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(8/31): <http://www.forbes.com/sites/brittanyhodak/2016/08/31/why-you-wont-find-tidal-partner-jason-aldeans-new-album-on-tidal/#593309775ee3>



Why You Won't Find Tidal Partner Jason Aldean's New Album On Tidal

Reigning ACM Entertainer of the Year Jason Aldean will release his seventh studio album, *They Don't Know*, on September 9. Produced by longtime Aldean collaborator Michael Knox, critics are calling the album a throwback to the early music that helped catapult Aldean into the spotlight more than a decade ago. It's appropriate that it sounds old-school, because consumers will have to employ an old-school approach to hear it: at least for the first month.

Aldean confirmed to *Billboard* that he will be withholding the album from all streaming services for the first 30 days of release. It will be available to stream on multiple services, including Tidal, in which Aldean is a partner, on October 9, one month after it hits physical and digital stores.

Aldean was the lone country artist among the initial 16 artist-owners of Jay Z's Tidal when it launched in 2014. Last year, he told *FORBES*, "It's taken a lot of heat in the early stages but all of us believe in what it's about and it's the right

thing to do. If I have to be the country guy that stands there and takes grenades for everybody else, for the betterment of our business, for now and for the future, then I can carry that load if I need to.” And although Aldean performed a stripped-down concert that streamed on the service this summer, Tidal customers, too, will have to wait for the new album.

“If you want something that’s brand new, you’re willing to pay the price for it. And then, after it’s been out for a while, you may get it at a discount. That’s just business 101,” Aldean told Billboard.

Aldean has taken a hands-on approach to navigating the new waters of streaming services. His 2014 album *Old Boots, New Dirt* had the biggest first week for any country album on Spotify when it was released. A month later, in a move that garnered the artist lots of attention, he decided to pull the album from the service. It has since returned.

He told Billboard, “the last time around, I tried to do the right thing and it backfired and made me look like the bad guy. This isn’t about me making more money. It’s about the writers, publishers, producers, everybody is getting the short end of the stick on this deal. I have a lot of friends in this town who make their living writing.”

“Lights Come On,” the lead single from the album and Aldean’s 17th career No. 1, has been available on streaming services since it was released to radio earlier this year. Aldean’s follow-up single, “A Little More Summertime,” has not yet been made available for streaming. *They Don’t Know* is available for pre-order now. I’ve heard it, and it’s actually great. Longtime Aldean fans will not be disappointed.

The Georgia native’s last three albums have all debuted atop the Billboard Country Albums chart, with the two most recent also topping the all-genre Billboard 200. Although streaming metrics are now tabulated for chart positions (which was not the case for Aldean’s last release), he will likely have no trouble debuting atop the Country Albums chart. Who knows—maybe the extra fans who pick up physical or digital copies of the album will more than make up for casual fan streams in those first 30 days. That seems to be what Aldean is banking on. And speaking of banking, Aldean’s pretty good at that, too: he earned an estimated \$36.5 million last year, enough to land at No. 5 on the FORBES list of top-earning country stars.