

# house concerts and 21st century touring

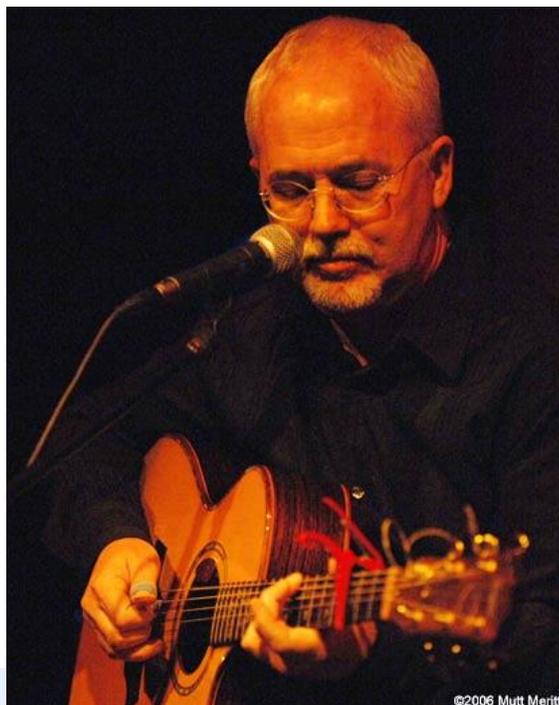
articles and tips from Fran Snyder and concertsinyourhome.com

## Craig Bickhardt - 1,2,3,4 (Number One Hits)

### Would you let a hit songwriter into *your* house?

I'm the last guy to worship hit songs, or writers just because they've had hits. However, sometimes a hit song IS a great song, and it would be bad form to show a songwriter the door just because he's had some major successes. **In fact, we have a bunch of hit songwriters at ConcertsInYourHome, but this one is a real stand-out.** – fran

His songwriting credits read like a Who's Who of the music industry. **Ray Charles, B. B. King, Johnny Cash, The Judds, Trisha Yearwood, Allison Krauss, Anne Murray, Art Garfunkel, Poco, David Wilcox, Kathy Mattea, Willie Nelson, Van Zant, Baillie And The Boys, Vince Gill, and Martina McBride are just some of the many luminaries who have recorded songs written or co-written by Craig Bickhardt.** A discography like that would be the envy of most songwriters, but the covers are only part of the story. "I never set out to write hits for other artists," Bickhardt says. "But I always got a kick out of hearing what happened to the songs in 'translation'."



"Craig Bickhardt has spent a lifetime crafting intelligently lean, but meaningful songs... meticulously shaped, with a keen literary and narrative approach. Most crucially; he is a communicator, capable of touching the heart of his listeners."  
- John Brindle, Maverick Magazine (UK)

His first break as an artist came when he was asked to write and sing the closing theme for Robert Duvall's Academy Award winning movie TENDER MERCIES. The success of that film led to a move to Nashville, where **Craig hooked up with fellow songwriters Thom Schuyler, Fred Knobloch and Don Schlitz to establish THE WRITERS IN THE ROUND.** Their laid back "living room" style of performing at The Bluebird Cafe became the hottest ticket in town. These days it's hard to find a city where songwriters haven't adopted the genial in-the-round presentation pioneered by the foursome in the late 1980s.

"...the real surprise is that Craig hasn't scored a hit himself. His... finely finessed visions tread in that warm, humane, Americana territory..."  
- Jonathan Takiff, Philadelphia Daily News

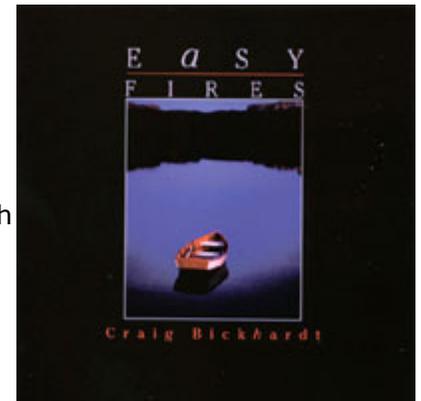
Eventually Craig, Thom, and Fred took their smooth blend of harmonies into the studio to record their commercially successful CD, NO EASY HORSES. **The disk spawned three top twenty singles including Craig and Thom's song THIS OLD HOUSE, which has since become a standard in the traditional bluegrass genre.** The trio, dubbed SKB, disbanded after making an unreleased second album, but not before they helped transform the country music scene, opening the door for a wave of singer-songwriter acts that exploded onto the country charts in the 1990s.

"What really makes his work click is the emotional depth in his voice and his presentation. He puts a lump in a listener's throat and a thought in a listener's head, frequently at the same time."  
- Mark Gould, Sound Waves Magazine

**Craig cemented his reputation on Music Row when he racked up a succession of chart topping hits, writing the number one songs "Turn It Loose", "I Know Where I'm Going", "In Between Dances" (co-written with Barry Alfonso), and "It Must Be Love" (co-written with Jack Sundrud of Poco).** His self-penned CD, EASY FIRES, is a collection of some of the strongest material garnered from this period. Bickhardt and Sundrud have also released a CD of their collaborations titled IDLEWHEEL. Bickhardt's performing style has often been called "soulful folk" Craig credits his Philadelphia roots for the influence. "I was lucky to grow up in a town that was a melting pot for musicians. I got to hear lots of R&B as well as the great folk performers of the late 60s, early 70s. It taught me that nothing moves people like a great song sung with some passion" he says.

Craig's years in the studio as an A-team picker helped to polish **his signature finger picking guitar style, which can be heard on CDs by The Judds, Kathy Mattea, Jonathan Edwards, Suzy Bogguss,** and others who invited him to sit in.

Bickhardt now regularly appears in concert around the country traveling with his percussionist and friend Tommy Geddes, often sharing the bill with Livingston Taylor, Maura O'Connell, Billie Joe Shaver, Poco, Suzy Bogguss and others. Among the thousands of troubadours on the scene today, few can outshine him in a concert setting.



**Craig has written four #1 hits, nine top ten hits and is the most in-demand songwriting teacher at [www.songu.com](http://www.songu.com).** He's a recent First Place Winner in the 4th International Acoustic Music Awards, and also writes a (fantastic) blog at <http://ninetymilewind.blogspot.com>

Here's one of my favorite bits from Craig's blog:

"We paid a premium for our dependence on record labels, and as it turns out, their jobs weren't so damn hard. Most of us manage to make our music, update our My Space pages, book a few gigs, print up the posters, submit our CDs to indie radio, ship the CDs that sell on our websites, and still have time to write a blog, answer email, and get to sound check."

Craig Bickhardt - from his blog <http://ninetymilewind.blogspot.com/>

**Consider booking Craig for a concert in your home. I think your friends will be seriously impressed - even if he *is* a hit songwriter.**