

Connecticut Songsmith

Newsletter of the Connecticut
Songwriters Association



CSA is an educational, non-profit organization dedicated to
improving the art and craft of original musical and lyrical composition.
Serving music's artisans and craftsmen since 1979.



Nov 2008
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Combining Arts,
Education, and
Community Outreach

1979 - 2008 : 29 Years of Combining Arts, Education, and Community Outreach

MEET THE PUBLISHER

An Evening with Jordan Tishler of Digital Bear Entertainment,
based in Boston -- Tues Nov 4, Middletown

Present Your Songs to an Award Winning Producer

The CSA meeting for November will be held Tuesday, 7:15, Wesleyan University, Middletown, (*directions page 2*).

The role of Publisher and Producer in today's music scene has evolved, and our special guest for this meeting, Jordan Tishler, represents the modern version of Publisher and Producer for today's Independent Artist.

Jordan has been involved in the music industry for 20 years, and is a classically trained musician. As a songwriter, he has many record and film credits, and he is also an accomplished audio engineer.

Jordan is Chairman Emeritus of the New England chapter of the Audio Engineering Society. He present nationally at various music conference events.

Jordan's Digital Bear Entertainment company has a stellar team of industry pros, and the songs they produce for up-and-coming artists have won many national awards, including an entry in the 2006 Grammys.

This program is free to members, \$5 to non-members.

CSA is taking the month of December off, so we can all enjoy the Holidays with friends and family.

We'll see you in 2009 with another great year of helping songwriters and artists achieve their goals.

CSA CRITIQUE SESSIONS: At regular monthly meetings, following the presentation, as time permits, there will be a song critique session. To participate, bring a song on cassette or CD, or do it live, with 20 copies of typed lyric sheets, and receive constructive feedback. Critique sessions are a good forum for works in progress or rough demos. For best feedback, note on your lyric sheets the intended genre and audience for your song, and what your goals are (i.e. picked up by a commercial artist, self-produce, etc.. Do NOT state what the song is "about". For non-members, \$5 of your guest fee is applicable toward membership if you join within 30 days. Members are encouraged to bring a friend who might be interested in what CSA offers. .

CSA EVENTS CALENDAR

(for complete listing see <http://www.ctsongs.com>)

Nov 4 - CSA Meeting. Wesleyan, Middletown, with special guest from Boston, Producer Jordan Tishler of Digital Bear Music

Nov 15 - CSA Collaboration Concert: The 2008 Day of Praise, Hamden

Dec 6 - 12th Annual LUNCH Holiday Show, Stonington

STAY TUNED FOR OUR 2009 SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER 15: Dunbar United Church of Christ, in Hamden, 7:30pm

CSA presents the annual "Day of Praise" a collaborative concert of spiritual/inspirational songs to benefit local social services

COMBINING ARTS, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR 29 YEARS

Guiding Songs Along the Path from Creation to Realization to Proliferation

Directions to Wesleyan University:

- The meeting room at Wesleyan is B2B, South College near the Chapel in the core of the campus.
- **From New Haven** take I 91 north to Exit 18 which is Route 66 which becomes Washington St in Middletown. Go right onto High St. after Memorial Green. The chapel and South College are on High St. See Wesleyan Univ. sign at the corner of Washington and High St.
 - From the Merritt / Wilbur Cross Parkway** (Route 15) to Route 66 east to Middletown.
 - From Hartford or from New London**, take Route 9 to Exit 15 in Middletown. This is Route 66 which becomes Washington St. High St is a left just before the Green.
 - From Waterbury**, take I 691 past Meriden. 691 becomes Route 66. See above.
 - For automated travel directions call 860-685-3390.

**How to
Get There!**

**REMINDER -- FINAL CALL for the current CSA Compilations --
Get your submissions in. See page 5**

GET A TAX DEDUCTION FOR YOUR OLD STUFF

If you have any old music or office equipment lying around or just old "stuff" that you don't need, consider donating it to CSA and you'll get a generous tax deduction !

CSA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all items donated to us can be deducted at their maximum fair market value. We have helped many folks get nice deductions for their old items, which certainly can be useful to us either in our regular CSA programs or our community outreach programs through LUNCH.

We can use any office equipment and supplies, old computers, any type of music and studio equipment, and any type of item that could be used for auction or raffle. We'll provide a tax receipt that will give you the best possible tax-deduction.

If you have anything that you might like to donate, contact Bill Pere at bill@billpere.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for various CSA projects and roles.

CSA tries to bring you the best programs every month, with workshops, industry pros, performance opportunities, compilation recordings, and special events. The more people we have helping out, the better the programs we can provide. Our 30th anniversary is coming up. It will be as special as the level of participation we get can make it. Here are some of the things you can do to help CSA:

- Help set up at meetings. Take care of the sign-in table and name tags.
- Bring a snack to share with folks at meetings. Hospitality is always appreciated.
- Tell other musical folks you know about CSA. Put a membership form in their hands
(print it out from the website). We need every CSA member to try to get at least one new person to join.
- Volunteer set up a showcase or benefit event
- Make donation to our 30th anniversary fundraising campaign. Support CSA by purchasing the Compilation CDs and other CSA merchandise.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR RECENT CSA VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE STEPPED UP TO DO SPECIAL PROJECTS FOR US. Gale Gardiner coordinated the 2007 Day of Praise event in West Hartford. Linda Bonadies is coordinating the 2008 Day of Praise concert in Hamden. Bonnie Panda organized a benefit concert in Wallingford. Don Donegan hosts the CSA Summer Showcases in Glastonbury. There is always room for folks who want to get involved. Success comes from opportunity, and opportunity comes from involvement. Be an active CSA volunteer !

HAVE YOU GOTTEN A FRIEND TO JOIN CSA YET ? Make it a goal for the coming year to get at least one new person to become part of the CSA community ! **We need your help !**



CALLING ALL WRITERS

ANNOUNCING THE CSA 2008 COMPILATIONS



Get your songs in by October 31, 2008 to insure eligibility! *(after 10/31, contact us for status - we might be able to take a few more)*

CSA Compilation CDs have received radio airplay and are displayed at national conferences, and the digital downloads pay artist royalties.

1: SONGS of SOCIAL RELEVANCE - Songs that address an issue of social importance -- hunger, homelessness, the environment, substance abuse, global warming..... This is your chance to speak out and be heard. **TIP: Don't just write a song that preaches -- Make your point by showing it, not telling it.**

2: SPIRITUAL/INSPIRATIONAL SONGS - Our 3rd collection in this very popular series. See our previous Spiritual/Inspirational collections "Share the Journey" and "Along the Road" for examples of songs that fit this category.

3: HUMOROUS/NOVELTY SONGS - We started this category in 2007 but we're continuing to collect songs in this group, as we still have space -- If your song doesn't fit anywhere else, this is probably the place. We want songs about off-beat topics, written with a twinkle in your eye and a tongue-in-cheek. Let's bring some laughter into the world!

GUIDELINES:

- At least one writer must be a current CSA member
- All songs must be professionally produced, up to 'radio-ready' standards.
- Social Relevance songs must address a specific topic and social issue, such as hunger, homelessness, substance abuse, the environment, global warming, etc...
- Spiritual Inspirational songs must be appropriate to the category. See examples on the previous CSA Compilations "Share the Journey" and "Along the Road".
- Songs for the Humorous/Novelty compilation must be appropriate for the theme of the collection. Songs should feature unusual topics, tongue-in-cheek lyrics designed to bring a smile to the listener, or to just present a totally whimsical idea or story.

Please specify for which CD Collection you are submitting.

- Any musical style is okay
- Submission is NOT a guarantee of acceptance. Songs will be selected based on :
 - Appropriateness to the theme
 - Song Crafting
 - Production Quality (must be professionally recorded and radio-ready)
 - Available space on the CD (if there are more acceptable submissions than can fit on the CD, those submitted earlier and those of shorter length will be given greater consideration.
- Songs must not violate the terms of any third-party agreement (e.g. with a publisher). Unsigned songs are preferred. If a song is under contract to a publisher, a signed release from the publisher must be provided.
- Songs may not have been included on any previous CSA CD Compilation
- Submissions will not be returned.
- At CSA discretion, songs from the compilations may be made available for digital downloads, with royalties paid to the writers.

TO SUBMIT, PLEASE SEND THE FOLLOWING:

- A recording of the song on CD, suitable for duplication (put your name and contact info on the CD)
- Clearly indicate the TIME of the track, in minutes: seconds
- A lyric sheet (put your name and contact info on the lyric sheet)
- A signed release form, printed out from the CSA web site (www.ctsongs.com)
- A non-refundable one-time \$10 per song processing fee payable to CSA.
If you want your complementary copy to be mailed to you, please include \$2 for postage.
(there are no additional costs, whether a song is accepted for inclusion or not)

Send your recording, lyric sheet, release form, and \$10 (+ \$2 postage) to CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355.

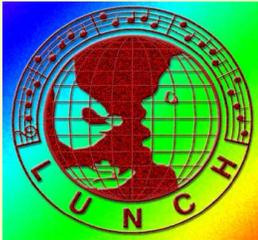
IF YOU HAVE A SONG which is not yet fully produced and you want to know if it acceptable for consideration before doing the production, you may bring it to a CSA critique session



**Connecticut
Songwriters
Association**

(www.ctsongs.com)

and



**Local
United
Network to
Combat
Hunger**

(www.lunchensemble.com)

**Three Decades
of Using the
Power of
Popular Music
to Produce
Positive Social
Action**

SATURDAY NOV 15, 2008

**Dunbar United Church of Christ
767 Benham St., Hamden CT**

A DAY OF PRAISE

**CSA Performance Collaboration and Release Concert
for the CSA Spiritual/Inspirational Compilations.**

**Spiritual and Inspirational Music to Benefit
Local Social Services through LUNCH**
(see www.lunchensemble.com)

- 1:00pm - 5:00pm:** Gather to learn each other's songs to play and sing backup as needed. Setup and Sound Check.
- 5:00pm - 6:00 pm:** Fellowship dinner (bring a dish to share - kitchen facilities available)
- 6:00pm - 6:30pm:** Kitchen cleanup, set up post-show reception for audience
Doors open for concert
- 7:00pm - 9:00 pm:** Concert, open to the public. (Tickets: \$10)

Registration in advance for CSA members is only \$10 for the entire program
Make checks payable to CSA PO Box 511 Mystic CT 06355
For questions, Contact Bill Pere at info@ctsongwriting.com.

All CSA members are welcome to participate in performing the songs. Artists who have songs on any of the CSA Spiritual/Inspirational or Holiday Compilations are invited to present the song at the concert, and to teach the other artists any back-up parts you may want. It is your responsibility to provide written chord sheets, music, and lyrics as needed. We will have approximately 20 minutes to work on each song., so keep it simple. Each artist gets to have one of their songs done by the ensemble, and everyone can participate in everyone else's song.

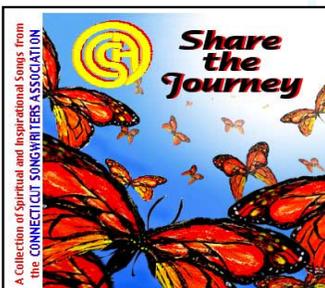
If you do not have a song on the CD but would like to perform at the concert you are certainly welcome to participate in the group.

.We welcome other performers to do backup parts on the songs.

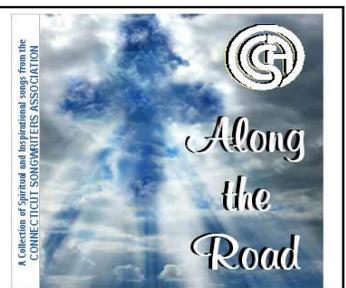
Contact Bill Pere at bill@ctsongwriting.com

All registrants may have a spot on the merchandise table to display and sell CD's. It is requested that \$1 of each item sold be donated to LUNCH

**On Behalf of the 100,000 hungry children
in Connecticut, Thanks for Caring**



Dunbar United Church of Christ
www.dunbarchurch.com
767 Benham St, Hamden, CT
NOVEMBER 15, 2008



Announcing:
**THE VOICES FOR HOPE
MUSIC AND SERVICE-LEARNING
SCHOLARSHIP**

**Vocalists, ages 11-19, are invited to participate in
the 2008-09 Voices for Hope
Music and Service-Learning Scholarship Vocal Competition**

AN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG VOCALISTS

Finalists audition live and perform at a concert event.

The winner receives

- a \$500 scholarship
- featured performance opportunity at a major event
- audition for music industry professionals
- professional recording opportunity with worldwide distribution
- professional vocal and performance coaching in recording technique

**ENTRY
DEADLINE:
Feb 28, 2009**

All participants become part of a service learning outreach through LUNCH (Local United Network to Combat Hunger) which supports social service agencies providing food, shelter and services to those in need.

**EVENT DETAILS AND ENTRY FORMS are available
online at www.lunchensemble.com**

VOICES FOR HOPE is a community service outreach of
L.U.N.C.H. (Local United Network to Combat Hunger),
Mystic CT - www.lunchensemble.com

**TO SEE AND HEAR PREVIOUS VOICES FOR HOPE EVENTS AND
WINNERS, Visit www.lunchensemble.com**



For further information, visit the
websites or contact

Bill Pere bill@billpere.com

This year's Voices For Hope
Events will benefit Special Voices,
which offers programs for kids
with special challenges, and The
Foundation for Autism Training
and Education





LOCAL
UNITED
NETWORK to
COMBAT
HUNGER

Songs of the Season,
Harry Chapin
Favorites, and an
original play to benefit
Local Family Service
Agencies

Using the power of popular music to produce positive social action

Where do you think the Elves learn to use their Christmas Magic ?

When the students of Hogwarts go on Christmas break, Santa takes over....

with appearances by your favorite characters :

Harry Shopper, the Evil Wizard WeideMart, Headmaster Double-Door, Mr Fudge, Weasel, and many more... and also, the long awaited return of -- DoNut the Barbarian !

FEATURING Bill Pere, Kay Pere, Larry Batter, Scott Sivakoff, and the LUNCH Ensemble

with **Elves, Reindeer, Santa, a bunch of crazy characters, and professional artists from the Connecticut Songwriters Association carrying on the legacy of HARRY CHAPIN**

TICKETS: Adults: \$ 10 in advance, \$12 at the door
Kids (Under 12) \$ 8 in advance, \$10 at the door

On sale November 1, 2008. Seating is limited so Reserve in Advance with Visa or Mastercard Call 860-572-9285 to reserve.

An Annual Family Favorite!

to benefit local Social Services

The 2008 L.U.N.C.H. Holiday Show

featuring

Harry Shopper and the Order FRom Phoenix

Coming Down your Chimney on Saturday, December 6, 7:00pm

with special folk, holiday and sing-along music beginning at 6:15pm

**Stonington Community Center
28 Cutler St.
Stonington CT**

You too can learn the powerful "Retailus Exorbitum" spell !

FOOD FOR THOUGHT -- YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

On behalf of Connecticut's 100,000 hungry children, Thanks for Caring.

One of the biggest hurdles faced by today's songwriter or performer is the fear of having to tread the complex and unfamiliar waters of the business side of music. Or the murky shadows of music technology, recording, and MIDI. Or the mists and fog of producing your own concerts. Unfamiliarity begets fear, and fear begets inaction -- thus a promising career stalls. In these articles written by Author and Columnist Robert Wilson, we look at the essence of motivation and how to venture into -- the Un-Comfort Zone.

THE UN-COMFORT ZONE with Robert Wilson: Don't Get Stuck in Reverse

I love this quote by Gandalf the Gray from the book *Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien, "When we despair we cease to choose well. We give in to short cuts." It's so true and we all know that we have been guilty of it at some point in our lives. It reminds me of the Dot Com Bubble that burst in March of 2000 and caused the stock market to crash, I remember those heady days of "irrational exuberance" as Federal Reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan referred to it. It seemed like everyone was worried they were going to miss out on the digital revolution. They were motivated by the dreams of easy money. It was all about taking a short cut. Several start ups approached me to help them promote their new Internet businesses in exchange for stock options.

I looked at a couple of cobbled together companies that were little more than a guy with a website and the hopes of mining some venture capital. The idea was to generate web page hits with a clever name or gimmick, sell a ton of stock at the Initial Public Offering, then retire a millionaire. I decided to stick with those willing to pay in cash. After the burst, I read about a repo man in Silicon Valley who repossessed the expensive cars of former Internet millionaires. He reported that he frequently found dozens of losing lottery tickets in the cars -- evidence that the former car owners were acting out of despair and looking for short cuts back to the elusive wealth that had slipped from their grasp. Beverly Sills, the famous opera soprano, once said, "There are no shortcuts to any place worth going." But, too often when times are good we pile on the responsibilities.

Later on when we encounter adversity, we look backwards instead of forward. We attempt to go back to where we enjoyed success in the past even when it is counter-productive to our current goal. In my seminars on innovation I conduct a fun exercise that demonstrates how we frequently feel we must go backwards before we can go forward. A volunteer from the audience is selected and sent out of the room. The audience chooses a simple behavior they want the volunteer to do (like jumping up and down on their left foot). What makes it fun is that the volunteer must guess the behavior. The audience can only help by saying the word, "yes" when the volunteer does anything that comes close to the desired behavior. They are not allowed to say, "no" or give any other hints. Once the volunteer performs the desired behavior, the audience rewards it with a round of applause. I ask for a second volunteer, but this time we change the rules after the person leaves the room. When the desired behavior is reached, the audience goes silent, says nothing, and gives no applause. Since the volunteer is no longer getting feedback in the form of "yes" he or she will go back and repeat behaviors that did elicit a "yes." The audience, however, remains silent.

As we watch the volunteer, we can see despair forming on his or her face. The volunteer will then go further backward to find a previous behavior that generated success. Eventually the volunteer quits going backwards and starts initiating brand new behaviors in the hopes of regaining another, "yes." It is after several new behaviors are performed that the audience is signaled to applaud and reward the volunteer for his or her efforts. The purpose of the exercise is to force the volunteer to backtrack to the point that they realize success can only be found by moving forward. In life, the trick is to stay focused even when our luck seems to be changing. We may have to slow down or make changes in our methods, but the goal must remain the same. Henry David Thoreau observed, "We rarely hit where we do not aim." In other words, if you're moving backward you are moving away from your goal... and it's hard to hit a target when you're facing the wrong direction.

SONGCRAFTERS' COLORING BOOK

by Bill Pere

The Three Levels of Critique

From our previous discussions, we know there are four roles in the creation phase of a song -- lyricist, composer, idea generator, and sounding board. The Sounding Board, i.e., a source of objective feedback, is the one role you cannot fulfill yourself. There is little doubt that critique is one of the best ways to learn whether or not your songs are having the desired effect on listeners, and what you might do to fully unlock the potential of your creation. To maximize the benefits of receiving feedback, it is important to understand the three distinct levels of critique, and how to use them for improving your work.

The first level of critique is the easiest to get, and can be provided by anyone, anywhere. It is the simple "I like it" / "I don't like it" response. Although it can be stated many ways, this ultimately is just the listener telling you whether or not the song fits their subjective taste. This type of information from each person is a single data point. If you gather many of these data points, you can get an idea if the song is reaching a significant number of people, and what the demographic is (young, old, male, female, etc). This is certainly useful information, but in terms of helping you improve your craft, it is of little value. It gives no insight as to WHY the person likes or does not like your song, nor if they actually understand it. Without that knowledge, you have no actionable information -- nothing you can use in your future writing to duplicate or to avoid certain responses.

The second level of critique, which is most frequently found in songwriter groups or from well-informed music appreciators, is the type of feedback that addresses the major aspects of songwriting such as overall structure (placement of verse, chorus, bridge), appropriateness of title, clarity of meaning, flow of logic, effectiveness of the hook, marriage of music and lyric, rhyme scheme, grammar, concreteness, mixed metaphors, and perhaps some comments on performance/production, if appropriate. Most people who are involved with songwriter groups or courses are aware of these song parameters, and can comment on them. The more specific a comment is, the more actionable information you get as the songwriter (and of course, your chosen action can be to ignore a particular piece of input). This is clearly the most frequent type of information given at CSA critiques or similar forums. It is also the most common type of input given from panels of industry pros, or in many workshops where lots of songs have to be critiqued in a short time.

In getting this type of information, it is essential that the songwriter and the critiquer be on the same page regarding the writer's intent for the song -- the above factors have different degrees of significance and applicability depending on whether the song is intended for a mainstream commercial market (and specifically, which genre), a film or musical, a specific artist (Indie, or mainstream), third-party or self-publishing, a specific niche audience, a specific purpose, self-expression, etc.. A critique from a Nashville perspective of a song intended only to be a tribute to your parents' anniversary is of no value to you, or to the critiquer. The song's purpose (but *not* its meaning) is best stated up front in the critique process.

The third level of critique is the most difficult to find, as it requires critiquers who are thoroughly familiar with the more detailed song parameters and how to analyze them. These include the interplay of every vowel and consonant sound, the klang effect of every syllable and word, the understanding of audience psychology, the horizontal and vertical mapping of song elements, and understanding of composition and music theory. This type of critique for a given song, takes a fair amount of time, as it requires going line by line, word by word, chord by chord, motif by motif, and presenting a thorough analysis. Critique like this is valuable and is often a paid service of good songwriting coaches, provided in one-on-one consultation. Occasionally, you can find a Level-3 critiquer at open songwriting forums and workshops, but rarely is there the time to be thorough when many songs have to be reviewed. The value in this type of analysis lies in the fact that the information you get is based on communication and psycholinguistic principles which work across most songs and most styles, allowing you to develop techniques which you can use over and over in your writing.

It's always up to you to determine what the right level of critique is for your songs and goals, and how to use it to improve your craft, but it is essential to understand the three-tier nature of critique in order for you to make informed decisions about what's right for you. (For more, see Bill's article on "Taking the Mystique Out of Critique" at www.billpere.com/Songwriter_Tools.html.)

Bill Pere is President of the Connecticut Songwriters Association and Executive Director of the Connecticut Songwriting Academy. He presents songwriting workshops at conferences and events across the U.S., and was named IMC Indie Artist of the Year. Bill is a recording artist, award winning songwriter, performer, and educator well known for his superbly crafted lyrics, with lasting impact, as heard on his 17 released CDs. Bill is an Official Connecticut State Troubadour, and is the Founder and Executive Director of the LUNCH Ensemble (www.lunchensemble.com). Twice named Connecticut Songwriter of the Year, Bill is qualified MBTI practitioner, a certified public educator, and a member of CMEA and MENC helping develop young talent in songwriting, performing, and learning about the music business. His long-awaited book "Songcrafters Coloring Book: The Essential Guide to Effective and Successful Songwriting" will be released in 2009.