



2015 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Soggy night doesn't dampen enthusiasm for Bentley's 'Sounds of Summer' stop



Dierks Bentley performs at Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre on Thursday, June 18, 2015. Photo by Jon Gitchoff

June 19, 2015 1:00 am • By Amanda St. Amand

0

RELATED GALLERIES



iParty: Dierks Bentley at Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre

When a performer brings a tour called "Sounds of Summer" to soggy St. Louis, it would be understandable if the enthusiasm was a little dampened by the environment.

So give Dierks Bentley some props for not letting the wet weather Thursday night bring down his tour when it stopped at the Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre.

Maybe the squish-squish of flip-flops was not what fans hoped for, but Bentley brought a good game to the audience

that braved the puddles and intermittent rain for a rock-solid 85-minute show.

Bentley came on stage with a literal bang, as near-cannons sounded as he bounded into “Sideways.” Before his tour began this summer he promised fireworks would be a part of it, and he kept his word on that throughout the show.

In his second season as a headliner, Bentley seemed a bit more comfortable as he went from uptempo numbers like “5150” into slower songs like “Tip It On Back” and “Every Mile a Memory” in the early going.

As he moved into the fan favorite, “I Hold On,” he reminded the crowd of his early years playing at Mississippi Nights on Laclede’s Landing, and how he’d dreamed of coming out to headline the amphitheater.

Of course, the crowd loved that, just as it did when he headed to the satellite stage toward the lawn for a few numbers like “Come a Little Closer” and “Back Porch.”

What was nice was Bentley telling fans that as a headliner, now he feels like he can do whatever he wants, and he wanted to create that back porch stage. Power to the people, yes?

But he went back up front for “Home” and “Up on the Ridge,” the bluegrass number of the night (and one of my favorites).

Bentley left the mostly simple stage — save for a giant video screen at the rear — after about an hour, to return for the encore set of “What Was I Thinking” and most possibly the

fan-favorite of his career to close the night with “Drunk on a Plane.”

Yes, the crowd sings along with every word. Yes, he pulls female fans dressed as flight attendants up on the stage with him. And yes, we all wanted more. Politically incorrect as it may be, this is one of the most fun songs out there in country music, and Bentley makes the most of it.

If there was any quibble with the show, maybe it felt a little short. (The night’s big quibble — and it was bad — was the landfill stench that hung in the wet, heavy air. It was really ripe.)

Along with Bentley, though, were three opening acts.

There was 50 minutes from Kip Moore, of “Something ’Bout a Truck” and “Hey Pretty Girl” fame. He gave the female fans, especially, what they wanted with a sleeveless T-shirt and tight jeans, paired with a very pleasant voice.

On top of that, Bentley brought out Maddie & Tae, an up-and-coming duo who made some waves with their anti-bro country anthem “Girl in a Country Song” and newcomer Canaan Smith, who shows plenty of promise with “Love You Like That.”

Bentley also shows some class as a headliner who brings his openers out with him, as he did with Maddie & Tae and Smith, who joined him on “Free And Easy (Down the Road I Go).”