

TASTE OF COUNTRY



Dierks Bentley Stirs Up Detroit With Hits, Songs From 'Black'

By **Billy Dukes** May 23, 2016 2:00 PM

Link: <http://tasteofcountry.com/dierks-bentley-detroit-black-tour/>

Quietly, Dierks Bentley has reached a stage in his career where he needs to choose between babies. With far more hits than his 90-minute set at DTE Energy Music Theatre in Clarkson, Mich., would allow for, the singer relied mostly on the ramblin', bluegrass-fired country rockers that helped brand him. It was the right move.

As good as songs like "Riser" and "Come a Little Closer" sound on the radio, that's not what the 15,000-ish fans came to hear. "Up on the Ridge," a thumping, banjo-driven track from 2010, opened Sunday night's (May 22) show.

Four songs and very few breaths later Bentley had torn through “Free and Easy,” “Tip It on Back,” “Am I the Only One” and “5-1-5-0.” The singer and his band were a muscle car on a wide open highway, driving through these singalongs with equal parts control and recklessness. Bentley’s drummer was the engine, perched high like a sorcerer on the mountain.

“Say You Do” slowed the pace before Bentley played “Lot of Leavin’ Left to Do” and the first of four songs from the Black album. Dedicating nearly a quarter of the show to new music was a risk, but “What the Hell Did I Say” and, later, “Freedom,” were easy transitions. The star took a moment to admit when he gets drunk he tends to text Alison Krauss, “So I decided I would record a song on this next record about drinking and cell phones.”

The Eagles’ “Take It Easy” (performed with opening acts Cam and Randy Houser from a small stage at the front of the house) was the only cover in Bentley’s set. The show’s soft middle included “I Hold On,” “Every Mile’s a Memory” and “Black,” with many fans in attendance getting their first listen to the red-hot title track of Bentley’s new album, out May 27. A surprising amount knew the words already.

“Somewhere on a Beach,” “What Was I Thinkin’,” “Sideways” and “Drunk on a Plane” were his final four songs, with his alter-ego Captain Holden “Mike” Johnson (the “K” in Mike is silent, he jokes) emerging from the fuselage of an airliner. Few close a show like Bentley. The center of the stage split open for the aircraft to poke through. Soon, Houser, opener Tucker Beathard and Cam were on stage with him. Then, all of a sudden, two dozen members of the media (including Taste of Country) broke free. This is not likely to happen at future shows, which may be for the best. Video evidence confirms that we write better than we dance.