

SHOWCASE

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On a fair evening . . .

Main musical attractions at the Antelope Valley Fair include grandstand performances by Kenny Loggins (at right), the Oak Ridge Boys (top photo, below) and the Everly Brothers (bottom photo, below). Acts such as the New Grass Revival (center photo, below) allow fairgoers to hear music for the price of admission. Inside, Karla Tipton interviews and previews many of 1989's fair performers.

— Loggins, Oak Ridge photos by Rick Perrine



Kenny Loggins still gets a kick out of single hits

By KARLA TIPTON
Assistant Showcase Editor

When pop rock artist Kenny Loggins hears one of his hit singles on the radio, his reaction varies.

"I still get a kick out of hearing a song on the radio," said Loggins, whose hits include "This Is It," "Footloose" and "I'm Alright." "But sometimes I'll listen and I'll try just to let go and enjoy it and other times I'll listen critically, and start thinking about things I would have done differently."

Loggins kicks off the Antelope Valley Fair's Redman Grandstand musical entertainment at 8 p.m. Monday.

AV Fair: Aug. 28

While it's still exciting for him to hear a song become a hit, "It's hard to compete with the first time anything happens to you," he said in a phone interview.

His first hits came in the early '70s with Jim Messina and included such Top 20 songs as "Thinking of You," "My Music" and the ever familiar "Your Mama Don't Dance."

Of those early days, Loggins never fails to cite his six years as a part of Loggins and Messina as both enjoyable and a learning experience.

"My years with Jimmy Messina I look upon as a great time for me," he said. "Not only did we see success, but it was a serious period of apprenticeship. I learned how to make a record and how to put a band together and keep it together and how to find a record label and a manager and different techniques for recording."

"There was a tremendous amount of information that I learned, both from the good things that Loggins and Messina did and the mistakes that we made," he said.

The duo's last record together was more than a decade ago. Yet when Loggins plays a medley of their songs — as he did at a recent show at the Del Mar Fair — tears come to the eyes of some attendees when they hear "Danny's Song" or "The House at Pooh Corner."

"The Loggins and Messina material still gets good responses," said Loggins, who has played about 50 shows so far this year.

Yet it depends on the audience what kind of show Loggins will present: "When I was in Taipei (Taiwan), that audience was really into the rock'n'roll material," he said. "Most of the kids in the audience had never heard of Loggins and Messina, so the acoustic part of the show got real

short. I started throwing in more and more rock'n'roll tunes. To have 12,000 people dancing out in an open field is really a kick."

Then there are other types of crowds, he described, "Slightly older. They might want to sit down and relax. So I get intimate with that audience and do more acoustic stuff."

Loggins — who handles louder, faster numbers as well as the ballads — enjoys his rock songs ("or what I call rock'n'roll") as

much as his softer material.

"Each one has its moment," he said. "Sometimes you're in the mood to hear something gentle and pretty and sometimes you're in the mood just to have a good time. So my songs reflect the moods that I might be in."

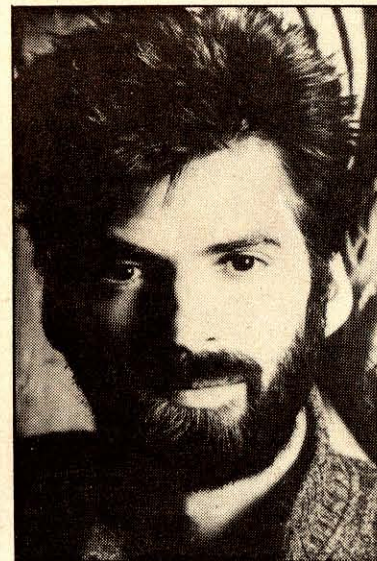
But always, when writing a song, Loggins is concerned with melody. "I think melody is probably the most important element for a pop song," he said. "I lean on melodies and I try to hook in the lyrics that have some emotional impact."

Several of his songs — "It's A Miracle," "This Is It," "Forever" and "Back to Avalon" — have one thing in common: They're all autobiographical, said Loggins.

"I'd say 80 percent of the time (my songs) are autobiographical. The songs that probably work the best are personal," he said. "Then you can really tap into your own emotions and your odds are much better of hitting others."

Currently, Loggins is writing songs for an album he expects will be released in the first half of 1990. And while it does have a specific direction, he wasn't giving any hints because "I don't want to box myself in."

As an established artist, Loggins does have room to experiment — unlike many pop per-



KENNY LOGGINS

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Loggins

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formers starting out today.

"I wouldn't want to be a young musician right now," he said. "It's very difficult for talented rock'n'roll bands to bust through now unless they're playing metal. Unless they look like metal and act like metal, out-tough each other."

"Radio has become an extremely repressive place to be," said Loggins. "Now's the time to leave the framework."