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Lady Antebellum's Charles Kelley Says 'Heart Break' Grammy Nods Are 'A Success for Us'



Lady Antebellum is no stranger to the Grammy Awards. The country trio have already won five golden gramophones since first being nominated in 2009, even taking home the esteemed record of the year trophy for "Need You Now" in 2011. But upon being woken up to the news that his band had received their ninth and 10th nominations Tuesday for their album *Heart Break* and funky single "You Look Good," Charles Kelley can't help but admit it was an exciting morning.

Although Kelley and his bandmates, Hillary Scott and Dave Haywood, were all in their respective homes when the nominations were announced -- Lady A had their final performance of 2017 on Nov. 15, with the holidays approaching and Scott expecting twins early next year -- they made sure to celebrate together via text.

"There was a lot of text messages back and forth between us and friends and family just saying, 'I'm proud of you,'" Kelley tells *Billboard*. "It was a lot of fun, it really was."

Jay-Z performs onstage during his 4:44 tour at Barclays Center of Brooklyn on Nov. 26, 2017 in New York City.

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Lady A's best country album nod for Heart Break marks their third time being nominated for the award, as they won in 2011 for Need You Now and again in 2012 for Own the Night. Kelley was quick to acknowledge the Grammy achievement for Heart Break producer Busbee, who also produced Maren Morris' "I Could Use a Love Song," which is up for best country solo performance this year.

"It's a pretty big moment for him as a producer and songwriter," he says. And while both Busbee and Lady Antebellum have celebrated Grammy wins before, this nomination achieved a goal they set upon beginning the creation of Heart Break.

Take a look at our conversation with Kelley to get the full scoop on why the album is a success in their eyes, regardless of a trophy.

Were you anticipating that you'd get nods this year?

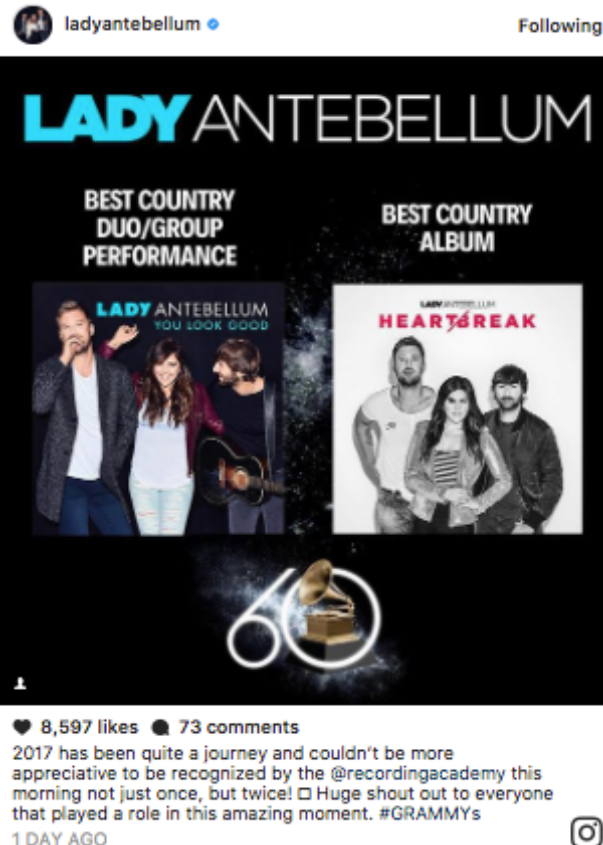
It's always the dream. When you're making a record – and I've never said this to anybody, but it's true – when you're making a record, and you go, "Man, this might win a Grammy!" You feel that level of confidence when you're making a record. Of course, as we were making this record we felt like we were making something special.

Mike Busbee, our producer, instilled a lot of confidence in us with this record as we were making it. I remember him saying, "I want to make the follow-up to Need You Now, I want to make a Grammy-worthy record." He kept using that phrase, "Grammy-worthy" – we all put Grammys at the top of our minds when we talk about great music, and it's just kinda funny that that's actually happened. Whether it wins a Grammy or not, the fact that it's nominated, we feel like we accomplished that goal that we set out to do. We feel like this was a success for us.

So what was the initial interaction with you guys and busbee once you heard you achieved his goal?

We all just kind of reached out and said "here we go." We're just so proud – he has not just us but he has Maren Morris with Grammy nominations. We're very proud of the project, we've always been proud of it, and these kind of moments always make you appreciative when you sit back and say "We were already super proud of it, but you never really know until the masses kind of take a hold of it and make it their own.

You can always say it's something great, and you feel it's great, but you don't really know it's great unless people gravitate towards it. This was definitely one of those moments where we all reached out to each other and we're like "This feels pretty special."



You've won best country album two other times, but would this mean the most to you guys because of how special the album is?

Man, that's hard to say if this would ever mean more than the first [win] -- what always will mean the most is the first. I'm already kinda putting ourselves as not gonna win it so it's hard for me to register in my mind what it would mean. After Need You Now, we had so much success that I was confident. I'm not confident right now [laughs]. I'm just glad to be in the category.

It would mean a lot, because I'm already going ahead and putting Chris Stapleton as taking that award. It's deserving. He's just so good. So of course we are [scared of him as competition], he's the best. And we all love him, we've all sang his songs, and we've been there -- we're just so proud that he's finally getting his due. That's the funny thing about our genre right now, a guy that we've been rooting for for the past five years is finally getting his due as an artist. But with that said, I would love to win and we would love to win as a group. It would be awesome, but we'll just sit back and have a cocktail and go ahead and raise it to Chris Stapleton if he takes home the award.

With "You Look Good," as it was the first time you guys really incorporated horns -- do you think this song opened you up to a new group of fans and are you wanting to continue with incorporating horns?

I think the reason that “You Look Good” is in the category is because I think it was bold. One thing I love about the Grammys is that they love to recognize old, risky music. I don’t know that that necessarily means that us as a band are gravitating towards horns in our music moving forward, I think that was just a time and a place. There will definitely be some songs in the future that will have horns, just because now we’ve found that we love having them in the live show, but I don’t necessarily think that it’s a change of direction for us as a group – I think it’s more, if anything, solidifying that we need to take chances more.



And it’s a validation that you guys do versatility well.

We may never do another song that has a significant horn section in it, but I just like the fact that we did it and we trusted it. I remember when we put it out, I said, I’m really curious to see what people think about this [Laughs] because I love it, but you never know what people are going to think. But I always love to push the boundaries, and I love to be a part of that. At the end of the day, it’s just nice to be part of the conversation.