



MUSIC

The A and B Sides of Dierks Bentley's *Black*

"It's the Stuff Around the Outside of Your Heart"

by **alison bonaguro** 5/26/2016

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There are two sides to every great album. Even if it's no longer technically an album made out of pressed vinyl that has an A side and a B side.

But that didn't stop Dierks Bentley from approaching his new music that way.

"During the process of making it, I really did try to envision a round vinyl record," Bentley told me before his Chicago show on Saturday (May 21). "I was trying to make an album that has 13 songs, and has a story and a thread and a theme. But I wanted it to have an A side and a B side, so when you, 'flip this record over,' and listen to the second half, starting with 'Why Do I Feel,' it's different from the first half."

Different how?

"There's growth and maturity on the second half," he explained. "It's the stuff around the outside of your heart that doesn't get talked about in modern country music."

Bentley added that he wanted Black to showcase him as the guy singing songs like his latest No. 1 “Somewhere on a Beach” and then the guy singing his new single “Different for Girls” with Elle King. And that’s exactly how this stack of tunes sounds.

The timing of this new music is pretty perfect, too. Bentley told me that since co-hosting the Academy of Country Music Awards with Luke Bryan, and kicking off his new tour and releasing a hit single, he said it feels like first time in forever it all came together just right, and notched things further up.

“I think what’s been really cool is that it’s like $1 + 1 = 3$,” he added. “I’ve heard about that happening in people’s careers, but it’s never happened in mine. Usually in my world it’s $1 + 1 = 2$ Until now.”