



Musical

Instigator

# Kaci Brown

At just 17, singer Kaci Brown has her sights firmly set on pop success. Kaci's debut album on Interscope, *Instigator*, came out in August 2005, and she's currently on the road promoting the release in the US. "The performances are going great," says Kaci. "It's better than I'd ever expected. I'm getting to do what I love to do—not many people can say that!"

Born in Texas in 1988, Brown began performing at an early age. At ten, she won the title of "Little Miss Texas Overall Grand Talent" and began performing at venues across the state. Soon she began experimenting with the piano as well. "I'd been singing all my life," she explains, "but I'd never played an instrument, and no one in my family plays or sings. I started teaching myself piano scales, and then took piano lessons for a year, but it wasn't going anywhere. It was only later, when I began writing, that it all started to click."

Seeking to make the most of Kaci's budding talents, her family moved to Nashville in 2001. "My grandmother took me to the Fan Fair CMA Music Festival in Nashville for my 11th birthday," Kaci recalls. "When I got back, I told my mom, 'This is what I want to do. I want to be up on the stage next year, a country celebrity singing in front of all those people.' I had started writing my first songs, so my mom began calling publishing companies in Nashville."

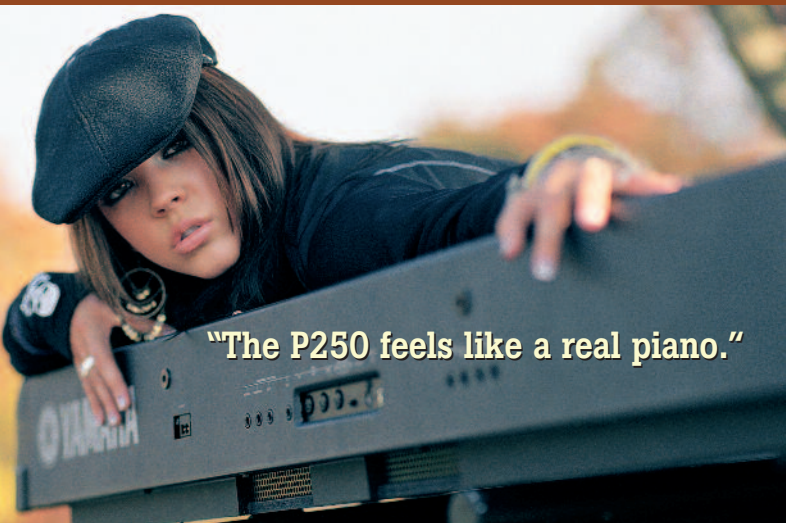
Through Charlie Monk, a Music Row veteran who befriended her, Kaci connected with Clay Myers and Barbara Orbison, who had just started a new publishing company. At the tender age of 13, she was offered a publishing deal by Myers and Orbison. "My whole publishing deal was a major growing experience," says Kaci. "I started writing

lyrics and music and learning how to read Nashville number charts and play them on the piano."

Kaci especially enjoyed the Nashville style of co-writing: "I got to

work with all the writers in the company. I absolutely love working that way. Maybe you have great lyrics, and they have a great melody, and you just put it together. Or you write the whole song together, because you're feeding off each other's energy and emotion and talents."

At 15, Brown switched genres from country to pop music. She connected with producer Toby Gad and began co-writing the songs that would become the basis of her current album. "The funny thing," says Kaci, "is that we didn't do it in a studio. My producer used his laptop, and we just recorded wherever we were. We recorded everything we did right when we wrote it—in my living room, a hotel room or wherever. He'd build a track, and we'd put vocals to it. And we wound up



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keeping all those original tracks! I liked their roughness, and the fact that everything's not perfectly tuned. It's raw, it's real—just the song, the way it was written."

Recording is very different from performing live, Kaci notes: "When you're recording, you have to imagine there are thousands of people sitting in front of you, and you're trying to express how you feel. You just have to close your eyes and think about what you're saying, to get that connection."

Onstage, Kaci uses a Yamaha P250 stage piano. "Whenever I write on keyboard, that's what I use, too," she says. "The sounds are amazing, especially the basic piano sounds. The strings too—they sound so full and rich. And the P250 feels like a real piano. It's a lot easier to get into playing something that feels like a real grand piano. So when I played the P250, I was like, 'I have to have this one!' I also sometimes use the built-in speakers for monitors. I love Yamaha!"

Kaci's future plans include touring abroad next year, recording a second album and more. "I'd love to get into TV and movies, both doing music and acting," she says. "I've always been interested in all sorts of entertainment. And I'm hopefully going to plug my songs into everything I do. I'm really all about the music. It's such a great way to express yourself, and a great way to understand others. Sometimes in pop you find that everyone's focused on the production or how fresh the beats are, rather than the lyrics and the actual emotion. But coming from Nashville and then working with a pop producer is great because not only do you get really great lyrics, but great production as well."