

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

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## Country/Roots

### **Home**

(Capitol \*\*\*)

Dierks Bentley gets his new album off to a rousing start with "Am I the Only One," which has already been a No. 1 hit. It's a honky-tonk-inflected party anthem but a smart and witty one - in other words, it's Bentley at his country-mainstream best after the foray into rootsier, acoustic-based sounds on 2010's *Up on the Ridge*.

Home occasionally flirts with generic country-rock ("Gonna Die Young") and ballads ("Breathe You In"). But mostly Bentley shows why he has deservedly become a star - whether it's with twinkle-in-the-eye crowd-pleasers ("Diamonds Make Babies") or more soulful and somber-minded efforts such as "When You Gonna Come Around," a duet with Little Big Town's Karen Fairchild.

Bentley makes his usual foray into quasi-bluegrass with "Heart of a Lonely Girl," but the album's most striking number is the title song. It's a rarity in country music - a song about America that manages to be clear-eyed and unsentimental, while remaining deeply patriotic and moving.

- *Nick Cristiano*