

A song is born

NBC welcomes viewers to 'Songland'

By Kyla Brewer
TV Media

A song is born: Whether you're a fan of country music, pop, jazz or heavy metal, our favorite songs serve as the soundtrack to our lives, and a new television series is about to shine a spotlight on the songwriting process.

Aspiring songwriters get the opportunity of a lifetime when they're invited to present their songs for a music superstar and panel of industry experts in "Songland," premiering Tuesday, May 28, on NBC. In each episode, three songwriters are invited to work with well-known producers to adapt their song to suit the style of a recording artist in the hopes that it will be chosen as the artist's next single.

The show is the brainchild of Eurythmics co-founder Dave Stewart, producer Audrey Morrissey ("The Voice") and director Ivan Dudynsky ("Hollywood Game Night"). All three of them will serve as executive producers along with Maroon 5 frontman Adam Levine. Stewart explained why he's excited about "Songland" in an official release about the show.

"I've been writing songs with and for other people for 40 years and it's always a thrill to hear those songs interpreted and recorded by all kinds of artists," Stewart said. "I'm excited for the viewers to see and hear that magic being created between unknown songwriters and our panel of hit-making mentors."

Levine, who may be familiar to TV viewers from his role as a mentor in "The Voice," weighed in with his take on the series.

"As a songwriter, I'm all too familiar with the challenges that face the music community today," he explained. "With this new series, we are excited to provide opportunities that will not only impact these songwriters' careers but also give them a platform to truly showcase their talent to a global audience."

Open to anyone and everyone, the show sought submissions from songwriters regardless of

their training or experience. The casting phase appealed to music students, teachers, stay-at-home moms and bartenders — anyone who had a song to share. Each installment of the 11-episode series features five songwriters who perform their original songs in front of a major recording artist and a panel of three top music producers.

"Songland" has recruited music producers Ryan Tedder, Ester Dean ("Pitch Perfect," 2012) and Shane McAnally to serve on the panel and mentor the competitors. While the average music lover may not be familiar with these names, they are responsible for some of the biggest hits of the modern music era. Tedder, who's also known as the lead singer of OneRepublic, is a Grammy-winning producer thanks to his work with such artists as Adele and Taylor Swift. Dean has earned a reputation as a "song factory," having written No. 1 hits for Rihanna and Katy Perry. With 38 No. 1 country music albums to his credit, songwriter and producer McAnally is one of the genre's most successful hitmakers, having worked with Kelly Clarkson, Sam Hunt and Kacey Musgraves.

Each week features new recording artists looking for their next hit song. So far, "Songland" has snagged the Jonas Brothers, John Legend, Charlie Puth, Meghan Trainor, will.i.am, OneRepublic, Kelsea Ballerini, Macklemore, Aloe Blacc, Old Dominion and Leona Lewis to appear in the series. Along with the producers, the artists will consider each song's lyrics, arrangement, beats, melody and story as they try to decide which ones they like best.

After the aspiring songwriters present their songs, the recording artist(s) chooses three of them to move on in the competition. The episode's three finalists are paired up with one of the

three producers who serve as mentors to adapt the song to suit the musical act's style. What follows is a fascinating look at the creative process as the songs take shape in the studio before they're presented to the artists once more. In the end, one of the songs is selected to be recorded and released as a single.

While there are plenty of music-themed competition series these days, "Songland's" premise offers viewers a unique perspective by focusing on the songwriting process. However, the show will still have plenty of competition during the summer's reality TV-laden prime-time schedule. Its premiere faces off against the finale of ABC's docu-series "1969," which chronicles memorable moments from that year in history. Fox also serves up some serious competition with its culinary competition series "MasterChef Junior" on Tuesday evenings before switching to the new reality TV program "First Responders" later in the summer.

Luckily, "Songland's" producers have reeled in some serious star power to catch the attention of TV fans. The premiere episode features three-time Grammy nominee Puth, who rose to fame after he began posting videos on his YouTube channel. Up-and-coming songwriters try to woo Puth with their heartfelt melodies in the hopes he'll bring them to a global audience in the premiere of "Songland," airing Tuesday, May 28, on NBC. The show is slated to continue on Tuesday evenings until July 2, at which point it will take a short hiatus. Fans can then catch the conclusion of the series beginning Wednesday, Aug. 14, on NBC.

Shane McAnally, Ester Dean and Ryan Tedder as seen in "Songland"



Late laughs

Conan

In China, an Avengers fan cried so hard during the movie, he was hospitalized. Doctors ordered him to get some rest and never watch "The Notebook."



notification that says, "The CIA is now following you."

This week, the emperor of Japan is giving up the throne. If you wanna know more, just read the 50 articles about it that Prince Charles taped to the Queen's fridge.

Instagram might get rid of "likes," 'cause they want users to, quote, "focus on the photos and videos." While users want Instagram to focus on what it's really made for: making your friends jealous.

There's a lot to talk about, but let's start with the Kentucky Derby. It's this Saturday, and it should be fun. There's nothing more exciting than a two-minute race that decides whether or not your kids go to college.

The Late Late Show With James Corden



The shoe company Crocs recently unveiled a new design that combines their famous rubber shoe with a miniature fanny pack on the back of the shoe. I mean, did we ask for this? If you're wearing Crocs, you are almost certainly already wearing a fanny pack.

Facebook just made a new announcement. They're rolling out a new dating feature in the United States

Marvel announced that "Endgame" is the fourth and final Avengers movie. Marvel's exact words were, "we're sick of money."

In the Democratic primary, Joe Biden has opened up a 24-point lead over the nearest candidate. Analysts expect that lead to fade once Biden starts talking.

The Tonight Show With Jimmy Fallon



What a weekend! We had "Avengers: Endgame" in theaters, and the Battle of Winterfell on "Game of Thrones!" It was the first time kids had to tell their parents, "OK, that's enough screen time."

I wanna say happy birthday to Spongebob Squarepants, who just turned 20. You can tell he's getting old, because today they changed his name to SpongeBob DadJeans.

I saw that the CIA just launched their own account on Instagram. Yeah, it sounds cool until you get a

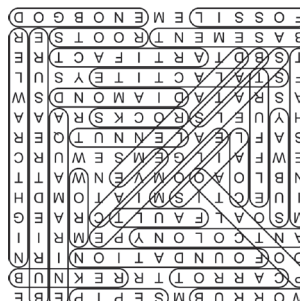
called Secret Crush, that lets you express a romantic interest in your Facebook connections. Finally, something creepier on Facebook than that cousin we all have who is way too into Disney.

Scientists in Suffolk, England, were recently testing freshwater shrimp for chemicals and they made a shocking discovery: every single one of the shrimp tested positive for cocaine. A shrimp is not the animal I would expect to test positive for cocaine. A hamster, maybe. A woodpecker, definitely. A shrimp, I don't see it. It's surprising, shrimp usually just stick to cocktails.

A section of downtown Chicago was shut down recently after police spotted a suspicious device in the street, and the device turned out to be a school project that was — get this — a can of Chef Boyardee ravioli fastened to a set of wheels. I have no idea what this assignment was, but considering it's a can of ravioli on wheels, it's pretty obvious it was thrown together five minutes before it was due.

Jimmy Kimmel Live

The other thing people were mad about was the big battle scene on "Game of Thrones," which was so dark, a lot of viewers watching on TV couldn't even see it. It was like listening to a very violent podcast.



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