

COUNTRY MUSIC

SINGS TO A NEW HARMONY

BY OLIVIER BJÖRKSÄTER-BLEYLOCK



If you're looking for beautifully-articulated, passion-fuelled country songs full of real emotion, then look no further than *The Harmonators*. With the sounds of Old Nashville complete with that familiar Tennessee mountain home spirit of pre-showbiz Dolly Parton, *The Harmonators* are being touted as the next big major home-grown country music act to be catapulted onto the international stage. And with a debut album that's already got the industry abuzz, this recording is a very impressive release that may soon see *The Harmonator's* Rae Moody and Liz Kinnimont hold the co-throne of queens of female country music.

Country artists, unlike their jillion other pop music counterparts, have a road much tougher in order to make or break it in the industry. Good country artists sing from the heart and it shows. *The Harmonators*, in all their debut glory, have just proved that they're vibrant tunesmiths who both write and sing from their hearts. And despite Nashville's flaws, it's a city that still shoots out sharper lyrics than most rockers give it credit for, and these women will have no problems fitting in at all with their technique, soul and experience, not to mention some rousing words worthy of song.

Together for four years, *The Harmonators* are Rae Moody, a 2007 CMAA College of Country Music graduate and 2007 Toyota Star Maker Finalist, together with Liz Kinnimont. The duo, each a product of the Australian Institute of Music's contemporary voice department, met as they pursued studies as lead vocalists. They have achieved success in Sydney, as audiences are captivated by their uniquely distinctive harmonic rhythm.

In 2004, they took their first successful trip to the Tamworth Country Music Festival. While there the girls performed at many venues and competitions, but it was at the Capital Country Music Association's 38th National Jamboree where they achieved their first taste of success. *The Harmonators*, winners for 'best group,' became the overall winners, one of very few groups to do so in the history of the competition. And it probably comes as no surprise that their success led to widespread media interest, becoming regulars on national radio and television, as well as performing with the likes of Elvis Costello, Joe Camilleri, and Diesel.

Part of their recipe for such broad appeal to a far-reaching audience is their versatility which allows them to cross musical genres but maintain their country roots. The material is well written and lyrically point to women with strong personalities and a certain self-actualisation uncommon for country artist early in their careers. It's because of this that *The Harmonators* are on the verge of much grander things, and rightfully so, for all the correct reasons.

Fast forward a year, and with the release of their self-titled debut EP featuring the first single *I Forget*, it was an exciting year for *The Harmonators*. In fact, their debut single secured spots in both the Top 20 CMC Videos and the Top 100 Country Hits charts, and earned them a Tamworth Independent Artists Recognition Awards (TIARAS) nomination in the duo category. Meanwhile, their second single *Wish I Didn't* was named a finalist in the 2006 TAS & New Zealand Independent Songwriting Awards and named a Top 20 finalist in the 2006 Musicoz Awards for Country Artist of the Year. The single also charted on the Top 50 CMC videos and Top 100 Country Hits charts. And if that wasn't enough, Moody and Kinnimont were later nominated as finalists in the 2007 Coopers Golden Saddle Awards and the inaugural Horsham CM Awards for Independent Vocal Group of the Year. All of this simply backs up why I say this is definitely one up and coming act that's making audiences sit up and listen...not to mention your club.

This year has finally seen *The Harmonators* record and release their first full-length feature album, *Here & Now*, with their first single *Don't Come Back* already hitting the Top 100 Country Hits chart. Packed with a stunning range of contemporary country tunes showcasing both a list of originals along with songs penned by club favourites Felicity Urquhart and Sam Hawksley, it's an album that shows *The Harmonators* in a new light. Their harmonies are beautiful, natural and 'harmonious' for want of a better description, and raise the bar for the duo's success – they are sure to shine, and have cemented themselves as an act to keep an eye on.

To book *The Harmonators* for your club today, contact Rebecca Urquhart McCarthy at RUM Entertainment on 0439 730 460 or email rum@rumentertainment.com. Or, to check out *The Harmonators*, visit their website at www.theharmonators.com ■