

Nashville Scene

Keep Your Eyes On The Duo Of Rose & Kennedy

By KIP KIRBY

Predicting success for unknown new acts can be a form of Russian roulette. With all the factors that go into success, crystal ball gazing is, at best, risky business.

Nonetheless, an act sometimes comes along that's so obviously ready for recording stardom that it doesn't take a crystal ball to see it—an act with powerful magnetism, charisma and enough talent to carry it through the home stretch.

In our opinion, Pam Rose & Mary Ann Kennedy are such an act. And judging from the phenomenal response they've been getting lately in their showcase appearances, it seems to be a majority opinion.

Diminutive, attractive, blessed with enviable vocal and writing skills, Kennedy and Rose share a buoyance that comes across beautifully in all their songs. When they blend their voices into their trademark mix of pure soprano and husky alto, it's hard not to think of Simon & Garfunkel's shivering harmonies back in their "Sounds Of Silence" days.

Neither artist is unknown in Nashville. Rose was on Capitol as a solo artist prior to signing with Epic. She and Kennedy were part of a manufactured CBS female act called Calamity. They have impressive credits as songwriters: "First Time Feeling," "Ring On Her Finger, Time On Her Hands," "Sometimes A Stranger Will Do" and "The First Word In Memory Is Me," the title cut of Janie Fricke's upcoming album.

As a duo, they sparkle with the patina of polished performers who still think being onstage can be a magical experience. They bring the same quality to their studio work. At a recent World's End nightclub showcase, they climaxed an evening of fine performances by Angela Kaset, Annie Freeman, Pam Tillis and Nancy Montgomery—and reduced the noisy packed house to hushed silence song after song. Using only acoustic guitars, they galvanized the crowd almost from the first note, and when they finished, they had earned deafening applause and an encore.

As a duet, Pam Rose and Mary Ann Kennedy have a captivatingly commercial sound. With the shortage of country duets these days and a proliferation of male artists, a female act as refreshing and self-contained as this could signal new horizons to a record company interested in developing their career.

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All right, let's see: We've witnessed Bob Seger and Sheena Easton on the country charts, we've got Lionel Richie rocketing up the chart even as we write this column. Why not Neil Young?

Why not indeed, is exactly what Neil himself says, and he's cut an album he believes could be his strongest since "Harvest." Besides that,

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WHAT'S THE SCOOP?—"Today" host Jane Pauley chats with RCA's Ronnie Milsap about his Marlboro-sponsored concert tour and his most current video, "She Loves My Car." Milsap also introduced his album, "One More Try For Love," which features his current single, "Still Losing You."

CMA Names Horizon Finalists

NASHVILLE—The Country Music Assn. has released the names of the 10 finalists nominated for this year's Horizon Award: Deborah Allen, Earl Thomas Conley, Exile, Jim Glaser, Vern Gosdin, Mark Gray, the Judds, Gus Hardin, Kathy Mattea and Michael Martin Murphey.

This award honors an artist (or artists) who has demonstrated the most significant growth and development in overall chart and sales activity, live performances, professional-

ism and critical media recognition. The Horizon Award, first given in 1981, will be presented during the 18th annual CMA Awards Show, Oct. 8.

Nominees are selected by CMA officers and directors and submitted to the general membership on the second round of balloting. Any artist who has previously won the award, has been a Horizon nominee twice, or who has previously been a final ballot nominee for any other CMA award is ineligible.

Indigo's Singles Losses Prompt Roster Trimming

NASHVILLE—Indigo Music Corp. here has severely cut back on the number of artists signed to its record labels in a move to stop the losses incurred in issuing, promoting and distributing single records. From now on, Indigo vice president Mike Figlio says, the company will deal in albums and sell them mainly through television advertising.

Audiograph, Phonorama and Indigo have been the parent firm's most active labels of late. It also owns the Living Songs, Rosanne, Brylen, Accord, Townhouse and Oregon labels. The only acts still signed, Figlio reports, are the Four Guys, Ronnie Prophet and Harold MacIntyre, all of whom are with Audiograph.

"It was partly an ethical decision" to free the artists of their contracts, Figlio claims. "I couldn't justify keeping them tied to the labels under these circumstances."

Figlio cites the high cost of radio promotion, the difficulty of sparking significant chart activity, pressing expenses and the insistence on the part of distributors to take Indigo product on consignment as reasons for making the cutbacks and seeking other marketing devices.

"It was a one-way street—with everything going out and nothing coming back in," Figlio continues. "We're going to do our selling through our own tv, and we'll be doing a lot of PIs (per inquiry orders)."

Famous Renews Subpublishing Deals

NASHVILLE—Famous Music has renewed its foreign subpublishing administration agreements with Charley Pride for the world, excluding the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Eire, New Zealand and Australia, and with Alabama for the world, excluding the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Eire.

FIRST-HALF SURVEY

One In Three Singles Made It To Hot 100

By EDWARD MORRIS

NASHVILLE—Nearly one country single out of every three released during the first half of 1984 managed to make the Hot 100. And about one in 12 went top 10.

These reasonably rosy statistics are partially explained by the fact that of the 662 singles sent to Billboard between Jan. 1 and June 30 for review, 174 were from major labels or labels with major distribution, while another 111 were from independent labels with at least a fair track record and additional distribution.

Cover records, not long ago the bane of radio programmers, seem to have waned in recent months, with only 41 of this type detectable in the six-month output of singles.

Duets by artists who normally perform solo also appear on the decline, with just nine such twosomes being offered by the majors in this period. One of these, however, was the powerful Willie Nelson/Julio Iglesias pairing, "To All The Girls I've Loved Before," the only release to hold the volatile No. 1 country spot for two weeks.

Of the January-June releases, 19 have—as of this week—reached No. 1. Nine of these were by male solo artists, two by women, six by groups and two by duets.

RCA's Alabama holds the distinction of having so far had two 1984 singles sweep into the top spot: "Roll On (Eighteen Wheeler)" and "When We Make Love."

Label-wise, RCA artists account for five of the chart-toppers, Columbia/Epic for five, MCA for four, and Elektra/Asylum, Mercury, Capitol, Compleat and Warner Bros. for one each to date.

Newcomers at the top are Eddy Raven, Exile, Vern Gosdin and the Judds. Lane Brody may also be edged in here, since she shared the vocals on "The Yellow Rose" with Johnny Lee. The veteran chart-toppers in the list are Lee, Janie Fricke, Anne Murray, the Kendalls, Alabama, George Strait, the Oak Ridge Boys, John Conlee, Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Earl Thomas Conley, Ricky Skaggs, Conway Twitty and Don Williams.

Although it could hardly be called

a resurgence, novelty/topical songs figured among the country successes through midyear. At least 18 examples of this ephemeral genre have so far been unleashed, the most successful of which have been John Anderson's top 10 finger-shaker, "Let Somebody Else Drive"; T.G. Sheppard and Clint Eastwood's swaggering "Make My Day," which went to number 12; and Moe Bandy and Joe Stampley's grudging tribute to Boy George, "Where's The Dress," which peaked at number eight.

The "Urban Cowboy" trail across the face of country music grows increasingly indistinct. Not one of the top 10 songs for the first half of the year alluded to Texas.

25,000 Enter Nashville Network Alabama Contest

NASHVILLE—In its first promotion with a major record company, The Nashville Network drew more than 25,000 entries during a recent RCA-sponsored Alabama "Roll On" contest. The promotion also involved 150 Record Bar, 66 Sound Warehouse and 44 Tower Records retail outlets.

TNN viewers were given the chance of entering the contest either by sending in a postcard to the Network, or by filling out an official entry form located at participating Record Bar, Sound Warehouse or Tower stores. Special Alabama "Roll On" displays were prominently featured in these outlets along with the entry forms. More than half the entries received by TNN were on the official retail blanks.

The winner of the contest won an expense-paid weekend as Alabama's guests at the band's June Jam in Fort Payne, Ala., and two pairs of Laredo boots. The 10 second prize winners received Nashville Network satin jackets, autographed Alabama albums and posters, and Alabama T-shirts. Fifty third prize winners were sent Alabama albums and shirts and TNN belt buckles.

BMI Adds 30 Songs To 'Million-Air' List

NASHVILLE—BMI honored 30 of its newest million-performance Nashville songs July 25 at special luncheon festivities. Also honored were songs which have this year achieved two, three and four million broadcast performances.

In her remarks, BMI vice president Frances Preston observed that a song of three minutes in length which has been broadcast one million times has been played a minimum of 50,000 hours. Played continuously, she noted, million-performance compositions would log an air time equivalent of more than five and a half years.

John Hartford's "Gentle On My Mind" was listed as having logged four million performances, followed by Kris Kristofferson's "For The Good Times" and "Tennessee Waltz" by Pee Wee King and Redd Stewart, each with three million performances. Newcomers to the two million broadcast performance level were "Blue Bayou" by Joe Meldon and Roy Orbison, and "Mr. Bojangles" by Jerry Jeff Walker.

The following were awarded their one million performances citations: "Come A Little Bit Closer," written

by Tommy Boyce, Wes Farrell and Bobby Hart (Morris Music Inc.); "Dueling Banjos," Arthur Smith (Combine Music Corp.); "Feels So Right," Randy Owen (Maypop); "Funny How Time Slips Away," Willie Nelson (Tree Publishing); "Hey Baby," Bruce Channel, Margaret Cobb (CBS Unart Catalog/Le Bill Music); "Honky Tonk," Billy Butler, Bill Doggett, Henry Glover, Clifford Scott, Shep Shepherd (Islip Music/W and K Publishing).

"I Don't Need You," Rick Christian (Bootchute); "I'll Never Love This Way Again," Will Jennings, Richard Kerr (Irving Music); "I'm Movin' On," Hank Snow (Unichappell); "I'm Sorry," Dub Allbritten, Ronnie Self (Champion Music Corp.); "Lost Her Love On Our Last Date," Floyd Cramer, Conway Twitty (Acuff-Rose); "Love In The First Degree," Jim Hurt, Tim Du Bois (Warner House Of Music); "Lovin' You," Minnie Riperton, Richard Rudolph (Dickiebird).

"Mabelline," Chuck Berry (Arc Music Corp.); "Mountain Of Love," Harold Dorman (Morris Music);

"Nobody," Rhonda Fleming-Gill, Dennis Morgan (Tom Collins Music); "On The Road Again," Willie Nelson (Willie Nelson Music); "One Day At A Time," Kris Kristofferson, Marijohn Wilkin (Buckhorn Music); "Only The Lonely," Joe Meldon, Roy Orbison (Acuff-Rose); "Rings," Alex Harvey, Eddie Reeves (CBS Unart).

And: "Say You'll Stay Until Tomorrow," Roger Greenaway, Barry Mason (PRS) (Dick James Music); "Seven Year Ache," Rosanne Cash (Atlantic Music/Hotwire Music); "Sharing The Night Together," Ava Aldridge (Alan Cartee Music); "Smoky Mountain Rain," Rhonda Fleming-Gill, Dennis Morgan (Hall-Clement); "Stop And Smell The Roses," Mac Davis (Screen Gems-EMI); "Sweet Home Alabama," Gary Rossington, Ronnie Van Zant (Duchess/Hustlers); "Then Came You," Philip Pugh, Sherman Marshall (Mighty Three); "Walk On By," Kendall Hayes (Lowery Music); "Walk Right Back," Sonny Curtis (Warner-Tamerlane); "Welcome To My World," Johnny Hathcock, Ray Winkler (Noillrae/Tree Publishing).