

## Goldmacher Turns the Page on Songwriting

BY GAYE SWAN

Innovation is a word that is tossed around quite a bit, especially in business settings. How to actually achieve it is the subject of many a corporate workshop and self-improvement book. Is there anything truly innovative left to be said about innovation? In his new book, *The Reason for the Rhymes*, **Cliff Goldmacher '86** answers with a definitive yes. A Grammy-recognized, No. 1 hit songwriter, Goldmacher tackles the subject with a new approach summed up in the subtitle, *Mastering the Seven Essential Skills of Innovation by Learning to Write Songs*.



Cliff Goldmacher shares his songwriting secrets in a new book.

The book is based on a series of workshops developed and led by Goldmacher. In these sessions business executives and teams learn that the skills used to write a song are the very abilities needed to innovate in business. More important, participants learn that anyone is capable of creativity and innovation.

“Everyone possesses the ability to create, but not everyone believes it,” he says. “By breaking down the process into seven components, I show people that songwriting is an ideal way to unlock innovation.”

Translating the principles used in his workshops into written form was fairly easy, he said. “A songwriter must have the day-to-day discipline to sit down and write,” Goldmacher says. “I approached writing a book the same way. Of course, a song takes me about three hours. A book is a different animal, and I did have to get used to the idea that I wouldn’t have a finished product at the end of the day.”

In his workshops, Goldmacher divides groups into smaller teams, with the instruction to write a song utilizing seven innovative skills. In his book, he details each skill, correlates it to a songwriting component, and follows with an insightful (and fun!) songwriting exercise. At the end, dedicated readers completing the exercises will have written a song.

### LATERAL THINKING

The first innovative skill is lateral thinking. To create something new and different, you must think in a new and different way, Goldmacher tells readers. The songwriting component is the metaphor, as it is rich in sensory language, infuses emotions into your ideas, and requires lateral thinking about familiar concepts. In the exercise, readers follow a step-by-step process to turn a concept into a metaphor.

### CREATIVITY

The songwriting component for the skill of creativity is the verse. Writing verses is a concentrated form of storytelling, and the more you develop the skill, the easier it becomes to access creativity. He includes

easy-to-follow, detailed instructions on how to write lyrics.

### COMMUNICATION

Clear and compelling communication is important both for gaining support from your colleagues and for marketing your product. As the corresponding songwriting skill, the chorus serves as the distillation of the message you want to get across. Not surprisingly, the challenge is to write an effective chorus.

### EMPATHY

The fourth innovative skill is empathy, with a songwriting component of observation. Empathy increases your understanding of your customers’ needs. Goldmacher calls it “refined emotional intelligence,” and he explains that writing a good song requires observation from other points of view. The exercise is designed to heighten empathy by honing observational abilities.

### COLLABORATION

Collaboration allows group members to play to their strengths, holds them accountable, keeps them motivated, and makes for a stronger team – and thus, a better song (or product). The songwriting component, co-writing, is described as the perfect microcosm of effective collaboration, and the exercise asks readers to determine their role in the songwriting process.

### RISK-TAKING

Risk-taking is up next, correlated with vulnerability. An odd juxtaposition at first glance, perhaps, but Goldmacher explains that taking risks requires you to make yourself vulnerable. The songwriting challenge is to match your lyrics to a melody (public-domain options are included).

## DIFFUSION

The last skill is diffusion. Innovative ideas are meant to be shared, and so are songs. The songwriting component is performance. Fortunately, readers are not required to go out and sing!

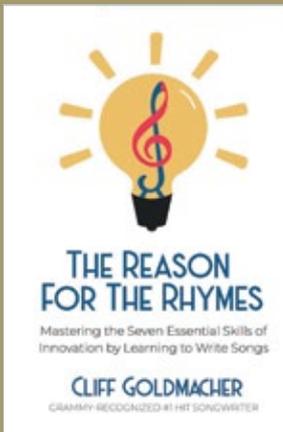
Throughout the book, Goldmacher sprinkles in entertaining and helpful anecdotes from his songwriting career to illustrate his points. He has spent time in Nashville and New York City as well as California, working with Grammy-winning and platinum-selling artists in a cross section of genres. He also tells some great tales from his workshops – no

spoilers, but his preface about working with a team headed up by a stone-faced “warden” clearly shows his methods work with anyone!

As Goldmacher looks to the

future, he plans to continue his workshops once pandemic restrictions ease, and he is working on an online version. In the meantime, his collaborative music efforts are full steam ahead. From his home in Sonoma, CA, he is working with Grammy-nominated jazz chanteuse Stacey Kent and her husband, saxophonist and composer Jim Tomlinson, on Stacey’s upcoming album. Goldmacher is also working with songstress Antonia Bennett (Tony Bennett’s daughter) on an untitled project. ■

Learn more about Goldmacher and his work at [TheReasonForTheRhymes.com](http://TheReasonForTheRhymes.com).



# Book Highlights Crump’s Artistry

BY JOHN MCBRIDE '17

**M**et Crump '60 loved art even as a young child attending classes at Memphis Art Academy, and he never outgrew that love. The architect and founder of The Crump Firm has spent free moments throughout his lifetime sketching and painting, and the evidence can be found in *Met Crump: Travel Sketches and Paintings 1963-2020*. The 104-page coffee-table book encompasses more than 80 paintings and 55 line drawings, mostly from Crump’s extensive travels through Europe.

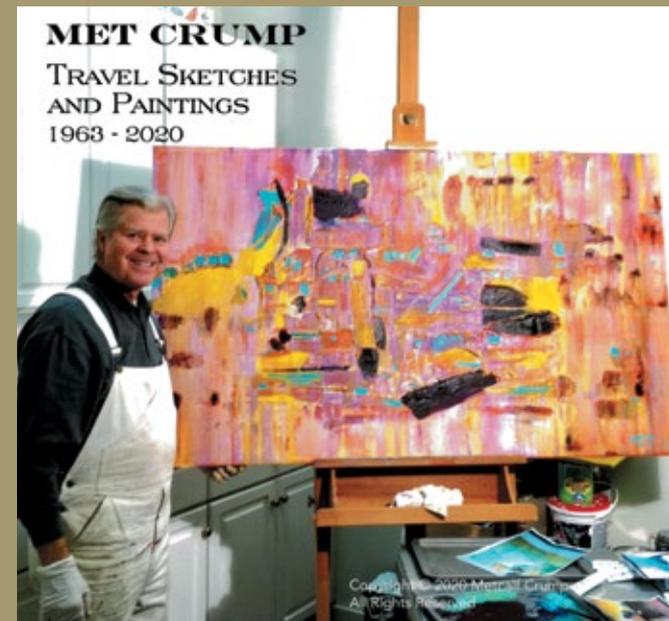
During his MUS days, he demonstrated his artistry by creating the first Owl logo. At The University of the South, Crump learned the technical skills required of oil and acrylic paints as well as quick sketch exercises, forcing split-second decisions between the hand and the mind guiding it. Before his graduation he hosted a one-man art show with large canvases, encouraged by his professor, Stan Barrett, renowned abstract painter and founder of the Art Department at Sewanee.

The ink and watercolor pieces in the book hearken to Crump’s year spent in Paris at age 22. There he studied art and architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts, and Paris quickly became his muse, inspiring more than 30 trips to France.

Fredric Koeppel, esteemed Memphis art critic, provides commentary throughout the book along with a forward. He praises the artist’s sketches that “convey a breathless sense of immediacy that transcends the ordinary character of reality” and watercolors that display “a gift for handling the transparency of color wash to a point that approaches the abstract.”

Koeppel concludes, “It is evident ... that he approaches the world and exercises his craft with generosity and affection – that he brings to these efforts not only his learning and knowledge, craft and experience, but his expansive love for life.”

Crump’s book is available at Novel bookstore in Memphis. ■



Since his MUS days, Met Crump has never been far from a sketch pad or canvas, as his new book will attest. See one of his watercolors on the inside front cover.