

Rob Ocampo

Subject: FW: June 28, 2006 Venues Today



VENUES**today**

"The news behind the headlines"

Dear April,

June 28, 2006 VOL. V, Number XXI ISSN 1547-4143

Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Look for the VT Mid-Year Hot Tickets and Top Stops reports in our upcoming July magazine. Our new recruit, Dave Brooks, staff writer, is covering the Association of Luxury Suites Directors convention in Detroit this week. For a full calendar listing, to view archives or to subscribe to *Venues Today*, visit our Web site at www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"You need to understand if there is a demand for it. It's not that you have the best television in the world and everyone should come down and watch it." — *Lee Zeidman, general manager of Staples Center in Los Angeles, on luring 20,000 to the arena for a World Cup Soccer viewing party*

IN THIS ISSUE...

- **Duke Center Breathes Life Into Cincy Convention Economy**
 - **Rockport Music Festival Hopes to Build a \$12 Million Hall**
 - **World Cup Soccer Fever Fills Remote Sites Like Staples Center**
 - **Hot Tickets: Bon Jovi Has 'A Nice Day' In the UK**
 - **Reggae Sunsplash Returns To U.S. After Decade-Long Hiatus**
 - **Promoting Movies on Fair Midways Starts with Monster House**
 - **Concessionaires Aim For Smaller Portions, Personalized Service**
 - **Short Takes**
 - **Help Wanted**
-

COMING SOON - OUR ANNUAL IAAM/NAC ISSUE!

VENUES**today**

In August, we
will publish our

popular
IAAM/NAC issue that will be distributed at the huge San Antonio trade show! Make sure your message goes home with the attendees - advertise in this collector's issue! Contact your VT rep today!

Reserve your space by July 15th, by contacting:

Eastern Region: Sue Nichols, (615) 662-0252, Sue@venuestoday.com

Lower Central Region: Pauline Davis, (615) 356-0398, Pauline@venuestoday.com

Upper Central & Western Region: April Stroud, (714) 378-0056, April@venuestoday.com

VENUE NEWS

The new Duke Energy Center in Cincinnati.



DUKE CENTER BREATHES LIFE INTO CINCY CONVENTION ECONOMY

The renovated and re-named Duke Energy Center opened on June 22 to a hail of handshakes and congratulations during its ribbon-cutting ceremony in downtown Cincinnati. City leaders are hoping the new high-tech facility, formerly known as the Cinergy Center, breathes some life back into the downtown area and puts the Ohio-city

back on the map as a regional convention and meeting stop.

The grand opening included a free concert by Mercury/Universal recording artist Rusted Root in the center's new 40,000 square-foot Grand Ballroom. The renovation was funded by contributions from the city, the surrounding Hamilton County and the State of Ohio, coming in \$25 million under budget at \$135 million.

The facility is owned by the city of Cincinnati and will be managed by Global Spectrum as part of a three-year deal (VT e-newsletter March 15, 2006). Richard Booth, former assistant general manager of the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, has been appointed to run the Duke Energy Center.

Now it's about booking the building and building the team. "On July 1, I get the book," Booth said. But he isn't cooling his heels waiting. He's been on board since May 8, and now has two salespeople, Kate Fisher and Dan Phenicie, pounding the street.

Linda Jensen has been hired as assistant general manager. She starts July 1, after

fulfilling her current commitments at Kings Island. Site visits and big FAM (familiarization) trips have begun.

"We've been very, very busy. The goal is to book 80 events through the end of this year, 40 more than we have on the books today," Booth said.

Very quickly, Global Spectrum will have four full-time sales managers, plus an additional two sales managers that book just for Ovations Food Services. "On July 1, we'll have a team of five salespeople including Linda and will hire two more as soon as we can; then a director of sales on Jan. 1," Booth said.

Cincinnati officials hope the new convention center will revive the city's slumping convention business. In the recent past and during renovation, the center had only booked a 45 percent occupancy rate after a number of high profile setbacks sent meeting planners looking to other cities. Problems started a decade ago when city voters passed a law stripping homosexuals of legal protections, prompting protests and cancellations from groups hoping to book the city. An economic down turn and a series of race riots in the spring of 2001 prompted more concerns about booking in the area.

But things have changed in recent years. Booth relegates those incidents to ancient history. He's marketing the convention center as "new." He can't ignore the competition, though, particularly the smaller but busy Northern Kentucky Convention Center across the river in Covington. He admits they lured a lot of the corporate meeting business away from Cincinnati and he will zero in on getting it back.

With the new center, Cincinnati estimates it can compete for 75 percent of all convention business; the old center could only go after 60 percent, according to information from the city's conference and visitors bureau.

"We're attracting meeting planners who are starting to take a second look at Cincinnati," Booth said. "We're putting Cincinnati back on the map to host major conventions."

Convention officials estimate the new facility will double convention-related revenue from \$122 million to \$262 annually. Duke Energy reportedly inherited a \$9 million naming rights deal for the facility when it acquired Cinergy. The Duke Energy Center is adorned with a series of metal panels set into the western façade of the new convention center, spelling out "Cincinnati" in 50-foot-tall letters to drivers along Interstate 75.

The convention center has more than 100,000 square-feet of meeting space, including 37 meeting rooms, as well as 200,000 square-feet of contiguous exhibit space. The facility's Grand Ballroom is the second largest in the Midwest region behind Chicago's McCormick Place. The center also has a second, 17,400 square-foot ballroom and is connected using a multilevel concourse that provides easy access to exhibit space, meeting rooms and ballrooms. Visitors in the upper level meeting space area can overlook the exhibitor area, or access the Cincinnati Skywalk system.

The facility's kitchen includes full banquet capability and is can serve 5,000 meals in a single setting. Concessions will be managed by Ovations Food Services, a sister company to Global Spectrum, both owned by Comcast-Spectacor.

The main exhibit space can be divided into three separate halls. The center includes a 48,500 square-foot lobby and three drive-onto-floor entrances, one for each hall, as well as 17 vehicle berths to move in and out. Two freight elevators with 10-ton capacity along with an additional, smaller elevator with a 7.5-ton capacity also service the center. The area is lit with 400-watt metal dimmable halide bulbs.

The upper levels of the Duke Energy Center provide 37 meeting rooms capable of accommodating groups of 24 to 4,100. The rooms are all fully carpeted and lit with fluorescent lamps and dimmable incandescent flood lamps. Each room has an individually controlled audio, lighting and climate control systems, padded with sound abatement wall treatments.

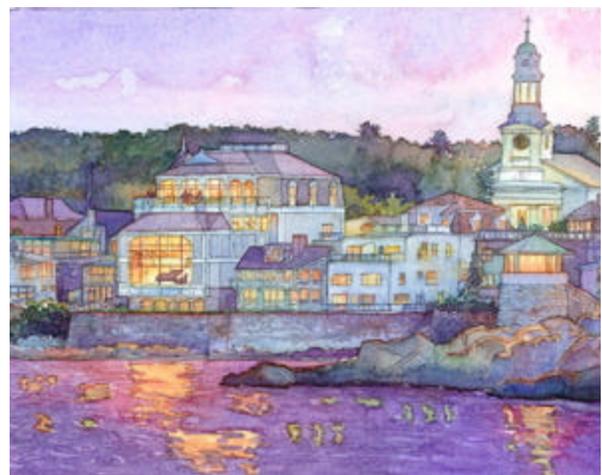
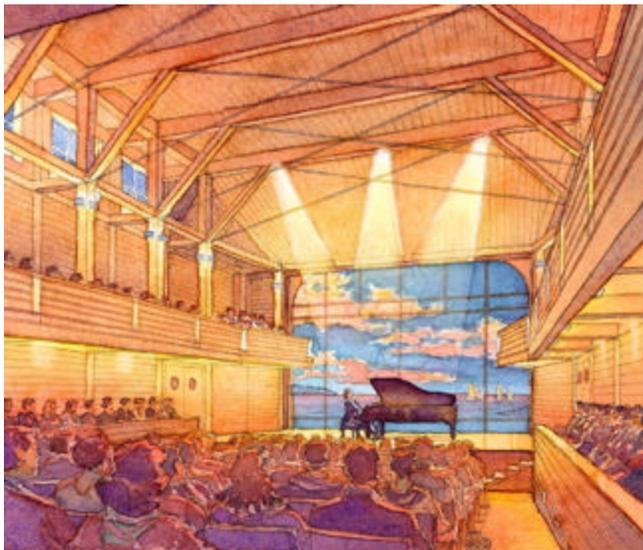
Upcoming bookings include the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives for a July 6 conference. The center also plans to host the Festival of Sports, which brings 4,000 people July 15–24; the Progressive National Baptist Convention, with an attendance of 8,000 people from Aug. 4–12, and the National Society of Hispanic MBAs, which will attract 6,000 people Oct. 23–29. The largest conference planned to date is the 27,000-person National Baptist Convention, from Sept. 9–12, 2008.

“Through 2011, we have about \$80 million booked and we hope to double that number in the next two years through the same period,” Booth said.

During RFPs, the projected operating budget sat at \$5.2 million. Having researched existing and potential business more critically now, Booth said, “I would forecast our operating budget for 2007 at \$4.4 million. With what’s on the books now, it would be difficult to get to \$5.2 million. The budgets for 2007 are due Aug. 1. If I had to make a forecast today, I’d say \$4.4 million.”

He’s proposing his crack staff will book 120 to 160 new events in 2007, additional to the existing base. Right now, Duke Energy Center has about 40 events contracted and another 40 tentative events “I feel pretty good about. We need to triple that number, from 80 to 240. We will concentrate on the short-term business, corporate business,” Booth said. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Ric Booth, (513) 352-3947.



Renderings of the interior and an oceanside view of the proposed Festival Center, Rockport, Mass.

ROCKPORT MUSIC FESTIVAL HOPES TO BUILD A \$12 MILLION HALL

Innovations proposed for the 325-seat, \$12 million Festival Center planned for

Rockport, Mass., include a 20-foot-square window at the back of the main stage. This will put a sunset background to concerts and shows, a unique aesthetic innovation. The window will also be visible looking in the front door from the street side, giving passersby a glimpse of the ocean behind the building.

"So people will be able to watch a concert," said Alan Joslin, principal of Epstein-Joslin Architects, one of the main designers for the hall, "with the backdrop of the ocean and sort of flow in right off of the main street of this historic, almost mythic fishing village. And I don't think there's any hall anywhere else in the country that has that quality to it."

The venue is to set right on Main Street in the town and opens out on to Sandy Bay.

Pending funding, the theater is to open in June of 2009. Financing is currently being raised privately, foundations and grants being the major contributors. The amount includes a \$1 million endowment to help cover operating expenses. To date \$4 million has been raised.

Tom Burger, chairman of the board of the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, said construction is contingent upon financing, but he is confident enough will be raised to permit groundbreaking in January 2008.

The hall will use traditional technologies, natural acoustics governing the main hall and variable acoustic drapes on the sidewalls to regulate the sound. On the third level there will be a major reception hall constructed for social gatherings. Being the tallest building in Rockport at 55 feet, one will be able to see both the entire town from this elevation while also having an impressive view of the ocean.

Burger is most enamored of the openness of the design, likening it, in its own small way, to Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York which has a glass wall. There will be wood shutters for the stage window and a curtain out front to black out the auditorium for performances when necessary, he said.

"Right now we just do a 16-to-18 day festival. We would certainly expand that festival, and we're looking to do a jazz series and a celebrity series. We can expand at our own rate off of the festival we now have," Burger said of future plans.

The Rockport Chamber Music Festival this year runs June 8-July 2. It is housed in the Rockport Art Association art gallery, which it has called home for 25 years. The 16 performances traditionally draw 98 percent capacity in the 240-seat venue, for a total audience of about 3,500. The current budget for the nonprofit is \$400,000 annually, one third of that from ticket sales, the rest from fundraising, Burger said. Tickets are priced \$35-\$20. Prices will probably be increased somewhat in a new hall.

He has no doubt the festival can grow into its new location. He anticipates the chamber music festival would be stretched into six or eight weeks, three performances per week.

The theatre will be "reviving and enlarging this great civic space for the town," Joslin said, "for the pre-imposed concert events and the like. This is really an opportunity for the concert venue to invigorate, rather reinvigorate the town and become one of the primary civic meeting spaces in this village."

The board of directors is promoting the project with renderings and models of the hall at the current Rockport Chamber Music Festival. "We're doing numerous cultivation and fundraising parties," added Burger. "We've got lots of local and regional friends,

including the *Boston Globe*. We've been networking, talking it up, and getting people to come and see the site and listen to our story."

The board is experimenting with nearby lots to gauge the demand for parking that the hall will create. The festival handles its ticketing in-house.

Burger said the dream of a new festival hall has been percolating for seven or eight years. He noted there is a dedicated group of locals working on the project, which is obvious "from what we've raised so far." — Greg Lehman
Interviewed for this story: Alan Joslin, (617) 868-1766; Tom Burger, (978) 279-9100, ext. 201



Korean soccer fans crowd into Staples Center, Los Angeles, to view World Cup Soccer games on TV

WORLD CUP SOCCER FEVER FILLS REMOTE SITES LIKE STAPLES CENTER

For Staples Center, Los Angeles, World Cup Soccer was close to home, albeit taking place in Germany. The venue hosted 20,000 fans June 18 to watch South Korea play France in what turned out to be a tie, 1-1.

Lee Zeidman, general manager of Staples Center, said the event is a natural evolution of what has become a staple at major league sports venues — the televised away game during championship playoffs. The promoter was basically the Los Angeles Galaxy of Major League Soccer, a team owned by AEG, which also operates Staples Center.

The arena produced it for cost, plus ancillaries, Zeidman said. Hard costs came in at about \$50,000, including staffing and security, he said. Revenue included \$50,000 from food and beverage and another \$15,000 in parking. "We made about \$65,000 in ancillaries. Some will be profit," he said.

There was no World Cup-specific merchandise sold. Food and drink was themed to the Korean tastebud where possible.

Staples Center pulled off the last minute promotion with a Los Angeles Sparks WNBA game moving in that evening. "The Korean viewing was from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Sparks game started at 6:30. We changed the set up a little for the Korean soccer party and then we cleaned the building. We gave out 20,000 tickets," Zeidman said.

He considers it part of the venue's community outreach. The Galaxy worked directly

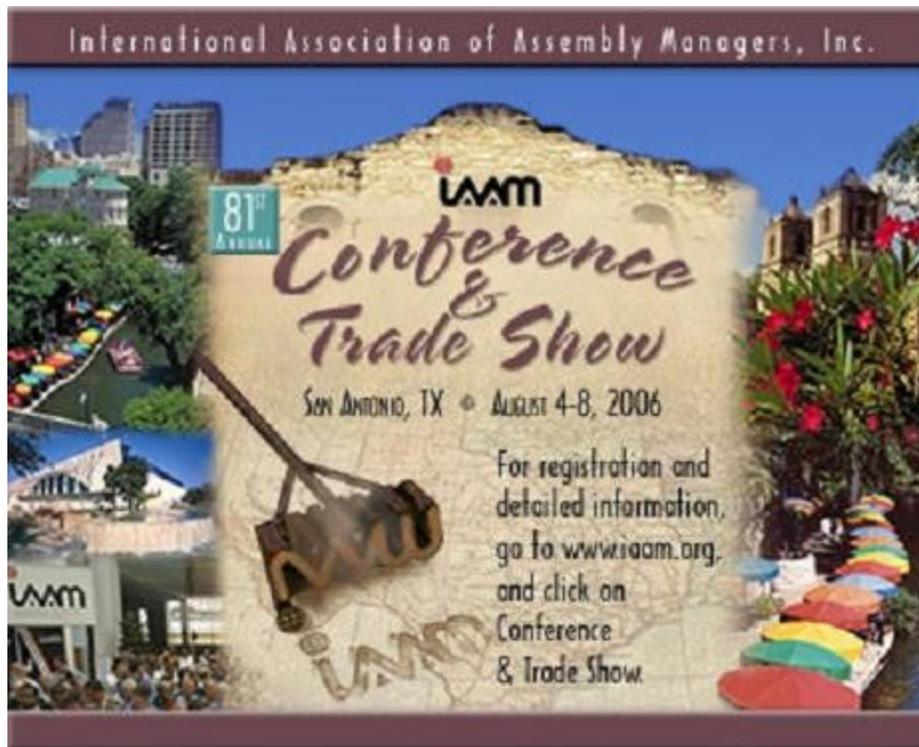
with the Korean community; Staples worked with the Galaxy. But while guests were in the building, venue staff took the opportunity to promote premium seats and other events, Zeidman said. "While you have them here, you are also introducing at times a whole different demographic to your building."

To his way of thinking, "it was the sister event to what we did in 2002 when we showed the South Korean team in the semi-finals at 4:30 in the morning. This is the second time we've done it. It's the same model as the first three years of the championship run for the Lakers [of the National Basketball Association] to do the Home Court Advantage. We opened the building for free, and charged the Lakers the costs. The first couple of years, we gave away free tickets, then it was \$5 for tickets. People came to watch all the road playoff games, which you find now most arenas and stadiums are doing."

He's not sure there is a reason to grow the televised events business. "It has to be a specific type of event," he said. "We have a strong Korean community here. In downtown LA, there were viewing parties all over the place."

"You need to understand if there is a demand for it. It's not that you have the best television in the world and everyone should come down and watch it. You're creating an atmosphere that while never equal to being there live, it's rivaling that by bringing 15,000-20,000 people who have the same common interest to cheer for their team," Zeidman said.

The atmosphere also includes themed food and beverage, cheerleaders, possibly merchandise, and any in-game elements that make sense. "It's not just turning on your scoreboard and letting them go. During the Korean viewing party, they had a Korean band here that went around the arena playing the Korean chants. They did other giveaway type things. During the Lakers heyday, when they were going for those three world championships, it was like being at a Lakers game. We had the Laker girls here, in game promotions, all the elements of a game," he recalled. — Linda Deckard
Interviewed for this story: Lee Zeidman, (213) 742-7255



BOOKINGS



HOT tickets

BON JOVI HAS 'A NICE DAY' IN THE UK

HOT TICKETS is a weekly summary of the top acts and ticket sales as reported to **Venues Today** e-newsletter. Following are the top 20 concerts and events, the top 5 in each seating capacity category, which took place since June 6, 2006. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

The **Hot Tickets** this week as reported to **Venues Today**:

15,001 or More Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$6,489,043; *Event:* Bon Jovi; *Venue:* **Milton Keynes (England) National Bowl**; *Attendance:* 85,112; *Ticket Range:* \$95-\$44.34; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West, Marshall Arts; *Dates:* June 10-11; *No. of Shows:* 2

2) *Gross Sales:* \$3,060,322; *Event:* Faith Hill, Tim McGraw; *Venue:* **Wachovia Complex, Philadelphia**; *Attendance:* 38,184; *Ticket Range:* \$87-\$37; *Promoter:* Electric Factory Concerts; *Dates:* June 15-16; *No. of Shows:* 2

3) *Gross Sales:* \$2,893,955; *Event:* Kenny Chesney with Big & Rich, Blaine Larson, Dierks Bentley, Gretchen Wilson; *Venue:* **Qwest Field, Seattle**; *Attendance:* 44,582; *Ticket Range:* \$79.50-\$34.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, The Messina Group; *Dates:* June 24; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$2,365,643; *Event:* Bon Jovi; *Venue:* **St. Mary's Stadium, South Hampton, England**; *Attendance:* 34,783; *Ticket Range:* \$63.35-\$44.34; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West, Marshall Arts; *Dates:* June 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$2,300,799; *Event:* Bon Jovi; *Venue:* **Ricoh Arena, Coventry, England**; *Attendance:* 36,293; *Ticket Range:* \$63.35-\$41.17; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West, Marshall Arts; *Dates:* June 7; *No. of Shows:* 1

10,001 - 15,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$1,641,892; *Event:* Coldplay; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 22,145; *Ticket Range:* \$87.82-\$55.67; *Promoter:* Chugg Entertainment; *Dates:* June 23-24; *No. of Shows:* 2

2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,080,284; *Event:* Soul2Soul; *Venue:* **Bryce Jordan Center, University Park, Pa.**; *Attendance:* 14,743; *Ticket Range:* \$87-\$37; *Promoter:* Jack Utsick Presents, In-house; *Dates:* June 21; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$725,824; *Event:* Kenny Chesney, Dierks Bentley, Carrie Underwood; *Venue:* **Mandalay Bay Events Center, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 8,485; *Ticket Range:* \$99.75-\$68.25; *Promoter:* AEG Live, The Messina Group, In-house; *Dates:* June 16; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$206,320; *Event:* The New Cars; *Venue:* **Nikon at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.**; *Attendance:* 4,557; *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$20; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* June 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$185,537; *Event:* Burton Cummings, Randy Bachman; *Venue:* **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; *Attendance:* 3,652; *Ticket Range:* \$61.85-\$44.05; *Promoter:* House of Blues Concerts Canada; *Dates:* June 24; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,001-10,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$412,998; *Event:* Starstruck; *Venue:* **Newcastle (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 14,426; *Ticket Range:* \$40-\$24; *Promoter:* Department of Education NSW; *Dates:* June 15-17; *No. of Shows:* 4

2) *Gross Sales:* \$352,894; *Event:* Big Head Todd & The Monsters; *Venue:* **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver**; *Attendance:* 8,599; *Ticket Range:* \$46-\$41; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* June 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$289,495; *Event:* Chicago, Huey Lewis & The News; *Venue:* **Greek Theatre, Los Angeles**; *Attendance:* 4,904; *Ticket Range:* \$80.50-\$40.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* June 13; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$139,920; *Event:* Brian McKnight; *Venue:* **Borgata Resort Spa & Casino, Atlantic City, N.J.**; *Attendance:* 2,193; *Ticket Range:* \$95-\$55; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* June 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$112,993; *Event:* Bachman, Cummings; *Venue:* **ENMAX Centre, Lethbridge, Alberta**; *Attendance:* 2,513; *Ticket Range:* \$61.97-\$44.14; *Promoter:* House of Blues Canada; *Dates:* June 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$1,216,789; *Event:* Tommy Tune in "Doctor Dolittle"; *Venue:* **Sacramento (Calif.) Community Theater**; *Attendance:* 26,091 *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$15; *Promoter:* California Musical Theatre; *Dates:* June 14-25 *No. of Shows:* 16

2) *Gross Sales:* \$986,270; *Event:* Chicago; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 22,231; *Ticket Range:* \$62-\$20; *Promoter:* Theater of the Stars; *Dates:* June 20-25; *No. of Shows:* 8

3) *Gross Sales:* \$300,488; *Event:* Dr. Dolittle; *Venue:* **DeVos Place, Grand Rapids, Mich.**; *Attendance:* 7,318; *Ticket Range:* \$62-\$32; *Promoter:* Broadway Theater Guild; *Dates:* June 6-11; *No. of Shows:* 8

4) *Gross Sales:* \$272,342; *Event:* Aretha Franklin; *Venue:* **House of Blues, Atlantic City, N.J.**; *Attendance:* 2,834; *Ticket Range:* \$100-\$65; *Promoter:* House of Blues Entertainment; *Dates:* June 23-24; *No. of Shows:* 2

5) *Gross Sales:* \$241,991; *Event:* Disney Live-Mickey's Magic Show; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 11,530; *Ticket Range:* \$50-\$15; *Promoter:* Feld Entertainment; *Dates:* June 8-11; *No. of Shows:* 8

Compiled by Rob Ocampo, HotTickets@venuestoday.com



UB40: (left to right) James Brown, Norman Hassan, Earl Falconer, Michael Virtue, Ali Campbell, Robin Campbell, Astro, Brian Travers; and the festival logo

REGGAE SUNSPASH RETURNS TO U.S. AFTER DECADE-LONG HIATUS

When promoter Tony Johnson passed away more than nine years ago, it seemed to signal the end of his effort to spread good vibes and good island tunes across the world with the annual Reggae Sunsplash tour. But nearly a decade after his death, the tour is slotting a return to the U.S. with a roster of major reggae acts including UB40, Maxi Priest, Toots and the Maytals, Third World and Rik Rok. The tour, still using the motto, "Uniting the World Through Music," is scheduled to kick off on Aug. 10 with a show in West Palm Beach and stay on the road through Labor Day.

Tour co-producer, TJ Johnson, son of the late founder Johnson, said that part of the effort to revive the tour was as a kind of memorial to his dad. "Over the last couple of years we've never given up on it and it's always been my dream to further my father's dream," said Johnson. "My father was a genius in what he did and no one else is my father. We're trying to unite the world through music, because music is the one thing that people of all races can enjoy together."

The tour is a co-production of the Johnson family and Toby Ludwig of 21st Century Artists, Inc. Ludwig was Johnson's agent at William Morris and worked closely with him for many years. "Reggae Sunsplash was one of the first packages I worked with in the

mid-80s when I was at Associated Booking," Ludwig explained. "Tony Johnson was a friend and strong supporter and when I went to William Morris we did it together there and when I went to law school Tony kept it at William Morris while I was in school."

Ludwig said that after Johnson died in 1997 he contacted the Johnson family every few years to see if they were interested in relaunching the festival to no avail. In the meantime, Ludwig kept booking Japansplash and other Asian reggae tours, as well as Reggae Madness with Maxi Priest and Shabba Ranks. Finally, when he called his year, TJ Johnson was ready to talk.

"It's probably the best known reggae brand there is in music packages and it's certainly performed more shows than any other reggae package in the world," Ludwig said. "And in front of a larger audience than any show."

While Tony Johnson generally tried to package the tour as a combination of young and mid-range acts, avoiding a major headliner, Ludwig said he is tweaking the format this year in order to help the tour gain a footing again. Hence the topping of the bill by longtime British reggae/R&B group UB40, as well as such respected artists as Maxi Priest and up and comer Rik Rok.

The show, which will travel in two semi trucks, is budgeted at around \$100,000 a night and Ludwig said the roster of dates has been cut from the usual 40 to 17 in order to be conservative in its first year back. The Reggae Sunsplash 2006 tour is being booked by APA's Troy Blakely.

During a time of war and uncertainty, Ludwig said he thinks the time is ripe for Sunsplash to reassert itself in the U.S. "Thanks to hip-hop and artists like Sean Paul and Shaggy selling 12 million records a few years ago, there's been a resurgence of reggae," he said. "In times of war and conflict, reggae stands for peace and love and good vibes and people like to share that."

TJ Johnson said he hopes the show will have the same spin his father aimed for, a safe, fun environment for families and reggae fans. But he also hopes that the return this year will signal that the Johnson family's life's passion is back to stay.

Ludwig is already looking for several major sponsors for 2007, but the tour does not have a headline sponsor this year. Johnson said Air Jamaica is not offering any sponsorship, but has pledged to pitch in the cost of airline tickets to ferry the artists from home and back home after the tour.

Tony Johnson, who was born in Jamaica and raised his family in California, returned to his home in 1978 to launch Reggae Sunsplash, which he launched in the U.S. in the mid-1980s and took on the road to cities around the world until his death.

Chris Blackwell, chairman of Island Records and a longtime proponent of reggae and world music called Johnson a "great pioneer in bringing reggae music to the rest of the world." The show will be hosted by its longtime official voice, Tommy "Yes Indeed!" Cowan, and will feature such midway attractions as Jamaican food and crafts booths, peddling everything from "jerk" chicken and Red Stripe beers to intricate wood carvings and hand crafted clothes.

"We grew up in it [Reggae Sunsplash] and it's all I know and love to do," said TJ Johnson. Tickets for the shows range from \$15-\$69.

Dates for Reggae Sunsplash:

- West Palm Beach, FL Sound Advice Amphitheatre, West Palm Beach, Fla., Aug. 10

- Ford Amphitheatre, Tampa, Fla., Aug. 11.
- The Cocoa Beach (Fla.) Pier, Aug. 12
- Nissan Pavilion at Stone Ridge, Bristow, Va., Aug. 15
- North Fork Theater, Westbury, N.Y., Aug. 17
- Bank of America Pavilion, Boston, Aug. 19
- Hilton - Atlantic City, N.J., Aug. 20
- DTE Energy Music Theater, Clarkston, Mich., Aug. 22
- Tower City Amphitheater, Cleveland, Aug. 23
- The Backyard, Austin, Texas, Aug. 25
- The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, The Woodlands, Texas, Aug. 26
- Journal Pavilion, Albuquerque, N.M., Aug. 28
- Viejas Concerts In the Park, Alpine, Calif., Aug. 30
- Konocti Harbor Resort & Spa, Kelseyville, Calif., Aug. 31
- Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre, Irvine, Calif., Sept. 2
- Mandalay Bay Beach, Las Vegas, Sept. 3
- Usana Amphitheatre, West Valley City, Utah, Sept. 4

— Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this story: Toby Ludwig, (212) 254-5500; TJ Johnson (323) 273-4471

MARKETING

Monster House interactive attraction playing North American fairs.



PROMOTING MOVIES ON FAIR MIDWAYS STARTS WITH MONSTER HOUSE

A new collaborative agreement between North American Midway Entertainment (NAME) L.L.C., and Columbia TriStar Marketing Group has resulted in the launch of a carnival ride promoting an upcoming Columbia Pictures animated movie, *Monster House*.

The interactive dark ride, produced by Owens Trailers and customized by Columbia, debuted

at the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, Brandon, and then appeared on the midway at the Red River Exhibition, Winnipeg, Manitoba, before starting its North American trek. In all, it will hopscotch to 12 fairs sporting a cumulative attendance of five million, said Charlotte Allison, who handles marketing for NAME. The first stop in the states will be the Three Rivers Festival in Ft. Wayne, Ind., July 8-16.

To date, it hasn't made a big impact on fair management. Karen Oliver, manager of the Brandon fair, wasn't aware of it; Paul Robson, fair manager in Winnipeg, said it replaced another dark ride that was in that same location last year and he had not yet heard whether it had garnered additional business or publicity. But that is the ultimate goal for NAME and Columbia, that the hype helps both endeavors.

Allison, who first worked for NAME CEO Fred Rosen at Ticketmaster and approaches marketing from a venue perspective historically, said the *Monster House* ride used to be

themed Mardi Gras. "Sony contacted us with the idea that marketing dollars are so stressed and they're looking for something new and fun and different. Our demographics [fair attendees] are all families in the middle of Americana. Why not do something we can promote together with G-rated entertainment?"

That's how they hatched the idea to theme a carnival ride after a movie. "It promotes itself," Allison said. Columbia Tri-Star chose the locations based on areas they wanted marketing support for the movie. It is playing in the eastern half of the country only.

The ride is the basic fun house design, said Scooter Korek, vice president of client services for NAME. There is a glass house maze on the first level and distorted mirrors on the second floor, where visitors also find a DVD playing Monster House movie trailers and see characters painted on the walls, Korek said. The movie premiere is also promoted on the outside façade.

NAME is composed of several different carnival units and the Monster House attraction goes in and out of various units, traveling its own route. When the movie opens, the ride will be playing the Rock County 4-H Fair, Janesville, Wis. There are no additional marketing dollars supporting promotion of the ride, Allison said. "The fairs are promoting it when they can, because it's new; a different, interactive walk-through. It's so different looking, people are automatically drawn to it. When the movie is released, there will be that much more of a buzz."

NAME is also building a relationship between fairs and movies, it seems. "We're hoping this will be an annual deal. We're already in talks for next year for another summer release," Allison said. "We won't redo the same ride, we'll do different rides — whatever makes sense to connect the ride with whatever release is coming out."

She said Monster House was "one of the top 10 rides in both locations we've brought it to so far. There is a lot of buzz around it. Hopefully we can make it grow."

In a statement, George Leon, EVP, Consumer Marketing, Columbia TriStar Marketing Group, cited this movie's interactive quality as a great fit for the themed ride promotion. The movie will be released in 2D and in 3D formats, depending on the movie house's technical abilities, which he said puts the audience right in the movie. Rosen, also in the release, said the relationship ties in "all the elements of summer family fun." — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Charlotte Allison, (310) 691-5273; Karen Oliver, (204) 726-3590; Paul Robson, (204) 888-6990; Scooter Korek, (403) 616-0137

CONCESSIONS

Michael Golden and Melissa Redmon of Joe Louis Arena, Detroit.



CONCESSIONAIRES AIM FOR SMALLER PORTIONS, PERSONALIZED SERVICE

DETROIT — Concessionaires at America's ballparks need to find creative ways to service a shrinking group clientele, said food and beverage panelists during a concessionaire session at the Association

conference here on June 28.

Premium seat sales are increasingly moving to small businesses, bringing smaller groups to luxury boxes and often splitting tickets with one or two other companies. That creates a quandary for catering departments, which are used to dealing in big portions for larger groups.

"We definitely need to downsize our packages," said Nancy Golden, premier services director of the Gwinnet Center in Duluth, Ga. "We see a lot of waste. It's definitely not productive to throw all that food away and not get what the customer wants."

Portions are usually grouped in units of eight, 12 or 16, said Jon Vingas, vice president of catering for Centerplate. For small groups of four or six, that creates an ordering challenge. To meet the need, Vingas said he's increasingly seeing other venues offer half-orders, usually in units of six and eight.

But even those small units can be difficult for chefs, so Vingas suggests limiting the availability of half-orders to certain items, or limiting half-order service to game day.

"In this economy, we're seeing clients ordering a little bit of food and adding on as needed," said Michael Golden, executive chef for Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. Gone are the days of big clients preordering large quantities of food and drink, always keeping their suites well-stocked, co-worker Melissa Redmon added.

Instead clients usually order a few a la carte items, and then order more food as guests become hungrier. While clients are becoming less enamored with packaged food deals, most concessionaires at the event said packaged offerings still made up 80 to 90 percent of their sales.

Also making a slow exit is the in-seat service menu. From a logistical standpoint, it's becoming increasingly difficult to offer the service, and revenue returns from the practice are shrinking, the panelists said. The Palace of Auburn Hills in Detroit still offers in-seat service for about 5,500 premium clients —serviced out of a meek 800-square-foot service kitchen — but Vingas said Centerplate venues are reducing in-seat service to drinks only. The FedEx Forum in Memphis has switched to drink hawking, but that practice is not applicable for all venues. California, for example, bans the hawking of alcoholic drinks, although the state does allow preordered drinks to be delivered to seats.

Upscale dining continues to be on the rise. Golden said Joe Louis Arena is beginning to roll out new dishes, like roasted turkey, baked hams and specialty ethnic foods, like Mexican, Chinese and Indian, but the dominate foods remain small items.

"People want something that is easy to grab so they don't have to cut up a steak while trying to watch the game," he said.

Also showing a larger presence at American venues are action stations, manned by one or two employees. The units can be difficult for older venues without the proper space or electrical hook-ups, but overall, other venues, like the Arrowhead Pond of Anaheim (Calif.), are finding success with the units.

"Right now we have two carver stations — one that makes sandwiches, and another that offers chicken pastas and salads, and we find both do quite well," Arrowhead Executive Chef Gretchen Dane said.

Vingas said clients like the freshness of the stations and the transparency. "They want to know what is in it and they want it made in front of them like Chipotle does," he said. "You can get \$7 for hot dogs if the condiments are fresh and they have their choice of buns."

Vingas said he's also seeing more chefs being asked to walk the club level several times a game and interact with clients. At Centerplate, it's mandatory that chefs check in with clients.

"If you don't have the guts to represent the food, we're going to find someone who does."

The customers want to see the chefs and they want to interact with the chefs. It really improves the profile of the food and it shows that we care," he said. Golden added that it's especially important to walk the floor if there are concerns about the food, because at least it shows patrons that someone is listening and cares. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Michael Golden, (313) 396 7419; Melissa Redmon, (313) 396 7439; Nancy Golden, (770) 813-7680; John Vingas (619) 525 5823; Gretchen Dane, (714) 704 2690

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS USEFUL (AND FREE) TOOL! FREE HELP WANTED ADS!

Venues Today now offers **free help wanted** listings in our e-newsletters. To submit your listing or for further information, e-mail April Stroud at: April@venuestoday.com. Please look over the submission guidelines before sending (see spec link below).

Just another way that *Venues Today* is YOUR source for information.

[Click here for submission guidelines](#)

SHORT TAKES

GARDNER TAKES BEAUMONT REINS FOR SMG

Charlie Gardner returns to Ford Park, Beaumont, Texas, as general manager for SMG effective July 10. He had been general manager of the Five Flags Civic Center, another SMG-managed facility, in Dubuque, Iowa. He formerly served as director of event services at Ford Park, then event manager at the Houston Astrodome, and sales executive for the Houston Astros of Major League Baseball. He is a native of Southeast Texas.

Contact: *Adriene Tanamachi, (409) 951-5400*

RADIO CITY ENTERTAINMENT RE-BRANDED

Radio City Entertainment will henceforth be known as MSG Entertainment (MSGE), a move being positioned as a major expansion of Madison Square Garden's entertainment portfolio. MSGE, New York, will aggressively pursue new content opportunities, according to Jay Marciano, president MSGE. MSGE manages Radio City Music Hall, and

entertainment events at Madison Square Garden, the Theater at Madison Square Garden and the Expo Center at MSG. The plan is to expand MSGE's original theatrical productions, city wide events and new venue opportunities.

Contact: Mikyl Cordova, (212) 631-4337

GAYLORD ENTERTAINMENT AND NISSAN NORTH AMERICA ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP

Gaylord Entertainment Co. (NYSE: GET) and Nissan North America, Inc. (NNA) have forged a partnership, a deal that heralds Nissan's relocation to middle Tennessee. The multi-year agreement will involve the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center in Kissimmee, Fla., the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas, and the historic Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. Nissan is the presenting sponsor of Summerfest and "A Country Christmas" at Gaylord Opryland Resort. The car company will also sponsor ICE! In Kissimmee and the Ryman Concert Series (as co-title sponsor) in Nashville. Nissan is designated as the official vehicle of the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center.

Contact: Brian Abrahamson, (615) 316-6302

IOC AND IPC EXTENDED AGREEMENT FOR 2014 AND 2016

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) signed an extension to their current agreement, which will continue to see the IOC support the IPC and the Paralympic Games through to 2016. The present accord, which runs through to 2012, will now be extended to the Games of 2014 and 2016 respectively. The main changes see greater clarification in the roles of the IOC and IPC in respect to the planning, organization and staging of the Paralympic Games; the use of the technical manuals mentioned in the Host City Contract for the Games; and a revision of the scope parameters of the Paralympic Games sports program and the number of accredited individuals. This agreement will also lead to an increase in funding for the IPC of 25 percent for 2014 and of 20 percent for 2016. The agreement reaffirmed that the Paralympic Games, from 2008 on, will always take place shortly after the Olympic Games, using the same sports venues and facilities. From the 2012 bid process onwards, the host city chosen to host the Olympic Games will be obliged to host the Paralympics as well.

Contact: IOC Communications, 41 21 621 611; IPC Communications, 49 228 209 7180

HELP WANTED

Venues Today now offers **free help wanted listings** in the e-newsletter. For more information or to submit listings, e-mail April Stroud, Advertising/Production Manager at: April@venuestoday.com

[Click here to view free help wanted listing guidelines](#)

Box Office/Parking Mgr & Event Mgr - Greater Richmond Convention Ctr

Global Spectrum seeks two skilled, detailed and customer service oriented individuals for the positions of Box Office / Parking Manager and Event Manager. Located in the heart of downtown Richmond, the \$170 million Greater Richmond Convention Center is the centerpiece of a massive downtown revitalization plan, and is the largest convention facility in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

[To learn more and apply online, please visit www.global-spectrum.com](http://www.global-spectrum.com)

To submit news or information to **Venues Today** contact:

Linda Deckard, Publisher, Editor-in-chief
(714) 378-5400, ext. 22
linda@venuestoday.com

Dave Brooks, Staff Writer
(714) 378-5400, ext. 24
dave@venuestoday.com

For advertising information, contact:

Sue Nichols, Eastern Region
(615) 662-0252
sue@venuestoday.com

Pauline Davis, Lower Central Region
(615) 356-0398
pauline@venuestoday.com

April Stroud, Upper Central & Western Region
(714) 378-5400 ext. 23
april@venuestoday.com

You are receiving this weekly e-newsletter as part of your annual subscription to **Venues Today**.

Remember that you can also access the **Venues Today** archives as part of this subscription at www.venuestoday.com. [Unsubscribe](#)



This message was sent by Venues Today using VerticalResponse's [iBuilder](#)®



Venues Today
P.O. Box 2540
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
USA

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.