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## Dierks Bentley Brings His 'Beach' To Detroit



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Dierks Bentley's eighth studio album, *Black*, follows the ups and downs that a relationship can bring. From initial attraction to uncertainty, deceit, jealousy, regret and nostalgia, *Black* encompasses 13 tracks that tug on the emotions, some stronger than others.

"This record really is me fully realizing who I am and being comfortable in my skin," Bentley said recently at an album listening event in Nashville. "A lot of it is autobiographical and a lot of it is really personal. But, a lot of it is me really exploring ideas and elements of love that I don't want to explore in real life, like extreme jealousy."

Exploring these concepts is suiting Bentley well as the first single off *Black*, “Somewhere On a Beach,” quickly rose to No. 1 on the country charts and became the fastest rising single of his career. Bentley wrote seven of the 13 tracks on the album — produced by Ross Copperman and executive produced by Arturo Buenahora Jr. — which includes three standout features from Maren Morris, Elle King and Trombone Shorty.

The sexy, heart pounding “Black” kicks off the album and is a nod to Bentley’s wife, whose maiden name is Black. What Bentley calls a “passion song,” after writing it he decided to center the remainder of the album around the title track. Where “Black” introduces a relationship, next track, “Pick Up,” has Bentley questioning what he did wrong in that relationship while hoping there’s still a chance to mend things. “Pick up the pieces, girl we ain’t that broke,” he sings.

One of the standout moments on *Black* is the heartbreaking “I’ll Be the Moon,” which features Morris. The song details the struggle of a tortured soul dealing with being the other man in a love triangle. Morris adds a unique perspective to the storyline with her striking harmonies on the chorus and pristine vocals on each verse. “I don’t want to be a secret but I will if you want me to,” Bentley laments passionately.

The Trombone Shorty aided “Mardi Gras” also leaves a lasting mark. A song about a girl who is difficult to love, Bentley likens her to a hurricane alongside memorable accompaniment by the trombonist. Meanwhile, “What the Hell Did I Say” is a comical next day scenario where a man finds himself wondering what he told his girl the night before when he had a few too many drinks.

Like many artists, Bentley’s livelihood is on the road and the fast paced “Freedom” is easy to envision in the live setting with an anthemic sing along chorus. He also showcases his ability to try something new with the slowed R&B vibe of “Why Do I Feel,” which has Bentley emoting and questioning how something doesn’t feel quite right in his relationship. The piano based song features ear-grabbing drum loops that highlight his yearning.

One of the most interesting moments on the album comes from “Roses and a Time Machine.” The futuristic musical accompaniment assists in the storyline of a man wishing he could go back in time and change the mistakes he made in his past relationship. Later, King assists on the all too real “Different For Girls” which discusses how the two sexes handle heartbreak.

“Can’t Be Replaced” closes the album and like on “Roses and a Time Machine,” Bentley reminisces of turning back the clock. He sings of things he misses and wants back including his old Levi’s jacket, a Memorex mixtape and the summer of ’89, alongside soaring dobro. “For 15 years right by my side / From a single man to three kids and a wife / Friends come and go but when it comes to Jake/

There's just some things that can't be replaced," he sings of his dog, who has been on the journey with Bentley since the very beginning.

While *Black* has been described by Bentley as a relationship album, it is also an reflection on one man's journey in life. Self penned songs like "Light It Up" and "Can't Be Replaced" leave the greatest mark and show Bentley's confidence and vulnerability as a songwriter and performer, something fans first fell in love with 13 years ago on his debut. Eight albums in, Bentley continues to prove his versatility and steps outside the predictable, something only someone comfortable in his skin can do.