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KARLING

MEET THE NEW FACE OF CONTEMPORARY ROCKABILLY... KARLING!

THE ENGAGING BRITISH BORN
SINGER-SONGWRITER RECEIVED A
HOLLYWOOD MUSIC IN MEDIA (HMMA)
NOD FOR “ANOTHER LOVELY DAY” FROM
HER NEW ALBUM ‘*BOUND FOR NOWHERE*’

Karling’s Eclectic Vibe, Which Has Been Described
As “Wanda Jackson Meets Gwen Stefani, Who Puts
In A Conference Call To David Bowie Who’s Lunching
With The Stray Cats” Has Delighted Audiences
Everywhere From Europe To San Francisco and New York City

Since the designation “**First Lady of Rockabilly**” has already been taken by 2009 **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** inductee **Wanda Jackson**, we’ll have to come up with something unique to describe the hip, contemporary twist that singer/songwriter **Karling** brings to the genre.

While we’re figuring out a term for the multi-talented, British-born, Los Angeles based performer (www.karlingabbeygate.net) that’s as witty, clever and buoyant as the songs on her new indie album, we also might wonder about its ironic title. Karling calls it **Bound For Nowhere**, but in truth, she’s been practically everywhere these past few years, winning accolades and delighting audiences throughout the U.S. and Europe with her enigmatic brand of Americana.

In 2009, she earned a **Hollywood Music in Media Award (HMMA)** nomination for “**Another Lovely Day**,” the charming, easy rolling lament that kicks off Bound For Nowhere which she also performed at the ceremony. Her 2006 self-titled debut, a critically acclaimed shout out to traditional honky tonk country that earned comparisons to **Patsy Cline**, **Tammy Wynette** and **June Carter**, won three **L.A. Music Awards: Rockabilly Album of the Year**, **Rockabilly Artist of the Year**, and **Female Americana Vocalist of the Year**.

Over the past few years, Karling and her band have shared the stage with luminaries like **Jackson**, **Wayne Hancock**, **Big Sandy**, **The Hacienda Brothers**, **Deke Dickerson** and **James Intveld** and performed regularly throughout the West Coast and Europe—with dates everywhere from Portland, Oregon to Baltimore and New York.

While she performs throughout California—and recently played in Fresno, Sutter Creek and San Francisco—one of Karling’s most loyal fan bases is in Bakersfield. The band is scheduled to play the 2010 Buckfest in honor of country legend Buck Owens, who hailed from there.

Just as a revival of the **Elvis Presley-Sun Session** era rockabilly sound inspired the revival in her hometown of Norwich in the English countryside when she was growing up, she taps into the Euro passion for rockabilly regularly; in 2009, she performed in Germany, Belgium and Switzerland, Holland and the UK.

“Because we don’t do straight traditional rockabilly,” Karling says, “we also appeal to those who enjoy old country, the **Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette** and **Hank Williams, Sr.** fans as well as the rockabilly crowd. The European crowds are always a little surprised because the songs have an original twist and they are not used to songs that cross traditional boundaries and aren’t duplicates of the old style. People tell me they like my singing voice because it sounds like a 50s crooner but then I can get into hard rocking, high energy stuff that inspires the audience to jump and dance around.”

One of the songs her fans are high steppin’ to lately is the infectious “**Crazy Mable**,” which draws on one of her favorite hobbies, writing horror stories, and the darker elements of her former musical life as the lead singer of the alt-rock band **Karling Abbeygate and the Monks of Love**. This is just one element of a background that makes her a fascinating musical enigma. New listeners might assume she hails from Texas or Memphis, since her twang is tweaked to perfection and her voice captures the authentic soul of American roots music.

Mystery solved: Karling’s father, a military man hailing from Coffeyville, Kansas, met her mother while based in Norfolk, England. Both avid old-style country fans, they fed their daughter a consistent diet of Patsy Cline, **Johnny Cash, June Carter**, Tammy Wynette and **Loretta Lynn**, practically from the day she was born. Her friends at school also exposed her to vinyl records their parents had of artists like Wanda Jackson, and Norwich had concerts hosting rockabilly bands where dressing up in circle skirts and petticoats was encouraged.

Those experiences help explain Karling’s evolution as a country/Americana artist. But somewhere along the way, to the delight of the indie rock community, Karling explored that other side of her musical artistry. Based alternately in Portland, Oregon and Las Vegas, **Karling Abbeygate and the Monks of Love** did numerous tours of America. During these years, she also prepped for her later slew of awards as the band won honors as **Las Vegas Artist of the Year** by **City Life Magazine**.

Though she is now billed as a solo artist, Karling is very much a collaborator in both the studio and onstage with her band featuring guitarist **Joel Morin**, rhythm guitarist **Donnie Whitbeck**, drummer John Schwartz (who has played with Weird Al Yankovic for the past 29 years!) and bassist Kevin Stewart (Wanda, Big Sandy). “I can have an idea in my head of how I want a song to sound,” she says, “but I don’t know how it’s going to turn out until I bring the guys together and they hear my ideas and then add their own talent and expertise.

“I think I simply have varied tastes in music,” Karling adds. “Growing up, I loved **David Bowie, T Rex, The Cars** and **Nirvana**, and later I was an immediate fan of **Amy Winehouse**. The music I make now is American roots music, where I’m going back and bringing out the essence of where rock came from. If young rockers act like they don’t care about old style rock and roll and rockabilly, they’re fooling themselves because it’s where the music they make today is built from. And before that was the blues. Older fans feel that my songs are honest and like the bare bones vibe because we do it all without a huge production. It’s also wonderful to find fresh ways to make the music relevant to a new generation of young fans. They listen like it’s completely new and have no idea how it connects to an old style of music—but they still love it, and that’s what matters to me.”

Karling sees a strong progression between her debut album and **Bound For Nowhere**, not only stylistically but because the new collection is comprised of all original material; the first was a ballad heavy mix of four originals and covers of older country songs, a few which were popular but many of which were coolly obscure. Vibe-wise, think Wanda Jackson meets Gwen Stefani, who puts in a conference call to David Bowie, who's lunching with The Stray Cats. They exchange notes and then write a 14 song album.

While "Another Lovely Day" has received many accolades already and "Crazy Mable" is the song about crazy obsession that everyone's talking about, the set runs deep and features numerous other classics in the making. Among these is "**The Valley**," inspired by some of the great cowboy songs by the late **Frankie Laine**, who became a fan of Karling's music before his passing. On March 30, the singer went down to San Diego to participate in a party Laine's widow is throwing for what would have been the legend's 97th birthday.

"Looking back," Karling says, "the funny thing about being in the alternative rock band is that the whole time, there was this feeling I had that I didn't know how to express. I was missing that rockabilly beat, that train rhythm, and I kept wanting the band to do something like that. Instead, they made a lazy beat and it became increasingly frustrating for me. I guess it was just a matter of time before I would emerge with the style of music that was most true to my heart, and on my own terms. The writing comes naturally to me, and I had started writing songs for **Bound For Nowhere** when the first album came out and at one point was penning a song a day. But that's just the start. What is ultimately exciting to me is how they begin to take on a life of their own, and that we get the opportunity to preserve them forever."

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