

## Some basic information

*from an online interview we did for the Christian Songwriters Group: <http://www.christiansongwriters.com>*

*What are the 3 most often mistakes new songwriters make?*

1. Writing a song without first thoroughly thinking about what they want to say in the song.
2. Writing a song that isn't about the title or doesn't have a title in it.
3. Writing a song without a firm understanding of song structure.

*When writers come to you for consultation, do you find common things that need fixed, and if so what are they?*

Besides the above, most writers want to know if their songs have a chance to “make it” in the bigger songwriting world, or if they can “make it” as songwriters. We tell them their answers lie within. If they hang in there and keep working, their chances increase with time.

*What avenue do you find best for writers far from Nashville/LA? Send songs to publisher/artist, etc.*

You have to make a personal contact before sending songs (unless you use Taxi <http://www.taxi.com>). This can be done by phone. We believe in hitting as many contacts as possible. An artist is surrounded by people who have input on the material chosen: producer, manager, publisher, record company A&R. Try them all.

We also recommend vacations to music centers for those who don't live in them. Time the trips for conventions. Taxi offers its members free attendance at the Taxi Road Rally in November of each year. The Road Rally alone is worth the price of a membership.

If you vacation to a music center during a convention you can make face-to-face personal contact. That's the best kind.

*Do you see the Internet affecting songwriting in any way?*

Yes, the Internet is an amazing tool for information gathering. Check out our links page for songwriting links that will lead you to more links that will lead you to more links....it's fantastic! Search engines are a great way to research artists, too.

*What is the best way a writer can improve their craft of writing?*

Study the songs you love and really understand what makes them great. Write and write and write. Collaborate. Go to songwriting workshops. Read books on songwriting. Write and write and write.

*Your book is very good! What prompted you both to begin writing a book and do consultations?*

Thank you! We came to L.A. in 1973 to be songwriters. Helen King had just started what is now the National Academy of Songwriters. We began volunteering in exchange for classes. In 1978 we were at her bedside when Helen died and the organization was run by the handful of people who were there, including yours truly, Pat & Pete. In 1979 we started doing workshops at what was then SRS, because they were needed and because we could. After our second child was born in 1981, Pete took the workshops on and continued to do them every Monday until late in 1997. Almost 19 years! The consultations were an outgrowth of the

workshops. Our work at SRS led to lots of other work in music business journalism so we were actually approached by Writer's Digest to write the book because they wanted one like that to fill a hole in their catalog. They tell us now that it's one of their best sellers. We just updated it.

*I'll bet a lot of people have been helped by the book and consultations. Any specific consultation you could mention that would be enlightening to us? Funny story - etc.*

One of our greatest claims to fame is that four couples met and married at Pete's Monday night workshop. There was also one divorce, as the wife of one of the couples who married originally came in with her first husband. One of our favorite consults was a stockbroker from Hong Kong who came and spent two weeks in full-time consultation. He left with his first song written and recorded and he was ecstatic.

*In story songs, what are the most common mistakes?*

As in all songs, we must be very careful to look at what is actually there in black and white when we read the lyrics and not allow the understanding of the song to rely on any assumptions we have made. We call that "being a stranger to your song." What if you walked up to a stranger on the street and said any one line of your song to them - is it strong enough on its own to be perfectly understood?

*When you critique a song, what are the three main things you look for 1st?*

1. We want to know what the song is about. What its main point is. Ideally, this is distilled into the title.
2. We look for a clear structure.

3. We look for integrity in the song, a unity of its message, its music and its language.

*Thanks a lot for your time! We very much appreciate it! I encourage everyone in the CSG to check out your site and book!*

You're totally welcome. And thanks for the opportunity. One last thing, songwriters, take heart. It matters not if the whole world hears your song, or one special person, or if no one ever hears it! The writing itself is its own reward. Use it as a tool to help you to grow. Use it as a game to entertain yourself. Trust that as you improve at expressing your message, it will be heard where it needs to be. And Write On!

Pat & Pete Luboff