

Keep Dierks Bentley away from your girlfriends, wives (Syracuse concert review)

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http://www.syracuse.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2016/08/dierks_bentley_syracuse_review.html



Halfway through his set at Lakeview Amphitheater on Saturday night, Dierks Bentley accepted a note from a male audience member and started cracking up.

He held it up to the crowd and read, "Will you kiss my GF?" Despite the endless screech of female cheers and hollers since Dierks took the stage, the country star looked honestly baffled.

"I don't even know what to do with that," he said, grinning. "I might need to take a hall pass on that one."

But he wasn't about to pass on such a juicy offer. Between his songs "Black" and "Every Mile a Memory," the lights went out as Dierks ran up the thrust stage, flopped on his belly, returned the note to its owner and snogged his girlfriend.

It wasn't the last time Dierks shamelessly flirted with women in the audience. He also noticed one man holding up a sign reading, "My wife wants seat 7B." It's a reference to the song "Drunk on a Plane," in which Dierks is seated in seat 7A.

"Sure, she can have it," he responded. "But are you going to be in seat 7C, or is it going to be just the two of us?"

Oh Dierks, you dog.

It's a big part of his onstage persona as a charmer (though he's been married to his childhood sweetheart for more than a decade).

The biggest takeaway from his act? Dierks Bentley loves to play the party animal. He likes to drink and flirt and he hates to lose, so don't let him near your spouse and don't challenge him to a drinking contest.

Longtime fans know Dierks often brings fans up on stage to shotgun a beer. As far as I've seen, no one can do it faster.

"Oh, I'm getting challenged right now," Dierks said, before giving a beer to one fan dressed in a full pilot costume (also a "Plane" reference). Dierks distracted the fan, took a generous head start and threw his empty beer can on the ground within a few seconds.

He dismissed the pilot from the stage, triumphantly. "Hopefully he's better at flying than he is at drinking." Oh snap, we all knew a dude like Dierks in high school, right?

The wiry, wide-awake Dierks kept his energy explosively high all night long. He repeatedly praised Syracuse for its stunning views and ran around the stage to get the crowd cheering for his bandmates. At one point, Dierks told the crowd he and his band have only been doing "this headlining thing" for about three years. He's certainly hit his stride.

Dierks has a deep, immediately recognizable voice, one that sounds older than he is. He doesn't get to show off those pipes with his party songs, but slower hits like "Different for Girls" and "Riser" prove how much he deserves to be drawing big crowds like the one in Syracuse, which was estimated to be over 14,000.

Best of all, he's startlingly theatrical and takes every opportunity he can to play with his audience.

Another tip? Don't give Dierks your cowgirl boot. He'll stick a cup of beer in it and dance around. When you get it back, it might be soggy, but it'll have a free Dierks Bentley guitar pick inside.

The gals loved it, and swooned loudly when Dierks emerged from a literal cockpit for the "Drunk on a Plane" encore, dressed as a disheveled pilot. Everyone loves a man in uniform.

Joined by openers Cam, Tucker Beathard and Randy Houser for the final song, Dierks stumbled around the stage, grinning widely, still dancing with the wet boot. He shrugged and mouthed, "Sorry, I'm drunk," though he seemed proud and fully in control of the party he had created.

Cam and Houser also joined Dierks onstage earlier in the night to sing the Eagles cover "Take It Easy" on a mini stage set up in the middle of the audience -- a treat for people sitting in the back of the pavilion.

Cam, with her bright yellow curls lit up by the sunset, bubbled with enough talent and confidence to carry her own show. Her crystal-clear voice rang out through the pavilion and made me wonder why she's not touring as a headliner herself.

She was a sunny contrast from the sort-of gritty Beathard and the vigorous Houser, whose potent vibrato made for a soulful half hour of the night (though he called Lakeview the "Lakewood Amphitheater").

Between the openers and Dierks himself, this show certainly hit a sweet spot for Central New York country fans who believe in the power of a good party.