

# KENNY ROGERS & THE FIRST EDITION

## *Country Legend*

1. Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town
2. What Am I Gonna Do With The Rest Of My Life
3. Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In)
4. I Found A Reason
5. She Even Woke Me Up To Say Goodbye
6. Sleep Comes Easy
7. Sunshine
8. If Wishes Were Horses
9. I Just Want To Give My Love To You
10. Lay It Down

## *Songs Of Love And Heartache*

1. But You Know I Love You
2. Heed The Call
3. Ticket To Nowhere
4. Always Leavin', Always Gone
5. All God's Lonely Children
6. Elvira
7. Church Without A Name
8. Trying Just As Hard
9. My Washington Woman
10. Last Few Threads Of Love

## *Poem For My Little Lady*

1. Reuben James
2. Something's Burning
3. Poem For My Little Lady
4. It's Gonna Be Better
5. Me & Bobby McGee
6. I'm Gonna Sing You A Sad Song, Susie
7. Molly
8. Tulsa Turnaround
9. Where Does Rosie Go
10. New Design

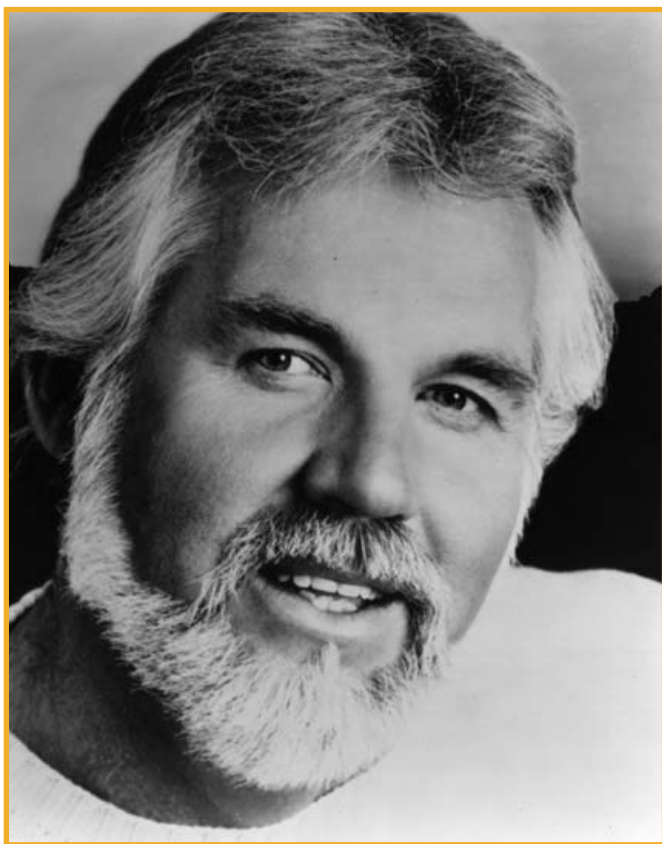


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# KENNY ROGERS & THE FIRST EDITION

As one of Country music's greatest performers, Kenny Rogers has consistently entertained audiences with his smooth vocals and laid back style. Boasting a career that spans more than four decades, Rogers has been a constant presence on the always evolving Country music scene and is most certainly regarded as one of Country's favorite sons.



Born on August 21, 1938, in Houston, Texas, Rogers came from modest beginnings, raised with seven siblings in one of the poorest areas of that city. His interest in music evolved through high school, and he quickly learned to play guitar and fiddle. By his senior year, Rogers had joined his first band, a Rockabilly outfit known as The Scholars. The group would release three singles, but after graduation Rogers decided to branch out on his own.

After signing on with the Carlton label, he released two singles, the first of which was “We’ll Always Fall In Love Again.” Ironically, it was the B-side of that single, a song called “That Crazy Feeling,” that proved to be more popular, so much so that it earned him a spot on *American Bandstand*. In 1959, Rogers made the fateful decision to drop out of school – he was enrolled at the University Of Texas – to pursue a musical career full-time.

It wouldn’t be long before a record label came knocking, and soon Rogers was signed to Mercury. He released a number of singles with them, however none of the songs made a splash with the public, and he was eventually dropped from the label.

Determined, Rogers continued on, and joined the New Christy Minstrels. He performed with the group for a year, before leaving in 1967, taking a number of the band members with him – Mike Settle, Terry Wilson, Thelma Lou Camacho – to form a new group, The First Edition. The group signed with Reprise and released “Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In).” The song climbed the charts and hit number 5. They followed that success with another Top Ten hit, “Ruby, Don’t Take Your Love To Town.”

The following years found the group releasing more hits that would crack the top twenty, including “Something’s Burning” and “Tell It All Brother.” They proved to be so popular that they eventually landed their own syndicated television show, *Rollin’ On The River*. In 1973, The First Edition left Reprise records and signed to Jolly Roger, a new label owned by Rogers himself. The group didn’t have any major hits on Jolly Roger, and when Rogers decided to leave the band in 1974, it was the beginning of the end for First Edition; they disbanded soon after. Rogers himself was in a lot of debt at the time, and was eventually forced to fold the label.

Rogers then signed to United Artists and went on to become one of Country music’s most revered and well-loved performers. A generation earlier, Patsy Cline had proven that Pop melodies could be infused with traditional Country music, creating a new sound that thrilled radio listening audiences. With his work in The First Edition, and later with his solo career, Rogers brought the same aesthetic to his music. In this sense, it could be argued that Rogers, along with colleagues such as Lee Greenwood, Dolly Parton and Glen Campbell were the first wave of “new Country” artists. Steeped in tradition, yet embracing modern pop production and songwriting, Rogers crafted a new style of Country that found favor on both the Pop and Country charts.

Though the music was accessible, the lyrical content often remained quite intelligent. Kenny Rogers & The First Edition's hit, "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town," for example, is a moving song about the relationship between a crippled war veteran and his lover. And though the lyrics are pensive, the music is catchy and upbeat, even with the haunting final line.

Rogers was equally as gifted delivering potent love songs, which would bring him much success during his solo career. Early evidence of this talent is apparent in his work with The First Edition in such songs as "Something's Burning," "Elvira" and "But You Know That I Love You."

While The First Edition had a harder rocking sound than what Rogers would become famous for, there are a number of songs that hint towards the gentler direction he would take later in his career. Songs like "For The Good Times" and "Poem For My Little Lady" were strong indications of the road Rogers would take in his career after The First Edition.



Since his days with The First Edition, Rogers has gone on to become a major Country music star, expanding his career into film, television and even a restaurant chain! Rogers has also used his celebrity to help those less fortunate, creating the World Hunger Media Awards, and co-chairing the "Hands Across America" fund-raising event. He has even turned his talents to photography, publishing two acclaimed volumes of his landscape and portrait



work. The popular appeal of Rogers' blend of Pop and Country has not gone unnoticed by the music industry. In his illustrious career, he has received three Grammy's, 11 People's Choice awards, eight Academy of Country Music awards and five Country Music Association

awards. These honors are no surprise, as Rogers has charted a staggering 27 Top Forty hits between 1968 and 1984.

It's hard to overstate the importance of Kenny Rogers' success. Part of a group of new musicians who brought Country music to mainstream audiences from the '70s onward, it's easy to see how his success has shaped the contemporary Country sound. His influence can be found throughout popular Country music. The production values which favor vocals over instrumentation, and the intelligent fusion of Pop sensibilities with a Country feel, all point to a sound that Rogers and his colleagues perfected.

**That Kenny Rogers has remained an important figure in the Country music scene is a testament to the durability of his unique style. He continues to record and perform live, and to develop his song craft, looking for new directions to take his laid-back Pop-Country style. *Original American Classics* is proud to present the timeless music of Kenny Rogers & The First Edition, and a glimpse into the burgeoning career of this Country music superstar.**