

# KHALID

Everything typically happens for the first time in high school. It's the first moment behind the wheel, the first taste of freedom, and the first experience of love. Though not far removed from those days, 19-year-old El Paso, TX singer and songwriter Khalid revisits this seminal time on his full-length debut album, *American Teen* [Right Hand Music Group/RCA Records]. It reflects the spirit of classics such as *The Breakfast Club* and *90210* through a kaleidoscope of glitch-y soul-driven cinematic 21<sup>st</sup> century pop and his transient upbringing in a military family.

"From beginning to end, it's the story of your average teenager going through a typical day in high school," he explains. "In this day and age, young people face a lot of hardships, whether they're mental problems, relationship problems, or problems with simply facing reality. I wanted to address that in a language someone younger than me can relate to, but that can also translate to somebody a bit older. High school was the same situation every day, but with a slightly different story."

On the eve of his own graduation, the now five-time Grammy® nominated artist Khalid created a bona fide hit in the form of the album's breakout single "Location." It generated over 26.5 million Spotify streams and 4 million YouTube views, received acclaim from *Nylon*, *Pigeons & Planes*, *Earmilk*, *DJ Booth*, and more, and figured prominently in Snapchat stories from Kylie Jenner, P. Diddy, and Rita Ora. As "Location" became a 21<sup>st</sup> century anthem, he landed a major label deal with Right Hand Music Group/RCA Records.

The album paints a modern picture of growing up in the age of Uber and Instagram. With its dreamy production and shimmering synths, the title track sums up the central theme.

"It's my own homecoming pre-graduation song," he says. "It's all about being an American teen. You get a visual of seeing your friends passed out in an Uber ride. You're never going to experience your senior year of high school more than once—at least you shouldn't," he laughs.

Elsewhere, the first song he ever wrote, "Saved," pairs a guitar buzz with a simmering vocal performance, while "Young Dumb & Broke" encourages embracing that youthful freedom in the face of suburban malaise. "Hopeless" represents his "musical interpretation of the color blue," and "Coaster" transfixes with raw confessional emotion. A shuffle of handclaps and piano ignites "Let's Go," as he croons, "*This is the start of something great. We might be a little late, but at least we're on our way.*"

"This is the post-graduation track," he explains. "I never imagined I'd be where I am. I thought I would become a music teacher. I couldn't even dream I'd be an artist. It's got this sense of manifestation, which I'm a strong believer in."

With Khalid's mom serving in the military, he spent most of his childhood moving from state-to-state and country-to-country. After living in Heidelberg, Germany for six years, his family moved to Fort Drum in Watertown, NY during his 8th grade school year. Throughout, mom proved to be a major musical influence on Khalid. She always sang around the house and played classics by Brandy, SWV, and Destiny's Child for her son. With his mother's passion for music as a foundation, he built his own aesthetic cultivated by travel and cultural experiences. Along the way, he became a fan of artists such as Father John Misty, Grizzly Bear, Fleet Foxes, and The High Lows. This diverse musical taste fostered his distinct tone and youthful adventurousness to break traditional barriers.

During his senior year of high school, he was forced to relocate yet again: this time to Fort Bliss in El Paso, TX. Khalid transformed one of the most depressing times of his life into gorgeous melodies and

poetic lyrics inspired by all of the broken friendships fragmented from the nomadic reality of a military family.

Settling wouldn't be easy. However, out of all the places he'd resided, he overcame one of his biggest fears in El Paso and shared his feelings and personal experiences with complete strangers—not knowing how they would react—for the first time. Fortunately, his new friends and peers wholeheartedly embraced these heartfelt stories (and the kid with the weird hair and funny fashion sense behind them). Khalid finally felt at home surrounded by that love.

"With this album, I want to show everyone it's okay to have emotions, it's okay to be happy, and it's okay to be sad," he concludes. "I feel like a lot of people are afraid to open up, and the trend is to be very cold. I'm throwing everything I've ever been through on the table. I'm giving everyone my take on high school and life."

Since its release, *American Teen* has received mass critical acclaim with praise from The New York Times, TIME Magazine, Billboard, NYLON, and many more. Billboard stated, "...*effortlessly excellent...the kid is still so young, but this body of work is beyond his years*". Rolling Stone also called him a "*pop prodigy*".

Khalid embarked on his first-ever headlining tour in both the U.S. and select European cities where he sold-out every single date before the album was even released. In addition to his own headlining tours, Khalid has toured with the likes of Lorde and Travis Scott. He has also been featured on a number of collaborative songs including mega hits "1-800-273-8255" with Logic and Alessia Cara, and "Silence" with Marshmello.

2017 continued to be a massive success with nominations for a 2017 BET Award for Best New Artist, a Teen Choice Award for Choice R&B/Hip-Hop Song for "Location", and a 2017 American Music Award for Favorite Song-Soul/R&B for "Location" where he also performed a show stopping mash-up of "Young Dumb & Broke" and "Thunder" with Imagine Dragons. Khalid also won Best New Artist at the MTV Video Music Awards, recently landed on the cover of Billboard's 2018 Grammy® Preview issue, and is Grammy® nominated for Best New Artist, Song of the Year ("1-800-273-8255" - Logic Featuring Alessia Cara & Khalid), Best R&B Song ("Location"), Best Urban Contemporary Album (*American Teen*), and Best Music Video ("1-800-273-8255" - Logic Featuring Alessia Cara & Khalid). Khalid's "Location" is officially certified 4x Platinum by the RIAA, and his latest single "Young Dumb & Broke" is also certified Platinum.