

SongLink is one of the most acclaimed and widely-used tipsheets for music publishers and songwriters around the world, providing up-to-date and accurate "who's looking" leads and information to its hundreds of satisfied subscribers, many of whom have successfully placed songs and made valuable industry contacts through the London and LA-based service. Edited and published by music business veteran David Stark since 1993, SongLink's subscribers include all the major music publishers, independent companies, professional songwriters (including many top names) along with selected unsigned writers, who must meet certain standards in order to subscribe.

SongLink provides listings on artists in all styles of music, including Pop, Rock, R&B, Dance, Soul, Country, Blues, Jazz and Crossover etc, whatever is required. Our leads are sent out by mail and/or email each month, along with interim updates, and provide the essential information needed to pitch songs, including details about the act and their style of music, links to their website or Myspace, plus - most importantly - direct contact details for their manager, A&R person or producer who has placed the lead. There are also listings for co-writers, masters and licensing deals wanted, plus upcoming events and other items of interest.

Apart from the subscription fees, there are no extra charges for pitching songs through SongLink. However, in order to subscribe to the service, unsigned writers or new publishers must first supply at least 2 sample demos of their work for subscription approval. Writing or co-writing cover songs is a highly competitive and specialized business, and SongLink is not a service for writers with non-suitable material or sub-standard demos. We would prefer such writers to save their money rather than mislead them into thinking their songs could be easily placed. However, for writers with the right kind of material and who have a business-like attitude to pitching (essential these days), SongLink can provide all sorts of opportunities leading to successful placements, as many of our subscribers can confirm.

It's also worth noting that although our leads cover artists all over the world, especially the USA/Canada and UK, much of our success has been in mainland Europe, particularly Germany, Holland, Belgium and Scandinavia, where A&R executives and artist managers are always very keen to find great English-language commercial pop songs, and tend to respond quickly if they like something. We often list local artists whose names may not be known outside their own country, but are often huge stars who can sell truckloads of records, and who regularly use SongLink to help find their new material.

For instance, back in October 1998, SongLink ran a listing for unknown new RCA artist Christina Aguilera, which was spotted by UK subscriber Pam Sheyne. Her LA-based co-writers David Frank and Steve Kipner pitched a certain song to the project entitled 'Genie In A Bottle', and the rest, as they say, is history. Of course it doesn't always happen as easily or fast as that, but without that small mention in SongLink, who knows if that particular song would have been submitted, or if Christina's career would have taken off so enormously...

In January 1998, SongLink acquired the monthly Los Angeles tipsheet "Crossroads," which was merged into SongLink, retaining the services of editor Valerie Jones and her research team, who today still provide many of the US and Canada listings for SongLink. A few years later we also acquired Cuesheet, the Film/TV music tipsheet, which is published twice monthly and has helped many composers & publishers achieve successful placements in Hollywood, London and other movie markets.

We are also proud to continue our longstanding co-operation with Songs Wanted, the Munich/Germany-based newsletter published by Ellie Weinert - our two independent publications regularly exchange new leads and information, and we also share booths at Midem (Cannes/France) and Popkomm (Berlin/Germany), the two biggest music industry trade shows in Europe, where we meet many of our subscribers and advertisers.

SongLink founder David Stark also visits the main USA music centres New York, Nashville and Los Angeles on a regular basis, and over the years has built up relationships with 1000's of publishers, writers, A&R executives, producers, managers and their artists. David also has excellent contacts within all the main industry associations, e.g. ASCAP, BMI, PRS, SESAC, British Academy of Composer & Songwriters, NSAI, APRA, SOCAN, etc. For further information about David's other activities in the music industry, click to [About the Editors](#).

SongLink founder and Editor/Publisher David Stark has worked in the music business for over thirty years, for such companies as DJM (Dick James Music), Decca Records (where he was international press officer), MAM Records (head of international promotions), Billboard / Music & Media, MIRO (Music Industry Research Organization) and various other music industry and pro-audio magazines, before launching SongLink International in 1993. He also acts as an official research consultant to the UK's Ivor Novello Awards; the annual World Music Awards (formerly in Monte Carlo, now in Los Angeles); and is a member of the voting academy of the UK's Brit Awards.

He is still an occasional contributor to Billboard, and in 2001 and 2002 was consultant to the ten-day major songwriter seasons at London's Royal Festival Hall, entitled 'The Song's The Thing', which he also coined the name for. David is also an occasional songwriter himself, and plays guitar and drums. In 2004 he played European dates with the John Lennon Experience tribute band, including one memorable sold-out show at the Olympia Theatre in Paris.

In October 1995 David received a prestigious Gold Badge Award at London's Savoy Hotel for outstanding services to the UK songwriting industry from the British Academy of Composers & Songwriters. He has also served as a jury member at song contests, and/or has attended music industry events as far afield as Australia's Gold Coast, Copenhagen, Cuba, Dublin, Helsinki, Bali and Jakarta (Indonesia), Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Poland, Prague (Czech Republic), Bucharest (Romania), plus Los Angeles, Nashville, Miami, New Orleans, New York and Vancouver. He has built SongLink up from small beginnings to a recognised worldwide brand name, and has made many friends and industry contacts over the years, hence his reputation as the man who knows (almost!) everyone in the music industry.

In 1996 David wrote the programme notes for the 'Masters of Music' Prince's Trust Concert at Hyde Park, starring The Who, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton and Alannis Morissette, and has also acted as consultant to various music video & film productions, including 'The Beatles Story' and 'The Rolling Stones Rock'n'Roll Circus', which he also attended as a schoolboy in 1968. Recently released on DVD, David can be heard recounting his first-hand experience of the Circus at the end of the audio commentary section, over the closing credits.

In 1999 David co-wrote the book 'Inspirations - The Stories Behind The Songs' (Sanctuary Publishing) with DJ/broadcaster Mike Read and Michael Randolfi. The book features interviews with many famous songwriters who donated lyrics for auction by Sotheby's in March 1999 under the banner 'Hits Under The Hammer', raising over £250,000 for childrens' charities Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy and Norwood Ravenswood. Recently, David has contributed a chapter on songplugging to the excellent new songwriters' manual 'Heart And Soul: Revealing The Craft of Songwriting' by Chris Bradford, published by Sanctuary in spring 2005.

David is also a founding partner of the Unisong Song Contest which has been running from 1997 to 2008, and as well as giving cash and prizes worth over \$100,000, the contest has also made donations to such worthy causes as Amnesty International, the Earth Love Fund and various songwriters' associations worldwide.

A huge music fan since the 60's, David has some amazing stories and items of personal memorabilia from meeting many top artists, including all of The Beatles on various occasions, and attending hundreds of concerts and other music events for the past 40 years. Highlights include seeing Jimi Hendrix six times, including at the Royal Albert Hall and the Isle of Wight 1970 festival; the Rolling Stones many times at Hyde Park, Wembley, the Lyceum, Giants Stadium and elsewhere; seeing over 150 gigs by The Who since 1967, plus memorable gigs by Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Steely Dan, the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, Allman Brothers, Steve Miller, David Bowie, Queen, Elton John, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Bob Dylan, Grateful Dead, Santana, Lou Reed, Rod Stewart, The Faces and many others - he was even at one of the Sex Pistols' legendary gigs at The 100 Club in 1976. Other highlights include seeing Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and Liza Minnelli at the RFH; meeting Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys; attending the CMA Awards in Nashville and meeting George Jones and Vince Gill among others; dining with Celine Dion at the World Music Awards; hanging with Bonnie Raitt, Beth Nielsen Chapman, Mick Fleetwood and others at "Music Bridges" in Havana, Cuba (1999) and seeing Buena Vista Social Club live with Ry Cooder, also in Havana... the list goes on. And when he's not networking at some mega-gig, you'll find David hanging out at one of London's top songwriter venues like the The Bedford, the Cobden Club, or the Original Songwriters' Showcase supporting new talent - and promoting SongLink, of course!

David's longtime associate ELLIE WEINERT (right) of SONGS WANTED based in Munich, Germany, was originally a native of Connecticut, USA, and started working in the German music business as professional manager for UFA Music Publishing (now BMG/UFA) from 1971 for seven years. She joined Global Music as professional

manager/A&R for another seven years before setting up monthly publishers' tipsheet Songs Wanted in 1986, now in its 20th successful year.

Twice a year Ellie publishes a special issue entitled 'Who's Who In A&R in Germany' and also runs the successful 'Songwriter's Live' series of showcases rotating at venues in Germany's major cities. She has also been a regular correspondent for Billboard for many years, and also freelances for the leading German trade magazine Der Musikmarkt.

<http://www.songlink.com/about-songlink-international.html>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is SongLink?

SongLink is a tipsheet service for music publishers and songwriters, providing monthly listings ("leads") about recording artists looking for songs or co-writers. Every month we send out around 50-60 new leads detailing what kind of music is required for each project, along with direct contacts for the artists' manager, label, producer or whoever is placing the lead, usually with their e-mail address and the artist website details.

How long has SongLink been going?

SongLink tipsheet was launched in September 1993 and has been published continuously since then by hard copy (UK first class or overseas airmail) and also by email. We usually publish around 50-60 leads from the start of each month, apart from July/August and December/January which are combined issues.

Who subscribes to SongLink?

Our subscribers are mainly music publishers (majors and indies) and songwriters of all levels, ranging from major hit tunesmiths to new writers, as well as management companies, producers, record labels, lawyers and agents - in fact almost anybody who represents creative songwriting talent and needs to know about new exploitation opportunities.

Do you accept anyone as a subscriber?

No we don't, as we have to be very careful to ensure that our members are pitching good quality songs and demos to our contacts. Any new or unsigned writer first has to send us at least two sample demos for consideration, by MP3, CD or web Links. If the material is of suitable standard we are then happy to confirm the subscription, but if not then we regretfully have to refuse the application.

Do you refuse many applications?

Yes quite often, as there's absolutely no point in someone subscribing if they don't have the right type of material. This includes writers whose stuff is just not good or pitch-ready, or singer/songwriters who incorrectly think their songs could be good for other artists. There's an enormous difference in writing songs which are only relevant to the artist/writer singing them, to writing well-crafted commercial songs and highly polished demos specifically aimed at chart artists who don't write their own material.

So what should new applicants submit for approval?

It's essential to provide 2 good commercial songs that you can easily imagine other artists recording, with demos recorded to a high standard. In fact with today's technology, demos are often used as the basis of the finished master, so top-end writers are actually writing records rather than just songs. There's no excuse these days for sub-standard or average-sounding recordings, the market is looking for dynamic, clever and outstanding songs.

How can I pay for my subscription, if accepted?

We accept payment by various methods - by credit or debit card; by Paypal; or by cheque (UK/US or Eurocheques).

Where do you get your leads from?

From A&R executives at record labels of all sizes, and from artist managers, producers and often the artists themselves. SongLink is an international service so we feature leads from all over the world, although mainly from the UK, Europe, USA/Canada and Australia, along with occasional requests from SE Asia and other territories.

What genres of music are most in demand?

Mainly commercial pop, dance and pop/dance, pop/rock, R&B and pop/R&B, soul, country, MOR and rock. Plus occasional requests for jazz, blues, reggae, classical-crossover, singer/songwriter, gospel and Christian, in fact pretty much any musical style. On the urban side there's also a demand for non-vocal beats and tracks only. We also carry regular requests for co-writers from songwriters who are looking for composers or lyricists to collaborate with.

How do you source all these leads?

As well as having excellent relationships with industry executives in the UK and all over the world, we also have SongLink contributors based in Germany and the USA who are constantly researching and providing us with new leads every month.

Does it cost anything to place a lead?

No, all leads are published free of charge. Companies and individuals can place them via our website.

How successful is SongLink?

We've helped an enormous number of artists over the past 17 years, from major names like Christina Aguilera ("Genie In A Bottle" and "Come On Over Baby" were found via SongLink) to scores of new and up-and-coming acts. However SongLink has probably been most successful in mainland Europe (Germany, Belgium, Holland etc) helping local stars who need good English-language pop songs, many of whom are unknown outside their own country but who sell hundreds of thousands of records locally.

How do I send my songs once I've joined?

Every lead specifies how the contact prefers to receive the material - by CD, MP3 or web Links, or a mixture of all three formats.

Are there any extra charges for pitching songs?

No, we don't charge anything other than the subscription fee - there are no "per song" charges or hidden extras, unlike certain other services. How will I know if my song is chosen?

If a song is chosen or put on hold, the contact will usually inform the writer or publisher pretty quickly once a decision has been made. Sometimes it can be within hours or days of making the pitch, or in other cases it may take weeks or even months before all the incoming material is assessed.

Should I make follow-up calls or send e-mails?

If you haven't heard anything after 2 weeks then there's no harm in sending out a polite e-mail enquiring if your song has been received and heard, or asking when the likelihood of receiving a decision might be. However it's true to say that in most cases when you don't hear back fairly quickly, it means that the song has been passed on.

Does SongLink get to hear if songs are chosen?

We always ask our advertisers for feedback by sending a follow-up e-mail at the end of the first month that their lead appears. Some companies and individuals are very good at keeping in touch and letting us know how successful the listing has been, others less so.

How do I know my songs aren't being ripped off?

In 17 years of publication we have never had one instance of submitted songs being pirated or plagiarized, or in fact any disputes whatsoever. Of course it is essential to make sure that your copyrights are fully protected, and we recommend that you join your local performing right society (PRS, ASCAP, BMI, GEMA etc) and register your songs as soon as they have been written or demo'd. Other ways of establishing when they were created are by sending a sealed registered letter to yourself containing the demo and lyrics, or lodging copies with a bank or solicitor.

Does SongLink provide Film & TV music opportunities?

Occasionally, but this market is covered in our sister publication Cuesheet, a separate tipsheet which covers the Film/TV music market. Cuesheet is e-mailed twice a month and has a much smaller and more select subscriber base, hence it's a bit more expensive than SongLink. However we can do a discount deal if you subscribe to both newsletters. For more information go to Cuesheet.net

Is there really a market for songs these days?

Yes definitely! Songs are still the life-blood and main currency of the music industry, and hopefully always be. It's always been hard for writers to get songs cut, and essentially nothing has changed over the years, except at the top end of the market it's much more closed shop and hard to break in. However, although we do list major-label projects, SongLink tends to provide more info on lots of mid-range and independent artists who are dependent on finding good material. It's a big music world out there, but we help make it a lot smaller and more accessible via our monthly leads.

<http://www.songlink.com/songlink-international-frequently-asked-questions.html>

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

- 1) Established publishers & professional songwriters can subscribe without providing proof of status, but a brief mention of previous track record is appreciated.
- 2) Any new music publishers, unsigned or non-professional songwriters **MUST** send 2 songs (MP3, CD or Links to songs online) for subscription approval. We reserve the right to refuse any non-suitable applicants, in order to keep the standard of demos submitted to our industry contacts as high as possible. Please also send brief details of any songs published/released; whether you are a member of a Performing Right Society, or any other relevant information.

Send 2 MP3s or Links before subscribing to:
david@songlink.com (7mb max per mp3)

Send CDs to:
David Stark, SongLink Int'l
23 Belsize Crescent, London NW3 5QY, UK

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL:

Please note that you will receive a Renewal Notice sent by email approximately two weeks before the expiration of your subscription period. **PLEASE NOTE:** If we don't receive any reply from you regarding the renewal notice, or any other cancellation request by three days before the end of your subscription, your account will be automatically renewed ("Auto-Renewal") on the same terms as the current period.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Should you wish to cancel your subscription for any reason while it is still current, we will refund you the equivalent monetary value of any unused full months remaining.

SUBSCRIBE BY MASTERCARD, VISA, AMERICAN EXPRESS OR PAYPAL:

Six issues (6 months) €180
10 issues (12 months) €295

Approximately 70-80 new leads are sent each month from around the world.

My Song Cuts Through SongLink - By Niall Toner (Ireland)

Most songwriters will agree that it's usually the personal touch that counts when it comes to getting your songs recorded. All too often, writers treat the business like a fishing trip, and end up feeling frustrated, having used all their "bait" to try and lure a cut, rather than being more focussed and finding out what kind of songs an artist might want to record, rather than bombarding the artist, or manager, or producer, with a whole heap of stuff, and ending up with nothing.

SongLink has proved invaluable to me in this regard. Firstly there's the actual lead, and usually a brief description of the style, genre and format that will be accepted, and very often a tip with regard to the number of songs that should be submitted. The lead will usually also include a contact number or an email address. The other, and very important part of the equation is that you have to have the songs, and they have to be in some sort of reasonable demo format, and then it's a question of putting the two together...

Back in the early '90s. I had been writing with a whole slew of (mostly) American writers, but I was frustrated at the lack of covers for my songs, and hence the severe lack of commercial success. On the strength of a couple of minor covers for my songs in Ireland I had secured a small publishing deal with Bardis Music Ltd. in Dublin, but I also felt that I should be proactive myself in trying to secure covers. I had written a song called Mood Swing with Keith Sewell and Wendy Buckner from Nashville during their visit to Dublin in 2000, we had a fairly decent demo of the song. I had pitched it to everybody I could think of, and I became increasingly frustrated at the lack of response, as I thought it was a great song. One day I was listening to a Bill Wyman CD at home, and it struck me that my song might suit his style, so I called SongLink editor David Stark and asked him if he had a number for Bill Wyman. David duly obliged and I called the Ripple Records office in London and spoke to a very nice receptionist who asked me to send on my song. This I did, and a couple of weeks later I got an email to say that Albert Lee had been in the office, heard the song, brought it with him to the studio where Bill Wyman was recording, and the next thing you know, "Mood Swing" is on their album, "Groovin'", which was released worldwide in 2000. My first major "cut"...

The fact that Albert Lee was instrumental in securing a cut was not lost on me. I had always been an admirer, and had been to hear Albert and Hogan's Heros on a number of occasions in Dublin over the years. On one such occasion I went to see them at Whelans in Wexford street, and made sure that I had a couple of demos in my back pocket. After the show, Albert was surrounded by fans, but I managed to squeeze through and pass him my demo pack, with a wink and a nod ! Then in early 2006 I got an email from Los Angeles to say that Albert was in the studio with Buddy Emmonds, and they were recording my song, Working On Love ! It was released in 2006 on Albert Lee's Roadrunner CD on Sugar Hill Records. Another cut through my association with SongLink!

In 2002 I was at the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh, Co.Tyrone, for the annual Bluegrass Festival, and top of the bill was the Nashville Bluegrass Band, which at that time featured Roland White on Mandolin. I got talking with Roland after their show, and although I had no demos with me on this occasion, we ended up discussing the possibility of pitching some stuff to them. Sometime later I spotted a piece in SongLink about the NBB looking for songs, and I sent a two-song demo to them in Nashville. Once again, to my utter delight, this resulted in their recording "There's A Better Way" on their "Twenty Year Blues" album on Sugar Hill Records, which went on to be nominated for a Grammy...

I mentioned earlier that I had been writing with several American writers over the past twenty years or so, and one of those, a man who has since become a great friend, is

Keith Sewell. I first wrote with Keith when he came to Dublin in 2000, but ever since then we have written together both in Ireland and in the 'States and indeed, over the internet ! In 2004 I spent six weeks writing in Nashville while staying at the legendary Spence Manor on Music Row, situated about mid-way between ASCAP and BMI. Keith and I were at that apartment one afternoon, and both of our wives were going out on a shopping trip. They warned us that we should have a new song ready by the time they got back, about three hours. As soon as they were gone we set to work on a song called "Josie's Reel", based on the idea of Keith's grandmother as a young girl, dancing with a bunch of lads. When our wives returned, we had the song ready, and they both loved it. I pitched it to a band from Chicago called Special Consensus, and they released it on their 2006 CD, "Down The Trail Of Aching Hearts", on Pinecastle Records. Their version of "Josie's Reel" has since become a firm favourite among American Bluegrass Bands, and has been recorded several times.

Another enduring contact I made through SongLink was with Barry and Holly Tashian, two of Nashville's most respected songwriting performers. I had first come across Barry's name on a Gram Parsons album, GP, way back in the early 70s. He had also served with Emmylou Harris for about ten years on Guitar, and I had read many's a sleeve note where he was credited as writer. Barry and his wife, Holly, welcomed me into their home, and we began a writing partnership that has endured. They have also recorded a number of songs I have co-written with them, including two songs on their current (2009) CD, The Promise, and the title track, "Long Story Short." That's released on Rock-A-Lot Records.

To go back to what I was saying at the beginning, most of my success with songwriting and getting songs recorded has been in some way connected with SongLink, and today that success remains a combination of good contacts through the magazine, combined with the personal touch. My most successful writing partner is Keith Sewell, and we got together as a result of my publisher, Peter Bardon, subscribing to David Stark's publication. When Keith was coming to Europe in 2000, he had put out a request for co-writers through the magazine, and at that time, nobody else took him up on his offer, and that's how we got together! Keith has served a long and distinguished apprenticeship with the Ricky Skaggs Band, The Dixie Chicks, Sam Bush and Lyle Lovett. He has released three stunning solo albums, and his current CD on Rubber Dog Records just got a five-star review in Maverick Magazine ! I'm also delighted to say that it contains four songs I have co-written with Keith, including the title track, "The Way Of A Wanderer."

To sum up, I suppose it's fair to say that my success has been a result of a combination of things: A little inspiration, a lot of perspiration, good contacts and the personal touch! Many thanks to David and all at SongLink...

Niall Toner, songwriter
Co.Carlow, Ireland.

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<http://www.songlink.com/songlink-international-success-stories.html>