



Miranda Lambert

“My songs talk about real things,” says Miranda Lambert. “Things that I’ve been through or I’ve witnessed through my friends and family - even my parents’ private investigation business. If I feel it, I can sing it and make *anyone* believe it.”

Big talk from a small-town Texas girl, but Lambert’s got the goods to back it up. The old-school passion and power of her platinum-selling 2005 debut *KEROSENE* took it to the top of both the country charts and the critics’ polls. Now the two-time CMA Horizon Award nominee returns with ***Crazy Ex Girlfriend***, on which she raises the stakes both musically and emotionally.

“You can take each song on this album and compare it to the first record, and you can see that it’s an upgrade,” says Lambert. “It shows two years of growth. I also let people in a lot more than I did on the last record - so I’m a little scared, but I’m proud.”

One of the oldest clichés in the music business is that you have your whole life to write your first record - and then if it’s a hit, the second album is written on a schedule, while you’re busy promoting and touring. But with ***Crazy Ex Girlfriend***, Lambert proves that for a writer of her caliber, life on the road can actually add experience and perspective.

“At this point, you write ‘em on the road or you can’t write at all,” says Lambert. “You work, you get tired, but you also grow up. I’m more mature. I learned a lot about people and about who to trust, but I’m also a 23 year old girl and I go through things that other girls go through, and that’s the vulnerable side of the record.”

Miranda Lambert first exploded onto the scene as a finalist in the 2003 season of the *NASHVILLE STAR* television series. She didn’t win – a result she has described as a blessing. “I was hoping not to win,” she once said. “The winner had to go in right after the contest and make a record in a couple of weeks, and I wasn’t ready.”

Instead, she got the best of both worlds – Columbia Nashville, which had right of first refusal on the show’s performers – signed Lambert to a deal, but she had the time and opportunity to make the album that she really wanted to make.

Her confidence and firepower were evident in *KEROSENE*: it debuted at Number One on the country charts (only the sixth time a new artist entered in at the top), and went on to earn Lambert nominations for the CMA’s Horizon Award and the ACM’s Top New Female Vocalist Award. It also earned her a Grammy nomination. *KEROSENE* garnered critical praise from countless outlets and was named one of the best albums of

the year by New York Times, Rolling Stone, *Blender Magazine*, *itunes*, *Tennessean* and many more.

Most impressive, though, was the fact that Lambert, still a teenager, had written or co-written eleven of KEROSENE's twelve songs, which had the authentic feel of old-school, take-no-prisoners country music. The album marked the arrival of a major new songwriting talent. Extensive touring with George Strait and Keith Urban followed, raising her profile and sharpening her on-stage act.

Her peers took notice. "There's a girl named Miranda Lambert who is a great songwriter," Michelle Branch (whose band, The Wreckers, was also a Horizon Award nominee) recently said. "We always watch her shows and go, 'Oh, I wish I would've written that song.'"

When it came time to start work on a new album, says Lambert, she quickly realized that she really wanted an extension of, rather than a different direction from, the debut. "We really didn't want to change anything because KEROSENE worked," she says, "and, you know if it ain't broke... So we kept the same studio and the same producers, Frank Liddell and Mike Wrucke"

The songs on **Crazy Ex Girlfriend** reveal a blossoming songwriter whose gifts continue to expand, as well as a singer with impeccable taste in material. Lambert again wrote or co-wrote the bulk of the album's songs – eight of the eleven tracks – but she also interprets the work of some of the world's finest writers, including Gillian Welch, Patty Griffin, and Carlene Carter.

"In order for me to cut any song I didn't write, I want to feel it more than I feel my own words," she says. "It has to feel like it's something I could have written." Lambert's connection to the humor and pathos of "Dry Town," by Welch and David Rawlings, is immediately evident, and Griffin's new "Getting Ready" is a perfect vehicle for Lambert's most snarling, smack-talking vocal.

As for the modern classic "Easy From Now On," which closes **Crazy Ex Girlfriend**, Lambert says "it's just a ridiculously great song." She confesses to being intimidated by cutting a track most closely associated with Emmylou Harris, but concluded that "I just don't think you can ever hear that song enough."

The Lambert originals on the album reveal a wide range of tones and attitudes. "Love Letters," she says, "is a real country ballad, and it shows a more vulnerable side." (She also adds that "it's my grandmother's favorite song of mine, and she would have killed me if I didn't put it on.")

At the other end of the spectrum is "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend," which – in the tradition of KEROSENE's breakthrough title song – presents Lambert as a woman you damn sure don't want to do wrong. "We had started a song called 'Favorite Ex-Girlfriend,' which was kind of a sweet song," she recalls. "And I said, you know, I hate this, it's not me - I

don't do sweet songs." With a quick change of a single word, an unforgettable new kind of anthem was born.

"Everyone, especially the guys, will relate to it," she says. "Whenever I play it and ask if there are any crazy ex-girlfriends out there, the girls all scream!"

Possibly the biggest advance for Lambert, though, is an intimate song called "More Like Her". It expresses a fragility that she previously kept under wraps. "It almost scared me to put it on the record. It was so personal and introspective," she says. "But my fans deserve that from me, so I just need to go for it.

"I'm usually the girl who won't take any crap, but that's not realistic all the time." The results illustrate the depth of a genuine artist, and point to Miranda Lambert's true potential as a career artist – the kind everyone thinks the music industry doesn't make anymore.

"Every song on this album is something I care about," she says. "Something I want to get across to people and you can hear that in my singing."

Miranda Lambert's favorite line in "Easy From Now On" is "Don't worry about me/I got a wild card up my sleeve." With **Crazy Ex Girlfriend**, she's laying all of her cards on the table, and she's got one hell of a winning hand.



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