairly faint. I got used to it quickly and don't notice it anymore.

More expensive GTRs have latencies as low as 4 ms, which are undetectable, but I'm happy with what I have for now. (Pricier GTRs also offer lower noise, more stable connections, longer distances, etc.)

However, by design, Bluetooth latency is about 250-300 ms, more than a quarter of a second. If you're trying to record yourself while playing along with an existing track and you hear what you just played a quarter of a second later, it's ... well, trust me, it's impossible.

SVSAer Josh Jones performed at a 3rd St Coffeehouse tribute to him on April 21. (Photo by Jenya Shulym.)

SVSAer Barbara Martin performed on May 11 during the Library of Congress Veterans History Project's three-day event commemorating the Vietnam War in Washington DC.

NEWS & NOTES FROM

3RD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

Guitars Under The Stars switches nights, Kinnfolk returns

by **Bob Schmucker**

3rd Street Coffeehouse continued its mission to make the world a better place last night, Sat May 20, with a fundraiser concert for Feeding Southwest Virginia featuring local rock band "The Southbound Gypsies." It was their debut concert and was attended by more than 50 family and friends, bringing in more than $750 to feed our less fortunate friends and neighbors.

Starting in June, our very popular Guitars Under the Star guitar pulls will switch from Sunday afternoons to the first and third Thursdays of each month starting at 7:00 p.m. throughout the summer. There's nothing like playing music and looking out over the city as the sun sets.

Also, we just found out that the City of Roanoke built a small amphitheater behind the Discovery Center going towards the Zoo. It looks like a perfect spot to have a small concert. For reservations, please contact Gretch Boeren at the Discovery Center at 540-853-1236.

On Fri May 26, Josh and **Julie Kinn** return as Kinnfolk and will be playing some tunes written specifically with grant money from Art Matters Grant that they received last fall through the City of Roanoke and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Trinity UMC is still holding discussions about merging with Greene Memorial UMC in downtown Roanoke. Kids Soar, the after school reading program that uses Trinity as its headquarters, will likely make an offer to buy the building. As of this time, 3rd Street Coffeehouse will remain in the building and continue to be the best listening room in Southwest Virginia.

3RD STREET COFFEEHOUSE MAY/JUNE SCHEDULE

Date	Feature	Opener
May 26	Kinnfolk	Betsy Biesenbach
Jun 02	Russ Rentler	Bryan Bielanski
Jun 09	Jesse Milnes	**Mike Franke**
Jun 15	Open Mic with **Aspen Black** — 7-9 p.m.	
Jun 16	Redd	Rob Smith
Jun 23	Austin Miller	The McKenzies
Jun 30	Tony Low	**Bob Schmucker**

New amphitheater on Mill Mountain.

The SVSA Music News functions for members in many ways. One of the most overlooked is the **FREE** classifieds section.

There are two restrictions: One is that all classifieds must be music-related; the other is that classified ads may be submitted by paid members only. And that's it!

Remember: An ad is much more successful when accompanied by a clear photo and a complete and detailed description. The ad must contain a working e-mail or cell number. The SVSA Music News will not forward ad enquiries.

Take advantage of this free service now. Classifieds will run monthly until pulled by the person who submits the ad.

Members, e-mail your classifieds to svsa.songwriters@gmail.com or amosflame@aol.com.

SVSA SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

SVSA For Sale

3rd Street Coffeehouse is selling a brand-new-in-box (never opened) Insignia™ 55" Class F50 Series QLED 4K UHD Smart Fire TV. Comes with Amazon Fire. It sells at Best Buy for $339.99 plus tax but you can get it for **$300 obo**. Call SVSA board member **Bob Schmucker** at **540-521-4507**.

SVSA Vice President Mike Franke slides into a tune at a 3rd St Coffeehouse Guitars Under The Stars event.

Help SVSA sustain Jefferson Center Music Lab

by Mollye Otis

SVSA is a sponsor of The Music Lab, a progressive music and production program at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke VA. We are making an annual contribution of $300 to the tuition fund that is distributed to worthy students from the greater Roanoke area who show talent and promise.

The Music Lab presents an extraordinary opportunity to about 30 students each year, offering state-of-the-art production studios, music lessons, and learning alongside professional guest artists.

Mickey Nelson, a longtime SVSA member, astute songwriter, and frequent performer saw the value in supporting the next generation of writers and co-founded The Music Lab. The SVSA created The Mickey Nelson Songwriter of the Year Award in his honor as an incentive to the Music Lab students, a way of "earning" our investment.

Jordan Harman, the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the program will guide and advise the students who will create and submit their work to an SVSA committee for adjudication at the end of the Spring Semester.

A plaque featuring Mickey Nelson is now prominently displayed in the Music Lab Production Room. Another plaque that will displayed will show the names of the winner of The Mickey Nelson Songwriter of the Year Award each year. Then, also yearly, a public presentation will recognize the winner and SVSA's part in this program.

Please consider donating $5 on behalf of the Mickey Nelson Award to help support our commitment.

There are two ways to pay, either by clicking the tab on the pull-down menu within the dues-paying page of the SVSA website or by sending a PayPal payment to **SVSAFunds@gmail.com**. You may also mail a check to PO Box 2901, Roanoke VA 24011.

We value songwriting as we value our organization and its members — and we hope you might make a small donation to help sustain this important outreach.

WOULD YOU "LIKE" TO HELP THE SVSA GET MORE FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK?

That's all we need you to do. Just go to our Facebook page and "like" us. That's it. Your "like" will cause Facebook's algorithms to start considering the SVSA's page for shares, postings, and a greater all-around presence.

Of course, we'd also appreciate your input. You can share things to our page, comment on posts, memes, and images, and generally help make our page become more active and seen by more Facebook users.

As we said, it doesn't take much. Just pop the following URL into your Google (or whatever) search box, go to the Facebook SVSA page, and "like" us. We'd really "like" it if you'd help us out! Thanks!

https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=southwest%20virginia%20songwriters%20association

On May 5, world renowned harp guitarist Muriel Anderson was the featured performer at a house concert in Bridgewater VA. SVSA Board Member Greg Trafidlo attended the show and (above) sat in with Anderson and Bryan Allen (on mini-harp guitar). Anderson and Trafidlo are long-time friends who first met in bluegrass circles in the Chicago area. (Photos by Judy Larson.)

LOCAL, REGIONAL OPEN MICS

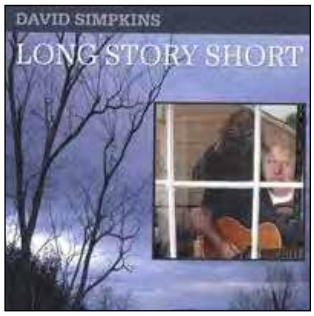
Coming back soon

Many local and regional open mics shut down due to coronavirus concerns. The good news is that many of those same venues (and new ones as well) are finally re-opening. Keep an eye out for the return of our comprehensive Local & Regional Open Mic listings. It'll be sooner than later!

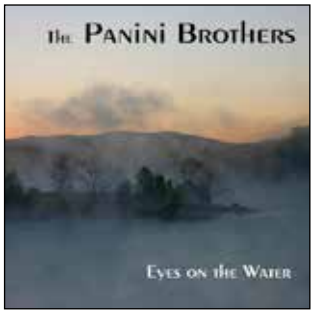
SVSA Members' Recordings

what's done is done

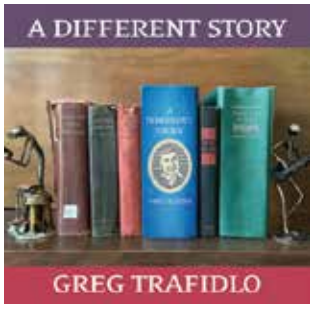
marc with a "c"



long story short

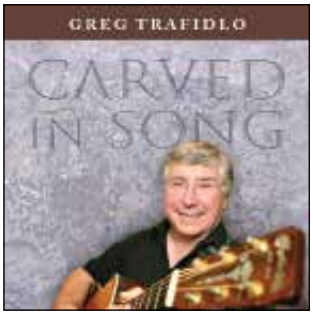


eyes on the water



a different story

the crawlspace tapes



carved in song

folk singular

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.

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.

The Panini Brothers

EYES ON THE WATER — Debut CD from a group comprised of SVSA members Larry Sakayama and Mike DeGiorgi as well as Chip Conway, Mark Earnhardt, and Scott Thomas. Jazzy, bluesey, eclectic, original tunes.

Greg Trafidlo

A DIFFERENT STORY — An eclectic combination of originals and covers featuring old friends and new, competently and professionally recorded and performed. And, as always, straight from the heart.

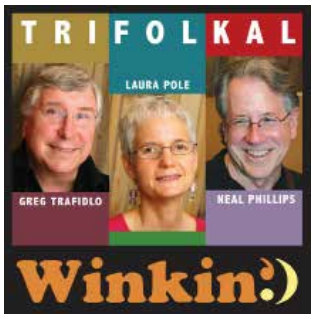
THE CRAWLSPACE TAPES — Greg's most joyful CD is a compilation of all his funny and goofy stuff. Tom Paxton says, "Loosen up, sourpusses. Greg is on the loose again!"

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

FOLK SINGULAR— 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.

SVSA Members' Recordings

silver



winkin'

pacing the moon

cup of contradictions

dimestore detective

dog joggin'

songwriter sessions

tales from the fire pit

Trifolkal

SILVER — The trio celebrates 25 years together with a "fan favorite" collection of covers from the Beach Boys to Tom Paxton.

WINKIN' — This top-notch release from that "trio fiercely dedicated to fun" tempers the fun with poignancy and heart.

Josh Jones

PACING THE MOON — Thirteen of the strongest songs Josh has written. For lyrics, short audio clips and additional information, please visit www.jonesgroupmusic.com.

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.

Steve Clark

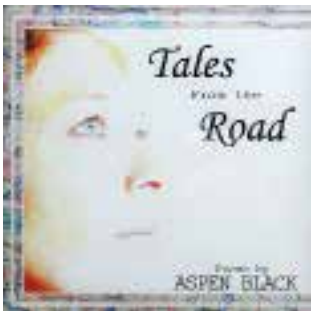
DOG JOGGIN' — Eleven sweet and true amusing tunes comprise this quirky singer/songwriter CD. Available at cdbaby.com.

The Entwined

SONGWRITER SESSIONS — The CD was released at Francis Ford Coppola's Turtle Inn Resort in Belize in 2018. It's a mix of 13 songs written by Dan Hildebrand ranging from real-life ballads to feel-good ditties. Recorded at Blackwater Studios. Percussion and harmony by Adonna Lemon.

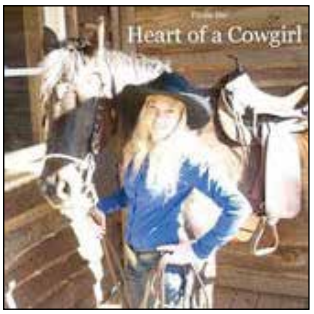
TALES FROM THE FIRE PIT — The most popular CD in Placenia, Belize for one week in 2018, the latest from the Entwined was recorded at Bad Monkey's music studio, located at the couple's home in VA, and features 10 original works.

SVSA Members' Recordings



tales from the road

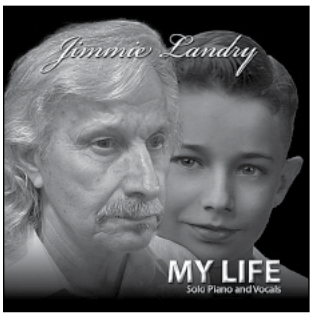
eastern western cowgirl



from the heart of a cowgirl

horsegirl poet

lovin' the west



my life

gumbo

style

Aspen Black

TALES FROM THE ROAD — 15 original poems with musical backup. Every poem has a tie to a road, although the road is never the subject. Either the road runs through it, shows up in a fleeting moment, or the whole story was inspired by, or witnessed "on the road."

EASTERN WESTERN COWGIRL — Eight original Contemporary Western songs. Available at CDBaby.com/aspenblack7.

FROM THE HEART OF A COWGIRL — Original spoken word poems adhering to the Western Music Association guidelines for the cowboy poetry genre. Available at CDBaby.

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

LOVIN' THE WEST — This is the latest CD released by Western Music Association singer/songwriter – and SVSA member – Aspen Black. It features 10 original selections, seven of which are road-tested favorites.

Jimmie Landry

MY LIFE — Jimmie sings stories about his friends, family, and life on the road. A jazzy-blues New Orleans-style piano and vocals paint a picture of 60 years in music.

GUMBO — Hot and spicy down-home jazz, funk, and soul that goes down easy. Ten originals and three covers.

STYLE — A blend of standards and one original in a variety of grooves like straight-ahead swing, samba, jazz, waltz, and funky second-line blues.

"We have to get out of our own way as songwriters. Think about the early folk songs and country songs and how simple they were in their chord structures and everything. I have to remind myself that it doesn't have to be real complex."

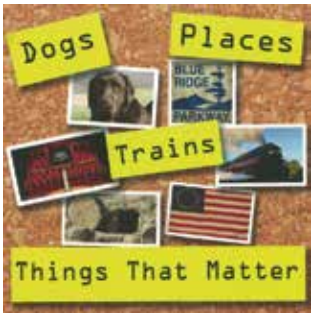
~ Lucinda Williams

SVSA Members' Recordings

electric bill

acoustic bill

songs for veterans & patriots



dogs, trains, places and things that matter

eyes on the horizon

kaleidoscope

touch the sky

Bill Stanton

ELECTRIC BILL — Ten original songs of Bill's lyrics and melodies accompanied by former bandmates on electric instruments and vocal harmonies originally recorded in the 1980s.

ACOUSTIC BILL — Ten original songs with lyrics and melodies by Bill accompanied by former bandmates on acoustic instruments and vocal harmonies recorded from the early 1970s through 2000.

Jerry Gilmore

SONGS FOR VETERANS & PATRIOTS — covers topics concerning Vietnam veterans, POW/MIA warriors, the US flag, military holidays, and the Medal Of Honor. The original compositions are performed in country, bluegrass, and southern rock styles. Available from CDBaby.

DOGS, TRAINS, PLACES & THINGS THAT MATTER — A "Baker's Dozen" of original tunes on a wide range of subjects in the traditional country format. Available at CD Baby and all the major platforms for download.

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.

TOUCH THE SKY — Swinging acoustic blues and jazz from Barb Martin and Mac Walter.

www.svsasongs.com

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 **amosflame@aol.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. Email articles and information to the Editor, David Simpkins, at amosflame@aol.com

SVSA is a non-profit organization.

2023 SVSA Board Members:

Charlie Divers – President

Mike Franke – Vice President and Webmaster

Celie Holmes – Treasurer

Mollye Otis – Secretary

David Simpkins – At-Large Board Member and Newsletter Editor

Larry Helms – At-Large Board Member

Bob Schmucker – At-Large Board Member, 3rd Street Coffeehouse Liason

Dan Hildebrand – At-Large Board Member

Greg Trafidlo – At-Large Board Member

Southwest Virginia Songwriters Association
101 Church Ave SW
PO Box 2901
Roanoke VA 24011

www.svsasongs.com

THE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

WHO WE ARE

The Southwest Virginia Songwriters Association (SVSA), founded in 1981, comprises approximately 40 songwriters from diverse musical backgrounds who share the love of songwriting and interest in developing our craft. Our core mission is to meet monthly, listen to fellow writers' songs, and share feedback with one another in a supportive, encouraging, and engaging process.

The SVSA also offers workshops, social events, and performance opportunities for its members, along with a newsletter, web site, and a Facebook page that focus on members' creative engagement and outreach to Roanoke and the region.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this vibrant songwriting community, we invite you to audit two of our monthly meetings and then decide if you'd like to join the association. Once you've paid yearly dues, you can submit songs and contribute to the feedback sessions, plus participate in all our activities.

The greatest joy we have as a group is seeing writers growing and reaching their potential because of the work we do together. If you would like be a part of this songwriting community, please contact us at **info@svsasongs.com**

A BIT ABOUT OUR ASSOCIATION

We have among us people who range from seasoned professional and semi-professional performers to those have never been in front of an audience. Some of our members have many albums to their credit, while some have never set foot in a studio or on a stage.

Several members have sold songs to famous artists or have film and TV placements. Some play multiple instruments, and most play guitar or piano/keyboard but there are also non-instrumentalist lyricists in the mix. Some are singers, some non-singers, some with extensive music education, many with credits in the school of life experience who play by ear. There are writers who focus more on melody and harmony, and others who focus more on lyrics. Some writers are skilled producers/arrangers with a depth of technical know-how.

Our membership includes people of all ages representing a broad range of musical influences including folk, Americana, blues, gospel, rock, jazz, zydeco, pop, contemporary, country, bluegrass, Celtic, and theatre/cabaret. With this mix of diverse styles, interests, and skills, we share a rich knowledge base and learn through the exchange of expertise from multiple perspectives.

OUR METHOD

Unless otherwise indicated, The SVSA meets in the L.L. Rice Room at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke VA every fourth Wednesday of the month (with holiday exceptions). The doors open at 7:00 p.m. for meet, greet, and catch-up time. At 7:30, we may have business to discuss, then perhaps a brief period of activities such as writing exercises, mini-workshop presentations, videos, or other creative activities. Songs are then presented for listening and feedback sessions. On any given night, we discuss the songs in a robust, healthy exchange of comments and ideas. The meeting ends when all the songs have been presented or we close at 10:00 p.m.

Members and guests are required to submit their Covid vaccine record at check in, or, alternatively, email a photo of your card to: **mollyeotis@gmail.com**

Members may receive written feedback from other members in addition to the verbal feedback at live or virtual sessions.

Members are coached to be honest, thoughtful, and supportive of one another and respectful of the work. Our experience has been that our songs invariably improve after going through the feedback process.

If you would like to hang out with this welcoming group of songwriters, we would love to meet you! You are invited to audit two monthly meetings and then, should you decide to join, pay yearly dues of $35. Once a member, you may submit songs for consideration in our feedback sessions and will be eligible to participate in events and benefits of membership.