



*By John McGlasson - GJD Contributor*

What an unlikely trio! But the three relate to the music biz in a strange way.

Barry Manilow has figured out something the Dixie Chicks, Kanye West, Green Day, Sheryl Crow, and countless others have known for awhile; anti-Bush sells. Big.

But I can't help feeling like he screwed up. Today, Barry announced [in a statement on TMZ.com](#) that he was canceling his scheduled appearance on The View because he refuses to be on the stage with someone of conservative viewpoint, i.e; Elisabeth Hasselbeck.

Does Barry know his audience? Does he know The View's audience? Does he know America? I get the feeling that he and The View share the exact same audience; women over 50 who lean towards conservative, and likely spend a lot more time being tolerant of the leftist views on The View than of Elisabeth's semi-conservative views.

Clearly, America's torn down the middle right now on a lot of subjects, I don't need to name them here. But to come out and refuse to appear before a huge audience because of someone's viewpoints and opinions, describing them as "dangerous and offensive" is just bad business.

If you read my [Live Earth column](#), you know how I feel about artist/musician political activism. This is where Zappa comes in.

Of course Frank was so political that he may not be the best example for this purpose, but he had a theme that grabbed me early on; Shut Up and Play Yer Guitar. I don't know exactly what he meant by it, but I know what it's always meant to me, just that. Shut up about politics, social injustice, war, poverty, apartheid, Bush, and PLAY YER GUITAR. Entertain. I can't speak for anyone else, but it REALLY bothers me when rich, socially-isolated musicians get preachy.

But back to Barry and the Bigger Picture. Barry just cut his album sales by 2/3, and they weren't going to break 1mil either way. When Barry Manilow tells a major part The View's audience that their views are dangerous and offensive, he can't expect them to rush out and buy his new album, or the next, or the next.

I'm pretty sure Mr. Manilow is quite proud of himself today, because, album-sales-be-damned, I'm sure he feels like he did something principled, but what he did was far, far more offensive than not appearing on the show, he was taking a shot at one thing (almost) all Americans hold

dear; freedom of thought, speech, and expression.

We all have to tolerate people we disagree with in our daily lives. Some of my best friends are complete polar opposites to me politically, but we love each other and work together. I'm in the music biz, of course I have to deal with people of varying viewpoints, but I wouldn't dream of working with, or not working with, someone because of their worldviews and political leanings. And I sure wouldn't refuse to be in the same room as them because they disagree with me.

So if we've learned anything, it's that (newsflash!!) these aging mega-stars can be quite diva-like. I read somewhere that Elton John once called his manager in the middle of the night to command him to "stop the wind from blowing so hard" or something to that effect. Now Barry seems to be saying he can't tolerate even a few minutes on a stage with someone he disagrees with. I find that dangerous and offensive, but not surprising from the man that once sang, "I've been alive forever, and I wrote the very first song...I am music, and I write the songs."

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