

# Billboard

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## THE BILLBOARD **REVIEWS** ALBUMS



### LADY ANTEBELLUM

#### Need You Now

**Producer:** Paul Worley  
*Capitol Records Nashville*

**Release Date:** Jan. 26

When Nashville-based Lady Antebellum won vocal group of the year at the 2009 Country Music Assn. Awards, it both ended Rascal Flatts' six-year reign in that category and accelerated the trio's journey into country music stardom. Indeed, Lady Antebellum's sophomore album, "Need You Now," will be a genre fixture this year. On the title track, the group's Charles Kelley and Hillary Scott harmonize on a melancholy tune about a bittersweet breakup and drunken yearning, and on "Love This Pain," Kelley shows off his vocal slyness and rough tenor with the accompaniment of lively guitar strings and pounding drums. And tracks like the riff-heavy, rock'n'roll romp "Stars Tonight" and the delicate arrangement of "Ready to Love Again" highlight the trio's musical growth. The new set—Lady A's follow-up to its self-titled debut in 2008—showcases the group's ability to combine its own contemporary country sound and folk-rock flair with a familiar formula, making it a refreshing addition to the ever-expanding country genre.—*CB*

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**AP** Associated Press

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## Review: Lady Antebellum builds on debut

By MICHAEL McCALL, For The Associated Press – Mon Jan 25, 12:09 pm ET



AP – In this CD cover image released by Capitol Nashville, Lady Antebellum's, 'Need You Now,' is shown.

Lady Antebellum, "Need You Now" (Capitol Nashville)

Lady Antebellum's second album, "Need You Now," achieves what a follow-up to a million-selling debut should. It accentuates what distinguishes the trio's talent — rich harmonies, grown-up melodies and a special group dynamic — by sounding more mature and more

aware of what makes them special.

The trio of Charles Kelley, Hillary Scott and Dave Haywood are country music's biggest breakout act of the last two years behind the supernova of Taylor Swift. Besides their sales success, their debut album went No. 1, and they picked up three CMA Awards and four Grammy nominations.

"Need You Now" already has built on that momentum: The title song spent five weeks at No. 1 on the country radio charts. As with their debut, the opening hit exemplifies the group's willingness to push country conventions: A drunken post-midnight call to an ex-lover is a bold theme for a modern country hit, but its true power comes in how well it expresses the longing that can haunt a breakup.

Those strengths run throughout the album, from the budding youthful wisdom of "American Honey" to the complexities of the love song "If I Knew Then" to the celebratory stomp of "Stars Tonight." "Need You Now" is the sound of a young country act's potential becoming fully realized.

CHECK THIS TRACK OUT: "Ready To Love Again" features Scott's lush alto and how the trio's harmonies excel at expressing contemplative feelings, while the subtle dynamics of piano-and-strings arrangement reveals how they have grown musically.