

S·V·S·A music news

Feature article:

How To Avoid Writing A Song

By **Greg Trafidlo**

How to Avoid Making Art (or Anything Else You Enjoy), written by Julia Cameron, author of *The Artist's Way*, offers a humorous approach to the fine art of procrastination. Below is a list I'm paraphrasing which applies directly to the songwriter's mindset which gets in the way of our creativity. Keep it handy when you're looking for a good excuse to keep from applying your seat to your chair:

- Always attempt to write a hit
- Tell everyone why it's so difficult for you to write songs
- Hang around people who will be glad to tell you why a career as a songwriter won't work
- Tell yourself that you need perfect conditions to work
- Answer the phone when you're in the middle of writing
- Always compare your work to others'
- Nurture others instead of concentrating on your own creativity
- Refuse to attend live performances by the pros to study what makes them successful
- Avoid spending time in major music cities
- Only write in chemical- or alcohol-induced states
- Curb your enthusiasm and ideas whenever possible
- Write only complex, complicated songs that mean something only to you
- Realize it is too expensive to take your songs to the next level (demos, better microphones, etc.)
- Talk about songwriting instead of doing it
- Realize how selfish you are for following your dreams
- Listen only to those who teach, but do not do
- Realize that all menial things have priority over your songwriting
- Co-write only with those who know less about songwriting than you do
- Take it to heart when relatives say why it won't work
- Share your successes with people who'll dampen them
- Demand perfection from yourself
- Write only what's never been written before
- Tell yourself that your job keeps you from songwriting
- Focus on the dreams of others, not your own
- Begin each writing session asking, "How much can I make off of this?"
- Tell yourself that you are too old, or too young, to do what you love
- Watch TV
- Hang out with those who drain your creativity
- Spend more time answering e-mail or watching YouTube than writing
- Be oblivious to the motives of those who criticize your songs
- Volunteer for everything that distracts you from your music
- Know that housework and home projects are more important than your songwriting
- Spend more time at the office
- Choose friends whose depression is contagious

- Tell yourself you can't afford supporting your music (then buy a new flat screen TV)
- Always suffer for your music. If it's fun, it must be wrong
- Concentrate on your "Big Break." Pay no attention to little victories
- Discount all praise. Take criticism to heart
- Realize you'll be homeless if you pursue your music
- Write only in styles/genres in which you are comfortable
- Admit you can't be successful in your hometown
- Make others' problems your own, so your energy is depleted
- Admit that you can write songs only with your family's approval
- Tell yourself you can have artistic freedom only if you leave your wife, your kids, your state
- Tell yourself that songwriting is frivolous
- Fill your writing space with distractions
- Only choose songwriting mentors who are jaded and disillusioned
- Don't write songs, read about how to write songs
- Always fear the security of leaving your day job
- Never take feedback seriously
- Keep from rewriting at all costs
- Realize your songs are too good to bring to SVSA for critique
- Realize your songs aren't good enough to bring to SVSA for critique
- Make an expensive purchase so you have to work overtime to pay for it
- Spend an excessive amount for time with your significant other
- Avoid solitude and daydreaming
- Decide that you first need to first live a colorful life in order to be a writer
- Spend time posing and being seen instead of writing

- Never complete a song more than once every two months or so

Writers Conference in Roanoke will feature Sharyn McCrumb

The Roanoke Regional Writers Conference's second edition will be held January 23 and 24, 2009, at Hollins University. The conference will be held Friday evening and all day Saturday and will feature a reception, networking event with three writing-related talks on Friday and 24 classes Saturday.

A new format will feature two different sets of three classes each: "Writing For and About Women" and "Writing About Nature and the Environment." These two sets will feature some well-known writers including Appalachian Trail author Leonard Adkins, nature/spiritual columnist Liza Field, outdoor writing legend Bill Cochran, veteran journalist Sarah Cox, magazine editor Elizabeth Parsons, and Southern Living Editor Cassandra Vanhooser.

Among the other presenters will be New York Times best-selling author Sharyn McCrumb, last year's keynote speaker, and Virginia Tech business writing teacher and young adult fantasy writer Tiffany Trent, who has a large following.

The conference costs \$50. That includes the wine reception, coffee and pastries for breakfast Saturday and lunch in the Hollins rathskeller Saturday. Those in attendance may attend any class or set of classes they wish.

For more information, see the Roanoke Regional Writers Conference website: <http://hollinsroanokewritersconf.eventbrite.com>

Next SVSA Meeting:
Wed., August 27
7:30 p.m.
 Third Street Coffeehouse,
 Roanoke, Virginia

Six Degrees ...

SVSA member Greg Trafidlo reports that the guitar expertise of his friend Muriel Anderson is part of the soundtrack to the new Woody Allen movie, "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" (and Greg says the movie is good, too!). You can hear Muriel's recording of "El Noi de la Mare" in the scene when Vicky walks into the father's garden, and the song is on the movie's soundtrack CD.

International Acoustic Music Awards now accepting entries

International Acoustic Music Awards (IAMA) promotes excellence in acoustic music performance and artistry. Artists in various genres can gain radio and web exposure through this competition, which awards prizes in eight categories: Folk/Americana/Roots, AAA/Alternative, Instrumental, Open, Bluegrass/Country, Best Male Artist, Best Female Artist, and Best Group/Duo.

IAMA is open to all independent artists and labels.

Singer-songwriter Charlie Dore, best known for her 1980 pop single "Pilot of the Airwaves," won last year's IAMA.

The deadline to enter is November 10, 2008. For more information, see the IAMA website: <http://www.inacoustic.com>.

SVSA Disclaimer: The ideas and opinions contained in this newsletter are intended to be helpful to songwriters. The companies and organizations mentioned are believed to be legitimate SVSA music news; however, SVSA does not endorse any products or services and offers no guaranteed success based on the content.

We are always looking for articles about SVSA members and articles of interest to the songwriting community.

Send articles and information to the Editor, Kathy Acosta, at 125 Polk St., Radford, VA 24141, or svsa@davidsimpkins.com. SVSA is a non-profit organization.

*SVSA Board Members
Charlie Divers - President
David Simpkins - Vice President
Greg Trafidlo - Secretary
Connie Sellers - Treasurer
Kathy Acosta - Newsletter Editor*

P.O. Box 698, Salem, VA 24153

THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

Third Street Coffeehouse is located in Trinity United Methodist Church at the corner of Third St. & Mountain Ave. in Old Southwest Roanoke. The coffeehouse is open from 7-10 p.m. every Friday night, offering live music and socializing in a smoke-free, alcohol-free environment. Open Mic is 7:00-8:00 pm; sign up at the door. Main act 8:00-10:00 pm. No cover charge; we pass the hat for musicians. Supervised children are welcome. Drinks, snacks and desserts are sold.

For more information about Third Street Coffeehouse, contact **Marian McConnell** at **540-309-4707**.

UPCOMING AT THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

- Jul 18 Gretel
- Jul 25 Drew Arnn & Billy Via
- Aug 1 David Simpkins
- Aug 8 Bleecker Street
- Aug 15 Rusty Curling
- Aug 22 Special Surprise Tribute
- Aug 29 Steve Langston
- Sep 5 Mike Pearrell
- Sep 12 The Aardvarks
- Sep 19 Chuck Schaeffer
- Sep 26 Mary Gordon Hall and Friends
- Oct 3 Kat Mills
- Oct 10 SVSA Songwriters in the Round
- Oct 17 Larry Sakayama
- Oct 24 Clinton Collins & the Creek Boys
- Oct 31 Kimmon Waldruff
- Nov 7 Grace Note
- Nov 14 Kim & Lana
- Nov 21 Rob & Mike
- Nov 28 Closed for Thanksgiving
- Dec 5 Britt Misteale

MORE INFORMATION: Contact Marian McConnell at (540) 309-4707

SVSA Performing Member Gigs

Saturday, Aug. 23

Greg Trafidlo with Trifolkal
Unity of Roanoke Church

Friday, August 29

Marc Baskind with The Source
Annie Moore's Pub, Roanoke, Virginia, 8-11 p.m.

Tuesday, September 2

Greg Trafidlo with Trifolkal
Church of the Brethren National conference, Lake
Junaluska, N.C.

Friday, September 5

Greg Trafidlo
Lynchburg Academy of Music, Juried Photo
Exhibition, Lynchburg, VA

Friday, September 5

Mike Pearrell
Third Street Coffeehouse
Third Street & Mountain Avenue, downtown
Roanoke, Virginia 24015
Basement of Trinity United Methodist Church --
(540) 344-6744 (ext 309)
7:30-10:00 p.m.
Admission is FREE; donations appreciated

Saturday, September 6

David Simpkins, Mike Pearrell, and Greg Trafidlo
Vinton Farmers Market & Craft Show, 10 a.m. – 3
p.m.
204 West Lee Avenue, Vinton, Virginia 24179 --
(540) 983-0613
Admission is FREE
[http://www.town.vinton.va.us/departments_pages/
farmers_market_photos.htm](http://www.town.vinton.va.us/departments_pages/farmers_market_photos.htm)

Friday, September 12

Marc Baskind with The Source
Annie Moore's Pub, Roanoke, Virginia, 8-11 p.m.

Saturday, September 13

David Simpkins
Radford Farmers Market
Norwood Square in downtown Radford, Virginia
24141
10 a.m. - noon
Admission is FREE; donations appreciated
<http://www.mainstreetradford.org/market.php>

Friday, September 19

David Simpkins, Marc Baskind, Mike Pearrell,
and Greg Trafidlo, with Kathy Acosta
The Whole Note Performance Club
570 Blue Ridge Avenue, Bedford, Virginia 24523
7:30 p.m.
Admission: \$5.00
<http://www.emh2.net/wholenote/joomla/>

Saturday, September 20

Marc Baskind with The Collegians
Tazewell, Virginia, MiniPark

Thursday, September 25

Marc Baskind
Brambleton Blend Coffee House, Roanoke,
Virginia

Friday, September 26

Marc Baskind with The Source
Annie Moore's Pub, Roanoke, Virginia, 8-11 p.m.

Friday, September 26

David Simpkins
Coffee Buy The Book
10 West Main Street, downtown Pulaski, Virginia
24301 -- (540) 980-4424
6:30-9:00 p.m.
Admission is FREE; donations appreciated
<http://www.coffeebuythebook.net>

Friday, September 26

Greg Trafidlo performing with Mary Gordon Hall
Third Street Coffeehouse, Roanoke, Virginia

Saturday, September 27

Marc Baskind with Caravan
Centerfest, Bedford, Virginia

Friday, October 3

Marc Baskind
Octoberfest, Bluefield Auditorium, Bluefield,
West Virginia

Sunday, October 5

Marc Baskind with Caravan
Chateau Morrisette

Friday, October 10

Marc Baskind with The Source
Annie Moore's Pub, Roanoke, Virginia, 8-11 p.m.

Friday, October 10

SVSA Songwriters in the Round
Third Street Coffeehouse
Third Street & Mountain Avenue, downtown
Roanoke, Virginia 24015
Basement of Trinity United Methodist Church --
(540) 344-6744 (ext 309)
7:30-10:00 p.m.
Admission is FREE; donations appreciated

Friday, October 17

David Simpkins
Coffee Buy The Book
10 West Main Street, downtown Pulaski, Virginia
24301 -- (540) 980-4424
6:30-9:00 p.m.
Admission is FREE; donations appreciated
<http://www.coffeebuythebook.net>

Saturday, October 18

David Simpkins
Radford Farmers Market
Norwood Square in downtown Radford, Virginia
24141
10 a.m. - noon
Admission is FREE; donations appreciated
<http://www.mainstreetradford.org/market.php>

Friday, October 24

Marc Baskind with The Source
Annie Moore's Pub, Roanoke, Virginia, 8-11 p.m.

Friday, November 14

David Simpkins
Coffee Buy The Book, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
10 West Main Street, downtown Pulaski, Virginia
24301 -- (540) 980-4424
Admission is FREE; donations appreciated
<http://www.coffeebuythebook.net>

Friday, December 12

David Simpkins
Coffee Buy The Book
10 West Main Street, downtown Pulaski, Virginia
24301 -- (540) 980-4424
6:30-9:00 p.m.
Admission is FREE; donations appreciated
<http://www.coffeebuythebook.net>

.....
**next meeting: Wednesday, August 27 –
Third Street Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m.**