



Dierks Bentley to open 2016 PNC Bank Arts Center season

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Hank Williams sang “Your Cheatin’ Heart” in 1952.

In 2016, Beyonce’s “Lemonade” and Dierks Bentley’s upcoming album, “Black,” due May 27, also have cheatin’ on the mind.

“Maybe it happened to Beyonce, maybe it’s a publicity thing, I don’t know,” Bentley said. “For me, it’s just something I wanted to explore. I’ve been in a long-term relationship and there are the ups and downs and the pitfalls. I’ve been around some friends who just didn’t make it. It’s love in a long-term relationship and how it changes on you and how you have to keep on battling for it.”

Bentley, who nicely straddles the line between new and classic country, goes deep on “Black,” exploring adult themes with a deft touch and artful hand. He has a rich, warm tenor voice with a dusty drawl, and applied here, it has suitable gravitas for the situation.

“I wanted to make a record for me that was part autobiographical and the parts I don’t really care to explore, like cheating or jealousy or any of that stuff,” Bentley said. “That’s me as a songwriter exploring some of that ground.”

He’s released a series of videos advancing “Black” with a cheating-gone-very-wrong story arc that includes what appears to be a lifeless body at the end of the video for “Pick Up.” R. Kelly’s “Trapped in a Closet” has nothing on this guy.

“I wanted to write something that loosely follows somebody on that journey,” Bentley said.

Bentley’s journey brings him up the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel on Thursday, May 12 for the first show of his Somewhere On A Beach Tour, named for “Black’s” lead single.

Randy Houser, Cam and Tucker Beathard, whose debut single “Rock On” is scoring, are also on the bill. It’s also the center’s first show of the season.

Bentley’s one of the biggest names in country music with a string of hits, including “I Hold On,” “Drunk on a Plane,” “Come a Little Closer,” “Feel That Fire” and “Sideways.”

“We’re coming up to Jersey the day before and do the entire show,” Bentley said. “We’re going to play for absolutely nobody but the truck drivers, the bus drivers and all the people who don’t get a chance to see the show. But we’re going to very happy when it’s full of people. It’s going to be a real celebration for me and the guys, the band and the crew.”