

# AIMING HIGH



BY DEBORAH MINTER

The Australian Institute of Music (AIM) is arguably Australia's elite musical education facility. Its values of excellence are instilled in graduates RAE MOODY and LIZ KINNINMONT as country music's hottest new duo THE HARMONATORS.

I always felt a longing whenever I saw someone else singing/ performing and felt that it was what I was supposed to be doing!" Rae reminisced. "The idea of going to a place where everyday the focus was solely on music was a dream," Liz agreed. At the AIM the girls began to realise that having a successful music career was something they could really achieve if they worked hard and were committed to it.

"We learnt that your voice is an instrument and needs to be taken care of like any other instrument," Rae added. "If a guitarist doesn't practice and perfect his technique he's going to hurt – bruised fingertips, aching wrists, etc.

"It's exactly the same for singers. You need to exercise your voice and practice good technique; then hopefully it will never fail you, especially when you put it under stress like ten

days of full-on country music festival!"

Liz, who grew up watching ELVIS PRESLEY and listening to JOHN DENVER records admits she didn't appreciate her Dad's favourites as a child. "As I got older I realised what an amazing songwriter and artist John Denver was."

What Liz didn't know until much later was that Elvis's roots were in country and much of his music had a strong connection to those roots.

"The music I was listening to back then made more of an impression than I ever could have realised, but when I heard TRISHA YEARWOOD sing *How Do I Live* (from the movie *Con Air*) I fell in love with her voice and realised that this music was something I could personally relate to."

It was Liz's love of country music that brought Rae to the genre; a move that she

embraced with gusto, attending the CMAA College of Country Music in 2007.

"I had a fantastic time," she said. "Apart from the lack of sleep I got to live and breathe country music full on for two weeks with 21 other incredible people who feel exactly the same way I do. Needless to say I made some fantastic friends."

The girls have just released their debut album *Here & Now*.

"*Here & Now* is a genuine reflection about how we feel about the album and the songs on it," Rae said. "It's where we are personally and musically."

"I think the title makes a statement," Liz agreed. "We're not traditionalists, and even though we appreciate that music, it's not the kind of music we make. Our sound is very contemporary."

The debut single from the album is *Don't Come Back*. "A few years ago we both went through simultaneous bad break-ups," Rae said. "Thankfully we were there for each other."

The song, about the jilting lover having second thoughts, wanting to start over and being rejected in turn is a firm declaration of female independence. "The hook of the song is realising 'the choice is mine' and having the strength to tell that person 'don't come back no more,'" Liz said.

The album also features the SAM HAWKSLEY / FELICITY URQUHART-penned, *Tomorrow Never Knows*. "It's a completely different sound for us," Rae said, "very rocky and a bit dark. I get really excited about it being the next single."

"Every time I put it on in the car I crank it up," Liz agreed. "Again it comes back wanting to make a strong statement about the kind of music and the contemporary artists we want to be."

The girls have now performed as THE HARMONATORS at festivals and shows up and down the East Coast of Australia.

"We've been asked to play at the Mildura Independent CM Festival this year for the first time and that's a great buzz because the independent industry is very competitive at the moment," Liz said. "We've never had a full album to play with before so we're excited to get out there and perform it. We're really looking forward to the ride."

The Harmonators may have high goals to aim at, but with powerful, passionate vocals and an impressive songwriting talent, they have plenty of strings to their musical bows.