



Island Songwriters Showcase

www.islandsongwriters.org

December 2000

Newsletter

SONNY MEADOWS IS NOT A POLITICIAN!

By Shari Diamond

Sonny Meadows writes topical songs so I think it is only appropriate that the man and his music are becoming topical as well. Now all we need is someone to write a song about a topical songwriter becoming topical. I just gave myself a headache! So, amidst all the election hoopla, in the **Long Island section of the November 19th Sunday New York Times** paper, was a breath of fresh air – something that really matters. **Robbie Woliver**, a known supporter of original L.I. music and the folk scene, did a story about Sonny Meadows, and in particular, his latest CD, **“Bibles, Guns, and Flags”**. It should be noted that this **album was played in its entirety** on **WBAI 99.5 FM** on Friday, **November 24th**. Sonny's song **“Clemens Beaned Piazza”** was featured on **WFAN radio** during the World Series and it generated more interest from a cable television show called **LT One** (Local Talent). He was recently in the studio shooting the episode that he said went very well and was basically a live performance in front of three cameras. At this time, he does not have the date the show will be aired but we will keep you posted.

The article covered Sonny's current life, his past, his musical inspirations and his viewpoints. It's basically everything you wanted to know about Sonny Meadows and his songs. Of course, many of his songs have political overtones so one can wonder if Sonny is thinking of running for office. His answer to this is “I'm not a politician. I'm an artist”.

But if Sonny ever thinks of running for office, he would have my vote.

UPCOMING ISS EVENTS

WORKSHOP MEETING: **January 8***

OPEN MIKE @ BORDERS SYOSSET: **December 7**

SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND:

@ BARNES & NOBLE, COMMACK: **December 7***

@ BORDERS, WESTBURY: **December 15**

** date change this month only*

ISS WORKSHOP MEETING

Five Towns College

November 6, 2000

Part 1 by Shari Diamond

1. Charlie Ward started us off with an older song of his called “*Again and Again (We Need to Pray for Peace)*”. It was written during the Iraqi war back not too long ago. Andrew noted a minor word conflict and suggested modulating the key somehow through the middle of the song. He also didn’t like the children at the end. Frank G. noted the hook in the song is real catchy and to drop the chorus and make the hook the chorus. He noted that references to Vietnam would be appropriate. Gerry was also wondering what the “dream” was in the song and also felt the kids laughing at the end was a bit startling. Sarah liked the song and the kids at the end, but she agreed the laughing stood out. She noted the bridge was kind of long to repeat twice. Sonny S. stated similar points and suggested updating the song to show today’s conflicts verses yesterday’s. Jane also suggested that since this is about war, more visuals could do as well. This was a very thought provoking song.

2. Andrew Kirschner followed with a song that’s not allowed to be played at Borders called “*Professional Pee-On*”. The title alone got laughs. A very disgruntled employee Andrew must be. Jane complimented him on his singing and noted the improvement. Jane also noted the subject matter is tough to write about. Gerry thought it was a perfect song and wouldn’t change a thing. Sonny S. suggested playing it more times to nail it down (Andrew had just written the song that day!). He suggested changing one of the verses to a pre-chorus to better set up the song. Sarah liked the subject and music but wanted more musical departure in the bridge. A great song!

3. Terry Hallock Jr. performed “*Rosie*”, a short but very sweet Spanish country tune that got great feedback on a star-talent search. Terry noted that the song has more instrumentation when played with the band. Gerry noted it was catchy but noted some rhymes could be better. Sonny M. wanted to know more about Rosie. Sonny S. agreed and felt it was kind of a fast date scenario. Andrew noted there were a lot of hooks. Sarah liked the rhymes so there! Then Sonny S. borrowed his guitar and did a little Mexican parody – Guantanamera to Hang on Sloopy to One Ton of Maalox! You know who got my vote tonight!

4. Frank Gambino played “*You’ve Gotta Roll When It’s Your Turn TO Throw the Dice*”. Mike C. felt he had a real good groove and fell as with all his songs. He noted that the song started light and ended serious and thought Frank should make a choice. Charlie liked the way the song went. Sonny S. suggested tightening the lyrics. Terry liked the way it came back at the end. Sonny S. and Jane felt the bridge needed to be varied more. There were lots of good messages here. Sonny M. also felt that the song stayed serious. Gerry felt he should only do the bridge once.

5. Jane Ross borrowed Frank’s guitar and after changing the tuning played the song “*Dancing*”. She didn’t have lyrics but didn’t really need them. This was a dynamite song! She captured the feeling of twirling, whirling and dancing so wonderfully. Andrew noted how she was able to use repetitive chords over and over and make them work. Sarah felt the darkness and had lots of great visual effects. Gerry liked it and wondered if she considered playing slower. We asked about her upcoming CD. Gerry suggested releasing it in January as many college stations play newer material then. Rick felt the lyrics were so genuine and matched the chord progressions so well.

Part 2 by Bill Ryan

6. Another first at the ISS, **Shari Diamond** performed her bouncy, bluesy “*Notice Me*” half a cappella and half accompanied by her piano playing. Jane thought it worked and encouraged her to keep it that way. Andrew loved it, loved it, loved it! Sarah thought it grooved and was catchy.

7. Mike Clark has been on a writing tear since he got his 7 string. Each new composition taking advantage of the extra bass string. And the funky “*Into The Fire*” was no exception. It scored points with the crows musically and lyrically. Sarah picked up on Mike’s tricky use of vowel words – oh’s, ee’s, ay’s. Sonny S. thought it could use a James Brown ninth!

8. Sonny Meadows was up next. Well, writing an entire rock opera about Slick Willie wasn’t enough. Sonny had to get in one more ode. The song “*Goodbye Old Bill*” was another great example of Sonny’s mature-audience-only sense of humor. Sonny S. urged him to get this song out to the shock jocks ASAP. And we all had fun reminiscing as Sonny sang through old Bill’s foibles.

9. Sarah Haddock writes compositions that I love. I think she’s the female Ben Folds (Bernice Folds?) Tonight Sarah took “*Not Going To Wonder*” off the shelf and lucky for us that she did. Gerry thought it was a great idea-driven song. Sonny M. loved the first 2 lines of this song Sonny S. and Shari suggested that one of the choruses be lifted. All told, it garnered a lot of positive comments from the group.

10. Rick Crawford moved into a higher key and started “*The Healing Season*” with a really nice picking pattern. Gerry thought it was one of Rick’s best, but thought the last line needed some oomph. Mike and Jane liked the finger picking and suggested it be brought back in at the end of the song. The song drew compliments from the group for the lyrics and melody.

11. Bill Goldsmith presented his “*Days and Weeks*” for the first time anywhere at the workshop. This was another of Bill’s catchy melodic efforts. Bill’s style reminds me of the not widely known but critically acclaimed group “*Guided By Voices*”. Sonny S. suggested the chorus be cut down and that some dynamics be added to the verses. Jane thought the song could use a bridge whereas Rick thought the lyric structure was intentional.

And that’s how we wrapped up another fine evening of fabulous original and diverse music for the night. Next meeting is January 8, 2001!.

SONGWRITER'S CHOICE

Sonny Meadows - "Goodbye Ol' Bill"
Sarah Haddock - "Not Going to Wonder"
Jane Ross - "Dancing"

By Shari Diamond

It doesn't surprise me at all that we had a 3-way tie this night. In fact, it could have been more people than that. We have a diverse group of writers within the ISS that cannot be more evident than the 3 songs picked this month. I personally have a real tough time selecting a winner because of the diversity so I commend those who cast their votes.

Sonny Meadows typically writes humorous bluesy topical songs and his song "Goodbye Ol' Bill" was another fine addition to the collection. As one ISSer stated, "It was nice to be a part of history with Sonny tonight. I won't forget it." **Sarah Haddock** songs are all cleverly crafted and evoke thoughts and emotions many can relate to. Her song "Not Going To Wonder", put us all in that spot. **Jane Ross** has a voice that is a gift and her songwriting takes her voice and puts in beautiful wrapping paper. Her song "Dancing" had many of us mesmerized.

Believe it or not, there were only 2 votes left over and guess whom for? Yep, somehow they were for **Shari Diamond** for her song "Notice Me". I guess it worked.

The best part about the ISS workshops is hearing excellent original music. Don't be afraid of your creativity!

BORDERS RECAP

*Borders, Syosset
November 2, 2000*

The open mike scene at Borders hosted by **Bill Ryan** is still going strong with performances from **Andrew Kirschner**, **Bill Goldsmith**, **Mike Mattel**, and **Tania**. This night is dedicated to showcasing ISS members so come on down, bring a song and support your fellow ISSer's.

Next Borders event is December 7. Support the ISS and original L.I. music.

SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND - COMMACK

*Barnes & Noble - Commack
November 30, 2000*

Sonny featured artists **Dean Mahaltis**, **Bill Ryan** and **Larry Knoch**. On **December 7th**, (another date change due to the holidays), Sonny will present an evening of guitar instrumentalists with **Mark Yodice**, **Jeff Curtis**, **Nick Vermitsky** and **Jim Tepe**. Mark your calendars for these Thursday events! You don't want to miss out on this. See Sonny Meadows for more info or call him at 673-3605. Support L.I. music.

SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND - WESTBURY

*Borders - Westbury
November 17, 2000
By Shari Diamond*

Well, this month was easy to write about not only because I was at Borders but because I was one of the performers! Host **Rich Stein** set the stage up and had one of his students man the board while he attended a high school performance. Since this was an evening dedicated to children's music, we started a bit earlier than normal and didn't perform in a round. Instead, **Kitty Gill** started the night by debuting her CD, "The Secret Door". She is friends with Martha and Tom and was incredible. I love her CD and my kids do as well. Then, I, **Shari Diamond**, followed with one of my kid shows complete with my huge moose puppet. My kids were there to help make it chaotic but fun. Next month will resume the regular round performances.

The next round on **December 15th** will feature host **Rich Stein** and **Jim Dexter** so mark your calendars.

See **Rich Stein** at meetings or gigs for more info or call him at 516-742-2817 or e-mail him at clearsteer@aol.com.

Next Borders roundtable evens is December 15.



Scoop's Link O' the Month

The ISS Web Site News

www.islandsongwriters.org

Check it out - ISS artists are being broadcasted on the Web as we speak (or read) - MP3LL

Go to the Island Songwriter site - www.islandsongwriters.org, click on the MP3LI link, this will take you to Live365.com. You'll need an MP3 player, such as RealAudio's Realplayer or Winamp. If you already have one the broadcast begins automatically. If not you can go to the Live365 help page - <http://www.live365.com/help/index.html>. There you'll hear ISS members - **James Yarsky, UniversalDice.com (Gerry Dantone), dunderhead (Walt Sargent), and OverSoul 7 (yours truly)**. Help us out - click on the "Rate this Broadcast" to move the station up in the charts. Click on the "Tell A Friend" link to spread the word. Oh and, If you'd like to get your songs up on internet radio or converted to MP3 for other sites, email me at scoop@optonline.net or call me 516 628-1163.

That's the scoop for this month. - *Bill Ryan*

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS at FIVE TOWNS COLLEGE

(Dix Hills) ~ The Island Songwriters Showcase (ISS) is a no fee organization. Group efforts include monthly meetings at Five Towns College, located on Burr's Lane in Dix Hills, Huntington, NY, generally on the first Monday of the month. **IT'S FREE**. Songs are often premiered at the meetings, and so much material is presented that there is limit of one song per writer. Writers may bring an acoustic guitar, CD, or cassette tape (no Dolby n/r reduction is best), and a piano is available for keyboardists. Lyric sheets are encouraged and ensuing discussions regarding presented songs can range from passionate to hilarious to instructive. To become a member, simply come to a meeting. That's it! Really!

Come join us on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 P.M. on the following date: January 8* *date change this month only

Becoming an ISS member also entitles you to participate in our open mike night at any of our showcases (see highlighted below). Sign ups are at 7:30 P.M. All artists are able to play 2 original songs. Also, you can become eligible to be invited to perform at one of our Songwriters in the Round. No critiquing – just fun! Original bands are also welcome – please call Sonny in advance. Make friends. Make contacts. Get heard!

For more information call our director Sonny Speed at (631) 462-3300 or email him at mcspeed@aol.com.

Schedule of Local Open Mikes:

Mondays

- The Stephen Talkhouse - 8:30 P.M. Amagansett. 267-3117, hosted by Gene Hamilton

Wednesdays

- The Broadway Beanery - 9:00 P.M. 2 Broadway, Lynbrook. 596-0028, hosted by Stuart Markus
- The Cup Café - 9:00pm. Railroad Street, 3268 Railroad Ave., Wantagh. 826-9533
- MVP Café - 8:30 P.M. 1485 Hicksville Rd., N. Massapequa, (516) 529-5845, hosted by Jackalope Junction, original or cover

Thursdays

- BORDERS Syosset - 425 Jericho Tpk, Syosset, 7:00 p.m. sign-up, 7:30 p.m. start on the 1st Thursday of the month, ISS exclusive showcase hosted by Bill Ryan.
- Bunnery Pub - 9pm. 3120 Hempstead Tpk, Levittown, 735-0105, hosted by Frank Walker

Weekly Venue:

- Sundays at Seven Series - The Northport Historical Society Museum, Main St., Northport on the north side of the street opposite the police station. 7 PM. Contact hosted by Kate Kelly at 757-1111 for listing of scheduled performers. The Sunday At Seven Arts in Concert Series is supported by funds from the NYC Council of the Arts, distributed in Suffolk County through the Huntington Arts Council. They request a \$2 donation for the evening.

Songwriters In The Round:

- 2nd Thursday of the month @ Barnes & Noble, Commack, hosted by Sonny Meadows
- 3rd Friday of the month @ Borders, Westbury, hosted by Rich Stein.

ISS Postcard Mailer

If you didn't receive the postcard mailer that was sent out recently, or want to receive future updates on ISS events via mail or email, please provide Sonny Speed with a completed membership form available at meetings or gigs.

Director's Blurb

ISS workshops have become increasingly popular and we want to ensure that all members get enough time for comments. If you want your song heard but you're not looking for critique, please save the debut for the showcase. If you want feedback, please remember to bring 25 copies of the lyric sheet (or be prepared to pay a hefty fine - just kidding!)

ISS Address

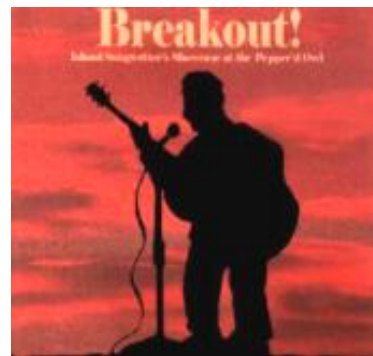
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- Ø **Website Coordinator:** Bill "Scoop" Ryan
- Ø **Newsletter Editor/Publisher:** Shari Diamond (looking for a new me)

Please make sure you check out our website www.islandsongwriters.org for info about the ISS, past newsletters, and member performances. If you would like to have a newsletter emailed to you, please send your request to Shari Diamond at shari@kidtestedtunes.com.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!



Don't forget to get your copy of the first ISS compilation CD featuring 14 ISS members recorded Live at the ISS Showcase at the Pepper'd Owl in 1996. This is a lot of talent crammed into this one CD and this is only volume 1! George Trapani made this release possible and he continues to record performances at ISS events. The Cost is \$12 per CD and you can get yours from George when you see him at ISS events, via the web at www.cyber-songs.com or email him at gtrapani@optonline.net.