



**MICHELLE  
BILLINGSLEY**  
**Not The Marrying  
Kind**

★★★★★

*Portia / When Will You Learn / Mom Jeans / Once In A While / Kangaroo Court / Gaslighting / Drink 'Til I'm Pretty / She's Gone / Afternoon In Triplet / Then I Remember*

Producer: Matt Brown

**Independent**

27:06

*Not The Marrying Kind* is a great introduction to a talented new country singer. On her debut album

Michelle Billingsley has written all the songs and has already been compared with Nancy Sinatra and Neko Case but is a lot more country than anything created by either of them in recent years, or more likely ever.

The first track is an absolute cracker. *Portia* is one of those timeless country songs with a warm melody, a sympathetic backing track and a superb vocal. The song is under two and a half minutes but really makes a mark. Plus, it lingers in the mind.

*When Will You Learn* is a neat mix of dark Americana and country. This song comes with a side-order of 1960's guitar. The best things about *When Will You Learn* are the very well-written lyrics - which need to be heard - and the quality vocal.

*Once In A While* is a duet with Michelle Billingsley joined by a male voice whose name is not credited on my downloaded copy. The simple arrangement highlights the voices and the song has a country melody and a hint of John Prine. We also get a wonderful country-blues track *Kangaroo Court*. This atmospheric song has sharp-as-a-tack lyrics.

So what is Gaslighting? It's a form of emotional abuse and manipulation quite often perpetuated by a narcissist. It's also a powerful song written and sung by Michelle Billingsley. In the song the phrase "I did nothing wrong" is repeated many times. The track has a fine country tune.

Also featured on the album is the melodic,

acoustic country of *Drink 'Til I'm Pretty*. This is a superb drinking song and the vocal has an edge to it. *She's Gone* has an engaging backing track featuring banjo and steel guitar and the song lopes along with a certain style.

The final track, *Then I Remember*, is another timeless song which completes the musical circle. Here jazz and country combine in a wonderful manner. With a strong melody as well it makes a great way to end the album.

I have been reviewing albums for CMP for quite some time, during which, in my humble opinion, women have added more to country music than the men. As further evidence of that we have Michelle Billingsley's stunning debut disc *Not The Marrying Kind*. Here is a new singer who is born to write and sing country songs. The debut is confident, mature and the lyrics have real depth. Plus, let's not forget the wonderful melodies and the very high entertainment level reached here. Producer Matt Brown has also done a fine job and also plays several instruments on the album including a banjo.

Michelle Billingsley - don't forget the name - is now at the top of the country music mountain. If she continues to produce incredible music like her debut she maybe be there for many years. An important new voice has arrived.

**Paul Riley**