

Song Writer's Association of Norman

Otherwise known as SWAN, a great local music opportunity.

I'm a huge fan of Norman's local music and also a musician myself. I scratch out songs on paper, wail at the microphone and hack away at the guitar. I've attended hundreds of live music shows in Norman from both the audience and performer sides of the microphone. I created the NormanMusicScene.com website and was one of the two founders of the SongWriters Association of Norman (SWAN).

So let's talk music ... It's Jan. 29, a special night for SWAN. It's the fifth Tuesday and time for SWAN's Fifth Tuesday Party Songwriter Jam!

SWAN is a group of folks from central Oklahoma who share an interest in songwriting. We get together to play our songs, discuss songwriting and hang out with others who share our passion for writing songs. On Fifth Tuesdays we bring a bigger sound system, drums, electric guitars, bass, congos and other instruments to form a "sit-in" band for the night. This gives SWAN songwriters who usually play solo a chance to hear their songs with a band backing them.



>> Tom Marshall

Tonight we're at O'Connell's Irish Pub on Campus Corner, and we're rocking! I asked songwriter Peter Ericson a few questions. Many of Peter's songs have the feel of a specific songwriter or band, like Dan Fogelberg, Alan Parsons Project or Little River Band. But it's not a style that goes through his entire repertoire – just that one song has that sound. That's a unique quality. I asked Peter about "Oklahoma Sunrise," a song he played that he wrote earlier this month. He said, "I was inspired by an Oklahoma song that Darden Pierce had written." The song Peter referred to earned SWAN's Darden Pierce a second-place prize in Othello's recent songwriting contest.

"It's hard to be humble when you bleed crimson and cream, Oklahoma forever in my dreams. Oh lead me home Oklahoma sunrise, Oh take me back where I belong..."

My slot came up, so I took the stage with bass player Chris Walsh and Isaac De La Garza sitting in on drums. We kicked off with a blues shuffle tune. Next we played a recently written song called "Rock Star Dish Washer" that describes me as a teenager at my first job at Girlie Pancake House.

"I got my hands in soapy water, Rock & Roll in my heart ... I got a radio playing Led Zeppelin, water-soaked tennis shoes. I'm a Rock Star Dish Washer, just paying my dues ..."

Joe Wilson, who followed me, just became a SWAN member tonight. I asked Joe about a song he played called "Girl Who Went North." Joe works as a hospice social worker. He told me he was talking to a friend about someone who was having trouble with drug abuse issues in their family. The friend said, "Some people just like to take their meds and get snowed."

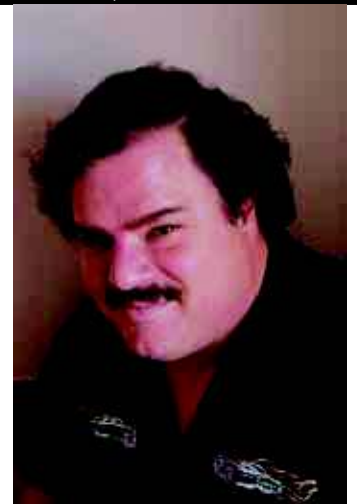
Joe said, "I thought that's the coolest metaphor I've ever heard. That's where the song started – she goes up north to get snowed."

"We'll wait, right through Christmas time. We'll wait, see if the New Year brings us patience, to welcome home our girl who went up north with the snow ..."

Wow! This song grabs me by the heart – the story of a girl lost in drug abuse and the people waiting for her to "come home." Songwriters write about life's highest and lowest points. It helps us to get emotions out of our system and gain some perspective.

Thirteen songwriters played two or three original songs at O'Connells tonight. The variety presented is incredible! The group crosses many genres and styles. Since each person's perspective is unique, you get a broad spectrum of musical and lyrical variety at any SWAN event. If you are interested in songwriting at any level, know someone who is or just love to hear original songs, you should bring yourself and a friend to a SWAN event soon.

– Richard 'Daddy' Love



>> Richard "Daddy" Love



>> Tanner Miller

SongWriters Association Norman www.normansongwriters.org