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# Lady Antebellum Celebrates 10th No. 1 Single With Emotional Celebration

Lady Antebellum celebrated their 10th career chart-topping hit, “What If I Never Get Over You”—the trio’s first at new label home BMLG Records—during an emotional No. 1 party held at Nashville’s Analog at the Hutton on Feb. 3.

The song marked Lady Antebellum’s first No. 1 in six years, following 2014’s “Bartender”—a fact not lost on Lady A’s Dave Haywood, who brought his five-year-old son, Cash to the child’s first No. 1 party.

“My wife and I were talking yesterday and I said, ‘I think we should bring him to the party,’” Haywood said, before tearing up. “This has not happened in his lifetime, you know? That just makes me want to say we don’t take this lightly. This is big for a lot of people, but this is huge for us. I didn’t know if we’d get to have another one of these, and it means so much, so thank you. It’s given us such a peace to make music again and that’s been such a gift.”

Not only did the song reach the No. 1 spot on country radio, but it was also certified Gold by the RIAA.

ASCAP, BMI and SESAC co-hosted the party, which honored the song’s writers Sam Ellis (ASCAP/UMPG), Ryan Hurd (BMI/UMPG), Jon Green (SESAC/UMPG), and Laura Veltz (BMI/Big Machine Music).

ASCAP’s Beth Brinker, BMI’s Spencer Nohe, and SESAC’s Lydia Schultz spearheaded the festivities, while others in attendance to celebrate the songwriters included UMPG’s Cyndi Forman, Big Machine Music’s Mike Molinar, Big Machine Label Group founder/President/CEO Scott Borchetta and BMLG Records President/CEO Jimmy Harnen.

“This has been such an incredible journey so far,” Lady A’s Hillary Scott said. “I thank so many incredible hearts up here. I’m so overwhelmed with love and gratitude...you just poured your hearts into promoting this song.”

Scott also specifically thanked the Big Machine promotion staff for their tenacity and creativity in bringing the song to the attention of radio execs.

“We have had so many singles released over the course of our career. Never have we ever been doing radio remotes in Las Vegas and had someone from the promo team—Michelle [Kammerer]—taking PDs out of the booths, with headphones, to play them our latest single and to get them in from the beginning to build that. They heard it first, and felt that ownership. That was so above and beyond, and so gorilla grassroots, it was

incredible, just the fact that that was the tone that was set going into this new chapter, in a really pivotal time in our careers.”

Lady A’s Charles Kelley had similar compliments for the Big Machine Staff and the band’s management at Red Light.

“I could sit here and thank every single person. You have all been involved at some point in the past 13, 14 years. Jimmy [Harnen], we did it. We dreamed about doing this as a band. I’ve never worked with someone who sends us a text every 20 minutes and he’s the head of our label. Sometimes it’s like too much information, but it takes all that anxiety away. We can focus on the music. It’s just so comforting. To me, this day is all about the songwriters, publishers and promo staff. Also our manager Callie [Cunningham], we had a serious moment that could have completely gone the other way, but she and everyone else on our team weren’t going to let us throw it away. This is pretty wild.”

Universal Music Publishing Group’s Cyndi Forman announced a donation to the organization MusiCares in the name of the songwriters.

Forman also addressed Lady A and producer Dann Huff, saying, “Watching you guys throughout your career, the word that sums it up for me is ‘integrity.’ Thank you guys so much for making this song yours. Dann, we are always in awe of how you make these records sound. I know one writer/producer—I won’t say his name, but it rhymes with Sam Ellis—who was beside himself when we first heard the song together.”

Forman said of Ryan Hurd, “He sort of grew up at Universal and I remember the conversations we had when he was trying to decide whether or not he wanted to make a record for himself and do the artist thing and the one thing he said was, ‘I don’t want to quit writing for other people. I want to keep having activity, I don’t want to lose momentum,’” before noting that indeed, he has stayed true to that goal.

She told Green, “Through all of this we’ve had a lot of cuts and misses and frustrations. But through it all, you never came in with a ‘Why me?’ attitude. You kept your head down, you stayed focused, you focused on identity as a songwriter and we got these great [writing] combos...because of what you brought to the table as a songwriter. I’m so proud of you and congratulations on your first number one.”

Forman also thanked Veltz, saying “You are the common denominator that makes the magic happen.”

“We work with so many great songs and still there are some that separate themselves,” Big Machine Music’s Mike Molinar said of the hit. “The day that this song was texted to me, I was driving down the highway. By the time I made it out of the first chorus, I had to pull over, get off the road and call Laura [Veltz]. I said, ‘This is not a little hit, this is a big hit.’ And it’s also the scariest moment for a music publisher, because the songwriters did their job now it’s ours to mess up. So I was really lucky we had Cyndi and Kent Earls and experienced publishers we could talk to about where we are going with it and who do we trust with this song. So much of this is about collaboration and trust. We knew we could trust Allison Jones and producer Dann Huff. This is an amazing record. We knew we could trust the BMLGR team to leave no stone unturned at radio. What we really knew is we could trust Charles, Hillary and Dave to get everything that makes this song great. This may be their first number one in several years, but to paraphrase the words of the great poet LL Cool J, ‘Don’t call it a comeback—they’ve been here for years.’”

Molinar also noted that Veltz is a co-writer on the current No. 1 single on the country charts. “And today we are having another single shipped, and you are getting another cut today. Congratulations, my friend.”

Big Machine's Scott Borchetta recalled the early conversations he had with the trio in bringing in them into the label fold. "When Charles and Dave and Hillary were open to having a conversation about possibly switching homes, Jimmy and I got really excited. We also got a little bit scared. We wanted to make sure we get this right and really understand what we want to represent to them and make sure we were giving them the opportunity to do everything they wanted to do because as we all know there is a lot left to do in Lady Antebellum world. We had this incredible meeting over at Charles' house because they were very honest about who they were and what they wanted to do, but they also allowed Jimmy and myself to be very honest about what we thought they were doing, and we made some pretty specific recommendations and really laid the groundwork for what our relationship could be. I don't know that I've ever been involved in anything that I've been more proud of than this Lady Antebellum record."

The No.1 party was also a reunion for Lady Antebellum and many execs on the BMLG team. In 2009, as Lady Antebellum celebrated their first No. 1 single with "I Run To You." At the time, execs Matthew Hargis and Jimmy Harnen were both at Capitol, while Michelle Kammerer worked at CAA. That same year, Harnen left Capitol to join Big Machine.

"For the next nine years, we all admired Lady Antebellum's meteoric rise from afar at BMLG," Harnen said. "Then in 2018, they were looking for a new home and Scotty B and I wasted no time in offering them a new home at BMLG. Next we needed a producer and it took us all of about 30 seconds to hire Dann Huff. "

Harnen presented the trio with a crystal award commemorating their No. 1 single.

Veltz thanked Huff, Borchetta and all of BMLG for their work and persistence in promoting the song to radio.

"You make a song and you know it's right...I feel like it's my baby and then it's heading off to college and you're just rooting for it."

She also thanked her co-writers, and teared up as she addressed Big Machine Music's Mike Molinar.

"Thank you for what you've built and what you continue to build. Songwriters are so lucky to have you at the helm of careers that we hold dear. To my sister Alison Veltz Cruz, I love you. My family, to my husband Wesley who is just everything and to our children, they are my support system at home and really allow me to have fun with this. It's a gift I won't ever get over. To Hillary, Charles and Dave, thank you so much for just killing this song...in every good way. It is so weird to see your song somewhere near 'Need You Now' on a Wikipedia page. It is such an honor to have a song in your catalog."

It was UK native Green's first No. 1 party.

"As a band and as human beings, you are completely world class," he told Lady Antebellum. "You crushed this song and Ryan, Sam and Laura, that was a great day, a good time. You guys are geniuses and getting to write with you guys as much as we have—and hopefully continue to do—is a real privilege."

"My parents are here and they dropped me off in this town in 2005 to go to college and they thought I was going to be some hit superstar. I went and got a sociology degree and so this is probably a really cool moment for you," Hurd said. "I currently work with every person in this room I think. I want to thank everyone at ASCAP...I had been with ASCAP for a really long time and now I'm at BMI, but thank you to Robert Filhart who decided I might be good at this, and for introducing me to people like Kent Earls. I owe so much to you guys. BMI thank you for supporting me now and for this really cool guitar that can match Maren's. The publishers in this room, all of you taught me how to do this and how to be a good songwriter. WE surround ourselves with

people who make us feel good about our music and push us to be better. Then, I have another side of my career and there are managers and business managers that are amazing. The BMLG radio team is amazing. I work with a label and I know how much it takes to promote a song. Thank you for hustling so hard for us on this song. This song was the song where I had a couple of people say 'You should record this,' and I didn't feel like I had that platform yet so thank you for using yours. You guys do not need our help to write your own songs and write your own hits and the fact that you decided you wanted to step out with on your new project, we are all so blessed by it.

You guys are going to be in the Country Music Hall of Fame one day." Hurd summed.

He also thanked his wife Maren Morris, who was in attendance.

"I remember sitting and writing this song, and just imagining life without you is the most horrible inspiration, but having someone like you that would be so painful to lose is the reason this song is so special. I love you very much and I'm so proud of you and our little baby boy."

The evening concluded with Hurd, Veltz, Green, and Ellis joining Lady Antebellum for a sincere, stirring performance of "What If I Never Get Over You," with Haywood's son Cash sitting behind him at the piano.