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Boyz II Men Expect Muscovites to Bring 'A-Game' to Concert

By Lena Smirnova

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The stylish R&B trio expects locals to bring their ‘A Game’ in style when they perform in Moscow on Feb. 6.

President Vladimir Putin's crusade to raise the country's birth rate is set to get the support of three powerful voices on its behalf.

A baritone and two tenors, that is.

The stylish trio of Boyz II Men, the most successful R&B group of all time, is coming to Moscow on Feb. 6. The group will perform a selection of their classic and new romantic ballads, hopefully giving Russian men some inspiration ahead of St. Valentine's Day.

The band members Wanya Morris, Shawn Stockman and Nathan Morris answered The Moscow Times' questions about their upcoming concert, growing up, Russian fashion and the possibility of writing a song about Moscow.

Q: You are visiting multiple countries on your world tour. How will you adapt the show to the Moscow audience?

A: One of the reasons we have so many loyal fans is that we stay true to who we are — we don't tailor each show to a specific audience. We bring 100 percent energy each and every night we're out on tour — and we love seeing the fans react to that. Fans can look forward to all the hits and some great new material.

Q: This is the second time you are coming to Russia with a concert. What do you like about the Russian audience?

A: Russian audiences have always shown us a lot of love. It's amazing for us to see fans across the world who know every lyric to our songs. We really appreciate all the support they have given us over the years.

Q: You are known for your crisp and clean fashion style. What do you like about Moscow's style?

A: Our Russian fans always bring their A-game. They always look sharp and definitely know how to keep warm!

Q: Your popularity was tremendous in the 1990s. What are your recollections of Russia at the time?

A: We have been touring the world for the past 20 years, so at this point it all blurs together a little bit. That said, we feel really fortunate every time we visit Russia. It's a beautiful country! We love our Russian fans, and we love the beautiful scenery in Moscow!

Q: What is the atmosphere like within the group?

A: We've been writing music and performing together for so long that at this point, we're all basically family. We're really close, and we always feel comfortable bouncing ideas off of each other. Our families get along really well. They are all so supportive of our careers. We absolutely could not do it without them!

Q: What are the biggest stereotypes and criticisms you've had to endure over the years? How did you deal with them?

A: We don't really like to focus on the negative. We are doing what we love for a living — it doesn't really get much better than that. We don't really feel we have anything to complain about. There have been ups and downs for sure, but overall, we feel blessed to still be doing what we love!

Q: You've come from being "boyz" to being men, husbands and fathers. Has your music changed? Do you want to sing about different subjects now?

A: We've been in the music industry a long time now and have all obviously grown and changed over the course of the last 20 years. But that's a good thing. It's a beautiful thing. On the other hand, the passion, rhythm and energy we put into our music is something that has not changed at all. And at the end of the day, it's still about love for us.

Q: You've recorded a song about Philadelphia. Any chance you'll write a song about Moscow?

A: Well, we chose to write about Philly because that's where we're from. As far as doing more song writing, you never know what the future holds! We are currently focusing on our residency at The Mirage hotel and casino in Las Vegas and our upcoming "Package Tour" this summer with New Kids on the Block and 98 Degrees. Definitely be on the lookout for that!

Boyz II Men continue their world tour in Moscow on Feb. 6, performing at 8 p.m. in Crocus City Hall, located on the 66th kilometer mark of the Moscow Ring Road. Metro Myakinino. +7-495-550-0055. www.crocus-hall.ru. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes.

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