

# cma C I • S E U P

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000

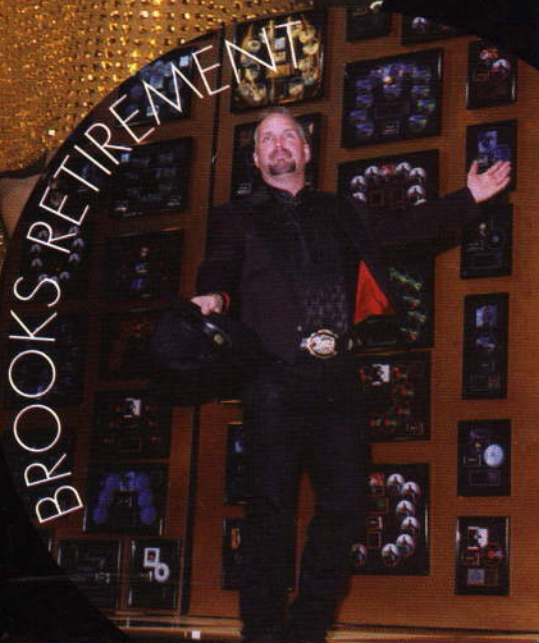
DIXIE CHICKS FLY INTO THE RECORD BOOKS



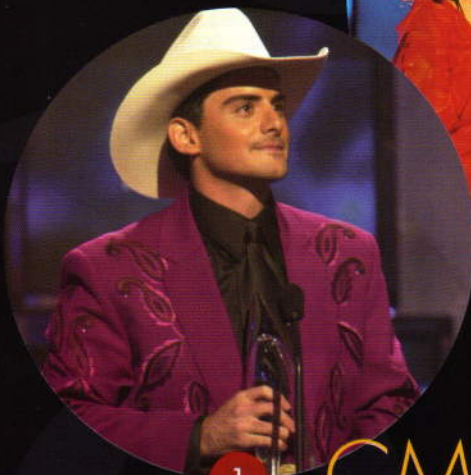
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Winning Moments. 1. Brad Paisley - Horizon 2. Dixie Chicks - Entertainer, Vocal Group, Album and Music Video 3. Lee Ann Womack - Single of the Year, 4. Faith Hill - Female Vocalist 5. Alan Jackson & George Strait - Vocal Event 6. Mark D. Sanders & Tia Sillers - Song of the Year, 7. Tim McGraw - Male Vocalist 8. Montgomery Gentry - Vocal Duo





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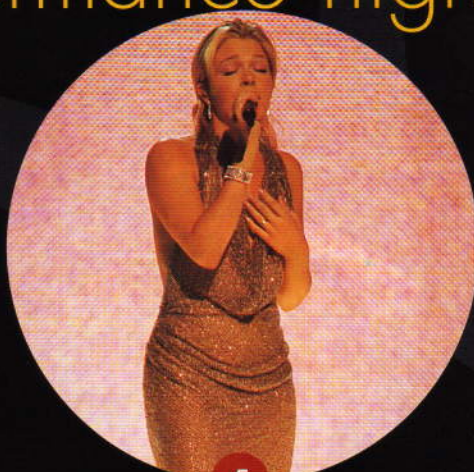


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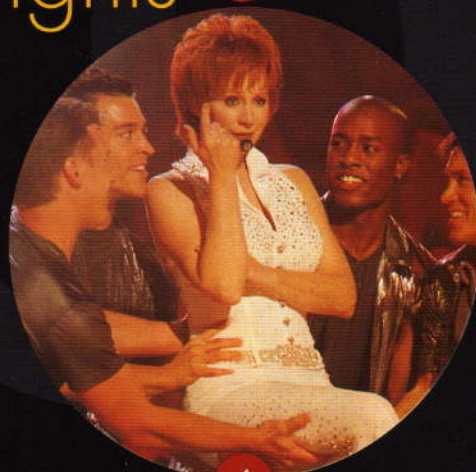
# performance highlights



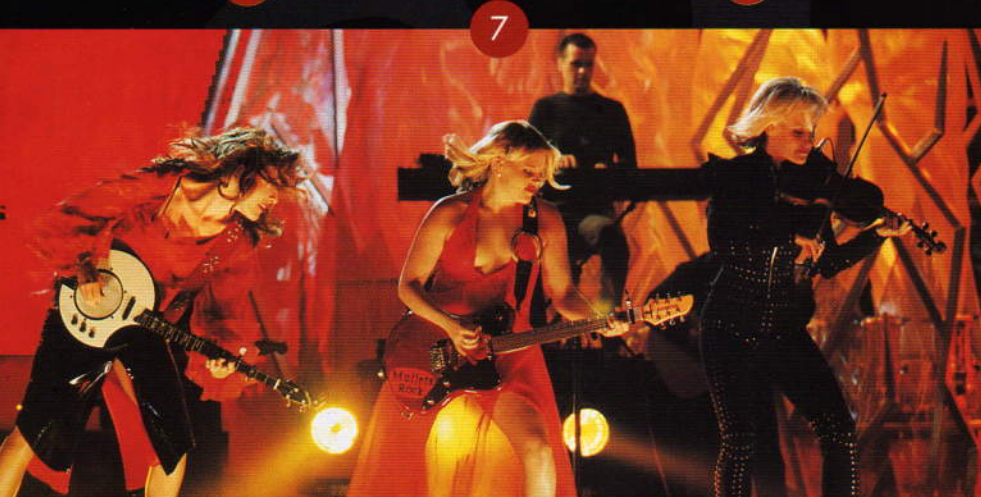
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Under The Lights. 1. Tim McGraw 2. Montgomery Gentry 3. Brad Paisley & Ricky Skaggs  
4. George Strait 5. LeAnn Rimes 6. Reba McEntire 7. Dixie Chicks 8. Faith Hill

photography by Chris Hollo



# Y2CHICKS



## The Year of the Dixie Chicks

**A**s celebrations were underway around the world ringing in the new millennium, the Dixie Chicks were preparing to embark on an unforgettable and memorable year. Now, in the final two months before winding down one of the year's hottest Country tours, Dixie Chicks' Emily Robison takes some time to talk about their whirlwind year. This isn't a whirlwind, it's a tornado.

The Chicks (Natalie Maines, Emily Robison and Martie Seidel) saw numerous awards (four CMA Awards, two Grammy Awards, two Academy of Country Music awards), a wedding, a pregnancy, their first mega-successful headlining tour, an RIAA Diamond Award (10 million albums sold for *Wide Open Spaces*) - and an upcoming network television special. The Dixie Chicks also were the top winners at the "34th Annual CMA Awards" in October taking home the night's highest honor - Entertainer of the Year, Vocal Group of the Year, Album of the Year (*Fly*) and Music Video of the Year ("Goodbye Earl.") In 1999 the Dixie Chicks became the first act in the history of the CMA Awards to be nominated for Entertainer of the Year on the strength of a debut album. This year, they became the first group since Alabama (1984) to win the highly coveted and prestigious Entertainer of the Year award. "We've really worked hard to be as entertaining as possible and to put on a show that raises the bar a little bit for Country Music tours," says Robison. "I think we've done that. So, to win [Entertainer of the Year] helped to justify all the work. Last year we were on Tim McGraw's tour and George Strait's tour and we got great exposure. But to not have put on our own tour, we didn't feel very worthy last year. There's a lot of work that goes into it, and this year having put as much as we did into the 'Fly Tour', it was wonderful to be recognized for all the hard work." The fans showing up each night for their shows and snatching up 17 million albums to date proves that they are truly the real deal - a girl band with true talent. From Martie's masterful fiddle playing, Emily's rousing banjo licks and Natalie's critically acclaimed original sounding vocals, they have won over the critical media and industry skeptics, who pick apart or doubt the style and substance of many female artists.



From the start, the media reviews made only glancing references to their being a girl band and their looks, but instead quickly filled the space talking about their talents as true musicians and pickers. "I think women overall have to prove themselves a little bit harder," says Robison. "We used to get girl band questions like 'Do you all cat-fight?' Do they ask Diamond Rio that question? Because we're women, they think we fight. What is the stigma in male groups? We kind of went up against a little bit of that, but then people see our dynamic and realize that that's not the case. We've been very lucky, and the press has always been very kind to us from the beginning. I

We feel very lucky being able to have the critical acclaim and also be able to have the record sales because sometimes they don't go together.

think because we did so much to prove ourselves, to not be perceived as a put together studio act," says Robison. "We feel very lucky being able to have the critical acclaim and also be able to have the record sales because sometimes they don't go together. So, that's a double wonderful thing for us." The saying goes, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." The Dixie Chicks are a prime example. As many awards and achievements the group has received this year, they have also experienced their own individual successes. The individual recognition adds depth to the group dynamic and drives them to reach new heights. "We're always working as a band so much, when you're recognized individually, that's always fun," says Robison. "I think it's a different kind of high than the high you get when you win a group award or something like that." Martie Seidel received her first-ever BMI Awards this year, winning the BMI Songwriter/Artist Award for "Cowboy Take Me Away," "Ready To Run" and "You Were Mine" (written with sister/Chick Emily Robison.) Seidel shared the night's honor with fellow artist and superstar Shania Twain. "I know Martie was really proud of her BMI award, being able to stand up there with someone as prolific as Shania Twain," says Robison. "Martie is hitting her stride as far as songwriting goes. So, I think if you're encouraging, it makes her say 'All the time and effort I've put into writing has really paid off.' So, it kind of gives you a kick in the butt as far as continuing with that."

Robison has had her own individual successes this year. She was nominated by the Academy of Country Music for Specialty Instrument for her talents on the banjo, a gift long admired by critics. A May 1991 article for *Buddy - The Original Texas Music Magazine*, elaborated "Emily on the banjo, she of the quick and complicated finger rolls, is plenty hot for a player of any age. Thank heavens for Earl Scruggs when Chicks like Emily come along." Maines, Seidel and Robison's individual successes can also be found on *Fly's* liner notes, co-writing with some of the industry's top songwriters - Marcus Hummon, Stephony

Smith and Eric Silver. Each of the Chicks contributed their own songwriting talents, writing or co-writing five of the album's 14 cuts. The multi-platinum selling Monument Records trio is obviously excited about the successes they have had since making their major label debut in 1998, but they are just as excited for the people around them who have contributed to their achievements. "To me, that's the best," explains Robison. "I love being able to affect other people around us. I love to share the wealth as a general rule," Robison said. "We definitely feel like the people around us are just as responsible for everything that's happened as the core three of us. Someone like Susan Gibson ["Wide Open Spaces"] who was just an obscure songwriter, who had never had a cut with anyone, and probably never even had been to Nashville before the song. She is in this group called the Groobies in Amarillo, Texas, and I love being able to see them be able to afford to go back in the studio and make a killer album because they have the means to do that now. That's really a very rewarding part." In their live show, the Chicks bring out a couch to recreate "Emily's living room," to take their fans back to their early days of what it was like writing, picking and playing music. Robison explains, "Looking back, you can always say, 'Those were the good ol' days.' But I wouldn't go back for anything. It's one of those things where once you have surpassed a certain point, it's easy to romanticize about the way it used to be. But I feel like I'm having the best time of my life right now, and those were really tough days, struggling to make ends meet and playing these gigs that you didn't want to be playing. Sometimes you do humiliating things to be able to make sure you had a gig, and you do certain things to be able to completely make the right artistic decisions. That's the best by-product of success is being able to put your foot down and say, 'Now, this is our vision, this is how we're going to do it, and if you don't like the way we're going to do it then we have the means to be able to do it on our own.'" To see a Dixie Chicks concert is to also have the opportunity to get a glimpse into their musical roots and influences, extending as far as the hand-picked opening acts. The artists are a combination of each of their tastes and talents. Robison explained that

A lot of people don't realize how cool bluegrass music is until you're actually sitting there. It's a very much alive music.

the artists are an extension of the Chicks. Their selection says to the audience, "This is a piece of us. This is the music that we listen to, and we'd love for you to hear it too." Robison said, "We had the opportunity to expose our fans to a lot of the music that we love or that we grew up on. Patti Griffin was a given. She's been a constant in all our CD players since the moment we saw her open for Shawn Colvin one night at the Ryman Auditorium when we were recording (*Wide Open Spaces*.) "And Ricky Skaggs, of course, comes from the bluegrass blood that

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# Y2CHICKS

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we have. Martie and I grew up listening to tons of bluegrass and going to festivals. We used to see him when we were kids, and he was always so wonderful and such a great inspiration to us. A lot of people don't realize how cool bluegrass music is until you're actually sitting there. It's a very much alive music. And Willie Nelson comes from our Texas, honky-tonk roots. Just the fact that he said, 'Yes.' We said, 'Let's just ask him and get it over with.' I was the one designated to call him, and I was so nervous." Joe Ely and Groupavida, a Cahunta band from San Antonio were recently added to some dates on the Fly Tour - which Robison said comes from living in San Antonio and developing a love of Mexican music and salsa. The Fly Tour wraps up in early December and the Dixie Chicks announced in October that they would be taking next year off. Robison says they "will go be with our hubbies and nest a little bit and have some fun doing some outside interests." Robison claimed they "haven't really planned it yet, and don't really want to plan it right now. "Natalie is going to take it easy and have her baby, and I think for the most part we're just going to go off and be creative, write and get our creative juices flowing again. Pretty much just get a life back outside of music," Robison commented. "You kind of feel like when you write songs you're writing songs based on real life, and unless you're living a real life, it's hard to write." Y2K was certainly not a disaster for the Dixie Chicks and their team. In fact, everywhere you turned there was another award being won, another record being broken or another certification being bestowed. With their fans showing, 17-million times over, that the "Chicks Rule," and their industry peers bestowing numerous awards, it truly has seemed to be "The Year of the Chicks." On behalf of the Dixie Chicks, Robison said "Thanks" to their industry friends..."It never ceases to amaze me the support we've gotten from everyone. I think sometimes, it's really easy when someone becomes so successful, the process of starting to pull them back down begins. I think, in a way, it's human nature, but everyone continues to be very supportive of us and I really want to let everyone know we are so proud of being in Country Music, and I'm not just saying that. I feel like we will wave the Country banner as long as everyone will allow us to. It's the kind of music we've come up through, and we have no intentions of going anywhere anytime soon. Thanks to everyone that voted for us. That's the ultimate compliment!"

**Dixie Weathersby**