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Maddie & Tae preview concept album with new single 'Friends Don't'



Maddie Marlow, left, and Taylor "Tae" Dye of music group Maddie & Tae during the 52nd Academy of Country Music Awards red carpet at T-Mobile Arena on Sunday, April 2, 2017, in Las Vegas, Nev. (Photo: Larry McCormack / Tennessean.com)

Country music fans met Maddie & Tae when the women were 18 years old. Their catchy ditty “Girl in a Country Song” went viral in 2014 and was a direct blow to how women were portrayed in lyrics in the bro-country era.

Since then, the teens have grown into young women and their music has matured along with them. “Friends Don’t,” the lead single from their upcoming album, is on country radio now. The up-tempo almost-love song was inspired by Maddie Marlow’s sister who was trying to gauge a guy’s romantic interest.

“She kept telling me things he was doing like calling her or getting her flowers – that’s how we got inspired,” Marlow said. “I was like, ‘That guy is not your friend. He’s totally into you.’ Tae and I have both been in that situation, and it’s really awkward but still exciting.”

“Friends Don’t” is not only the album’s lead single but also its opening track. The yet-to-be-named project is a concept album that follows a relationship from beginning to end.

“Are they just friends? Are they more?” Marlow explains of “Friends Don’t.” “They fall in love and then they go through the heartbreak phase. Then the end of the story is the girl picking up the pieces and allowing her trials to make her stronger and using heartbreak to build her character.”

“Friends Don’t” is the duo’s first new single in more than two years. They couldn’t be more excited for people to hear their new complete body of work. The new album is due in stores later this year.

“Coming out at 18 years old and coming back out at 22, it’s a big difference,” said Tae Dye. “Those are very pivotal years for young women. For Maddie and I, we felt like we’ve really, really grown in the last four years and we wanted to be able to show our more mature side.”

The duo will play CMA Music Festival, which is June 7-10 in downtown Nashville. Maddie & Tae will be featured on the Radio Disney Country Stage at 4 p.m. June 8, the Cracker Barrel Country Roads Stage at Ascend Amphitheater 8:20 p.m. June 8 and the Chevy Riverfront Stage 10 a.m. June 10.