

## TIM HUSS BACK FROM GIG HIATUS

By Pedro Pereira

**Tim Huss** is a lucky guy. The golden-voiced ISS member finds inspiration pretty much everywhere. At home, all he has to do is look at his wife, children and grandchildren for the muse to visit him.

“Then there is the great outdoors and the people that live and work there — the baymen, fishermen, hunters, trappers and the like have always fascinated me,” says Tim. Of course, he adds, “sometimes it’s just fun to make up a story and bang out a tune like ‘Defenseless,’ about a guy who is chopped liver when it comes to his lady friend.”

Tim is returning to the gigging circuit after more than 20 years away from playing in public with any regularity. This month he has two gigs lined up — Oct. 12 at the Eclectic Cafe, 28 Brentwood Road, Bay Shore and Oct. 13 at Heckscher Park in Huntington. Tim has a sizeable repertoire of original compositions from which to choose for those gigs, and we have heard many of them at the monthly ISS songwriting workshops.

“The way I write songs generally is, I pick up the guitar and play. When certain chords or melodies in the chords strike me, I get inspired to write. Sometimes it will be a melody that is the inspiration, sometimes it is a phrase or line of words that comes to me as I play the guitar. Sometimes I wonder where it came from at all.”

One song, “To Lend a Helping Hand,” came to him as he was driving on the New York Thruway. Owing to its environmental sensitivity, the song became the theme track on the Fox Network show “Warden Wildlife Journal” for about five years.

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**The ISS performance workshop is on for Nov. 9.  
See details on page 3.**

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Tim has been writing songs since he was 16. He picked up the guitar in 1965 and learned a few chords and techniques from friends. He had no lessons, but his mind’s ear would pick up Gordon Lightfoot, Jim Croce and John Denver, and his fingers would pluck, strum and hammer their way through melodies and rhythm patterns. Tim played in a band a while, and after college he performed at local pubs and coffee houses. “One club owner in Oakdale produced a show at the Westbury Music Fair and I got to play there on the round stage. That was a real thrill but it was scary being up there with just me and the guitar. That was in 1976.”

In the 1980s and early 1990s, Tim’s songwriting and guitar  
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## SUMMER FESTIVALS: THE CURE FOR THE MEDIOCRITY BLUES

By Tony Tedeschi

I’m a Canada-ophile and come summer, I head north for the music festivals in eastern Canada. Since I’d been to the Montreal Jazz Festival last year, this time I thought I’d take in the city’s Franco Folies, an internationally oriented fest, concentrating on francophone music.

With little understanding of French, I had to relate to the performances per se. The headliner was Robert Charlesbois, a kind of Quebequois Elvis, whose sextet is so polished you quickly get into the groove. While he played rhythm guitar throughout most of the set, when he finally took over lead, he quickly established why the gentleman sitting next to me called him, “a legend here in Québec.” Another performer, Sylvie Paquette is not a legend yet, but if she continues to rock the way she did on amplified acoustic for a song called “Donne Moi,” it’s only a matter of time. Not even a steady rain could drive away onlookers.

The fact that the Montréal Jazz Festival and the Québec Summer Festival are virtually back-to-back in early July makes it easy to catch some of both, especially if you choose to drive. The Québec festival is centered around the old city, with its boutiques, galleries, restaurants and outdoor cafés, where you can enjoy a pleasant lunch, an afternoon tea or cold-drink break, or dinner at just about any of the shoulder-to-shoulder eateries.

Unlike other festivals, where the headliners play strictly the indoor, tickets-only arenas, at the Québec Festival the top acts play the outdoor venues and you can see it all, throughout the duration, for about \$10 U.S.

Within this classical, colonial setting, before a stone battlement on a rise just above where a hill slopes down to the river, I saw Fairport Convention, the Irish band that has been generating a Celtic, folk-influenced rock sound for more than 35 years and launching soloists like Richard Thompson. The local favorite was a young man named Remy Shand, from Manitoba, doing his Motown sound,

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**ISS Workshops: Five Towns College**, Dix Hills, 7:30 p.m. first Monday of every month, run by Sonny Speed. **Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2.**

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**Songwriters in the Round: Barnes & Noble**, Commack, 7:30 p.m. second Thursday of the month, hosted by Sonny Meadows. **Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12**

## ♫ WRITER'S CHOICE by Gerry Dantone

### Ernst wins with 'What's in a Name?'

It cannot be stressed enough that sometimes what makes a song great is not its absence of flaws, although a song that hits all the right notes and says all the right things is wonderful indeed.

Sometimes a great idea, or great execution or a great "something" is enough to make the whole thing great in its own right even though some of the parts can be less than perfection itself. But **Suzanne Ernst** did a number of great things on "What's in a Name?" to handily and deservedly earn this month's Writer's Choice award.

*If I look at a tree and name it 'tree'  
How can I really know a tree  
Unless I feel the breezes flowing  
through the leaves  
— Suzanne Ernst*

The first verse gave us all the clues we needed that this was a special tune. The finger-picking was hooked-filled and memorable, the lyrics intriguing. The song starts with simple lyrics: "If I look at a tree and name it 'tree'/How can I really know a tree/Unless I feel the breezes blowing through the leaves/Changing with the seasons, grabbing the earth with my feet."

Despite the simplicity, the words are enough to get you thinking about Plato, nature and life. The playfulness continued when she pondered about cats, watching it "prowl for rodents and birds... yum yum."

Workshop attendees seemed unusually eager to write their approval of the song on their ballots calling it "beee-u-tee-ful" and "terrific!" The song asked big questions, sought to tie it up neatly at the end, and although there may have been a loose string here or there, the effort was appreciated. A great idea for a song. A landslide first-time winner!

*Gerry Dantone will be singing to the masses on Nov. 2 at a rally on the Mall in Washington.*

## CURE FOR MEDIOCRITY BLUES

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accompanying his singing mostly on keyboard, with some guitar thrown in to demo his multi-instrumentalist capabilities.

My favorite of the Canadian festivals was in Fredericton, New Brunswick, in early September. The way the bands were allocated to venues around town made a lot of sense: loud bluesy ensembles in the big tents, soft jazz groups in

the bars in hotels. A big favorite was the Downchild Blues Band, inspiration for fellow Canadian Dan Akroyd's Blues Brothers, with the leader, Donnie Walsh, inspiring Akroyd's Ellwood character. But catching Sonny Landreth, straight from the bayou, on slide guitar, will get you thumpin'. A young band named Flat Top, which won the new group competition, will blow you away. Remember that name.

I couldn't walk half a block without some collection of instruments in play. There is so much talent out there, below that despised and vastly overrated radar screen, which filters most of what we are exposed to through a mesh of mediocrity. This background world of music festivals is one of the great discoveries a music lover can make. Every town should have one. They are liberating, regenerating, invigorating, energizing – choose your own adjective(s). You'll have a head full of them – during those breaks between songs when you deign to let in anything but the music.

## TIM HUSS BACK FROM GIG HIATUS

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playing took a backseat because of work and the "rotten commitments of life" such as "taxes, college tuition and mortgages."

A few years back, the muse came calling again, and he hasn't put the guitar down since. songs started flowing, and he wrote what he considers some of his own favorite tunes, "Tiffany's Song" about his granddaughter, "Sometimes This Life" about "the burden of making life-changing decisions until you realize that you have everything you need right in your own home," and "Men's Lives" about fishermen.

In recent months, Tim has started recording at **Sonny Speed's** Son Spot Studio. "I'd like to polish up the recordings of the better songs and place them on one CD. I plan on scheduling that with Sonny in the near future."

In the meantime, he is getting ready for his Eclectic Cafe gig "I haven't had a regular gig since maybe 1978," he said. "I'm really not too nervous about my upcoming gig at the Eclectic Cafe. I like small venues like that one. I'm excited about being able to showcase some of my music."

The Eclectic Cafe gig starts at 8 p.m. Oct. 12 with an open mic, and Tim will play some time after 9 p.m. Open performers must sign up by 7:30 p.m. The Heckscher Park gig on Oct. 13 is part of a fall festival.

## ISS HITS THE SPOT

ISS has secured three evenings at The Spot nightclub at SUNY Stony Brook in October, November and December. See page 4 for more details.

## THE BEST WAY TO GET YOUR MUSIC ONLINE? DO YOUR OWN THING

*“The fastest way to succeed is to look as if you're playing by somebody else's rules, while quietly playing by your own.”*

— *Michael Konda*

**By Walter Sargent**

The online music scene is perhaps the most visible aspect of the much larger scene of digital arts, entertainment and information. Slashdot.com, a web site and online community that follows the technical, legal and social developments of this scene, posted a discussion recently on how independent musicians can use the Internet to be more successful. Many of the suggested sites are trying to sell promotional services to musicians. I think that's like trying to sell dirt in the desert, but hey, like P.T. Barnum said, “a sucker is born every minute.”

On the other hand, there were a few gems in the bunch. A “gem” is a website that hopes and understands that the terms musicians have endured may not stand much longer. These sites connect musicians to listeners virtually for free. Unlike Napster, these sites are legal and unlike MP3.com, musicians don't exchange ownership for promotion, which if you think about it for two seconds, makes no sense. Why would anyone want to promote something they no longer own?

I was most impressed with Emergent Music and DMusic. They are well-conceived, well-implemented and, above all, very musician-friendly. Next came the limited but useful FurthurNET and etree. Musicians who really want to pay for online promotion might want to look into Tonos. I didn't find them; they found me, which I generally view as suspicious (I do not like direct marketers, Sam I Am). In addition, their homepage boasts that they give you “access to the biggest names in the music industry,” which to me feels oddly like paying to be a floor-scrubber on the Titanic.

Slashdot is a great site for keeping up with intellection property vs. freedom in general, but Cyber-Songs.com is geared much more specifically toward musicians. Independent musicians will also find champions in David Marsh and Robert X. Cringely. Marsh's recent column in CounterPunch illuminates current copyright law with a story about an anonymous CD he received called “Nothing to Fear.” It's anonymous because it's illegal. It's newsworthy because it shouldn't be. Cringely, a contemporary of software titans Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, is a very highly regarded industry insider. His recent column, “Steal This Column,” is subtitled “Criticism Won't Change the DMCA, but Breaking the Law Will.”

The DMCA is a bad law. Not only do technology and legal experts perceive it as grossly unfair, but enforcement is also a problem. In fact, the RIAA has had to break anti-hacker laws in order to build its cases. These transgressions are serious enough that ISPs (Internet Service Providers) are suing the RIAA to protect their client's privacy. In all, it's such a complete failure that media companies are now advocating something called “squishy security.” Squishy security tries to impede piracy rather than eliminate it. (See “Digital Rights Outlook: Squishy” at wired.com for details).

My advice to aspiring musicians is not to waste time or energy buying into any of it. The last thing the industry needs is more musicians. So, no matter how well they say DRM is going to work, read the fine print. I think musicians are much better off trying to figure out what really will work for them. Be creative. Do it yourself. Surprise everyone. Break out a can of Whoop-Ass and have fun.

*References for further details:*

*Cringely article:* [www.pbs.org/cringely/pulpit/pulpit20020926.html](http://www.pbs.org/cringely/pulpit/pulpit20020926.html)

*Cyber-Songs:* [www.cyber-songs.com](http://www.cyber-songs.com)

*Dmusic:* [www.dmusic.com](http://www.dmusic.com)

*EmergentMusic:* [www.emergentmusic.com](http://www.emergentmusic.com)

*Etree:* [www. etree.org](http://www. etree.org)

*FurtherNet:* [www.furthurnet.com](http://www.furthurnet.com)

*Marsh article:* [www.counterpunch.org/marsh0911.html](http://www.counterpunch.org/marsh0911.html)

*Slashdot:* [www.slashdot.org](http://www.slashdot.org)

*Tonos:* [www.tonos.com](http://www.tonos.com)

*Wired:* [www.wired.com/news/mp3/0,1285,55006,00.html](http://www.wired.com/news/mp3/0,1285,55006,00.html)

## PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP IS NOV. 9

After several months of discussion and gauging interest among ISS members, the performance workshop has been scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 9 at Jane Ross' Song Box in Huntington Station.

Fifteen members will get a chance to perform two or three of their songs in front of a panel and an audience of peers. The panel, which ISS Director **Sonny Speed** plans to assemble in coming weeks, will judge the performances and provide feedback. Audience members also will have a chance to give feedback.

A video of the performances will be shot to give members a chance to evaluate themselves after the workshop. Look for more details on this in the next issue.

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## WHAT'S DOING

### This Month

ISS members are always out and about. Check your local listings for appearances live, on the radio or even on TV. Also check [www.islandsongwriters.org](http://www.islandsongwriters.org) for gigs and links to member sites with information about CD releases, shows and MP3s. Here's what's happening in the coming weeks (*Remember to check with the venue first because dates and times may change*):

### ISS Workshop

**Five Towns College**, Dix Hills, run by ISS Director **Sonny Speed**, first Monday of the month. Starts at 7:30. Bring a guitar to perform your song live, or play a CD or tape. A piano is available for keyboardists. Bring 25 copies of your lyrics so other workshops attendees can follow along and critique your work. Upcoming workshops: Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2, Jan. 6.

### Open Mics

**Borders, Jericho Turnpike, Syosset**, hosted by ISS Webmaster **Bill "Scoop" Ryan**, first Thursday of the month. Sign-up starts at 7 p.m. Try to get there early to guarantee your spot. Upcoming gigs: Sept. 5, Oct. 3, Nov. 7.

**Starbucks, Main Street, Huntington**, 7:30 p.m. Mondays.

**Ruby's, Oakdale Ave, Port Jefferson**, 8 p.m. Wednesdays.

**69 Wall Street, Huntington**, 8:30 p.m., Tuesdays.

**Starbucks, Long Beach**, 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

### Songwriters in the Round

**Barnes & Noble, Commack**, hosted by **Sonny Meadows**, second Thursday of the month. Starts at 7:30 p.m. Upcoming gigs: Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12

### Gigs

#### ISS Hits The Spot

ISS has secured three evenings at The Spot, the nightclub at SUNY Stony Brook to showcase the talents of some of its best performers. The shows, organized with the assistance of Rich Hughes of the Long Island Music Coalition, are scheduled for the third Thursday of the month in October, November and December. Sonny Meadows and Sonny Speed will co-host the events and play some tunes. The Spot is located at the Fannie Brice Theater Building at the Stony Brook Campus. Here's the schedule:

**Oct. 17:** Vinnie Cricci, James O'Malley, Stuart Markus, Frank Gambino, Bill Ryan, and Suzanne Ernest.

**Nov. 21:** Rich Stein, Little Toby Walker, Bob Westcott, Brian Sendrowitz and Sarah Haddock.

**Dec. 19:** To Be Announced.

Directions to The Spot: Take the LIE (or Route 347) to Exit 62, Nichols Road north for seven miles to the South Entrance to the Stony Brook Campus. Go left into the South Entrance. At the first full intersection, Forest Drive, take a right and continue to the third stop sign. Turn left. The Spot is in the Fannie Brice Theater Building on the left. Enter through the door by the loading dock. The Spot is on the second floor.

**Sonny Meadows, Little Toby Walker and Blonde Lemon Pledge, Central Islip Library**, "The Blues: The Music of Yesteryear and Today," 7 p.m. Oct. 4.

### Songwriting Conference

The Eight Annual Northeast Regional Folk Alliance (NERFA) Conference is scheduled for Nov. 15 to 17. It is geared toward folk music and singer-songwriters. Check the alliance's web site, <http://www.nefolk.org>, for details and registration forms.

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### Director's Message

ISS workshops are increasingly popular and we want to ensure all members get enough time for comments. If you want your song heard but don't want critique, please save the debut for the showcase. If you want feedback, **please remember to bring 25 copies of the lyrics sheet** (or be prepared to pay a hefty fine – just kidding!)

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