

billboard

(12.12.16) http://www.billboard.com/files/pdfs/country_update_1212.pdf

NASHVILLE & NATIONAL TOM ROLAND



Dierks Bentley signed a publishing deal with Kobalt Nashville, which also acquired his existing publishing catalog. From left are Kobalt founder/CEO Willard Ahdriz, Kobalt executive vp business development Merrill Wasserman, Bentley, Kobalt North America president Richard Sanders, Kobalt senior creative director Lauran Alexander, Kobalt vp creative Stephanie Cox and Kobalt Nashville GM Jesse Willoughby.

DIERKS BENTLEY SETS KOBALT PUB DEAL

Independent publishing services firm Kobalt Music has signed **Dierks Bentley** in a deal that includes the acquisition of his back catalog by Kobalt Music Copyrights, *Billboard Country Update* has exclusively learned.

The agreement gives Kobalt ownership of the publishing for Bentley's previous compositions, including two former Country Music Association (CMA) song of the year nominees — "I Hold On" and "Home" — as well as such key titles as "Drunk on a Plane," "Sideways," "Come a Little Closer" and his 2003 debut, "What Was I Thinkin'." Kobalt will also handle administration of Bentley's future compositions.

"I couldn't be more happy about joining the Kobalt team," said Bentley in a statement. "Everyone I've had a chance to meet emits a feeling of belief in the power of songs and songwriting. You can't help but sense their excitement about writing collaborations and possibilities. I look forward to having the positive energy surrounding me as we start thinking about the next project."

Songwriting royalties are typically split 50/50 between a publisher and songwriter, though as writers build their careers, they are often able to earn a greater portion of the revenue through negotiations, which sometimes include the formation of their own publishing firm.

Bentley signed to Sony/ATV at the start of his career. He eventually established a co-publishing venture with Sony/ATV before starting his own publishing company, Big White Tracks, previously administered by Words and Music. Widely regarded for an ever-evolving creative brand, his current album — the relationship-themed *Black* — was a finalist for CMA album of the year in November.

"Dierks Bentley is a gifted artist and songwriter who has only grown stronger over the years," observed Kobalt founder/CEO **Willard Ahdriz**. "We very much believe in him and feel strongly that he will keep growing and that the best is yet to come."

"We couldn't be more excited to bring such a phenomenal artist like Dierks Bentley into the Kobalt family," added Kobalt Nashville GM **Jesse Willoughby**. "His career continues to thrive as he pushes new boundaries on every project. His eighth album release speaks volumes about his contribution to country music and popular culture as a whole."

Other Kobalt-affiliated songwriters in Nashville include **Vince Gill**, **Ashley Monroe**, **Big & Rich** and **Old Dominion's Matt Ramsey**.

NASHVILLE & NATIONAL TOM ROLAND



Dierks Bentley signed a publishing deal with Kobalt Nashville, which also acquired his existing publishing catalog. From left are Kobalt founder/CEO Willard Ahdritz, Kobalt executive vp business development Merrill Wasserman, Bentley, Kobalt North America president Richard Sanders, Kobalt senior creative director Luran Alexander, Kobalt vp creative Stephanie Cox and Kobalt Nashville GM Jesse Willoughby.