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Hold on, he feels your broken heart's pain,
Stand strong, faith holds the key to rescue,
Reach out to love that cleanses your heart stains,
And never stop believin' . . . that God dreams of you.

—Paige Clawson and Shane Clawson



FROM "NEVER STOP BELIEVIN'"
YB2 MUSIC, INC.

August 31

YB2 ENJOYS THE SHOW AS MUCH AS THE CROWD

By Michael Dankin, Weekend Editor

Detroit Register Press

They may be young, but the fresh-faced members of the nation's hottest singing group know how to turn a phrase—and more than a few heads.

When the lights went down last night at Detroit's Palace of Auburn Hills, five young singers appeared under five spotlights on the otherwise dark stage. From the moment the music kicked in and the teens began to move, it was clear YB2 (Young Believers, Second Edition) was planning to have fun—and share it with the crowd.

The group, now traveling full-time, has polished their presentation to a high gloss. Unlike some bands that play a different set every night, YB2 presents the same concert in each venue—what you get in Detroit is the same thing you get in Pittsburgh, should you be lucky enough to snag a ticket.

The crowd changes every night, though each contains a few common denominators—screaming preteen girls carrying signs

proclaiming their love for Shane, Noah, or Josiah, the three resident heartthrobs; toe-tapping grandmothers; and the occasional babe in arms—YB2 wannabes in training.

YB2 opened the night with their newest release, "Never Stop Believin'." To kill time between costume changes, individual group members entertained with brief introductions and stories about their hometowns, ranging from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Orlando, Florida.

Four members of the band—Shane Clawson, Noah Dudash, Josiah Johnson, and Liane Nelson—exhibited a few funky hip-hop moves. Paige Clawson, the group's fifth member and co-composer of many of their songs, stayed behind the keyboard even during interludes. Smiling at the crowd from behind her trademark sunglasses, her confident image made it difficult to believe that the girl has been blind since birth.

For all their jumping and running and shaking hands with the

crowd, these kids can sing. When they gather in their trademark semicircle around the piano for five-part harmony, we are all reminded that they are singers first . . . and the songs have first priority. Their lyrics are about young

love, technology, and music, but they also sing about the meaning of life. Heavy stuff for kids.

If you missed them, better call Ticketmaster and reserve your seat for next year. YB2 is taking teen pop to the next level.



1

Wednesday, September 1

“I’m a girl for all times, livin’ in fu-tur-i-si-ty!” Liane Nelson strutted across the stage to the music’s pounding beat, then turned on the final downbeat and flung her hand toward the sky. She froze, her head tipped back and her eyes focused on a point in the coliseum’s dark ceiling, while she listened to the sounds of air moving through her lungs. Screaming applause rose around her, great whipped waves of it, and she steeled herself against the slightest urge to move until she heard Shane’s signal.

Finally, in the first instant the applause began to falter, she heard Shane Clawson’s voice. “Cut!”

Immediately Liane and the others snapped erect and moved to the back line. In one practiced motion, they unfastened the Velcro flaps that held the robotic-looking pieces over their black outfits, then yanked them off and tossed the lightweight fiberglass pieces into the darkness

beyond the line. Last month RC, their director, had added the pieces as a sign of welcome for Josiah Johnson, the team's newest member, who also happened to have scoliosis. After trying to dance in a brace, even a modified one, Liane understood Josiah's struggle to move in his brace.

At the soundboard, Taz punched the play button. At the first note of the music, the five singers moved into their semicircle position for the final song, "Y B Alone?" This song, the title cut from their first album, had become their unofficial theme. No concert would be complete without it.

As the piano floated a melody across the stage, Liane turned her head, shifting her attention to the brown-haired girl who sat at the keyboard, a top-of-the-line Korg Triton. The epitome of coolness, Paige Clawson flashed a smile beneath her dark glasses as she played. Then she lifted her head and nodded as if she'd just spotted someone special in the audience.

No one would ever guess she was blind just from watching her in concert.

Liane was amazed by her friend. Not only did Paige handle normal life without sight, she also helped write most of the songs they performed.

"You say you're brokenhearted," Paige sang,
"You say you're all alone,
Why let yourself stay in the dark
When there's love enough within his heart
To reach you . . . and hold you."

The music swelled. Liane joined the others in singing soft “ahhs” as she shifted her attention to Shane, commonly known as the biggest heartthrob of the group. He finished the first verse:

“You say your life’s a waste of time,
You say you’re barely getting by,
Why let yourself listen to the lies
When there’s love enough within his eyes
To catch you . . . and keep you.”

The drums kicked in, and the funky rhythms began. Liane felt her heart begin to pound with the beat as she lifted her chin.

“Cause I know,” she sang, belting out the words while the others echoed.

“The source of all love
I know
Who puts the power within,
It’s not
The star on the TV show,
It’s God,
Who created us all.”

Grinning, Liane pivoted toward Noah Dudash, the mop-headed California clown who’d been with the group since the beginning, like she had.

“You say you’re looking up now,” Noah sang, moving to the front line.

“You say you’re standing tall,
Be sure you stand on solid ground,
In the Rock alone true hope is found,
And that hope . . . is forever.”

The drums kicked, and the entire group finished the chorus with Liane moving out to take the lead.

“Cause I know—” she lifted her hand and pointed to heaven.

“The source of all love,
I know
Who puts the power within,
It’s not
Rich man counting out his dough,
It’s God,
Who created us all.”

Her heart pounding from the power of the song, Liane swiveled to look at Josiah. He’d been with the group only a month, but Liane already thought of him as a brother.

His pure tenor wafted over the stage: “The One who yearns to love you—”

Liane joined the others in echoing, “Why be alone?”
Josiah grinned at her. “Is always right beside you.”

She grinned back. “No, you’re not alone.”

“So never stop believing—”

“He’ll never let you go.”

“He’s calling out your name—”

“Now and forever . . .”

One more time—as one, Shane, Liane, Noah, and

Josiah moved from the back line to the front, stepping as close to the screaming fans as they dared. Noah led off on the final chorus while the others echoed.

“Cause I know,” he sang, pointing to his brain.
“The source of all love
I know
Who puts the power within,
It’s not
Experts who are in the know,
It’s God,
Who created us all.”

The song ended; they froze in their choreographed positions while the applause erupted from the enthusiastic crowd. Liane closed her eyes as happiness filled her. Some days she might be tired, she might be sick, she might be depressed, but when she stood on the stage and heard this kind of applause, all her negative feelings melted away.

She *loved* her life with YB2.

“Cut!” Shane’s voice cut through the roar. “And bow. One!”

Stepping back, Liane caught Paige’s and Noah’s hands. They had perfected an eight-count bow—after Shane’s initial “one,” they took two counts to grab each other’s hands (the extra beat was necessary to guide Paige from her place behind the keyboard to the back line). On “four” they lifted their linked hands; on “five” they bent

at the waist and swept their heads to their knees. They counted “six” in the bent position, on “seven” they straightened and lifted their arms again, and on “eight” they returned to their starting position. They bowed as many times as it took to satisfy the audience—tonight looked like a five-bow night—then, if the applause wasn’t dying, they kicked into another chorus of “Y B Alone?” as an encore.

After the encore and half a dozen more bows, the five singers linked hands and ran off the stage.

As they moved out of the bright lights and into the cloaking darkness, Liane took deep gulps of air. Noah dropped her hand and hurried off with the guys, but she kept a firm grip on Paige and led her toward the black curtains that separated the public areas from the back-stage crew.

Paige managed fine in almost every situation, and she didn’t like to ask for help. Liane admired her friend’s independence, but even sighted people could use a helping hand in the chaos of a packed coliseum.

Safely behind the black fabric wall that divided them from the demanding fans, Liane linked her arm through Paige’s and slowed her step. A pair of security guards nodded as she passed, and she managed to give them a tired smile in return.

“Come on, Paige.” She turned toward the hallway where their dressing room was located. “Ready to change?”

How many dressing rooms had she visited over the last few months? Liane had joined YB2 in the group’s first

official year. Happily, RC had asked her to come back for a second year, along with Shane, Paige, and Noah. Josiah had joined them last month at rehearsal camp in Orlando, replacing Vance Gerkin, who had made some pretty serious mistakes and had to leave the band.

Liane thought of Vance nearly every day. The group's incredible success apparently had gone to Vance's head. During the summer break he'd gone to a party and gotten drunk—which was bad enough—but then he'd tried to slug some reporter who was trying to get a picture of the famous Vance Gerkin making a fool of himself.

So he wasn't the famous Vance Gerkin anymore. Liane felt sorry for him in a way—he'd paid a big price for messing up—but RC had warned them all. "You are living in a goldfish bowl," he'd told them time and time again. "People are watching your every move. And since we stand for something positive, people are going to be watching us even more closely than they watch other groups."

Liane was used to people watching her—some of the guys complained about not being able to go out in public without being recognized, but sometimes she liked the attention. And she wasn't recognized very often when she was alone—if she went out in a baseball cap and sunglasses, most people figured she was just one of the girls from the neighborhood.

But when they went out as a group . . . that's when things got sticky. Every American girl between the ages of eight and sixteen seemed to be in love with Shane,

Josiah, or Noah, and *everybody* loved YB2. So if they were all together, or if they went somewhere in their performance clothes, it was impossible to do something as simple as visit the restroom without causing a scene.

Life in the goldfish bowl could be frustrating at times . . . especially when she just wanted to be alone to read or think. People always wanted to see them, hear them, touch them. Once, after the bus made a quick stop at a McDonald's in Michigan, Shane's empty Quarter Pounder carton turned up on eBay. Newspaper and magazine reporters wanted to know what they thought about all kinds of issues, and Liane was amazed that any goofball comment from a kid in YB2 could make headlines in *Tiger Beat* or *Teen People*.

With her arm linked through Paige's, Liane moved through the civic center's wide halls, then found the door labeled "YB2 Female Dressing Room." The security guard stepped aside as she and Paige approached, then he reached out to help her open the door.

After thanking him, Liane walked Paige to a sofa against the wall, then sank into a chair before a mirrored vanity. She stared at her reflection, where sweat had smeared her mascara and created smudges under her eyes. "Man, it was hot tonight. I thought I was going to melt into a puddle out there!"

"It *was* hot," Paige agreed, pulling off her glasses. "And all this makeup can't be good for my skin. Lee, do you see any zits on my nose?"

Liane grinned as she leaned toward her friend. “Honestly, I can’t see a thing under that pancake makeup.”

Paige sighed as she stood and reached for the white-tipped cane she’d left on the sofa. “I’m going to wash up and change. Will you be ready to go to the bus in a while?”

“Yeah, I’ll go with you.” Liane peered back into the mirror, half-expecting to see bags under her fourteen-year-old eyes. YB2 had been on the road for nearly two weeks, and she was beginning to feel the need for a break. “I just want to curl up on the bus and go to sleep.”

“Sorry.” Paige’s voice floated from the back of the room where she’d left her clothes in a locker. “We have an interview, remember? Some guy from *People* magazine.”

Liane groaned. She’d forgotten about the special arrangement *People* had made with RC. YB2 had been interviewed lots of times in *Teen People*, but now the adult magazine was interested in them. Instead of sending one writer to a press conference with twenty other reporters, *People* had asked if one of their journalists could travel with YB2 for twenty-four hours. RC had liked the reporter’s unique approach, so the deal was made. The guy had attended the concert tonight and would soon be boarding the bus with the singers.

He was lucky he’d picked this night. Sometimes after a concert they had to sit for interviews or give autographs for long lines of fans who had won local radio or television contests. But tonight they were on a tight schedule, so they had to move out as soon as possible.

Liane had thought she'd find travel boring, but she'd been pleasantly surprised by life on the bus. Though the group sometimes flew to special concerts and TV events, they usually traveled in two semitrailers and a shiny black bus with a simple shooting star on the side. The trailers carried the lights, stage equipment, and audio equipment; the bus transported the singers and their luggage. RC was always saying he wanted them to feel like they had a place to crash, so the roomy vehicle had become their home away from home.

Liane pulled a washcloth from her makeup case. "I forgot all about the guy from *People* . . . and I'm still not sure I understand why he wants to ride with us. I mean, it's not like he'll enjoy hearing the guys burp and carry on like they do."

Paige laughed. "He said he wanted to see the real YB2. But the real us might be more than he bargained for."

"I'll say."

Liane stood and slipped out of her performance clothes, then pulled her sweatpants and a faded shirt from the bottom of her tote bag. This outfit would never fly if they were going to appear in public, but only the group members and the guy from *People* would see her tonight. She and Paige would exit through a back door and leave the arena in the bus.

After changing, Liane washed the makeup from her face and brushed her teeth. If all went well, she'd be asleep within a couple of hours.

She paused in the middle of smearing moisturizer on her face. “You need any help, Paige?”

“I’m okay.” The girl turned from the sink where she stood, displaying freshly scrubbed skin. She had changed out of her performance outfit, too, and now wore baggy jeans and a fleece T-shirt.

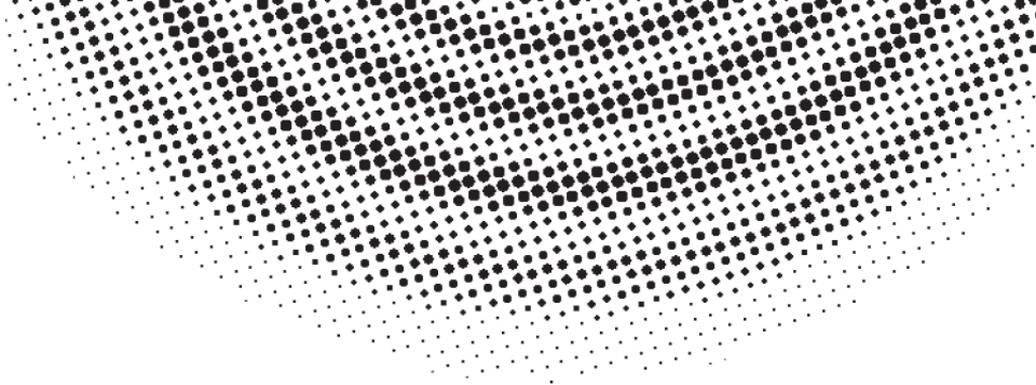
Liane packed her overnight bag with her toiletries, hung all the pieces of both girls’ performance outfits in a garment bag, then checked the room for any other personal items. When she was sure nothing would be left behind, she hoisted her small suitcase to her shoulder, then hooked the hanging bag over her right hand.

“Ready to hit the bus?”

Paige picked up her cane and her overnight bag. “Ready as I’ll ever be. And I think—” she yawned— “I’m ready for bed, too.”

“Yeah—let’s hope this reporter guy doesn’t try to gab with us tonight.”

Holding on to one another, the two girls left the room.



Never Stop Believin'

Young man sittin' lost by a streetlight,
Countin' out his last thin dimes,
What was he thinkin' by comin' here,
What dreams shone in his dark eyes?
Young girl cryin' lost in a bare room,
Missin' folks she's left far behind,
Where is the life she longed for?
Young Cinderella must have been blind.

Chorus:

Hold on, he feels your broken heart's pain,
Stand strong, faith holds the key to rescue,
Reach out to love that cleanses your heart stains,
And never stop believin' . . . that God dreams of you.

Young man finds a book in a trash can,
Opens up to a promise so old,

Reads of love bigger than his heartbreak,
Reads of One who can heal his soul—
Cinderella hears a sound in the hallway,
Old woman standing at the door,
Hungry girl, let me warm and feed you,
I know just what you're lookin' for.

Chorus:

Hold on, he feels your broken heart's pain,
Stand strong, faith holds the key to rescue,
Reach out to love that cleanses your heart stains,
And never stop believin' . . . that God dreams of you.

Bridge:

I know you've dreamed of a true love,
(He's dreaming, too)
I know you've dreamed of a home,
(He's dreamed of you)
I know you've dreamed of forever,
(You know what to do).

Chorus:

Hold on, he feels your broken heart's pain,
Stand strong, faith holds the key to rescue,
Reach out to love that cleanses your heart stains,
And never stop believin' . . . that God dreams of you.

WORDS AND MUSIC BY SHANE CLAWSON
AND PAIGE CLAWSON, 2003.