



WHERE TO START WITH... - April 25, 2018

Where To Start With... Kacey Musgraves

by Florence

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by Florence

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Bio

Likes loud rock music and pink lipstick. Working all the experience...

Where To Start With... Kacey Musgraves

Although Kacey Musgraves began songwriting at the age of eight when she performed her own composition 'Notice Me' for her elementary school graduation, it took the rest of us a while to notice her.

For the first three albums of her career, Musgraves self-released, with her grandma acting as her booking agent. Eventually, she caught the eye of independent label bosses at Triple Pop and signing her first record deal in 2009.

Artists often colour in the lines of the country music charts before breaching cross-over success. Hailing from Golden, Texas (population: 600), Musgraves pushes the boundaries by presenting vignettes of the small town life that many of her fans still lead while playing with country clichés "if you mind your own biscuits, life will be gravy."

Musgraves' first official album *Same Trailer, Different Park* featured her in full costume: cowboy boots paired with shorts to stay cool in the dusty Texas heat and a hit single 'Follow Your Arrow'. That track, which despite being deemed too controversial to play on country radio owing to its lyrics referencing same-sex relationships and drug taking, took the singer to the big time, selling 500,000 copies and going gold.

The next three years saw Musgrave release her bestselling album to date, *Pageant Material*, which met the expectations of a cookie-cutter country artist with provocative wit, and allowed to fulfil a dream, the chance to make a Christmas album.

Now, the singer's new LP, *Golden Hour* is with us. Released in March, the album sees the singer co-writing and co-producing all 13 tracks alongside Nashville hitmakers Ian Fitchuk and Daniel Tashian, and talking up a psychedelic mix of the Bee Gees and the country crooner Neil Young for key influences.

The album was also recorded above Sheryl Crow's horse stable, who rode by to hang out during production. Neither she nor the horses, did a guest spot, sadly.

You can hear 'Butterflies', the lead-off single from *Golden Dawn*, below:



As well as that, we've picked out five key tracks from Kacey Musgraves' career so far...

'Follow Your Arrow'

Taken from Musgraves' debut album, *Same Trailer, Different Park*, this hit harmonises honky-tonk style with inclusive lyrics. Although instructions to "kiss lots of boys, or kiss lots of girls if that's something that you're in to" scared away country radio audiences, the song appealed to people who felt alienated by the genre's conservative history and became a breakthrough hit.



Golden Hour
Kacey Musgraves

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'Apologize'

Our next pick is a stripped back cover of One Republic's Apologize that was released as a digital EP and racked up over 31 million streams, revisiting Musgraves' roots when she was first discovered by independent label Triple Pop.



'Good Ol' Boys Club'

Musgraves' mission statement in Good Ol' Boys Club is to deconstruct the tropes of whisky, cigars and handshakes to reveal an exclusive circle of business bosses. Using didactic storytelling popular in country lyrics, she twangs: "I don't want to be a part of the good old boys club" and refuses to adhere to strict standards for more airplay. It most definitely worked...



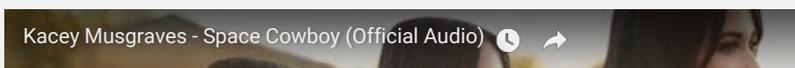
'Christmas Makes Me Cry'

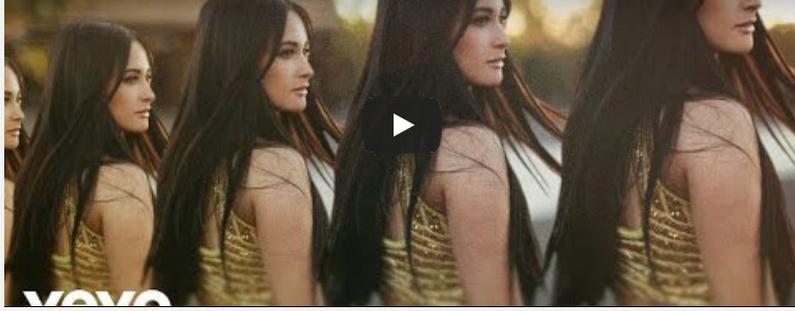
Critics often meet Christmas albums with a cold reception. They are generally thought of as cash-ins, guaranteed for singles to be repackaged year on year on compilation discs, crooning in the background while people gather around the Christmas tree. But Musgraves' pop ballad Christmas Makes me Cry on A Very Kacey Christmas was received as a mature reflection on the passage of time.



'Space Cowboy'

Our final pick is Space Cowboy from Musgraves' latest album, Golden Dawn. The song's Americana aesthetic and dreamy texture roll with a similar languid heat as Lana Del Rey's 2012 single 'Summertime Sadness'. Although it follows a familiar pop structure primed for airplay, the chorus is complex in construction, the pause between "space" and "cowboy" as wide as the miles between towns. But it's not her lover that's riding off into the big blue, its Kacey Musgraves.





You can check out Kacey Musgraves' full back catalogue here in hmv's online store.



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