



KACEY MUSGRAVES: FINDING HER OWN VOICE

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

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

Now an award-winning recording artist, Musgraves has made her mark in country music as much with her songwriting as with her singing.

Born in 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 dressed up in cowgirl outfits and began performing classic country songs at small amateur shows around the area. In 1999, she and another child performer, Alina Tatum, formed the Texas Two Bits, a duo that sang and yodeled in harmony and that performed at President George W. Bush’s Inaugural Ball.

Her guitar teacher, John DeFoore, pushed Musgraves to discover her own country music identity. (DeFoore also taught Miranda Lambert, another country star from East Texas.)

“When I first started writing my own songs, they were pretty bad,” Musgraves says. “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, Musgraves moved to Austin, Texas, to work on a singing career and then earned a spot on the television singing-competition *Nashville Star*, placing seventh. Two years later, in 2008, she moved to Nashville to focus on songwriting and was hired as a songwriter by a publishing company. But even as she wrote for other artists, she still thought about her own performing career.

Continued on back

LISTEN

“Dandelion,” “My House,” “All is Found” (from *Frozen II*), “Golden Hour,” “Dime Store Cowgirl”



KACEY MUSGRAVES: FINDING HER OWN VOICE (CONTINUED)

“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 explains.

Musgraves released her debut album, *Same Trailer, Different Park*, in 2013, and it won two Grammys. On November 14, 2018, ten years to the day after Musgraves moved to Nashville, her album *Golden Hour* won Album of the Year at the Country Music Association Awards. The following February, she won four Grammys: Album of the Year, Best Country Album, Best Country Song, and Best Country Solo Performance.

In 2021, Musgraves released her fifth album, *Star-Crossed*, which she co-wrote and co-produced during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. What was the name of the duo that Kacey was a part of with Alina Tatum?

2. Find the word “amateur” in the fourth paragraph. Underline the clue words and phrases that help you understand the word’s meaning. Then, define it in your own words.

3. Explain the meaning of the subtitle of this article, “Finding Her Own Voice.” Highlight phrases in the text that support your answer.
