

Blues/Jazz Special: Muddy Waters, remixing jazz, Ellington

PULSE!



Dixie Chicks

What part of "cute"
don't you understand?

Guided By Voices
Randy Newman
Folk Implosion

www.towerrecords.com
SEPTEMBER 1999

chicks with dix

The



den there if something like "you dirty bitch" and so
almost a far thing? I love you and the way in
Oh not it was a Number One record
"So (laughs) and on my mind when I wrote I
If I do this it'll be a hit - she - she - she
the Facts and Fiction? I think I would have
it - all the waiting - she I gotta keep
"... exactly once I have the idea."
... it's some musical figure
... will set it off. Almost always the music
comes first. Once in a while it's different; on this album a book
Biological Implications: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900
by Alfred Crosby did it. It's got a grim title but it's very enjoyable. It
it's a science book and I'm reading it for reviews. It tells simply
how European culture, animals and diseases overwhelmed the rest of
the world. I mean, it's not like something the kids have been charmed
up for, but I got a song out of it and I'd do anything for that."
Even exposing financial disasters and failed marriages, "I think
this is a more autobiographical record than usual, for no reason that I
can think of. I did a record of Downer with Dixie Flyer,"
and New Orleans has true things that hap-
pened. This album is a Country, that's the way I
grew up. I grew up in all kinds of stuff with
their family, and in fact, where we all
got together. I mean, I mean, or Bill Calley
want to be a singer in one room
and we had a record and my
but boys is over the
down

men
gong

Step aside, Shania!

Dixie Chicks

invade the land of Lilith

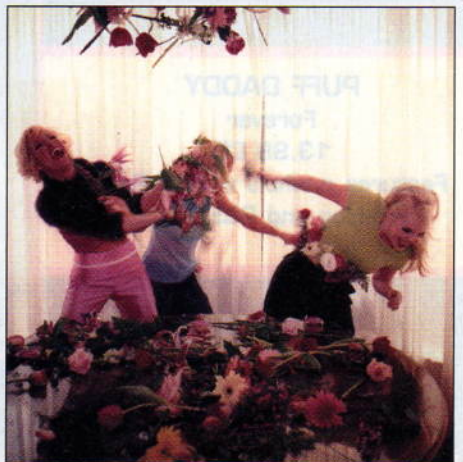
We really are down to earth girls," Emily Robison assures me, "but we love to dress up." Robison is sitting in the Dixie Chicks' dressing room, backstage at the Lilith Fair's San Diego stop. She's wearing a lightweight lime green little summer dress. Crowning her lank, blonde hair is a kind of novelty beret—something that the late Groucho Marx might have worn in his declining years. It's fashioned out of Astroturf; and the top is supposed to be a golf course putting green, with a little white flag and full sized golf ball dangling from a string.

The Dixie Chicks also do lots of cute photos: Posing with big cigars. (They're tycoons!) Three blonde heads lined up along a recording studio mixing board. The fact is, the Dixie Chicks would be unforgivably nauseating if they weren't the front end of one damn good country band. Robison plays banjo and dobro with the easygoing mastery of a seasoned Nashville studio cat, while her older sister Martie Seidel channels Chubby Wise on her fiddle and mandolin. Singer Natalie Maines possesses one of the gutsiest voices in contemporary country.

She can go from dulcet high notes to a barnyard howl and make you glad to come along for the ride. She grabs hold of a song and throttles it good, singing with a kind of barely controlled emotiveness that sometimes brings the late Patsy Cline to mind. The Dixie Chicks have accomplished an admirable musical feat. They've injected a note of genuine roots country and bluegrass into their state-of-the-art Nashville pop arrangements. This sets them apart from "designer country" counterparts like Shania Twain, and is frequently used to deflect criticisms that the Dixie Chicks are just the Country Spice Girls—the backwoods Bananarama. The Chicks come on stronger than ever on their newest album, *Fly* (Monument/Sony), the follow-up to their sextuple platinum Grammy magnet *Wide Open Spaces*. They've upped the rock quotient on tracks like "Hole in My Head" and "Some Days You Gotta Dance." Of course, the album contains a good measure of lavish, chart-friendly ballads ("Cold Day in July," "Without You," "Heartbreak Town"). But the Chicks and their backing band also show how they can tear the top off a

Not just a backwoods Bananarama: (l-r): Martie Seidel, Emily Robison, Natalie Maines

PHOTOS BY JOHN DUNNE



By Alan di Perna

