

ARTS & CULTURE

Podcast Puts Focus On Songwriters

by Eric Hoshaw, trentontrib.com

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Podcasts have become increasingly popular in recent years, and we live in an age where there seems to be hundreds upon thousands of new podcasts available for us to add to our listening library.

Trenton resident and musician Dave Caruso has rolled out his own unique music discovery podcast, "Songwriter Stories," which features in-depth interviews with special guests, focusing on the craft of pop songwriting.

Caruso draws upon decades of experience as an indie songwriter to engage listeners and guests with talk about songwriting, focusing on bringing well-deserved attention to seasoned songwriters, some of whom may not necessarily be household names but have contributed significantly to the music world.



"Any show you've ever watched that tells you how something works is always fun," said Caruso. "I think it's more than just for songwriters. It's a music discovery and songwriter podcast, which aims to ask questions, such as 'Why does a song work the way it does?' and the next thing you know, you're playing great songs from that artist and you've discovered someone that you can add to your music collection."

The idea for the podcast had been brewing for a few years, as Caruso recalled how the podcast initially came to fruition. "A couple years of ago, I got in touch with a famous songwriter from the 70s," said Caruso. "When that happened, I wondered,

"Why doesn't everybody know your name?' His name was Tony Macaulay, and he wrote some really famous songs in the 70s."

Other guests who Caruso has interviewed on the show, besides Macaulay -- who wrote or co-wrote eight No. 1 songs in the United Kingdom and three in the United States -- have included songwriter and master collaborator Bill DeMain, and celebrated Nashville songwriter-producer Brad Jones.

"If you don't perform your own songs, no one knows your name," explained Caruso, when reflecting on the guests he has chosen to spotlight so far. "Macaulay was my first guest, and he had a lot to say. After that, I decided that Songwriter Stories seemed like a good idea, and I started to look for more guests."

Caruso tries to keep a variety in his selection of guests, who hail from different parts of the globe and right back to the downriver community, an example being Nick Piunti, the owner of Sibley Gardens. "He has had a really great career, signed to Jem Records, is doing really well and has had his music played on XM radio."

Caruso's most recent guest was Vicki Peterson, the guitarist for the Bangles, which was the 17th show for the podcast. Two of the podcasts were analyses of Elton John songs, and the other 15 had guests.

Songwriter Stories is available to stream on 30 different podcasting sites, such as Apple, Google, Spotify and many others. Listeners can also go straight to the website, SongwriterStories.com, and click on the home page, which is called The Studio, and visit the guest's website, listen to their podcast or go to their Writers Room, which consists of additional bonus material that was not in their interview.

Caruso, who is still writing and recording music, with a new album due later this year, also keeps busy teaching 15 different songwriting courses within community education programs in Southgate, Dearborn and Bedford.

"All these courses are a different way of looking at songwriting," said Caruso. "Some examples are Songwriting Essentials, Creative Songwriting, courses on arranging and marketing, they're all different."

The future looks bright for Songwriter Stories, and Caruso looks forward to future guests to interview on the podcast. As far as dream guests, a few names immediately came to mind.

"It'd be great to get somebody like Bernie Taupin, who wrote [lyrics] with Elton John," said Caruso. "I'd love to talk to Elvis Costello, who's my favorite, as well as Glenn Tilbrook from the English band Squeeze."

Songwriter Stories was named in Player FM's September 2019 "Best Songwriting Podcasts," as well as Feedspot's "20 Songwriting Audio Podcasts and Radio You Must Subscribe and Listen to in 2019."

For more information about Dave Caruso and his music, visit his website, **DaveCarusoMusic.com**.