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**DIXIE CHICKS**

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# Dixie Chicks

WING THEIR WAY TO THE TOP





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**W**ho says chickens can't fly? If you're the Dixie Chicks, you can. In the last two years, they've amassed more than 30 "best" awards. With two Grammys for Best Country Album and Vocal Performance, the British CMA for Best International Group, the 2000 CMA Entertainers of the Year crown — plus statues for best album, vocal group and music video—the sassy Texas trio can do no wrong. And they're doing a lot.

They've graced the cover of nearly every major consumer magazine and had feature stories in others. They've appeared on just about every talk and musical variety show, and, certainly, have been all over the radio. They've appeared in irreverent print ads for Candie's and silly barnyard scenes for "Got Milk?" They've sung songs about living a loose lifestyle ("Sin Wagon") and murder ("Goodbye Earl"). In 1999 they opened for George Strait and Tim McGraw, and played 20 Lillith Fair dates, winning over a primarily pop audience with their cow-girl empowerment. In 2000, they launched their own sold-out headlining arena tour that was so successful they had to extend it. They've visited the White House and met with the President. They've become champions of the World Wildlife Fund.

And oh, by the way, they've sold 18 million albums.

Underneath all the flashy costumes, high-spirited stage hijinx and jaw-dropping — if admirably honest — I Am Woman innuendo, is a group of substantial musicians and entertainers who revel in pushing the envelope. The world-class musicianship of sisters Martie Seidel and Emily Robison coupled with

Natalie Maines's ebullient vocals make for, quite simply, an eclectic musical tour de force.

They certainly took the country music world by storm with their Southwest blend of banjo, fiddle and dobro. Add to that the boundless, goodtime spirit and a total lack of fear and you have the most popular group in country music. Their debut disc, *Wide Open Spaces*, has sold more than 10 million copies; the sophomore release, *Fly*, has passed the eight million mark. They took some "time off" in early 2000, reportedly to rest, but much of the time was spent planning for last summer's tour. Now, they swear they're going to rest a little while. Or is it "nest"?

Maines has lit in L.A. where she and her husband, actor Adrian Pasdar, recently celebrated the birth of their first child, a boy, Jackson Slade Pasdar. Robison is holed up in San Antonio where she and her husband — who she calls her best friend — are working on their ranch and building a house. Seidel lives in Nashville, and plans to write, write, write. "I've experienced so much in the last year, personally," she says. "I have a lot to get out and get down on paper." Seidel's pen has already yielded considerable success. Two cuts on *Fly* were her co-writes with Marcus Hummon: "Ready To Run" and "Cowboy Take Me Away." Robison has two co-writes on *Fly*, Maines, three.

"When we're writing songs, we're writing from our experiences . . .," says Seidel. "Cowboy Take Me Away," for instance, was written about Emily's marriage to Texas singer/songwriter Charlie Robison. The song earned her one of three BMI Awards this year — she and Hummon also won for "Ready To Run,"

which they wrote for the film *Runaway Bride*, and Seidel and sister Robison shared one for "You Were Mine." The triple play also gave Seidel BMI's crown for Country Songwriter/Artist of the Year (an honor she shared with country/pop goddess Shania Twain).

The Chicks plan to focus on their songwriting this year, since their tour last year failed to yield much time for writing. "A lot of being on tour ends up being not about the music because you're worried about logistics, technical things," says Seidel.

As far as what we can expect from their third album, the girls say it'll be more of the same, which is to say, *different*. "There's always the core of the Dixie Chicks," says Emily. "It's always kind of a snapshot of our lives. When we go into the studio we'll see what songs have inspired us, ours or those that we've heard from other songwriters."

Perhaps part of the Chicks' success may be that while women strongly identify with their *joie de vivre* and the lyrical content of the music, so do men. Says Seidel: "Just about everyone can relate to songs about needing the freedom to chase your dreams or dealing with a broken heart or falling in love or even just wanting to be a little wild and crazy every now and then."

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