

(5.18.17) [https://www.washingtonpost.com/goingoutguide/music/dierks-bentley-bucking-bro-country-stereotypes-comes-to-merriweather-post/2017/05/17/f2ce466a-365f-11e7-b4ee-434b6d506b37\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.01ef62c8fa4b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/goingoutguide/music/dierks-bentley-bucking-bro-country-stereotypes-comes-to-merriweather-post/2017/05/17/f2ce466a-365f-11e7-b4ee-434b6d506b37_story.html?utm_term=.01ef62c8fa4b)

## Dierks Bentley, bucking bro country's stereotypes, comes to Merriweather Post



For the past five years, country radio has been ruled by bro country, the music of male hunks who sing 1980s arena rock with lyrics about pretty girls in cutoffs sitting on pickup trucks packed with beer and parked at a fishing hole at the end of a dirt road. It's a subgenre that's easy to parody and even easier to denounce — until, that is, you confront an artist like Dierks Bentley. Arizona's Bentley is a good-looking musician with a fondness for '80s rock guitar and songs about women and beer. But he also likes bluegrass mandolin and New Orleans funk (both Del McCoury and Trombone Shorty have guested on his albums), and his lyrics are full of smarter wordplay and more complicated psychology than those of his colleagues. Bentley proves that any genre — even bro country — can produce admirable art if done with enough skill and intelligence.

His latest album, "Black," is an excellent example of what can be accomplished within the narrow parameters of modern country radio. Bentley's duet with Maren Morris, "I'll Be the Moon," is a terrific country cheating song; he's willing to let her main squeeze be the sun if he can be the moon. The heartbreak songs such as "Pick Up," "Why Do I Feel" and the title track subvert the happy-go-lucky bro country ethos with pain that cuts deep. Although the Elle King duet, "It's Different for Girls," locks in gender stereotypes, "Can't Be Replaced" is one of the decade's best sensitive-male country songs.