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## High marks for Lady Antebellum's 'Need You Now'

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**Lady Antebellum's moody country cool and more capture our critics' attention this week.**

**Lady Antebellum, *Need You Now***

**( ★★★ ) out of four**

Lady Antebellum's vocal group of the year win at last fall's Country Music Association Awards signaled a changing of the guard inside Nashville. But if favoring the trio's moody cool over Rascal Flatts' heated vocal pyrotechnics seemed a little premature at the time, it looks positively prescient with the title hit from Lady A's sophomore set, a former country No. 1, crossing into top 40 territory. Charles Kelley's whiskey-rough and Hillary Scott's honey-sweet voices mix like a drink that goes down warm and smooth. And while the group's attempt at rocking out (*Stars Tonight*) isn't nearly as convincing as its booty call (*Need You Now*, despite its melodic resemblance to the Alan Parson Project's *Eye in the Sky*), Lady A has just about the best-sounding guitars on any country record right now that aren't played by Keith Urban or Brad Paisley. In a town where song is king, records don't often sound this good. — Brian Mansfield

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