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Tucker Beathard Bares His Soul, Struggles With the Industry On Double-Album 'Nobody's Everything'



Tucker Beathard is doing things his own way. More than two years after the release of his debut EP on Big Machine Label Group's Dot Records, the "Rock On" singer is self-releasing his first full-length set *Nobody's Everything* today (Nov. 30).

As the first installment of a double album, the new project includes nine songs co-written by Beathard. The nine-song second half is due out next year.

In an interview with *Billboard* ahead of a performance at Nashville's Analog at Hutton Hotel, where Beathard played many of the songs live for the first time, the singer-songwriter detailed his long journey to *Nobody's Everything*. His time on Dot Records resulted in the release of his *Fight Like Hell* EP in October 2016, which included "Rock On." The song reached No. 2 on Billboard's Country Airplay chart and its follow-up, "Momma and Jesus," peaked at No. 43. When it came time to release his debut album with the label last year, he says there was a difference in artistic vision.

"It is all about the music for me," Beathard says, settling into a chair in Analog's greenroom. "Money and fame is not appealing to me if it's not something that I'm comfortable with to feel true to myself. For me, personally, it wasn't that big of a decision to [leave Dot Records]. I just knew this wasn't the right place. I figured anywhere else is better than the wrong place. That's how I looked at it." A representative for Big Machine declined to comment.

Beathard spent a year negotiating with lawyers as he and his manager worked to free himself from his first recording contract. A daunting experience that inspired many of the songs on his double album, the Nashville native admits that he's no longer upset about his failed label deal.

"Believe it or not, I'm grateful for it. It taught me a lot and it took me a while to see it from that perspective. I was bitter but I'm not bitter anymore because I realize I wouldn't have been able to make this album, which I feel is the epitome of what I want my first impression to be," he admits. "I think everything happens for a reason. It taught me a lot [as far as] the tangible business side of things."

The first half of the 18-track double album, available via all major digital service providers, is on Beathard's own Mother Tucker Records. He co-produced the project with Ryan Tyndell and Jordan Rigby, recording many of the album's vocals at 2 a.m. to capture the grit of Beathard's vocal range and the emotion within each song's lyrics.

Emphasis track, the vulnerable "This Life," was recorded live with Beathard singing and playing guitar. One of the most honest tracks on the album, Beathard declares he's his own worst enemy. The song details the many temptations and ups and downs of life on the road performing as a teenager. *Billboard* premieres the video below.



"I jumped into the business and on the road when I was 19 and I was definitely more susceptible to getting carried away with the whole sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll thing," Beathard, 23, admits. "After a couple years of that, it was leaving me more empty than anything. [In the song I'm] ashamed of it and recognizing it. That's what country music is about -- three chords and the truth -- and it all came out in that song."

One of the most emotional lines in the song for Beathard is when he reflects back on his youth. "There's a little kid hanging in a picture frame / That never thought about 21 / He'd break down somewhere / So damn lost he'd let roll off his tongue / This life is gonna kill me somehow / It's gonna chew me up and spit me right out," he sings.

"That line came from a real personal place. The whole song did, but that one is reflective on being your own worst enemy and putting yourself through this. Who would have thought that I would have let myself get carried away like this? I was just being brutally honest with myself," he explains. "I think that's the beauty of not only music in general, but what the roots and foundation of country music was built upon."

Another highlight is "Leave Me Alone," one of the first tracks Beathard penned when he was in a dark place while trying to get out of his label deal. During that time, he saw band members and people lose faith in him and jump ship.

"I was feeling a lot of pressure, like the weight of the world was on your back. It was one of the first ones I wrote to channel that emotion -- give me a break and leave me alone. It's portrayed through the story of a girl but that's just how I wrote it to be able to relate to people," he shares. "I tapped into a whole new spot for me as a songwriter. Unleashing emotion like that, allowing me to scream, so to speak. It was therapeutic and I stumbled upon a new craft to keep in mind as I write songs."

Some of the songs were originally slated for his shelved debut album with Big Machine, but were re-recorded for the new project. He says he's in a different place now. "I definitely feel more mature and [have a] better head on my shoulders with everything," he explains. "I think everything that I've been through up until this point was something I had to go through to mold me to who I am now as a person and artist."

Now secure in his business sense, as well as what he's willing to compromise on—or not—when it comes to his music, Beathard says the second half of his double album could be released on a label other than Mother Tucker.

"I have some offers as far as record deals that have come in," he says, explaining that he decided to hold off on signing with one in order to release the first installment of Nobody's Everything. "I didn't want to interfere with putting out music in November. I would rather put this out independently instead of have to push this back longer to just get a contract signed. I want to give fans what they've been waiting for and put out music for the first time. It's exciting to me. Finally! It all aligned. I'm excited to see how people react to it."