

## RE WITH A BEAT

### No July Workshop

*Next meeting is  
August 2*

The next songwriting workshop is at 7:30 p.m. August 2 at Five Towns College in Dix Hills. Because of the July 4 holiday, there will be no workshop next month.

### Defibrillate This

The Defibrillators are slated to play at the Riverhead Blues Fest July 18.

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### Chapin Benefit

ISS member Stuart Marcus is organizing a benefit in memory of Long Island's Harry Chapin

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### Find It Online

Visit our web site,  
[www.islandsongwriters.org](http://www.islandsongwriters.org)

### MetaJam developer speaks at ISS workshop

by Pedro Pereira

**Roy Elkins**, founder and CEO of software developer Broadjam Inc., spoke to ISS members last month to tout his company's MetaJam software, a promotion and career-management tool that helps artists organize their music.

Elkins, a songwriter who said he grew up in Michigan playing in bands, developed the software because he saw a need for artists to promote themselves to the public and to labels. The software tool's features include a web site manager, a promo and press kit builder, a song and album manager, a photo and image organizer, a gig and event scheduler, and a contact list manager.

"It's a custom application designed by a songwriter for songwriters," Elkins said.

With MetaJam, users can input information about each song file, called metadata, to describe the song. Such information would include title, artist name, release date, tempo of the track, and genre of music. This information is becoming more and more important as the music industry shifts from being album-centric to song-centric because of the Internet, Elkins said.

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### The Search for the Ultimate Guitar Goes On

By Tony Tedeschi

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO — After I'd been to the musty-smelling pawn shop with the lowest-end guitars, stopped briefly in at the "World's Largest Used Instrument Dealer" (I don't think so), then wandered the comfortable predictability of the local Guitar Center, finding the home base of Pimentel & Sons on Lafayette Street (near the corner of Aztec) in the northeast quadrant of this pleasantly buff-colored city at the foot of the Sandia Mountains was a revelation indeed.

Only a small ad in the Yellow Pages provided the tickler, seriously overpowered by ads for the other, aforementioned stops. But the ad said Pimentel had been making guitars since 1951 and that indicated they'd had an established market. In my endless quest to find the next addition to my guitar collection (now at nine, with one a-building), I am driven by the endless hope that I will stray "into a junkshop and discover a Meissen 'white swan' service" (Truman Capote, *Answered Prayers*).

I called for directions, since I could not find the street on my sparse, rent-a-car map. The congenial gentleman who answered the phone and identified himself only as Robert, said, yes, they did have a showroom, and they'd be happy to show me some instruments. He then gave me easy-to-follow directions for the 15-minute drive from my hotel. (Albuquerque residents will tell you everywhere in their city is no more than 15 minutes from anywhere else in their city; a bit of an exaggeration, but this is an easily navigable town.)

Robert met me at the front door, and introduced himself as one of the five Pimentel sons and as vice president of the enterprise. The walls about the anteroom were hung with guitars: classical nylon-string, contemporary steel-string, along with some



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## ISS member organizes Chapin benefit

Old-time ISS member **Stuart Markus** is organizing a concert in tribute to Harry Chapin at 6:45 p.m. on Sunday July 11 in West Hempstead's Hall's Pond Park. All ISS members are invited to come down, show their support, and volunteer to help collect food and cash donations.

Participating musicians at this point include **Judith Zweiman, Little Toby Walker, Sonny Meadows, Jane Ross, James O'Malley, Mike Soloway, Marci Geller, Frank Walker, Terry Winchell, Doc Butler**, and a few others. Each will do a Harry Chapin song, with various back-up arrangements.

Co-sponsoring the event is the West Hempstead Civic Association, which initially approached Stuart in April about helping them set up community concerts in the park. Food will be collected for Long Island Cares, and cash donations for World Hunger Year, both organizations founded by Harry Chapin.

Jen Chapin, WHY co-founder and executive director Bill Ayres, and LI Cares have all responded enthusiastically, Stuart said. "My idea was to have Long Island songwriters salute Harry Chapin and his music," he said, noting that the ISS traces its roots back to the get-togethers Harry would have decades past. "I'm trying to assign songs that fit with each songwriter's own style, but each performer is going to make the song his or her own."

To get to Hall's Pond, take Southern State exit 17N and go about half a mile; turn left just before the park onto Nassau Boulevard. to get to the park entrance.

### Writer's Choice

by Pedro Pereira

The song with the runaway beat was the runaway winner. Out of 14 songs

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**Winner:** Michael Svezia

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presented at the May workshop, no one worked up more enthusiasm among ISS members than **Michael Svezia's** "Overtime."

The tune is a breathless dissertation of a busy working father and husband's day. "Gotta see the bottom line, gotta get the overtime/gotta get down in the slime/slip and sliding in the grime/pinch a penny, nickel, dime/need to find a golden mine," Michael sings in a rapid-fire delivery that perfectly illustrates the song's message.

The vocal delivery morphs into a Beach Boys-style harmony at the chorus, providing a melodious break from the pounding lyrics.

"Overtime" is one of the most intriguing, well-crafted tunes played at an ISS workshop in a while, so its selection as "Writer's Choice" is well deserved.

## MetaJam developer speaks at ISS workshop

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The more accurate and complete the information attached to the file is, the more likely it will be for the song to come up in a web search by someone who is looking for a certain type of song for a movie soundtrack or some other specific use.

Buyers of MetaJam software have the option of building a site hosted by Broadjam, which may include links to songs the artist wants to share with the public.

Elkins, who sat through the whole workshop and provided feedback, raffled off a copy of MetaJam, which went to ISS member **Sonny Meadows**, who just released the CD "How Does a Patriot Act?" available at [www.cdmp.com](http://www.cdmp.com).

For more information on Metajam, visit [www.metajam.com](http://www.metajam.com).

### Promote Yourself on the ISS Web Site

The ISS is now offering songwriters *their own web pages* on the ISS web site. Whether you already have your own web site or not, a personal web page on the ISS site brings you closer to the traffic with a polished and professional look. If you don't already have a web site, it is an especially good deal. Prices range from \$20 to \$60 per year with a range of options.

Plus, you are supporting ISS web site development. So if you like the way the web site is going, you can help *keep it going* by signing up. Please see the web site for details: <http://www.islandsongwriters.org>



## The Search for the Ultimate Guitar Goes On

unique designs. I told him my preference was for steel-string, and he retrieved from one of the walls what was, unquestionably, one of the most beautiful variations on the theme I'd ever seen.

"This is one of our Southwestern Series," he informed me.

The guitar was beautifully crafted of rosewood back and sides with a spruce top. It was inlaid with turquoise and coral accents on the headstock, the fretboard, the rosette around the soundhole and at the bridge. He ushered me up a flight of stairs to a small room and directed me to a stool. Instinctively, I strummed an E chord. The sound was magnificent, every bit worthy of the look of the instrument: the deep bass of a Martin with the bright ring of a Taylor and just enough mids to fill out the sound. Single notes made bold statements.

Clearly, this was not going to be one of those \$200 steals I'd longed for. "I gotta ask," I said. "How much?" Robert smiled. "Fifty-seven hundred." I didn't bat an eye.

"Normally \$4,500, but the detail in the roadrunner inlay on the headstock is expensive work," he explained. "We do all that here as well."

Dare I say, the instrument would have sounded like a bargain at just about any price. How much is exquisite sound worth?

"Can we make one for you?" he asked.

"It would take me about five years to save up," I answered, at the same time conjuring what I could unload on eBay to shorten the distance between us.

"Well," he replied, "it takes a considerable amount of time to make one and we are a bit back-ordered."

Surprise, surprise.

One of the other Pimentel brothers stuck his head through the doorway and told Robert he had a customer who needed a quote on something. Robert hooked me up to a small acoustic amp and left me to noodle. The amplified sound was wonderful, but the guitar really didn't need it. The more I played with it, the more it became apparent that I was in big trouble here.

When he returned he asked if I'd like to play one of Pimentel's \$1,000 models. Of course, I did. Of course, it delivered a rich sound, well worth the price, but once you've stroked perfection . . . well . . .

I needed to put some distance between me and the roadrunner guitar. Robert took me on a tour of the workshop. Work here was the antithesis of an assembly line. Each of the brother-craftsmen builds a guitar from start to finish.

They make many of their own tools. They shape the sides of the guitars without using metal molds but following the contours of the back. They cut the tiny pieces of turquoise and coral using band saws and their customized tools. They lacquer the guitars themselves. In short, here was the kind of old-world craftsmanship that is an absolute requirement if you are going to produce something as magnificent as the instrument I'd played.

Robert's grandfather moved the Pimentel family line to North America from Portugal to Mexico, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where Robert's father, Lorenzo, was born. The Pimentels emigrated to the United States in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and Lorenzo and his wife, Josefina established the luthier business in 1951. As their sons grew into adulthood, they became more and more active in the hands-on elements of the enterprise, gaining recognition, like their father, as master luthiers. Players from around the world favor Pimentels, including classical players like Pepe Romero or country-folk groups like the Bellamy Brothers. Among their honors is a "Player's Choice" award from Acoustic Guitar magazine.

But, in the end, it's all about the sound. And that guitar I played, for those brief moments, is ringing sweetly in my ears. Haunting me, actually.

## Who Played What

Here's the list of songwriters and songs from the May ISS workshop:

**Mike Sullivan**

"Play the Fool."

**Rich O'Brien**

"21st Century Blues"

**Vincent Crici**

"Nicky's Lullaby"

**Sonny Meadows**

"Will the Missiles Be Dismantled?"

**Michael Svezia**

"Overtime"

**Pedro Pereira**

"Temple of Cheap Tricks"

**Walter Sargent**

"You Found Something"

**Steve Liberman**

"Skinheads in my Yard, Oy Vey."

**Estelle Henrich**

"I Can't Read You"

**Bob Campbell**

"In the Meantime"

**Conrad W. Tyras**

"These Memories"

**Bill Goldsmith**

"Ruminations of a Suit"

**Bill Ryan**

"Sleep"

**Guy Pezzullo**

"Pushing the Envelope"

## Open Mic on Hold

The weekly open mic hosted by **Gary Ivan** at the Madonna Cafe, 1 Clinton Ave., has

been suspended after two weeks. It is slated to restart when an upstairs room at the establishment is opened at a yet-undetermined date.



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## What's Doin'

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

### ISS Workshop

Test out your songs in front of fellow musicians, who provide constructive feedback. The workshop is on the first day of each month at **Five Towns College, Burrs Lane**, Dix Hills. Run by ISS Director **Sonny Speed**, It starts at 7:30 p.m. Bring a guitar to perform your song live, or you may choose to play a CD or tape. A piano is available for keyboardists. Be sure to bring 25 copies of your lyrics so other workshops attendees can follow along and provide feedback.  
*Next workshop: August 2*

### University Cafe

Look who's playing at Stony Brook in coming months:

June 17: **Bob Westcott, Vinny Crici**; July 15: **James O'Malley, Nick Vermitsky**

Don't forget, an open mic follows the featured performers.

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## ISS Member News

### Defibrillators to Play at Riverhead Blues Festival

The Defibrillators, the blues band whose members include ISS Director **Sonny Speed** and master songsmith **Sonny Meadows**, are scheduled to play at the annual Riverhead Blues Festival. The Defibrillators are slated to take the stage at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, July 18. The festival kicks off at 5 p.m. on Friday, July 16 and wraps up Sunday evening.

The Defibrillators also are scheduled to open for Leon Russell on July 24 at the Downtown in Farmingdale. The Defibrillators' set is scheduled to start at 8 p.m. Two days earlier, on July 22, the band is scheduled to perform live at 8 p.m. on WUSB-FM 90.1.

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### Open Mics

**Borders, Jericho Turnpike**, Syosset, hosted by Bill "Scoop" Ryan, first Thursday of the month. Sign-up at 7:30 p.m. *Next gig: July 1.*

**Starbucks, Main Street**, Huntington, 7 p.m. Mondays.

**Book Revue, New York Ave**, Huntington, discontinued

**Madonna Cafe, 1 Clinton St.**, Huntington, suspended until further notice.

**Pisces Cafe, Railroad Ave**, Babylon, 8 p.m. Wednesdays.

### University Cafe

**Suny/Stony Brook**, hosted by **Sonny Speed**, 8:30 p.m. third Thursday of the month. Featured performers followed by open mic. *Next gig: June 17.*

### Borders Showcase

**Borders, Old Country Road, Westbury**, hosted by **Rich Stein**, 8 p.m. third Friday of the month. *Next gig: June 18.*

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### Newsletter

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