

Listen: KIRBY: Miss Black America Album Stream



KIRBY's *Miss Black America* is a dedication to her Mississippi hometown and a loving defense of the south. It was four years ago when the singer-songwriter released *Sis. He Wasn't The One*. KIRBY pulls you in with her soulful tone that has a tiny rasp and an angelic higher register. Whether she is calling out the government on "The Man" or reminding folks that Mississippi is not a remote island but a part of the nation on the title track, KIRBY manages to entertain while sharing structural frustrations and heralding family. It is a world of old Cadillacs, Waffle Houses, plantations, the KKK, and curvy women.

She sums it up when she says, "When I go to the Dockery Plantation and stand on the land that my ancestors picked cotton on, sang on, danced on, and cried on, how can I not feel a responsibility to tell their story? To try and own my masters because those who started the blues indeed had a master. If you've never been to Mississippi, this record should take you there."

Miss Black America does revere KIRBY's ancestors, but it's also an autobiographical trip planted in a musical foundation of funk, blues, and R&B. KIRBY celebrates southern culture and claims the American dream while still pointing out certain gripes about life in the United States. *Miss Black America* compresses the contradictions of being Black and successful in the United States. She delivers the 12 songs with a short guest list that includes fellow Mississippian Big K.R.I.T., Akeem Ali, and the Tennessee Mass Choir. KIRBY oozes a sweetness that makes the gospel blues of "Reparations" feel like an accessible karaoke moment that does not lose the power of its message. KIRBY's *Miss Black America* is a rich dip into the happenings below the Mason-Dixon Line with a group of songs just as sustainable as the cuisine.