
Johnny Schaefer Wins Prestigious International Songwriting Contest in Song Featuring GRAMMY® Award-Winner Melissa Manchester

You Can't Hide the Light is the Winner of the 2021 UK Songwriting Contest "Best Original Song" Category in conjunction with Music Aid International

Manchester lauds Schaefer's "Brilliant, profound lyrics" and "wildly listenable weaving of melodies as enticements to "join the party" in recording the cool, energetic duet

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When he was a youngster growing up in Porterville, CA in the 70s, Pasadena Singer-songwriter Johnny Schaefer wrote songs and sent them to Grammy® Award-winning artist **Melissa Manchester** on cassette tapes hoping she would record one of them. Fast forward to the Fall of 2021 and Schaefer released his new single ***You can't Hide the Light*** featuring Ms. Manchester in a powerful duet. The song has just won the prestigious **UK Songwriting Contest (UKSC) Award for "Best Original Song"** in a special partnership category with **Music Aid International**. There were more than 6,500 entries from 80 countries in the contest this year.

Those looking for a fresh sound and thought-provoking lyrics in a song need look no further than this compelling release. ***You Can't Hide the Light***, features 55 vocal tracks and a double melody. "I thought the lyrics were brilliant and profound. The production was just sensational. I called Johnny and said 'I don't know why you think you need a duet. This is a very complete version. He insisted, and I'm thrilled he did. He heard it as a duet and, honestly, he has created a very unusual and complete world of a song. What's interesting is that the layering is all at the same level. He's created his own Greek chorus with the so-called backgrounds. They aren't background parts-they're literally compacting several worlds into one world. It's really intriguing and wildly listenable" says **Manchester**.

A beautiful song needs a compelling video, and the team of **Daniel Henry-Smith** and **Paco Silva of Siren Arts Productions** came through with a concept created by **Schaefer** with the help of Choreographer **Hilary Thomas** and dancers **Ericalynn Priolo** and **Christopher Frazier of Lineage Dance Company** in Pasadena. The video, which was a Finalist for "Best Music Video" in the UKSC, was filmed in their beautiful new [Lineage Performing Arts Center](#) and features a two minute-long shot in which the camera pans back and forth across the stage revealing different combinations of the singers and their dancing counterparts with each pass. "The song uses barbed wire as an analogy for obstacles in relationships and is about seeing the light in one another, even if the other person forgets," **Schaefer** added. "I wrote the song in the days following the death of my mother from breast cancer in November of 2020." As the energy builds, a Greek Chorus-style countermelody is introduced, and the song becomes a dazzling mix of textures, profound lyrics, and layered vocals. [See the video HERE](#)

Schaefer has worked long and hard at honing his songwriting craft. He has a BA in voice and composition from **California State University, Fullerton**. "My degree was in classical music, and I use what I've learned in my pop songs, which I started writing at age four. Part of my education has included studying **Melissa's** timeless hit songs like ***Come in from the Rain, Midnight Blue, Just You and I, Whenever I Call You Friend***, and more recent releases like 2018's ***A Better Rainbow***. "Why not learn from the best?" he asks. **Manchester** just received The **American Songbook Hall of Fame's New Standard Award** presented to her by **Michael Feinstein**. She has written songs with **Carole Bayer Sager, Kenny Loggins, Hal David,**

and **Bernie Taupin** and recorded with **Stevie Wonder, Dionne Warwick, Barry Manilow, Al Jarreau, Peabo Bryson, Keb' Mo',** and others. "I'm certainly in august company," says Schaefer. **Melissa** is currently releasing an album of updated versions of her hits called **Re:VIEW** one song at a time. In support of women's empowerment, **Manchester** composed the score to the hit musical **Sweet Potato Queens**, with a book by Broadway veteran **Rupert Holmes** and lyrics by Nashville Hall of Famer **Sharon Vaughan**, based upon the New York Times best-selling books of **Jill Conner Browne**. Regional productions are ongoing.

Schaefer gained confidence in approaching **Manchester** with the new song after being named as a Semi-Finalist in the 2020 UK Songwriting Contest in both the **Best Original Song** and **Best Music Video** categories for his song **Unflown**, and in the **Best Holiday Song** category for **All the Babes on Christmas Born**, which he wrote with two-time Bram Stoker Award-winning author **Elizabeth Massie** and Semi-finalist in the four categories in the 2021 contest for his single **While You are Right in Front of Me.** He has sung backup in concert for **Josh Groban, Sarah Brightman, Sarah Vaughan, Diahann Carroll, Pete Townshend,** and **Billy Idol**, but smiles broadly at the notion of recording with **Manchester**, whom he considers to be a mentor, which is a role she relishes and has taken on often at places like the **USC Thornton School of Music** where she was an adjunct professor, and **Citrus College**, where she is Artist in Residence. She studied songwriting with **Paul Simon** at **New York University** when she was young, so sharing knowledge of the beloved art of songwriting is integral to her life's work.

You Can't Hide the Light has a cool Indie Pop/Rock vibe, and the mood evolves from introspective reflection to celebration. It is beautifully produced by Johnny and Pasadena's **Stephan Oberhoff**, who served as **Manchester's** Music Director on the road for ten years and has produced numerous songs for both **Schaefer** and **Manchester**. **Oberhoff** has also worked with **Quincy Jones** and produced music for artists including **Brenda Russel, Jason Gould, Michelle Brouman, Marsha Malumet, Roslyn Kind,** and many others in addition to his own band and first love, **Heartbeat Brazil**. Electronic Dance Music Versions of the song are due for release in early March, 2022 by some of the world's top producers. The song has already received more than 700 spins on stations in Paris, London, Madrid, Miami, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and many other stations worldwide and was #1 for six weeks on the smoothjazz.com Listener Countdown. "I'm an example that dreams can come true at any age" says **Schaefer**.

For more information about Johnny Schaefer, go to www.hearjohnny.com

For more information on Melissa Manchester, go to www.melissamanchester.com

*Sometimes a spark
Sometimes a ray
Sometimes a burning ember
Sometimes it blazes
like the sun and moon and stars together
It shines 24/7 January through December
Sometimes I think that you forget
Don't worry, I remember
-Johnny Schaefer, You Can't Hide the Light*