

Exclusive: Kara DioGuardi and Jewel headlining new singer-songwriter competition for Bravo

by Michael Slezak



Image Credit: Bob Charlotte/PR Photos; PRN/PR Photos

Bravo has greenlit *Going Platinum*, a 10-episode reality competition for singer-songwriters that's set to premiere in 2011, EW has learned exclusively. And if you think the concept sounds a bit like *American Idol*, wait until you hear who they've cast! Kara DioGuardi (who sat alongside Simon Cowell in seasons 8 and 9) will be head judge, while songstress Jewel (a guest judge on *Idol*'s season-6 auditions, as well as a former *Nashville Star* emcee) will host and provide feedback to contestants, too.

But before you dismiss *Going Platinum* as a knockoff, consider this: *Idol*'s co-executive producer Nigel Lythgoe has repeatedly said his show's season 10 contestants won't be able to "hide behind their guitars." So if the reality granddaddy is really trending away from sensitive acoustic troubadours and back toward its big-vocal roots — think more Carrie Underwood than, say, Crystal Bowersox — perhaps it's the perfect time for Bravo's new entry into the genre.

The series, [which was previously announced as *Hitmakers*](#) and is currently in production in Los Angeles, will follow 12 musicians as they compete in songwriting challenges across a variety of genres — everything from dance tracks to love ballads, according to Bravo — and perform these self-penned tracks for the cameras. Unlike *Idol*, the viewing public won't be determining which contestants stay and which ones go; like Bravo's other competition series (i.e. *Top Chef*), its judges will determine the winner.

At stake is a \$100,000 cash prize; a publishing deal with Sony, BMI Songwriters The Writing Camp; and a recording deal with RCA/Jive.

According to the network, the series won't skimp on the "personal drama" that "will unfold within the show and in [the contestants'] lyrics as they compete and live together." What's more, *Going Platinum* will enlist current recording stars as guest judges throughout the show's run.

"Hit songs are the backbone of the music industry, and as a publisher, nothing excites me more than finding new songwriting talent," said DioGuardi, in a release. "I am happy to be a part of a show that helps up and coming songwriters pursue their dreams, while giving the public a look into the creative process."

DioGuardi dramatically improved her performance at the *Idol* judges' table during her second season on the show, and both she and Jewel have solid track-records in the songwriting department, so it's pretty much a no-brainer that there will be a spot on my DVR for the *Going Platinum* premiere — especially since some of my favorite *Idol* contestants turned out to be pretty good tunesmiths themselves.