

WHERE TO PLAY

From Huntington to Syosset to Floral Park

December 2005

January Workshop On Second Monday

Because of the New Year's holiday, the ISS workshop is scheduled for January 9.

A Living Room at the Cafe

The Urban Mic at Urban Coffee in Huntington is no longer an open mic, but rather an unplugged gathering of poets and singer/songwriters.

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Find Us On the Web

Keep up with what's going on at ISS and the Long Island songwriting community. Visit our web site, www.islandsongwriters.org

By Pedro Pereira

Singer-songwriters looking for a place to play this winter have several open mic options, including a monthly gig run by ISS at the Borders Café on Jericho Turnpike in Syosset.

The gig used to be on Thursdays but has been changed to the first Friday of the month. It kicks off around 8 p.m. with a featured performer and an open mic follows. Playing this month, on Dec. 2, is **Tornado Alley**, which features ISS Director **Sonny Speed**, ISS members **Tim Huss** and **Vinny Crici**, and percussionist **Robert Langley**.

Be sure to drop by and check out Tornado Alley; it will be worth it. If you have a couple of songs you're dying to play out, bring your guitar or keyboard and get in front of the mic. Playing on Friday nights should be a more rewarding experience since more people are out and about, which means the audience at Borders likely will be bigger than what we used to get on Thursday nights.

Happy Holidays!

ISS wishes you a joyful holiday season and a fulfilling new year

A Little Farther Out

A little farther west on Jericho Turnpike, you can check out another open mic, this one at 8 p.m. on Mondays. Run by singer-songwriter **Doug Kwartler**, the open mic takes place at the Trinity Restaurant and Bar, 190 Jericho Turnpike, Floral Park.

According to Doug's web site, www.dougmusic.com, the open mic runs from 8 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. and each performer is given 12 minutes to play. "This usually allows for three slightly less-than-average-length songs," according to the site. "Performers cannot exceed the 12-minute time slot so please make sure you plan accordingly. Come early to ensure you get playing time. As of now, the open mic will end promptly at 11:30 p.m. regardless of if any artists have yet to perform for the night."

Most nights, recordings of the performances will be available. Doug promises high-quality digital recordings of one song that can either be e-mailed to performers or picked up the following week on a CD. The e-mailed recordings are in MP3 format. If you'd like your whole set recorded, you can get it for a \$10 fee.

Directions from east of Floral Park: The fastest way is probably to take any highway west to the Cross Island Parkway and get off at the Jericho Turnpike/Jamaica Avenue exit heading east. Once you pass Little Neck Parkway (Exxon station on the right) it's only a few blocks on your right.

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FINDING PLACES TO PLAY

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The Trinity restaurant open mic features a sound system, but because of the intimate setting, performers may opt to go unplugged.

Writer's Choice

By Pedro Pereira
The November monthly workshop produced a runaway Writer's Choice winner: frequent winner **Sonny Meadows** with "The Widower's Waltz."

Winner: Sonny Meadows

The song, which Sonny said he wrote after attending several funerals, will be on the **Defibrillators'** next CD, due out after the first of the year. The track is a rare serious cut in the band's repertoire, which typically handles the topic of aging with humor and levity.

But even so, Sonny couldn't help injecting some subtle humor into the lyrics: "You left me before your time was due/You left me all alone/You left me dirty dishes/And the bill for the telephone."

Sonny handles grief with grace and sensitivity. A master songsmith, he married the poignant lyrics to a waltz beat, and even though some thought the song could have been slower, it worked beautifully.

Congratulations to Sonny for another win.

Sticking Around Here

If you don't feel like making the trek to Floral Park, there is still some action in Huntington. Also on Monday nights, what was formerly known as "Urban Mic" at Urban Coffee in the Book Revue bookstore on New York Avenue has become more of a laid-back rendez vous for singer/songwriters, poets and anyone else who wants to hang around.

ISS member and local luthier **Scott McDonald** had been running the open mic but has decided to quit hosting it.

"I just decided it would be more fun for me not to run it," Scott said. "There will be no host. It's just a place to go and hang, jam, and take turns playing and reading."

On Nov. 28, the first time the new format was used, a bunch of performers showed up, including yours truly, **Bob Krummenacker**, **Suzanne Ernst**, **Stuart Markus** and some others. There is no amplification and the setting feels like playing with friends in your living room.

"I just decided it would be more fun for me not to run it. There will be no host. It's just a place to go and hang, jam, and take turns playing and reading."

— *Scott McDonald*

Speaking of Scott McDonald, he is scheduled to appear at the ISS December workshop, on Dec. 5, to talk about how to care for your guitar. Expect a report on this in the January newsletter.

Cookin' Again?

The Urban Coffee gig is the only open gig happening in Huntington these days, but that may not be so for long. I spoke recently with local artists **Gary Ivan** who said he is interested in reviving the The Cooke's In open mic after the holidays.

The Cooke's In gig ran from February to September. Gary discontinued it as a result of dwindling participation, but he and proprietor **Juanita Cooke** still had an interest in keeping it going. I offered to help Gary get it off the ground again after the rush of the holidays, and I will ask for ISS' help in supporting this worthy gig.

We had some tremendous nights at the Cooke's In with truly memorable performances by first-rate musicians such as **Little Toby Walker**, **Martha Trachtenberg** and many others. The New York Avenue restaurant really was the place to be on Thursday nights, as regulars such as myself, **Scott McDonald**, **Tony Tedeschi**, **Estelle Henrich**, **Bob Krummenacker** and others kept it going all those months.

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THE ROOTKIT OF THE PROBLEM

By Walter Sargent

Rootkit. That's the class of copy protection "malware" that Sony-BMG shipped with their latest CD releases (1). "Rootkits" are the newest, stealthiest technique to get control of your computer. They are so evil, the action got Sony a reprimand from the Department of Homeland Security. Unbelievably, it gets worse. It seems that Sony actually stole proprietary source code to implement their copy-protection mechanism.

Between the recall of 2 million CDs, the public relations backlash and the potential lawsuits that Sony BMG could be facing, this is a major setback for the copy-protection movement.

In his paper on the effect of P2P piracy on recorded music sales, Harvard economist David Blackburn finds that piracy does hurt sales (2). It just doesn't hurt them all equally. Blackburn says that the most popular artists sustain the greatest losses while relatively unknown artists are actually helped by the increased exposure.

For my part, I question the role of commercial radio. They seem to either play new music that I can't imagine ever wanting to hear a second time — much less buy — or they play music that was marginally interesting back in the 70s and 80s. Peter Frampton Live? What's next, hair bands? Or is the industry reliving the good old days of triple platinum? I don't get it.

But I get Shpongles, which I found on the top of the charts over at AudioLunchbox.com, I bought their album, "Nothing Lasts... But Nothing Is Lost" for \$10. No lawsuits. No evil viruses on my computer. Twenty tracks of instant, electronica gratification. I expressed my enthusiasm by sending one of my favorite tracks, "Shnitzled in the Negev," to my brother. It was a completely unauthorized transaction and moral quandary. My brother sent the illicit MP3 on to his associate Steve who promptly bought the entire Shpongles catalog. My conscience is good with that.

While Blackburn estimates that the music industry lawsuits against consumers have increased sales by 2.9 percent, that's not enough to keep up with iTunes, which passed Tower Records and Borders in domestic sales (3). Russ Crupnick, industry analyst for NPD, the group that did the research, said he would not be surprised if iTunes continues to climb the charts, especially in the run-up to Christmas when iPods are high on many present lists.

Podcasts are the latest economic short circuit in this wonderful-horrifying content revolution (4). Podcasts connect producers with consumers with minimal overhead and no middlemen. With a couple of clicks and a Google search or two, you will find podcasts galore, an open door to great musical experiments — spectacular successes, and pitiful embarrassments that come with the exercise of creative liberties.

For more on these topics:

1. Copy Protection Still a Work in Progress
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051119/ap_on_hi_te/music_copy_protection
2. On-line piracy and Recorded Music Sales
http://www.economics.harvard.edu/%7Edblackbu/papers/blackburn_fs.pdf
3. iTunes outsells CD stores as digital revolution gathers pace
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/arts/netmusic/story/0,13368,1649421,00.html>
4. Podcasting - From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>

Who Played What

Here's the list of songwriters and songs from last month's ISS workshop:

Mike Solomon

Untitled instrumental

Andrew Kirshner

Highway 31

Bill Goldsmith

I hope I'm Wrong

Tony Tedeschi

Drownin' My Pain

Mike Svezia

Just Wasn't Meant to Be

Sonny Meadows

The Widower's Waltz

Lois Morton

The Children's Crusade

Bob Campbell

New Revolution Moon

Pedro Pereira

Hiding

Suzanne Ernst

The Compassionate River

Steven Peppas

By Your Side

John Marrantzini

Jennifer

Guy Pezzullo

Tailor-Made



What's Doin'

ISS members are always out and about. Check your local listings for appearances live, on the radio or even on TV. Go to 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. (*Check with the venue first because dates and times may change.*)

ISS Workshop

Test out your songs in front of fellow musicians, who provide constructive feedback. The workshop is on the first day of each month at **Five Towns College, Burrs Lane**, Dix Hills. Run by ISS Director **Sonny Speed**, It starts at 7:30 p.m. Bring a guitar to perform your song live, or you may choose to play a CD or tape. A piano is available for keyboardists. Be sure to bring 25 copies of your lyrics so other workshops attendees can follow along and provide feedback.

Next workshop: January 9

The workshop is one week later because of the New Year's holiday.

Finding Places to Play

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But it wasn't enough, and as the busy fall season got underway, with students returning to school and everything else, participation fell off. It was a shame to see it end, considering all the engaging performances that had taken place there.

I have high hopes for reviving this gig and will keep in touch with Gary to try and get it off the ground again. The Cooke's In is an inviting place. Juanita was supportive of the artists and it was obvious she loves music. And the food, a fusion of Caribbean, Southern and Italian cuisine, is delicious.

There are so many good reasons to revive this gig to enumerate here, but if we get it going again, we definitely will need the singer/songwriter community's support.

Open Mics

Borders, Jericho Turnpike, Syosset, hosted by Bill Ryan or Vincent Crici, first Friday of the month. Sign-up at 7:30 p.m. *Next gig: January 6*

Urban Coffee, Huntington, 8 p.m. Mondays

Trinity Restaurant and Bar, Floral Park, 8 p.m. Mondays

Cool Beanz, St. James, 8 p.m. Wednesdays

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