

TALKIN' TURKEY WITH THE DIXIE CHICKS



John Nutting has interviewed some of the biggest names in world music, especially country, during his career but even he admitted to be a little nervous when it came to interviewing the Dixie Chicks for Saturday Night Country on ABC radio network. Was it because he knew the Chicks have a reputation for speaking their mind or was it because John, like everyone else, was in awe of what the Texan-based trio's phenomenal accomplishments.



The Dixie Chicks Tour Dates:
Sept 28 Melbourne Rod Laver Arena
2nd SHOW - Sept 29 Melbourne Rod Laver Arena
Oct 1 [sold out] Brisbane Entertainment Centre
2nd SHOW - Oct 2 Brisbane Entertainment Centre
Oct 4 Sydney SuperDome
**2ND SYDNEY SHOW MOVES
INTO THE CITY'S HEART:**
Oct 5 Sydney Entertainment Centre
2ND SHOWS ARE ON SALE: July 21
TICKETEK 131 931 or www.ticketek.com.au

THEY are one of the hottest tickets in the country music world and they are heading our way later this year as part of their *Home* world tour.

They are, of course, the Dixie Chicks who earlier this year in March laid the groundwork for their upcoming shows as part of their world tour. The Chicks are delighted the tour will end Downunder where they have been one of the hottest overseas country acts since they burst onto the scene with their *Wide Open Spaces* album in 1997.

While in Australia the Chicks did a "one-off" show in Sydney to "whet the appetites" for their legions of fans around the country. In doing so have guaranteed their return performances in September and October will be sell outs.

The Dixie Chicks have a huge fan base in Australia. The girls have been busy working on building in other parts of the world, especially Europe.

"We recently toured Europe promoting the *Home* album and we proved to be every popular over there this time," Emily Robison told John.

"It was nice to see immediate results of us being over there with album sales up because we hadn't had much 'luck' before in Europe.

"It's been part of the plan to get more fans there."

It may seem hard to believe the Dixie Chicks would need a plan to build a fan base but as Natalie Maines pointed out, the timing of this tour had a lot to do with it.

"It does surprise me how well we have been received this time," she said.

"We were interviewed on our last tour there. At the time, we were told dance music was in and we didn't have a place at all.

"But now we are being told people now like the real sort of roots music so I guess we are there at the right time this time."

It may have also had something to do with Natalie's comments about George W. Bush and the US involvement in the Iraqi conflict which also may have won over European fans whose countries weren't eager to be drawn into the war.

The reception to the Dixie Chicks in their own country was less than warm after Natalie said she was ashamed the president came from Texas.

While the comments made headlines around the world, this caught Natalie a little off guard.

"I didn't realise what kind of impact we have on pop culture," she told John.

It was the "down home hardcore country fans of the US" who were the most vocal in their reaction to the Chicks.

The Dixie Chicks aren't ones to shy away from

controversy and have taken the whole thing in their stride.

"We realised people who hated us for saying that, were the ones who hated us anyway so we just gave them another reason," Natalie laughed.

"The true fans and 'sane' people appreciated we used our First Amendment rights. I have no regrets."

Ironically, the reaction to the Chicks' stance was taken out on their third single, 'Travelin' Solider' which was a very topical song about a young man heading off to war.

"It's ironic that it is such a relevant song for the times, though I wish it was just another song. It's also ironic that it is on this album and it is the song getting banned."

In Australia the song made the number two spot on the country singles charts, continuing an extraordinary run for the Dixie Chicks *Downunder*.

Their previous single, the old Fleetwood Mac song, 'Landslide' made the album after being chosen by Natalie as a song for the demo of *Home* though it wasn't a first choice.

Emily was wary of doing covers because "it's hard to do it better or different from the original."

"Nat was confident we could do it differently and after we did some different arrangements in our lounge room, I knew it would work," she said.

"There are a lot of younger fans who have never heard the song before so that's another reason to do it."

As for their first single off the album, 'Long Time Gone', there has been plenty of speculation as the message behind it.

However, it's best left up to the Chicks.

"The song is the writer's (Darrel Scott) take on his disappointment on what's happening in Nashville and country radio," Nat explained to John.

"It is also very well written with lines like 'Now they sound tired but they don't sound haggard, They got money but they don't have cash' explaining the situation today."

"The views expressed on the song are not necessarily our views," Emily laughed.

(Perhaps not in public).

Whatever their views and their beliefs, the Dixie Chicks have brought a new generation of fans to country and their popularity continues to rise in Australia. ■

