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Vulnerability Key To Country Singer Brett Young's Breakout



NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — “In Case You Didn’t Know,” a love ballad by country singer Brett Young, has been added to a lot of wedding playlists since it came out in 2017, but it has put Young in an awkward position for his own upcoming nuptials.

Young, who is engaged to longtime girlfriend Taylor Mills, said he’s already ruled out singing that song — or any other he’s recorded — at his wedding.

“One thing I think is just a terrible decision is to sing one of your own songs from your own record,” Young, 36, said. “That is such a cop-out and so cheesy and easy.”

The Southern California native has taken over as country music’s new heartbreak kid, thanks to that triple-platinum song and a string of other heartfelt singles from the debut self-titled album.

Young won new male artist at this year's ACM Awards and is up for new artist at the CMA Awards in November. His platinum-selling debut spawned four platinum-selling country singles and he just announced the release of his next album with Big Machine Label Group, "Ticket to L.A.," coming out Dec. 7.

Young hoped to become a baseball player in college but was sidelined by an elbow injury. He had been playing guitar since high school and was inspired to start writing songs after listening to Gavin DeGraw. So he worked as a bartender and sang wherever he could get a gig in Los Angeles



Country singer Brett Young is country music's newest heartbreak kid with several No. 1 hits. He said the key to his success has been the inspiration from his fiancée and his vulnerability. (Sept. 14).

"Ten years in total of playing bars and restaurants in one of the biggest entertainment cities in the world and I never got one meeting," Young said during a recent interview at The Thompson Hotel in Nashville's trendy Gulch district where he now lives. "I came to Nashville wanting to focus on the songwriting side of things. And within a year of writing songs and pitching demos with my voice on it, I had a record deal."

DeGraw said Young caught up with him as he was walking down Sunset Boulevard after a show about 10 years ago. They exchanged phone numbers and Young kept in touch to give him updates on his career.

"I love his story. He had high hopes for something else and it didn't work out," DeGraw said. "Instead of kicking a can about it, he found a new direction. It's a real classic underdog story."

Turns out he came to Nashville at just the right time. Young's image as a sensitive, athlete-turned-songwriter slid right into a niche among country music fans tired of party songs. Much of his first record was based on his lengthy relationship with his fiancée.

"The key has been vulnerability," Young said. "I'm a large guy and I came from the sports world, and the last thing I wanted to do was come barreling in with this kind of aggressive attitude. I think by being a guy that's willing to be vulnerable and show that, it's helped reach both male and female audiences."

He's been serving ballad after ballad to country radio, which has been surprisingly receptive to his slower songs. But he promises more tempo on the new album, including the title track, "Ticket to L.A.," which contains a story line fit for a Netflix romantic comedy.

DeGraw and Young, together with songwriter Ross Copperman, put Young's personal story to song in a new track they both sing on from the upcoming album, "Chapters." It felt very full circle for DeGraw to see a fan turn into a friend that has achieved his dreams.

"I've been lucky to have success," DeGraw said. "It's different when you get to watch someone you're friends with have success. It's well deserved. I tell Brett, 'You're gonna be the next stadium act.'"

Young is on tour with Thomas Rhett before headlining the next CMT on Tour trek, which starts in November. And he's still weighing his options for wedding songs.

"It is an interesting dilemma knowing that I got to sing something and I have no idea what it is," Young said. "I like stuff that happens in the 11th hour and I feel like this will be a thing I decide on like a week before or something."