

S·V·S·A music news

Feature article:

Performing Your Songs

By **Marc Baskind**

I am humbly grateful that I have had a dream come true. I am now playing an average of 4 to 5 gigs a week, with different groups, sometimes solo. I don't know how long this pony will run, but I'm gonna ride it as long as it will go. This is by far the most I've played in my life, and it's giving me some new insights into performing. For example:

- Working with other people, I have learned that they play and hear differently than I, and what I think is good is not necessarily in any way what someone else likes!!!! Good is in the ears of the beholder!
- People hear what they see, or what they want to, and generally something different from what I hear.
- I look and sound a lot different out front than behind my eyes!
- A good accompanist does not show off while the singer is performing--even if they're the same person.
- When it's my turn to take a solo, I'm NOT automatically required to put every note, lick, and inflection I've ever worked up into each ride!
- I used to think that the gig was the job, and the rehearsal was the fun: that's 180 degrees out of sync! WE DON'T GET PAID TO PLAY, THAT'S PLAYING! WE GET PAID TO WORK, TO BUY AND HAUL OUR EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, AND, MOST OF ALL TO SPEND HOURS AND HOURS GETTING READY TO PLAY!! (This is a good thing to say to the client who says "What would you charge for just one hour?")
- I'm going to have some good gigs and some not-so-good gigs, and, as I learn that I will live through it all, I should always do my best and not whine about it.

- When I have an exceptionally good gig, or an exceptionally bad one, only two or three sets of ears in the house know it — but they ALL know if I enjoy the gig! And, if I have a good time, generally so does everyone else in the room. So what's a good gig? My mission as an entertainer is to have a good time. I find that I can judge any particular performance, in retrospect, by how much I have looked at my guitar (that's my barometer — yours may be something else). Most of us have had our instruments in our hands as much as, say, a doctor has had his — we don't need to look at our instrument, give or take an occasional glance! When I "own" the performance — when I am confidently reproducing what I've learned, and am uninhibited about how it's going to sound, ONLY THEN can I do WHAT I CAME TO DO — transfer the emotion in me to someone else. I don't know why you play, but this is ultimately why I play! When I look at my instrument throughout the performance, I am actually hiding from the audience (duh!). And, of course, this all hinges on how prepared I am, doesn't it?

So — how does this relate to songwriting? My best example:

Paul Craft is a writer/producer in Nashville with his name on many hits, and is well-connected in the industry. One of SVSA's most active, Greg Trafidlo, is a friend and co-writer with Paul, and Greg arranged a meeting and met me at Paul's home in Nashville. I sat on Mr. Craft's couch and played for him, and, to make a long story short, I was not prepared! That was a blown opportunity to musically connect with someone who could really help me get my stuff heard by important ears. I was not prepared, IN PERFORMANCE OR CONFIDENCE, to produce. I don't remember clearly (I certainly didn't "own" that moment!), but I'm sure I spent a lot of time on Mr. Craft's couch looking at my guitar!"

There have been other such chances in my life, but not many, and I have generally wasted those moments. So, I respectfully suggest that, in the “planned” part of our writing careers — the part where we decide how much time we’re going to invest — we plan to have our best stuff ready at a moment’s notice.

Opportunities do knock, and, usually, three or four good tunes will fill up an interview. As far as the rest of our repertoire, let’s just learn it well enough to confidently enjoy playing it, and the satisfaction in others will guide us to the next “right thing.”

THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

Third Street Coffeehouse is located in Trinity United Methodist Church at the corner of Third Street and Mountain Avenue in Old Southwest Roanoke. The coffeehouse is open 7:00-10:00 p.m. every Friday, offering live music and socializing in a smoke-free alcohol-free environment. Open Mic starts at 7:00; sign up at the door. Main act starts around 8:00 until 10:00 pm. No cover charge; we pass the hat for musicians. Supervised children are welcome. Drinks, snacks and desserts are sold. Established 1987.

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

UPCOMING AT THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

- Oct 17 Larry Sakayama
- Oct 24 Clinton Collins & the Creek Boys
- Oct 31 Kimmon Waldruff
- Nov 7 Grace Note
- Nov 14 Dan & Marian
- Nov 21 Rob & Mike
- Nov 28 Closed for Thanksgiving
- Dec 5 Britt Mistele
- Dec 12 Roanoke Valley Bluegrass Pickers
- Dec 19 Wyatt Law
- Dec 26 Closed for Christmas
- Jan 2 Steve Langston – LaLaLand
- Jan 9 Commonplace
- Jan 15 Paul Kupfer
- Jan 23 Trent Wagler & the Steel Wheels
- Jan 30 TBA
- Feb 6 Justin Duncan

SVSA DISCLAIMER: The ideas and opinions contained in this newsletter are intended to be helpful to songwriters. The SVSA 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

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P.O. Box 698, Salem, VA 24153

SVSA PERFORMING MEMBER GIGS

Marc Baskind

- **Every Tuesday** 7-10:30 (with exceptions): J&J Social Hall, Burnt Chimney, Va., country/bluegrass, \$5 at the door, eat free, \$1 for drinks (alcohol free/smoke free environment)
- **Every Wednesday** 6-9 (with exceptions): Del Sol, Main Street, Lewisburg, W.V., Jazz/Variety w/Walter Scott, snazzy jazzy (Greenbriar) pianist extraordinaire, duo or trio
- **Oct. 18** Annie Moore's w/Caravan 8-11
- **Oct. 24** Annie Moore's w/The Source
- **Oct. 31** (Halloween Dance) Holiday Inn, Bluefield, WV w/The Collegians 9-12, \$10.00 per person, WEAR A COSTUME IF YOU WISH.
- **Nov. 7** Annie Moore's w/The Source 8-11
- **Nov. 14** Annie Moore's w/Caravan 8-11
- **Nov. 21** Annie Moore's w/The Source 8-11
- **Nov. 28** Annie Moore's w/Caravan 8-11

Mary Gordon Hall

- **October 18**, Brownsville Arts and Crafts Fair, 9am, with Blair Jones
- **October 19**, Batesville Apple Butter Festival, with Blair Jones
- **October 25**, Batesville Store Wine Tasting, Batesville, VA, 1-3pm, Mary Gordon Hall and TBA
- **October 26**, Fardowners in downtown Crozet, VA, Sunday Brunch, 12-3pm. Mary Gordon Hall and TBA
- **November 24**, Gravity Lounge, Charlottesville, VA. Opening for Mary McCaslin with Blue O'Connell and Debbie Hunter, 7pm.
- **December 5**, Stone Soup in Waynesboro, VA, 7-10pm, Mary Gordon Hall and TBA

Barbara Martin

- **Saturday, October 18**, 8-11 pm, Barbara Martin Trio, Downtown 56, 56 W. Gay St., Harrisonburg, VA 540-438-5600 owntown56harrisonburg.com
- **Wednesday, October 29**, 7:30-10:30 pm, Barbara singing jazz standards with a jazz combo, Mill Street Grille, 1 Mill St., Staunton 540-886-0656
- **Friday, November 21**, 8-11 pm, Barbara Martin Trio, Downtown 56, 56 W. Gay St., Harrisonburg, VA 540-438-5600 downtown56harrisonburg.com

- **Tuesday, December 2**, 4:30 pm, Family Concert, Rust Library, 34D Catoctin Cir., Leesburg, VA 703-777-0690s
- **Saturday, December 6**, 8 pm, doors open at 7:30, Barbara Martin and Mac Walter, Barking Cherry House Concert Series, Charlottesville, VA Coffee, tea, soft drinks and desserts will be available at the break. Directions to the home will be provided when you make your reservations. The suggested donation at the door is \$10. Reservations are accepted by e-mail at sngwrtr525@hotmail.com or at 434-974-6702 before 9 p.m.

David Simpkins

- **Friday, October 17**, 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**, 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, November 14**, 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, December 12**, 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>

Greg Trafidlo

- **Oct 25** "The Oaks" in Staunton song circle.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 22
Third Street Coffeehouse, Roanoke, Virginia
7:30 p.m.