

JASON JONES  
"Ferris Wheel"  
bio

"It's gonna go a little something like this/I'm gonna lean in to give you a kiss," sings Jason Jones, taking his best gal on a roundabout trip to bliss in "Ferris Wheel," his new single. Those lines could serve as a statement of intent not just for the object of his affection, but for the legions of country fans who are about to go airborne via the breakout song from the Warner Bros. Records newcomer. Hailing from Wakulla Station, Florida, Jones is a triple threat as a songwriter, guitarist, and singer, with an immediately irresistible alto-tenor voice that really does lift you 100 feet off the ground. So fasten your seatbelts; it's going to be a smooth—but skyward—ride.

"I just had the most fun singing that song," says Jones of "Ferris Wheel." "The lyrics are very picturesque, and it made me think about growing up and going to the fairs and riding the rides, eating corndogs and cotton candy." And some slightly older pursuits, too, since the song *is* about taking advantage of that heightened atmosphere to snag a kiss. "I think every young guy wants to take his girl up there on the Ferris wheel, so if she gets a little scared, he can kind of hang onto her, and maybe they have their first kiss. It just captures that young love kind of feel, and it's got this great groove and playful attitude that add to the fun."

"Ferris Wheel," like the rest of Jones' forthcoming Warner Bros. Records album debut, was produced by Brett Beavers, who's best known for his decade-long partnership with charttopper Dierks Bentley. Jones met Beavers before he even got his recording contract, and he was impressed by the producer's selectivity and loyalty in sticking with Bentley from well before the fame through a series of No. 1 singles. After signing with Warner, Jones knew just who he wanted to work with, and they co-wrote a number of the upcoming album's songs. "Brett doesn't try and push himself off on you," says Jones. "He just really knows how to write and work well with artists. From the very first time we went in and recorded, it didn't sound like anything else. It sounded like Jason Jones. And I was like: Okay, gotta keep doing *this!*"

And what is that sound? Jones' pipes are certainly higher and purer than the gruffer chops that have been the stock-and-trade of a lot of country's newcomers of the past few years, so it's not just the Ferris wheel doing the exhilarating elevating when that voice first comes out of the speakers.

If comparisons must be made, Jones shares, "People have said that my voice is similar to Keith Urban's, at times. They've also said it's similar to John Mellencamp's. That's really cool, because I love both those guys—their songs and what they're all about. But I hope that I bring something different to country music, and that people dig what I'm doing and like my voice."

But what's not to love? You couldn't be locked into a Ferris wheel car with a sweeter sound.

Jones' earliest memories of country music come from riding in the car while he was being shuttled between two states. "My parents divorced when I was a kid. My mom lived in Georgia and my dad lived in Florida, where I'm from, so I spent a lot of my time going back and forth. There are a lot of Diamond Rio and Shenandoah and Vince Gill songs that, when I hear 'em, it reminds me of driving back and forth, or being on the boat up in Georgia in the summer with my mom, sisters, and stepdad. There's a song for every major thing that ever happened in my life, and that's huge to me. Also, when I was 12 or 13, I saw Diamond Rio in concert and was honestly just blown away by how they came running out and were like giants on that stage. It wasn't anything I thought I could ever be capable of doing."

In high school, Jones formed a hard rock band, "but I always loved country music the most, and I'd get out of band practices and go home and grab my acoustic and start trying to learn the songs that were on country radio." Partway into a scholarship at Florida State, he dropped out to move to Nashville and pursue his dream, and hasn't looked back since. He fronted a band at the city's famous Wildhorse Saloon, playing cover songs and a few originals, even as he got a songwriting contract with Warner/Chappell music. He got work putting his pristine voice on other writers' demos, too, partly as a crafty method of getting in the door to meet and work with established songsmiths.

By the time Warner Bros. Records came knocking, he had an arsenal of original material as well as ideas for outside choices. "There's definitely plenty of songs out there in the world that I love that I didn't write," he says, "and I have no problem putting them on my album!"—one of those being "Ferris Wheel" (which was written by Kyle Jacobs, Josh Kelley, and Rachel Thibodeau). But he's naturally proud of road-tested originals like "You're My Favorite," which has already been used at weddings. "To me, that's the ultimate compliment, that somebody would love my song enough for that." Another early fan favorite is the more sorrowful "She Was." "I really want my music to touch people's lives and help them in some way or another, whether it be helping them get through losing somebody or helping them come up with that really-hard-to-find first dance song for their wedding."

For right now, country radio listeners have a first-kiss song... or, for those of a certain age, a fondly-distant-memory-of-a-first-kiss song. Whatever the climate outside may be, "Ferris Wheel" ensures that summer is already here. Corndogs are, of course, optional. Hey, carny: Take it around for another spin, will you?