

4. Songwriting & Publishing Splits

Chapter Overview

When a song is written, there is always at least one **Writer** and one **Publisher**, these are **The Two Sides of Composition Rights**. Unless the writer has a publishing deal, the writer will, by default, also be the publisher of the composition. With a co-write, there are multiple writers and usually one publisher per writer. That said, when two or more co-writers are signed to the same publishing company, there would be two writers and one publisher, three writers and one or two publishers, etc.

When it comes to co-writing, **Song Split Sheets** are critical to your success in the music business. They track the writer and publisher splits agreed to by each writer in the session, and provide the legally-binding agreement everyone can refer to moving forward.

In this section, we introduce examples of Shane and Michelle, two artists or composers (pick the one that most closely aligns to your career).

In one example, neither Shane or Michelle has a publishing or record label deal. When they write a composition together and decide to split the Writing and Publishing 50% / 50%, this is the result:

Writer Split	Publishing Split
- 50% Shane	- 50% Shane
- 50% Michelle	- 50% Michelle

In the second example, Shane is signed to a publishing deal, so this publishing company is listed as the publisher:

Writer Split	Publishing Split
- 50% Shane	- 50% Shane's Publisher
- 50% Michelle	- 50% Michelle

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Definitions

- **Writer / Songwriter** (from [Wikipedia](#)): a professional that writes lyrics or musical compositions. A songwriter can also be called a **Composer**, although the latter term tends to be used mainly for individuals from the classical music genre and Film Scoring.
- **Publisher** (from [BMI](#)): an individual or company that owns or administers the copyright of a [composition].
- **Song Split Sheet**: a legally binding document that includes contact info for each writer, names of each publisher, writer and publisher splits, PRO(s), and signature lines for each writer.
- **IPI/CAE#** (on some split sheets / from [BMI](#)): The IPI/CAE number is an international identification number assigned to songwriters and publishers to uniquely identify rights holders.
 - IPI stands for: Interested Parties Information
 - CAE stands for: Composer, Author and Publisher

Action Plan

- Review each of the Song Split Sheet options below and get familiar with the information they collect. Each is a bit different than the others, so find one that works best for you and ensure it's completely filled out and signed by each co-writer before the end of each future co-writing session.
 - [ASCAP](#) – paper split sheet
 - [LocalMusic.online](#) – paper split sheet
 - [SongSplit.com](#) – cloud-based split sheets
- Identify any co-written songs or cues for which you don't have a song split sheet. From these, identify the ones you want to license and complete a split sheet with each of your co-writers.
- Ensure every co-writer has or receives a paper or digital copy of the signed split sheet(s).