

★ Beatles manager

Bernstein to open office in Atlantic

By BARBARA McCREATH

Fifteen years ago next February, four mop-headed lads from Liverpool took the stage at Carnegie Hall in New York, and changed an entire generation. Today, the man responsible for all that, and the rest of the British Invasion, is turning his attention to the Maritimes.

Syd Bernstein, also known as "The Mayor of British Rock", was already an established figure in the music industry, when he read about a British band called "The Beatles" in an English newspaper in 1962.

"I began to read about a group out of Liverpool that was creating a great deal of excitement," says Bernstein. "As the months went by, I followed their progress through the British papers. Then, around the beginning of 1963, the word 'Beatlemania' just popped up at you in each paper."

At that time, the American charts were dominated by songs like Bobby Vinton's "Blue Velvet". The Beatles were getting very little airplay in the United States at all. But Bernstein had a feeling about this relatively obscure foursome.

"I decided, on a hunch or instinct, that I should contact their manager, the late Brian Epstein," he recalls. "It took me about three weeks to find his phone number. I called him in Liverpool, and I won't forget the number as long as I live. It was Central 6518. When he got on the phone I was just so nervous, I felt that something historic or important was about to happen. Of course, I had no way of knowing then just what an effect

they would have on the world."

Epstein was skeptical about playing in the United States, because of the lack of airplay. But Bernstein convinced him otherwise. He booked The Beatles to play two shows at Carnegie Hall, the following February, for \$6500.

Sometime during the summer of 1963, Ed Sullivan was changing planes in London, when he noticed hundreds of young people carrying signs proclaiming The Beatles. He asked an airport attendant if they were an insect act. The attendant replied that they were a hot new band from Liverpool. After looking into it further, Sullivan booked The Beatles on his show for February. They were to play two consecutive Sundays, before and after the concert.

When the news reached the American public that Ed Sullivan had booked a British group called The Beatles for two shows, the press reported it. The word "Beatles" became familiar to the American public.

"Then, in late fall, the first record hit," Bernstein recalls. "By December they had two on the charts, in January had three back to back, one, two and three. The tickets I had priced at \$3.50, \$4.50 and \$5.50 were now selling on the street for \$75 to \$150 dollars."

"By the time they played Carnegie Hall, their popularity had reached such proportions that there were 20,000 people behind barricades, who couldn't get in, but wanted to get a glimpse of the Beatles, as they came to do their show."

And, as they say, the rest is history. But to Bernstein, the

Beatles are still very much alive.

"Their impact has been so great," says Bernstein. "There has been nothing like it in the seventies."

He has even gone to the extent of trying to re-unite the famous four. He took out a full page ad in a New York paper, in 1976, asking them to play together one more time at a benefit for needy children. The press picked it up, and the Beatles were once again talked about everywhere. The only response from the band itself, came from Paul McCartney to a reporter in Paris. It was a flat "No".

Since that day fifteen years ago, when Bernstein first put the Beatles on stage in New York, he has been involved in the careers of the greatest performers of our time. He arranged and promoted tours of North America not only for the Beatles, but also the Rolling Stones, Dave Clark Five, the Animals, and the rest of the British Invasion.

Today, Syd Bernstein is keeping a low profile, even though he still puts on major concerts, as well as holding exclusive North American concert rights for Swedish rock band "Abba".

Why then is this giant of the music industry, one of the biggest promoters in North America, turning his eyes to Maritime Canada?

Syd Bernstein feels that the Maritimes are "culturally starved" for good concerts. He is now acting as a consultant to a New Glasgow based promotion company to change that.

EGG and MAD Productions, with the help of Bernstein, are planning

to begin putting on concerts in Halifax, Moncton, and possibly Fredericton, one every six to eight weeks. The first show is scheduled for late January or early February. Among the names being mentioned for this first concert is "Chicago".

The group is also working towards putting on a three-day outdoor festival in Nova Scotia next July. Tentatively named Atlantic Jam I, the show will be headlined by six or seven major acts and speculation is that the Eagles will be one of them.

"We'll bring in any kind of act the people want to see," says Bernstein. "The hardest part will be convincing the acts that they can include the Maritimes in a North American tour, and then play the next night in Montreal, Toronto, Boston, or New York. The distance isn't really all that great."

For the past three weeks,

Bernstein, along with EGG and MAD representatives Al Sirowitz and Harvey MacNeill have been talking to the press, student representatives, and hall operators around the Atlantic region. They are currently conducting a survey of university and college

students to determine what acts they would like to see. They are also attempting to discover if there is a market for black booking smaller name acts into universities for concerts.

"I like to take chances, to innovate, be the first in a new frontier," says Bernstein. "It fulfills a need. These boys came to me in New York with this idea and I believe it will work. We are going to establish this area as a viable market for large acts to play, regularly. I think it will be the best thing that's happened here as far as music is concerned."

Questionnaires should be dropped off

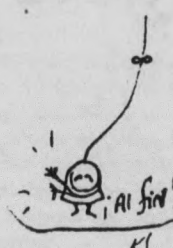
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PART ONE

1) What kinds of acts would you like to see at your school functions (i.e. Pubs and dances) (Number in order of Preference)

_____ Rock _____ Disco _____ Old Rock 'n Roll _____ Folk _____ Country
_____ Jazz _____ Pop _____ Other (Please specify) _____

2) Other than the Mega stars (i.e. Eagles, Bee Gees, Fleetwood Mac etc.), what acts would you like to see in concert at your university?

PART TWO

3) What kind of act would you like to see in a concert in your area? Please number in order of preference.

_____ Rock _____ Disco _____ Old Rock 'n Roll _____ Folk _____ Jazz
_____ C & W _____ M.O.R. _____ Pop _____ Other (please specify) _____

4) What NAME acts would you like to see in concert in your area? (excluding Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, Bee Gees etc.)

5) What would you reasonably expect to pay to see these acts? _____

6) Would you travel to one of the following cities to see these acts? If so please check at least one.

_____ Moncton _____ Fredericton _____ Halifax

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