

MICKEY GUYTON

House on Fire

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There is an unmistakable thread running through the songs of Mickey Guyton's new album *House on Fire*.

You can hear it in every note of the infectious melodies she sings in her powerhouse voice. It is embedded in the grooves, whether the tune is a call-to-the-dancefloor bop or a reflective ballad. It's palpable when the acclaimed country singer-songwriter is reveling in good times but also when knuckling through tough ones in lyrics that burrow into the soul. That thread? Joy. It emanates from the 12-track collection, and, it turns out, radiance suits Mickey Guyton.

"It's my love era," she confesses with a smile of the burning heart at the center of *House on Fire*.

After a whirlwind few years in which Guyton experienced incredible personal and professional highs — from welcoming her beloved son Grayson to scoring a Grammy nomination and performing at the 2022 Super Bowl — as well as faith-testing lows — a health scare for Grayson, uncertainties in her marriage and the music business and, of course, the pandemic — the Texas native was ready to rejoice.

"There was so much going on," Guyton says reflecting on the polar extremes of triumphs and challenges surrounding the release of her 2021 debut album *Remember Her Name*. "There was turmoil in several areas of my life and in the world at large," she says but she persevered on multiple fronts and was delighted to discover, "I was still able to find joy and love through it."

Among the things Guyton loves that inspired her on *House on Fire* were her husband of seven years Grant Savoy, her now-three-year-old son, and of course, country music, the genre she fell in love with as a child growing up in Arlington, Texas.

A co-writer on 10 of the 12 tracks, Guyton worked with old friends —including longtime producer and co-songwriter Karen Kosowski, singer-songwriter Tyler Hubbard, and multi-instrumentalist and producer Nathan Chapman —and new collaborators — like duet partner Kane Brown — and a renewed sense of purpose.

"I wanted to call the album *House on Fire*, because I feel like it is the complete story of my home," she says of the title, which shares its name with one of the album's most dramatic and relatable tracks about volatility in a relationship. "I sing about a lot of things in life, but my home is my safe space. It's my own internal mental state. It's my husband, it's my son, and the ups and downs and the beauty you make in your safe space, the things that people don't get to see. We walk out into the world, and we show one side, but there's so much going on in your home. My husband and I have been married for a long time and we've gone through a lot. We fought for our love and because of that, we're in such a beautiful space. This album is my story about us —the passion, the angst, the love, it's all of life wrapped up into a home."

But to be crystal clear, Guyton says, "This house is not burning down, it's burning up."

That fire is evident in the album's lead-off track and mission statement, the frothy "My Side of the Country," one of three tracks co-written by Tyler Hubbard on the album.

“When I was initially trying to figure out the sequence that just seemed like the right way to kick things off,” she says of the celebratory track repping country music. “It’s a welcome to my neck of the woods. Country music is having a huge renaissance right now. There are so many different versions and variations of it, and this is my version that I wanted to share with people.”

“Tyler is such a gem of a human being,” she says of the former Florida Georgia Line hitmaker, who also co-wrote the album’s country weeper, the Kane Brown duet “Nothing Compares to You.”

“Once we got in the studio, it was just such a healthy, inspiring thing,” she says, noting that Hubbard is “so dialed into making fun country music. There are heavy things going on in the world, but I’m a fun, silly, shade-giving person.”

The pair also co-wrote the giddy, flirty pop-country single “Make it Me,” all hand claps and hair flips, along with Corey Crowder, who’s written songs for FGL, Brown, and Little Big Town among others. “They’re just really good guys to write with,” she says. “They’re very in touch with respecting women’s voices. We just wanted to show that flirty side. They both know how much I love my husband and we wanted to write something like that about the beginning of that relationship and when you meet that person.”

While not strictly autobiographical, the album does follow the contours of Guyton’s life and relationship which includes the warm balladry of “Here With You,” examining the many sides of love — “It’s half hundred proof, half holy water/Half burning bed, half Sunday altar” —anchored by a lyrical pedal steel line.

“There’s the passion and the holiness of it, of a holy matrimony,” says Guyton. “A marriage is such a sacred thing. I can be a really fun person, but I also can have my heavy emotional days and it takes a very special person to love me. Thank God, I found him.”

The trouble with love is, of course, is that it’s not always easy. But that’s what makes it worth fighting for. Frustrations big and small make themselves known in the fiery title track which tackles the idea of accepting our loved ones at both their best and worst and the highly relatable “Little Man,” in which the narrator wants more emotionally from their partner musing “Maybe if you gave a damn/I could meet you more than halfway” over a track tinged with rock rumblings like a distant storm cloud.

“One of the women I wrote it with, Jessica Kane, along with Karen Kosowski, was just going through a breakup,” Guyton recalls of writing the track in 2023. “We just started talking about it and the conversation really brought me back to my own story and what I was going through in my life when we were fighting for our marriage. It felt like such a completion of the work that I’d been doing in this album. Yes, there are all these beautiful parts of this relationship, but on an album like this, you really need to find that breaking point. And I felt like that this song is the breaking point in the album.”

Another tough moment came with “Scary Love,” born out of a moment when Grayson, at nine months, became gravely ill with sepsis. Reminiscent of the best of ‘90s country Guyton sings of “the kind of love you fall in and never hit the bottom of.”

“It was the most terrifying experience,” says Guyton still shuddering at the thought. “It really made me understand why our moms can be so crazy over us. The love that a mother has for a child can be scary. I’m a ‘two hands on the wheel’ person now. It gave me a perspective. It made me love and appreciate my mom and so much more, and mothers period. You just see things so differently when you go through something like that.”

Things return to surer footing in the album's gorgeous final track "I Still Do," tailor made for vow renewals and all restatements of purpose when it comes to claiming your person.

"Once we started doing the work, we found a new love, that just didn't exist," says Guyton. "I'm more committed than I've ever been."

While Guyton purposefully doesn't share a lot about her relationship online — "Because I feel like it's the one sacred thing that I have and it's nobody's business" — she says she is happy to "honor my husband with my creativity." And how does Savoy feel about *House on Fire*? "He loves it," says Guyton with a smile. "He heard a lot of these songs as I was writing them, and he loves knowing that he's my inspiration."

Now that she's found a sense of peace and creative expression in her life, Guyton is excited to head out on her first headlining tour, presented by CMT, and to share these songs with her fans. She hopes they will find their own spark of joy and inspiration in *House on Fire* by seeing themselves in her story.

"I hope people just feel really good when they listen to the album," she says. "I hope there's a song for everybody. Sonically, it's just so beautiful and the topics are so real. And if you're not in a relationship, maybe it will make you wish you were in one. And if you're in one and having a tough time, maybe it makes you think, 'Wow, I need to fight for the one that I have.'"

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