



Island Songwriters
Showcase Newsletter

www.islandsongwriters.org

2001

October

United We Sing!

By Shari Diamond

I don't know where to start to write about the absurd tragedy that occurred in our country. I, like millions of others, am walking around with a hole in my heart and sick feeling in my stomach. Most people I know are having difficulty sleeping. But throughout all this, many found comfort in singing, especially one of our nation's theme songs. After many prayer services from various religions, the congregations sang "God Bless America", a song many of us had not sung in quite some time (myself included). Our voices are what make us strong. Our singing in unison makes us stronger. As songwriters, we can express our feelings with a tune. We can also band together to help ensure all voices are heard. Many benefit concerts have and will be held to honor those who died, their families, and all those who volunteered to help out. **Sonny Meadows**, with his band **The Defibrillators**, had turned their September 14th show at **The Wrong Way Inn** to become a benefit concert. Don't be afraid to take a stand.

A friend had forwarded me a copy of a poem he had received. It's temporarily titled, "If Dr. Seuss could say something about all this" since neither my friend, nor I know who wrote this. I thought it was to the point and simply stated. Peace to you all.

Every U down in U-ville liked the US a lot,
But the Binch, who lived Far East of U-ville, did not.
The Binch hated US! The whole US way!
Now don't ask me why, for no one can say.
It could be his turban was screwed on too tight.
Or the sun from the desert had beaten too bright.
But I think that the most likely reason of all
May have been that his heart was two sized too small.

But, whatever the reason, his heart or his turban,
He stood facing U-ville, the part that was urban.
"They're doing their business," he snarled from his perch.
"They're raising their families! They're going to church!
They're leading the world, and their empire is thriving,
I MUST keep the S's and U's from surviving!"

Tomorrow, he knew, all the U's and the S's,
Would put on their pants and their shirts and their dresses.
They'd go to their offices, playgrounds and schools,
And abide by their U and S values and rules.

And then they'd do something he liked least of all,
Every U down in U-ville, the tall and the small,
Would stand all united, each U and each S,
And they'd sing U-ville's anthem, "God bless us! God Bless!"

All around their Twin Towers of U-ville, they'd stand,
And their voices would drown every sound in the land.

“I must stop that singing,” Binch said with a smirk,
And he had an idea – an idea that might work!
The Binch stole some U-planes in U-morning hours,
And crashed them right in to the U-ville Twin Towers.
“They’ll wake to disaster!” he snickered, so sour,
“And how can they sing when they can’t find a tower?”

The Binch cocked his ear as they woke from their sleeping,
All set to enjoy their U-wails and U-weeping
Instead he heard something that started quite low,
And it built up quite slow, but it started to grow
And the Binch heard the most unpredictable thing,
And he couldn’t believe it – they started to sing!

He stared down at U-ville, not trusting his eyes.
What he saw was a shocking, disgusting surprise!
Every U down in U-ville, the tall and the small,
Was singing! Without any towers at all!
He HADN’T stopped the U-ville from singing! It sung!
For deep down in the hearts of the old and the young,
Those Twin Towers were standing, called Hope and called Pride
And you can’t smash those towers we hold deep inside.

So we circle the sites where our heroes did fall,
With a hand in each hand of the tall and the small.
And we mourn for our losses while knowing we’ll cope,
For we still have inside U-pride and U-hope.

For America means a bit more than tall towers,
It means more than wealth or political powers,
It’s more than our enemies ever could guess,
So may God bless America! Bless us! God Bless!

UPCOMING ISS EVENTS

WORKSHOP MEETING: **Oct 1 Nov 5**

OPEN MIKE @ BORDERS SYOSSET: **Oct 4 Nov 1**

SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND:

@ BARNES & NOBLE, COMMACK: **Oct 11 Nov 8**

@ BORDERS, WESTBURY: **Oct 19 Nov 16**

ISS WORKSHOP MEETING

Five Towns College

September 10, 2001

By Sonny Meadows

Little did we know the night of this meeting the tragedy and horror that would befall our world in just a few short hours. I hope all members, family and friends are holding up well and finding strength through their songwriting to carry on to a brighter.

Bob Cattrano – Bob started off the evening with the re-working of a song he presented several months ago, “*There Could Be Magic Tonight*” - a very hypnotic piece with relaxing new age instrumentation. “Close your eyes and relax/There could be magic tonight.” Everyone agreed with the changes Bob made to the tune. Gerry and Sonny Speed offered some production ideas.

Steve Lieberman – provided a live acoustic version of his song “*Puppy*” which is recorded on his Fire Sale Box Set (volume 1) CD. Everyone agreed it was great to be able to hear Steve’s lyrics clearly sung. Some discussion regarding keeping the theme of the Puppy throughout the song took place.

Josh Golden – a new performer at ISS, played “*Blue Sea*” a country-blues tune he wrote following a Ringo Starr concert where he was criticized for his dancing. Bob Cattrano suggested some kind of break in the drive of the tune – a chorus or bridge. Sonny S. thought adding an instrumental break would achieve the same thing. Everyone liked Josh’s hard strumming style.

Tania - delivered “*Remember*” a country ballad about searching for lost love. Tania’s voice is such a beautiful instrument. General consensus was that the arrangement fit the sentiment – Pedro suggested the use of some vocal harmonies. Some lyrical comments focused on developing consistent verb tense throughout.

Frank Gambino – presented “*The Ballad of Jean Meslier and the Monkey Man*”, a lengthy story of an Eighteenth Century parish priest who lost his faith at the end of his life. The portrait of the priest is juxtaposed to the story of the singer who gets hypnotized. Some discussion took place regarding the length of the song. Gerry and I felt it was “BRILLIANT” – a truly original song with a unique concept that required its length for the full effect.

Gerry Dantone – provided us with a live recording of “*You Don’t Fool Me*” taped at a topless club in New Jersey twenty years ago. The tune was a pop-rock piece that stands the test of time. I would have paid any amount to see Gerry performing in a topless club, then again the thought of Gerry topless is a little scary.

Stuart Markus - played a song he wrote using the melody of the “*Wild Rover*”. “*Range Rover*” is a very humorous commentary on the latest stock market plunge and its impact on a yuppie and his/her ability to maintain their SUV.

Rick Crawford – crooned “*The Healing Season*”. There was a unanimous praise for what was considered one of Rick’s best songs. The poetic imagery was masterful. I would love to have volume of Rick’s work.

Jerry Rossa – another newcomer entertained us with “*Brighter*” – a pop “teenage love song”. Suggestions focused on bringing in some musical pauses to break up the constant drive – “breathe”. Gerry would like to have seen a more consistent story line, which would follow with the title.

Pedro Pereira – performed “*Used To Be In Love*” a serious interplay between two ex-lovers (he says/she says): “We’re not friends, we’re not foes/ We just used to be in love”. Josh felt it had a great hook but the tempo could be a bit quicker. Sonny S. suggested the verses should be spoken rather than sung.

Andrew Kirschner – treated us to “*Just As Surely*” – which Andrew introduced as another break up song. The consensus was the lyrics were strong and shouldn’t be changed. Suggestions focused on changing the dynamics of the delivery. The chorus could be played a little less harshly.

Bill Goldsmith – finished off the evening with a song from his first CD – “*Cinderella After Midnight*”. Andrew compared it to Ray Davies style, only better lyrically. Bill is a master of the minimalist songwriting style and delivery. He says quite a lot with few words and powerful imagery. Sonny S. and Gerry suggested using a bridge or a stronger chorus.

Next meetings are October 1 and November 5.

Songwriter's Choice

By Gerry Dantone

Gerry Dantone – “You Don’t Fool Me”

This month's Writer's Choice voting is a terrific example of there being many ways to approach a song: One can do it simply or in a more complex manner. Neither way is inherently superior in all circumstances -- the key is to know when to dig deep and to know when the answer is to be crystal clear.

This writer's song, "**You Don't Fool Me**," from a taped live performance almost 20 years ago, is a simple one, with an economy of lyrics and melodic ideas. A theme is established, a mood evoked, and a simple but unmistakable message transmitted -- "You don't fool me anymore/You're not so strong anymore." Almost anyone can relate to this tale of a self-important person being stripped bare. It wins this month's Writer's Choice.

Runner-up **Frank Gambino**, on the other hand, took central issues in human existence - God and faith, and gave it the depth required. "**The Ballad of Jean Meslier and the Monkey Man**" is two stories, seemingly unrelated, but on a deeper level, one a confirmation of the other. Jean Meslier was appointed Abbey of Etrepigny, in Champagne, France, in 1689, and remained there for 40 years. He campaigned vigorously against the social injustices of his day, often in conflict with his ecclesiastical superiors. He wrote memoirs detailing his non-belief, which were not published until after his death for fear of being executed. Meslier wrote, "You are my witness that I have never extracted the fees that attach to my office as cure'. I discouraged you from bigotry, and I spoke to you as seldom as possible of our wretched dogmas...How I suffered when I had to preach to you those pious lies that I detest in my heart! What remorse your credulity caused me!" Frank wrote, "What do you gain when you lose your faith?" In answer, Frank attaches a seemingly unrelated ditty about a fellow, who fakes being hypnotized, because that's what is expected of him. His friends are maddened because they wanted to believe in the hypnotism. And thus makes his point about faith.

Gerry Dantone is amazed.

BORDERS RECAP

September 6, 2001 Borders, Syosset

Bill Ryan continues to host this night, which is specifically, dedicated to ISS members. Come on down, bring 2 songs, have some gourmet coffee or tea, make new friends, and be a part of the music scene.

Next events are October 4 and November 1.

SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND - COMMACK

September 13, 2001 Barnes & Noble, Commack

At first, host **Sonny Meadows** thought it might be a good idea to get together and stated in his email to me "Rather than canceling - we want to open this up as a round robin event for whoever shows. Our music, our art, our poetry plays an important role as we

physically and emotionally rise from the rubble and face a very different future for ourselves and our children." Unfortunately, the songwriter's round was canceled this past month. But next month, the singing will prevail.

See Sonny Meadows for more info or call him at 673-3605. Support L.I. music. *Next event is October 11.*

SUNDAY @ 7 SERIES NEEDS PERFORMERS

This email came from Kate Kelly.

The following dates are open for SUNDAYS @ 7. Please let me know if you are interested in performing one of these evenings ASAP so I can get schedule in shape this week. Call Kate at 631-757-1111.

Oct 28 (Bill Graeser & Dan Giancola scheduled, need one more performer/presenter)

Nov 25

Dec 9

RADIO PROGRAM

The Saturday Light Brigade is a radio program featuring acoustic music and family fun. Broadcast since 1978, it is one of the longest-running public radio programs in the U.S. Quality music, on-air telephone calls from kids and adults, innovative participatory puzzles and games, and interesting guests have made *The Saturday Light Brigade* a family radio tradition for tens of thousands of people. Kids listen with adults, adults listen with kids, and everyone has fun listening to the radio together! *The Saturday Light Brigade* is broadcast live from 6 to 10 a.m. EST on Saturday mornings and originates live from WYEP-Pittsburgh whose signal can be heard in southwestern Pennsylvania as well as parts of Maryland, West Virginia, and Ohio. You can also hear live broadcasts, encore broadcasts and a 24/7 "best of" stream at www.slbradio.com.

In essence, they play a pretty broad range of acoustic-based traditional and contemporary folk, bluegrass, standards, novelty songs, and children's music that also can be enjoyed by adults. Highly-produced stuff (lots of overdubs, synthetic drum kits, formal children's choruses, etc.) usually won't fit well, even if it's of good quality.

They'd love to hear music from our group and actually *do* listen to what people send them! Their address is:

Larry Berger
The Saturday Light Brigade
P.O. Box 100092
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

WGBB LOOKING FOR LOCAL ARTISTS

This email came to Sonny Speed.

I am a radio show host on 21st Century Music Radio, **WGBB-1240 AM**. We air live every Monday night from 8-9 pm and webcast the show simultaneously with the broadcast. I just saw your website (islandsongwriters.org). Please have your artists send me their CD's and press kits/bio. My show is mainly devoted to giving airtime and exposure to the local artists in our communities and giving them the airtime and exposure that is so sorely needed.

My address is P.O. Box 0301, Baldwin, NY 11510 or you can go to <http://21stcenturymusicradio.com>

****Also, check out our radio show's songwriting contest. You can go to the homepage at www.21stcenturymusicradio.com.**

**

Thanks

Diane Corrado

****** Tania was on the radio show in April and Stuart Markus was the guest in May. It's a great experience and opportunity if you have never been on radio. What are you waiting for?! ******



Scoop's Link O' the Month

The ISS Web Site News

www.islandsongwriters.org

Our web site is getting more and more state-of-the-art and we already have popular features such as Post-a-Gig, and the on-line newsletter, up and running. Post-a-Gig lets you enter in your gig dates, no need to call, or fax anyone. If you can't get to a PC, you can leave the details on the cyber-songs phone line (516) 628-1163. So check out the site, and keep coming back as it grows. If you would like to purchase a CD from many of our talented ISS members, get it via the web from www.cyber-songs where you can listen to songs and become eligible to win a free CD! What are you waiting for? Get with the music!

Due to the success of the Post-a-gig feature on the ISS site, we've added a discussion forum. Simply go to the Island Songwriter's site and click on the New ISS Discussion forum link on the home page. To add to the discussion forum, click on Post a new article. You can then choose a topic such as songwriting, and enter your comments, thoughts, experiences, pearls of wisdom, etc.

Any ideas on other topics let me know - scoop@optonline.net.

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 dates: November 5
December 3***

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.

Open Mikes:

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.

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.

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.

HELP WANTED!

We know you can write songs! So how about helping out and writing about workshop reviews, articles, open mike scenes, whatever. They don't take much time and you get to have your name in print! Remember that the newsletter goes up on the web so your name will be out there. Talk to **Shari Diamond** or **Sonny Speed** at our meetings.

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!)

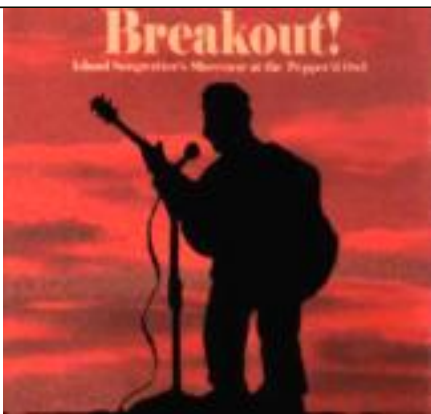
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- Newsletter Editor/Publisher:** Shari Diamond

If you would like to have a newsletter emailed to you, please send your request to Shari Diamond at shari@kidtestedtunes.com.



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, email him at gtrapani@optonline.net.

Visit our website

www.islandsongwriters.org