

Sammy Kershaw has long been one of Country Music's most definitive voices, with a string of hits ranging from the rowdy "Cadillac Style" to the romantic "Love of My Life." If you look at the title of his newest disc, *The Blues Got Me*, you might think he's taking off in a different direction. But, Sammy says you might need to think again – the Blues have always been a part of the music that influenced him.

"You know, people like George Jones, Hank Williams, Ronnie Van Zant, or Mel Street were country soul singers. There's just a few that can make me cry like that. Those guys could. That's rare. I hear it. I feel it. They moved me. I like to think of myself as a country soul singer, so the Blues would be something naturally for me to want to do and like."

*The Blues Got Me* definitely sounds like a natural artistic progression for the stylist. He says he's not trying to change or anything like that, but rather showcase the wide menu of musical choices he grew up around in his native Louisiana.

“In Louisiana, we have so many different styles of music. There’s Zydeco, Cajun, and French. We have Jazz, Blues, and Country – so many different things. I’ve always liked the Blues, always have. Country is where my heart’s at, and will always be.”

One thing is for sure, in recording *The Blues Got Me*, Sammy did his best to represent the music he loved – as well as the artists that have played so crucial a part in it. “There’s so many that have influenced me. You’ve got to start with B.B. King, of course. He definitely would have to be one. I loved his music. Who doesn’t? Muddy Waters, too! But, at the same time I also love Keb Mo, and what he brings to the musical table. He’s just an amazing singer and musician. The Blues is the Blues. You can’t get around it, that’s for sure.”

There are moments on the new disc that might throw Blues aficionados for a loop. But, that’s ok, Sammy says. It’s all how you define the term. Take “Ain’t My Cross To Bear,” for instance. “That’s an old Allman Brothers song, you know. Now, a lot of people might not consider them blues...they’d put them in the rock and roll category. But, when you listen to some of their songs, it’s a style of the blues. They cut their teeth on that Macon sound, and of course, Otis Redding, was from there, and I loved him too, as well as Percy Sledge. Who doesn’t love him?”

Sammy had a hand in writing seven of the eleven cuts on *The Blues Got Me*. One might think that you go to a different place to write the Blues, but he says he just tried to make the music as truthful as he could. “There wasn’t a different approach to it. I only write about what I’ve lived. I don’t consider myself a writer. Every once in a while, I might get lucky and write one. That’s what happened here. I sing it influenced by what I’ve lived, and what I feel singing it. As it turns out, a lot of other people in the world have felt the same way. My music is honest. I don’t sing about anything I don’t know.”

One of the highlights of the album is “I’m Goin’ Crazy,” about a mysterious lady from Sammy’s past. “I wrote that in about ten minutes. We were in the control room, and we were getting ready to cut something else. It just all of a sudden popped in my mind, and it wrote itself. Actually, it’s about a girl with black hair from New Orleans. I lived it when I was nineteen or twenty. I still remember her name, and that’s a long time ago.”

He combined his love of the Blues with western movies in “I’m Your Huckleberry,” of which he said “I signed this guy to a publishing deal, and he rode with me one night to a show – not too far from Lafayette. He had an idea for a song, and was playing it for me. I’m a big fan of Doc Holliday in Tombstone,

and he says in the movie, 'I'm Your Huckleberry.' I can't remember what the idea for the song that night was, but I woke up the next morning, and all of a sudden, I started writing it. I sent it to him, and said 'Here's your song, man.'

*The Blues Got Me* represents the latest chapter in the musical odyssey of Sammy Kershaw. But, he's got a few aces left up his sleeve. "I'm going to do another studio album this year, and we're starting to work on our first-ever Gospel record," he says, also saying he just might experiment with another sound of Louisiana – Swamp Pop music. "That's something I'm thinking very seriously about in the future," he says. "I'm feeling good. I'm singing good, and the fans still want to hear us. Why not do all you can to give them music? You only live once!"