

## Kacey Musgraves: Inspired by Small-town Roots

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By the time she started taking guitar lessons at age twelve, Kacey Musgraves had already spent four years singing at public events. But her guitar teacher challenged Musgraves to do more than play and sing.

“He saw that I dabbled in writing a bit and really pushed me to work on that,” Musgraves said. “My assignment was to go home and try to write a song. I fell in love with it.”

Born on August 21, 1988, in the east Texas town of Sulphur Springs, Musgraves grew up in nearby Golden, a town with fewer than two hundred residents. At age eight, she learned to yodel, dressed up in cowgirl outfits, and began performing classic country songs at small amateur shows in the area. Her guitar teacher John DeFoore – who also taught Miranda Lambert, another country star from east Texas – pushed Musgraves to discover her own country music identity.

“When I first started writing my own songs, they were pretty bad,” she said. “I hadn’t found my own voice yet. . . [But] I learned not to be scared to just throw an idea out there.”

At age eighteen, she moved to Austin, Texas, to work on a singing career, and earned a spot on the television singing competition *Nashville Star*, placing seventh. In 2008, she moved to Nashville, where she decided to focus on songwriting, and was hired as a staff songwriter with a publishing company. But as she wrote for other artists, she thought about her own performing career.

“I developed a real passion for the construction of songs and probably wrote a couple hundred during that time, putting aside the ones that felt the most like me,” she said.

She also became part of a tight circle of talented songwriters, including Shane McAnally and Luke Laird. The two eventually joined Musgraves to co-produce her 2013 debut *Same Trailer Different Park*, an album of



witty lyrics inspired by growing up in a small town. The album won two Grammys. Musgraves followed that record with *Pageant Material* in 2015 and the holiday album *A Very Kacey Christmas* in 2016.

In 2018, Musgraves released her album *Golden Hour*, which combined country music with other styles of music she enjoys, such as pop and disco. The album won four Grammys, and its unique sound helped introduce new fans to country music.

“My favorite compliment ever is when someone says, ‘I hate country music but I love your music,’” she said.

Sources: *American Songwriter*, [kaceymusgraves.com](http://kaceymusgraves.com), *The New York Times*

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### LISTEN:

“Dandelion”

“Good Ol’ Boys Club”

“My House”

“Somebody to Love”

“Undermine” (performed by Hayden Panettiere)