

Tennessean.

(4.10.20) - <https://www.tennessean.com/story/entertainment/music/2020/04/10/maddie-tae-the-way-it-feels-interview/5126537002/>

With an album 5 years in the making, Maddie & Tae ‘spread a little joy’ in uncertain times



If any country music duo can handle an album release with unblinking acrobatics, it's Maddie and Tae.

The outfit, featuring 24-year-old singers Maddie Marlow and Tae Dye, logged five years between full-length releases — a by-product of former label Dot Records collapsing in 2017.

Bouncing from a defunct label to their new home, Universal Music Nashville, opened a two-year gap between singles from a duo riding a wave of mid-decade Platinum success (who *doesn't* remember the no-nonsense debut anthem, “Girl In A Country Song”?).

And Friday, after years of writing and waiting, Maddie & Tae debut “The Way It Feels,” a 15-song reminder of the group's penchant for real-life experiences explained through diligent truth-telling.

After all that time, they wouldn't dare let COVID-19 prevent this sophomore album from reaching earbuds.

"It would only make sense for when the album finally comes out to have a global pandemic going on," Marlow said via phone. "With this journey, of course there's gotta be something crazy."

They've gotten pretty good at life's "left field" moments, she added, "We can catch a curveball like a damn professional baseball player at this point."

They're not balking at the pandemic forcing promotional tour changes or postponing concert dates. If anything, new music can offer a bit of escapism.

And the new album — with stories tackling grueling heartbreak, glowing marriage and the late nights where friends matter more than either — delivers plenty of opportunity to forget about self-isolation.



"We're excited to share our own new music and spread a little joy and excitement," Marlow said. "Cause I think all of us need a little more of that these days."

Dye, taking a break from Mario Kart, her lockdown activity of choice, added, "The thing that makes me feel better is knowing that all the artists are having to go through this. We're all in it together and we're using each other's ideas and following each other's leads. And that's really cool."

Self-described as a record of love, loss and redemption, "The Way It Feels" offers five new songs with ten tracks previously released on a pair of Maddie & Tae EPs. Dye and Marlow

co-wrote 14 of the songs, including stirring Gold-certified single “Die From A Broken Heart” and supercharged party call, “Bathroom Floor.”

A rightful guitar-and-banjo ruckus that Dye said began as a tearful ballad, “Bathroom Floor” sings, “Get up on the bathroom floor Get up off the bathroom floor/Let's wipe the tears off your cheeks ... Let's show that heart some neon magic/ Till we're drunk and laughing/ Back on the bathroom floor.”

But the album doesn't shy from tearful moments, either. They chronicle life's turning points (“Trying On Rings”) and unavoidable messiness (“Lay Here With Me,” a Dierks Bentley duet) while holding true to the no-nonsense tolerance (“Drunk or Lonely”) that first earned Maddie & Tae acclaim.



Dye said she's keen to release “Water In His Wine Glass,” an acoustic number they penned in about 20 minutes. The chorus sings, “Bring the man he used to be back/ ... I'm on my knees, and all I ask/ Is, Lord, pour water in his wine glass.”

“It's cool as a writer and you feel that inspired and that connected to a song,” Dye said. “I think it can be very healing for people.”

“ ... Wine Glass” is one in more than a dozen songs reminding Maddie & Tae, and their fans, that some things are worth the wait.

“Everyone thought we went on some hiatus or like took a break,” Marlow said, “but we were working our asses off — writing every single day and trying to just keep perfecting our craft.

She continued, “That's why this record means so much. ‘Cause it's a tangible reminder that this is what we're supposed to be doing, curveballs and all.”

