

Writer's Choice Newcomer Plays Dirty And Wins

By Gerry Dantone

Is there such a thing as beginner's luck?

I doubt it. Although February Writer's Choice Award winner **John-Flor Sisante** is a newbie at ISS, he's hardly a musical novice. At least he doesn't sound like one.

His first tune out of the box was "Dirty Violin" and it was Stradivarian in value even if unkempt in some hidden way. The tune, about a broken-hearted fellow back in the dating wars, was starkly original and sung beautifully. Piano accompaniment is all there is for most of the song but the intensity rises toward the end with additional harmonies and instruments. The lyrical content was rich with metaphor but a melancholy hung over the song like a shroud.

'Hi my name is John
I've been stuck on reruns
since my heart was orphaned
till you walked in and filled the bar
like flowers to sudden sunlight
all the dark exploded'

— *John Flor-Sisante*

He sang, "Cuz oh, you're beautiful/Like a pendulum on the upswing/And, oh, I meant to say/I'm your lost Dirty Violin." For your listening pleasure go to [http:// artists.mp3s.com/artist_song/2740/2740354.html](http://artists.mp3s.com/artist_song/2740/2740354.html).

On this evening where many outstanding songs contended for the honors, we have two worthy runners up. First is **Rich Stein's** "Nor'easter Girl," a typically (for him) amazing all instrumental journey on acoustic guitar, backed by **Phil Jimenez** on percussion. Since there are no lyrics to quote, you are simply advised to find a way to hear this tune yourself. The CD will be out soon.

Finally, kudos to **Suzanne Ernst** for "A Visit with Rosie," an emotional tune about her Alzheimer's-afflicted mother. Though the situation is obviously tragic, a sense of love and appreciation permeates this thoughtful lyric and lovely melody.

ARE YOU READY FOR AN AUDIENCE?

Want to see how your material plays before a sympathetic audience? ISS hosts an open mic at Borders, 425 Jericho Turnpike in Syosset, the first Thursday of each month. The next gig is March 6.

OPEN MICS EVERYWHERE

Local Songwriters Fight Harsh Winter With Warm Performances

By Pedro Pereira

Local songwriters and performers are a hardy bunch. Despite one of the harshest winters on record, every week ISS members and other local performers are getting in front of audiences at open mics across the region trying to make their winter more tolerable.

In this issue, we publish a comprehensive list of open mics that take place regularly at spots from western Nassau to east of Riverhead. Open mics are a good way for budding songwriters to get experience performing for an audience, so ISS members are encouraged to participate. The ISS-sponsored open mic, hosted by local musician and ISS webmaster **Bill Ryan**, takes place on the first Thursday of the month at Borders on Jericho Turnpike in Syosset. Signup begins at 7:30 p.m.

One of the most recent additions to the open mic scene is Writers Night at the Nawlins Grill in Mineola. Hosted by **David Isaacs** and his band Jackalope Junction, the Tuesday night weekly gig is geared to songwriters, although there is no prohibition against playing cover songs.

Performers who prefer accompaniment can ask Jackalope Junction to join them on stage.

"Almost everyone has had some sort of backup on at least one song," said Isaacs. "Some have played all their songs with the full band, others with just one other instrument accompanying. Some people have come with charts, others had songs that were easy to follow. It's definitely been a challenge but there have already been some really wonderful moments."

Writers Night started in January, and performers so far have included **Sonny Meadows**, the **Defibrillators**, **Stuart Markus**, **Blonde Lemon Pledge**, **Linda Sussman**, **Nick Vermistky**, **Howard Hilsenrath** and **Bill Goldsmith**. Isaacs said attendance has been "respectable. The room is

Continued on page 2

ISS Workshops: Five Towns College, Dix Hills, 7:30 p.m. first Monday of every month, run by Sonny Speed. **April 7, May 5.**

Songwriters in the Round: Barnes & Noble, Commack, 7:30 p.m. second Thursday of every month: **March 13, April 10.**

ISS at The Spot, SUNY Stony Brook, 8:30 p.m. third Thursday of every month: **March 20, April 17.**

OPEN MICS EVERYWHERE

Continued from page 1

not really all that large, so there's a nice intimate vibe, and I know that people are coming just to hang out and listen in addition to those that come to perform. All in all, I'd say we're off to a very good start and it is my hope that it will continue to build.

If you're interested in performing at an open mic, or just enjoying the music, we've compiled an extensive list of open mics in Suffolk and Nassau counties. This list was culled from listings compiled by Kathryn Donohue for "Aural Fix," Sue Herbst for "LIE News" and Rob Upham for "Long Island Music Scene."

SUFFOLK - SUNDAY

Host: Rebekka Carol/xpo8odx

Time: 8 p.m. with 7:30 signup

Place: The Village Pub, 1509 Main Street, Port Jefferson

Phone: (631)331-4800

Host: The Jim Moran Jam

Time: Call venue

Place: Cat's Meow, 60 Terry Rd., Smithtown

Phone: (631) 265-3331, web: www.thecatsmeow.com

Host: The Last Stand Open Jam

Place: Chances, 415 E. Main St., Patchogue

Phone: (631) 758-7444

Acoustic Open Jam

Place: Pistachio's 49 E. Hoffman Ave., Lindenhurst

Phone: (631) 226-0970

Host: Willie Steele Blues Jam

Place: Chesterfields, 330 New York Ave., Huntington

Phone: (631) 425-1457

Blues Jam

Place: Digger O'Dell's, 58 W. Main St., Riverhead

Phone: (631) 369-3200

Host: Josey Wales Open Live Jam

Place: Kozy Kabin, 1911 Deer Park Ave., Deer Park

Phone: (631) 595-9743

Host: Bobby Sexton Open Jam

Place: Paula Jean's Supper Club, 130 Old Town Rd., E. Setauket

Phone: (631) 751-5483

SEPT. 11 BENEFIT AT THE ALEHOUSE

ISS member **Rich O'Brien** will be master of ceremonies at the First Annual Fallen Heroes Benefit Show on March 30 for the New York Police and Fire Widows and Orphans Fund. The event, scheduled to start at noon, is at the Bayview Alehouse, 365 Bayview Ave, South Freeport.

Rich, who joined ISS recently, is scheduled to play a set from noon to 1 p.m., after which he will performing hosting duties until 9 p.m. Eight acts will follow Rich on stage.

SUFFOLK - MONDAY

Host: Honey Baked Goodness

Time: about 10:30 p.m.

Place: Gerry Finlay's NY Tavern, 40 Bayshore Rd., Bayshore

Phone: (631) 254-6992

Host: Seth Davis

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Starbucks, 1 Wall St., Huntington

Phone: (631) 421-3459

SUFFOLK - TUESDAY

Host: Gene the Machine

Time: 9 p.m.

Place: Brick House Brewery, 67 W. Main St., Patchogue

Phone: (631) 447-BEER, web: www.brickhousebrewery.com

Host: Jim Moran & Cherry Black Open Jam

Place: The Lizard Lounge, 4589 Sunrise Hwy., Bohemia

Phone: (631) 563-7761

Host: Gary Ivan Open Mic

Place: 69 Wall Street Restaurant & Jazz Lounge,

69 Wall St., Huntington

Phone: (631) 385-7084, web: www.69wallst.com

Open Mic

Place: Ruby's, 28 Oakdale Ave., Port Jefferson

Phone: 631-474-5678

Host: Oren of Finespun

Time: Call venue

Place: Da Funky Phish, 1668 Union Blvd., Bay Shore

Phone: (631) 665-9851, www.dafunkyphish.com

SUFFOLK - WEDNESDAY

Host: Michele Monte

Time: 8 – 11 p.m.

Place: Ruby's, 28 Oakdale Ave., Port Jefferson

Phone: 631-474-5678, www.michelemonte.com

Host: Ed Travis

Time: 9:30 p.m.

Place: The Brickhouse Brewery

Location: 67 West Main St., Patchogue

Phone: (631) 447-BEER

Host: Jim Moran Open Mic Jam

Place: Grizzly's Sports Den, 888 Sunrise Hwy., (South Service Rd.) Bay Shore

Phone: (631) 665-0154

Open Mic Jam Session

Place: Molly Bloom's, 43 E. Main St. (Rte. 25 A) Smithtown

Phone: (631) 360-8160

Host: Reckoning

Place: Fadeley's Deli Pub, Main St., Patchogue

(631) 758-8882

Red Hot Blues Jam

Place: Paula Jean's Supper Club, 130 Old Town Rd., E. Setauket

Phone: (631) 751-5483

SUFFOLK - THURSDAY

Kerry Kearney Open Mike n' Jam

Place: Paula Jean's Supper Club, 130 Old Town Rd., E. Setauket

Phone: (631) 751-5483

Continued on page 2

OPEN MICS EVERYWHERE

Continued from page 2

Jim Moran Band Open Mic Jam

Place: SPEE's Pub, 1044 Jericho Trnkp., Smithtown
Phone: (631) 499-9029

Host: Rebekka Carol LIMC Acoustic Series

Place: The Spot, State University at Stony Brook
Phone: (631) 632-6027, www.the-spot.org

Host: Smoke Daddy's Acoustic Jam

Place: Giacamo Jack's, 248 S. Ketcham Ave., Amityville
Phone: (631) 691-CRAB

Host: Bill Meehan

Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Morrill Theater, 127-6 Smithtown Blvd., Nesconset
Phone: (631) 979-5942

NASSAU - MONDAY

Host: The Jim Moran Open Jam

Place: Little Buster's Hideaway, 190 Glen Cove Ave., Glen Cove
Phone: (516) 671-4364

NASSAU - TUESDAY

Host: Rick Eberle

Time: 8 p.m. with 7:30 p.m. signup
Place: The Downtown, 190 Main St., Farmingdale
Phone: (516) 293-7700, web: www.thedowntown.com

Host: Ed Ryan/Harlan Friedman

Time: 9 p.m. with 8 p.m. signup
Place: Munchaba Lounge, 58 Gardiners Ave., Levittown
Phone: (516) 735-6827, web: www.munchaba.com

Host: Dave Isaacs & Jackalope Junction

Time: 8 p.m.
Place: Nawlins Grill, 44 Willis Ave., Mineola
Phone: (516) 747-8488

Host: Lisa Miller All Star Jam

Place: Calico Jack's, 3297 Long Beach Rd., Oceanside
Phone: (516) 766-9822

Open Mic Night

Place: Starbucks, 2490 Hempstead Trnkp., East. Meadow
Phone: (516) 796-0858

Host: Al Cardillo & Friends Open Jazz Jam

Place: Jessica's Lounge, 346 Newbridge Rd., East Meadow
(516) 679-1853

Acoustic Blues Open Mic

Place: Backstreet Blues, 60 Front St., Rockville Centre
Phone: (516) 766-6656, web: backstreetblues.com

EAST SUFFOLK - MONDAY

Host: Island Songwriters Showcase Open Mic

Place: Stephen Talkhouse, Main St., Amagansett
Phone: (631) 267-3117

EAST SUFFOLK - THURSDAY

Host: Tom Hood of the Unknown Gentlemen

Time: 8 - 11 p.m. with 7:30 signup
Place: Mardi Gras, 1271 North Sea Road, Southampton
Phone: (631) 259-0300

NASSAU - WEDNESDAY

Host: Frank Walker

Time: 9 p.m.
Place: The Irish Cottage, 1010 Park Blvd., Massapequa Park
Phone: 516-798-2196

Host: Seth Davis

Time: 7 pm
Place: Starbucks, 101 W. Park Ave., Long Beach
Phone: (516) 670-9181

Host: Greg Fine

Time: 8:30 p.m.
Place: Cup Café, 3268 Railroad Ave., Wantagh
Phone: 516-826-9533

Smoke Daddy's Open Blues Jam

Place: Yankee Peddler, 70 Merrick Ave., Merrick
Phone: (516) 378-9735

Host: Josie Wales Band Blues & Rock Jam

Place: Episodes, 800 Jericho Trnkp., New Hyde Park
Phone: (516) 794-7099

Open Blues Jam

Place: Backstreet Blues, 60 Front St., Rockville Centre
Phone: (516) 766-6656, web: backstreetblues.com

Island Songwriter's Showcase Open Mic

Place: Cup Café, 3268 Railroad Ave., Wantagh
Phone: 516-826-9533

NASSAU - THURSDAY

Host: Jim Treutlein and John Struck alternate

Time: 9 p.m. - 12 a.m.
Place: The Irish Cottage, 1010 Park Blvd., Massapequa Park
Phone: 516-798-2196, web: www.massapequapark.net/irishcottage

Host: Austin Kuebler

Time: 8 p.m. with 7:30 signup
Place: The Fin Bar & Grill, 1148 W. Beech St., Long Beach
Phone: (516) 432-3765, Web: www.finbarandgrill.com

Host: Barry Greenfield

Place: Café By The Sea, 195 Nautical Mile, Freeport
(516) 771-4544

Host: Spunky's Open Mic

Place: Yankee Peddler, 70 Merrick Ave., Merrick
Phone: (516) 378-9735

Host: Seth Davis

Place: Starbucks, 101 W. Park Ave., Long Beach
Phone: (516) 670-9181

Host: Kane Daily Open Jam

Place: Mr Beery's, 4019 Hempstead Trnkp., Bethpage
Phone: (516) 731-9579, web: www.mrbeerys.com

Host: Call venue (Alternate Thursdays)

Time: 8 - 12 p.m.
Place: Ian McGregor's Public House, 100 Herricks Rd., Mineola
Phone: (516) 746-3713

NASSAU - FRIDAY

Host: Pat Farrell Band Open Mic Jam (once a month)

Place: Episodes, 800 Jericho Tnkp., New Hyde Park
Phone: (516) 794-7099

WHAT'S DOING

This Month

ISS members are always out and about. Check your local listings for appearances live, on the radio or even on TV. Also check www.islandsongwriters.com for gigs and links to member sites with information about CD releases, shows and MP3s. Here's what's happening in the coming weeks (*Remember to check with the venue first because dates and times may change*):

ISS Workshop

Five Towns College, Dix Hills, run by ISS Director **Sonny Speed**, first Monday of the month. Starts at 7:30. Bring a guitar to perform your song live, or play a CD or tape. A piano is available for keyboardists. Bring 25 copies of your lyrics so other workshops attendees can follow along and critique your work. Upcoming workshops: *March, 3 April 7, May 5.*

Songwriters in the Round

Barnes & Noble, Commack, hosted by **Sonny Meadows**, second Thursday of the month. Starts at 7:30 p.m. Upcoming gigs: *March 13, April 10, May 8.*

ISS Hits The Spot

The ISS monthly gigs at The Spot in SUNY Stony Brook resume this month and will continue for the foreseeable future. Here are the dates for upcoming shows: *March 20 and April 17.*

The Spot is located at the Fannie Brice Theater Building at the Stony Brook Campus. Directions to The Spot: Take the LIE (or Route 347) to Exit 62, Nichols Road north for seven miles to the South Entrance to the Stony Brook Campus. Go left into the South Entrance. At the first full intersection, Forest Drive, take a right and continue to the third stop sign. Turn left. The Spot is in the Fannie Brice Theater Building on the left. Enter through the door by the loading dock. The Spot is on the second floor.

Buy CDs from local artists, including the Defibrillators, Little Toby Walker, Jackalope Junction and Debra Lynn, at www.cdpimp.com

Open Mics

Borders, Jericho Turnpike, Syosset, hosted by ISS Webmaster **Bill "Scoop" Ryan**, first Thursday of the month. Sign-up starts at 7 p.m. Try to get there early to guarantee your spot. Upcoming gigs: *March 6, April 3, May 1.*

Starbucks, Main Street, Huntington, 7:30 p.m. Mondays.

Ruby's, Oakdale Ave, Port Jefferson, 8 p.m. Wednesdays.

69 Wall Street, Huntington, 8:30 p.m., Tuesdays.

Starbucks, Long Beach, 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

Director's Message

ISS workshops are increasingly popular and we want to ensure all members get enough time for comments. If you want your song heard but don't want critique, please save the debut for the showcase. If you want feedback, **please remember to bring 25 copies of the lyrics sheet** (or be prepared to pay a hefty fine – just kidding!)

ISS Staff

Director: Sonny Speed

Press Secretaries: Bob Catrano, Tony Tedeschi

Webmaster: Bill "Scoop" Ryan

Newsletter

Editor: Pedro Pereira

Contributors: Tony Tedeschi, Bill "Scoop" Ryan, Tim Huss, Shari Diamond, Frank Gambino, Walter Sargent, Gerry Dantone, Sonny Meadows.

If you would like to have a newsletter e-mailed to you, please send your request to Pedro Pereira at peddi@optonline.net.

Contact ISS

P.O. Box 430

East Northport, N.Y. 11731-0430

Phone: 631-462-3300 (Sonny Speed)

E-mail: mcspeed@aol.com

Be sure to check our site for updates:
www.islandsongwriters.org