**THE ACES**

**MARCH 2020**

The Aces are ready to greet you now, again. It’s been two years since the quartet released its acclaimed debut album, *When My Heart Felt Volcanic*. And in those two years, the band has supported 5 Seconds of Summer, COIN and X Ambassadors on the road, sold out their own US headline tour, and spent a countless number of hours documenting everything in-between (and after) in the songs that make up *Under My Influence*, or, as The Aces’ fans like to call it, “TA2.” Universally relatable and yet deeply personal, The Aces return with the confidence only time and true friendship can bring. *Under My Influence* isn’t just an album brimming with honesty it’s an album brimming with trust—trust in themselves, as individuals, as a group, and in their camaraderie they have with their fans.

“We spent so much time with our fans before going into this album,” McKenna Petty (bass) says. Those encounters spent, as Petty notes, “talking with them and hearing what they’re going through and how our band has impacted them” showed the girls how alike they all were. “We realized our fans are literally us,” Alisa Ramirez (drums) says. “It made us so much more comfortable to say what we want, to joke in our lyrics, and push our sound further because we knew they’d understand it.” So, with that, some time spent with top-tier collaborators (Christian Medice, Kyle Shearer, and Nate Campany), and a whole lotta introspection, The Aces began to, as the album title suggests, fall under its own, sublime influence.

The record kicks off in, as Cristal Ramirez (vocals, guitar; and Alisa’s sister) says, “quintessential Aces fashion”: sparkling guitars, slick basslines, and a buoyant promise of hope. “You know, you know, you know I’m coming back to you,” Cristal sings on “Daydream,” the album’s first single. And come back they do. From there, flows the funk-tinged, lovelorn “New Emotion,” a song Cristal says is “basically part two of [*When My Heart Felt Volcanic’*s] ‘Bad Love.’” Fans of *When My Heart Felt Volcanic*’s portrait of romance in the digital age will find a kindred spirit in the anthemic ode to social media anxiety, “My Phone Is Trying To Kill Me” (co-written with Justin Tranter) Meanwhile, songs like the beachy “Kelly,” bittersweet “Lost Angeles,” confidently lustful “Can You Do,” and hands-up-I’m-over-this energy of “Not Enough” find The Aces exploring love, desire, and breakups with candid honesty, using gender pronouns explicitly for the first time in its lyrics.

“It was something we wanted to explore,” Cristal says of using gender pronouns. And though the band steered clear of them on its debut, “we felt like we were being untruthful and inauthentic to the stories to not use gender pronouns and own who we—Alisa and myself—are, as queer women.” Because truthfully, you can swap Kelly for Chad and the heartbreak will still be there; the story is still the same. “Our trust for one another is so rare and special,” Petty adds. “It’s important to see a band like ours truly, genuinely support one another. There’s room for nuance and empathy for people who are different from you.”

Bold declarations of love for another and love for the self are abound on the album. Going deeper into *Under My Influence* is an exercise in returning to the self and learning to be fueled by what’s honest and true to you. From reflecting on the places that influence its view of the world (“801”) to the places and people that come to be a chosen home and family (“Going Home”), The Aces always see the glass half full. “If any of these songs felt scary to put out or made us nervous about what others would think, that’s what assured us we were doing something right,” Alisa says. Under The Aces’ influence, life is better because of honesty, trust, and authentic affection. “We just want to send the message of joy and positivity,” Katie Henderson (lead guitar/vocals) says. “That’s what we’re all about.” It is, after all, why they decided to call the album *Under My Influence*. “When you listen, you quite literally are,” the band says. “We want our fans to feel submerged in this music and walk away feeling closer to us than ever.”

It wouldn’t be an Aces record if it didn’t end with some semblance of hope. Where *When My Heart Felt Volcanic* left off with the hope of a lover returning, *Under My Influence* finds The Aces standing tall, cheeky, and fantastically, hopefully independent (“Zillionaire”). When The Aces were just starting out, their website described the group as “a band of four girls preparing to take over the world.” Well, preparation time is over. With *Under My Influence*, The Aces have gone from four best friends hailing from Provo, Utah with a dream of making music to full-fledged global stars. No “Daydreaming” needed.

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