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Billboard

Rascal Flatts Press 'Rewind' and Emerge With Another Hit

With "Rewind," the band looks poised to score their eighth No. 1 on Billboard's Top Country Albums chart



This past Tuesday, **Rascal Flatts** released their ninth studio album, "Rewind." The group has quite an impressive streak going with their sales success over the years -- their past seven releases have topped the Billboard **Top Country Albums** chart. Lead singer Gary LeVox tells Billboard that their track record is something they take a great deal of pride in.

"It would be nice to debut at the top, and we've been fortunate enough to do that," he said. "But, the landscape of the industry has changed so much. We've been used to having big first-week sales, and now it's digital downloads. I think we always hope for the best, and debuting at number one is certainly the top of the list."

LeVox may get his wish. According to industry sources, "Rewind" is forecast to sell around 60,000 or so in the week ending May 18, which should place it at No. 1 on the Top Country Albums chart. It would mark the group's eighth No. 1.

The new album is paced by the success of the current single and title track, which rises to No. 5 on the **Hot Country Songs** chart -- their 29th single to crack the top ten. LeVox admitted that though the numbers are very impressive, the Grand Ole Opry stars say they are still as humbled today as when "Prayin' For Daylight" became their first hit in 2000.

"We've been fortunate to have so many singles do well. It's so hard to believe. At first, you just want a record deal, then you just want to hear yourself on the radio, then all these years later, we're still on the radio and still having hits. It's just so nice to know that the passion that we put into writing and finding songs that are great still have the impact that they did when

we first started. It's humbling, and it's crazy to think about all those singles. Hopefully, we'll add to it on this album."

One song that just could very well find its way onto the airwaves is the poetic "The Mechanic," of which Jay DeMarcus said knocked out everyone involved.

DeMarcus said he found the song during a late-night pitch meeting with songwriter Sara Johnson. She said "I'm going to throw something out there to you. I'm kind of nervous about this, but it's one of my favorite lyrics that I've heard in a long, long time. She played the song for me, and I was immediately mesmerized and blown away by the lyric. You can hear Tony Lane's handiwork all over that song, and Jaren Johnston co-wrote it too. It was one of those times, and it's only happened a few times, like 'Bless The Broken Road,' 'I'm Movin' On,' and a few things like that, where we all three huddled around the speakers listening to a song, and were speechless. It was a no brainer, and something we felt like we could sink our teeth into. When you've got a singer like Gary who believes in the lyric like that, and he delivers it that way, it's spectacular."

Though songs like "Payback" and "Night Of Our Lives" will no doubt sound familiar to their fan base, Joe Don Rooney says the album process for "Rewind" took them to a few new places. "I think we searched high and low and in places and spaces we haven't before in the past. I wouldn't use the word desperate, but in a sense, we wanted to listen in a way we haven't listened, and hopefully hear in a way we haven't heard before songs.

He added, "A lot of times in pitch meetings, publishers will pitch you things that sound like a Rascal Flatts song. Nine times out of ten, we love that, but we wanted to hear that one time out of ten – that special song that is something we've never done before that doesn't sound like anything Rascal Flatts would do as a demo. We found quite a few of those on this album that we're very proud of that were a different tempo, different beat, or a different hook. Maybe it's the same kind of subject matter we've done before, but just said in a different way."