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TV Thomas Rhett, Zara Larsson Shine in *CMT Artists of the Year Mashup*

He Thanks Fellow Artists for Inspiring Him

by **cmt.com staff** 10/20/2016

In his first-ever acceptance speech at the CMT Artists of the Year party, Thomas Rhett was quick to thank international pop star Zara Larsson for going out of her way to join him onstage in Nashville.

Backed by a band with a hefty, soulful horn section, Rhett and Larsson performed a mashup of his crossover smash “Die a Happy Man” followed by her breakout hit “Never Forget You.”



“She traveled from Sweden yesterday to be here and is literally flying to Australia tomorrow,” Rhett said. “Her voice is incredible. I’m glad she got to share that with you guys.” As accepting the trophy, Rhett also credited other artists who attended the Artists of the Year ceremony that aired Thursday night (Oct. 20).



“My wife always has this phrase — and I’m probably going to get it wrong — but she says, ‘As long as God is gonna to open doors, I’m gonna continue walking through them,’” he said. “I’m honored to be here. All the artists that honored in this room did not get here by chance. They got here by taking chances. I could go around and talk about all of them and how they influenced me and how they influenced my shows and the way I write songs.

“I feel like they paved the way for me to do something that I do which is kind of weird and kind of different. I appreciate y’all embracing it and for making me one of the Artists of the Year.”

The 2016 CMT Artists of the Year special re-airs Friday (9:30 a.m. ET/PT), Saturday (6 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. ET/PT) and Sunday (12 p.m. ET/PT).