

BACKSTREET BOYS MOVE ONTO MAIN

(Continued from page 16)

was predictable.

"It was very strange to see this phenomena, this group that the whole city was talking about in Montreal," says Shebel. "After that, it wasn't a surprise by any means that they've done so well here."

Meanwhile, a clip for the song debuted as the most-requested video on the Box U.S.A. It also made an impact at MTV out of the box on the channel's "Popular Videos People Prefer" program.

According to McPherson, the group's management company, the Orlando-based Wright Stuff Management, deserves a great deal of credit for the act's current standing. Booking the Boys at theme parks, junior high schools, and high schools before they signed to Jive allowed them to perfect their live show and raise their visibility. These tours also helped Wright Stuff create an invaluable database of teenage fans.

"Those were the hardest crowds to perform to," says group member Kevin

Richardson. "You could tell they were thinking, 'What is this, the second coming of the New Kids On The Block?' But once we started singing a cappella and showing them we could really sing, we won them over every time."

Donna Wright, who co-manages the act with husband and former New Kids On The Block tour manager Johnny Wright, says she was also wary of the Boys when she met them.

"Before I saw them perform, I wasn't sure if we wanted to get involved," says Wright. "The New Kids had just finished up two years prior. But hearing them sing just gave me chills running from the back of my heels to the top of my head. I really felt like we had something there."

Wright Stuff was also able to secure the act opening spots for veteran bands that often draw family audiences, such as REO Speedwagon, Richard Marx, Kenny G, and the Village People.

Hoping to build on Wright Stuff's database, Jive VP of artist marketing (U.S.) Janet Kleinbaum says the label

was in the midst of a massive awareness campaign while the Backstreet Boys were busy storming European markets.

"We've been actively seeding the marketplace and super-serving their core audience for more than a year," says Kleinbaum. "They have a very active audience, and we've been keeping them visible, particularly through advertising, contests, and publicity in the teen magazines. It's very rare that a marketing person gets enough time to properly set up a record."

Among the many programs instituted by Jive was a promotion with publisher Bantam Doubleday Dell. The label attached 65,000 sampler cassettes to the back of Bantam's teen romance book series, "Love Stories," as well as directly mailed samplers to subscribers of Bantam's "Sweet Valley High" series.

Jive will continue to mine teen magazines with which the label already has a rich relationship, such as 16, Tiger Beat, and Teen Machine.

It's not the first time that Jive has attempted to market the Backstreet Boys to teens in the U.S. The label distributed several thousand samplers and merchandise giveaways through roller-skating rinks simultaneously with the 1995 release of "We've Got It Goin' On."

As part of the new attack, in August, the label will place cassette samplers in J.C. Penney's Kaboodles line of plastic makeup cases. The pro-

motion will be bolstered with in-store play of the group's videos in the stores' junior departments.

Yet another plan to prime the market with sampler cassettes includes distributing the tapes at summer cheerleader camps. Jive also hopes to encourage singles sales by including bonus items in CD and cassette singles.

A limited-edition CD single will include postcard pin-ups, while the cassette configuration will include Backstreet Boys temporary tattoos.

While the label is clearly concentrating on the teen market, Kleinbaum is careful to qualify that Jive's efforts are a jumping-off point to a wider audience.

"The band's audience is not limited to the teen market, but you have to build from a base, and we know that these young fans are particularly active," she says. "They are the ones that are going to rush out to make the scene."

"Besides," adds Kleinbaum, "I don't think adults are going to know that there is a teen market for this band because they're not reading Teen magazine. They are seeing the band's videos and hearing them on [New York top 40 station WHTZ] Z100."

Nick Carter, who, at 17, is the youngest member of the group, says he and his bandmates realize the dangers of being pigeonholed.

"When you think of a teen sensation, you think of the past and how this is just another one to come along,"

Carter says. "We realize that people are talking about that, but we take everything with a grain of salt. We know it's going to take a lot of proving."

Still, some industry observers say that this summer may be the most opportune time to capitalize on younger audiences, as the past years' drought of teen-oriented music has created a void now being filled by artists such as Hanson and Jonny Lang (Billboard, March 22).

"It's time," says McPherson. "The market is opening itself up to this pop mixture that includes everything from hip-hop and R&B to alternative. There is room for these different types of music, as evidenced by acts like Hanson and the Spice Girls."

More traditionally, Jive will work with mass merchandisers in positioning programs and in-store campaigns.

Jive also hopes to take advantage of the act's visual appeal by shooting three more clips for the album. The Backstreet Boys will also make an appearance this summer on Nickelodeon's "Nick In The Afternoon" program.

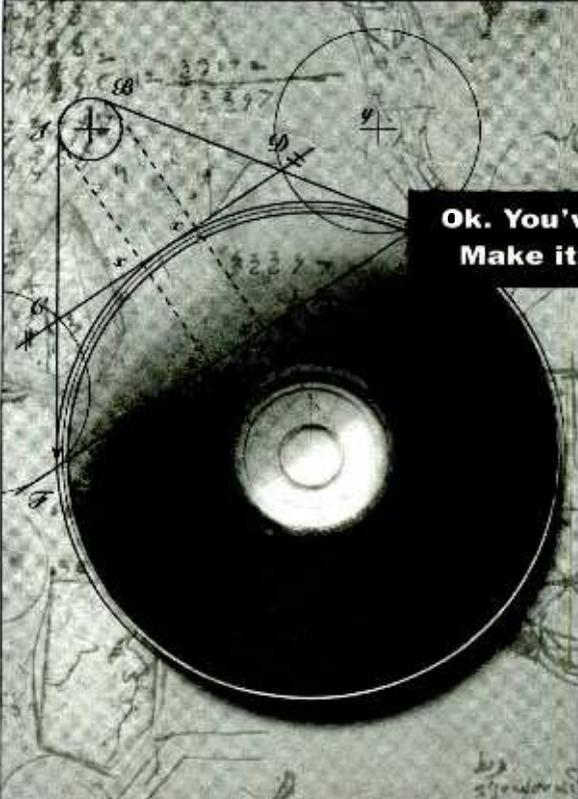
The act, which is booked by New York-based Renaissance Entertainment, will also perform at a series of Wal-Mart in-stores this summer in conjunction with each market's top 40 outlet.

However, most of its appearances will begin with a fall tour, freeing the group to dedicate its efforts this summer to European territories.

amusement business		BOXSCORE		TOP 10 CONCERT GROSSES	
ARTIST(S)	Venue	Date(s)	Gross Ticket Price(s)	Attendance Capacity	Promoter
U2 FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS	Soldier Field Chicago	June 27-29	\$3,856,907 Gross Record \$52.50/\$37.50	118,872 127,500 100% shows	TNA International Ltd Jam Prods.
U2 FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS	Foxboro Stadium Foxboro, Mass.	July 1-2	\$4,388,134 \$52.50/\$37.50	83,846 100% seefoots	TNA International Ltd Don Law Co.
U2 FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS	Camp Randall Stadium, Univ. of Wisconsin Madison, Wis.	June 25	\$1,781,045 \$52.50/\$37.50	34,802 40,000	TNA International Ltd Cellar Door
OZZFEST '97: OZZY OSBOURNE, BLACK SABBATH, MARILYN MANSON, PANTERA, AND OTHERS	Glen Helen Blockbuster Pavilion Devore, Calif.	June 29	\$436,822 \$56/\$53/\$40.50	28,811 29,234	PACE Concerts Avalon Attractions
ROCK CONCERT: ROCK CATS, THE PLATTERS, FLASH CADILLAC, JOHNNY RIVERS, THE MAMAS & THE PAPAS, MARY WILSON, CHUCK BERRY, THE TEMPTATIONS, TOMMY LAMBL, TUBEE BOG NIGHT	Mile High Stadium Denver	June 14	\$817,384 \$11	38,124 50,000	Fey Concert Co
OZZFEST '97: OZZY OSBOURNE, BLACK SABBATH, MARILYN MANSON, PANTERA, TYPE O NEGATIVE, MACHINE HEAD, AND OTHERS	Blockbuster Desert Sky Pavilion Phoenix	June 26	\$538,875 \$52/\$38/\$28	16,140 seefoot	PACE Concerts Evening Star Prods.
THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND RONNIE EARL & THE BROWNSTEERS	Great Woods Center Mansfield, Mass.	June 20	\$519,213 \$38.50/\$23.50	19,256 seefoot	in-house
TINA TURNER CYNDI LAUPER	Molson Centre Montreal	July 5	\$485,482 (\$259,547 Canadian) \$40.94/\$26.99	13,399 14,114	Universal Concerts Canada
JOHN MELLENCAMP	Pine Knob Music Theatre Clarkston, Mich.	June 20	\$464,440 \$55/\$39.50/\$27.50	13,584 15,000	Belkin Prods Cellar Door
COUNTING CROWS/ THE WALLFLOWERS BETTIE SERVEERT	World Music Theatre Tinley Park, Ill.	July 5	\$461,770 \$32.50/\$25/\$17.50	21,181 25,000	Tinley Park Jam Corp Nederland Organization

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