

March 2010

www.islandsongwriters.org



Next Workshop
Monday, April 1st at
Five Towns College.

Borders Open Mic

The next shows are
Friday, March 5th and
Friday, April 2nd
hosted by
Vincent Crici.

Writer's Choice

Find out what song won
on Page 2.

March 20th, 2010 ISS Night at the Hard Luck Café

The ISS is invited back
to the Hard Luck Café.
Details on page 2.

Songwriting in the Movies

~ Crazy Heart ~
Oscar-nominated film
about the redemption of
an alcoholic, down-and-
out songwriter. Playing
at your local Cineplex.

Happy Spring!

Vernal Equinox
March 20th @ 10:32 PM

*If we had no winter, the
spring would not be so
pleasant. If we did not
sometimes taste of
adversity, prosperity
would not be so
welcome.*

- Anne Bradstreet

The Prime Time To Rhyme?

The Magic and Mystery of Rhyme in Songs

BY SID CHERRY

The main rule to remember about rhyming in songs is that there are no rules about rhyming in songs. When, where, how and why to rhyme will vary greatly from one song to another. The best that any writer can do is to get armed with a few basic principles, an active imagination and a little common sense.

What the @%&# does that mean?

The closest thing to a rule on rhyming is that rhyme should never obscure the meaning in a song. While many successful, well-respected songwriters have, on occasion, ignored that guideline, those same songwriters, in most of their songs, have followed it. In general, if your song is supposed to tell a story or make sense, it is unwise to throw in a rhyme for the sake of rhyme, especially if it leaves listeners scratching their heads.

A rhyme is a rhyme is a rhyme.

Not exactly. An exact rhyme is exactly that. *Joke* and *Smoke* are exact (or perfect) rhymes. *Joke* and *Boat* are not. *Moon/June* and *Time/Mind* are classic exact and inexact rhymes that have been used in countless songs (to the point of cliché).

What does this mean in songwriting? Not much, except to know what you are dealing with when calling something a rhyme. It's mostly about context and expectation. If, throughout your song, you have mixed rhymes, you have set up an expectation that some things will rhyme and some won't. That's okay and the listener will follow along. If, however, a highlight of your song is that it is filled with one pair of exact rhymes after another, it may be a letdown to the listener to suddenly come upon an inexact rhyme.

Variety is the spice of songs.

There's no one place or way to rhyme in a song. You can rhyme at the beginning, middle or end of a line. You can rhyme every line, every other line or at any number of intervals. You can use double (*minute/win it*), triple (*crazy dress/hazy mess*) and even quadruple (*January/Man You Marry*) rhymes anywhere you like. Again, guided by context and common sense, you are only limited by your imagination.

Of all the words in all the world, you had to use that one.

With over a million words in the English language, no writer should ever get stuck trying to rhyme any one particular word. In fact, it's funny to look at the hand-written song drafts of many of our great songwriters and see how they scratched out some really odd words and phrases until they got to their final, often classic lyrics.

We don't need no stinking books!

Many of the world's great songwriters have gone on record to state that, when they write, they keep two books handy: a thesaurus and a rhyming dictionary. Most have said that while the truly great rhymes may not be found in these books, they use them often to get new ideas and to spark the imagination. Writers working on a song about a particular subject, a historical person or event, for example, will use any number of books to find words related to that subject. Reference books are made to be used.

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We're on the Web!

See us at

www.islandsongwriters.org

Resources

Suffolk County
Library Online

<http://suffolk.lib.ny.us>

Order books, sheet music, CDs and DVDs from any Suffolk library and have them delivered to your local library to check out - Free! All you need is a computer and a library card. If you have no computer, use one at the library. Cool!!

The Prime Time To Rhyme?

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Why bother?

For hundreds of years, rhyme has been used as a way to make music more musical. Words that rhyme can also help listeners follow and remember a song they are hearing for the first time. With a little effort, rhyming in songs can be extremely satisfying.

Writer's Choice: "Note To Myself" by Bob Schryver

Who Played What

Here is a list of the performers and songs from the February workshop:

"Cousin Steve" Goldmintz - *Smells Like a Holiday*
Jules Jacobs - *Splurge*
Bob Schryver - *Note to Myself*
Susan Choen - *The Penny*
Mike Svezia - *Country Home*
Suzanne Ernst - *The Ghost Horse*
Marguerite Cassell - *Trip Around the World*
Sonny Meadows - *Reminisclin' 'Bout Bob*
Denise Romas - *You Can Fly*
Walt Sargent - *Go Away*
Vin Gangi - *Ain't Going Nowhere Fast*
Ken Krumenacker - *Laundry List of Love*
Mark Hussey (by the other Arthur Miller) - *Walkin' What's Left of My Mind*
Susan Davis - *Best Years of Our Lives*
Jim Baron - *Critics' Darling*

New Feature – "I Wish I'd Written That Song."

~ Submissions Needed ~

The newsletter is starting a new feature next month called "I Wish I'd Written That Song". We are asking for submissions about any song that has inspired you as a writer or moved you in any other way. Include the name of the song and the writer. If applicable, include the name of the artist who performs the version you know. Also include a short paragraph or two about what makes the song special and its meaning to you. We're hoping to print as many as possible each month or every other month. Please email submissions to sidcherry@optonline.net

ISS Night at the Hard Luck Café

The ISS is doing its third year at the Folk Music Society of Huntington's Hard Luck Café. This year's performers are (in alphabetical order): Sid Cherry, Susan Cohen, Suzanne Ernst, Estelle Henrich, Ken Krumenacker and Hank Stone. *More details are available on the ISS Website and in the February newsletter.*

Monthly Workshop

Test your songs in front of a crowd by playing them for fellow musicians who will provide constructive feedback with the goal of helping you improve as a songwriter. The ISS workshop takes place the first Monday of every month, except holidays, at Five Towns College, off Burrs Lane in Dix Hills. Run by ISS Director Walter Sargent, the workshop starts at 8:00 p.m., with performer sign-up beginning at 7:30 p.m. Bring a guitar if you wish to perform your song live, or you may bring a recording on CD or tape. A piano is available for those who write their songs at the keys. Be sure to bring 25 copies of your lyric sheets so the other workshop attendees can follow along while listening to your song. It is much easier to provide constructive criticism when people can read the lyrics. The ISS workshop is at the center of the organization's mission to help songwriters perfect their craft. Many performers on Long Island got their start at ISS.

General Information

For general information about ISS or how to join the organization, visit our web site, www.islandsongwriters.org. To submit items for publication in the newsletter, contact Sid Cherry at sidcherry@optonline.net.