

# Big splash in the Pond for trio

*Press-Telegram*

*June 20, 2000*

*By A.K. Whitney, Staff writer*

The Arrowhead Pond in Anaheim was overflowing with cowboy hats Saturday night -- some leopard-spotted, some zebra-striped, most bubblegum pink. In many cases, the hats were paired with ultratight halter tops and bright pink slacks.

If this seems like a strange fashion scene in otherwise staid Orange County, consider this -- these outfits were being worn by fans gathered to see country band The Dixie Chicks. That's right, The Dixie Chicks, who shocked many country music buffs with their hit "Goodbye Earl," a song about a woman who decides to do away with her abusive husband by feeding him poisoned black-eyed peas.

But to their credit, The Dixie Chicks did not follow the fashion trend of the crowd, dressing instead in outfits that befitted their status as music divas on their first headline tour. Singer Natalie Maines, for instance, was a futuristic riot girl in a blue metallic dress and matching knee-high boots, her bottle-blond hair in ponytails.

Rock outfits aside, Maines, fiddler Martie Seidel and banjo player Emily Robison stayed close to their country roots, playing every song, from the slow plaintive "Without You" to the stomping "Some Days You Gotta Dance," with a tremendous, infectious energy that had their tube-top wearing fans singing along with every line.

It was a hip hootenanny, though, mainly because many of the Chicks' songs don't adhere to the lyin', cheatin' heart, stand by your man/woman country repertoire. Rather, the song ``Let 'Er Rip'' shows a woman who is most definitely not a victim, encouraging her unsatisfied lover to dump her, already. ``Sin Wagon,' has Maines singing lyrics such as ``Feel like Delilah looking for Samson, Do a little mattress dancin,' that's right, I said mattress dancin'."

Topping all that, of course, is ``Goodbye Earl," which sports lines such as ``Those black-eyed peas, they tasted all right to me, Earl, You're feeling weak? Why don't you lay down and sleep, Ain't it dark? Wrapped up in that tarp?"

Perhaps it was those lyrics that caused the picketers to gather outside the Pond waving ``Jesus Saves" signs.

The Chicks also had a few surprises up their sleeves. One was the appearance of Sheryl Crow, who befriended the trio when they all toured together last year during Lilith Fair. Crow accompanied the Chicks on the accordion on two songs, including ``You Were Mine."

Another surprise was a slide show featuring a variety of ``unflattering" photos of the Chicks. It was, they claimed, a pre-emptive strike against VH1's ``Before They Were Rock Stars."

None of the photos were particularly hideous, but Maines seized the opportunity to preach against the ``mall bangs" she was sporting in one 1988 photo. She should also have preached against the hideously familiar pink-and-black striped sweatshirt she was wearing. Its twins are still lurking in the depths of many of our closets.

The slide show ended with sisters Robison and Seidel playing one of the first banjo/fiddle pieces they had composed together as

children.

It was an impressive piece, highlighting a very important fact - looks, humor and catchy lyrics aside, the Chicks are accomplished musicians, and this will probably be the first of many headlining tours.