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COUNTRY | BY KEN TUCKER

Regrets, I've Had A Few

Lady Antebellum's Breakup Anthem Scales The Charts

Lady Antebellum, one of country music's biggest new-artist success stories of the last two years, is on a roll. "Need You Now," the first single from the trio's forthcoming second album, is the Hot Shot Debut at No. 50 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs.

The track speaks to anyone who has broken up with someone and regretted it in the early morning hours, with lyrics like, "It's a quarter after one, I'm a little drunk and I need you now." Members Hillary Scott, Charles Kelley and Dave Haywood co-wrote the song with Josh Kear.

Lady A's 2007 debut single, "Love Don't Live Here," reached No. 3 on Hot Country Songs and then scored its first No. 1 with its third single, "I Run to You," on the July 25 chart. (Its second single, "Lookin' for a Good Time," reached No. 11 on Hot Country Songs in 2008.)

The trio's self-titled debut has sold 751,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and the group won the Country Music Assn.'s and the Academy of Country Music's top new artist awards in 2008.

Country KSOP Salt Lake City music director Debby Turpin says she's been impressed with the trio since she first met the band, and the new track is no exception. "From the moment I heard the twists and turns of the melody, I couldn't wait to hear it again—



Save it for the morning after: Lady Antebellum's HILLARY SCOTT, CHARLES KELLY and DAVE HAYWOOD (from left)

and again and again," Hilton says. "There is hit quality all over this song." KSOP played the new single 26 times during the week that ended Aug. 16, according to Nielsen BDS, the most of any U.S. radio station.

The station's listeners agree, according to Turpin. "After just a few days on the air, it is our second-most-requested song. Forget what I think about it—the listeners love it."

Kelley says the group, which is co-producing its second album with veteran Music Row producer Paul Worley, is spending more time on arrangements than it did on its first album. "Hopefully people can hear that on 'Need You Now,'" he says. "We're trying to get a little more creative on intros and outros. We've been able to take our time with this one. We've tried to analyze the songs

from a lot of different directions.

"We've been dying to get back in the studio," Kelley adds. "It's a different kind of artistic creativity; it's constructing something as opposed to entertaining."

The group toured with Kenny Chesney and Keith Urban this summer and also headlined some of its own fair and festival dates. "It's been awesome," Kelley says. "We're finally seeing that there's an awareness of who we are and our music. We look out in the crowd and we're seeing more and more people singing our songs."

That stands in stark contrast to shows the trio did in 2008, Kelley says. "For the most part, the majority of the audience had no clue who we were last year. It's pretty wild to see it move in baby steps, a little bit at a time. Hopefully it's just the beginning." ♦♦♦