

December 2006

NEW BLOOD AT ISS

Newcomers Making an Impression

Who Played What

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

Steve Leiber

Bina

David Baily

The Side of the Road

Bill Goldsmith

Follow Your Dream Forever

Steve Robinson

Duncan Yo-yo

Bill Mega

Love's Not Just a Game

Frank Gambino

The Map

Christine Baker

Sagittarius and Scorpio

Suzanne Ernst

Untitled

Mark Hussey

Guru Talk

Estelle Henrich

Great Outdoor Landscaping Company

Josh Levine

This May Be Love

Steve Bregman

Angel

Larry Cherowski

Fifty

Vincent Gangi

She Devil

Walter Sargent

That Makes the World Go Round

Tim Dillon

The Crossing

Adam Winter

Related

A.J. Ross

Letting Go

Howard Pavane

Together Forever

Mike Svezia

There Must Be A Way Out

By Pedro Pereira

The ISS' efforts stepped-up efforts to attract new blood are paying off, judging from the number of new members recently at the monthly workshops. And the newcomers are wasting no time in making an impression, collecting praise from the membership for the quality of the songs they have been bringing to the workshops.

ISS workshops take place monthly at Five Towns College in Dix Hills. They kick off around 7:30 on the first Monday of the month, with each member who is presenting a song getting his or her turn in front of the membership. The idea is to offer constructive criticism on the songs so everyone can become a better songwriter.

Song of the month

By Walter Sargent

Each month the membership votes on the Writer's Choice award, and the winner in November was "The Crossing" by ISS newcomer **Tim Dillon**. The room was packed and Tim's song was one of what is quite possibly a record 20 tunes presented during a workshop.

"The Crossing" is a flawlessly constructed song that felt traditional and authentic. Members described it as "mesmerizing" and "beautiful," and one said, "Don't change a thing."

ISS Open Mics This Month

Asta Wine Café and Art Gallery, Huntington: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6

Batata Café, Northport: 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 7

Cool Beanz, St. James: 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, 16 and 30

Hot on his heels was "Duncan Yo-Yo" by **Steve Robinson** and my own "That Makes the World Go Round." In "Duncan Yo-Yo," Steve wrapped his message in references to the classic yo-yo tricks and delivered it with his smooth and smoky trademark style. "Play it on the radio," wrote one member. But then again, all of Steve's stuff sounds like it belongs on the radio.

"That Makes the World Go Round" was constructed around four short verses about the consumer economy with a modulation at the end of each verse. Every verse went up a half-step. I call it "key inflation."

Newcomer **Adam Winter** scored with "Related." Jazzy, and poetic, Adam showed us lyrical and musical depth. A "great, unique song," wrote one member.

Another newcomer, **Christine Baker**, won acclaim with "Sagittarius and Scorpio", which had a very strong story, imagery and musical ideas. "Nice story, clever chorus riff," wrote one member.

Continued on the next page



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 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: Jan. 8*

On the Web

For more information about ISS and organization-sponsored events, be sure to visit our web site at www.islandsongwriters.org

Song of the month

Continued from previous page

By the way, it is worth noting that the ISS crowd is not known for being "easy" on newcomers. Congratulations to everyone who took a turn on the hot seat!

ISS veterans **Bill Goldsmith** and **Frank Gambino** were also nominated for their songs, "Follow Your Dream Forever" and "The Map," respectively. Bill never fails to deliver a great hook, but I think "Follow Your Dream..." actually had three hooks.

With "The Map", Frank continues to reach beyond his very reliable sense of humor for something more meaningful. I think it's working. As one member put it, "I didn't want to relate...but I did."

On a final note, let me explain why I have been giving everyone "awards" in recent newsletters. It is not simply to make everyone feel good. Songwriters who want to promote their music need to get other people talking about it, and that is not easy. It is completely legitimate to use these "impromptu awards" in a press kit. If it announces a strength or some unique quality of the writer, it is all to the good.

Little Toby Walker to Record Live Album

Long Island's favorite bluesman **Little Toby Walker** is recording a live album during a show on Jan. 26 at the Boulton Center for the Performing Arts in Bay Shore. For more information, check out Toby's site at <http://www.littletobywalker.com>.

Wanted: New Editor

Here is an opportunity for an ISS member to get more involved with the organization: Take over as newsletter editor, a position that has been filled by **Pedro Pereira** for the past five years. Anyone interested should contact Pedro at pedropereira@verizon.net or ISS Director Sonny Speed at mcspeed@optonline.net. But, for goodness' sake, please hurry; this offer won't last forever!

Open Mics

Borders, Jericho Turnpike, Syosset, hosted by Bill Ryan or Vincent Crici, first Friday of the month. Sign-up at 7:30 p.m. *Next gig: Jan. 5*
Bartini Bar, 124 Carl Ave., Babylon, 8:30 p.m. Mondays
Asta Wine and Art Gallery, 335 Main Street, Huntington, 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., second Wednesday of the month. *Next gig: Dec. 6*
Cool Beanz, 25A St. James, 8 p.m. Saturdays through December and January

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To submit newsletter items, contact Pedro Pereira at pedropereira@verizon.net. Visit our web site at www.islandsongwriters.org.

