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Martin Koop - Blame it on the Blue Sky BIOGRAPHY

TIFFIN, Ohio — When it gets down to gritty, groovy, soulful songs about life, broken hearts, dirty laundry, trains, and best friends, nobody in Americana music today does it the way Koop does it.

After a thirty year career of festivals, pubs, coffee shops, campuses, wineries, house concerts, and little theaters, Koop is emerging as a nationally touring artist with the release of his 2016 EP *Blame It On the Blue Sky*.

The iconoclastic, bearded, bespectacled, storytelling songwriter is on a hot streak, coming off of his Blue Sky Tour of the Southwestern US, with the full Blue Sky CD due for release on December 5, 2016. From his early beginnings as an Ohio coffee-house open-mic-night regular, strumming in Toledo's dive bars in the early '80s to his wild ride through thirty years of adventure and obscurity, leading up to the 2016 Blue Sky Tour, Koop has remained deeply connected to the songwriting roots that first inspired him.

Koop cut his teeth in the folk clubs and on the sidewalks of Austin's famed Sixth Street.

"It was 1983 in Austin. I had \$6.00 in my pocket, no job, no car, and no place to live. Stevie Ray's Texas Flood was climbing the chart. Nancy Griffith's Poet in My Window was on an obscure folk label called Philo Records. Townes was alive - Pancho and Lefty was No. 1 on the charts. Guy Clark was an invisible presence in every room. Steve Earle was making a record and splitting his time between Austin and Nashville. There were so many others playing in the clubs and on the sidewalks, and the talent was so pervasive in every genre that you couldn't tell who had made it, who was about to break, or who was just passing through . . . it was a puzzling, overwhelming hotbed of creativity for a kid like me to be immersed in. Back then I felt like a freshman watching the seniors before graduation . . . I soaked it all up and spent thirty years digesting it, trying to live up to it, being grateful for it, regretting I didn't make more of it, and keeping promises I made to myself then."

A few years later, Koop drifted to Nashville.

For additional press information about Martin Koop please contact Holly Kristiansen holly@martinkoop.com or visit www.martinkoop.com

“When I got to town Randy Travis was on billboards and all the songwriters I met were singing through their noses and cloning that George Jones style. Just a few years later, Garth Brooks was on billboards and all those same writers were wearing cowboy shirts and singing about rodeos. I love Nashville but my writing stays more grounded when I’m living in Ohio or traveling around.”

Notwithstanding frolics and detours to the two-stepping heart of Texas and the alleys and edges of Nashville’s Music Row, Martin Koop is inescapably a rust belt songwriter from the heart of it all, Ohio. His songs are culled from the steel mills, cornfields, highways, dirt roads, and fishing holes of the hardscrabble heartland.

Now emerging as a nationally touring Americana artist, Koop’s relentless pursuit of grit and tone and well crafted lyrics is suddenly finding it’s way to audiences in the nooks and crannies of America . . . in the pocket of her heart.

In 2012, Koop booked a few gigs on the road (most notably Morgantown, WV - the source of the song *Morgantown*), and he hit a brand new groove all his own. Having found an audience that resonated with his songs and stories, Koop dove headlong into the verities and balderdash of the human condition, offering up his own inimitable take on the American folk song, with groove and grit. Sandusky Ohio’s Funcoast Magazine called Koop *“proof that folk music is alive and well”* and Nashville insider Richard Helm called Koop a *“groove dawg.”*



Koop started out with a signature percussive rhythmic strum and while he has kept that groove, he has refined it and worked tirelessly on the tone and texture of his guitar playing.

“No amount of practice has ever changed my primitive approach to guitar, which was a frustration until other guitar players started complimenting my playing - it’s like John Prine says ‘if you make the same mistakes long enough, that becomes your style.’”

Martin crafts lyrics about life from the perspective of the mishaps and mistakes and journeys and longings and *“the scrapes we all go through figuring out how to love each other without getting too banged up.”*

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Koop primarily performs solo acoustic shows when touring, but also performs regularly as the frontman of his formidable trio *Free Wild* along the north coast of Ohio.

Koop has served as a regional coordinator for NSAI (the Nashville Songwriting Association International) for the past 9 years, fostering the songwriting community in NW Ohio, and he contributes proceeds from his shows and sales to Feeding America.



Koop is also member of Folk Alliance International, and The Americana Music Association.



BLUE SKY EP SONGS

Blame it on the Blue Sky s about redemption and making peace with pain and moving on after a broken heart. *“Blame it on the blue sky. Blame it on the sunshine. Blame it on the red dress. Blame it on your kindness. Blame it on the good times, red wine, wild nights and high times and bright eyes . . . and blame it on the blue sky.”*

Light of Virginia tells the true story of Koop’s gypsy carpenter grandfather who *“married again and again, always planted a garden, kept the family farm for a while until he swapped it for lost highways to Anchorage and Hot Springs, the Northern Lights, and the California Shore.”*

Laundry Day is a wry love song for the girl who left him in Nashville after several weekend visits from Columbus Ohio. *“If I could have you once in a while, I would find a way, to have you here on laundry day. I’d be lying if I said I wanted you to stay, but I long for you - on laundry day.”*

Almost My Best Friend tells the lost and found story of a shy teenage girl from Cleveland who admired her sophisticated summer camp friend from New Jersey, who taught her to smoke cigarettes when they were kids, who lost each other until twenty years later when they find each other again on Facebook.

Morgantown is the love story of a traveling songwriter falling for the too-tall blonde waitress at Gibbie’s Pub, nestled in the coal mining college town of Morgantown West Virginia. *“Twenty years later, they’re still kissing underneath the bridge on Pleasant Street . . . who said it ain’t love . . . down in Morgantown.”*

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RECENT NOTABLE VENUES

The 806 Coffee & Lounge, Amarillo, Texas
Bistro Al Vino, Aurora, Colorado
Gibbie's Pub & Eatery, Morgantown, West Virginia
The Acoustic Coffeehouse, Johnson City, Tennessee

FREQUENT VENUES

Leisure Time Winery, Napoleon, Ohio
Madison Street Tavern, Tiffin, Ohio
Majestic Oak Winery, Grand Rapids, Ohio
The Tilted Kilt, Maumee, Ohio
Coffee Amici, Findlay, Ohio
Greek Garden Cafe, Findlay, Ohio
Bluto's Bar & Grill, Norwalk, Ohio
The Ritz Theater, Tiffin, Ohio
The Redbird Songwriter Showcase, Toledo, Ohio

LEGENDARY VENUES OF THE PAST

Antone's, Austin, Texas
Chateau Tebeau Winery, Helena, Ohio
The Bluebird Cafe', Nashville, Tennessee
Douglas Corners, Nashville, Tennessee
Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, Nashville, Tennessee
The Hole in the Wall, Austin Texas
Cheatham Street Warehouse, San Marcos, Texas

RIYL List:

("Recommend if you Like")

Steve Earle, John Prine, Darrell Scott, Todd Snider, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Jackson Browne, Guy Clark, Tim Easton, Mark Stuart, Rodney Crowell, Harry Chapin, John Hiatt, Robert Earl Keen, Tim O'Brien, Shawn Mullens, John Gorka.

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PRESS PHOTOS



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