

May 2010

www.islandsongwriters.org



# Island Songwriters Showcase

## Next Workshops

Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and  
Monday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at  
Five Towns College.

## Borders Open Mic

The next shows are  
Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup> and  
Friday, June 4<sup>th</sup>  
hosted by  
Vincent Crici.

## Writer's Choice

Find out what song won  
on Page 2.

## I Wish I'd Written That Song

"The Diet is Cast"  
by Lois Morton  
*Details on page 2.*

## Songwriting in the Movies

### ~A Mighty Wind ~

In this documentary  
spoof, three folk groups  
from the 60's reunite for  
a memorial concert in  
New York City following  
the death of a legendary  
folk manager.

Available on DVD.

## May Day!

*The hardest challenge is  
to be yourself in a world  
where everyone is trying  
to make you be  
somebody else.*

- E.E. Cummings.

# 90 % Perspiration?

## How much work can songwriting really be

BY SID CHERRY

Songwriting is an art. Songwriting is also a craft. To write truly great songs, a songwriter needs a healthy balance of both.

### He doesn't work, he's a musician.

How many times has a version of that quote been directed at musicians and songwriters? Anyone who is serious about music and songwriting knows how untrue that statement is. And yet, there are still many out there who are great at coming up with the inspiration but not so great at following through with a little perspiration.

### I pick up my instrument and the songs just come pouring out.

It happens. Sometimes. Most of the time writing involves blood, sweat and tears. Don't give up if you have a great idea but the details aren't coming right away. Sometimes you have to keep pounding on the rock until it breaks open.

### Writing is rewriting.

It's helpful and amusing to look at early drafts of classic songs to see words, phrases and even titles that were changed or removed until the writer got the final, iconic lyric. Keep yourself open to changing anything and everything in a song.

### Practice makes perfect.

The 10,000-hour rule states that, to be truly exceptional at something, one must devote 10,000 hours to honing that skill. That's about 3 hours of practice every day for a decade. Looking at it that way can give you a new perspective on the week you spent mastering a new chord progression or trying to get your song lyric exactly right.

## Writer's block-busting exercise

### ~ An Inanimate Object ~

Having a hard time figuring out what to write about? Looking to do something different than what you usually do? Try writing about an inanimate object. Anything you see around you can become an inspiration. Because you are writing a song, try to find an interesting new spin on the object in question. See if you can include it in some great adventure or just some wonderful everyday occurrence.

A perfect example of a song that does that is "This Shirt" by country/folk singer/songwriter Mary-Chapin Carpenter. The song begins by describing an old, faded shirt in wonderful, touching detail. It then goes into the life that has been lived by the wearer of the shirt and how the shirt played a part in that life. By the end of the song, the shirt has its own identity and has become a trusted friend.

Others have written about cars (Springsteen's "Pink Cadillac"), homes ("Our House" by Graham Nash) and even boats (John Denver's "Calypso"). The great thing is, you'll never run out of potential ideas.

## ISS

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We're on the Web!

See us at

[www.islandsongwriters.org](http://www.islandsongwriters.org)

## Resources

### Thesaurus of Slang

On your reference shelf, next to your dictionary, thesaurus and rhyming dictionary, add this one unusual but necessary book. Help spice up your songs with colorful words and phrases from all idioms. Looking for a hundred ways to say vomit? Look no further!

Available in many different versions from Amazon.com and other retailers.

## Writer's Choice: "Renew" by Tim Dillon

### Who Played What

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

1. Tim Dillon - "Renew"
2. Dave Anthony - "Blue Sky"
3. Gerry Dantone - "Better Man"
4. Jules Jacobs - "That Makes All The Difference"
5. Hank Stone - "Home"
6. "Cousin" Steve Goldmintz - "Imperfections"
7. Mark Hussey - "Girl From New South Wales"
8. Mike Svezia - "Meet Me In The Middle"
9. Frank Gambino - "Springtime's Come 'Round Again"
10. Sid Cherry - "We Are Friends"
11. Mike Wells - "Just Like This"
12. Ken Krumenacker - "Walkin' Shu Swamp"
13. Vin Gangi - "It Wasn't Meant To Be"

## "I Wish I'd Written That Song."

### "The Diet is Cast" by Lois Morton

BY SUZANNE ERNST

Every time I've heard Lois Morton perform her song, "The Diet is Cast", I've gotten a feeling of familiarity. "Yes, I know about that. Why didn't I think of that?"

Lois's song is about her planning a dinner for friends, all of whom have special dietary needs. The song addresses this situation with lyrics that tickle the funny bone, and a sparkling melody that fits the lyrics like a glove.

Why do I wish I had written this song? It makes me laugh every time I hear it, and I love the audience response it gets. I have been on both ends of the dilemma - having been a strict vegan in the past, and having thrown dinner parties where my guests had special needs.

The rhyming of names with dietary choices, - "Harry and Marion both vegetarian" - the operetta-style melody - all provide the right ingredients for the telling of a great story. Lois has managed to capture this humorous humanness that we all share. Her song reminds us not to take ourselves so seriously...even if we must eat gluten-free.

-Lois Morton's rendition of "The Diet is Cast", can be seen and heard at the following link, where she sang it at "Don't Tell Mama," in NYC:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/lantusappreciation#p/a/f/0/yZb30xZjUZc>

Submit your own "I Wish I'd Written That Song" to [sidcherry@optonline.net](mailto:sidcherry@optonline.net)

### 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. 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 20-25 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](http://www.islandsongwriters.org). To submit items for publication in the newsletter, contact Sid Cherry at [sidcherry@optonline.net](mailto:sidcherry@optonline.net).