

# The Boston Globe

MUSIC REVIEW

## Dierks Bentley revels in role of headliner in Mansfield



ROBERT E. KLEIN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

**Dierks Bentley gets close to his fans at Xfinity Center Saturday night.**

**By Stuart Munro | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JUNE 29, 2015**

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MANSFIELD — During his performance of “the Sounds of Summer” Saturday night, Dierks Bentley paused to get the crowd to do the slow hand wave, joking that he knew they loved Kenny Chesney, so they would have that maneuver down. Then, surveying his handiwork, he remarked, “I feel like Kenny Chesney right now. . . . I’ve worked a long time to feel like Kenny Chesney.”

It was a revealing comment: Bentley has had a long, steady climb to Chesney heights, which he has finally reached in the form of a headlining package tour and all its accouterments: the outsize stage drawing enough power to light a small town, the giant video screen, the pyro. In the middle of all that, Bentley kept returning to the beginning

and to the climb, with particular reference to Boston.

He talked of his first show in Boston, at the Paradise Rock Club, in 2004. (Later, he claimed that the Paradise was where he first heard the Dropkick Murphys' "I'm Shipping Up to Boston," and then feigned surprise when his band launched into the song.) He talked, too, of the achievement of coming to the Mansfield summer shed as the featured attraction.

Bentley's music has always balanced modern country and more classic elements. There was plenty of the former to be heard Saturday, from the muscular rock of "5-1-5-0" to the power-ballad guitar sounds of "Say You Do." There was ample bro-country, too, from the bro's complaint "Am I the Only One" to "Tip It on Back" and "Drunk on a Plane," both of which are songs about drinking to forget, but this night were party anthems.

But the steel guitar sitting onstage wasn't there merely as a signifier, it was actually prominent on several songs. There was dobro, too, joining with banjo on the backwoods stomp and menace of "Up on the Ridge." And there was Waylon: Bentley's fine paean to that giant, "Lot of Leavin' Left to Do," featured some extended interplay between guitar and pedal steel.

Onstage, Bentley was as exuberant as ever, roaming and high-fiving, running up to a tiny stage set in the cheap seats for a handful of songs, doing a little crowd surfing, and bringing a teacher up to shotgun a beer with him after spotting her sign ("School's Out!") inviting him to do exactly that (the youth of America thank you for that fine example, Mr. Bentley). Judging from his performance, Dierks Bentley is enjoying the view from the top.

**DIERKS BENTLEY**

At: Xfinity Center, Mansfield, Saturday