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EXCLUSIVE

FIRST LISTEN: Lady Antebellum Weighs the Pros and Cons of Celebrity in the Amy Winehouse-Inspired Song 'Famous'

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HEART BREAK follows more than 18 million units, nine No. One hits, ACM and CMA "Vocal Group of the Year" trophies three years in a row, and countless other honors including Billboard Music Awards, People's Choice Awards and Teen Choice Awards. For more information about new music and upcoming tour dates, visit www.ladyantebellum.com.

There's the kind of fame Lady Antebellum enjoys – chart-topping hits and screaming fans at a concert, yes, but mostly friendly smiles, the odd selfie at a grocery store, autographs at airports. And then there's the Amy Winehouse kind of fame — full-time paparazzi camped at the door, hungry to capture each new tragic turn, every new misstep a headline.

Despite the trio's own celebrity, Lady A's Hillary Scott tells PEOPLE that Winehouse's life and death in the spotlight was a story completely foreign to them, and it became the inspiration behind "Famous," the song that ends their new album, Heart Break. "We were very intrigued by that level of fame, which we've never really had to carry," Scott says. "There's a lot more anonymity being a band."

The trio were in California last year writing for their new album with pal Eric Paslay when they began talking about the British singer, who died of alcohol poisoning in 2011 at the age of 27. They had all recently watched Amy, the 2016 Oscar-winning documentary about her life and death, and were musing about the nature of fame and the role the media and the public play in watching a life out of control.

"We are so fascinated by people who are famous and what it does to them, that we forget that they are people. And I say 'we' because it's all of us!" Scott says. "As much as we three want our privacy, we're just as guilty of looking at our socials or looking at the magazines in the grocery store. What makes us do that?"

The song's chorus explores that puzzle: "Kinda breaks your heart when you think about/Everything she gave

and the life they stole away/ You can't blame her/Everybody's drawn to the danger/Lookin' through the lens of make believe, ain't a mystery/Why a star goes down in flames"

"The song is also an examination of, why do so many artistic people have so many demons?" says Charles Kelley. "We started talking about Marilyn Monroe, Whitney Houston, all these artists who feel so lonely in their level of fame. They have everything they thought they wanted and it makes them unhappy."

There was a point in Lady A's career that Kelley says he could feel his world shifting. "The most successful we've ever been was probably after the night of the 2011 Grammys when "Need You Now" won Song of the Year," he says. "Everything was spinning so out of control with our schedules and I can see how to keep up that level of success and expectation can be hard on people." But, he says, the strength of their friendship and their history as a band carried them through. "It's nice for us to lean on each other and say, 'Hey, we may never have another "Need You Now," but we're going to be fine,'" Kelley says. "It would be so lonely to go through some of those things by yourself."

Plus, he says, he knew his band mates weren't going to let one another stray down a dangerous path. "We always keep each other in check too," he says. "We're not going to be yes people to each other."

With their musical inspiration more often drawn from love and love lost, "this is an interesting departure for us," Dave Haywood says of the song. "It's a really heavy song but we felt it was important to include because it closes out the record and makes you think."