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"Live It Out Loud" by Michael Dean Church

Next rating - B-

The debut album by Georgia native Michael Dean Church found its way to my desk in December. I'm not completely sure how that happened, but I'm kinda glad it did. In the downtime before the big labels begin releasing their summer CDs, it's good to know that real country music still exists in the country music business.

In a refreshingly varied set, Church shows he can go from straight country to smooth country crooning to gritty country blues, and never miss a beat with songs like "What Am I Crying For," "I Won't Run," and "Another Only One." And "Burned By The Same Fire Twice" is as solid a country song as anything on the radio.

In another time, "Live It Out Loud" could have been a firm foundation to build a solid mainstream country career on. Times have changed, but I still hope it helps this new career.