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Bentley Enlists Fans To Shape Hits Album



Dierks Bentley

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Gary Graff, Detroit

Country star Dierks Bentley is inviting fans to pick the title, cover art and some content for an upcoming greatest hits album due out May 6 on Capitol Nashville.

"I'm making the fans executive producers of the album," Bentley says. "The label was interested in doing some sort of greatest hits. I said if we're gonna do something like that, I want to make something for our fans and make the fans the center of it. It's the fans who made us have greatest hits, so they should have something that's for them."

Bentley describes the set as "a package that has hits, some new stuff, some of my favorite stuff and some live stuff," including all 10 of his top 10 Hot Country Songs chart hits as well as two new songs.

Meanwhile, at Dierks.com, fans will be able to choose live recordings, photos and the title. The vote will run for three weeks beginning Friday (Feb. 22) — members of Bentley's fan club get exclusive access during the first 24 hours — and will be announced on April 1 via an online "town hall" meeting at the site.

The first 3,000 fans to vote will also have their names listed as executive producers in the liner notes, and Bentley will make a donation to Vanderbilt Childrens Hospital in their honor.

Bentley, meanwhile, is continuing work on his fifth album, the follow-up to 2006's "Long Trip Alone." He's been working on new songs since December 2006 and also had an intensive demo session in May 2007.

"I want to make sure it's better than anything we've ever done," Bentley says. "I'm trying to keep it tied to writing great songs, great melodies, great country instrumentation — steel guitar, fiddle and dobro and banjo — and also be a little more progressive, I guess. I just want to keep doing things that excite me musically."

He hopes to release the album in the fourth quarter of the year.