

# WRITING SONGS FOR OTHER PEOPLE

## Part One in a Series of Three

By Keith Caldwell

Many of us songwriters are writing songs for ourselves to sing. However, some of us write for other artists or publishers as well. There are some songwriters that do not sing and, therefore, all of their songs are written for other people. This article will be the first of three which will not only cover how to write a song for others, but will also cover the most important information – having an agreement up front and picking the right artist to work with. This first article is only covering the information you need to know about what type of singer you will allow to record your music that you have already written or one that you will write an original song for.

Before you deal with a contract, here are some things to consider:

- **Does this artist have the voice for your music?** (This is a valid point. Just because someone flatters you about your songs, is no reason to allow them to record your song, no matter what they promise you. Unless they have the talent, move on. Without the talent, your song will get little or no airplay. Sometimes a song is so great that anyone can sing it and with the right song and track it can get decent airplay. BUT, imagine that great song with a great track, but sung by a great voice! Sometimes, however, a singer might not have an awesome voice, but has a way of telling a story and a way of reaching an audience. These singers are popular in spite of not having the best voice. Make sure your song is one that you feel they could really sell.)
- **Does this artist have the funds available for recording and releasing this song?** (Don't give a song to someone who is probably going to take well over a year to just record it and then even longer to afford to get it released for radio. Do they even have the ability to finish their album project and get 1,000 CD's for distribution? You might be looking two years down the line before your song is out there. You will have to ask yourself, is this artist worth waiting that long to get this particular song out there?)
- **Does this person have a heart for ministry?** (Don't associate yourself with a person you know is only doing this for the money or the glory. You can tell this, not by what they say, but by what they do. Look at their past actions in the industry to see if they have a track record for good or bad behavior in the industry.)
- **Does this person have ability to tour and the time to promote their ministry (including promoting your song or the project it will be on)?** (Don't be tricked into helping someone release a vanity CD. This is a project someone records just to hear their voice and brag that they have a CD out. Here is another thing to watch out for: Is this the type of person who could leave their home and tour ENOUGH to promote their CD? For this, you can ask them, but also, check out their website, social networks, etc. to see what they have in play at the moment in readiness for promoting themselves and their projects. Is this artist willing to do whatever it

takes. So, I am only asking you to take each person case by case and keep all of these in mind as you consider them.)

Hopefully, you will find the right artists to work with. One last word on this subject. Clay Howell (my writing partner) and I have decided that at our age and after all we have been blessed with, it is our time to give back. We have decided to work with new, young artists. We are taking a risk with some really wonderful music that, if placed with an established artist could do extremely well. However, we also know that new artists have a difficult time finding really good original music. We have worked with several so far and it has been a rewarding experience. So, if you are at a place in your ministry, you might try to mentor a new artist and try out an original song or two on them.

Keep writing and God Bless!

Keith Caldwell