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Lady Antebellum tours with new album waiting in the wings



Lady Antebellum returns to the touring circuit this summer with a whole new spring in their collective step.

The trio of Hillary Scott, Charles Kelley and David Haywood spent most of 2016 on hiatus – a period that allowed both Scott and Kelly to make solo albums, while Haywood spent some of his time producing music for other artists.

Now the reconvened group is watching its frisky R&B-ish, horn-accented single, “You Look Good,” climb “Billboard” magazine’s “Country Airplay” chart, while a new album “Heart Break,” is ready for an early June release. And Haywood said the group is as energized as at any point in Lady Antebellum’s 10-year career.

“I feel like this album and this past 18 months is really a larger story, I think, for us as a band,” Haywood said in a recent phone interview. “This definitely isn’t just another record. This is a really special moment for us in our career. For us, we knew creatively we were getting to the point where we were a little drained and we felt like we had kind of tapped the well of ideas. So that’s when we entered into last year and said you know what, it’s time for us to take a breather musically.”

A first step was choosing a producer who could bring a fresh perspective to the next album, and Lady Antebellum chose to team up with Busbee, who has worked with pop acts such as Pink, Shakira, Gavin DeGraw and the Backstreet Boys, as well as country stars Rascal Flatts, Jason Aldean and Keith Urban.

Then Haywood, Scott and Kelley scheduled two sessions – one in Florida and the other in Los Angeles – where they would live in the same house and write and record what became the “Heart Break” album.

“I think more than anything it was trying to get back to the way we started,” Haywood said of the sessions. “I think with any relationship or anything, you’re always trying to get back to that time and place when it was just truly organic and you truly weren’t thinking about anything other than just having a great time and making music together. And that’s how we started in 2006. Me and Charles lived in a house together, and Hillary came over

every single day, all day long. Gosh, when you're kind of living the day-to-day together, you're so in sync together with where everybody is and where they want to go writing-wise and creatively."

This time the trio was joined by eight outside writers while in Florida and then went to Los Angeles, where they wrote with Busbee and recorded with session musicians.

Haywood feels the approach the group took in making "Heart Break" achieved the goal of bringing freshness to the project. The R&B groove of "You Look Good," the soulful sound of "Good Time to be Alive" and the sing-along "oh-oh-we-oh" vocal hook that gives "This City" a contemporary pop dimension are among the new twists. But there are also songs like the ballads "Somebody Else's Heart" and "Big Love In A Small Town" that will be like musical comfort food for fans familiar with Lady Antebellum's back catalog.

With the new album ready for its June 9 release, Lady Antebellum is heading out on a summer tour that will have the group headlining amphitheaters across the United States into September.

Although Lady Antebellum became known early in their career for their ballads ("I Run To You," "American Honey" and "Need You Now"), the group has mixed more uptempo songs into both "747" and now "Heartbreak." This has helped the group create a set list that's better suited to the large outdoor venues that make up most of Lady Antebellum's tour dates.

"It's kind of a crazy juggling act, because I feel like the more energetic and uptempo songs you have, it actually makes the ballad a more special and unique moment," Haywood said. "Now I think with the amount of content and songs that we have, and especially with 'You Look Good' and the title of the record is a song called 'Heart Break,' which is another great, fun tempo song, it really allows those ballad moments to actually be more special."