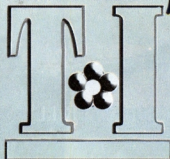


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Dixie Chicks

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TUNE-IN

Free!



Going Where No CHICK GROUP Has Gone Before

Natalie Maines, Martie Seidel and Emily Robinson believe in telling it like it is. We caught up with them on their tour bus before their second album, *Fly*, was released....And we dare you to eavesdrop...

How do you follow up such huge success with *Wide Open Spaces*?

Martie: "We were really excited, but I don't think we over-thought it. It's been two years since we recorded *Wide Open Spaces*, and we've grown a lot and been through a lot in that time, and we wanted the album to reflect that. We've grown both as soul sisters and as writers and performers, and we wanted to have more of our own work on this album. We were lucky that we were able to have five of our songs on there and were able to find lots of great material from other writers. We didn't have any trouble finding songs at all. We had more songs than we could cut. In answer to the question: You just kind of forge ahead. You don't think, 'Oh we need to do the same thing again.'"

Natalie, there's a song you wrote called "Sin Wagon." It was creating controversy six months before the album came out...

Natalie: "I know, and I don't think it should! I got the title from the movie, *Groove*, when Olivia Newton John gets out of the car at the drive-in and says, 'I'm not gonna stay with you in this sin wagon!' (Laughs) After seeing that for about the 300th time, it finally clicked that that was a great name for a song. It probably should have come to me a little earlier, but I'm a natural blonde. It's so funny that Sony's so concerned about that song when people in pop and rock music say stuff that's so much more explicit. I mean, it's all done in humor. We're just down-home girls... Everyone seems so shocked that we have a song that uses the term 'mattress dancing,' but we also have a song that talks about premeditated, first degree murder ("Goodbye Earl"), and no one sees anything wrong with that!"

Your record company, Sony, has been afraid of so many things y'all have done, but you refuse to conform or tame yourselves...

Emily: "And I think that's what people responded to on the first album. I think they can see our honesty—in the way we talk, at our live shows and in our songs. It's when you try to take that away that everyone starts sounding like everyone else. A lot of people just play it safe."

Natalie: "And I don't think we push it too far. When you're just sitting there behind a desk and not out there in the real world amongst the fans, it's a little more difficult to know what's going on. We're out there traveling around and putting a show on in front of our fans—the

BY SANDY ADZGERY

regular record-buying public. The record company will say that a lot of people like 'Cold Day In July.' Well, yeah, fans seem to like that, but I can tell you that when we play 'Sin Wagon' or 'Goodbye Earl,' we get as big a response from those two songs that nobody's ever heard as we do with any of our hits that the crowd already loves."

If you look at the charts the two most "controversial" acts are at the top — Shania Twain and the Dixie Chicks. Playing it safe hasn't done anything for anyone.

Martie: "I don't even think it's controversial, it's just real. We don't plan out what we're gonna say or what we're gonna do. We're just being ourselves and having fun."

Emily: "Even if people have a reaction, that's not what gets them to go out and spend fifteen dollars on an album. Music is supposed to move you to make you feel something — make you cry, make you laugh, whatever. If it doesn't do any of those things, then what's its purpose?"

It's so homogenized. Everyone goes to the same media trainer to tell them what to say in interviews...

Natalie: "They tried that!"

Martie: "But we are not risqué. We are very normal. We don't do anything to excess. I have a stepson who's five, and there's nothing in our music or in my persona that I would be ashamed for him to hear. He loves the whole album, he's listened to it a hundred times, and he's never once asked me what 'mattress dancing' was."

Natalie: "Well, the thing is, we're old enough to sing about mattress dancing!"

Back when I was a kid, I just glossed over things in songs that now I'm shocked I went around the house singing!

Natalie: "Oh my goodness, I can't believe my mother let me sing 'Greased Lightning.' (Laughs) That song's disgusting! I'm like, 'Mother, how could you let me go around singing that song?' I had no clue what I was singing!"

Emily: "Oh, in fourth grade I was going around singing Foreigner's 'Feels Like The First Time.' I didn't know what that meant. (Breaks into song...) The first time you rode a bike? The first time you saw a movie? I didn't care."

There almost seems to be this Great & Powerful Oz that wants to preserve this imaginary innocence in country music.

Martie: "I think it's a more recent thing, because the older country music was not tame. When you think about the things that Tammy Wynette used to sing about, I mean there was this talk about divorce, and Loretta Lynn was singing about the pill. All of it was very honest and real. Then there was Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings and all those guys."

For each of you, what's the single biggest thing that's happened in the last year or so?

Martie: "Personally, Natalie announcing a week into the recording that she was getting a divorce set the tone for the rest of the year. Every single song we were working on was about love, falling in love,

everlasting love... (laughs) It made me think of her. And then Emily falling in love. It was two very opposite emotions going on, and there I was in the middle going, 'What's happening?' We didn't want to bring Emily down, because she's trying to plan a wedding, but then there's Natalie who's going through a divorce. Professionally, the Grammy thing was huge. It was just such a shock. We had no idea we were going to win. When I look at those trophies, I just bow down to the Grammy gods and thank them."

Natalie: "I relived it when I got them and took them out of the box and put them on the mantle." **Emily:** "I think one of our mistakes, if you want to call it that, is that we really don't prepare for anything. So when we get up there, we start laughing and forget what we should say."



Natalie: "We've pretty much taken care of everybody except our publicist, Kathy Allmand. She's turned down clients because she's so devoted to us, and we've never thanked her! We walk off the stage and see her and go, 'Oh my gosh! I'm so sorry! I hope we win a CMA. I want to go up there and say, 'We would like to thank Kathy Allmand,' and walk off!" (Laughs)

Emily, Natalie — your biggest moments?

Natalie: "For me, on a personal level going through my divorce was the main thing. That was something that I needed to do, and I'm so thankful that I had the courage to take that final step."

"Divorce" was not a word that was in my vocabulary, but when you have all these great things happening to you in your career, and you're still not happy, you have to take a look at your life. This was something I had to do... And unexpectedly, I found love at Emily's wedding."

With who?

Natalie: "Oh, I don't want to say it. It'll be out soon enough. He's an actor, and he's a friend of Charlie's."

Emily?

Emily: "Getting married was probably the biggest thing, personally, for me. I really was on cloud nine all last year, and preparations for a wedding are so

intense. I'm so anal about details that I was probably pretty hard to live with for awhile. But it was incredible. I knew that Charlie was the one the first time we met — at Fan Fair last year."

Natalie: "It was funny, while we were working on the album, Emily would be in another room making plans for her wedding. And in the studio, whenever a decision needed to be made, Blake and Paul would go. 'This is what we know, Natalie's likes everything. Martie likes nothing, and Emily's getting married.' (they all laugh) But she never freaked out or anything!"

You're actually going to wait until next year to tour again. It must be nice to have the time to actually plan the tour out.

Emily: "I think that's what success is — being able to pick and choose what you do, rather than just taking everything that comes your way. I mean, we worked for more than a year just working off the dates that had been planned two years ago."

Natalie: "The day after we won the CMA awards, we had a private gig in Dallas playing this lady's birthday party for her and like forty of her closest friends. (Laughs) We had booked it so long ago, and we keep our word. But oh, it was so humiliating. In the announcement before we came out, they said, 'Two-time CMA award winners...' and I'm thinking, 'Yeah, why are we here?'"

Martie: "They had this make-shift stage, and I was mad because I kept tripping over this wrinkly astroturf they'd laid down. Everytime I'd go to sing, my microphone would hit me in the head. It was awful!"

Natalie: "We got brought back down to earth constantly every day. We joke that we'll never not be humble, because we humble ourselves every day by looking at our naked asses in the mirror. (Laughs) Really, you should have seen Martie and Emily last night having a simple contest! Here they are going, 'Well I have more...' 'Yeah, but mine are deeper.' It was hysterical."

So... You're taking six months off...

Natalie: "And Emily's not allowed to get pregnant!"

Emily: "I don't want to get pregnant. They're so worried that I'm gonna get pregnant. Every day they're going, 'Take your pill.'"

Natalie: "We give it to her every day."

One final question about the new album: Why call it Fly?

Martie: "It's the whole chick thing. We've kind of earned our wings. The first album was the momma bird, the label, pushing us towards the edge so we could learn to fly. 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 that I've waited so long to take. When I said to the girls, 'What about Fly for the title of the album?' We started to see how many references there were to flight, or birds, or wings in all the songs. There are so many meanings to it. It was like a sign."