



April 2005

## I've Got to Tell You a Songwriter Story

By Billy Byron

I was born and raised as an American overseas. After college, I found myself back home working and living in the laconic isles of Bermuda. I used to drive a lorry, a van, up and down the island for a linen shop, The Irish Linen Shop. As I came into the main shop of the three shops of the Irish Linen stores located on Front Street, Hamilton, the elderly sales ladies handed me a package to take to the post office...and, on the front it said, to: Mrs. John Yoko Lennon (New York address). Well I thought the staff at the shop were foolin' with me, pullin' my leg, since, they knew I was a hotel musician/entertainer at the Elbow Beach Hotel. They also knew I was a songwriter and was making my first record. They didn't know I took the job SO I COULD WRITE songs in the van. So I went back into the quaint, and small main

floor of the shop, and joked around with them...and, they looked confused!!! They had no idea who John Lennon was! When I saw their baffled expressions, I urgently shouted: "was it a man, with some sort of glasses and hair down to about here." When they said yes I gasped: "Where did he go?!" They said that he just went out the door and around the corner. I rushed out on the busy Hamilton sidewalk, looking everywhere, but did not spot him. He was gone. I had no idea he was in Bermuda...until later. Then, I learned he was visiting and eventually writing a few of the Double Fantasy songs in Bermuda. I learned he had even created the LP Title from the name of a flower in the Botanical Gardens in Bermuda.

I went back in to the Irish Linen Shop and sat down mumbling. They asked me what was the matter. I said: "You

know I am a Bermuda songwriter, right?!" They said yes. "Well... I just missed meeting one of the best songwriters in the world!! John Lennon of the Beatles!"

A few months later, the world... missed him. At the sad, sad news, I held my own private, silent vigil. I stood outside the gates of the harbor-side house in Pembroke, Bermuda where John stayed. I placed some island hibiscus flowers and some Bermuda ferns on the pastel-colored, concrete gate posts. That was my goodbye to John Lennon.

*A brief coda:*

Recently I visited my relatives in Bermuda and the bass guitarist from my old Top 40 cover band invited me to a jam with six of his musician friends out on an island...Agars Island. (See "Story," page 2)

*They said yes.  
"Well... I just missed meeting one of the best songwriters in the world!! John Lennon of the Beatles!"*

## BSW Hosts Special Workshop

### GETTING YOUR MUSIC INTO FILM AND TV PROJECTS IN TODAY'S COMPETITIVE MARKETPLACE

**Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup> • 2-5 p.m.  
Berklee College of Music,  
150 Mass. Ave. Room 118**

Boston Songwriters Workshop is hosting a special event with Mark Northam, founder of FILM MUSIC. Mark will speak about placing your songs into Film/TV. This high-impact course is a brief version of Mark's all-day course, offered in NYC and LA. His lecture will focus on specific methods and practices that songwriters and composers can use to get work in the film and television music business.

Depending on the needs of the group topics may include where to

find jobs, how to approach filmmakers, deal points on film and television projects, contracts and licenses, how to maximize your royalty income, and how to build your business in the industry.

Whether you're at the beginning of your career or are looking to move to the next level of the business, Mark Northam offers practical, usable techniques to build your career in the film and television music business.

For any questions about the workshop, please call 978-386-5644 or email to: [Ksteudel@yahoo.com](mailto:Ksteudel@yahoo.com), Space limitations allow only 35 paying participants and 10 free slots for Berklee students so sign up early.

Course Fee:  
\$15 non-members  
\$10 BSW members

*First come-first serve for the very limited seating of 35 paying guests. Additional standing room only for 10 more, at the door, will be free to current Berklee students and staff with valid ID.*

Accepted Payment methods:

• Email To our **PAYPAL** account  
[Ksteudel@yahoo.com](mailto:Ksteudel@yahoo.com)

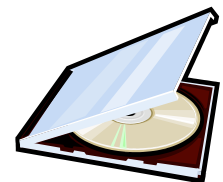
• **Direct mail** of personal check or money order to: BSW, PO BOX 321 Sudbury, MA, 01776

• **At the door**, the day of the event, cash or check

**Mark Northam's FILM MUSIC site:**

[www.filmmusicworld.com](http://www.filmmusicworld.com)

**Boston Songwriters Workshop:**  
[www.bostonsongwriters.org/](http://www.bostonsongwriters.org/)



*Mark Your Calendar*  
**Upcoming BSW Meetings: April 12<sup>th</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup>**  
(Meeting details and directions are on page four)

# Songwriter Block: Breaking Out Of Writer's Block

By Danny Arena

(This article comes from a songwriting website, [www.craftofsongwriting.com](http://www.craftofsongwriting.com))

At one point or another in our songwriting, virtually all of us find ourselves suffering from writer's block or "uninspired music syndrome" (everything you write sounds the same). Here are some old tips along with a few of my personal favorites that might help you break through that songwriting block and get back to writing good songs again.



1. Use a different approach. Some songwriters write the melody first. Some prefer to come up with the chord

progression first and then write the melody. And still others prefer to come up with a rhythm or groove first and then write the melody and chord progression. There is no one correct way to write a song. However, if you're someone who always writes the melody first, try coming up with a chord progression first. Or, see if you can get yourself into a different groove by programming a beat on your drum machine and writing to a rhythm.

2. Write a song in a different key. Try writing a song in a key you don't normally write in. This is especially good if you compose on guitar. It will get

your fingers into different positions, hitting chords that sound fresh to your ear. If you're a keyboardist, you might try using one of the other programmed sounds from your keyboard instead of the usual piano or DX-7 sound.

3. Learn some new chords. It may be time to expand your knowledge and add a few more tools to your songwriting toolbox. Learn some new fingerings on the guitar. Try some of those chord inversions or suspended chords you've been afraid to use. Take some chances - do something as a songwriter you wouldn't normally do.

(See "Block," page 3)

## Story (Continued from page 1)

An abandoned underground aquarium on the island had been renovated by the new owner and we were invited over to jam, as loud as we wanted, in this perfect practice place. As the boat carrying me and my friends, now aging but spirit-filled musicians, in front of the dock near the old aquarium entrance, I looked back behind the boat across a few hundred yards of waves, and there was the very house on the harbor that Lennon visited. On this sunny December day in 2004, with salty air and a sea breeze, I mentioned to the disembarking musicians, that we may have been inspired to pick up a guitar, struggle with new chords, and form bands by the exciting music and stories of the Beatles. I looked across the turquoise, blue-green water and I

could see the painted gate pillars of that house where the former leader of the Beatles retreated and wrote starting-over songs. This was the same stone gate where, on December 8, 1980, I held my little vigil to John Lennon.

moved on after years of getting the newsletter out to all of us. Thank you for your steady support, Rich. Who would like to share the job with Jeff Reilly? It means once every two months you copy the master, put on the address labels and stamps provided by Stan, and drop them in your nearby mailbox. If you would like to do this quick and necessary job please email or call Martha at [marthar@massed.net](mailto:marthar@massed.net) (978-663-9123).

*"I looked across the turquoise, blue-green water and I could see the painted gate pillars of that house where the former leader of the Beatles retreated and wrote starting-over songs."*

### Exposure Opportunity New Songs for Peace

2001-2010 has been designated as the "Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World." This UNESCO-endorsed "New Songs for Peace" project is intended to encourage people to think about peace, talk about peace, and write a new song that we will collect and self-publish in a book. These new songs will promote peace, cultural acceptance and understanding for those who work towards peace throughout the world. If you have written a peace song you may wish to get some exposure by submitting it for inclusion on this web site. **FMI:** <http://newsongsforpeace.org>

## An Easy Way to Help Out With BSW

Rich Glenn, our longtime newsletter mailer, has

### BSW Executive Team

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**BSW Hotline:** (617) 499-6932 (For special events, membership, etc.)

## Block (Continued from page 2)

4. Jumpstart your creativity. Maybe your songwriting battery's just a little weak and you need a jumpstart. Try opening your music book to a song you don't know and write out the chord progression on a piece of paper. Then, try and write a melody to that chord progression. You can do the same with rhythms. Write down two rhythm patterns from a song - one from a verse motif and one from a chorus motif and try to compose a melody/chord progression around those rhythm patterns. By choosing your patterns wisely, you'll also guarantee yourself of writing a song with strong rhythmic contrast.

5. Write somewhere else. Get away from the keyboard or guitar for a little while. Try writing a song in your head while you're working out at the exercise club or chopping vegetables in the kitchen. Try writing in a different room.

6. Take a few days off. Get together with some friends, go see a movie or read a good book. Look through your old high school yearbook. You may be emotionally spent and need to refuel. You can't drive a car forever without stopping to fill up the tank once in a while. The same goes for your songwriting.

7. Don't worry about it. Don't spend too much time being

frustrated or worrying about that song you're still not finishing. The more you worry about it, the more you'll continue to block your creative energy. Know that it will pass. It always does.

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## Songwriting Contests Can Provide Exposure

### MakeaStar.com

Unlike other sites that house thousands of songs, at least once a month, MakeaStar.com only showcases the best 16 new songs submitted to the site. Therefore the artists who make it to the MakeaStar.com contests have already earned huge bragging rights! Each of the 16 qualifying songs earns a spot on MakeaStar.com's "Sweet 16" page. Our contest Champions also earn a permanent spot on MakeaStar.com's "Hall of Fame" page. **FMI:** [www.MakeaStar.com](http://www.MakeaStar.com)

### Great American Song Contest

This annual songwriting contest boasts a \$500.00 (U.S.) grand prize, TAXI memberships, and more! The entry fee is only \$20.00

per song. They feature eight style categories, including one for lyrics only. The judges include many respected songwriters, educators, and authors.

**FMI:** [www.greatamericansong.com](http://www.greatamericansong.com)

### John Lennon Songwriting Contest

The John Lennon Songwriting Contest is an international songwriting Contest that began in 1997. The Contest is open to amateur and professional songwriters who submit entries in any one of 13 categories. **FMI:** [www.jlsc.com](http://www.jlsc.com)

### The International Songwriting Competition

The International Songwriting Competition (ISC) is an annual

songwriting contest whose mission is to provide the opportunity for both aspiring and established songwriters to have their songs heard in a professional, international arena. ISC is designed to nurture the musical talent of songwriters on all levels, and promote excellence in the art of songwriting. Amateur and professional songwriters and musicians are invited to participate. ISC has the most prestigious panel of judges of all the songwriting contests in the world, offering exposure and the opportunity to have your songs heard by the most influential decision-makers in the music industry.

**FMI:** [www.songwritingcompetition.com](http://www.songwritingcompetition.com)



## Check your Membership Expiration!

Please be sure to check periodically to know when your membership expires. In order to avoid a lapse in your membership, please send in your renewal fee before the 20th of the month in which your membership expires. We hate to lose old friends!

## BSW Newsletter

**Editor:** Martha Rogers

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Contributions from members are welcome. Deadline for the next issue: on or before April 10<sup>th</sup>. Send submissions via E-mail to: Martha Rogers: [marthar@massed.net](mailto:marthar@massed.net) or phone Martha (978) 663-9123.



### BSW Newsletter Advertising Rates

Full Page: \$40 • Half Page: \$25 • 1/4<sup>th</sup> Page: \$15 • Business Card Size: \$7.50 • Classifieds: \$3.50/inch.

Member discounts: 20% discount on display ads; free classifieds. *The BSW makes no endorsement of the quality of individual services advertised.*



We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.bostonsongwriters.org](http://www.bostonsongwriters.org)

### CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

(Call by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to place or renew your ad)

**RICH GLENN AND SAM HOOPER** just completed a recording Project at Larry Luddecke's Straight Up Studio in North Arlington. Their inspired performances are now available on a demo CD called Rich Glenn & Sam Hooper. If you are interested in obtaining a copy, please contact Rich Glenn at (617) 254-6145.

**PIANO TUNING.** Write and play on a piano that sounds and feels good. I have done piano tuning, repairs, regulation, renovation, voicing and assessments professionally for 21 years and am a Registered Tuner-Technician with the Boston chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild. I discuss prices and options before servicing your instrument. Let me make you and your piano happy. Barry Rosenberg, (978) 589-9875.

**STEREOSONIC STUDIO** is a digital studio specializing in singer/songwriter production. Turn your song ideas into finished, radio-ready masters that can get you noticed. Get the individual attention your music deserves at a price you can afford. [www.stereosonic.net](http://www.stereosonic.net) (978) 994-0021. Located in Bolton.

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**GET YOUR MUSIC RECORDED, ARRANGED, AND PRODUCED** by ZTK Productions. Sound engineer Zane Kuchera is currently augmenting his skills in the Contemporary Writing and Production program at Berklee College of Music. His Waltham studio includes state-of-the-art MIDI and digital audio

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**LIVE MUSIC FOR YOUR EVENT.** Four-piece JAZZ BAND, four-piece PARTY BAND with great dance music originals and covers. Ambient, original PIANO music for cocktail hour, receptions. Please go to our site for sound bites, full descriptions, photos...[www.Karlmusic.com](http://www.Karlmusic.com). (978) 386-5644. E-mail: [ksteudel@yahoo.com](mailto:ksteudel@yahoo.com).

**MUSIC FOR USE IN YOUR CREATIVE FILM PROJECT.** Experienced composer has a diverse library of existing music or will customize for your projects. User-friendly genres include pop, reggae, jazz, instrumental. This is not scoring the film, but music for use in title themes, part-of-scene, etc. I represent a few diverse and talented musicians. We can usually work within your budget and schedule. Clips can be e-mailed to you at your request...[www.Karlmusic.com](http://www.Karlmusic.com). (978) 386-5644. E-mail: [ksteudel@yahoo.com](mailto:ksteudel@yahoo.com).

### Next BSW Meetings April 12<sup>th</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup>

Meetings are held at the  
**First Parish Unitarian-  
Universalist Church**  
23 Dedham Street,  
Needham, MA.

Enter the church through the door that faces the PARKING LOT. Look for the BSW sign on the door.

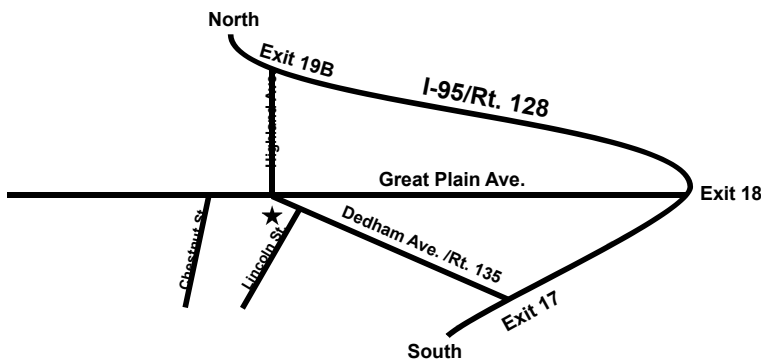
#### Directions:

**From the North:** Take route 128 south to Exit 19B (Highland Avenue, Needham). Follow o to Great Plain Avenue in Needham Center. Jog slightly to the left

onto Dedham Avenue. Turn immediately right down Lincoln Street beside the church. Turn in the parking lot behind the church and enter the back door.

**From the South:** Take route 128 north to Exit 17 (route 135) to Lincoln Street. Parking is off Lincoln Street behind the church.

**From Boston and Cambridge:** Take route 9 west to route 128 south (follow the directions "from the North" above).



### BSW Registration - New Members or Membership Renewals

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

- Yes, I wish to join the BSW. Enclosed is my check for:
  - \$35 for the Individual Membership  New  Renewal
  - \$50 for the Two-Person Household Membership  New  Renewal
- No, I do not wish to join the BSW at this time, but keep me informed. Here is my check for:
  - \$10 for the Non-Member Newsletter Subscription  New  Renewal

Send check and completed form to Brent Hall, 21 Wood Rd. Sherborn, MA 01770