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Breaking Big in Country: 5 new artists to hear now

From a Sturgill Simpson protégé to a rockin' five-piece



LANCO

The arena-rock leaning five-piece's first break came back in 2013. Frontman and primary lyricist Brandon Lancaster — yep, that's where the band's quirky name comes from, it's an abbreviation for Lancaster & Company — was working at the hot dog stand at Bridgestone Arena in Nashville when studio wiz Jay Joyce (Eric Church, Little Big Town) passed by his station. "I shut down my register and approached him, just as a fan," Lancaster recalls. By the end of the conversation, Joyce had told the singer to come over and play some music; a follow-up meeting saw the entire band performing in his studio. "After about the fourth song he stopped us and said, 'Guys, I get this. I want to record it. It want to be a part of it.'"

And the breaks have just kept on coming: The band landed a record deal with Arista Nashville and their debut EP, produced by Joyce, dropped last spring. Lead single "Long Live Tonight" cracked the Top 40 on the country airplay charts, and now the strummy charmer "Greatest Love Story," which earned placement in the Netflix comedy series *The Ranch*, has too. "We knew we had something big going on," Lancaster says of "Story." "Before we even recorded it, it started impacting people during our live shows. That was when we knew, 'Okay, this song is hitting people on a certain level.'"

Now, the group is readying for the release of their first full-length album. With the batch sent off for mixing, LANCO is eyeing a fall 2017 release. Asked what guides their song selection for the LP, Lancaster's answer is simple: Honesty. The singer says that it's the most personal and real songs that have been the most rewarding to mix in their live sets. "I've been a music fan my whole life," he explains. "[Before becoming a performer] I thought, there was a detachment between artist and fan. But what I realize now is that when these fans are

singing these words back to me, they're singing the words out of my journal. So, it's like, 'If you're this into this song, then we have something in common — even though we've never met and we're in a strange city, in a different time zone, we have something in common.'



"Greatest Love Story" is streaming above. LANco is currently on tour.