



(02.14.2018) <https://www.rollingstone.com/country/features/dierks-bentley-on-way-women-are-depicted-in-country-songs-w516684>

Dierks Bentley on the Changing Way Women Are Depicted in Country Songs

Country star and writers Josh Kear and Ross Copperman talk about the message inside Bentley's empowering single "Woman, Amen"

Dierks Bentley has a knack for choosing just the right party songs – propulsive, hands-in-the-air jams that are all but irresistible whether on the radio or on the stage. Perhaps surprisingly, the singer-songwriter considers his latest single, the empowering "Woman, Amen," to be cut from that same cloth.

"It's a really great love song, but it also feels like a party for me," he tells Rolling Stone Country of the track that announces his upcoming album *The Mountain*. "I have party songs like '5-1-5-0' and 'Am I the Only One,' but you can get to that same destination in a different way, like with this song. It still gets to the party, it just takes a different route to get there."

Some might say it's a more thoughtful route. Written by Bentley with Josh Kear and Ross Copperman, "Woman, Amen" was inspired by the men's strong relationships with their wives. But the song is also an acknowledgement of the slowly evolving way that women are presented in country music.

"We went through such a long period of time where it was just booty-shaker songs, and now we've had our own little version of Hollywood here, I think," says Copperman, who took a wobbly first step in righting the ship by co-writing Keith Urban's "Female."

Kear, who most recently had a hand in Luke Bryan's hopeful new single "Most People Are Good," echoes Bentley's idea that "Woman, Amen" can be interpreted as a party song with a message. Its Imagine Dragons drums and huge "whoa whoa" refrain pop the cork, but the more somber lyrics take pains to praise women, especially the one who saved Bentley's "drifter's heart."

"In the context of historical country music, there has always been room for party songs. It's not like they suddenly became something you should steer away from," says Kear of today's songwriting trends. "Wanting to have a good time with a woman in a song or in real life has never been a bad thing. The way you talk about it might be shifting, and that is probably long overdue. If part of what is happening in our country as a whole is finding its way into the way songwriters lyrically approach the presentation of the message, great. That's going to be a good thing for everyone involved. It's going to make men more respectful. It's going to make women feel less objectified."



Recorded in Telluride, Colorado, *The Mountain*, according to Bentley, mixes elements of his last album, the slick *Black*, with his 2010 bluegrass departure *Up on the Ridge*. While a track list has yet to be announced for the LP, due later this year, Bentley rattles off a number of highlights: "Living," about the difference between being alive and actually living life; the story of perseverance "Can't Bring Me Down"; and the introspective "Burning Man," which he's already been performing live.

"There are a lot of songs about hope and gratitude and feeling alive and feeling good," Bentley says, circling back to "Woman, Amen." It celebrates "that person in your life, who grows with you, and grounds you but also allows you to continue to grow. I feel like it's a good place to start off from before you jump into all these other themes. Where does that gratitude come from? For me it all starts at home."