

Connecticut Songsmith

Newsletter of the Connecticut
Songwriters Association



Feb-Mar 2015
Vol. XXXVI
Number 2
Issue # 410

Combining Arts,
Education, and
Community Outreach

1979-2015 : 36 Years of Combining Arts, Education, and Community Outreach

Three Events for You in February and March

Tuesday February 10, 7:15PM

Mystic Morgan House, 121 High St, Mystic

There are well-crafted songs that are not hits, and there are not-so-well-crafted songs that do become hits. "Craft" and "Popularity" are separate song parameters, not necessarily tied together.

We'll listen to some songs that are considered "successful" and look at whether or not they are well-crafted. Then you may present your songs and we'll have an in-depth critique to provide you with constructive feedback.

To have a song critiqued, bring multiple lyric sheets, and a song on CD or mp3 device, or do it live. CSA critiques are considered among the best in the industry.

THE CSA MARCH EVENT WILL BE HELD IN FEBRUARY, Saturday February 21 9am-5pm

at University of Massachusetts (UMASS) in Lowell, MA. CSA teams up with the New England Music Awards to present a songwriting workshop, and a day of mentoring along with panels and workshops from many music professionals on a range of topics. There is no better way to network than to attend a conference – and it is FREE!

Details here: <http://nemusicawards.com/nemacon15>

ALSO IN MARCH, Fri-Sat February 21 9am-5pm

at Congress Hall, Cape May, NJ: The Annual Singer-Songwriter Conference (SS Calpe May). Two days of great workshops and panels with current music professionals. CSA will be there with 3 workshops and a mentoring station. DETAILS:

<http://www.sscape.amy.com>

GET INVOLVED !

Success comes from opportunity. Opportunity comes from involvement. Get involved!

CRITIQUE SESSIONS

Following regular CSA programs, as time permits, there will be a critique session. To participate in the critique session, members may bring a song on CD (or do it live), with 15 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.). The programs at most CSA monthly meetings, except for special workshops, are free to members, \$10 to non-members, applicable toward membership if you join within 30 days. Members are encouraged to bring a friend who might be interested in what CSA offers.

EVENT CALENDAR

(for complete listing see www.ctsongs.com)

Feb 10 – CSA Meeting, Song Development Workshop
Feb 21 – CSA is at the NEMA Conference, in Lowell, MA
Mar 27-28 – CSA is at SS Cape May Conference
Apr 10-12 CSA Songwriting Retreat Weekend!
May 12 – Collaboration Workshop, Mystic
Jun - CSA meeting TBA
July- Picnic/Jam performance opportunity
Sept-Nov: Fall meetings
Dec 05 – 19th Annual LUNCH Holiday Show

PLAN AHEAD!

CSA 2015 SONGWRITING RETREAT

ONLY A COUPLE OF SPOTS LEFT !

Don't Miss Out.

Every CSA retreat has been an amazing weekend, again eliciting descriptions of "Life-Changing" and "Inspiring". April 10-12 2015

WWW.CTSONGS.COM

GIVE YOUR SONGWRITING A JUMP-START AND GET ON THE FAST-TRACK!

Guiding Artists Along the Path from Creation to Realization to Proliferation

CSA RHYTHM AND NEWS

CSA Meeting January 14: Directions to the Morgan House, 121 High St, Mystic: I-95 going North, Exit 89, turn right on to Allyn St. I-95 going South, Exit 89, turn left onto Allyn St. Go to the intersection of Rt 1 (2nd light), turn Left, heading toward downtown Mystic. You'll quickly come to a 5-way intersection. On your left is Union Baptist Church. Take a left and enter the church parking lot. The Morgan House is the large white house on your right. Enter from the wooden walkway near the playground around back.

How to
Get There!

CSA's community outreach through music, LUNCH, is now registered with the Amazon Smile program. When you enter Amazon through the link below, a portion of your purchase is automatically donated to LUNCH. It's exactly the same Amazon that you currently know, but you enter it through this special link. Bookmark it, and you're all set to support our community outreach efforts through music. YOU can make a difference - please help!

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/06-1530307>



Support Local United Network To Combat Hunger by shopping at AmazonSmile.
smile.amazon.com

When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon will donate to Local United Network To Combat Hunger. Support us every time you...

GET A NICE 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, computers and electronics, 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. THANKS !

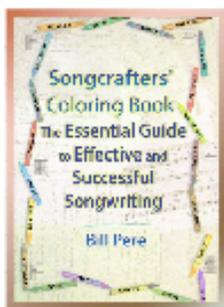
**JUST A COUPLE OF SLOTS REMAIN FOR THE
2015 CSA SONGWRITING RETREAT. DON'T MISS OUT!
REGISTER NOW FOR LOWEST RATES AND A GUARANTEED SPOT!
DON'T MISS THIS CHANCE**

LAST CHANCE !

CSA SONGWRITING RETREAT

FAST-TRACK
YOUR
CAREER!

What others have said:
"Life-Changing! "A Transformative Experience!"
"You've given me a whole new way to approach songwriting"
REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN- LIMITED TO JUST 12 SLOTS
Slots are going - Reserve your spot now!
Take control of your creative process!
Take your songwriting to a new level!
Get several years worth of CSA knowledge and experience in one weekend!
You'll see songwriting in a whole new way and
discover a level of creative control you never thought possible.



April 10-12 2015, at Camp Wightman, North Stonington, CT
A time away from the distractions of everyday life, where all you have to think about is your music. A beautiful setting in the woods, with meals and lodging provided, and a group size limited to 12. You'll get personalized attention guaranteed to give you new ways to improve the effectiveness of your writing, and bring it to a new level.

Artists from 12 states and 3000 miles have come to this retreat. It has been called "Transformative", "Life-Changing", and "Inspiring!"
Folks have even come from Canada!
REGISTER NOW! DON'T BE LEFT OUT!

This program of Master Classes, performance and critique, is based on the concepts of Bill Pere's internationally acclaimed songwriting book, "Songcrafters' Coloring Book", and led by Bill and Kay. This content, presented nationally at major conference events, is not available anywhere else at this affordable cost. All the details about the program, the facilities, schedule and registration are online at:

<http://www.ctsongs.com/Retreat/SongwritingRetreat.htm>

See what others have said -- Check photos /reviews of the last retreat at the CSA website

The program is limited to 12 participants. The earlier you register, the lower the cost, and it guarantees your spot. **The cost includes meals, lodging, and all workshops.**

(Note: If you have to arrive late or leave early, we cannot make cost adjustments).

Register by: Member rate is for active **members of CSA, RISA, Songsalive, IndieGrrl, IMC**

(Before Nov 1, 2014) Member Rate = \$149 Non-member = \$169

(Nov 1 - Feb 28, 2015) Member Rate = \$169 Non-member = \$189

(After Mar 1, 2015) Member Rate = \$179 Non Member = \$199

**MEALS AND
LODGING
INCLUDED !**

Two ways to Register, for your maximum convenience and security:

1. PAYPAL SECURE REGISTRATION ONLINE (www.ctsongs.com)

2. BY MAIL: Send check or Money Order payable to CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355 (Include your e-mail address, phone number, street address, and member ID # (if a member of CSA, RISA, IndieGrrl, Songsalive, IMC))

QUESTIONS ? Check the Website www.ctsongs.com for FAQ Info, photos, and reviews
If you don't find what you need, e-mail us at retreat@ctsongwriting.com

Taylor Swift, Spotify, and the Musical Food Chain Myth

(source.nationwidedisc.com/taylor-swift-spotify-and-the-musical-food-chain-myth/)

by Doria Roberts © 2014 Doria Roberts/Chatterbox Blues

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.” –Alice Walker

	<p>About Doria Roberts</p> <p>After relocating to Atlanta in 1996 from Philadelphia, singer/songwriter Doria Roberts stumbled into the legendary Eddie’s Attic Open Mic just hoping to get a chance to play. Instead, she wound up winning its bi-annual shoot out (which has also been won by John Mayer and Jennifer Nettles). Three years later, she was chosen to represent Atlanta (again along with Nettles) at the original Lilith Fair in 1999 where she was plucked from the side stage to perform solos with Sarah McLachlan and the Indigo Girls on the Lakewood Amphitheater main stage. She’s been performing and recording since then. Doria has released six studio projects with international distribution on her own Hurricane Doria Records imprint and most recently released an original musical tribute to Odetta, the late civil rights singer/songwriter and activist who was also a mentor and friend of Roberts’. Photo credit: (c) Zack Arias/UsedFilm</p>
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I cannot tell you how happy I am that the conversation about [Taylor Swift and Spotify](#) is happening. Maybe people will start listening to what independent artists like me and my peers have been saying for years now.

A little background...

For those who don’t know me, I’ve been a indie musician by choice for 22 years. In 1999, I was chosen to perform at Lilith Fair and quit my day job the following Monday. I attracted several major labels, but ultimately, I walked away because I felt the industry was not going to be supportive of me, the business model was almost laughable for a new artist with little leverage and an insidious law called the Work For Hire Copyright Law had been passed that year, which prevented copyright ownership from reverting back to artists and remained with record labels in perpetuity. Like, that means forever. Luckily, Sheryl Crow and Don Henley went to Capitol Hill and had it repealed, but, by then, I was determined not to be become a cog and had committed to my full time life as an artist. And, you know, I had good run of it...

Fast forward to 2008 when everything was crashing. I don’t think people think of artists being affected in a failing economy, but we were. Gas prices were sky high as were flights so expenses went up and venues started paying less because fewer were able to come out to the shows because they were broke, too. And, for the first time in all my touring history my American dollars lost value going into Canada. It was sobering to say the least.

In the years preceding this, I saw a slow but very deliberate decline in my music sales, which was more than just supplemental income, it was nearly half of my income. So, I stopped touring full time to assess the situation and come up with solutions. The only solution I found that allowed me to stay true to who I am an artist was to stay put—which brings me to today.

Life As An Artist Now

Like clockwork, once or twice a week since I stopped touring full time in 2008, I get asked when I’m coming back to XYZ. And, like a broken record once or twice a week, I’ve had to say I can’t afford it. I’ve had to explain that not only have physical CD sales been down, but also the digital money I used to get from legal downloads all but disappeared. Instead of getting weekly payments ranging between \$200-\$750 from my distributor, I started getting an average \$11.36, once a *month* from all streaming services *combined*. Yes, \$11.36/month is what I get from all of them. That is not a sustainable business model for a truly independent artist.

While carefully building and maintaining a social media connection with my fan base and doing mostly one-offs in some of my bigger markets, I decided to do a full regional tour in 2012. And, while I am grateful to the people who came, I had miserable turnouts at most of the shows. In Buffalo, where the temp dropped to 30 degrees that night, I cleared \$14 once the door was split with the venue. In Philadelphia, where I started my career, I lost upwards of \$1,500-2,000 on one show because only 12 people showed up. It was the night of the Presidential debates, something I couldn't have known when I booked the show months before. But, I still had to pay the venue, their door person and sound person, pay my band, pay for their hotel room and mine for three nights so we wouldn't have to stay in NYC, paid for their flights (along with baggage handling fees for my cellist's cello), my rental car, gas and food for myself and the band (breakfast, lunch and dinner). Same with DC where the venue wouldn't even allow me to officially charge a door fee and where some people (my fans included) opted not to pay one even as a requested donation.

This is my reality and the reality of the many artists you care about.

I'm sorry if you think so, but music is not free. It costs money to make and it costs money to support via touring. It's a "life cycle". This "life cycle" is how I used to get my CDs out and how I used to see my fans two to three times a year in some places. It worked like this: Fans would come to my shows, they and their friends would buy my CDs, and then I made another CD and went on another tour, and so forth and so on. Simple.

All the money I made went to bills, touring, promotion and creating new music and so I had to keep my overhead low. No new cars (I had and still have my '78 Volvo that I bought for \$600 in 1996), no new shoes or clothes and I lived in a small 425 sq ft apartment for 12 years. *12 years.* That's how I did it. It's not a sob story. It's not a mystery or a marketing ploy. I am a working class artist. There is no rich-uncle-wizard-behind-the-curtain type situation here. This is how it goes when you make tough decisions to be true to your life and your life's work. I have no regrets.

But, I'm seeing a lot of chatter about Taylor Swift and her supposed "greed". If you're saying it, you're probably saying it because Taylor is already wealthy. But, what about artists who aren't? If you or your friends are indeed one of those people, I challenge you and them to go to work for a year, bust your butt, do a good job (maybe even a great job) and then accept half of a year's pay (or less) from your boss. I further challenge you to pay your bills and keep your other financial commitments from that pay all while keeping your enthusiasm for your job—which is kind of essential for you to even do your job. Go on. I'll wait...

As indie artists, for all intents and purposes, our fans control our careers, the ebb and flow, trajectory and course. For example, if I hadn't raised enough via Kickstarter to do my last project, a tribute CD to folk legend Odetta, there wouldn't have been a new CD to this day. Period. No new CD in eight years even though I was able to release six projects on my own before that and have enough music for about four or five full length CDs right now.

Another example: I haven't been back on the road since 2012 because *I assume my fans don't want to see me or can't afford to see me* in NYC, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Buffalo, NY and Charlotte, NC. Because of that, I can't take a financial chance on Chicago, Seattle, Portland, Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Austin and the like. And, just forget Canada, France, Sweden, Japan or Australia altogether. I've remedied this by doing online shows on a platform called StageIt and this has allowed fans as far away as Vancouver, Taiwan, Germany and Boise, ID to see me play. It works, but it isn't ideal.

The point is, we haven't just "given up". It's not that we don't "want to" do it anymore. It is, painfully and honestly, simple math that mostly prevents me and others like me from doing what we do.

Think About This For A Minute

Before the comments section gets flooded with snarky retorts, like "get a job", I will say this: First, I have a job, one that I'm fairly good at and one that I've had for 22 years (or over half my life).

And, second, what if Bob Marley or Bob Dylan, Kurt Cobain or Joni Mitchell or Mozart, Frank Zappa, Joan Jett, Diana Ross, Prince, or Aretha Franklin had actually listened when someone (undoubtedly and repeatedly) said to them, "get a job"? What would your life look like?

What happens to the first dance at your wedding to that special song, the one that made you realize you loved her? Or, the

song you hum to your baby because it's the only one that makes him less fussy? What would you be distracted by in an elevator ride with your creepy co-worker who wears the same shirt every day? Or, what would you focus on when a dentist is drilling a hole the size of the Grand Canyon in your head? And, how, pray tell, would you know when Jaws or Jason or Darth Vader is coming so you can yell your futile warnings at the screen?

Okay, granted, those last few examples sound frivolous but they're serious considerations to make when you consider how music plays an integral and inseparable role in your life, from the mundane to the momentous. How it can be both ubiquitous and precious. That's something to protect. That's something to respect.

How To Make The Future Better

I want to tell you something: *as a consumer and a fan, you are at the top of this food chain, not the bottom. You are not subject to the whims of popular culture; you are the arbiter of it.* If you want to see less "fluff" in the music industry, if you want to see your artists remain authentic, creative and prolific beings and, if you want them to come back to your hometowns:

- *Start buying our music again.* Digital, hard copy, doesn't matter, just pay for it. If you can pay \$4 for the coffee you're only going to drink once or \$15 for a blockbuster movie you'll see once, you can pay \$9.99 for something meaningful that you'll have forever.
- *Stop using streaming services that only pay us \$.0006 per listen* if you don't already own our music either via a legal download or a hard copy. Educate yourself. If you think the profits that oil companies make are obscene, I urge you to do some digging about what some of these streaming companies are really about.
- And, this is important: *Set your DVRs on your favorite show nights and go to our concerts.* If I had a dime for every time a person told me they weren't able to make my show because it was the finals of DWTS/American Idol/The Voice, I wouldn't be writing this post. I'd be sitting in a bungalow in Costa Rica sipping something fruity and delicious.

Simple solutions sometimes require difficult choices.

Oh, and this goes for independent movies, books, indie/feminist bookstores, small venues, and small businesses, too.

Just know this: You have the power to change the cultural landscape around you. Use that power wisely.

CSA FEB-MARCH CONFERENCE EVENTS:

CSA WILL BE AT 2015 NEMACon (New England Music Awards Conference) Saturday Feb 21,
9-5pm at Durgin Hall, home of the UMass School of Music in Lowell, MA

CSA will be at the SS Cape May Singer-Songwriter Conference, Fri-Sat March 27-28 at Congress Hall,
in Cape May, NJ

Great opportunities for networking, making connections, and learning.

SONG CRITIQUES Members may bring a song or lyric on CD (or do it live) to the monthly meeting for critiquing by fellow members. Please bring 20 copies of typed lyric sheet. Out-of-State members may have their songs or lyrics critiqued by sending one submission with 20 typed copies of lyrics to: CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355. Include an e-mail address or a double stamped return envelope. Please note that since critiquing is designed to give constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement, songs which are meant only to be shared for self expression (as opposed to critiqued for improvement) should not be submitted. These can be presented in songsharing opportunities.

Questions about CSA Programs? Need To check your Membership status? Have a news item to submit? Want to volunteer for a project? Seeking a collaborator? Change of Address? It's easy to contact CSA.

General Info: www.ctsongs.com E-mail: info@ctsongs.com

Change of Address, Newsletter, Membership, Special Projects: CSA membership PO Box 511 Mystic CT 06355 E-Mail: info@ctsongwriters.com

CSA on the Web: www.ctsongs.com

• **COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES AND NETWORKING** : CSA provides opportunities to meet collaborators and providers of various music services. Make sure you're listed on our web site.

• **SONG SCREENING** : CSA helps its members get well-crafted songs targeted to their best potential market. Songs may be screened at meetings or by mail. Selected songs are eligible for inclusion on CSA compilation albums which are often given to industry pros. Songs submitted for screening must have been presented at a prior critique session. (exceptions on a case-by-case basis)

• **PARTICIPATION IN CSA MARKETING OUTLETS AND DISTRIBUTION** : Recordings by CSA members may be made available to retail outlets, radio stations, or Internet Distribution channels.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES: The [LUNCH](#) Program offers opportunities to be involved in the production and performance of benefit shows to address hunger and poverty . For details, contact info@ctsongwriting.com

CSA REGISTRATION FORM FOR NEW MEMBERS

NAME _____

ADDRESS: _____

E_MAIL (required for newsletter) _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____ BIRTH DATE _____

PHONE: (_____) _____ OCCUPATION: _____

CHECK WHERE APPROPRIATE __ Songwriter __ Lyricist

__ Vocalist

__ Composer __ Musician __ Patron Other: _____

Membership Categories

(outside the U.S., please add \$10 to all categories)
(All memberships include free electronic Newsletter Subscription. For a paper copy by mail, add \$10 per year)

1 year New Membership \$45

2 year New Membership \$80 (save \$10)

3 year New Membership \$109 (save \$26)

Full Time Student (under 19) \$40/yr

Senior Citizen (60+) \$40/yr

Lifetime \$400 one time total

e-Newsletter Subscription only (\$25/yr. 12 issues)

Members receive a free 1 year subscription to the monthly newsletter *Connecticut Songsmith*, free or discounted admission to monthly meetings and critique sessions, participation in the Song Share Sessions, Song Screening Services, eligibility for inclusion on Compilation CDs, free classified ads, and discounts on goods and services.

Enclosed is my check or money order to CSA for \$ _____

Mail to:

CSA Membership OR
PO Box 511
Mystic CT 06355

Go to:

www.ctsongs.com and
you may join online using
PayPal

E-Mail: info@ctsongs.com

**An investment in CSA is
an investment in yourself!**