

SongWritersNotes

The Newsletter for San Diego Songwriters

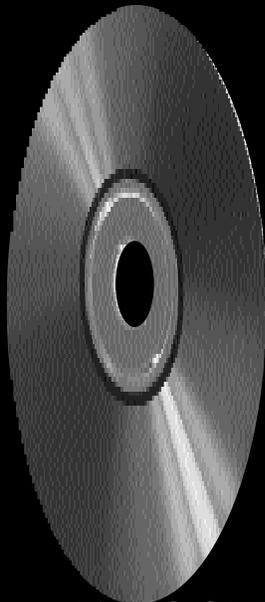
Volume 15 • May 2001

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**The San Diego
Songwriters Guild**

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Production Music Pitch and Critique Monday, May 21

Megatrax

Andrew Robbins

On Monday, May 21, SDSG welcomes Andrew Robbins, Licensing Director Film/TV for Megatrax Production Music. Mr. Robbins has been called "a third generation member of the first family of music publishing." Remember "Singing in the Rain" and "Blue Moon?" Andrew's grandfather, legendary music publisher Jack Robbins, headed the first music publishing company to strike a publishing deal with the major Hollywood movie studios upon the advent of sound in motion pictures. **This session presents a great opportunity for our instrumental composers, as well as all songwriters who would like to write for TV, Film and Advertising.**

Prior to joining Megatrax, Andrew was Director of Music Publishing for Coyote Entertainment. He has worked independently overseeing his family's music publishing interests and in the creative department of Rondor Music International, the publishing arm of A&M Records, as well. Andrew has promoted the catalogs of The Beach Boys, The Carpenters, East Memphis Music, and Billy Preston, among other artists.

Megatrax offers its clientele a choice of thousands of music tracks across all genres, including drama, comedy, orchestral, rock, electronica, lounge, pop, country, R&B, blues, jazz, Latin, and much more. **Andrew will be looking for material that is suitable for immediate placement in the Megatrax Library, but will also offer critiques based upon his years of publishing experience.** Production music sought by Andrew and Megatrax includes songs and instrumentals in all styles except rap. For placement purposes in film or TV, master quality is essential. However, Andrew's generous offer to critique all comers means this SDSG session offers something for every writer.

Due to Andrew's very busy schedule, we have been asked to limit submissions to no more than 25 total. As a result, SDSG members may submit **one song only per writer or team of writers.** Song submission is limited to SDSG members but memberships will be available at the door. Non-members may attend, but not pitch. Admission is \$20.00 for non-members, FREE for members. Pitch fees are \$10.00. Registration begins at 6:30 and the session will start at 7:00 PM.

Please join Andrew and SDSG at the Doubletree Hotel - Randy Fischer

SDSG PRESENTS

BRYAN SPEVAK • LARRY MUNROE • JOSQUIN DES PRES

CARGO RECORDS

SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE...

JUNE 4

From the Counselor's Desk . . .

Critiques and Pitches – One Man's Perspective by SDSG Executive Counsel Member Bob Duffy



Critique Session: a relatively small group of people who get together to hear feedback on their songs from a professional in the music business. The groups are usually small because a) most songwriters already know their songs are great, b) people who critique songs can't get songs played on the radio, and c) who cares about one person's opinion anyway?

Pitch Session: a relatively large group of people who get together to be discovered by a music industry heavyweight so they can become insanely rich within the next 12 months. The groups are usually large because a) most songwriters already know their songs are great and b) people who do pitch sessions can get songs played on the radio (maybe even this week), and c) this person's opinion is REALLY important.

If you've been involved in songwriting for any length of time you may have been exposed to these two aspects of the songwriting process. The above tongue-in-cheek definitions are intended to emphasize a few of the pitfalls writers encounter as they seek to exploit their songs commercially.

Songwriters often have very limited feedback from people who don't know them and may not realize that the honest opinion of an industry professional is often worth more than a hundred opinions from family and friends. A good, professional critique of a song can be the key to eventual airplay, because the critique can reveal a song's strengths and weaknesses. But why waste time with critiques when a review won't actually get a song signed? Here's why: There are dozens of stories of great songs, songs that went on to commercial success, that were rejected in pitch sessions by seasoned industry veterans.

In pitch sessions, panelists typically look for specific material for specific projects. Songs that don't *exactly* fit immediate needs are disregarded. For this reason, I believe that for the developing songwriter — i.e. songwriters with no cuts by major artists - Critiques are more important than Pitches.

People who earn their living in the music business rely their ability to

Continued on Page 3

What's Going On?



SDSG Live Show Coming up:

DEL MAR FAIR, TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2 TO 5 PM AT THE "ENDLESS SUMMER" STAGE

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 2 PM UNTIL THE FAT LADY SINGS: PADRES TAILGATE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

BENEFIT, with Mark "HC Markus" Hattersley on keys at the Qualcomm Stadium Practice Field. \$30 gets you in to the party and buys you a ticket to the Padres game immediately following. You can drink Carl Strauss beer all day (Food and Drink FREE with admission) plus sample margaritas and other libations prepared by San Diego's firefighters. Then eat all you can eat, and walk to the game to recover. Don't miss this event, 'cause the proceeds benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Call the MDA for tickets at (858) 492-9792

STEVE WHITE IS TAKING ON THE TOWN! For the month of May, he'll be at Tom Giblin's Tavern (640 Grand Ave, Carlsbad) every Sunday night from 8-11pm. Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:30pm, Steve will be at Martini Ranch (Hwy 101, downtown Encinitas) and every Tuesday starting May 22 he'll be at the Nautical Bean at Oceanside Harbor. Steve's Special shows include May 24 at Dizzie's (downtown San Diego) for the Bob Dylan birthday tribute plus nine shows at the Del Mar Fair. PLUS a very special appearance at the Coach House on June 29, opening for Charlie Musselwhite and Gatemouth Brown. Advance discount tix from stevewhiteblues.com

THE USA SONGWRITING COMPETITION has announced the launch of the **Year 2001** songwriting event. Songs may be entered in 15 different categories including Pop, Rock and Country. Entries are accepted from now through **May 31, 2001**. For more information visit: <http://www.songwriting.net> Contact: (Toll free) 1-877-USA-SONG Outside US call: (954) 776-1577

THE TENTH BILLBOARD SONG CONTEST is now accepting entries. **June 15, 2001** is the cutoff date for this event. Eight categories are featured in this competition. Check it out at www.billboard.com/songcontest

SUMMER SONGS SONGWRITER'S CAMP 2001 runs from **August 5 through 11** and will be held at Ashokan in the Catskill Mountains of New York. Sounds like just the place to recharge one's creative batteries. Call (914) 246-0223 or visit summersongs.com to learn more.

The Northern California Songwriters Association presents its **21st Annual Songwriters Conference** Saturday and Sunday **September 8 and 9, 2001** at the Foothill College Campus in Los Altos Hills, CA. Call (650) 654-3966 or email info@ncsasong.org

IN CONJUNCTION WITH LA MUSIC 2001 A&R ONLINE'S NEXT LIVE A&R SHOWCASE will take place at THE MINT in Los Angeles, a premiere LA showcase venue on Monday June 25th. Now seeking artists and groups to perform in front of our A&R music industry contacts. Submission deadline is June 11, 2001. Email stacey@aandronline.com for details.

Cargo Records

Pitch Session

Coming to the Doubletree on Monday, June 4, 2001, **Josquin des Pres, Larry Munroe** and **Brian Spevak** will be SDSG's guests, listening for great music in a wide variety of styles as well as discussing their new venture **Bandsbiz.com**. Topics to be discussed include recording and production of demos, shopping demos, booking gigs, and more.

Bryan Spevak began his career in the music industry organizing on-campus concerts and shows including Henry Rollins, No Doubt, Rage Against the Machine, Social Distortion and Stone Temple Pilots. In 1992, Spevak was offered a full-time position in the publicity department at music industry powerhouse Geffen Records, where he worked as a Publicity Director for 2 1/2 years before relocating to San Diego to work for Cargo Music. During his tenure at Geffen Records, Spevak organized and implemented press campaigns for high profile artists including the Counting Crows, White Zombie, Maria McKee, Joni Mitchell, Rickie Lee Jones and Izzy Stradlin from Guns and Roses. Hired originally as the Director of Publicity of Cargo Music, Spevak now manages the Headhunter label, handling everything from A&R/artist relations to promotion/publicity to advertising/marketing etc. In addition to working in the business end of the music industry, Spevak is also an accomplished bassist.

Larry Munroe got his start with Fineline Entertainment then began working with Avalon, Bill Silva Presents and Goldenvoice, promoting local shows. Munroe provided each company with "street level" promotion. Munroe worked at local college radio station KCR for 5 years as Music and Promotion Director and promoted afternoon concerts with local musicians (Blink-182, Blacksmith Union, Loam, Buck-09). Munroe promoted shows at Tijuana's premiere concert venue, Iguana's for the 3 years it was in existence with bands that included Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Offspring, Bad Religion and Green Day. Over the past 6 years with Cargo Music, Munroe has handled radio promotions for all the Cargo artists including the first two Blink-182 records.

Josquin Des Pres has worked as a professional songwriter; written, produced, engineered, and mixed countless albums; shared credits with legendary players Jeff Porcaro, Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Lukather, David Garibaldi, Bunny Brunel, Alex Acuna and many more; and written a shelf-full of instructional books for bass technique. As a songwriter, he is one of the very few to collaborate with Elton John's legendary lyricist Bernie Taupin. Most recently, in between production sessions at his recording and production company, Track Star Studios, Des Pres co-authored Creative Careers in Music, a layman's guide to the music industry.

This pitch will be held at the beautiful Doubletree Hotel in Mission Valley on Monday, June 4. Registration begins at 6:30 PM. The pitch is open to SDSG members only and is limited to one submission per writer or team of writers. Non-members may attend for the admission price of \$20, but why not join SDSG? Membership is open to all interested songwriters, costs only \$45 per year, and members are admitted FREE to this and other SDSG events.

- Mark Hattersley

"CRITIQUES" continued from page 2

recognize a song that perks up the ears of music consumers. Obviously this is very subjective terrain here, but even so, music business people make these judgment calls their profession. Although there are no set formulas for great songs, there are forms and elements that, when present, give a song a much higher likelihood of being considered great. In a Critique, an experienced industry pro can identify missing or poorly implemented elements and structural flaws that the writer (and his friends and family) may have overlooked.

Ongoing critique is like being in a continuous songwriting course, with the writer constantly picking up new tools and techniques for making songs stronger. And while specific criticism of one song may be difficult to implement, the concepts discussed can be incorporated into the writer's future efforts. Yes, good critique is like coaching. Coaches are people who have been there (and are there). Good coaches are people who can see things you can't. Great coaches have the desire to help others succeed, and they care enough to be honest.

Critiques Save! There is no point spending hundreds (or even thousands) on a demo of a song that is not ready for prime time. There is no point spending even more money pitching a demo of such a song. And, since first impressions are critical, pitching a flawed song to a publisher, A&R person or artist can be harmful to a writer's reputation. My advice: Don't demo a song unless at least three professional critiques confirm "The song is ready, it just needs a great demo."

After all is said and done, a critique is just one person's opinion. Don't necessarily rush off and completely rewrite a song based on one critique (unless you agree in your heart that the critique is completely valid). Get several critiques. Be willing to pay \$15-\$20 each for three to five critiques. That hundred bucks will be worth more to your songwriting than one \$500 demo. Weigh all of the feedback together. Fix the things that are commonly criticized. For mixed feedback, go with your gut when it's not clear which feedback to take. Develop a thick skin, but remain open to constructive criticism.

Ultimately, the commercial success of a song depends on a bunch of people who don't know the songwriter. These people make a decision to spend money because of the affect hearing the song has on them. When you've incorporated good critique and have a great demo made, you're ready to pitch to the decision-makers.

SDSG Live!

while! Next up was my old friend and showcase veteran Bill Mayes. Although Bill does occasionally play along with prerecorded tracks, most of his material is performed solo with acoustic guitar. He calls his fingerstyle music, "Dreamscape." The closing act for our show was Chula Vista local Mark Jackson. Accompanied by Ken Wilcox on acoustic guitar and back up vocals, and Pat Ambre on harmonica, Mark played the type of music many people call "Americana," a blend of Folk and Country. We are grateful to Fred and Ernesto, the owners of Just Java, for allowing us to bring our music to South Bay.

On Sunday, April 22nd, the Songwriters Guild hosted its second showcase at **Java Joe's** in Ocean Beach. I started off the show with one of my originals, followed by our opening act, Melissa Worthington. Melissa has sung with Paul Anka, performed "The Star Spangled Banner" at Aztec games and for the LA Kings and others, and had her material placed in movies. Accompanied by Travis Garrison on guitar and keyboards and Erik Shumate on congas, Melissa displayed her rich vocal talents and also showed that she can play the oboe! Since she lives and usually performs in North County, some of her fans came quite a distance to see her on this evening. Her performance was well worth the drive. Our second act was long-time Guild board member and favorite Tamara Westgate. Accompanied by "Goob" on acoustic guitar, Tamara sang material that ranged from Blues to Rock to Pop. Goob and Tamara are part of a band called GTO that performs primarily in North County. This was their first trip ever to Java Joe's. Their great performance reflected the cool ambiance at Joe's. Closing the show was a gentleman who recently rejoined the Guild, Joe Byrne. Joe usually performs traditional Irish in places like The Blarney Stone and Effin's Pub, but on this night he got the opportunity to showcase some of his original compositions. His material is very impressive, his delivery strong. We certainly hope that Joe decides to stay with the Guild for a long while. Many thanks go to Java Joe for allowing us to present the showcase at his establishment. Special thanks to Wendy, who runs Wendy's open Mike at Java Joe's every Monday night, for handling sound for us.

- Tony Taravella

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On Wednesday, April 18th, The Guild presented its first live showcase at **Just Java**, 285 Third Avenue in Chula Vista. Under new ownership, this coffee house is getting away from Karaoke and booking live Swing, Salsa and Jazz bands. Just Java is frequented by many of Chula Vista's young people. I started off the showcase with an hour set. I haven't been performing much live lately and I remembered how easy it is to forget songs when you haven't played them in a

Although Bill does occasionally play along with prerecorded tracks, most of his material is performed solo with acoustic guitar. He calls his fingerstyle music, "Dreamscape." The closing act for our show was Chula Vista local Mark Jackson. Accompanied by Ken Wilcox on acoustic guitar and back up vocals, and Pat Ambre on harmonica, Mark played the type of music many people call "Americana," a blend of Folk and Country. We are grateful to Fred and Ernesto, the owners of Just Java, for allowing us to bring our music to South Bay.

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- Tony Taravella

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SDSG Opportunities and Newsmakers

Here are the new **SongwriterUniverse Magazine** articles now online:

"Brenda Russell Returns With New Album, Paris Rain, And Top Writing Collaborations." Artist/writer Brenda Russell talks about her new album release, and about her recent songwriting collaborations with Stevie Wonder and Carole King. "True Rags To Riches Story: Hot R&B/Pop Songwriter Greg Lawson." Greg Lawson is one of the hottest songwriters around. He co-wrote the smash "Love Don't Cost A Thing" for Jennifer Lopez, and he has the next singles on Anastacia, Ginuwine and two other artists. But Lawson reveals that just six months ago he couldn't even pay his rent. This story tells the amazing ups and downs of this talented songwriter. **Also check out the new SongwriterUniverse Message Boards & Chat Rooms.** See **Dale Kawashima's songwriteruniverse.com**

SDSG's "Love Notes" CD is still available. Proceeds from sales go to **Children's Hospital.** If you'd like to hear this great CD for yourself, and support music for kids, please send your \$15.00 check or Money Order payable to SDSG to 3368 Governor Dr, Suite F-326, San Diego, 92122.

If you watch the **Padres on Cox**, you just might hear the work of SDSG's **Mark "HC Markus" Hattersley**... Mark's music is used as one of the segues in between innings. If your taste runs to **National Enquirer Television** or **Access Hollywood**, you, too, can hear Mark's tunes sprinkled liberally throughout.

Was that SDSG 2000 Song Contest Pop Winner **Sharelle** performing at Twiggs on Saturday, May 12? Hope you didn't miss her.

Check out **PMAMusic.com** for information about the **Production Music Association**, which is comprised of Publishers and Composers working in the field. The site has some choice tidbits about music licensing, and is particularly pertinent as Andrew Robbins prepares to come to town... See page 1.

Liz Axford, you go girl!

A belated thank you to **Marigold Fernandez** for selecting SDSG to be the recipient of her employer's \$100 donation. SDSG thanks Marigold and **Larrabee & Associates, LLP** for the generous donation.

If you are interested in earning a living from your music, you may wish to peruse **Todd and Jeff Braybeck's** book about the business titled "**Music, Money and Success.**" The Braybecks now have a web site dedicated to the proposition that Music + Income = Dollars and Sense. **MusicAndMoney.com**

Email HCMarkus@aol.com or call the SDSG Hotline and leave a message to share your news

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“ THE PITCH SESSION ”

PRODUCERS, PUBLISHERS, A&R REPRESENTATIVES, MANAGERS and ARTISTS may screen for a specific recording project. They use these events to find songs, singers, musicians, etc. Our guests may critique your song and give you valuable feedback on how you could improve upon it if time permits. The guest may "pick-up" your song which means they would like to hear it again for further consideration.

Submission Rules

- One song per Guild Member will be listened to before those of Non-Members.
- On exceptionally busy nights, we reserve the option to limit the number of tapes submitted by an individual to any event. This option applies equally to those members submitting tapes by mail. We ask that writers number their tapes, #1 being your first choice, #2 your second, so that we may play them according to your priorities.
- Due to time limits, we cannot guarantee that your song will be heard in the Pitch Session.

Fees

- For the submission price of \$10 per song (limit 1 to 2 songs per writer, varies with guests), you may enter your song(s) for the Pitch Session. Members may sign up songs in advance.
- You may join The San Diego Songwriters Guild on the night of an event for a \$45 yearly membership fee.
- Non-members are charged a \$20 door fee in addition to tape submission fees. The door fee must be paid by non-members wishing to pitch songs. Some pitch events are open only to SDSG members

How It Works

- Bring neatly typed lyric sheet and CD or cassette cued to the beginning of the song you want heard.
- Tapes will not be accepted for the Pitch Session after the start of the event.
- Be sure to include your name and phone number on both your lyric sheet and your tape or CD because they may get separated.
- The Pitch Session is limited to 70 tunes. Once event is filled, sign up is closed, even if the event has not started. SDSG reserves the right to limit the number of submissions further.
- When you check in your song, sign in all names of writers, song title and phone number, so that others who hear your song can contact you.
- Submissions will be referred to by song title. Writers may or may not remain anonymous during the Pitch session depending on our guest for that event.

Join the San Diego Songwriters Guild. Membership dues are \$45.00 annually. Timely renewals are \$40.00 per year.

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You Must Have a Dream

SDSG s Eva Fry

Today it is not unusual for entertainers and performers to be senior citizens. We have grown up, and old, with our stars like Tina Turner, Barbara Streisand, Kenny Rodgers and Debbie Reynolds, and we still love them. What is unusual is for someone who is already a senior citizen to start a musical career.

Eva Fry is unusual! She is 61 years young, a grandmother of eight and just beginning her musical career. This grandmother, who had no musical training and was unable to play a musical instrument, has grown into a songwriter, speaker and entertainer.

Performing has been Eva s life-long dream, a dream that was a long time coming. Eva was born to a troubled family that provided no opportunities for song and dance. She married young, became a stay-at-home mom and got involved in the family business. But when her children grew up and moved out on their own, Eva rekindled her hidden dream and began to learn the words to old-time hits. She took over her son s old Karaoke machine and entertained at senior centers. She took a speech class to overcome her lack of confidence and a stand up comedy class to satisfy her need to encourage people to laugh and be happy. She performed wherever and whenever she could.

At the age of 58 Eva began to write music, something she had previously had no idea she could do. Realizing it was necessary for her to learn how to play an instrument, she took guitar and piano lessons and can now accompany herself, as she does on the 5 CD s she has completed.

Eva loves her new life and hopes to inspire others. She shares her story in a seminar she teaches at the Escondido and Vista Adult Schools entitled "You Must Have a Dream." She proves it is never too late to live one s dream, and is grateful to two gifted people who helped, inspired and encouraged her; Justin Gray of Gray Music and Marci Carr. Justin, the music director of Lawrence Welk Theatre, produced all of Eva s songs and Marci, a professional performer, is her music teacher.

Being a member of The San Diego Songwriter s Guild has been a tremendous help to Eva. The Guild has provided a forum to rub elbows with amazingly talented people. The critiques and pitch sessions have taught her much about the music industry and ways of improving her songwriting. Eva knows she still has a long way to go but has concluded that by the time she is 80 she will be really good!

Eva will perform in her own show at the Del Mar Fair on June 19, from 12:30 to 1:30 PM on the San Diego Showcase Stage. She can be reached at (760) 749-4354

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Every year the Guild brings music industry professionals to San Diego - just to hear your song! Members get a discount all year long - every time! Get your songs heard by pros who want to hear them. Join the Guild.

NETWORKING!

Meet the songwriters and artists of the community at *Special Events *Live Showcases *FREE on-line postings *FREE postings in our newsletter. Friends of the Guild include NSAI, SLAMM, and many, many San Diego studios, music merchants, producers, venues and industry professionals.

DISCOUNT on TAXI

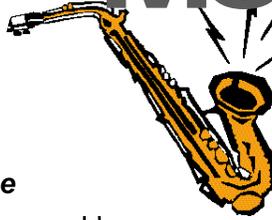
SDSG Members get a \$50 discount off their first-year TAXI membership dues.

BEGIN or RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Get your member discount at this year's events. Participate in members only pitch opportunities.

S D S G 2 0 0 1

**Megatrax
production
Pitch**

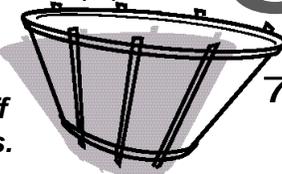


Monday, May 21

7:00 at the Doubletree

My sole inspiration is a telephone call from a producer.
- Cole Porter

records
Cargo Pitch



Monday, June 4

7:00 at the Doubletree

Call (619) 615-8874 or
check sdsongwriters.org

SongWritersNotes

The San Diego Songwriters Guild

3368 Governor Drive, Suite F-326

San Diego, CA 92122

Address Correction Requested

Please check your membership expiration date below

First Class Mail