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## Dierks Bentley brings steamy 'Black' album to Utah show

By Sheena McFarland Special to The Tribune

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Dierks Bentley may be a solo male artist, but his latest album is largely about women.

"Black" was named in honor of his wife's maiden name, and he pairs up with five women for duets on the album — creating some pretty steamy tracks.

"The album had this thread of conversation that matches different relationships," Bentley said.

But the album, which he is promoting on his latest tour that will stop in West Valley City on Saturday, didn't come together quickly.

The cowboy crooner credits a local coffee shop where he would sit and write after dropping his girls off to school each weekday.

"It came together really slowly, and it was a really organic process," Bentley said. "It was like a shotgun blast. I was writing songs left and right, and then trying to whittle it down and trying to get to a bigger thing."

That's where the relationship focus of the album started coming together. He sang "Different for Girls" with Elle King and "I'll Be the Moon" with Maren Morris.

"There was this tangible thing happening with these female vocals," he said.

He said he hopes the songs do what all great music does — invoke emotion.

"The worst response is that this is background music," he said. "I want it to be something that hits you hard and makes you feel something."

Ahead of the album release May 27, Bentley asked Wes Edwards to create a four-film series featuring four of the songs in a specific order. It depicts a love triangle that keeps viewers waiting for the next turn, the last of which is the deeply erotic title track.

"I let Wes run with it and let him create his own story just like fans who put their own stories on top of the ones I created," Bentley said. "These songs weave into their own personal lives."

The film series has apparently worked in getting his fans excited, because Bentley said this has been the biggest year he's had for selling albums and concert tickets.

"This is my third year of headlining amphitheater shows, and it's like I'm on this great rollercoaster ride," he said. "I'm having the best summer of my life."

Part of that fun was co-hosting the Academy of Country Music Awards with Luke Bryan in April.

"I had never thought about doing that before. I was busy writing songs, touring and trying to be a good husband and dad," Bentley said. "I had turned down previous TV stuff, but that opportunity came up, and Luke is one of my best friends, and it was really fun. If they asked me to do it again, I'd say 'Sure, yeah!' "

The tour has created a great season, but the Arizona resident is looking forward to his Utah show.

"It's all West Coast in September, and that's special for me because my friends come out to the shows," he said. "I'm excited for Utah because it's as close to home as I'm getting without playing Arizona."