

BRITNEY SPEARS

By Tamela Meredith Partridge
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Oops ! Jive recording artist Britney Spears has done it again with her newly released sophomore album, "Oops...I Did It Again."

Spears, who is the youngest debut solo artist to simultaneously reach No. 1 on various Billboard charts with multi-platinum selling '99 debut album and title track, "Baby, One More Time." is repeating musical history with No. 1 released "Oops...I Did It Again" and it's impressive first week sales status of 1.3 million units.



"I'm not really doing anything different this time around," Spears said. "But I am really growing up as a person, and that just all flows with the overall sound and feel of this record ("Oops...I Did It Again"). There's no master plan. I'm just gonna be me and hope it all works out."

Just being Britney has certainly proven to be an ingenious master plan all on it's own. The 18 year-old pop diva has influenced millions of male and female teenage fans worldwide with her satiny vocals, long honey-blond hair, navel ring enhanced bare-midriff fashions and choreographed dancing.

"I want to be an artist that everyone can relate to, that's young, happy and fun," Spears said.

The Kentwood, Louisiana native has also garnered numerous global music industry awards and nominations with her chart-topping debut album singles, "Baby, One More Time," "Sometimes," "From The Bottom Of My Broken Heart," and "You Drive Me Crazy."

"People have to remember that when I did my first album, ("Baby, One More Time"), I was only 16," Spears said. "I had never been in the studio, it was all new to me. Before, I had let people help me out, and I honestly think that was because I was just so new to the music industry, and not just because I was young."

Bordering precariously between schoolgirl innocence and heightened teenage sensuality is Spears "Oops...I Did It Again" debut title track single and it's accompanying futuristic Barbarella concept video. The single, which deals with romantic misintentions, has already broken the record with it's CHR/Pop radio first week total of 155 adds.

"It's an incredible song !" Spears said. "I think it is even better than 'Baby, One More Time.' "

Reminiscent of a butterfly emerging from it's nurturing cocoon, Spears musical career has steadily matured from her former role as a new "Mickey Mouse Club" Mouseketeer to that of an internationally acclaimed Queen of Teen destined for a lengthy reign.

"Making records and being a part of the process and becoming more in charge of my sound was something I had to experience and grow with," Spears said. "And on this album ("Oops...I Did It Again"), I've had a chance to do that. This album is closer to who I am. It's funkier !"

The twelve song "Oops...I Did It Again" collection demonstrates Spears ability to deliver soulful ballads with as much intensity as her frisky, uptempo rump-shaking cuts. Intermittent dialogue excerpts, laughter and phone conversations scattered between various "Oops...I Did It Again" selections grants the listener an intimate perspective into the fragile complexities today's youth undergo in social and romantic relationships.

"I don't want to just be some singer who sings a song just to sing it," Britney said. "When you sing a song with feeling and do your all, you connect, and that's crucial to me. Especially since I think that the songs on this album are ten times better than on my first album, so I really want my fans to feel and hear how much these songs mean to me."

In conjunction with tracks featuring the prestigious songwriting talents of Diane Warren, Rodney Jerkins, Mutt Lange and Max Martin, is the tender melody "Dear Diary," which marks Spears first co-writing collaboration. The brown-eyed songstress consistently hones her songwriting skills while out on the road and hopes to learn guitar and write more songs in the future.

"I think I've always had these songs that I've been writing in my head," Spears said. "Now I feel ready to let people start to hear them."

A behind-the-scenes view of Spears phenomenal rise to stardom is chronicled in the book "Heart to Heart," which is co-authored by Spears and her mother, Lynne. In their own words, the mother and daughter duo share an in-depth detailed account of life, love, fame and following your dreams. The pair also conduct an open discussion on common questions mothers and daughters face, including "How do you encourage your child ? How do you deal with overcoming obstacles, success and failure ? and how do you talk to your mom about dating, relationships, dress codes, self-esteem and body image ?"

The soft-spoken southern vocalist recently concluded a month long "Oops...I Did It Again" promotional tour that incorporated stops in London, Germany, Hawaii, Tokyo, Paris and New York. Spears made the most of her worldwide tour by filming the June televised FOX special, "Britney Spears in Hawaii." Another tour highlight consisted of performing at Kokusai Forum Hall in Tokyo with 800 media representatives from all over Asia in attendance, as well as 2000 fortunate fans who had won the right to attend the show after entering local competitions.

"...Everyone in Asia was so supportive of this launch," Spears said. "It was the first time I performed a show outside of the US and it was great to see that all of my fans in Asia knew the words to my songs. The people there are wonderful and really took care of me."

Current performances include kicking off a three month 48-city "Britney Spears 'Oops...I Did It Again' 2000 Tour on June 20, which is scheduled to arrive in Tinley Park, Illinois on July 7 at the New World Music Theatre.

Along with her hectic tour and promotional schedule, Spears still found time to create the Britney Spears Foundation in conjunction with the Giving Back Fund. It's first endowment is the formation of a performing arts summer camp for underprivileged kids in Massachusetts.

"I'm so happy to be able to give the kids the opportunity to learn about the amazing world of dance and music that I've been lucky enough to make such a big part of my own life," Spears said.

Even with all her success, Spears remains sincerely grateful to the legions of fans who have helped her music career dreams come true.

"Special thanks to my dedicated, crazy, supportive, encouraging, creative, sweet and loyal fans - I love you all and hope that in some way through my music I've been able to touch each of your lives."

SOUNDBYTEZ STAR STATS

Full name: Britney Jean Spears

Birthdate: December 2, 1981

Age: 18

Hair : Honey Blond

Eyes: Brown

Hometown: Kentwood, Louisiana (population 1200), a small town approximately 80 miles NW of New Orleans, La.

Parents: Father, Jamie, a building contractor and mother, Lynne, a school teacher.

Siblings: Brother, Bryan, who is four years older and sister, Jamie Lynne, who is ten years younger.

Nicknames : "Brinnie" and "Boo."

Pets: Yorkshire puppy named "Baby" that travels with her.

Personal Assistant : Felicia "Fe" Culotta, who is a good friend of Britney's mother.

Education: Elementary School, Off-Broadway Dance Center and the Professional Performing Arts School in New York City and a private High School in McComb, Mississippi. Currently enrolled as a 12th grade student with the University of Nebraska home schooling program. "I need a lot of help in geometry and Spanish !" Spears admits.

First Performances : Debuted at age 4 singing "What Child Is This," at her local church. Performed throughout her childhood in local dance reviews and church choirs. "I had always wanted to be a singer. It's what I always wanted to do since I was little," Spears said.

First Audition : Auditioned in Atlanta, Georgia at age 8 for Disney's new "Mickey Mouse Club," but was turned down due to being too young.

Early Professional Performances : Won as a contestant on "Star Search." Began appearing in national commercials and Off-Broadway shows including the '91 comedy "Ruthless," based on the '56 thriller "The Bad Seed." "At 10, I was playing this really bad child who seems real sweet, but she's evil too. It was so much fun," Spears recalls.

First TV Series : Earned a 2 year stint in '92 on the Orlando, FL based new "Mickey Mouse Club" at age 11. When the new "Mickey Mouse Club" series was cancelled in '94, Spears returned to Kentwood, La at age 14 to attend one full year of private high school in nearby McComb, Mississippi. "It was fun for awhile, but I started getting itchy to get out again and see the world," Spears said.

Early pop musical influences : Michael Jackson, Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston and Madonna.

Current pop musical favs : Macy Gray, Sisko, Janet Jackson and Shania Twain.

Current dance influences : Michael Jackson, Janet Jackson and Paula Abdul.

Big Break: Signed a solo pop career contract with Jive Records at age 15 after auditioning in New York City for an all-girl vocal group.

First album : "...Baby, One More Time" in 1-12-99 which debuted at No. 1 on Billboard charts. Spears was the youngest debut solo act to hit No. 1 on both Billboard's album chart and Top 100 chart simultaneously for "Baby, One More Time" album and title track.

1st album U.S. singles : "Baby, One More Time," "Sometimes," "From The Bottom Of My Broken Heart," and "You Drive Me Crazy."

Favorite song from 1st album : "From The Bottom Of My Broken Heart."

Second album : "Oops, I Did It Again" 5-16-2000.

Second album U.S. singles : "Oops, I Did It Again."

Favorite song from 2nd album : "Don't Let Me Be The Last To Know."

Artist she would most like to do a duet with : Madonna

Favorite current TV shows : Felicity and Dawson's Creek

Favorite current make-up to use : MAC Cosmetics. To find the MAC cosmetics retailer closest to your area call the toll-free MAC Cosmetics customer service department at 800-387-6707.

Favorite Foods: Cookie dough ice cream and chicken & dumplings.

Favorite books to read : Non-fiction self-help and awareness publications and fictional romance novels containing adventure and action.

Off-stage personality : Quiet, a bit shy but warms up once she gets to know someone, sensitive, fun, spiritual/religious, great sense of humor, family-oriented, loyal, focused and down-to-earth.

Saturday Night Live debut : host, actress and musical guest on 5-13-00

First love : singing.

Second love: dancing.

Favorite charity : Britney Spears Foundation formed with The Giving Back Fund in mid-2000.

Favorite current expression : "So sweet."

Dancers : 4 male dancers that have been with her since the very beginning for the past 2 years.

Band members: Skip, Freddy, Slam, Dan and Mike.