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LANCO's Brandon Lancaster on Sharing the Stage With Brooks & Dunn for 'CMT Crossroads'



Photo by Jason Kempin/Getty Images for CMT

Brandon Lancaster could not hide his excitement sharing the stage with the legendary country duo of Kix Brooks and Ronnie Dunn during *CMT Crossroads: Brooks & Dunn and Friends*. Performing "Mama Don't Get Dressed Up for Nothing" with the award-winning icons was a dream sequence come true for the LANCO lead singer.

The milestone moment was part of a special taped earlier this month in downtown Nashville showcasing collaborators on Brooks & Dunn's *Reboot*, a collection of re-recordings alongside some of the country's emerging superstars. Others joining the party were Luke Combs, Jon Pardi, Midland, Brett Young and Cody Johnson.

For Lancaster, it's another blessing for he and his band's meteoric rise building off the success of their first album *Hallelujah Nights*. Here the front man tries to put into words what it meant to work with inspirations in Brooks & Dunn and making new music.

What made "Mama Don't Get Dressed Up for Nothing" the perfect song for LANCO?

Brandon Lancaster: Brooks & Dunn epitomize an era of country music. One thing they did with their career is had this rocking sound. We thought if LANCO was around in the 1990s country era, that totally could have been a song we made back in the day. It also had a rock element. It's a fun song. It really represents that honky-tonk era that Brooks & Dunn were kind of trailblazers for.

What was it like doing the 1996 hit live with the originators?

When we recorded the song, I didn't know if we would be able to perform it live with them. You dream of that. Once I found out I was performing it live, I was so excited because the song is perfect for that moment. That song is literally about getting out of the house, hitting up the town, going to the honky-tonks. It was the perfect song to sing with all these people that definitely didn't get dressed up for nothing.

A few years ago we got to play a festival. After we performed I remember being so excited to go back out there trying to get to the front just to watch them because they are so iconic. I was actually in the crowd watching Brooks & Dunn, so to be on stage with them was a really cool opportunity. It was a lot to live up to. It was surreal. Once in a lifetime.

When you look at the lineup in general it's a lot of newer artists on the scene. LANCO certainly fits the collection of these emerging performers.

I think it's an exciting time to come up in country music. One thing for us is fun is between Luke Combs and Kane Brown, we've known them and playing in bars together. To see everyone rising up and finding their own voice, at the end of the day country music has been about telling your own story and putting that to music. Even when I look at others on the Brooks & Dunn *Reboot*, I think it's such a great representation of where country is because it's all kinds of voices. Right now, there is no rules for how you're going to put your voice out there.

Given the success of your first effort, do you feel any added pressure with a sophomore record in the works?

I think when the album first came out, it really did exceed our expectations. You always have dreams, but when those dreams become reality you ask yourself how did this even happen? And can we do this again? You have to be very honest that the way this happened was we just had fun, went in the studio, wrote some songs. We showed ourselves. I think the biggest success story that came from all of it was being able to tell our stories, and people connected to that.

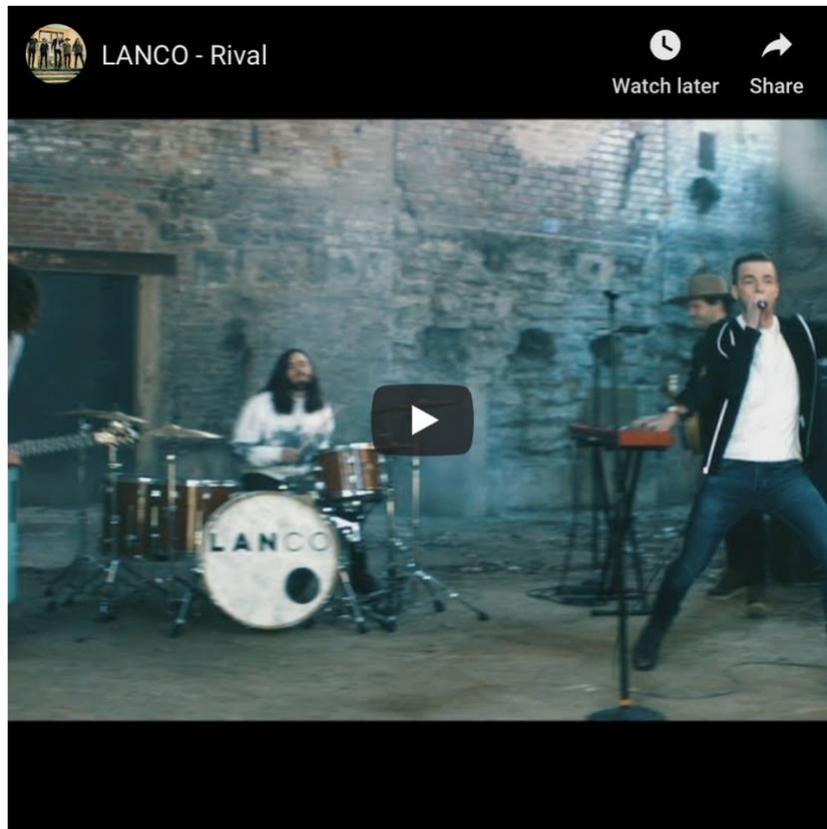
Your newest single "Rival" has really been an anthem for people. What kind of feedback have you gotten?

It definitely is an anthem. Before it even came out, we got to shoot the music video. I saw we impacted people right away because we had these people on set. Real kids with real issues. We told them we had this wall we built. They listened to the song. We told them this song is if there has been anything in your life that you feel has tried to stand in your way. An expectation set against you or

something said, we wanted them to put that on this wall. They started walking up putting things on the wall that people told them or what they had to fight against in life.

They then got to knock down that wall as a visual representation of knocking down your rival. On set when we knocked down the wall, it wasn't acting. Everyone was cheering. There was such joy in the air and feeling of triumph. This song providing such an impactful moment for these 40 people on set.

If it could affect this many people in such a way, we already accomplished what we wanted to with that song. We wanted to tell people, "Hey, you matter. Your story matters. What you're doing in life matters. You just have to believe in yourself. Since then we've played it live, and people would meet us letting us know how the song has got them through certain things. That song has already served its purpose in motivating people, and that is what we're proud of.



Is there anything you can tell us of more music coming out and what the sound might be?

New music is coming. We've been in the studio really for the past six months...When people listen to your record, that's how they get to know you. The biggest thing is making sure you know some of our viewpoints and what we might have been going through. We really tried to do that on the second record as well.

We wanted to put those different experiences we've gone through and our friends have gone through. We've grown both in the lyrics and the music. We've grown as musicians and make sure that's on the record. We're going to make it a representation of where we are in life.

I know you guys are spending much of the summer performing at festivals. What are your must-haves on the road during these months?

Cold beer, water are must-haves on the road. We love festivals. We set up a tent. We set up a whole area with a tent, a whole bar and stuff. We try to camp out and be one with the festival. We want the same experience. This year I made sure I bought a fanny pack, so I can make sure I could walk around the festival and make sure I have the must-haves like sunscreen, water, my phone. Anything can go in there.

Is there anything you are binge-watching on the tour buses and airplanes?

I'm watching *Chernobyl* right now. I haven't finished it yet. We all got seriously into *Game of Thrones*. I've been watching the new version of *The Twilight Zone*. But ever since *Game of Thrones* finished I've been looking for a new show honestly. That was a big part of my life. I'm waiting for that next big one.

***CMT Crossroads: Brooks & Dunn and Friends*, Friday, June 28, 10/9c, CMT**