

### SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE

# Lucinda Williams

On the eve of her 12th studio album, *The Ghosts of Highway 20*, the lauded roots rocker spoke to EW about the songs that shaped her. **By Madison Vain**

#### THE WOMEN WHO MADE ME WANT TO SING

When I started playing guitar, around 9 or 10 years old, I was really intrigued by **1 Mary Travers** from Peter, Paul, and Mary. I loved the way she looked—those shift dresses and little kitten heels and long straight hair with bangs. And Joan Baez is the one where I was like, “I want to be that.” She was so cool, barefoot and playing those great songs.

#### THE FIRST RECORD I EVER BOUGHT WITH MY OWN MONEY

It was probably a Beatles album, maybe *Beatles '65*? I remember them on the radio when they first came out in 1963, “I Want to Hold Your Hand” and all that. It was just a combination of the music and their style and the whole look.

#### THE FIRST SONG I EVER WROTE

It was when I was playing guitar, about 13, and it was called “The Wind Blows.” I had this little melody and everything. It was, “The wind blows/And

it blows through the town/And the people in the town hear it blow/The wind blows/And it blows through the town/And the people in the town hear it blow.” It was a lot like **2 John Denver’s** “Today,” which was on the radio—this is when folk songs were on the radio.

#### THE FIRST TIME I PERFORMED IN PUBLIC

When I was about 12, I was in the play *Annie Get Your Gun*. It was a teeny-tiny part, but at the end we were all on stage singing the theme song, and I remember being like, “Wow, I like the feeling of this.” I was really shy, but I liked being on stage. And then, of course, later in my teen years when I was learning more and eventually writing songs, it was a really good way to impress boys. [Laughs]

#### THE SONG THAT CAN MAKE ME CRY

**3 Percy Sledge’s** “When a Man Loves a Woman.” Something about that—[singing] “When a man loves a wooh-man”—reminds me of this one guy I

knew. He introduced me to a lot of R&B and soul music, and he died at a real young age. He’s the one I wrote my song “Lake Charles” [from her Grammy-winning fifth album, *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road*] about. It just tugs at my heartstrings.

#### MY KARAOKE JAM

I don’t normally do karaoke, but I discovered my song “Righteously” in a karaoke book one time and I went, “Oh my God, I made it! I’m in a karaoke book.” So there were a couple instances where I had to get up and do this song. I told the announcer, “Don’t say who I am,” but they never know who I am in there. That’s what’s so funny. [Laughs]

#### MY LOVE SONG

We got married on stage in Minneapolis. [Williams wed man-

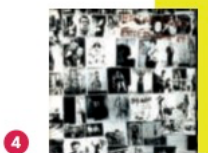
ager Tom Overby in 2009.] We did our vows before the encore, and we had invited everybody we knew, so half the audience there knew what was happening and then half were surprised and stunned. Right after, Tom jumped up on stage and grabbed a guitar, and we did the **4 Rolling Stones’** “Happy.” So I guess you could say that’s our song.

#### THE SONG I WISH I’D WRITTEN

You know what I really love? The Clash’s “Straight to Hell.” Recently we started doing “Should I Stay or Should I Go” [in concert], too.

#### THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

“Amazing Grace.” It’s just one of those classic, beautiful old songs.



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