

How Farmington team makes it big in records

By CORINNE ABATT

It's exciting to meet a 25-year-old woman, completely happy, doing exactly what she always dreamed of. Particularly since it was no nickel and dime dream.

Joey English of Farmington Hills wanted to be a big singing star from the moment she opened her mouth on a stage in the Greenville, Mo. Christian Church when she was three years old.

Now better known to her suburban neighbors as Mrs. Ron Schaefer who makes drapes, likes to cook and occasionally chauffeurs the kids, the pretty, dark-haired, dark-eyed songstress is playing the top clubs in the country.

She will be seen on the Merv Griffin and Dinah Shore talk shows later this fall and four of her records are soon to be released. She is also one of the principals in the new Farmington Hills-based Scorpion Records, which has her under contract.

Not bad for the lady, who says proudly looking at her manager-husband, himself a former Boston Braves pitcher, Thunderbird test pilot and NASA astronaut. "I'm doing exactly what I always thought I'd be doing."

SHE MENTIONS THE new records, the first one to be released this month, are Sammy Cahn compositions written especially for her, arranged by Jeff Steinberg with music by Peter Daniels, backing her are members of the Detroit Symphony and the Johnny Trudell Big Brass.

Sitting the big time means traveling with a personal hairdresser, wearing Halstead creations on stage, having a manager and playing clubs such as the Top Hat in Windsor, ETC and the Little Club of Los Angeles and Mr. Kelly's in Chicago.

The Schaefers created Joey English in May of 1970. The first name was OK, but Schaefer didn't have the kind of soft look they wanted on a marquee.

Believing his wife had a tremendous talent, Schaefer, president of KHF Productions, set about making that talent visible. A believer in starting at the top, he contacted the Playboy Club in San Francisco and was given the name of the booking agent. He flew the agent in for a special Joey English performance in a club he had rented for the event. From this came a two-week engagement at the Lake Geneva Playboy Club.

She has since played many others and Schaefer says, "Once she plays a room, she can play it again every six months. We have packaged a reliable talent—a grandmother can see her as a granddaughter, a man as a wife or girlfriend, a woman as someone she could be."

Schaefer, marketing and game plan-oriented, says all of his wife's fall appearances have been carefully worked out to create what he calls "an event." She will be on the Dinah Shore show just before she opens in Los Angeles Nov. 11. At about the same time, the second record will be released and shortly after that there will be guest spots on the new Dean Martin show and with Telly Savalas sitting in for Griffin.

Schaefer merged his KHF Productions with Tauratron, Inc. owned by Omar C. Miller of Farmington Hills and named the new company Scorpion Records last April.

Miller, also of Farmington Hills, is a Canton, Ohio-born former radio station and night club owner who has a PhD in endocrine bio-chemistry. In addition to Miss English, Miller

says his new recording company will concentrate on vocal and instrumental talent in the Midwest.

The first record will be released on Sept. 20 at a reception at Detroit's Roccinelli. Sammy Cahn is coming in for the occasion and, coincidentally, Miss English is appearing at the club at the same time.

She is no musical lightweight who just happened to be in the right place at the right time. After attending the University of Miami on a full voice and French horn scholarship, she began her career with musical comedy roles in industrial shows, TV and radio commercials and productions.

WITH A BIG VOICE and good range, she gets to the heart of things such as "I Want to Be Around to Pick Up the Pieces," Neil Sadaka's "Love Will Keep Us Together," and goides "Am I Blue" and "Walking My Baby Back Home."

Calling Mr. Kelly's of Chicago "the finest club credential in the country," she speculates on things to come—a Broadway show (she has already turned down one offer), more TV appearances, more records and most of all, a TV show of her own.

With a husband-businessman pitching and fielding for her, a partially family-owned record company and a belief in herself, Joey English may go all the way.

She stands at the door of her Farmington Hills home exchanging quips with her husband and Miller and says seriously, "Don't forget to say that I love my home. I love being a wife and mother but I love having a career too. It sounds silly, but I'd like to be a household word and have kids all over the country want to grow up and be like me."



Proud of their accomplishment in establishing a record company are (from left) Joey

English, her husband Ron Schaefer and Omar Miller. (Staff photo)

Miller named 'Boys' chief

By SUSAN AVERILL

William Miller has been appointed director of education at Boys' Republic in Farmington Hills, becoming the first black administrator in the Farmington School District.

The appointment is part of the district's attempt to comply with the four-year-old Michigan Mandatory Special Education Act which has made it necessary for public school districts to fund the education of handicapped youngsters in their area. Boys' Republic on Nine Mile Road is the only such facility in the Farmington District.

Miller has been a teacher and counselor at the school for the emotionally impaired since 1965.

"He's basically supervisor of special education at Boys' Republic," said Graham Lewis, district director of special education.

"IT'S KIND OF unique, because his jurisdiction is just that one school. As

supervisor of education there, he's principal of the school at a secondary level, because the kids are 12 to 18 years old."

"He's well-suited to the job and a nice addition to the staff," said Lewis Schulman, assistant superintendent of secondary education in Farmington.

Miller said that while the name has changed, the job has remained basically the same since 1971.

"The only difference is that we'll have more flexibility. Now we'll be able to go into the schools in areas where we haven't been able to be before."

Vocational education is one of the programs in the district in which Miller hopes to include his students.

"Hopefully, we'll eventually have our own program in vocational education here. In the next few years, we should hopefully branch into some other areas, too."

Married to a Detroit special educa-

tion teacher, Miller graduated from Florida A and M University in Tallahassee and earned an MA at the University of Florida. He received an MA in special education for the emotionally impaired from Oakland University.

From 1959 to 1964, he was a teacher, counselor and athletic coach at Monroe High School in Cocoa, Calif. He played football in the American League for the Denver Broncos for four years and was voted the Florida state basketball coach of the year in 1963-64.

HE WAS ALSO a vocational education counselor for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) at Cape Kennedy from 1960-64.

From 1965 to 1971, he was director of clinical services at Boys' Republic, in addition to being a teacher and counselor.



Joey maintains a close relationship with her grandmother, Mrs. Vada Kail, who raised her. (Staff photo)



JOEY ENGLISH



Guess who

Do you know these students? Farmington resident Joe Wood, and brought in this photo of students attending school at Nine

Mile and Halstead schoolhouse in 1914. By the way, Joe is the little guy in the first row, far right.