

# COUNTRY

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still  
loud  
and  
proud



**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
& HOT NEW PHOTOS**

## Dixie Chicks

**Boldly going where no  
man has gone before**  
*one*

**ALSO** Toby Keith • Bryan White • Tom T. Hall • Ty Herndon  
Jason Sellers • Emmylou Harris & Linda Ronstadt








# Dixie

Courtesy Sony Music





# SOARIN' AND ROARIN'

**Story by  
Larry  
Holden**

Chicks' success is out of this world

**T**he Dixie Chicks are taking the ride of their lives. 5...4...3...2...1... Ignition. Lift off. The spaceship with *Dixie Chicks* emblazoned on the nose streaks skyward. Inside, Natalie Maines, Emily Robison and Martie Seidel are relishing the rush.



# Dixie Chicks

The mega-talented trio's national blast-off back in 1997, their 6-million-and-climbing debut album *Wide Open Spaces* – now the best-selling album of all time by a country duo or group – carried them off the pad and into the sphere of stardom. Now their second album, *Fly*, woven into an even richer musical tapestry, is set to take them to superstardom.

The Aug. 31 launch of *Fly* is powered by a runaway hit from a runaway hit movie, a sexual controversy (oooooh!), a song of wonder for Emily's real-life wedding, another tune with ties to Natalie's marital breakup, the specter of premeditated murder (gulp!) and – oh yeah – some Calgon bath-oil beads.

"The new album has a lot of songs that are emotionally attached to one or all of us," reveals Emily. "And we co-wrote five of the 13 tunes.

"We recorded the album in a very emotional time," she continues. "I was planning my wedding. Natalie was beginning a divorce. Martie had to be away from her husband the four months we were in the studio. We were in different places in our lives and the songs mirror that."

Did the amazing success of *Wide Open Spaces* create extra pressure?

"The biggest scare for performers is the debut album's follow-up," Emily admits. "We refused to be intimidated. We felt like we didn't have rules this time, because people liked what we were doing – and we loved singing honest music that's not contrived."

Natalie agrees. "We went into it thinking that we're going to make the album we want to make and if people like it, great. If they don't, we wouldn't be happy about it – but at least we made the album we wanted."

When not in the studio, the Chicks have been performing across the country with George Strait, Tim McGraw, and in their history-making role as the first country act to co-headline the traveling Lilith Fair pop-rock festival.

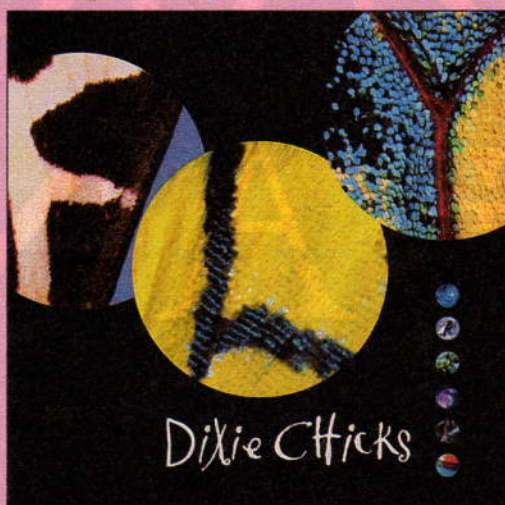
"The Lilith Fair tour was a new challenge for us," admits Emily. "I'm glad we're drawing the country crowd to the tour. At the same time we're picking up

new fans who don't listen to country by showing them it isn't square."

The Chicks' brand of country music is far from square. More than 60 percent of the group's sales have been to music lovers under the age of 25. Young women are identifying big-time with the three gifted Texans – and the trio of feisty, fun blondes has also picked up a not-surprising legion of male followers, too.

With the release of the much-anticipated record, the Chicks are busier than ever – performing as this month's *CMT Showcase* act, scheduling shows in Europe and Australia, and planning their first headlining tour.

In a year's time, the Chicks have collected awards like eggs in a hen



house: two Grammys, three ACMs, an American Music Award, two TNN/Music City News trophies and two CMAs. Their recent four CMA nominations underscore a mind-boggling feat – last year they won the newcomer's Horizon Award and this year they're up for the top prize of all: Entertainer of the Year. The Chicks are the first group in CMA history to ever accomplish such a meteoric leap.

"The way we look at CMA Entertainer of the Year is that we may be worthy of the nomination, but not of the win," declares Emily. "We feel like we are very entertaining and we've gone out the past two years and really hit the road hard. And as far as the big picture entertainment-wise and in the media, we really have exploded this year. So, if that is the criteria the voters were

going on, then I think, sure, we're up there with the big guys.

"We've been on wonderful tours. George Strait and Tim McGraw put a lot of work into their tours. All we did was walk onstage, play our songs on their sound system and then go eat their catering. So it would be fitting if one of them took the award."

**T**he Chicks were definitely on an award-winning level when they taped their *CMT Showcase* segments, which will air Sept. 3, 10, 17 and 24 at 11:30 p.m. EST.

"We have a lot of fun making our videos, especially 'Ready To Run,'" says Martie of their Top 10 single. "I mean, how much fun is it to ride around on BMX bikes in wedding dresses and jump into a swimming pool and have a cake fight!"

Emily thinks the song is a hoot on its own. "It's a fun song to sing," she explains. "It has sort of an Irish feel at the start. Martie brought the Irish influence in writing the song."

The song fits so seamlessly into the Julia Roberts/Richard Gere romantic comedy *Runaway Bride* that the Chicks must have written it especially for the movie, right?

Well, no.

"People with *Runaway Bride* approached us about writing a song with Diane Warren," recalls Emily. "We told them we were recording an album, but as soon as we got time we'd love to do it. Then we found out what the movie was about and realized 'Ready To Run' – which we'd already written – was perfect!"

Then there's the song on the album about a wife killing her abusive husband.

"'Goodbye Earl' is a song we've been doing live and it goes over fantastic," exclaims Emily. "The women really get into it and the guys are amazed we have the guts to sing about it."

The story behind "Sin Wagon," the song that was kicked around as the album's possible title, is intriguing. So's the reason why the record was finally called *Fly* (but let's unravel *that* tale later).

"One day Natalie and I were writing



‘ We’ve  
always stood  
up for  
what we  
believe in.  
But now we  
have more  
confidence  
and ability  
to soar  
and fly ’



Courtesy Sony Music



"Move over Garth Brooks. Sit down Shania Twain. The best concert act in country music today is the Dixie Chicks."

— James Muretich, *Calgary Herald*

"The Dixie Chicks . . . pretty much stole the show with a combination of good country songs . . . and personality to burn. Natalie Maines has the spitfire demeanor of a young Patsy Cline . . ."

— Robert Hilburn,  
*Los Angeles Times*

"Imagine the sexual energy of Elvis Presley mixed with the night-piercing screams of Robert Plant and the musical virtuosity of Earl Scruggs. Ten years ago, the combo couldn't have sounded

## The Critics Are Crowing

stranger. But that's the future of country music, and it's called the Dixie Chicks."

— Miriam Longino, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"Chicks rule . . . the Dixie Chicks put more energy into their stage performance than Mick Jagger's last three shows combined."

— Susan Young,  
*San Mateo County Times*

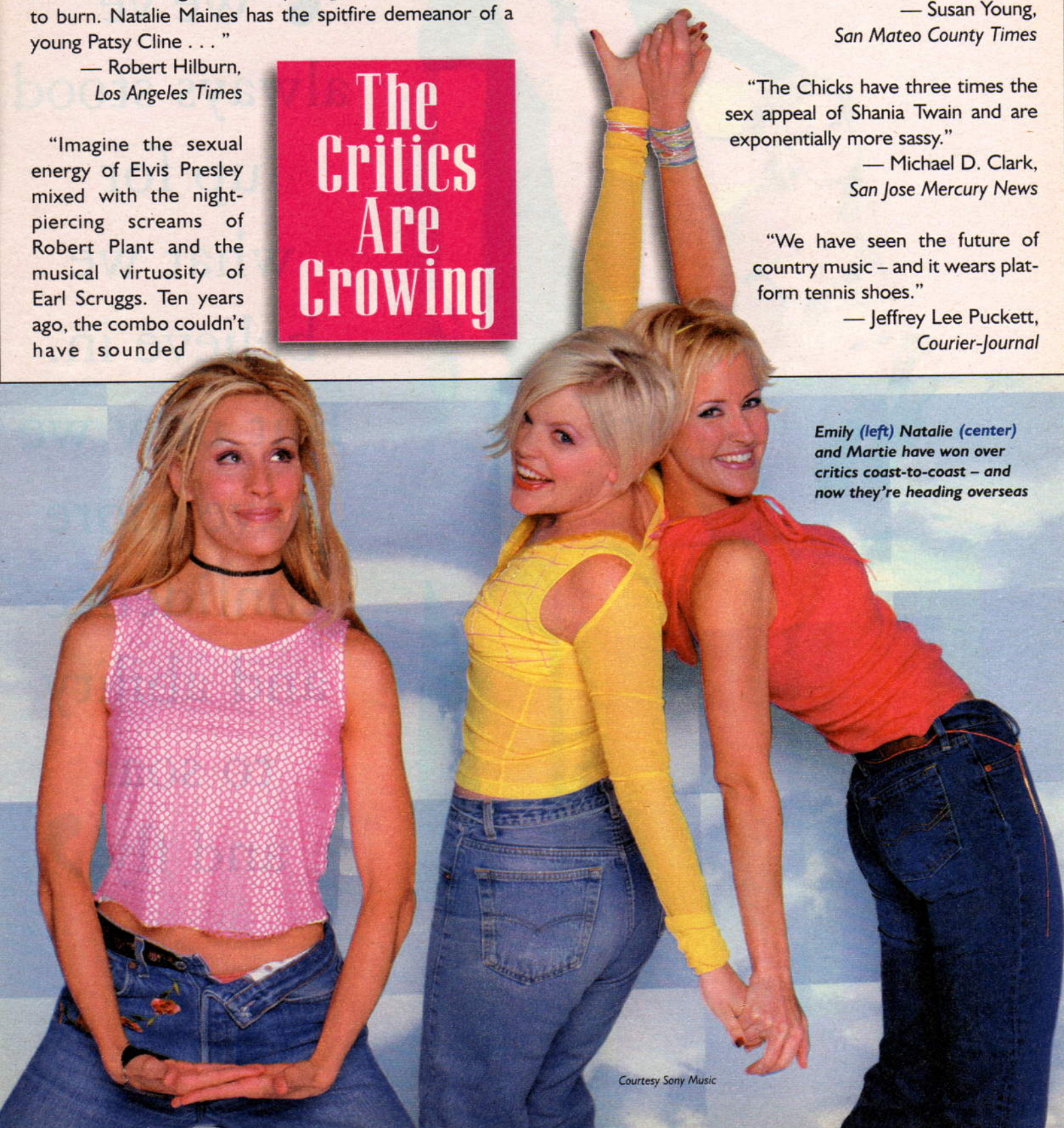
"The Chicks have three times the sex appeal of Shania Twain and are exponentially more sassy."

— Michael D. Clark,  
*San Jose Mercury News*

"We have seen the future of country music — and it wears platform tennis shoes."

— Jeffrey Lee Puckett,  
*Courier-Journal*

Emily (left) Natalie (center) and Martie have won over critics coast-to-coast — and now they're heading overseas



Courtesy Sony Music



# Dixie Chicks

with Stephony Smith," recalls Emily. "Natalie is a huge *Grease* fan. She's seen that movie a gazillion times. In the scene where Sandy and Danny are in the car at the drive-in theater and he starts to get fresh, she blurts out, 'Do you think I'm going to stay with you in this sin wagon?' Natalie had written 'sin wagon' in her idea book.

"So we started throwing out the wackiest stuff we could. Stephony was totally kidding when she tossed out the words 'mattress dancing.' Natalie and I are saying, 'We could never use that lyric' — at the same time we're writing it down."

Natalie interjects, "It's about a really good girl thinking about being really bad, which is kinda cute. Courtney Love couldn't sing this song!"

Then their record company balked.

"We now joke about the label discouraging us from putting 'Sin Wagon' on the new album," notes Emily. "They thought it was too sexual. We asked, 'Why are you getting so upset about "Sin Wagon" when we already have a song about first-degree premeditated murder? Murder is OK, but mattress dancing isn't?' They eventually agreed with us."

**T**wo songs really hit home in a personal way — one about Emily's courtship and her marriage last May to singer-songwriter Charlie Robison, and another that mirrors Natalie's feelings about her divorce.

"'Cowboy Take Me Away,' which Martie co-wrote, is a special song for me," explains Emily. "I'd just met Charlie, and Martie wrote the song with me and Charlie in mind."

Martie adds, "I was thinking about the peacefulness of the old Calgon commercials — 'Calgon, take me away.'"

Emily chuckles. "We all sang it at my wedding. We were completely out of tune — because we had too many margaritas — but it was still touching."

Emily views her entire marriage as touching. "Married life is going great. I'm cut out for it. I'm happier than I've ever been. And I've found my soul mate. How



Three grumpy young brides? No, it's the Chicks during the filming of their video 'Ready To Run'

lucky can I be?"

The song "Let Him Fly" strikes a chord with Natalie. "Although written by Patty Griffin, that song is a little bit biographical for Natalie," explains Emily. "It says a lot about reaching the point in a relationship where it's time to let go. Since Natalie's now in the eighth month of her divorce, she says it's a song she wishes her husband would sing to her."

After promoting the new album this month, the Chicks will head to Europe and then to Australia until mid-November. Then they'll be off the road until May of next year.

"We'll carve out two weeks to do the Grammys [in the spring]," declares Emily. "But we're pretty much going to relax, brainstorm about the headlining tour and maybe get the creative juices flowing to do more songwriting."

"The most important thing for us is to have a life. Our life is not the Dixie Chicks — it's a wonderful part of our lives, but it's not our entire life."

There is a project the Chicks would interrupt their downtime to do.

"We've been wanting to record something with Willie Nelson for years and we've discussed it with him," reveals Emily. "I hope we can go to his studio near Austin to record a song for a tribute album or something else down the road. That would be cool."

Courtesy Front Page Publicity



Now, let's reveal why the album is called *Fly*. "The first album was like the momma bird, the record company, pushing us towards the edge so we could learn to fly," says Martie. "And now we're doing it on our own."

"We've always stood up for what we believe in. But now we have more confidence and ability to soar and fly. Our career has really taken off. Natalie was flying from a situation she didn't want to be in. Emily's flying to a better place with someone she loves, and I'm experiencing the musical flight I've waited so long to take."

"When I said to the girls, 'What about *Fly* for the title of our album?' we started to see how many references there were to flight, birds or wings in the songs on the album. There are *so* many. It was like a sign."

"It's the whole 'Chicks' thing," says Martie. "We've kind of earned our wings."

