



# LUCY HALE

"I'm still getting to the good part," sings Lucy Hale in the poignant, coming-of-age song, "Road Between." It's the most personal track on the Memphis native's long-awaited debut album, as it reflects a recent time in her life where a fork in the road required a lot of soul searching.

"It's the perfect song that explains that I've grown up a lot but am still not where I'm going to end up. I'm still caught in the road between," says Hale.

"Road Between" serves as the lyrical account of Hale's longtime musical aspirations finally becoming reality. That fork in the road actually led Hale back to her first love, singing. After years of honing her craft and finding her voice, she is finally ready to share what had been a bit of a hidden talent for the past decade. And so far, the response has been tremendous.

Hale started singing at just 8 years old and got her first taste of musical success at 13, winning the FOX singing competition show, "American Juniors." Shortly after, her devoted mom cashed in her retirement so that the two could pack their bags for Los Angeles in pursuit of a record deal. But after knocking on doors in the music world, the then-teenager found herself taking what became an extraordinary detour into the acting world, including her current, star turn as "Aria" on ABC Family's "Pretty Little Liars." The change of course resulted in several award-winning roles, and also gave her the time needed to realize the key to her musical success: going back to her Tennessee roots.

"I'm glad a record deal didn't develop when we first moved to LA," says Hale. "It took a while to figure out what I wanted to say and what my vocals lent to, so music got put on the back burner. But it's such a blessing that it took a little bit of time, because now I know who I am."

And who she is and always has been at heart is a country music artist. Hale remembers singing Faith Hill and Shania Twain songs into a hairbrush as a young child. She and her sister, Maggie, would perform "concerts" for their parents, and Hale is the first to admit she would try to steal the spotlight from her big sis.

"But I was always very shy with my friends growing up," she recounts. "I didn't boast about it or sing karaoke at parties ... A lot of people didn't know that I liked to sing. I just did it for me. People would see me performing around Tennessee, and they had no idea."

In fact, Hale did graduate from hairbrush to microphone at several events in her home state, including a talent competition at Loretta Lynn's ranch in Hurricane Mills, Tenn., where the youngster sang two songs by another of her musical heroines, Martina McBride. She explains that she has always gravitated toward songs that paint vivid pictures, by artists like McBride who wear their hearts on their musical sleeves.

“For me, that’s what country music is: stories that can make you feel any emotion across the spectrum,” she muses.

Those closest to Hale will not be surprised to hear the heartfelt stories contained in her upcoming debut album. Set to release through DMG Nashville and Bigger Picture Group, the 11-song collection was worth the wait for both the singer and her fans, who will learn a great deal about her through this lyrical diary.

“My album is a snapshot of where I am in my life. I wanted it to be genuine – to tell the story of what I was going through at the time and what I’d been through -- and I think we captured that.”

Through her songs, the vocal powerhouse introduces her millions of fans to her true self outside a Hollywood sound stage. The tracks strip away the glitz and glamour of Tinsel Town to show that she is just like any other 24-year-old woman, with dating drama and typical insecurities.

“With acting, you can hide behind your character,” she says. “With performing, it’s just me, Lucy. It’s completely stripped down and vulnerable; it’s everything I’ve gone through.”

Hale’s relatability is perhaps best exuded in a poignant song called “Nervous Girls,” which tells the stories of several women in various situations that cause self-doubt. “The cruelest words about me come from my own mouth,” she sings on the heartfelt track that hits close to home.

“I relate to more than one of the girls in the song,” Hale confesses. “No matter how old you are, where you live or what you look like, it’s hard to be a girl. Sometimes we forget that we’re in it together, because we’re so hard on each other. This song says, ‘Look, we’re all fighting our own battles.’ The response I’ve received for the song has moved me to tears.”

On the opposite end of the album’s broad emotional spectrum is the gutsy track “Goodbye Gone,” which is a different kind of girl anthem. Hale cites it as the most fun song to perform live, as she can unleash her often bottled-up sassy side.

“It’s by far the edgiest song on the album – production, lyrics, melody, everything,” she says. “It’s about being with a guy who has treated you horribly for way too long. You break up and you’re determined to get back to being the person you used to be. So you’re telling this guy to get out, leave, get your goodbye gone!”

There’s a fair share of romance on the album, and though the singer is a sucker for a great country ballad, she has quite a knack for the kind of love songs that you crank up while rolling your windows down. “Kiss Me” is one of those tracks that very well could have been a ballad but is instead set to an infectious, up-tempo melody. Hale recorded it when she was personally going through the same story the song tells.

“I’m 24 and becoming a woman but still feel young and fun, and that song really captures that. This song is about the ex you keep running into. You think you’re over each other, but you’re not. So you’re finally like, ‘Just come over here and kiss me!’ You’re like magnets.”

Another love song is the album’s first official single, “You Sound Good to Me,” which has more country flair than a lot of today’s biggest hits in the genre. It’s the perfect introduction to audiences who only know Hale by her big and small screen personas, as it’s the musical mirror image of her personality: clever, sweet, fun-loving, and -- as Hale says with a smile -- “in your face a little bit, but in a good way!”

The doe-eyed beauty hopes that for those not familiar with her early musical beginnings, the music will speak for itself.

“If you didn’t know me before listening to it, you’ll get a clear idea of every different side of me: where I stand on love, what my morals are,” she says. “If I’m lucky enough for one new listener to hear it, that’s what we were going for. It was scary for me to make this album, but it’s turned out to be something genuinely me and something I’m really proud of.”

A four-time Teen Choice Award winner and recipient of the prestigious Gracie Allen Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Rising Star, Hale has an acting resume a mile long. After “American Juniors,” she appeared on several TV shows including “How I Met Your Mother,” “Privileged” and “Pretty Little Liars.” Film credits include “Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2,” and “A Cinderella Story: Once Upon a Song.”

“Whether I’m singing or acting, I just consider myself a performer,” she says. “They’re both ways for me to channel my creativity. My focus now is music, and people have been so supportive.”

Hale has certainly found a lot of open arms in Nashville – the place she says “feels most like home.” While the singer has no regrets about the winding road she took to get there, she is happy to at last be parked at her dream destination.