

Bieber promotes his book, talks music, faith, hair

By Sandy Cohen
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Justin Bieber might be the modern king of all media.

The teen heartthrob has the Web wired — he's a YouTube discovery with almost 6 million followers on Twitter. He makes hit music, with an album and concert tour in the nation's top 20 and a new album on the way in a few weeks. He's got a movie coming out early next year, and this past Sunday, he drew enough fans to temporarily shut down a Barnes & Noble bookstore where he promoted his autobiography, "First Step 2 Forever: My Story."

More than 1,000 teen and 'tween girls, a handful of boys, and their parents waited in a long line that snaked



MATT SAYLES, ASSOCIATED PRESS
Musician Justin Bieber poses for a portrait while promoting his new book, "Justin Bieber: First Step 2 Forever."

through the popular Grove shopping center for a chance to meet the shaggy-haired Canadian singer. All had secured

wristbands days earlier when they bought Bieber's book, a photo-packed hardcover about his rise to fame that sells for

\$21.99.

The store closed its doors and blocked them with black curtains as fans streamed in to collect their signed books and pose for a photo with the 16-year-old star.

Before the fan-demonium began ("Oh my (gosh) he touched my hair!" one girl said), Bieber talked about his book and his future ambitions.

The Associated Press: Your fans know your story, why tell them again in a book?

Bieber: I don't know if they know it completely. I've never gotten the chance to really tell them myself. I've told them in interviews and people have written articles, but it's not really from me. I was able to write all my thoughts down and tell them, basically, how

I'm feeling, you know? Just different stuff like that.

AP: One revelation is your religion and faith. How do you reconcile that with the temptations of Hollywood?

Bieber: Hollywood is ... a scary place. There's a lot going on, there's a lot of bad things, but there's also a lot of good things. I'm able to live my dream, I'm able to do a lot of good things. Basically, I don't even consider religion. Like, I'm a Christian, I believe in God, I believe that Jesus died on a cross for my sins. I believe that I have a relationship and I'm able to talk to him and really, he's the reason I'm here, so I definitely have to remember that. As soon as I start forgetting, I've got to click back and be like, you know, this is why I'm here.

AP: You've accomplished a lot already. Where do you see things going for you?

Bieber: I see myself being like, 30, like, married, like, probably. It seems far away for me. But I want to be a young dad. I don't want to be old and not be able to kick around the soccer ball...I see myself making a smooth transition from being a teenage, um, you know, teenage heartthrob basically to, you know, to an adult singer. I want to make that smooth transition, kind of like Usher or Justin Timberlake did it.

AP: And keep music your focus?

Bieber: Exactly. People are always like, 'So, your hair is your trademark' and stuff. I'm like, no. My voice is my trademark, you know?

It's the best circus in history — if you and your kids decide that it is

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JASON F. WRIGHT

A FEW NIGHTS ago, my family attended a "Circus Extravaganza" at our local fairgrounds. It was a one-night-only engagement held not in a giant tent, but in a wood-and-sheet-metal exhibit hall that normally holds fat chickens and blue ribbon bunnies.

My wife and I did our best to downplay and manage our children's expectations. If ever an event were custom-made for Mom and Dad's trademark sarcasm, this was it.

There was no big top. There were no lions, tigers or elephants wearing lacy pink tutus.

No World's Tallest Man. No

trapeze artists. No one named Leonardo in a leotard to be launched from a cannon.

But somehow on this night, this stuffy and odd-smelling building was transformed into home of the best circus in history. Why? Because my kids said so.

As the show opened, my wife and I marveled at the genuine performance of the ringleader. The mid-70s woman with blinding red lipstick didn't care that she was performing in a building with barely 100 people watching. Nor was she concerned that her various tacky outfits sported enough glitter they could have stopped a bullet. Her chief concern was that for 90 minutes we all believed we were seeing "World Class Talent from around the Globe!" She believed it, and by the end of the night, so did we.

My oldest daughter, a high school freshman, sat wide-eyed and slack-jawed as three scruffy

dogs performed for an Italian-looking trainer with sideburns so thick he could have been hiding a plate of tortellini in each one. The dogs jumped through rings, sailed over plastic fences and danced on two legs. Judging from my daughter's enthusiastic reaction, these pooches could vie for Best in Show at the Westminster Kennel Club. She couldn't have been more impressed if one of them hopped on her lap and offered to help with her geometry homework.

My second oldest, also a young lady, marveled as a Russian named Tatiana spun hula-hoops on her feet and arms. For her grand finale she spun 25 of them from her neck to her knees. I could see my daughter's big brown eyes light up with possibilities; there's a trip to Hula-Hoops R' Us in our future. Later in the program, Tatiana returned as a professional face painter and created

a masterpiece on my daughter's cheek. When the grand finale was introduced, guess who came out with a partner and dazzled us by juggling a dozen bowling pins in a dozen different ways? Tatiana!

My 7-year-old was mesmerized by a chubby boa constrictor that his mother and father paid \$5 to pose with during intermission. Later, he sat in awe as the man who took our tickets outside appeared in a tuxedo and spun eight ceramic plates. Neither my son nor the professional plate-spinner cared when a plate hit the ground and shattered. Both were too caught up in the crowd's excitement. When plate number eight finally went up and all were spinning simultaneously on tiny rods in the circus ring, my son's face made an expression I'd never quite seen before. Later that night my wife felt inspired to lock the china cabinet.

Our youngest, a 3-year-old boy, inhaled cotton candy and smiled when someone in a ratty felt-covered Sponge Bob costume appeared from behind a curtain and danced for the kids. He wouldn't get close enough to high-five Sponge Bob, but the shy wave from his seat in the second row was priceless. Then if only the world could have heard the joy in all our voices as we sang the Sponge's theme song from the top of our lungs. As we headed home after the show, my kids unloaded a flurry of praise and picked their favorite, most memorable moments. No mocking, no poking fun, just unbridled excitement and gratitude for a night out at something that doesn't happen every day.

It was an inexpensive night that proved more valuable than a million trips to Disney. Without meaning to, my gang reminded me that a positive attitude is a terrible thing to

waste. We make the fun around us. It doesn't usually happen by accident. Want to have a good time? Have it. Want to have a lousy time? You can have that, too.

These performers won't win "America's Got Talent," and they will probably never perform for more than a few hundred spectators, even on their best nights. But if they believe they are World Class Talent, shouldn't we?

If they're having the time of their lives, shouldn't we?

If they perform and dance and smile as if it's the best circus in history, maybe it was.

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