



Brad Paisley for

"The more success we have," says Natalie, with mates Emily and Martie, "the more we have to prove."

Back On The BUS

Grammy winners
the Dixie Chicks
hit the road with
their kids in tow

Every new mother suddenly discovers that kids will get into anything if it's not childproofed. Even if Mom is a Dixie Chick.

The Chicks have hatched two children since the last time they hit the road. That's why lead singer Natalie Maines snapped up a tour bus that previously belonged to fellow celebrity mom Faith Hill.

"There's a floor that covers the steps, so a baby couldn't trip and fall while the bus is moving," she reports. "All the doors are padded, so they can't hit their heads on anything. It's got a full-size refrigerator, which is a good thing to have with kids. There's a little trundle bed that pulls out from the master bed. And it's got a big sink that you could bathe a baby in, though I don't think I could bathe Slade in it — he's a little big now!"

Indeed, Jack Slade — Natalie's son with her husband, actor Adrian Pasdar — is now 2 years old. But there will also be a younger baby crawling around with the Chicks on their Top Of The World Tour, their first road trip since 2000's blockbuster *Fly* jaunt. That's because Chick Emily Robison and her husband, singer/songwriter Charlie Robison, welcomed son Charles Augustus in November. And Emily's sister Martie Maguire and husband Gareth have already discussed having kids of their own, so there could be more to come.

While many performers are reluctant to take kids on the road, Natalie sees this as a golden learning opportunity for her son. "I think it's really great for Slade to get to travel around the world," she says.

Slade will see a whole lot of new things over the next several months, as the Chicks set out on their 2003 Top Of The World Tour. Beginning in

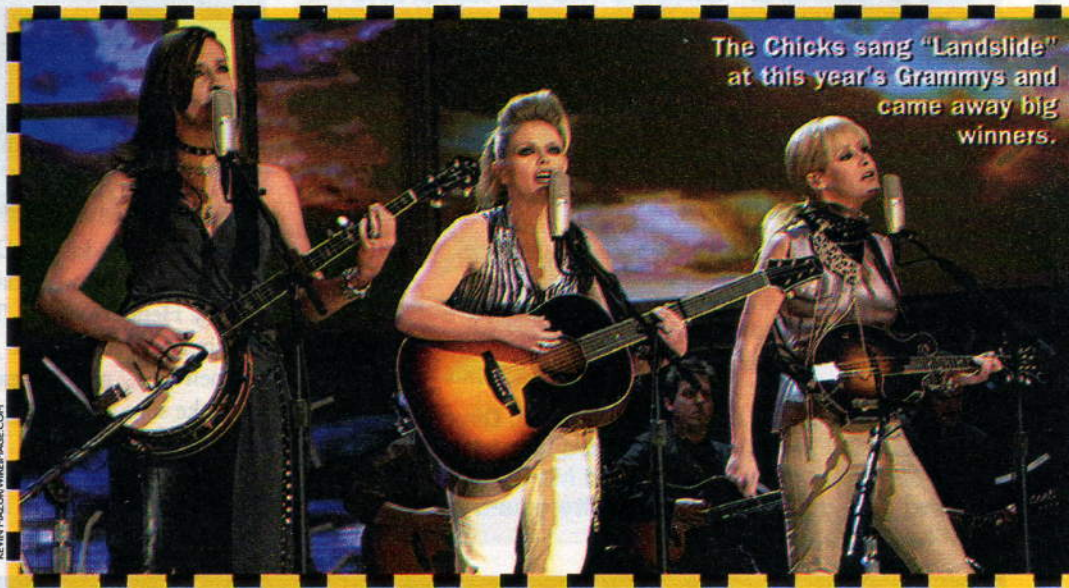
Europe, the band will also conquer Australia before beginning a nearly 60-city North American trip in May.

The Chicks promise that their fans will get a kick out of the show, which will feature them playing "in the round" in an effort to get closer to the crowd. "Our goal is to eliminate that typical audience-performer barrier and to be able to practically reach out and touch our fans," says Natalie. "To be separate and far-off is not what this music is about."

Even though the show will be intimate —

They've also just released *An Evening With The Dixie Chicks*, a video and DVD featuring an expanded 16-song version of last November's in-concert TV special.

And if that doesn't satisfy your craving for live Chicks action, you can get first dibs on the good seats at this summer's shows by joining the group's "Official Artist Club" at dixiechicks.com. The club also gives the Chicks' hard-core fans a close-up look at the band through tour diaries and backstage photo galleries, among other features.



The Chicks sang "Landslide" at this year's Grammys and came away big winners.

featuring a mix of the acoustic sound of their latest CD, *Home*, with rowdier Chicks hits — that doesn't mean fans won't go away dazzled. "I can't give away all the surprises, but it'll be very visual," teases Natalie. "I want people to walk away thinking that it's better than the *Fly* Tour, visually and musically.

"We hope people go away feeling truly energized. That's part of our job. It's not just making music — we feel it's equally important to entertain. And I feel that the more success we have, the more we have to prove."

That success keeps mounting up with *Home*, which has already sold five million copies and won the Chicks three Grammys.

"We feel so isolated from our listeners sometimes, because we can't read all the mail and get on the website all the time," says Martie. "I think the really dedicated fans will enjoy it."

The Chicks certainly do seem to be enjoying themselves these days. The key, they say, is having one another to lean on.

"We just have a lot of respect for each other," adds Natalie, "which I think is the basis for any great relationship, be it with your family or your husband. We each appreciate and respect what the others do in this band. None of us thinks we'd be where we are without the others."

— Chris Neal
Country Weekly 27

APRIL 1, 2003