

Rolling Stone

See Dierks Bentley Dedicate 'Riser' to Charleston

Country star appeared on ABC's 'Good Morning America' before headlining huge FarmBorough Festival

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Tonight, Dierks Bentley will headline opening day of New York City's first-ever country music festival, **FarmBorough 2015**. On his way to the gig, the 10-time Grammy nominee made a detour through Central Park for a live performance on ABC's *Good Morning America*.

SIDEBAR



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"I played here at B.B. King's in 2004 for 20 people, and to now be playing a festival on Randall's Island here in New York City — it's incredible," he exclaimed.

An enthusiastic crowd sang along to Bentley's 2013 hit, "I Hold On" and eagerly welcomed Maddie & Tae as duet partners on "Free and Easy (Down the Road I Go)," but it was

(Down the Road I Go)," but it was Bentley's solo turn on his new single, "Riser," that proved to be the morning's show-stopper. The country music superstar dedicated the song to the people of Charleston, who have shown amazing resilience in the wake of the June 17th shooting that took the lives of nine people at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

"The song started off as kind of a personal song about my dad passing away," he explained to anchor Robin Roberts, "but everyone's going through something right now, and they've got people counting on them.

"[I'm] thinking about all the folks in Charleston, South Carolina, right now, what they're going through," he continued. "I can't think of any group in our nation right now that's facing more difficulties, and if there are any 'risers' out there, they're out there leading the way. So this song is definitely for them today."

A spontaneous cheer rippled through the audience as Bentley punched the tune's inspirational chorus, perhaps with a little more emphasis than usual: *"Hey, I'm a fighter/When darkness comes to town, I'm a lighter, fighter, get-out-aliver/ I'm a fighter."*

There were lighter moments on *GMA*, too — like when Bentley exited his tour bus and nonchalantly high-fived a random Central Park jogger, or when he later shook his head in embarrassment as Roberts mentioned that *People Country* magazine has just named him “Country’s Hottest Guy.” Then there was the moment when he asked where the fried fudge was, as he stood behind a table groaning with festival food, along with Kip Moore and Canaan Smith — tourmates from Bentley’s Sounds of Summer tour, which also features Maddie & Tae. All are taking the main stage at FarmBorough today.

Saturday’s line-up is anchored by Brad Paisley, while Luke Bryan closes out the festival as Sunday night’s headliner. The weekend will also feature a “Next From Nashville” stage, spotlighting such buzzworthy artists as the Cadillac Three, Chris Stapleton, Striking Matches, Sturgill Simpson and Ruthie Collins. As many as 50,000 fans are expected to descend upon Randall’s Island for the country music celebration.