The Dixie Chicks

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I. Introduction

There are many singers who we don’t know or haven’t even heard of them in the world. A singer or a band is usually famous for the songs or the scandals they had, but this group are different – Dixie Chicks. It consists of three people, Natalie Maines, Emily Robinson and Martie Maguire, who love to sing country music and together they have won lots of Grammy Awards.

During their London performance in April, 2003, Natalie Maines, made a comment on the war in Iraq, which made a sensation in the United States. The public started to doubt their patriotism and condemn them. The radio station even banned their music. As a result, they lost the album sales and the radio play and appeared less and less for a very long time. Two years later, the situation was different. People began to think that what they said before was right, and soon, their album “Taking the Long Way” became a great hit. It seems that Dixie Chicks has gone through the depression of their singing career, and that makes me want to know more about their career, the turning point that they had met and the development after the public condemnation.

II. Thesis

1. The origin of Dixie Chicks
The Dixie Chicks was not the same as we see them now. In fact, the Dixie Chicks are founded by the fiddler Martie Maguire, banjo-playing Emily Robinson, bassist Laura Lynch and the guitarist Robin Lynn Macy in 1988, and their group’s was inspired by the little Feat song “Dixie Chicken”. They released their first album “Thanks Heaven for Dale Evans”. Since then, they began to building the fan base, winning their first prize at the Telluride Bluegrass Festival and established their country music career. They soon released their second album “Little Ol' Cowgirl” in 1992, moving toward more contemporary music, and also the exit of Macy at the same time. Before long, Lynch left the Chicks as well, and the replacement of her was the lead vocalist Natalie Maines.

In 1997, the Chicks released their major label debut, “Wide Open Spaces”, which not only win them a lot of awards but also stardom.

2. The turning point of their career

2.1 What happened

In 2003, ten days before President Bush declared the war against Iraq, which sacrificed lots of American soldiers on the battle. In the concert they performed in London, Natalie Maines said “Just as you know, we are on the good side with you all. We do not want this war, this violence, and we’re ashamed the President of the United State is from Texas.” Directly after Maines made her statement on the stage, Emily
Robinson remarked that their band supported the American troops 100 percent. Shortly after the comment they made, the US media picked up the story and the controversy erupted. Everyone soon criticized about their not having the patriotism to their own country.

2.2 How the public responded and how they dealt with the situation

Their remark soon sparked intense criticism. Many people started to think that Maines shouldn’t criticize the president of her own country on foreign shores. However, Maines insisted and said “I said it there because that’s where I was.” Although Maines did apologize to President Bush for being disrespectful, she didn’t think that she should feel sorry for what she said that day. And people began to drop their support, throw away their CDs and even more, the Dixie Chicks received the death threats. The audience started to prohibit thousands of the radio stations to play the songs by Dixie Chicks. During a prime interview on TV, Maines said that she remained proud of her original statement. The Dixie Chicks also appeared naked on the cover of Entertainment Weekly magazine with slogans such as “Traitors”, “Saddam’s Angels”, “Dixie Sluts”, “Hero”, “Free Speech” and “Brave” printed on their bodies, representing the labels that had been placed on them. However, they didn’t felt sorry about saying anything about the war and they always thought they had the right to speak what they thought. They began to put more effort on their
III. Their comeback

3.1 The different opinion from the public

People began to support Dixie Chicks again three years after Maines made the statement about the war. Everyone started to think what they said in 2003 was right because the war that President launched was terrible. When the Dixie Chicks released their new album in 2006, showing what they felt during these three years, people gave them support by buying their CDs and attending their concert as they did before 2003. They never seemed to be influenced or doubted their patriotism anymore.

3.2 Their new album in 2006

The latest album, “Taking the Long Way”, released in 2006, obviously shows their feeling through the lyrics. The first single that was published, “Not Ready to Make Nice” represents their feelings inside their hearts.

I’m not ready to make nice

I’m not ready to back down

I’m still mad as hell and I don’t have time to go ‘round and ‘round and ‘round

It’s too late to make it right

I probably wouldn’t if I could
The Dixie Chicks

‘Cause I’m mad as hell

Can’t bring myself to do what it is you think I should

And in this song, they also make a protest to a woman who told her child to say “screw them”.

It’s a sad sad story when a mother will teach her

Daughter that she ought to hate a perfect stranger

And how in the world can the words that I said

Send somebody so over the edge

That they’d write me a letter

Sayin’ that I better

Shut up and sing or my life will be over

In a press release, Emily Robinson said that the stake making this song was higher because it was so autobiographical and they had to get it right. In this album, all 14 songs were written by themselves, containing additional tracks that seemed to indirectly reference to what the group called “incident”. At first, the public, even the radio station refused to hold the concert because of the poor ticket, but in the end, Dixie Chicks turned out to be more popular and won the 2007 Grammy Award for Best Album, Best Record and Best Song for Not Ready to Make Nice.

IV. Reference
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