



# A Different Strummer

## folkside Coffeehouse SEASON OPENS WITH OPOSSUM & FRIENDS



WHAT BETTER WAY TO INTRODUCE A NEW COFFEEHOUSE SEASON THAN TO EXPERIENCE A GROUP MANY OF US MIGHT BE UNFAMILIAR WITH. OPOSSUM & FRIENDS COME FROM

GREEN CAMP, OH AND WILL BE SURE TO PROVIDE A GREAT EVENING OF ENTERTAINMENT! COME ON OUT ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 – SHOW STARTS AT 8 P.M.

**Bill Cohen:** Many of our members have never heard you perform, so they don't know what to expect when they see you. How would you describe the kind of music you do?

**Steve Moore:** Many years ago my music got branded as "Trance-Folk" by a listener, saying that was the feeling he got from listening. . . and I added "homegrown organic" to that, as we never play covers. Sometimes I jokingly tell an audience that Neil Young doesn't play my stuff, so why should I play his? (smile). We have come to call the songs "homegrown organic trance-folk" and I think its a good description.

Our all-original tunes are songs and stories about life, love, work, nature, healing the planet, and some fun and funny stuff. Sometimes we sing stories. . . sometimes we tell songs. . . we're basically stripped-down, acoustic and rootsy.

**Bill:** Who are your musical influences ?

**Steve:** The influence question is always a tough one for me because I feel I have been influenced by hundreds of musicians and writers.

One of my biggest folk influences though, is Dakota Sid Clifford and beyond that, I feel I have been influenced by everything (non-folk) I grew up listening to: Motown, 60's Pop, Rock and Roll, and maybe a tiny bit of

progressive country like the Marshall Tucker Band.

**Bill:** You are the Opossum in "Opossum and Friends." Tell us about your friends who will be performing with you, and how they'll be contributing.

**Steve:** I am truly blessed by having the wonderful players that join with me in the songs.

On lead guitar is "Brother" Jed Sparks from Delaware, Ohio who is actually a blues man and does his own playing and recording. Jed grew up in a truck stop that his folks owned and spent his childhood listening to the truck stop jukebox tunes of the 50's and 60's which influenced him.

On his own, Jed is very big on Delta front-porch-type blues, and has a few albums he has self-produced.

The amazing thing to me about Jed is his ability to "read out" one of my songs and know exactly the type of feeling and story I'm trying to communicate and come up with great guitar parts and little surprise spices that drive the songs home and make them fun. Jed "Sparks" – he really does – and he's been playing with me for many years.

On bass and banjo is Doctor Joe Float (or Doctor Joe as we call him) from Marysville, Ohio. During his childhood, Joe's mother married country and western singer Carl Stuart who worked out of Boston, Nashville and Pittsburgh and owned a country radio station in Allentown, Pa. Because of this, Joe had the opportunity to be around Jim Reeves and Willie Nelson.

In high school he worked briefly with the Byrds, auditioning original material with them and getting to hear some of their material before they recorded it. He has played at New York's "Bitter End", and has played shows with John Hartford. In all, he plays classical

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### SONGWRITING: SOME BASICS & TIPS

#### PART TWO

SONGWRITING - HOW DO YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN? WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR A COMPOSING A SUCCESSFUL SONG? PART 1 (AUGUST ISSUE OF "A DIFFERENT STRUMMER") EXPLORED THE WRITING OF LYRICS. PART 2 EXPLORES DEVELOPING THE MELODY AND PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.

Webster's Dictionary defines melody as: "musical sounds in agreeable succession or arrangement; and "a rhythmical succession of musical tones organized as a distinct phrase or sequence of phrases." Melody basically refers to the tune of a song, something with a start and a finish and which is the prominent musical line of the song. It is composed of the notes, the intervals (the space between notes) and the duration of the notes. Tony Snow said, "Great writers can express moods through melody and capture experiences we share most powerfully - love. . . longing; joy, rage, fear; triumph, yearning and confusion."

So how can a songwriter come up with melodies?

Columbus Folk Music Society (CFMS) member, Larry Drake, says "I have no particular method for writing except trying to keep open to ideas for words or music – and I never know which will come first – as

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they pop into my head. I think it helps to try to write songs about things that I have experienced in one way or another. My life hasn't been extremely interesting, so I often write about things I have experienced in my imagination. If it feels right, and tells a good story, then I think I'm doing OK."

CFMS member, Teresa Schleifer, says "I wish I could say that I approach songwriting like a job, work at the craft every day, and churn out new tunes regularly. Not so! But I do have a small library of song ideas, some only a vague notion, others a lyrical hook with or without the melody, maybe tied in with a trial bit of fingerpicking or a rhythm."

Brian Szuch (also a CFMS member) relays "I personally found starting with a blank sheet initially intimidating after being "reactionary" as an accompanist for so long. I almost always have a segment of music created before I give any thought to lyrics, but every now and then I'll hear a certain phrase or a title will come to mind that spurs an idea for a song. I've learned to not force a solution and sometimes will shelve an idea or passage I like for years till the right opportunity presents itself. Some songs take a few hours, others, a few years. (A segment of one of Brian's compositions, "Goose on the Gable" can be found at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hPgtxct0U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hPgtxct0U). Actually, he let the CFMS use the segment as the backdrop for it's 2013 Central Ohio Folk Festival 90 second promo video.

Paul Zollo in his book entitled, "Beginning Songwriter's Answer Book" says there are different approaches to coming up with a melody. "Some are methods in which pure melodies are sought after; other methods include matching the right melody to a phrase or set of lines. . . In a song, a strong melody is dependent upon the lyrics to carry it; if it doesn't fit the lyrics well, no matter how powerful or fresh the melody might be, it won't be effective."<sup>1</sup>

Some people have a gift for melody and can easily think of tunes or have them 'pop into their head'. Others have to work a little harder at it. Zollo goes on to say that some composers are able to come up with melodies away from an instrument and that this is "the best method for generating melodies because the direction of the tune is determined by the tune itself and not by chords you play on an instrument. . . . Jay Livingston [of Livingston and Evans who wrote "Que Sera Sera," "Silver Bells" and "Buttons and Bows,"] told us, 'I find that



when you're at the piano, your hands follow old familiar patterns. If you're walking around away from the piano, you're freer. Your mind goes anywhere you want. I've written some better melodies that way."<sup>2</sup> Zollo quotes Johnny Mandel, who wrote "The Shadow of Your Smile" and "Theme from M\*A\*S\*H" as saying, "'The best songs I write in my head. . . it frees me up to be away from the piano. I've been arranging music for so long that I can think of ten thousand substitutions for a given passage, chord-wise. If I start writing

**"TO MAKE YOUR CHORUS SOUND ESPECIALLY EXPLOSIVE, YOU CAN CREATE TENSION AND THE NEED FOR RESOLUTION IN THE VERSE TO BE RESOLVED IN THE CHORUS."** PAUL ZOLLO

a song, I'll start arranging it before I'm through with it. And that screws up the process. The only way I can do it is to just think of the melody.' Mandel went on to say that melodies written in this fashion will turn out to be sturdier than those based on chord changes. 'If a melody will hold up a cappella, without any accompaniment at all, it's going to be a stronger song by far than one that depends on accompaniment."<sup>3</sup>

#### AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

One thing to be conscious of when you are coming up with melodies is the possibility of plagiarism. Zollo says, "When striving to write a new melody you lean toward that which moves you emotionally. And since your brain has stored up literally thousands of melodies that have moved you in the past, it's easy to land on a variation of one of them and think that it is new. . . . Because the potential of plagiarism is so great, songwriters must train themselves to recognize an unoriginal melody as soon as they come up with one. If you suddenly find yourself with a gorgeous tune, one of those melodies that seemed to write itself, play it for yourself and make sure it doesn't belong to another song." However, Zollo says that you shouldn't necessarily discard your song. He says, "Take your melody

and change it around. Change the pattern of the notes, the places where it rises and falls. Enlarge the range of the melody if you can, adding new notes where the melody returns to the same note. Switch the chord changes. Try it in a different rhythm. Allow these changes to inspire and encourage you. . . .do whatever it takes to change the melody and make it your own. . . . Even the greats have been 'inspired' by other writers' songs to create a great one of their own: Paul McCartney admitted that he wrote "Let it Be" under the influence of Paul Simon's "Bridge Over Troubled Waters," yet the two songs sound nothing alike."<sup>4</sup>

#### COMING UP WITH MELODIES

Just assuming that you have to work at it a bit, as opposed to just having the melodies pop into your head, where do you start? Zollo tells us that you can either think of the melody line by itself (not thinking of the chord changes) or you can think of it in relation to the harmony. If by itself, try it on a piano and you can also experiment with variations. Zollo says "Another way to generate melodies is by experimenting with the harmony – the chord changes – to see what melodic ideas you might imagine. Simply play one chord either on a piano/keyboard or on a guitar – a C-major chord, for example – and see if it leads you anywhere. Play the chord in a simple rhythm and try singing any tune to it. Notice that you can start the melody on many different notes and it will still match the C-major chord." However, he continues, "The danger lies in letting yourself get too restricted by the chords you are playing. Melodically it's important to remember that beauty lies not only in how a melody works with a chord, but also in how it works *against* a chord.

"An A-minor chord, for example, consists of three notes: A, C and E. When playing the chord to come up with melody ideas, the use of those three notes is most obvious. To use another note, however, you don't have to move to another chord. The use of a note not in the chord will create a certain dissonance, and dissonance creates tension. And the beauty of all melodies lies not in their static nature but in the process of tension and release. So when writing melodies to chord changes be aware of the notes that work against as well as with chords."<sup>5</sup>

Zollo says that it is this tension and release that makes a strong melody stand out from just an 'okay' melody. He says,

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## Songwriting - from page 2

“To make your chorus sound especially explosive, you can create tension and the need for resolution in the verse to be resolved in the chorus. An example of this is “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’” by Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil and Phil Spector. The song is in the key of C and yet the very first chord creates tension: a B flat with C in the bass (B flat/C). The chord hangs underneath the C major, and pulls us upward toward it. It’s used for two measures, resolves to the C major, and then repeats the process: tension is created and resolved twice before we even get to the first chorus. The momentum is then increased by a series of ascending chords that lead us up the scale to the dominant: Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, F/G and finally G. The G is the dominant or V chord in the key of C, and it propels us back to the tonic chord, the C major. That chord comes after this huge buildup, this creation of tension, and resolves with the chorus on the title line: “You’ve lost that lovin’ feelin’.” The effect is a buildup that increases in intensity until it explodes on the chorus and then repeats the process after the chorus with the next verse. None of this build up of tensions would be worthwhile, of course, if the payoff wasn’t great. The chorus of “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’” is sufficiently powerful to stand up to that kind of buildup. A big buildup to a disappointing chorus only intensifies that sense of dissatisfaction; make sure your resolution is not a letdown.”<sup>6</sup>

### MELODY AND LYRICS

Are you composing a melody for lyrics you have already crafted or are you writing a melody for which you’ll craft the lyrics later? Zollo says, “If you are writing to an existing lyric, at least you have some structure in which you can work. An existing lyric, if written well, will provide you with the subject matter, the meter, the length of the lines, the verse-chorus patter, etc. Basing a melody on an already established foundation such as this is much simpler than composing a melody apart from any lyrics – and then attempting to write words to it.”<sup>7</sup>

Zollo says that “When composing a tune for a finished lyric, you have to be sensitive to the music that the words already possess. Even without an actual melody, all lyrics have a meter and a tone already uniquely their own. You want the music you write for those words to reflect and support the words. If the lyric bends in a funny way, the melody should also

bend. Where the words are forceful, the music should be forceful, and so on. . . . Unless your purpose is to create a deliberate contrast between the words and music, you want it to seem not only that the words and the music were created by one person, but also that the words and the music were created simultaneously. . . .born at the very same time.”<sup>8</sup>

“If you are writing the melody first (without a lyric pattern), be sure that it fits a regular structure. . . it’s tough to write a lyric to a piece of music that has an irregular structure. Songs must be structured in a way that clearly defines the verse, chorus and bridge sections; a song that has long melodic lines with no repeats just does not work. If you examine most songs you will see that they are based on repeating patterns. . . .A melody writer must be conscious of creating these

SCHLEIFER SAYS, “I ADVISE ASPIRING SONGWRITERS TO USE A RECORDER TO CAPTURE SUDDEN INSPIRATION ON THE FLY (OR CALL YOURSELF ON THE PHONE AND LEAVE A MESSAGE!); TO INVEST IN A SMALL RHYMING DICTIONARY AND A THESAURUS; AND TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SONGWRITING FROM THE PROS.”

patterns when writing a tune if that tune is to be effectively turned into a song.” He does say, “Of course, many great lyrics *have* been written to long, irregular and complex melodies. Joni Mitchell’s phenomenal lyrics to Charles Mingus’s melodies on her *Mingus* album are a good example of this – colorful lyrics every bit as rich and imaginative as the music to which they match.”<sup>9</sup> But most people aren’t Joni Mitchell.

Zollo tells us “When writing words to a melody, it’s important to write words that fit that specific melody, not simply words that are brilliant on their own. . . . One way is to listen to the melody many times with no intention of thinking up words that will fit it. Instead, simply listen to what the melody says to you. What is it about? What feelings does it create in you? What pictures does it paint? Is it a love song? Is there a time, a place, a person? After doing this, jot down these ideas and see if you can form any kind of structure for the content of the song. Then follow this up by creating a story containing the specifics you have discovered, being as specific as possible. Establish a strict sense of time, place and character. Then forget all about

your intended meaning. In the words of David Byrne, ‘stop making sense.’ Instead, listen to the melody and try to imagine what sounds work well with the movement of the tune. See if those sounds suggest any words or phrases. If so, write them down with no attention given to what they mean or if they will fit into your context. Let the music write the song for you; let it show you where certain sounds are needed.”<sup>10</sup>

Zollo goes on, “After that process is complete, look at the lines in front of you. See if they connect in any way themselves, if there is any inner logic that links them. Then see if they connect in any way with the intended meaning of the song, the details you jotted down earlier. To do this well you have to keep your mind open and look for new connections between things you may have never thought of before. The rest is like putting together a puzzle, connecting the different parts until they all fit into one organic whole. Dig deep into your imagination and you can come up with some brilliant solutions.”<sup>11</sup>

With regards to creating lyrics and the tune Zollo says: “A good marriage between the words and the music of the song is what makes the song succeed. If the words are brilliant and the music is pedestrian, the song will not be effective. Rather than the good words making the music sound better, the music will make the words seem even worse. Similarly, a good melody – even a great one – with okay words will only be an okay song and not a great one. . . . A lyric has to have many things: meaning, brevity, a rhyme scheme, a good use of sound, etc. . .

“When writing words to a melody or words that will be set to music, you must be conscious of words that will sing well, that flow in terms of melody. . . and as time goes on and you write many songs, you will become familiar with those words that are pleasing to the ear and that can be sung well.”<sup>12</sup> The sounds from the letters in the words can also evoke certain feelings.

“Paul Simon has admitted a special preference for certain vowel sounds as well as some consonants. He said that he likes Gs and Ls as well as the percussive nature of hard consonants like Ks and Ts. If you listen to any of his recordings, you can hear in his enunciation a concentration on these sounds. An example of this is from the last verse of his song “The Boxer” (from *Bridge Over Troubled Water*): ‘and he carries the reminders of every glove that laid him down/Or cut him till

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### *Opossum – from page 1*

upright bass, electric and acoustic bass, guitar, and banjo.

Joe's wonderful, foundational bass is a integral part of my songs and drives the rhythm and holds it all together. He plays with a deep passion and love for the music. Sometimes as we are playing a show, I will look over at Joe and he will have eyes closed and be "gone" – totally, totally into the song and living it. What a joy!

I am very blessed and extremely grateful to have these wonderful players and friends giving wings to my songs!

**Bill:** You live near a small town in Marion County right near the banks of the Scioto River, and your two "friends" are from Marysville and Delaware. Do your small-town roots have an influence on your music?

**Steve:** I was born and raised in Marion and was a factory worker my whole life. The blue-collar industrial thing has influenced me heavily – as is shown in many of my songs.

When I was a kid, most of my family were railroaders working for the Erie out of Marion. I worked at every type of job: from working in a quarry to factory type jobs making road machinery, padlocks, dog food, soap, and [I spent] many years at an auto plant. So hard factory work and the gritty lunch bucket work life and good common working folk influenced me heavily.

At the same time, I always loved animals, nature and wildlife and wanted to work with wildlife. In 1986, I bought a small property in farm country [Marion County] 31 feet from the Scioto River between Green Camp and Prospect. I started planting trees and created a little nature preserve. That same year I started doing wildlife rescue and rehab work in Marion County which I did for 25 years. In addition to that I became somewhat of an environmental activist.

These things all influenced my songs and you can hear that distinctly.

**Bill:** Tell us how you came to be a musical performer. Were you into music as a child? How has your performing career progressed over the years?

**Steve:** What made me want to become a musical performer? One thing – campfires! Campfires and acoustic folk music grabbed my heart and locked me in.

The intimate setting and the strings and stories against the backdrop of the crackling fire and sounds of nature hooked me – & I have sat around many, many fires.

I was never a player or performer as a child but I was a tremendous music fanatic and was raised listening to AM pop radio out of Detroit. In those days, that era of pop radio included everything – and I loved it. Rock and roll, soul, crooners, R&B, folk. . . all of it came across the stations together & I loved & bought it all.



*Opossum & Friends performing*

I guess I feel that over the years, I have come to care less about simply performing – to wanting to perform for the right audience and I keep moving closer towards that all of the time.

I care less about playing on big stages, at festivals, or at bars or restaurants, but love the intimacy of a living room or house concert where you are "with" a group of listening friends to connect and share time with.

I never really started performing publicly until around 2005 and I never had any illusions about making a living at it, but instead thought the best way to honor the songs and music was to put it to work and give it all away – as opposed to buying new underwear, or whatever.

So, I started the "Winds of Good" fund and collected every penny from every performance and I have donated it to good grassroots charities, animal welfare groups, and homeless camps. You can see the entire history of this fund and our donations at my music site on [www.reverbnation.com/opossumsongs](http://www.reverbnation.com/opossumsongs). To this point, we have raised and donated over \$12,000.00 through this fund.

My biggest recent thrill was to have 3 of my songs on my new album "Without Warning" produced and engineered by Gurf Morlix at his Austin studio. Gurf, who was Lucinda William's band leader and guitarist for many years, is a huge

Americana singer/songwriter, and producer and has won many Americana music awards.

**Bill:** What kinds of experiences have you had in past performances? What was the best time you ever had, and what was the worst?

**Steve:** I have had great and poor times at performances. The worst, I guess, is any performance where we are expected to be background music, as my songs just don't work well for that. One show I have in mind is when I was booked to perform at a very big annual meeting of an environmental group. I was really excited as many of my songs fit the nature scheme well. When it was time to perform, huge round tables were set up and dinner was served at show time – so with half of the huge crowd with their backs to us, and all of the audience eating – we were basically ignored.

The very, very best shows are the ones where I was approached by someone who said a song made them laugh or cry because it touched their own life.

The best shows have nothing to do with crowd or venue size but have to do with linking lives and hearts with the audience through songs. That's why the best stage, to me, is a couch.

**Bill:** Is there a particular over-riding message or theme in most of your music? What do you want people to take away from your performances?

**Steve:** I feel that my songs talk about the struggles of the common folk and things we all encounter such as work, death and love. More importantly, I try to speak of things that we don't usually talk about in life – such as the human species as a whole, how we fail and refuse to look at ourselves objectively, and our impact on the planet as a whole.

I am a vegan and believe in equal rights for all beings – of all species – and an overriding theme in my music is universal compassion for all. That also includes an understanding and view of ourselves as being connected as global brothers and sisters – sharing the planet, without regard to borders, politics, religions, flags, economics, and all of the things that have divided us and caused all of our strife in the world. Also that, all of us, if we are willing to evolve on a personal level, can truly change the world through compassion for all beings.

## SAVE THE DATE . . .

 The **Saturday Music Jam** at the **Worthington Farmers' Market 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.** The southeast quad on Worthington Square. All are welcome to come play. Every Saturday through Fall Festival in October. It's good to bring a chair.

 **Saturday, September 28 – Folkside Coffeehouse**  
**6:00 p.m.** Open Jam  
**7:00 p.m.** Open Stage

**8:00 p.m. Featuring Opossum & Friends.** *Columbus Mennonite Church*, 35 Oakland Park Avenue (just East of High St. & one block North of E.N. Broadway), Cols, OH. \$7.00 donation; CFMS members \$5.00; under 12 free.

 **Sunday, Oct. 13 1 - 4 p.m., Darby Creek Day – Battelle-Darby Creek Metro Park/Indian Ridge Picnic Area.** CFMS members have been

invited to play at the annual *Darby Creek Day*. This year's grand event will be at the Indian Ridge Picnic Area from 1 to 4 p.m. Similar to years past, they'll have a small tent in an area where visitors will enjoy hearing us play. NOTE: There wasn't a *Darby Creek Day* last year due to the dedication of the new Nature Center. So save the date and plan on coming out; enjoy the park and help provide some music for the visitors!



Left (top & bottom):  
**June CFMS picnic @ Fred Bailey's;**  
**Bottom: July CFMS picnic @ Hal Pepinsky's**

Right and bottom:  
**CFMS at Franklin Co. Fair - 2013**

Above:  
**CFMS plays @ Ohio State Fair-2013**

## FOLLOWING OUR OWN. . .

**Friday, Sept. 6: One More Time String Band - Honey Festival,** Lithopolis, **2:30 to 4:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, Sept. 7: The Hardtackers - Santa Maria Pirate Day.** *Season opening ceremonies starting at noon* (Sept 7: tours, \$2). The local chapter of Sea Cadets will present a flag raising ceremony along with patriotic music and cannon fire. **Hardtacker's Sea Chanties from 1-2 p.m.**

**Saturday, Sept. 7: Halfway Home, Hartford Village Day,** On the Square, Croton, OH **7:30-9 PM**

**Saturday, Sept. 7: Loosely Strung,** *North Market in the Short North,* Vine St., Cols. **12 - 2 pm**

**Sunday, Sept. 8: Joanie Calem -- Intergenerational Sing Along** at the

Senior Residence, 120 Morse Rd., behind church. If you love singing & dancing & building community come out & join us. **2nd Sun. of every month. 4 - 5 p.m.**

**Friday, Sept. 13: Grassahol, Byrnes' Pub;** 1248 West 3rd Ave. - Columbus, OH. **7 - 9 P.M.** Free.

**Saturday, Sept. 14: Loosely Strung, BeanFest,** Pickerington, **11 - 3 pm**

**Saturday, Sept. 14: Halfway Home, The Oldtime Farming Festival, Festival Stage,** Centerburg Community Memorial Park, Rt 314 & Rt 3, Centerburg, OH. **2:00-3:30 PM**  
[Oldtime Farming Festival](#)

**Friday, Sept. 20: Halfway Home, Music on the Square,**

Intersection of US 62/Market St, Berlin, OH. **7-8:30 PM**

**Saturday, Sept. 21: Halfway Home, Clifton Opera House,** Clay St, Clifton, OH. **7:30-9:30 PM.** Acoustic Show.

**Saturday, Sept. 21: One More Time String Band, Covered Bridge Festival,** Marysville, **2 - 3 p.m.**

**Saturday, Sept. 28: Halfway Home, Columbus Oktoberfest,** Ohio Expo Center, Schmidt Prost Hall, Admission Free / Parking \$8, **Noon-3:30 PM**

**Saturday, Sept. 28: Grasshol, Pataskala Antique Power Show,** Thomas J. Evans Foundation Park, Pataskala, OH, **Noon - 2 P.M.**

**Saturday, Sept. 28: One More Time String Band, North Market,** Columbus, **10:00 to Noon**

**COLUMBUS FOLK  
MUSIC SOCIETY'S  
2013-14  
FOLKSIDÉ COFFEEHOUSE  
LINEUP**

- September – **Opossum & Friends**
- October – **Joe LaMay and Sherri Reese**
- November – **Open Stage** (start recruiting good people – February might become theirs!)
- January – **Grassahol**
- February – **TBA**
- March – **Jon Mosey**
- April – **Scott Alarik**

**A COUPLE OF  
EXCITING  
ANNOUNCEMENTS:**



Like last year, the CFMS will be producing a 2014 calendar (with full color photos for each calendar page). It should become available either late October or early November. So keep

it in mind for upcoming Christmas gifts. All proceeds from calendar sales go to the CFMS.

If you have or know of a business who might be interested in sponsoring a calendar ad, please e-mail: [newsletter@columbusfolkmusicociety.org](mailto:newsletter@columbusfolkmusicociety.org). Ads are \$40 each and the form you'll need explaining what they need to do will be provided. Couldn't be easier than that!

The CFMS has recently opened up a "Folkside Shop" at Cafepress. We're making many items available with our logo and a slogan: t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, caps, mousepads and more! Check them out at: <http://www.cafepress.com/folksideshop>.

Have fun on the site!



*Songwriting - from page 3*

he cried out. . . ' The highlighting of the hard Cs on "cut him" and "cried out" is carried in the voice and amplified in the percussion, emphasizing the anger and hurt contained in the lyric."<sup>13</sup>

Local musician, Teresa Schleifer relays, "Most of my songs tell a story or share a message, and crafting the verses requires time and effort. How can I say the most with the fewest words and keep the message focused? A college English prof taught me the power of writing without the verb "to be". In other words, recast phrases to eliminate "is", "are", "was", "were", and so on. Using strong verbs in place of these weak ones infuses the lyrics with a greater density of meaning. Any songwriter can create a more powerful song by using this simple technique.

"From the point of telling the story, I prefer to beat around the bush and leave the lyrics open to interpretation.

In "Standing On Mars", I could have written directly in simple declarative sentences about my mother's deteriorating health, the expectation that she would soon die, and my sense of loss after she passed away. The song, instead, approaches the subject obliquely, and the listener figures it out, perhaps connecting with some universal piece that resonates in his or her life."



**REWRITING A SONG**

A good songwriter will go back, after the song is completed, and see where it needs more polishing. Zollo, as a songwriter, says of his process "I would go back and see if there were any parts of the song that were weak and that didn't excite me. I would analyze the lyrics, making sure that there wasn't a single line that bothered me in any way. I would also analyze the melody in the same way. And a truly good songwriter will replace the weak parts with newer parts that are even stronger, adding power to the overall structure of the song."<sup>14</sup>

Sing the melody without any instrument. Does it sound good? Does it have a good range? Zollo says to also be conscious about employing melodic skips (going from one note to another that is larger than a step, for example, from C to G). Zollo gives the example of the song "Somewhere over the Rainbow" where the skip starts with the first word of the

song 'somewhere' rising a full octave, which he says, "establishes the perfect emotional setting for the longing nature of the lyric, and the reaching upwards toward the sky."<sup>15</sup> Other things to ask yourself about your melody: Is it strong and memorable? Is there a building of tension and eventual release? Overall, Zollo reminds his readers, it is the melody, and not the chord changes that people listening to the song are going to react to.

In addition, Zollo says "While some songs are created spontaneously, with no rewriting at all, most songs are based on what is essentially a rough draft; the songwriter follows his inspiration as far as it will take him, being careful not to get in the way. And when that process is finished, the writer must go back and examine those ideas to determine what works and what doesn't work. This is the craft stage of songwriting, and every good songwriter must be a good craftsman, able to take a roughly formed piece of clay and mold a song out of it."<sup>16</sup>

**SOME FINAL TIPS**

Schleifer says, "I advise aspiring songwriters to use a recorder to capture sudden inspiration on the fly (or call yourself on the phone and leave a message!); to invest in a small rhyming dictionary and a thesaurus; and to learn more about songwriting from the pros. The book "How To Write Songs on Guitar", by Rikky Rooksby (2000, Backbeat Books) has lots of practical tips and tricks and gets my recommendation as a resource for aspiring songwriters who play guitar."

Brian Szuch relays that collaboration with another artist can be very helpful in coming up with new ideas. Szuch says, "I . . . have found I'm more productive writing for a particular artist. I can imagine their voice and it helps in the decision making. Though I greatly prefer composing music to writing lyrics, I do both, with a lot of self-critiquing and editing along the way. I've been recently writing with Paisha Thomas in preparation for her forthcoming debut album. Her great vocal energy and interpretations of material I bring, along with her ability to come up with unique lyrics and musical ideas, have made the collaborative process very rewarding."

Lastly, local singer/songwriter, Terry Keller, says "As others have said – our songs are our children. So. . . here's what I have to say about mine. I have a song called "Fingerprints" that is my eldest

*See Songwriting - page 7*

**How can I find out more about the Columbus Folk Music Society and/or its events?** Visit our website for information at: [www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org](http://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org).

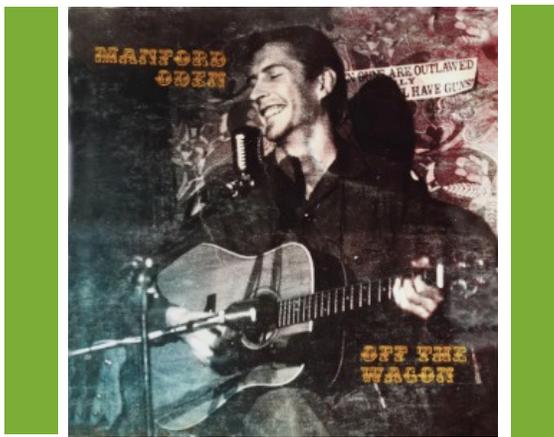
Or you can, join us as a member. Benefits include: Camaraderie with the folkies in town, discounts on certain admissions, this monthly newsletter and the comfort of knowing that all events are family friendly!

There are 3 banjo players in a car. Who is driving?  
The cop

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**SEPTEMBER'S - "NAME THAT PHOTO":**

You may be stumped on this one. But then again, maybe not. Who this is and a little history will be forthcoming in October newsletter!

*Songwriting - from page 6*

child (about 40 years old) and which I still like but haven't played much recently. Sorry old friend! Since then, there have been many abandoned songs (gone who knows where). I keep finding songs languishing in old song folders and I do try to bring some of them back.

"Now if I could just get someone to record or sing them I'd be a happy father! I do like to hear other people do my songs - like Mike Hale and Halfway Home's version of "Never Say Die" from their Better Days album. In conclusion, I've got quite a few songs of mine waiting to be heard and everyday I hear good new songs by Columbus songwriters. I must end it here for I have a song idea I need to put down on paper!" A sampling of some of Terry's songs can be found at: [www.myspace.com/terryckeller/music/albums](http://www.myspace.com/terryckeller/music/albums). And if you want to contact Terry about recording for yourself some of his many songs, you can reach him at: [singerTCK@aol.com](mailto:singerTCK@aol.com).

**LOCAL SONGWRITER'S ASSOCIATION**

There is a local songwriters association in Columbus, should you be interested in connecting up with other like-minded folks.

The Columbus Songwriters Association is a non-profit organization that provides music industry opportunities, performance outlets, educational resources, technical services, and collective benefits to a select group of passionate songwriters. Since the emergence of Columbus

Songwriters Association (CSA) in October 2012, CSA has grown to a group of nearly 120 songwriters in Columbus, Ohio who perform at monthly showcases at Woodlands Tavern in Grandview, Ohio. CSA also helps songwriters link for co-writing through two songwriter circles and a partnered online community of songwriters, [www.Frettie.com](http://www.Frettie.com). Our non profit community is also partnered with John Schwab Recording Studios, which provides discounted recording, mixing, and mastering services to Columbus Songwriters Association's members. In addition, several freelance professionals, including videographers, photographers, designers, and other local businesses, have offered discounts to CSA members on creative services that further the musical projects of songwriters in our community. Recently, CSA has launched the Local Music Shelf which is a grassroots CD distribution network that helps locals songwriters and bands sell CDs to customers all around Columbus. Local Music Shelf will help sell local music in 100 local stores in 2014. As 2013 draws to a new year, Columbus Songwriters Association will hold an end of the year event where industry-relevant judges will provide feedback on songs performed by songwriter finalists at the 2013 Finale Showcase.

For more information, follow them on Twitter @CbusSongwriters or visit their website: <http://columbussongwritersassociation.com/>

**Footnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> thru <sup>16</sup> *Beginning Songwriter's Answer Book* by Paul Zollo, pgs. 16-24; 49; 63

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Next Issue in October

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Yes! Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities within the organization

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