

August 2018

**10** Artists You  
Need to Know



## Amanda Shires

**An Americana visionary makes her rock-star move**

At 15, Amanda Shires was playing fiddle for the Texas Playboys; more recently, she's been hailed as one of Americana's new visionaries for the music she's made on her own and in husband Jason Isbell's 400 Unit. But these days she's so over that sound. "If you are making an Americana record, and you're a woman, you have to play acoustic instruments and be fucking sad all the time," says Shires, 36. "I did not want to do that." Her excellent new album, *To the Sunset*, swings instead toward big, joyful rock & roll and progressive-pop sounds, with help from producer Dave Cobb. "I'd say, 'My violin needs to sound like it's in an aquarium, but more bright,'" Shires says. The solution: plugging into some guitar pedals. "Why didn't I think of that sooner?" MARISSA R. MOSS

**HOMETOWN:** Lubbock, Texas  
**SOUNDS LIKE:** The Breeders if they lived in Nashville, or Tom Petty hitching a ride on Ziggy Stardust's spaceship

PHOTOGRAPH BY Alysse Gafkjen