

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Boyz II Men



The Boyz II Men quartet

"The last 2 1/2 years have been a continuous joy ride," says Michael McCary, his booming bass beaming with joy. "We've been welcomed all over the world. We've been honored by our peers and fans. We've been successful. We've straightened out our business. The next thing for us to do was our second album."

But how do you follow up an album that produced more than seven million sales worldwide, two Grammys, three American Music Awards, two soul Train Awards, two NAACP Image Awards, two MTV Awards, one World Music Award, and a foundation of fans that made a Christmas album go platinum after only one single? Well, the safe route would be to copy exactly what you did the first time.

"It's not very creative to duplicate yourself," Mike said. So, then, if you don't go there where do you go, Mike? "We went home. We went back to Philadelphia."

And of course they were greeted with open arms. They had left home more than two years before with a dream, and returned with platinum everywhere. Friends, family, neighbors, -- the outpouring of love was phenomenal.

And distracting. "As much as we love our family and friends, Philadelphia turned out to be the worst place for us to get any work done," Mike lamented. So after a couple of months of trying to get started, the guys decided to go to the other side of the country and start all over again.

They went to Granny's House. "That's the name of this remote studio secluded in the desert," Shawn Stockman said. "You do everything there. You write there. You record there. Eat. Sleep. Live. you can even

cook your own food, if you want to. It was a great place for us to get started, and get focused."

Holing up together at Granny's House helped the group recapture their family feeling. Soon they were on a roll: laying down ideas on tape, recording riffs, writing, collaborating. Instead of dwelling on how big they had gotten or how tired they were, they thought about songs and music. They thought about how they recorded their first album. They went back to "Yesterday."

"We sang 'Yesterday' in high school," Mike recalls. "We sang all different kinds of songs: classical, operatic and a lot of jazz. Everything - Brahms, Beethoven and Beatles."

But to actually record a John Lennon/Paul McCartney classic (perhaps their greatest song) required one quality that Boyz II men would need to record a great follow-up album: confidence.

"On this album, we tried to go places that people didn't know Boyz II men could go. 'Yesterday' will surprise some people. But we knew we could do it right," Mike said. Indeed the song shows how much the young men have matured vocally.

Returning to "Yesterday" also reminded the guys of how they learned music at the Creative & Performing Arts High School of Philadelphia. It is a small school (Total enrollment: 500 students). So you know each other and learn from each other, it's like a family. Their family values inspired great music. As a result, Boyz II Men have an album that is...

Refreshing...
Mature...
Romantic...
The album II, the second collec-

tion of original material from Boys II Men, provides a look at all the shades, stages and rhythms of romance. Boyz II Men update the best Motown traditions: The Temptations' touch, The Supreme's seduction, Smokey Robinson's songwriting and overall top production.

Their first single, "I'll Make Love To you," reunites them with one of the finest songwriters operating in contemporary music today - Babyface. Of course, the last time these artists and this producer collaborated, they made history.

"End of the Road" (from the "Bommerange" soundtrack co produced with LA Raid and Darryl Simmons and "East Coast Family Volume I" LP) held the No. 1 position on the popular music charts for 13 weeks, longer than any single for an entire generation - eclipsing Elvis Presley's most successful chart performance 25 years before. "End of the road" reached the top slot on charts all over the world, earning the distinction of truthfully being termed an "instant classic."

"It's hard to explain what happened with 'End of the Road,'" Wanya confesses. "It's a tasteful song. Meaningful. Real. How do you do that again?"

That was the challenge. But these were the men to meet the task.

"Babyface is a worker. And we're workers. We'll keep working until our voices burn out," Wanya continues. "Babyface has a method that's different from anyone else. There's nothing easy about it. He pushes."

You can hear all of that effort, but none of the strain on "I'll Make Love to You." You hear another instant classic, another song with a permanent place across the radio dial.

Symphony Appoints First Volunteer Coordinator

John Harris, who most recently coordinated eight volunteer groups with close to 2,000 members overall for the Cincinnati Art Museum is joining Symphony staff as its first Volunteer Coordinator.

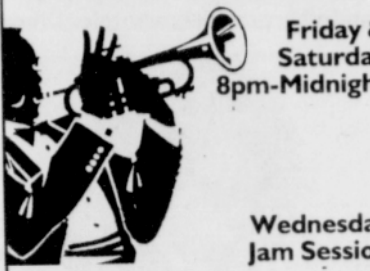
The new position reflects the Symphony's growing commitment to volunteerism, said President Don Roth. "Volunteerism is a non-profit's, or arts organization's not-so-

secret weapon. Other orchestras, as well as a number of other local non-profits, have said they have found such a position essential in assisting volunteers to attain maximum success. This is certainly true in the area of fund raising and financial contributions from volunteerism, as well as in enhancing the Symphony's image and impact in the community through its volunteer program," added Roth.

Among Harris' duties will be serving as a liaison with the Symphony's Women's Association and Associates volunteer groups; establishing a core of office volunteers; recruiting new groups of volunteers; and providing staff support to the Centennial Celebration Steering Committee.

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