



The Watson Twins – *HOLLER*

Long before their entwined voices took them around the world — first as harmony singers for Jenny Lewis, then as leaders of their own critically-acclaimed band — The Watson Twins grew up in the American South. They sang in the church choir. They listened to gospel classics and country standards. Those sounds became part of their musical foundation, connecting the siblings to their Kentucky hometown even after they relocated to Los Angeles and, years later, settled in Nashville.

Chandra and Leigh Watson's southern roots break through the surface once again with *HOLLER*. Recorded with their Tennessee-based touring band and produced by Grammy nominee Butch Walker, it's an album that highlights the identical twin sisters' songwriting chops and vocal chemistry. Songs like "Two Timin'" and "The Palace" make room for Telecaster twang and honky-tonk harmonies, while ballads like "Never Be Another You" are countrified classics for the modern world. Together, these 10 songs nod to the siblings' old-school influences while boldly pushing forward into new territory. Captured during a series of live-in-the-studio recording sessions, *HOLLER* isn't just The Watson Twins' most collaborative album to date — it's their strongest, too.

Everything began with "Two Timin'," a longtime staple of The Watson Twins' live show. "When we were opening for Jenny Lewis in 2018, people kept coming up to us and asking which album 'Two Timin'" was on," Chandra remembers. "That song is a honky-tonk jam, but it never fit on any of our records. So we set out to create a home where it could comfortably live."

For years, Chandra and Leigh had written songs separately. "We're natural partners because there's two of us," says Leigh. "We've been collaborating since birth, but since we already share DNA, parents, and clothes, we wanted to create our own songs." That began to change with 2018's *DUO*, an album that found the sisters joining forces not only as crooners, but as composers, too. *DUO* marked a new beginning for The Watson Twins, with *Rolling Stone* praising the record's "swooning, vintage-friendly grace." *HOLLER* explores that partnership on a deeper level, with occasional co-writes from the likes of Brian Elmquist (The Lone Bellow) and producer Jacob Sooter. The sisters even sing every line together, alternating between gorgeous harmonies and unison melodies, and their songwriting has never sounded so sharp.

"*Holler*" title track, with its barroom piano solo from Thayer Sarrano and slide guitar from Steven Cooper, is a rallying cry for those hoping to enact positive change. "We wrote it after *Roe v. Wade* got overturned," Chandra explains. "We were frustrated, but the song is about how we're stronger together, and how we need to keep trying. When we sing 'Holler if you hear me,' we're singing about that collective energy." Meanwhile, "Sissy Said" mixes the breakneck pace of Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues" with a

storyline about remaining present and staying enlightened. "You gotta love your life or you're gonna be dead," the sisters sing during the song's chorus, backed by the propulsive pulse of drummer Sam Wiseman and bassist Owen Beverly. During the record's final moments, The Watson Twins revisit "Southern Manners," a song that appeared in an earlier version on their debut EP. Is it a love song to a person or a place? The sisters dance between the two answers, blending mystery and metaphor into one of *HOLLER*'s most moving moments.

When it came time to record *HOLLER*, The Watson Twins found a natural partner in producer Butch Walker. Like them, Walker was a southern native who'd spent more than a decade in Los Angeles, blurring the lines between indie music, rock & roll, and more rootsy sounds. Weeks after he moved to Tennessee, the Watsons found themselves in his recording studio, surrounded by the musicians who'd become their go-to bandmates. With Walker joining the group on harmony vocals, acoustic guitar, and the occasional guitar solo, the band tracked each song live, capturing the spirit and spontaneity of The Watson Twins' concerts in real time. Chandra and Leigh even recorded their vocals simultaneously, both singers standing within arm's length of one another, matching their vowel sounds and mouth shapes while the tape rolled. *HOLLER* was finished in five days, a timeline that suited the album's high-spirited soul.

"There are a lot of honest imperfections here," Leigh says. "We didn't want the album to be pristine. We wanted it to be raw, organic, and authentic, like the songs themselves."

Chandra adds, "When you don't have a lot of time at your disposal, you learn to make the most of the time you *do* have. That's a great way to live your life, and it's how we handled ourselves in the studio. We made an album that would translate into a joyful, fun show. The songs were able to breathe and take on a life of their own, and a lot of people helped turn that wheel to make it happen. When you have that kind of collaboration and collective energy, you can do things you didn't think were possible, just like the song 'Holler' says."

With numerous appearances on albums by Jenny Lewis, Harry Connick Jr., and others, The Watson Twins have woven themselves into the 21st century's musical fabric. *HOLLER* finds them carving out their own space once again — not only as singers, but as writers and frontwomen, too. It's an album about highs, heartaches, harmonies, and the joy of togetherness. Holler if you hear them.