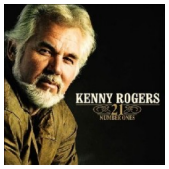
Kenny Rogers – 21 Number Ones (2006)



1. The Gambler 2. Through The Years 3. Lady 4. Lucille 5. Coward Of Th eCounty 6. I Don't Need You 7. We've Got Tonight - (with Dolly Parton) 8. Crazy 9. Islands In The Stream - (with Sheena Easton) 10. She Believes In Me 11. Every Time Two Fools Collide - (with Dottie West) 12. You Decorated My Life 13. Make No Mistake, She's Mine - (with Ronnie Milsap) 14. Share Your Love With Me 15. All I Ever Need Is You 16. Buy Me A Rose - (with Allison Krauss) 17. Daytime Friends 18. Love Of Something Like It 19. Love Will Turn You Around 20. Morning Desire 21. What Are We Doing In Love - (with Dottie West) 22. Don't Fall In Love With A Dreamer - (Bonus Track, with Kim Carnes)

Given Kenny Rogers' long and successful recording career, it would seem that a collection like 21 Number Ones would be a useful to way to collect all of his biggest and best hits. That's not necessarily the case. First of all, this 2006 compilation has nothing from the First Edition, with whom he had his earliest hits, including "Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In)" and "Ruby Don't Take Your Love to Town." Then, because of the nature of number one singles -- once an artist has had one number one single, it's easier to rack up subsequent singles, particularly on a genre-specific chart like Country, which is where nearly all of these 21 tracks charted -- his more interesting music from the late '70s and early '80s is left behind in favor of the slick ballads of the second half of the '80s. These are songs that did hit number one on the charts, but they're a little samey and not is interesting as the singles he made on his way up the charts. That said, with the exception of the previously mentioned First Edition singles -- and some other good '70s sides like "Something's Burning," "Laura (What's He Got That I Ain't Got?)," and "Love Lifted Me" -- all the big hits are here in their original hit versions, including the bonus track of the Kim Carnes duet "Don't Fall in Love With a Dreamer," which may not have hit number one, but made the Top Five on the Pop, Country, and Adult Contemporary charts. While it's hard not to miss those First Edition songs, this is the best single-disc collection of Rogers' biggest songs -- it's half the length of 2004's 42 Ultimate Hits, after all, so many listeners may find this more manageable -- which makes it both a useful overview and introduction. Plus, it has terrific song-by-song liner notes by Kenny Rogers himself, offering such insights as: "Around the world, I am known as the Gambler. When I go to Korea or Japan, for example, people see me and go, 'Ah, the Gambler.' The song really is a wonderful piece of

philosophy, not just about playing cards or gambling, but about life in general"; "Sheena Easton had some Streisand-like qualities, this wonderfully lyrical singer who sang with a little more everyday passion than Streisand"; and "Kim Carnes and I, we sound like we're hemorrhaging half the time when we're singing in full voice." For fans who already have this music elsewhere, these notes very well may make 21 Number Ones a worthwhile purchase. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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