

## LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

# Thomas Rhett talks "Tangled Up," his new album, track by track



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"Tangled Up," Thomas Rhett's second album, is out Friday. The first two singles from the record, "Crash and Burn" and "Die a Happy Man," have already generated a ton of interest and racked up some impressive sales.

In advance of Rhett's performance at the Oct. 2-4 Route 91 Harvest Festival at the Las Vegas Village — which also features Rhett's tour mates Florida Georgia Line, Keith Urban, Tim McGraw, Lady Antebellum and more — we caught up with the rising country star, who's on tour right now in Wichita, Kansas, and spoke with him about his new record, how he loves hanging out with his wife and cooking, what's in his Netflix queue, who would play him in a movie of his life and a whole bunch more.

You can read about all that in our feature in next week's Neon, along with excerpts from the interview, which will be posted exclusively online. In the meantime, here's Rhett giving a track-by-track breakdown of "Tangled Up," sharing his thoughts on each song.

### 1. "Anthem"

"Anthem" is a song that I really wanted to cut, strictly to put as number one on the album, because I plan on opening with that song for the next foreseeable future. I just think that song brings such a fantastic energy to open a show with, and I think it really sets the tone for what else is to come on the album. It's basically, the chorus is saying, 'This is an all-night anthem,' and it's a melody that is never going to leave your head. Basically, it's talking about you just being in this environment of the lights going down low, talking about how you need to move your feet, how you need to put your hands up. To me, it was really written as a show opener, and so, that's what we've got here.

### 2. "Crash and Burn"

"Crash and Burn" was written by my idol Chris Stapleton. He's my favorite singer and

favorite songwriter, at least in the last couple of years. Chris wrote this song, and from the first time I heard it, I think the first three times I listened to it, I don't think I knew what the song was about. I just knew that I liked the way that that chorus was so infectious and how it just engulfed my truck speakers. And as I started listening, I was just like, 'Man, this is like the saddest song I've ever heard.' So I think I love the fact of the irony of it being a really happy melody over a very, very sad lyric. And I think I was totally that guy in high school that, you know, just kept letting people get away and always had this problem of keeping girls around to date me. And so it really struck a chord with me, as my 15-year-old self. So it was very easy for me to dig down deep and remember those times and sing that in the studio. Chris could've cut this and killed it. The fact that he gave it to me was a huge blessing.

### 3. "South Side"

"South Side" was another one that I wrote with Chris Stapleton and my producer Jesse Frazier. I remember getting out of my bunk on the bus, to this crazy beat and Chris up in the front lounge singing this chorus, saying, 'People on the left, people on the right, shake your south side.' It's never a side that I've ever seen of Chris. It just seemed so fun, man. And basically, it's a country wobble, is what it is. It's just one of those songs that we've been opening with for a long time. If you can't just kind of let your guard down and smile and let loose a little bit after you hear that song, then there might be something wrong with you.

### 4. "Die a Happy Man"

You know, some of my favorite nights at home are when me and the wife actually do get to be at home. I feel like when you're at home, it's always, 'Well, you've got to go to this party; you've got to go do this.' Except for us, man, when we get a chance to be at home, we just turn on the Beats and either put on Marvin Gaye or Frank Sinatra, either one of the two, and we love to cook and drink wine while we listen to that older kind of music. It just kind of takes us back and makes us feel like we should've been born, you know, somewhere in the '50s or '60s. It seemed to fit mine and Lauren's typical Monday or Tuesday night in Nashville.

### 5. "Vacation"

"Vacation" was a song that I wrote with two guys from L.A., Joe London and Sean Keaton. Man, basically, the song, I think, just describes itself. It's basically like, you know, you're at work and you're kind of daydreaming about, you know, getting off at 5 o'clock, and even though you might be somewhere in the Heartland or somewhere where it's cold, you know, we're going to get out there and we're going to party just like we're on vacation. We're going to pretend like we're sitting under a palm tree drinking a Red Stripe, and we're going to pretend like we've got all of our friends here, just being idiots. That, to me, man, that's one of funnest songs on the entire album. Coolest part about it, is the entire band of War are co-writers on that song.

### 6. "Like It's the Last Time"

"Like It's the Last Time" is one of those songs that I've held on to for a couple of years. I wrote that song with my dad and there's actually been a couple other artists that wanted to cut that song, and for some reason, I just held on to it. To me, man, that sums up the

record to me, maybe not as melodic sound, but I think that's kind of how I live my life. You know, every day we wake up and we try to do as much as we can and have as good of a time as we can and love as many people as we can, because you really never know if tomorrow, or tonight, is your last day on this earth. So that's really what the song is about is just kind of living every day like, you know, like it is the last time.

#### 7. "T-Shirt"

"T-Shirt," we call this the lifer song, because I wanted to cut it on the first album, but it was on hold for Tim McGraw. And literally, Tim McGraw took it off hold the day that my record had to be turned in. So there was no time to cut it on the first record. But this was always my wife's favorite song, and for me, man, I was just like even though I've heard it a jillion times, I know that fans have never heard it, so I can't wait to cut it and see how they feel about it. Of the tracks we've put out, it's the biggest selling one on iTunes right now. So I'm glad they like it. "T-Shirt" is basically about you and this girl that you're dating, or you have dated, and basically, you know, it's just kind of like this remembering story — I remember when you were standing in my bedroom with my long T-shirt on and you were dancing around. It's basically just kind of a fun love song. It kind of just reminds me of, you know, when me and Lauren first got married and, you know, you're in that sort of honeymoon phase. It's just a good-time song and brings good vibes.

#### 8. "Single Girl"

"Single Girl" is another song I wrote with my dad, actually. It's basically, you know, you meet ... I mean, I still have a bunch of friends who are single, and you meet girls on the road that are single in your meet-and-greet and they always talk about, 'Man, I want to find a love so bad, like you and Lauren's. I just haven't found the right one yet.' Basically, it's me narrating in the voice of this guy saying, 'Single girl, you know, I know you're out there on the run and you're looking for all this stuff and you think you found something. But if you would just kind of turn around and look in my direction, I promise that I could make you happy.' And, so, yeah, I don't, man. I love that song. It's another one of my favorites on the album.

#### 9. "The Day You Stopped Looking Back"

Jaren Johnston from the Cadillac Three wrote that song. I just love the message of that song. It's basically this girl who is in a horrible relationship, and you've got this guy just saying, 'I promise you that the moment you just kind of drive away from this town and stop looking back, you'll know that your future is so much brighter, instead of just staying in this lonely pit that you've been in for so long.' So, I mean, the hook is 'the day you stop looking back is the day you start moving on.' I think that that can be applicable to so many people's lives. I don't know, man. I love the message to that song.

#### 10. "Tangled"

Gosh, "Tangled," I think, is the most different track on the record. I kind of call it "Make Me Wanna's" big sister. I don't know, man. I can't really tell you a whole lot content-wise. There's nothing in that song that's going to change anyone's life, but that melody is the most infectious melody I've ever heard. It sounds straight up like a Bee Gees song. I freaking love it. It's the hardest song I sing on the record, but it's fun to sing every night.

#### 11. "Playing with Fire" featuring Jordin Sparks

Man, just, what a ... like, that song still gives me chills. I don't know if you've listened to the song yet, but basically, "Playing with Fire" is about a guy and a girl who are in a relationship together and they know that it's toxic, but basically, they love this kind of pain that they both make each other feel. Hence, they love playing with fire, and the fire being both of them together. And, you know, putting someone like Jordin Sparks on a song like this, just like, I don't know, I think she just completely ropes in the message of the song. Her voice is one of the prettiest voices to come out of a female in forever to me. She sounds like dang Whitney Houston, to me, on this record. And she couldn't be a nicer human being. She came to Nashville and knocked this song out in, like, 45 minutes. But, yeah, man, she's fantastic and she's super talented.

#### 12. "Learned It From the Radio"

"Learned It From the Radio," man, is just one of those songs that, straight up, reminds me of turning 16 and getting my first truck and listening to nothing but my favorite CDs and my favorite radio stations. You know, you kind of figure out who you are when you get a vehicle, because all of the sudden you're on your own and you can drive wherever you want, you can hang out wherever you want — I mean, unless your parents were super strict. But it's amazing what you did learn from the radio, whether you were listening to what the DJs were talking about in the morning or you were listening to your favorite country artist. And the things that they were singing about are the things that you wanted to make part of your life — whether it was a song about God or about a girl or about a party or about, I'm in a freaking cornfield. I mean, it was all that stuff that we would listen to and we wanted to apply to our lives. I don't know, man. I think it's just one of those things that kind of taught me how to grow up and how to work and all that good stuff. So I think "Learned It From the Radio" is one of those songs that can apply to really anyone around the world.

#### 13. "I Feel Good" featuring Lunchmoney Lewis

We wrote this song and the two guys I was writing with are really good friends with Lunchmoney, and so they sent him the track and he literally just walked off his bus in Miami and put a rap on that bridge and sent it back to us, and that's what made the record. I literally wrote that song like a week before the album was supposed to be turned in. So that was a very last-minute one, and I'm so glad that we did, because that song brings so much happiness to me, and it's just such a fun song to sing and such a fun song to watch people listen to. "I Feel Good" is basically, you know, you could call it a Saturday. You know, you worked yesterday on Friday, you got two more days until Monday, and it's basically, you know, I'm going to live today just with a smile on my face. Nobody can bring you down. You know, you might have bills and you might have all these problems that you've got to figure out on Monday, but that can wait until Monday, because today I feel good, and I'm going to feel good the rest of the day. It's just really one of those really, really go-lucky, happy, happy vibes. I love it.

