

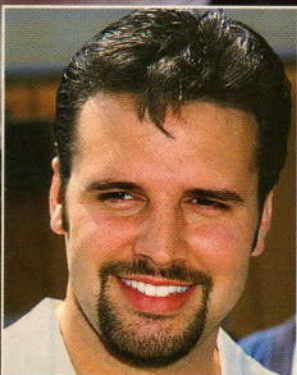
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Pickin' Up A Storm Dixie Chicks

Their Amazing Story... PLUS - High School Photos



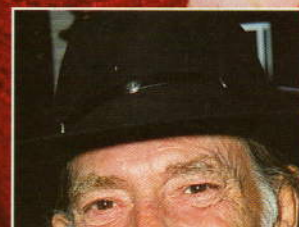
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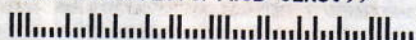


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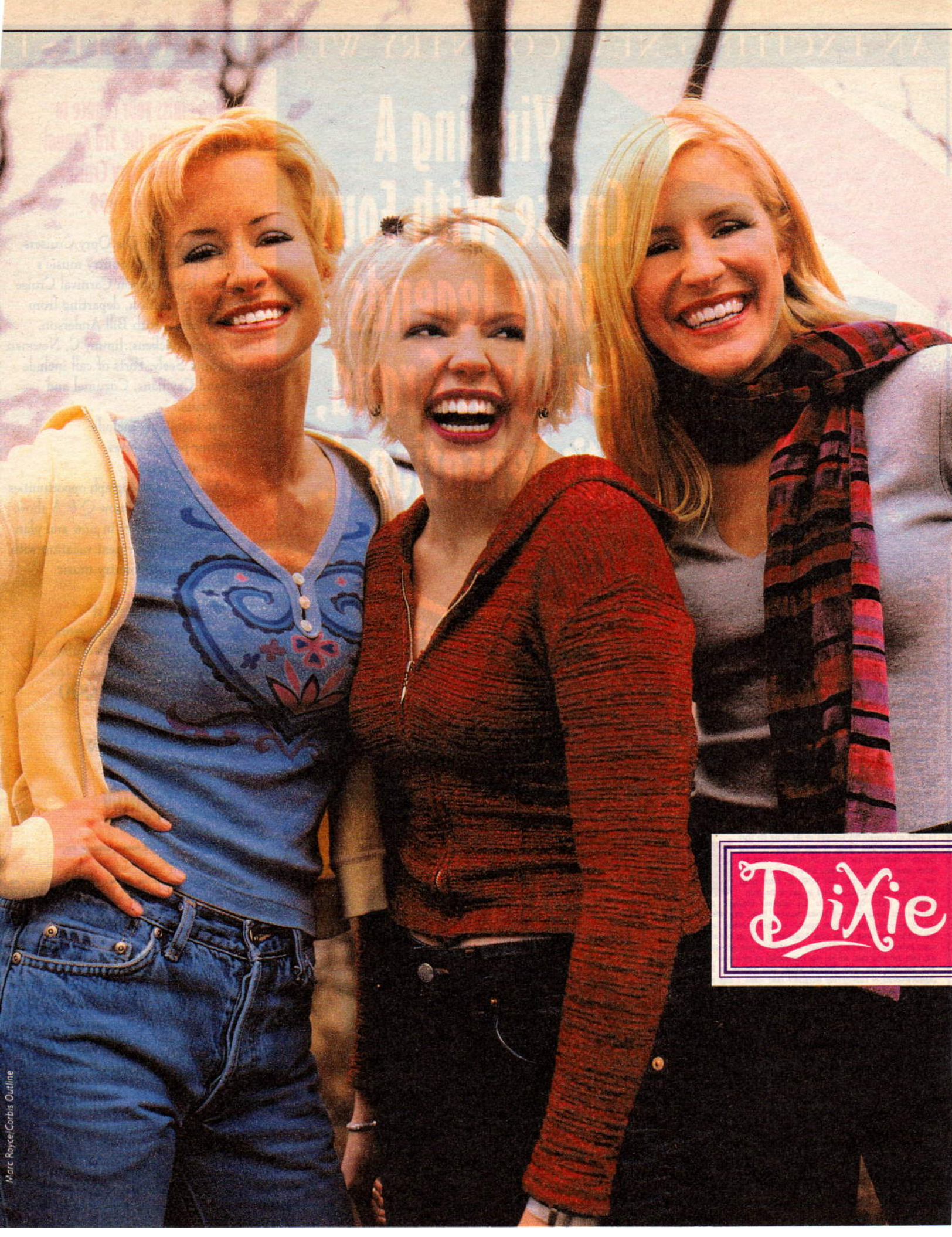
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Dixie

Ruling the country roost

Emily Robison loves the first impression the Dixie Chicks makes on guys – before they even sing a note. No, make that, she *lives* for it.

“The best part is dispelling the myth about women playing music – you know, the old stereotypical-blonde thing,” she says. “Half the fun is having guys say, ‘Oh, God, an all-girl band.’ And then blowing their socks off!”

Since their national debut in January 1998, the Dixie Chicks – Natalie Maines, Martie Seidel and her sister Emily – have left millions sockless and breathless. Their flawless harmonies, jammin’ instrumental chops and candid comments have added a new dimension of fun to country music.

And when it comes to being hot, the band’s temperature is a notch above Texas chili and rising by the minute:

- Their first major label album, *Wide Open Spaces*, has sold a whopping 5 million copies and counting. Their talent on fiddle, Dobro, mandolin, banjo and guitar goes beyond impressive;

- The Chicks were 1998’s top country group – out-selling all other country groups combined! What’s more, their new album, *Fly*, to be released Aug. 31, promises to shatter that record;

- Their first single, the Top 10 “I Can Love You Better,” proved just a warm-up. Three No. 1s in a row – “There’s Your Trouble,” “Wide Open Spaces” and

“You Were Mine” – quickly followed. Now, “Tonight the Heartache’s on Me” is on course for the top spot.

“The success we are having now,” Emily reveals, “says a lot about the people who were there when we were singing in barbecue joints. Those are the people who have stuck with us all these years.”

In the past 18 months, America has discovered what their

native Lone Star State had known for years: The Chicks are more than a novelty act. Their energy and style grab your attention, and then, their music locks it away for keeps.

“Ain’t they something?” crows country veteran Buck Owens. “You tell me where the top is – and I’ll tell you they can go there.”

The Chicks have come a long way from playing street corners in Texas for a few bucks. Their musical roots are deep, providing a solid foundation for their sound.

Martie and Emily grew up in Dallas in a family that embraced music. Martie started playing the fiddle at the age of 5 and became a championship fiddle player. Emily learned banjo at age 10 and soon picked up the Dobro and guitar.

Their mom monitored practice sessions with an egg timer. “I’d hear kids outside playing kickball, and I hated that I was inside,” recalls Emily. “Now, of course, I’m grateful for it.”

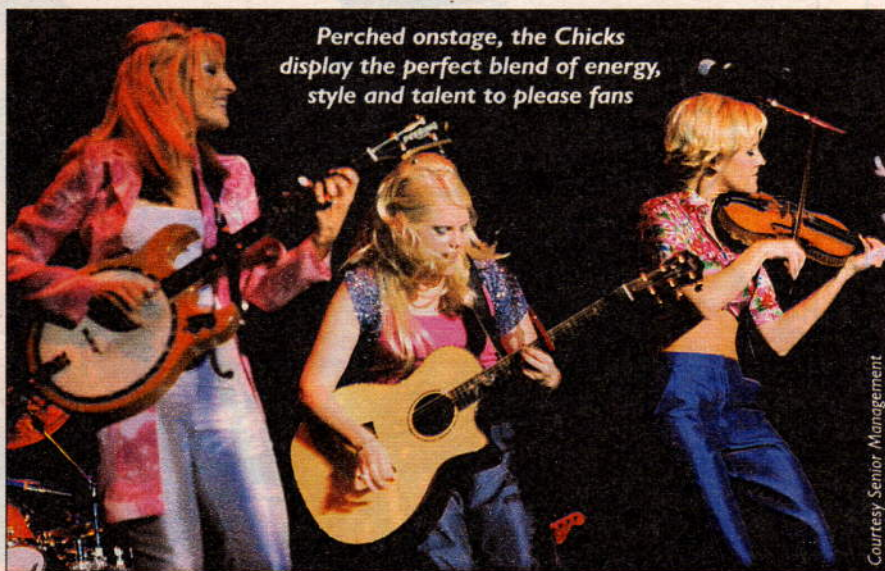
Emily, 26, and Martie, 29, honed their harmonies while they toured the country together in Blue Night Express, a teen’s bluegrass group, for six years before the Chicks were born.

About 400 miles west in the Texas Panhandle, Natalie launched her singing career as a 3-year-old in Lubbock. She had music in her genes. Her dad, renowned steel guitar player Lloyd Maines, and his band, The Maines Brothers Band, charted six country songs in the ’80s.

“Country music was so prevalent in our family that I was fortunate enough to be exposed to it at a very early age,” Natalie, 24, explains. “I always knew this is what I wanted to do. In grade school, I remember saying, ‘I don’t have to learn this because I’m *going* to be a singer.’”

She tackled piano when she was 12, then acoustic guitar. She won a vocal scholarship to Boston’s acclaimed Berklee College of Music.

Meanwhile in Dallas, Emily and Martie and two friends formed an all-girl band in 1989 to play Western swing, cowboy music and bluegrass. They wore red Dale-Evans-style outfits with white fringe and played street corners in Dallas’ business district. “We just happened to hit it lucky,” recalls



Perched onstage, the Chicks display the perfect blend of energy, style and talent to please fans

Courtesy Senior Management

Chicks

Martie. "The first time out, we made about \$375 – most of it in one-dollar bills."

Street corners were only the beginning. They played anywhere they could get booked: private parties, conventions, singing the national anthem at ballgames. Some of their early gigs included a funeral, a grocery store's produce section and a nursing home.

By the early '90s they became one of the most sought-after bands in Texas, opening for Garth Brooks, George Strait, Alan Jackson,

Loretta Lynn, George Jones and Emmylou Harris. They played the Grand Ole Opry and for President Clinton's Tennessee Inaugural Ball in 1993.

They developed a fan club with 6,000 members. And from 1990 to 1994, they churned out three independently produced records – which sold 90,000 copies.

"Those first five or six years as Dixie Chicks happened so fast," recalls Martie. "It was really growing time for the band. We

Dixie Chicks



From diapers to high school, playing the fiddle filled in the gaps for Martie



In high school, Natalie with her trademark short hair and cute smile



went from street corners to dance halls, from jeans and boots to tailor-made cowgirl get-ups with rhinestones."

Despite their regional success, the Chicks couldn't jump to the next level — they couldn't land a major record deal. They still needed something.

Natalie's dad, who played on a couple of the Chicks' independent albums, inadvertently gave it to them.

"He gave us his daughter's tape, and we were both secretly listening to it," remembers Martie. "I had to call him and ask for another, because I thought I lost it. It turned out that Emily was hoarding it!"

When Martie and Emily considered adding another voice, Natalie was the natural choice. She joined the band as the lead singer in 1995.

"After finding some fashion sense and evolving musically, we found Natalie," Martie explains. "That was the best thing that ever happened to Emily and me."

Natalie recalls, "I was always impressed at how well Martie and Emily played their instruments." Natalie did have one stipulation. "I wouldn't wear the clothes they were wearing," she says, laughing. "But they were ready for a change anyway."

After Natalie joined the group, Sony Records execs flew to Austin to check them out. The new sound and new look proved irresistible and a record contract soon followed.

They began putting together songs for their debut album and drew from diverse musical influences — from Bob Wills and James Taylor to Patty Loveless, Dolly Parton and Bonnie Raitt.

"A Dixie Chicks song has to have a spark, something that showcases our individual and collective talents," explains Emily.

"The live show is the best part for me," notes Natalie. "Even when I've had a bad day, I can get lost in the music." Martie adds, "It's very rare that

we vote differently on a song. We are so alike."

The Chicks' evolution from a Texas western music group to country music's dash of sass is chronicled in the shirts they put on their backs. They emblazoned their first slogan "The roosters crows but the hen delivers" on T-shirts.

Today, their T-shirts proclaim "Chicks Rule" and "Chicks Kick Ass." And if you ask any fan, they do both with style.

After doing 160 dates in 1998, the trio really cranked up with this year's mega-successful George Strait tour. Now they've been tapped for Tim McGraw's A Place in the Sun tour.

They're also the first country performers to headline the all-female Lilith Fair tour. Plus, they're performing in Australia, Europe and Canada.

In a scant year and a half, the Chicks have raked in a barnyard full of awards.

They won two Grammys, three ACMs, two CMAs, an AMA and even a British Country Music award.

"If it all ended tomorrow," Martie says, "I'd be OK, because we've been so fortunate. I have a scrapbook of memories."

It won't end tomorrow — that's for sure — or any time soon for the Chicks.

"It's important to emphasize the fact that Dixie Chicks are world-class entertainers and that they aren't new to this," states Sony's President Allen Butler. "When they brought in songs for the album, they said, 'This is us. This is who we are.'"

As the Chicks' achievements reach stratospheric heights, there have been changes.

"We can't stay at small hotels in little towns anymore," confides Natalie. "They get too excited. There's always people hanging out, and you get caught without any make-up and wearing fuzzy slippers. It kind of spoils the fantasy."

Fuzzy slippers would cover up the tiny chicken feet tattoos on the tops of their feet representing No. 1 records and gold or platinum albums. They each now sport six tattoos.

But to save skin, they've decided to limit their foot art. They won't get tattoos for multi-platinum albums or awards.

"Emily is the only one of the three," Natalie says, laughing, "whose foot is big enough for that many tattoos."

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Seth Poppel Yearbook Archives

A star in the making, Emily once wanted to join the Air Force


*'We found
Natalie
... That
was the
best thing
that ever
happened
to Emily
and me'*

— Martie

Dixie Chicks



courtesy Senior Management



'The live show is the best part for me. Even when I've had a bad day, I can get lost in the music' – Natalie

Coffee breath, McRibs, Neal McCoy's underwear and other fun Chicks nuggets

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The trio has made their mark on every late-night talk show. But their appearance on the *Late Show With David Letterman* is a special victory. While they were still a regional act, a Letterman security guard threatened to call police to halt their uninvited "concert" in the lobby. Exactly five years later, to the day, they were guests on the show . . . Though Martie and Emily are married, all three are flooded with marriage proposals – and nude photos – from male fans. "They send them, usually, over the Internet," says Emily. "They're not always totally revealing, but you can always 'get the picture.'" . . . Martie enjoys skiing, horseback riding and golfing – though Natalie and Emily claim they've never seen her swing a club . . . At the time the girls were featured in a McDonald's commercial for the McRib, Martie was a vegetarian and spit out bites of the sandwich between takes . . . Once Martie had to wear a pair of Neal McCoy's underwear. "I

was playing fiddle in one of Neal's videos," she recalls, laughing. "I'd worn hot-pink underwear to the shoot. They put me

in this see-through white chiffon skirt. It showed right through. We were trying to decide what to do, and Neal said, 'Try mine.' I squeezed them on. They cut off my circulation, but they got me through the video" . . . Natalie spends her free time decorating her home, reading and going to movies at least twice a week. She even knows every word to the movie *Grease* . . . Martie's pet peeve is coffee breath. Emily's is bad drivers. Natalie's is people who chew gum . . . Emily can moonwalk forwards and backwards. She also wanted to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy and even filled out applications, until she realized her math and science grades weren't up to snuff . . . The Chicks are the flagship act of Monument Records, a division of Sony. The label launched legends such as Roy Orbison, Dolly Parton, Kris Kristofferson and Larry Gatlin.

