

Connecticut Songsmith

Newsletter of the Connecticut
Songwriters Association



Apr 2017
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Combining Arts,
Education, and
Community Outreach

1979-2017 : 38 Years of Combining Arts, Education, and Community Outreach

LAST CHANCE!

APRIL 7-9, CSA SONGWRITING RETREAT
An amazing weekend of Master Classes with a diverse group of creative folks. It's been called "Life-Changing", "Transformative", and "One of the Best Values in the Industry".

Guaranteed to give you a whole new way to approach your songwriting. Give yourself a Jump-Start and Fast-Track your Career!

There are just a few spots remaining. Folks have come thousands of miles to attend this unique gathering. Don't be left out. Registration, detail, Photos and Reviews at:
www.ctsongs.com

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The workshop from March was snowed-out, but it has been rescheduled due to strong interest in this topic. THURSDAY, MAY 18, 7:15pm, Buttonwood Tree, 605 Main St, Middletown.

INTERNET PROMOTION STRATEGIES

What are the best uses of your time and resources in promoting yourself and your songs using Internet tools?

- Do's and Don'ts of Facebook
- Do's and Don'ts of You Tube
- Bandcamp ? Reverbnation? Sonic Bids?
- How to use AdWords
- Best digital platforms
- Website Strategies ..and lots more.

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MARCH 24-25: SS Cape May Conference (www.sscapemay.com). CSA will be there!

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.

CSA CALENDAR

Mar 24-25 SS Cape May Conference
Apr 07-09 CSA SONGWRITING RETREAT !
May 18 - Music Business Workshop, Buttonwood Tree, Middletown
June 6, CSA Meeting, Mystic

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER FOR THE CSA SONGWRITING RETREAT

JUMP-START YOUR SONGWRITING!
Every CSA retreat has been an amazing weekend, again eliciting descriptions of "Life-Changing", "Transformative" and "Inspiring".

April 7-9 2017

REGISTER NOW AT WWW.CTSONGS.COM

LIMITED TO 12 SLOTS!

Down to the Final Slots!

CSA RHYTHM AND NEWS

--- CSA May 18 MEETING 7:15, The Buttonwood Tree, 605 Main St, Middletown CT. Free on-street parking after 6pm

How to
Get There!

LAST CHANCE TO JOIN US FOR THE CSA SONGWRITING RETREAT APRIL 7-9. SIGN UP NOW TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS EXPERIENCE. GIVE YOUR CREATIVITY AND YOUR CAREER A JUMP-START. It's limited to 12 people, and the slots are almost all gone. See all the photos and reviews from the past years at www.ctsongs.com

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 !

VOICES FOR HOPE 2017 – If you know of any young vocalists, ages 11-19, please tell them about Voices For Hope. Sponsored by LUNCH, this is a vocal competition with an opportunity to win a \$500 scholarship, and performing & recording opportunities, while using the power of popular music to benefit local food pantries and social services. Full info at www.lunchensemble.com

The 10th annual Singer-Songwriter Conference at Cape May NJ (SSCapeMay) will be March 24-25. We highly recommend this event. Great workshops, networking, and performance opportunities. All of the industry folks there are totally accessible all weekend. CSA will be there presenting workshops and mentoring as well. Details at: www.sscapemay.com

CSA COMMUNITY OUTREACH



CSA has been a pioneer in the area of partnering with the non-profit sector and using the power of popular music to produce positive social action, involving more than 100 CSA artists and more than 3000 kids in hundreds of concert events. CSA workshops on "How to Do Successful Benefit Events" will be presented later this year.

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"

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER - LIMITED TO JUST 12 SLOTS

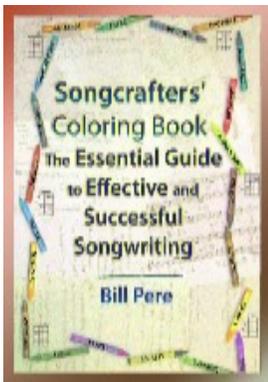
Slots are almost gone - Reserve your spot now!

Take control of your creative process!

Take your songwriting to a new level!

Get several years worth of industry 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 7-9 2017, 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 as far as CA, FL, and Canada have come to this retreat, calling it "Transformative", "Life-Changing", and "Inspiring!"

Great food as well!

REGISTER NOW! DON'T BE LEFT OUT!

This program of Master Classes, performance and critique, is based on the concepts of Grammy-winner Bill Pere's internationally acclaimed songwriting book, "Songcrafters' Coloring Book", and is 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. Registration is non-refundable except as stated on the website: www.ctsongs.com)

Member rate is for active **members of CSA, RISA, Songsalive, Folk Alliance, IMC**

(Before Nov 1,2016)	Member Rate = \$159	Non-member = \$179
(Nov 1 – Nov 31 2016)	Member Rate = \$169	Non-member = \$189
(Dec 1 – Dec 31 2016)	Member Rate = \$179	Non-member = \$199
(After Jan 01,2017)	Member Rate = \$189	Non Member = \$209

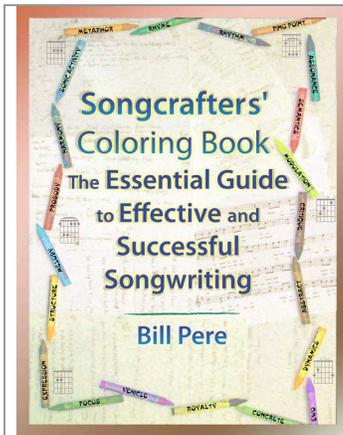
**MEALS AND
LODGING
INCLUDED !**

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 applicable))

QUESTIONS ? Check the Website www.ctsongs.com for FAO Info. photos. and reviews

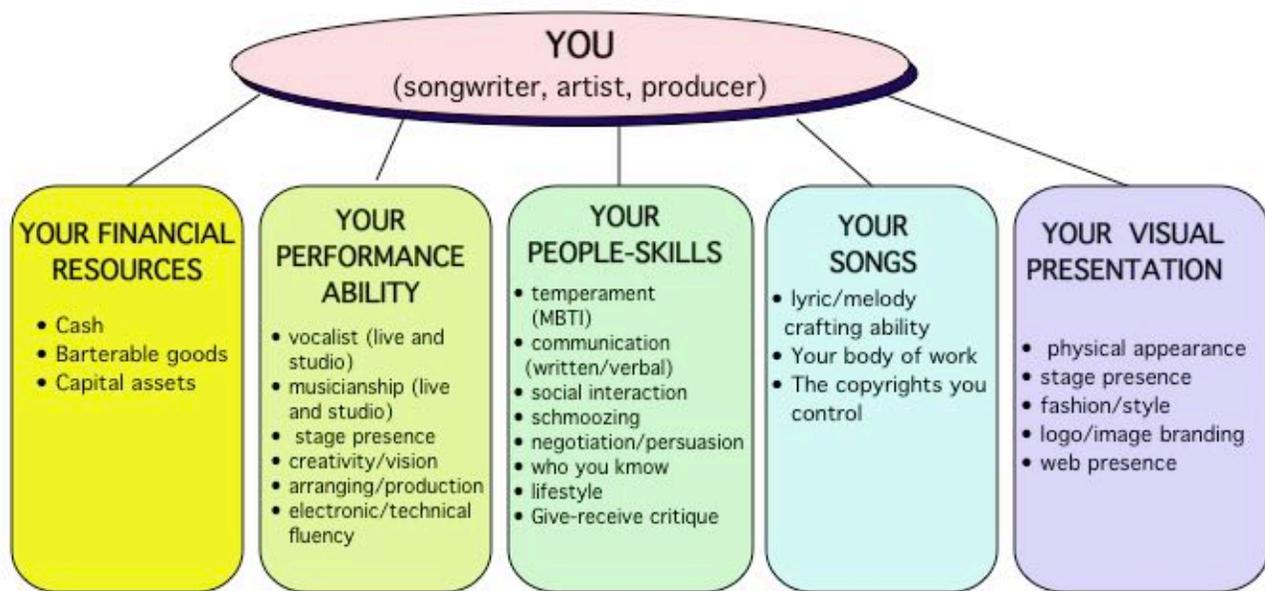


The concepts discussed in this article are a part of the comprehensive analysis of songwriting presented in the complete book "Songcrafters' Coloring Book: The Essential Guide to Effective and Successful Songwriting", by Bill Pere. For additional information or to order a copy, visit <http://www.songcrafterscoloringbook.com>

Your Music Career is a Pentathlon: The Five Currencies of Success. by Bill Pere

The Five Currencies of the Music Business

In the music business, everyone has five bank accounts, each filled to a different level with a different kind of currency. How you manage those accounts has great impact on how far you get along the path you choose.



The music business is unfortunately not a meritocracy, i.e. talent is not always recognized or rewarded. Success can be achieved through use of the other currencies, bypassing talent. That's not a matter of fair/unfair -- it's just an eyes-wide-open understanding of how the business works. For detailed discussion of the Five Currencies, their relative importance and how they interact, see the full article at http://www.billpere.com/Songwriter_Tools.htm

In the music business there are five primary currencies. "Currency" here does *not* mean money. It is anything that you can trade in specific amounts to obtain certain things or objectives. If you go to Europe, you use Euros, and in Japan, you use Yen. Online, the preferred form of payment is electronic transfer. Frequent Flyer miles are valuable when booking a flight, but not when buying a car. In a poor rural village, your basket of produce or bundle of firewood would be worth more than a non-edible gold coin. In a survivalist camp, a roll of toilet paper or tube of toothpaste would be valued over paper dollars.

Clearly, different things have value in different situations, and it is an essential business skill to know which currency to use, when to use it, and what it will buy you.

Having worked with more than 10,000 artists over more than three decades, it is clear that one of the main things impeding the forward progress of a career is not knowing what the five currencies are, when to use them, or even how much of each you have. Many aspiring artists simply don't know what or where their five "bank accounts" are, what their balance is, or when and how to draw on them.

The craft and business sides of music require many roles (a set of tasks) to get songs and artists from obscurity to a place of recognition, respect, and reward. Each role requires specific skills and currencies. (A complete discussion of the roles is presented in "[Songcrafters Coloring Book](#)". See here for condensed [diagram](#) and [article](#))

The five currencies for the purposes of this discussion are:

(a) Money

- cash or barterable goods

(b) Well-crafted songs

- lyric/melody crafting ability
- Your body of work
- The copyrights you control

(c) People Skills

- temperament
- communication (written/verbal)
- social interaction
- schmoozing
- negotiation/persuasion/mediation
- lifestyle
- management/coaching

(d) Performance Talent

- vocalist (live and studio)
- musicianship (live and studio)
- stage presence
- creativity/vision
- arranging/production

(e) Visual presentation

- physical appearance
- stage presence
- fashion/style
- logo/image branding
- web presence

The relative importance of these depends on one's specific goals and situations, but ultimately, some amount of ALL FIVE is required for a career that provides ongoing recognition, respect and reward. Each

currency opens a different door, and you have to know which keys fit which locks, and how much a given key will cost.

What about that all-important factor of "reputation"? The *track record* that one builds in using each of the currencies is essentially your "credit score", and THAT is what we know as "reputation".

One of the sad realities is that the music business is not a meritocracy, i.e. those with the most talent are not the most valued, recognized, or rewarded. Talent is indeed a currency, but unfortunately, not the most valuable one. Many of the artists I've worked with have the idealistic belief that because one has some talent, advancement should be automatic. They believe that if you go to the mall with enough money, there is no obstacle to getting the things you want. What they miss is that the stores at the "Music Biz Mall" require different kinds of currency, so no matter how fat your wallet is, there are some stores where all the merchandise remains out of your reach.

The fact that talent is not the primary currency is made evident by two simple observations:

- (1) - I, and probably you as well, know hundreds if not thousands of very talented performers, songwriters, or producers who are every bit as good (or better) than many of the biggest names out there, but they flail in obscurity for lack of the other currencies.
- (2) A good portion of stuff that is "out there" getting airplay and selling downloads is of average (or less) quality, when objectively measured [parametrically](#).

The same can be said about the quality of a song (another of the five currencies).

In a meritocracy, well-crafted songs would be successful and the songs with no evidence of writing skill or craft would fall to the bottom. But this is not the case.

There are huge numbers of truly great songs just sitting on dusty shelves or buried on bargain-bin self-produced CDs that are never heard, while "songs" that could easily have been written by your neighbor's 10-year kid (in collaboration with the family dog) are selling millions and getting all kinds of accolades and awards. Many well-known songs that receive all kinds of attention are really quite lacking in songwriting craft. There are obviously other currencies at work.

Popularity and quality of a song do not correlate, as there are many reasons that a song becomes a big hit other than the quality of the song itself. These include:

- (a) The popularity of the artist -- If a popular artist puts out a mediocre song, it is still going to chart because the artist's fans will still support it. This perpetuates an illusion that what is popular is also of good quality. The separation of popularity from quality and craft is discussed thoroughly in the [Four-Fader Model](#) in [Songcrafters' Coloring Book](#).
- (b) Great Production -- Production/Arranging is certainly a creative art form requiring a special skill set, but it is NOT songwriting. Great production is the essence of most pop songs, not actual skill at songwriting. Visual glitz and sonic sparkle are substituted for lyric and melody. This is not a matter of good/bad or right/wrong, but it simply requires an eyes-wide-open awareness that this is not the craft of songwriting. It is good studiocraft and stagecraft, as opposed to good songcraft.
- (c) Big \$\$\$ Promotion -- If a big record label wants a song to be a hit, then regardless of its quality, it is going to be a hit. Relentless promotion, manufactured 'buzz', and public saturation fueled by corporate dollars will usually get a song on the charts.
- (d) People Connections -- The old adage of "It's who you know" is never more true than in the music business. Networking and making contacts greases many paths forward, creating opportunities that otherwise would never be offered. Many hits exist solely because of personal contacts.
- (e) Riding the wave of a trend or news event -- If a song is written relating to some other event or trend that is getting a lot of media attention (9/11, fashion trend, politics, news event, etc), it too can get a lot of attention, but it will likely be of a limited duration.
- (f) Creative Marketing/Novelty -- An otherwise average song that is creatively marketed via YouTube or other social media can, through the [Asch and Von Restorff effects](#), become widely known and inject itself into pop culture.

The important thing to understand about all of the above is that the currencies at work in each instance are ones OTHER than the currency of having good songs. We'll come back to this key point later in more detail. But for now, consider – in each of the above instances, how much MORE successful would a song be if, in addition to any of the factors listed, it was ALSO a really well-crafted song.

Now let's look at some of the ways in which the five currencies function, and how they differ between the mainstream big-label world, and the Indie music world.

1 – Money: This is somewhat obvious. To get forward movement at any point along a career path, money is required. Buying a new instrument, transportation, hiring an arranger, maintaining a website, assembling a wardrobe, paying a sound engineer, renting a venue, etc. Spending money is straightforward and easy to do.

In the mainstream big-label world, money is the primary currency – after all, the big labels are corporations with a prime directive to make money, more so than to make music. Their supply of funds is virtually unlimited and thus all the other currencies take a secondary, though not invisible, role.

The thing that trips up lots of Indie artists is trying to apply that mainstream corporate model of being "under contract" to their own Indie career. In this day and age, if you are an Independent Artist, there is very little reason to want to be "under contract" unless you really find a deal that fits you perfectly. When you are under contract, even to an artist-friendly Indie label, it may seem that you no longer have to draw on your own money to get things done because the label is doing it for you – However, no matter what label and what deal, what they are really doing is spending YOUR money – it just happens to be your future money. So you have to expect not to see any of it since a majority of acts never recoup the investment put into them. And in some really bad deals, you can end up owing the label money. Also, there is no readily available way for an artist to know what they are owed, so the label can essentially dress up their own expenses and income and tell the artist anything they want.

Of course this does not mean that all labels are "bad" – many are out there trying to do right by the artist, but just be aware that they are not really giving you anything. You're still paying for it, just in a different way. Most labels, whether mainstream or Indie, focus on cash as the primary currency, and thus you don't get to fully leverage the other four "accounts" that you have.

As an alternative to traditional labels, there are artist "development" or artist "incubator" companies which, if they are doing their job, would be optimizing the flow of all five of your currency accounts. This assumes they are aware that all these accounts exist, and that they have the knowledge and resources to maximize them.

If you want to be affiliated with a label or artist development firm, it's up to you to understand the deal you're getting into (i.e. know how to understand a contract, or have one of the reputable songwriter associations review it for you – often at no cost) and to decide if that deal is right for you. There are many flavors to choose from. Ask them how they plan to use all of the currencies and how they will directly benefit you.

As a DIY (do-it-yourself) Indie Artist, who is not under contract, i.e. proudly "unsigned by choice", you retain control of all cash flow, and you issue the contracts to have work done for you, when you want, how you want, by whom, and for how much.

This approach keeps you in control, but it requires positive currency flow. Notice I say CURRENCY FLOW not cash flow. As an Indie, you do not have the big-label luxury of dealing in unlimited cash. You have to draw on multiple currencies to move ahead.

If your focus is entirely on the currency of cash, it's easy to fall onto the treadmill of having to do endless dead-end gigs to generate enough money to keep on doing endless dead-end gigs. Even if you can successfully generate surplus cash to move forward, your speed of advancement and choice of paths expands greatly when the other currencies are also in play.

2 – Visual Presentation/Appearance: This is a deceptive currency. People rich in physical appearance often try to use this as a primary currency and end up being disappointed. Appearance can open a door but if there is no talent, no people skills and no quality material to back it up, the door leads only to a small, unfurnished room (and beware if there is a couch...). Appearance is best used with the understanding that it is not enough by itself to propel one to the top of the career ladder. I meet many artists who are certainly pleasing to look at and who use that well on stage, but their material is devoid of substance, their talent is average, and/or their people skills may be lacking. Any of those deficits will impede or kill a career. I know many young artists who have effectively blacklisted themselves to those who otherwise could help them, because of less-than-ideal people skills.

Too often, an aspiring artist will expend a great deal of their limited time, energy, focus, and cash to try to increase the balance in their appearance account. Sometimes it is worthwhile, but just as often it is not the best investment of limited resources. It is converting a stronger currency into a weaker one. I typically turn down opportunities to help develop artists who rely too heavily on appearance at the expense of other currencies.

In stage performance, there are often great amounts of resource expended on lights and glitz and pyro and costumes and effects, and videos, all to present a stunning display of totally average (or less) material and/or talent. Not a good investment -- and as the years creep by, artists wonder why they are not "getting anywhere".

What if one has an abundance of talent but is short-changed in their appearance? If your primary goal is to be songwriter rather than a performer, then as long as you are writing top quality songs, and have reasonable people-skills, you are dealing in the right currencies. Although appearance is a big help in negotiation and persuasion, top-quality songs will be the most valued means of exchange for you and can carry you far.

You'll see a more successful career when you are wanted for your body of work, rather than for working your body. Looks decline – great songs age like wine.

As a performer, if you have great talent, but are not Aphrodite or Adonis, you can still have many opportunities, but they may be in more bounded regions of the music landscape. Consider the cases of the very talented but not glamorous Paul Potts or Susan Boyle, both winners on "Britain's Got Talent". The realms of classical, opera, or easy listening adult music are welcoming environments and have made them successful. For styles like folk, jazz, or hard rock, talent and substance tempered with people skills trumps appearance. Pop, country, hip-hop, Vegas, and glam-rock place a high value on appearance. It's up to you to know the realistic value of the currency you have in that account, and how to spend it wisely.

As one of the most poignant examples of how talent and people-skills trump appearance outside of the music realm, consider the story of Jackie Robinson, the first African-American to play in the baseball major leagues. His incredible talent silenced the critics, and his even-temperament in dealing with the harsh social environment he faced made him a revered legend and an inspiration to this day.

Aside from physical appearance, there are all the other visual elements that go into presenting yourself. It's amazing how many people want to be taken seriously as artists, writers, or producers, yet have no credible website, no logo, no brand identity. They have CD's with unreadable fonts and no clear communication about the name of the band/artist. These things are key conveyors of credibility. They give you gravitas and speak volumes about whether others should invest their time, attention, and money in you.

And finally, though ephemeral and superficial like physical appearance, an artist can generate great buzz through their fashion choices (Lady Gaga's meat dress? Michael Jackson's white glove? KISS's makeup?) This should not be relied upon as a primary currency, but can serve as a "value-added" supplement to your other currency accounts. Do not use fashion to try to make up for deficits in the other currencies. It is an add-on, not a substitute.

3 – People Skills: In my various conversations with top industry folks, I usually ask them "What are the top ten characteristics needed for success in music?" At the top of that list by a wide margin is people-skills. The music business is first and foremost a people-driven industry. There are egos, sensitivities, feelings, insecurities, and quirks that cover a vast spectrum. A detailed discussion of how people skills work in various parts of the music business is presented in great depth across several chapters of "[Songcrafters](#)"

[Coloring Book](#)". Suffice it to say here, it is among the most valued of the five currencies. It opens many doors and *keeps them open*, allowing opportunities to come to you, rather than you always having to seek them out. It is a slower-acting, more subtle currency, but it has greater reach and staying power than appearance, money, or talent. If a producer, publisher, manager, or any decision-maker has a choice between several people to whom they could offer an opportunity, they are not necessarily going to choose the most talented person. It will be the one they "like" best, the one they feel most comfortable working with, the one whom they know they can trust. Understanding people and knowing how to spend your currency gives you an incredible edge in negotiations, presentations, collaborations, and getting people to say "yes!" to you.

Tapping this account is one of the ways you can help generate positive currency flow when your actual cash reserves are limited. When a business owner (which you are as an Indie artist) asks for credit, or a loan, or sponsorship, or a favor, or an opportunity, the transaction does not hinge on cash currency – it is people-skill currency as you are asking someone to trust you and to believe in you, while you are offering your temperament, your communication skills, and your lifestyle as collateral. When you have a skill to trade or goods to barter, you are relying on your people-skills to make that happen. Crowd-funding ventures (Kickstarter, GoFundMe, etc) have less to do with cash and everything to do with generating faith in YOU and the way you communicate your ideas. Many successful deals on TV's "Shark Tank" have been made because an investor has faith in the *person* more so than the state of their business or product.

The successful writer / artist / producer understands this most fundamental people-based concept: The songs, the music, the performance, and the experience you offer succeed when they are first and foremost about the listener, not about you. Writers, performers or producers who make their work center on their own self-expression rather than on communication and connection with listeners are misdirecting valuable currency. The good steward of people-skill currency clearly grasps the difference between [expression and communication](#).

4 – Performance Talent: Talent is a bittersweet currency. It "should" be highly valued and propel you far, but alas, its luster is dimmed by the allure of the other aforementioned currencies. If you have talent in conjunction with one or more of the other currencies, it will serve you well. But remember this simple reality: In order to show people the talent you have, you must first get the opportunity to do so. That's where the other currencies are most helpful. They enable you to get people's attention, and then it is your talent that holds people's attention and makes them "believers".

There are two caveats here: (a) that you actually have sufficient talent to make people say "Wow!" and (b) that however much talent you do have, you have an accurate assessment of it. The "Wow" level of talent comes from a combination of natural ability, honed by around of 10,000 hours of practice. The 10,000 hours theory was originally formulated by Dr. K. Anders Ericsson, professor of psychology at Florida State University, looking at case studies in many different fields – sports, chess, music, business etc. This is discussed in detail in Malcolm Gladwell's excellent book "Outliers".

The point is this: don't expect people to be in awe of your talent if you have not put in a heck of a lot of work to develop and refine it -- and even after you have, make sure you have an accurate picture as to whether you are just average, competent, highly skilled, or world-class. And if you truly have top-notch talent, it's going to take the other currencies to get you the opportunities you need to cash in on that talent.

On the other hand, suppose you have only average talent and you know that, but you have an abundance in the other currencies, particularly people-skills. If you look at the music landscape across the mainstream and Indie worlds, the top spots are filled with competent or average artists, who have no more talent than many unknown folks that you or I know. There are some "Wow" folks to be sure, but not the majority. Most of those average folks got where they are through the use of the other currencies.

Sadly, the bottom line is that talent, though one of the more difficult currencies to amass and greatly valued by those providing it, is in the eyes of the buyers, the least critical of all the currencies. Yes, you need to be competent or at least adequate, but not great, in order to get ahead.

And that finally brings us back around to that key point mentioned earlier:

5 – Well-Crafted Songs: Why is anything valuable? It must be wanted by many, critical to meeting needs or goals, *and in short supply*. In the music world, there is no shortage of songs. Not even a shortage of average or reasonably good songs. But GREAT songs? Those that hit with the impact of a laser and etch themselves into the collective conscious of millions of people? Those that last across decades, being recorded by hundreds of artists in a wide spectrum of styles? Those are as rare as the Hope diamond. So if you have one – just one -- think of what you can do. And if you have a portfolio of them, few doors will remain in your way.

As an Indie artist, you probably do not have access to great sums of money. You do not have teams of people to support and promote you. You do not have wide vistas of opportunity to choose from. You may not have world-class talent or heart-throb looks, but if you have great songs, you have a path to the top of the value-pyramid.

Of all the currencies in the music world, songs are by far the most critical and valuable currency – after all there would not be a music business without songs. Like any other business, e.g., cars, computers, fast-food, there are well-made products and there are lower-grade products. The stock of companies that produce quality goods rises, and the stock of those that produce inferior goods languishes.

If you are a songwriter, don't just write songs; *Craft great songs!* Understand what it means for a song to be well-crafted so that it takes people's breath away. Understand that it is an extremely difficult task to score that "Perfect 10", but you can only achieve it if you try every time, and most times you will fall way short. But if you amass a portfolio of songs that are 7's or 8's or 9's in a world where most of what is "out there" is just 5's and 6's filling chart spaces while waiting for the occasional great one to come along, you have highly valued currency.

If you are an artist with great talent and a drop-dead looks, and you can whip audiences into a frenzy singing mindless pop lyrics, think of what you can ascend to when you augment your assets with the sparkle and gravitas of top quality songs that linger long after the final chord fades. When you're seeking songs to record and perform, don't settle for average. Find great songs from talented writers if you can't write them yourself. Don't fall into the trap of taking songs from your friends or colleagues just because they are the folks you "know". That is simply substituting people-currency for quality-song currency, and it's not a good use of your "funds". Train yourself to recognize a truly well crafted song.

If you are a producer with great talent for arrangements and beats, don't let that be all you offer. Apply that talent to great songs, so that a great production of a great song can elevate you to a new place., and you develop a reputation as a true artisan and not a mass-producer producer.

If you are an artist development coach, don't groom a talented, good-looking, people-savvy performer only to leave them with a repertoire of ordinary cookie-cutter songs that don't add significantly more value to what you have worked to develop. Use your currencies wisely.

Independent artists have only one way to really compete with all the big money, big talent, big schmoozing, big glamour competition – and that is through well crafted songs that are clearly a cut above the cluttered baseline of 'average' that is popular for all of the reasons having nothing to do with the quality of the song.

No matter what your role or aspiration, this is what you need to know: Big money is something you can't hope to compete with. Great vocalists and musicians and producers are out there in abundance. Great looks are out there in abundance. Great schmoozers are out there in abundance. Abundance reduces value. The ONE thing you can do to have rare and highly valued currency is to have great songs. They are NOT out there in abundance, and they cannot be created by money.
They can only be created by you.

Look at singer-songwriter icons like Harry Chapin, James Taylor, Bob Dylan, Billy Joel, Carole King, Janis Ian, Susanne Vega, Jim Croce, Don McLean, Jimmy Webb, and so many more like them -- No glamorous looks, no great voices, no glitzy stage performance and no silver spoons – just well-written songs that have lasted for decades, crossing styles, artists, and generations. And that portfolio of well-written songs attracted great talent and big money to support and propel them farther and faster.

One final point: You, like everyone, have these five currency accounts. What you might not have is a realistic idea of how much currency is in them. Toward that end, never be afraid to seek out qualified, objective feedback on your songs, your people skills, your image, or your level of talent. Don't be afraid to hear a constructive critique. Objective feedback will enrich you and keep you from overdrafting a big check on a low balance.

Some artists seek out critique not to improve themselves, but to get affirmation and pats on the back. That is a formula for disappointment. Some artists mistake a positive audience response to the energy of their performance as a positive response to the quality of their material. The result – a wrong notion about how much is in which account. Rather than great songwriting buying you a fan, it was your great voice singing meaningless lyrics. Some artists mistake a positive audience reaction to their appearance as an affirmation of their talent. The result – a wrong notion about how much is in which account. Rather than your talent buying you a fan, it was your short skirt or six-pack abs.

Not having the proper awareness of what currency you have, and when and how it is being used can take you down unintended paths that lead you farther from where you want to be. Keep a keen awareness and accounting of the five currencies and what they are buying you, and you will always be moving forward along the path that you have laid out for yourself. Spend wisely, invest wisely, and you will find that place of recognition, respect, and reward that awaits you.

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Bill Pere is named one of the "Top 50 Innovators, Groundbreakers and Guiding Lights of the Music Industry" by Music Connection Magazine. With more than 35 years in the music business, as a recording artist, award winning songwriter, performer, and educator Bill is well known for his superbly crafted lyrics, with lasting impact. Bill has songs on more than 26 CD's including a Grammy, and has received many awards for his philanthropy through music. He is President of the Connecticut Songwriters Association, an Official Connecticut State Troubadour, and is the Founder and Executive Director of the LUNCH Ensemble. Twice named Connecticut Songwriter of the Year, Bill is a qualified MBTI practitioner, trained by the Association for Psychological Type. As Director of the Connecticut Songwriting Academy, he helps develop young talent in songwriting, performing, and learning about the music business. Bill's song analyses and critiques are among the best in the industry. Bill has a graduate degree in Molecular Biology, an ARC Science teaching certification, and he has received two awards for Outstanding contribution to Music Education. The New York Times calls Bill "the link between science and music. For workshops, consultation, performances, or other songwriter services, contact Bill via his web sites, at <http://www.billpere.com>, <http://www.ctsongwriting.com>, and <http://www.lunchensemble.com>".
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CALLING ALL WRITERS

ANNOUNCING THE NEXT CSA COMPILATIONS

Get your songs in by October 31, to insure eligibility !

(after 10/31, contact us for status)

CSA Compilation CDs have received radio airplay and are displayed at national conferences, and any digital downloads pay artist royalties. 21 Compilations Released so far!

ALL CATEGORIES (you may submit to any of these categories) :

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Songs of social relevance | <input type="checkbox"/> Country songs | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Songs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual/Inspirational | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday songs | <input type="checkbox"/> Novelty/Humorous Song |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Country Songs | <input type="checkbox"/> Unusual Love Songs | <input type="checkbox"/> Story Songs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PatrioticAmericana | <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Songs | <input type="checkbox"/> Instrumentals |

GUIDELINES

- At least one writer must be a current CSA member
- All songs must be professionally produces, up to 'radio-ready' standards.
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; Available space on the CD
- 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 submission fee (\$18) payable to CSA,
If you want your complementary copy to be mailed to you, please include \$3 for postage. (there are no additional costs, whether a song is accepted for inclusion or not)
Send your recording, lyric sheet, release form, and submission fee 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



The Annual
VOICES FOR HOPE
Scholarship and Vocal Competition

Service-Learning Through Music
for students ages 11-19

Finalists audition live and participate in the annual Harry Chapin Legacy Concert

AN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG VOCALISTS

The winner receives prizes valued at more than \$1500, including:

- a \$500 scholarship
- professional recording and performing opportunities, with worldwide distribution
- professional vocal and performance coaching with Grammy and Immie Award Winners
- a lifetime membership to the Connecticut Songwriters Association

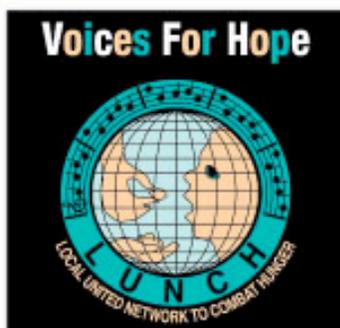
All participation is part of a service-learning outreach to support local agencies that provide basic human services for those in need, focusing on issues of hunger and poverty.

Previous winners have had opportunities to meet and perform with artists like Melba Moore, Diana Degarmo, The Harry Chapin Band, Patti Austin, and the LUNCH Ensemble at venues like the Bushnell, The Shubert Theater, University of Hartford, the Granite Theater, and many more. Their recordings have been released worldwide. Participants have come from many states, and our winners range in age from 11 to 19.

EVENT DETAILS AND ENTRY FORMS are at www.lunchensemble.com

ENTRY DEADLINE: MARCH 01, 2017 (early entry) / APRIL 10, 2017 (final deadline)

FINAL LIVE AUDITIONS & CONCERT: APRIL 29, 2017 in Mystic, CT



VOICES FOR HOPE is an outreach of L.U.N.C.H (Local United Network to Combat Hunger), using the Power of Popular Music to Produce Positive Social Action

For additional information and inquiries, contact
Bill Pere, Founder and Executive Director, LUNCH
bill@billpere.com
860-572-9285
www.lunchensemble.com

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

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 **Go to:** www.ctsongs.com and
 PO Box 511 **you may join online using**
 Mystic CT 06355 **PayPal**

E-Mail: info@ctsongs.com

An investment in CSA is an investment in yourself!

An Educational, Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Improving the Art and Craft of Original Music since 1979

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