

Title:

Carrie Underwood Vs. Kellie Pickler

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Summary:

The popular view in the media is that Kellie Pickler is so similar (even copying) Carrie Underwood. This is a misconception. Kellie is clearly superior.

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Article Body:

The fifth season of American Idol is underway, and the media is doing what the media does best: simplifying everything, and, thus, making everything stupid. Business as usual. So, one of this year's standout performers is the charming Kellie Pickler. Last year's winner, of course, was the very talented Carrie Underwood. Both of these young ladies are blonde, female southerners with a penchant for country tunes, and, all over the web and mainstream media we're seeing the headlines which draw excessive similarities between these two very different singers.

Strangely enough, it's really a form of racism and stereotyping, though, I haven't seen anyone make this argument. Could you imagine, though, for a moment, that these two women were of African American heritage, instead, and all of the comparisons were being made. I guarantee that there would be many a critic crying foul: "You're all a bunch of narrow minded racists! Just because they're both black females, they have to be clones of each other?"

But, it's really just that type of thinking at work. Kellie Pickler and Carrie Underwood are like night and day. And, in my humble opinion, Kellie is preferable in respect to disposition, personality, and, yes, talent. Let's take a closer look at these two women and perhaps you'll agree.

As indicated, Carrie is a talented star. There's no doubt of that: she's sold over two million copies of her debut effort "Some Hearts." Underwood is from Checotah, Oklahoma, where she was born and raised on a farm. She attended Northwestern State University; her major was mass communication. And, it came as no surprise to me when I learned that while at Northeastern, Underwood was a member of the Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority and competing in beauty pageants in her

spare time.

Underwood is basically a country singer; though, she admits to have been influenced by pop music also. Her musical talent is vast and includes the guitar, piano, and yodeling. She first entered the public spotlight in early 2005, as she auditioned for the fourth season of Fox's spectacular hit American Idol. Simon, Paula, and Randy were quite impressed and Carrie went on to roar through the competition to victory.

The viewing audience was treated to Carrie's performances of "Could've Been," "Piece Of My Heart," "Because You Love Me," "When Will I Be Loved," "Alone," "Independence Day," "Hello Young Lovers," "Love Is A Battlefield," "MacArthur Park," "When God Fearin' Women Get The Blues," "Trouble," "Bless The Broken Road," "Sin Wagon," "If You Don't Know Me By Now," "Crying," "Making Love Out Of Nothing At All," "Man! I Feel Like A Woman," "Inside Your Heaven," "Angels Brought Me Here," and "Up Where We Belong." I include the full song list to provide a bit of the Carrie flavor. As mentioned, she's a southern, country girl.

Much of the American viewing audience was pretty dazzled by Carrie, and, she has the distinction of not once appearing in the bottom three. The votes rolled in, and, her performances were nearly flawless. But, that was also the problem, almost, for some. Something about Carrie seemed a little too mechanical and rehearsed. Her life seemed a little too perfect. She couldn't help but project a certain snobbish persona. At times, on stage, her nose crinkled-up, she appeared slightly offended, as if someone had just cut the cheese, and the vapors were sullyng her pristine air space.

Carrie seemed like an individual who had never been touched by tragedy. The notes were all correct, and the execution was like text book science...but, what about that intangible thing that makes the heart zing? What about that quality that you just can't name, but, when it's there, oh, you know it! Soul...what about soul? Sadly, that was always lacking with Carrie, and, many noticed and opted for the deeper, more complex alternative, Bo Bice, who lost the competition by a mere 134 votes!

Do you understand what that means? You see, I didn't vote at all during the finale. But, had I picked up my cell phone and punched Bo's number for two hours, he'd currently be wearing the Idol crown! So, although Carrie is the official winner, understand, her majority was thin, and many weren't taken in by the whole soft-spoken, seemingly naïve, keep-mentioning-Jesus-and-heaven, kiss the flag, fresh apple pie trip. In fact, the Vote For The Worst website was particularly unimpressed, and they dubbed Ms. Underwood Farmbot, which

succinctly describes the mechanical, unemotional, vibe which Carrie projects. When Carrie won, I remember my mother commenting on how hard Carrie was struggling to squeeze out a tear.

Now, you may not agree with this Carrie Underwood characterization. However, many people do perceive her in this manner.

Kellie Pickler, in fact, despite the misinformed comparisons being made, stands in wonderful contrast to Carrie Underwood. Kellie, as many know, hasn't had such an easy time. She was raised in the little town of Albemarle, North Carolina. She lives with her grandfather, because her mother abandoned her when Kellie was only two. Her father's been mainly in prison her whole life. On the American Idol program, Kellie asks the question which has been haunting her for so long, "Why doesn't my mother want anything to do with me?" Kellie represents the real world. And, the troubles which haunt her--that emotion!--punches through in each performance.

The world got its first Pickler glimpse on January 24th of this year at her audition in Greensboro. She busted out with Kelly Clarkson's hit, "Since You Been Gone," and, immediately, the real-deal emotion, passion, and intensity were evident. And, the judges noticed! And, America noticed! The blogs were buzzing minutes later. Well, this is really what I'm getting at... When Kellie sang the lyrics, "...since you been gone," whom do you think she was thinking about? I'd speculate she was thinking about her parents: "Since you been gone daddy. Since you been gone mommy." And, believe it, the raw emotion sliced like a fist through the fog.

On February 21st of this year, Kellie performed Martina McBride's doleful ditty, "How Far." Once again, Kellie's passionate delivery was unbelievable. Well, let's take a look at one of the lyrics: "How far do I have to go to make you understand? I wanna make this work so much it hurts..." Again, whom do you imagine Kellie was thinking about? In this case, she actually told us in her interview that she'd be thinking about her dad when singing that song. And, it showed... it showed.

So, perhaps you agree that there are some real differences between Carrie Underwood and Kellie Pickler. Of course there are! They're two different human beings, with different histories, ideas, passions, etc. That should be obvious. Yet, the media, in a stereotypical fashion observes two southern women with blonde hair who love country music and concludes they're so similar. And, in some offensive cases, even claims Kellie is a clone, intentionally copying Carrie. Well, that's just not so, and, if you'd like to see further evidence, visit <http://www.kpickler.com>.

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