



Dierks Bentley's 'Black' Explores the Evolution of Romance and Relationships



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"I'm not from the South," Dierks Bentley says, while talking about his new album, *Black*. "So all of my music can't just be about living in the country or that lifestyle. All the singers I grew up with — Merle Haggard, Kris Kristofferson and Willie Nelson — were just writing about life. So if I am going to write about life and what I have learned so far, then I have to write about things that draw from a different idea pool."

Not that drawing from a different "idea pool" has been an issue for Bentley: he's as country as they come. He recently co-hosted the ACM Awards with Luke Bryan, and he's currently headlining one of the hottest country tours of the summer (Randy Houser, Cam and Tucker Beathard are also on the bill).

And like a lot of great country albums, *Black* is about relationships: specifically Bentley's relationship with his wife Cassidy, whose maiden name, *Black*, inspired the album's title. Bentley calls the album "a dark, mysterious, after-hours kind of record," filled with songs that look at the way romance and relationships evolve over time. "It explores some of the darker shadows of love, the edges of the heart, and the things that don't happen in broad daylight," he adds. "To me, that's

the more interesting side of love.”

“It’s a relationship album that covers the ups and downs of the journey and ends with some self-realization and evolvment. The song ‘Black’ helps set all of that in motion at the top of the album by guiding you into the darkness and the shadows of the night. The same guy who sings ‘Somewhere On A Beach’ winds up growing and having enough perspective to sing something introspective like ‘Different for Girls.’ By the last song, he’s taking a look back on love and life.”

Bentley also decided that he needed a female perspective on the record, and to that end, he reached out to a number of guest singers, including up-and-coming stars Maren Morris and Elle King and well as Nashville singer/songwriters Natalie Hemby, Hillary Lindsey and Jessi Alexander.

“Having a female perspective on this record really made the album more than just music,” added Bentley. “It makes it a conversation between a guy and a girl. Sometimes it’s harmonious and sometimes it’s two people clashing, but it’s always there.”

Dierks Bentley’s Black is due out May 27.