

# VENUES**today**

The news behind the headlines

Dear **Subscriber**,

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Welcome to your *Venues Today* weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. We look forward to hearing your comments. And we invite you to check out our new web site. For further information or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit [www.venuestoday.com](http://www.venuestoday.com).

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We've discussed that, if, God forbid, something happens, how we will relay those messages to the crowd...Nothing over the PA's or work radios. Because word travels fast in these venues and that's the last thing we want." — Sid Greenfeig of the BankAtlantic Center on how to prepare for problems for the upcoming Guns 'N Roses tour.

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## CHEERS TO A GREAT YEAR

**2006 will be over before you know it.**

The *Venues Today* December issue will be our annual wrap up issue and will contain our popular year end **Hot Tickets** and **Top Stops** reports, as well as our second annual **Hall of Headlines Awards**.

\*The deadline to submit concert and event grosses for inclusion in the year end **Hot Tickets** and **Top Stops** charts was **October 23, 2006**. If you failed to meet that deadline, call immediately. The events considered must have taken place between Oct. 16, 2005 and Oct. 15, 2006. To request a list of events already reported for your venue or company, to send reports for inclusion, or for questions about this process, e-mail: [HotTickets@venuestoday.com](mailto:HotTickets@venuestoday.com). Reports may also be faxed to: (714) 378-0040.

\*Know someone who bettered the industry in 2006? Be sure to submit your nominations for the second annual **Hall of Headlines Awards**. Nominees are being sought for the following four categories: News, Marketing, Concessions and Bookings. Include the name of the person or company being nominated, the affiliation or location, and a brief description of the achievement that took place in 2006. The deadline to submit nominations has been extended to **October 27, 2006**. E-mail nominations to: [Linda@venuestoday.com](mailto:Linda@venuestoday.com) or fax to: (714) 378-0040.

\*And don't forget about advertising in this issue. The year end charts, awards, and wrap up coverage makes this one of our most popular issues. Contact your VT rep to reserve space today.

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As always, thank you for your prompt attention and for your continued support!

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**VENUE NEWS**



**Barrie Marshall**

## **AEG GRABS BIG STAKE IN INTERNATIONAL PROMOTER**

AEG Live has acquired a 49-percent stake in Marshall Arts, a leading international talent agent and British promoter with a major reach in Europe. Company officials hope the move will help AEG secure its influence over the growing European touring market.

The deal also helps AEG Live prepare for a possible European standoff with promotions rival Live Nation, which is making its own in-roads into Western Europe, owning and operating 28 venues in the U.K. alone, including a management deal for the recently re-opened Wembley Arena.

"This deal is really essential for AEG from a growth perspective, especially as we move into two large buildings in Europe," said independent south England promoter Geoff Moseley. "I think AEG sees Live Nation making a major expansion attempt and they don't want to get left behind."

Under the deal, Marshall Arts will help AEG book talent for the O2 Dome, a sprawling entertainment complex on the site of the former Millennium Dome and the likely home of the 2012 Olympic gymnastic and basketball events. Marshall Arts will continue to operate under its current title, which is currently chaired by promoter Barrie Marshall. The deal also reunited Marshall with AEG senior international VP Rob Hallett. Hallett worked for Marshall for 10 years before quitting to join the Mean Fiddler Group in 2001, which he left four years later for AEG.

Before the merger, AEG and Marshall Arts worked on two tours together: Bon Jovi's recent U.K. tour and Paul McCartney's recent North American tour. Marshall said both collaborations proved the companies were capable of working together.

"Working with AEG means that we'll be able to broaden our horizons even further, because AEG brings to the table its own great promotion experience and a fantastic track record," he said. "This will help both of us grow into new markets for our respective companies."

The deal also lends some credibility to AEG, which has struggled with image and identity issues in the U.K. AEG's founder and owner, Phil Anschutz, has come under fire in the British press for several donations and gifts to English Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott over a proposed casino at the O2 site.

More importantly, the deal frees up Germany's Deutsche Entertainment AG (DEAG) from its relationship with Marshall — DEAG previously held the 49 percent interest in the company it first had purchased in 1999.

Oddly, DEAG's website had reportedly first detailed the sale back in July, and it's unclear why AEG waited three months to make an announcement. In a press release issued by DEAG, the company reported that the need for cash wasn't the only reason the German media group sold their share, prompting speculation that the company's chairperson Peter Schwenkow might have severed his ties with Marshall.

"It definitely left some of us wondering, especially since I think Schwenkow was beginning to tire of the shaky live music business," Moseley said. "It's not odd that Schwenkow would make a statement like that — he's big on insinuation."

Moseley said the deal also provides DEAG with some added liquidity to pay any shareholders who would rather be paid than be given additional shares when their investments in the company finally matured.

As for Marshall, it will continue to operate independently, although AEG President and CEO Tim Leiweke, AEG Live CEO Randy Philips and AEG Enterprise Managing Director Jessica Koravos will be joining Marshall's board of directors.

Marshall Arts is currently planning a second Paul McCartney European tour, along with dates for Katie Melua, Pink, Herbie Hancock, Just Jack, Lemar, Lionel Richie, George Michael and Nate James. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Geoff Moseley, (44) 88 626 44; Barrie Marshall (44) 7580 2626*



***Magician Frank Thurston smiles alongside his fans; Butler Amusements provided the midway rides for this year's fair; once again, the pig races were a hit.***

## **HORSE STALLS MOVED FOR CARS AT KERN COUNTY FAIR**

Like many fairs, the Kern County Fair in Bakersfield, Calif., is landlocked and space is at a premium. Also, like many fairs, officials at the event have gotten creative at ways to combat this problem.

One recent move by officials has been to take down 95 percent of the horse stalls on the fairgrounds.

"They were 50 years old and it was a very necessary move because of health and safety issues," said Bill Blair, the fair's CEO. "In looking how to utilize the space, it was decided that we could not afford rebuilding the horse stalls."

Instead, the fair created 1,000 new parking spaces, although that still does not take care of the event's needs. Blair said the new spaces were created on a dirt lot, demarked with chalk.

"It's never enough," Blair said. "And Bakersfield does not have the ability for us to have any kind of off-site parking with shuttling. We have no transportation mechanism, no parking lots that we can use. Gaining 1,000 parking spaces was a great thing, but we've still had to shut down parking lots when they get full."

One downside is that when equestrian events come in, those people now have to bring portable horse stalls. This prompts the fair to lose the rental income and adds an extra burden to the customer.

"But they like our venue," Blair said.

Blair also created more fairgrounds space by taking a large, grassy area, putting a large walkway in the center and adding attractions on both sides.

"It allowed us to utilize square footage and when you are on the fairgrounds, you can turn around 360-degrees and there is no dead space," Blair said. "It was easy. It was almost a no-brainer."

This year's fair, held Sept. 20-Oct. 1, experienced a 2.4 percent increase in attendance, up to 403,927 over last year's 394,310. Gate revenues were about \$1.4 million.

"It was almost picture-perfect weather," Blair said. "It was mid- to upper 80s. Ninety-one was the highest it got. For the first 11 days it was perfect, and then on the last day on Sunday, it rained."

Fairgoers could take advantage of a slate of free concerts in the 3,000-seat Budweiser Pavilion in the center of the fairgrounds.

Acts included Tower of Power, Paul Rodriguez, Pablo Cruise, Rita Coolidge, Kansas, Oak Ridge Boys, Jose Feliciano and Matthew and Gunnar Nelson. Keith Anderson and Smash Mouth each canceled because of illness.

"I've always been a proponent of free entertainment," Blair said. "I don't agree with paid entertainment anymore. When I was down at the California Mid-Winter Fair, we switched from paid to free."

Gate admission costs \$8 for adults and \$3 for kids ages 6-12, and the budget for all entertainment "including grounds acts and production costs" is \$850,000.

"It's added value to your \$8 admission, and you don't have to stay if you don't want to or you can stay the whole time," Blair said. "There are people who come to the fair

particularly for the entertainment on stage, but I think for the most part, people will come to the fair anyway, and as long as you have a good program and you're giving entertainment as part of the total package, it's added value."

Blair was not able to release the revenue figures for this year's events because the fair is in the middle of its budgeting process, although he felt the fair did very well. In concessions, Blair said, "it went very well and we were up in nearly every category."

Butler Amusements placed about 50 rides on the midway, Blair said, and the carnival's revenues were up.

The fair did not do anything new in marketing this year, Blair said. The fair, with an overall budget of \$5.5 million, spends about \$230,000 on marketing.

Even though the fair has a "proverbial master plan," Blair noted that costs have gone up considerably in the 10 years since it was created. He mostly concentrates on the infrastructure.

"We're paying more attention to preventative maintenance," he said. "We're a 50-year-old fairgrounds, and like every other fairgrounds that needs attention, we're paying attention to the aging infrastructure."

Next year's fair dates will be Sept. 19-30. — Mary Wade Burnside

*Interviewed for this article: Bill Blair, (661) 833-4900*

## **CANADIAN CONVENTION CENTERS JOIN FORCES TO BRING BUSINESS NORTH**

DENVER — While the geographical remoteness and lack of a dense population don't necessarily help the Canadian convention market, Rod Cameron said it's perception that most hurts the maple leaf nation.

"We've worked hard to establish ourselves as the 'Great White North' and we wonder why people think it's an ice age up here," he joked during an Oct. 13 session at the International Convention Center Conference in Denver hosted by the International Association of Assembly Managers.

Cameron is the driving force behind the Convention Centres of Canada, a three-year-old consortium that finally got some traction after sealing deals with the 17 major convention centers in Canada earlier in October. Cameron said the group is now a force to be reckoned with and can collectively promote the country as a meeting planner's destination. In the coming months, the group is planning to launch a benchmarking survey and develop a training program for best practices.

"Canada offers a high quality of facilities and services to a market that values these attributes very highly," Cameron said.

While the country offers a number of recreational opportunities, the nation isn't exactly recognized for its business climate, Cameron said, citing a number of issues that often keep business travelers and meeting planners at bay. Besides a lack of low-cost internal airlines in-country that make regional travel more expensive, the nation's small population of just 30 million — a tenth the size of the U.S. — can't produce the demand

for popular trade shows and consumer expos like major markets such as New York, Orlando, Chicago and Las Vegas draw.

“We just don’t have the critical mass that you would find in the U.S.,” he said.

And while there is a misconception about low quality in the Canadian market, Cameron said, there is a lack of space at the nation’s 17 small convention centers — only a total of 8 million square-feet for meetings and for expos is available in the entire country. Only about 7,000 events are booked for the Canadian centers each year.

On top of that, Canadian convention centers face a number of external factors from the U.S., including misunderstandings about passport requirements for citizens traveling into the country, along with a drop in valuation of the U.S. currency, which had previously made the country appealing to American bargain-hunters hoping to capitalize on a beneficial exchange.

Cameron said he hopes his new organization changes the perception of Canada and helps the nation grab a larger share of the \$40 billion global meetings and convention industry.

“They have never had a collective voice or a way of working cooperatively to improve their market position, and this is what Convention Centres of Canada will provide,” he said.

The group will be funded through the Product Club program of the Canadian Tourism Commission, along with individual contributions from member facilities. Member organizations are: Cleary International Centre in Windsor, Ontario; Halifax (Nova Scotia) World Trade & Convention Centre; Hamilton (Ontario) Convention Centre; London (Ontario) Convention Centre; Metro Toronto (Ontario) Convention Centre; Ottawa (Ontario) Congress Centre; Palais des Congres de Montreal (Quebec); Penticton (British Columbia) Trade & Convention Centre; Prince George (British Columbia) Civic Centre; Le Centre des Congrès de Québec in Quebec City; Saskatoon (Saskatchewan) Centennial Auditorium & Convention Centre; Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton, Alberta; Telus Convention Centre in Calgary, Alberta; Vancouver (British Columbia) Convention & Exhibition Centre; Victoria (British Columbia) Conference Centre; Whistler (British Columbia) Conference Centre; Winnipeg (Manitoba) Convention Centre.

Cameron said the immediate objective of his group will be a three-pronged approach to increasing bookings: enhancement of facility and service quality, development of a d annual Hall of Headlines Awards. Nominees are being sought for the following four categories: News, Marketing, Concessions and Bookings. Include the name of e said, he wants to plan to pool the centers’ resources and create an automatic contract review mechanism for all the centers in the consortium that book shows over a certain size.

“It’s key we provide the operational assistance alongside our marketing,” he said. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this article: Ron Cameron, (604) 836-2123*

***From left, Michael Marion, Dexter King, David Ross, Jim Brown, Nutter Center, Dayton, Ohio; Bart Butler and Greg Powell.***



## **CROWD CONTROL IS AN OBSTACLE COURSE FOR EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS**

NASHVILLE — “We’re one of the hardest places in town to get a beer — that’s not a bad thing,” said Michael Marion, manager of the Alltel Arena, North Little Rock, Ark., a panelist on the topic of entertainment security.

Various venue managers attending the IAAM panel at the International Entertainment Buyers Association meeting here Oct. 15-17, shared their horror stories and their policies for controlling alcohol consumption and weapons.

Greg Powell, Ohio Entertainment Security, said they do serve alcohol at Nutter Center, Dayton, Ohio, even though it is a university facility. “We wristband everyone and cut off sales one hour prior to the end of the event.”

Dexter King, executive director of the International Association of Assembly Managers, said alcohol control is a matter of being aware of what is going on in the hall. There are several programs available to train the staff on what to prepare for.

Marion said he used to say the venue would cut off alcohol sales at a certain time, “but now we monitor it” and play it by ear. Most attendees limited sales to two beers per person, but one attendee cut that to one beer per ID to limit pass-alongs.

One Virginian was concerned that in his state, it’s legal to carry a concealed weapon into a venue. King recalled the same issue surfaced at the Winter Olympics in Denver. An official had a permit to pack a concealed weapon.

Bart Butler’s answer to that was “right of refusal. You have the right to say who can come into your building,” said the owner of Rock Solid Security. But that isn’t necessarily true for publicly-owned buildings. Marion said off-duty officers can come

into his venue with a gun. State laws can supercede everything.

Butler stuck to his theory though, suggesting the venue is rented by the promoter, therefore it is comparable to private property for that period of time the concert or event takes place. He expressed gratitude to Tennessee, where he resides, is a right to work and right of refusal state.

But in Virginia, the right to bear arms prevails, though management can say no illegal guns and can, if patrons pack guns, require that they log them in. The balancing act is to marry effective crowd control with an effort not to become a bright light for the gun lobby.

All the panelists lauded pre-planning, from getting with the tour early to advancing every date to avoid day-of-show surprises. "Start a month out contacting the building with all you know," Butler suggested to tour security. "Honesty is the best policy."

"It's important for the building not to be an impediment," Marion added from the building management perspective. "Be supportive. They had problems somewhere if they need five extra security people."

At the same time, Marion reminded venue managers to communicate the cost at the time of the request for additional security and not surprise them the night of the show. "Make sure the right people know," he said.

King reminded everyone that "security" now has a new meaning post-Hurricane Katrina and the advent of mega-shelters. "It's not just crowd behavior and crazy people. We have to prepare to protect property and lives." King advised against being totally dependent on government in the future. "We need to prepare our managers on what we need to do" in the event of a disaster, he said.

"We've always been focused on evacuation," King said. "Sometimes you have to shelter and place. What plan do we have to hold people?"

That can happen without a government directive, Butler noted. At the Polaris Amphitheater, Columbus, Ohio, he had to evacuate the parking lot and bring people into the bowl when tornado warnings became a real threat. It was a Phish concert and a whole village of people had camped out to watch the dogs while friends were inside at the concert. Security let 3,000 un-ticketed individuals into the amphitheater for safety's sake.

"Whenever you put a show on, you are responsible to the community, from traffic to safety," Butler agreed. That includes a keep-'em-here plan.

Communities are becoming more aware of venues as shelters, King advised. When there was a brown-out in Chicago, a good part of downtown was housed at McCormick Place because the city fathers realized that venues knew how to manage crowds on a regular basis.

Butler's concerns include executive protection, meaning protecting the artist as well as the crowd. "Tell me where I need to go with my artist; we plan for this," he said. Though it has only happened one time in his 29 years in security, he remembers well that "I took your advice on the safest place."

Another perennial security issue is that crowds still want to be close to the act in hopes of being sprinkled with a little stardust, noted David Ross, Show Me Center, Cape Girardeau, Mo. And some acts encourage that desire, calling the crowd down.

Marion noted that's a big part of advance planning and, in some instances, it can happen in a controlled way. He recalled tour management for George Strait coordinating a surge. "This goofy thing is going to happen," they advised. "This is the way it works and it always works." And sure enough, fans came down, walked on the stage, left a rose for Strait and exited the stage.

The artist wants to be accessible and that doesn't have to be discouraged. Marion advised sitting in on security meetings and finding out the history of the tour, such as for a certain song, everyone is going to rush the stage during a Linkin Park date. It looks like a waterfall of people, but it's expected and therefore somewhat controlled, he said. "We send in people to advance the show at our expense," he said.

Butler goes out of his way to "hunt down the building manager" and invite him to come out and see the show at a venue prior to his date. "History settles it all," he said.

Every venue manager of any tenure has a horror story. Reggie Churchwell recalled the CMT tour at his Crossroads Arena in Corinth, Miss. It's a three-act show and the first act told the audience to come on down. A mother took her seven-year-old to the stage and soon the child was on the floor. Security saw the potential tragedy and saved the boy, but it could have been horrendous for the family, the venue and the act.

Butler considers such behavior inciting a riot unless it was pre-orchestrated. The Black Crows did the same thing but also advised the crowd to respect security and give them a high five on the way down. "It was a respectful crowd; they didn't run us over," Butler said. "The artist controls the crowd; they have the mike."

Seating configurations can help control parts of the house, but even then, King recalled tying chairs together twice and they still got moved. Churchwell has tried continental seating, with three or four seats in the aisles to create continuous rows and limit access to the stage. — Linda Deckard

*Interviewed for this story: Bart Butler, (615) 254-4357; Greg Powell, (937) 325-1947; Dexter King, (972) 906-7441; David Ross, (573) 651-2297; Michael Marion, (501) 975-9032*

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## BOOKINGS



**HOT**tickets

### CANADA'S DELIRIOUS WITH DELIRIUM

**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 Oct. 3, 2006. To submit reports, e-mail [HotTickets@venuestoday.com](mailto: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:* \$2,649,800; *Event:* Delirium; *Venue:* **Pengrowth Saddledome, Calgary, Alberta**; *Attendance:* 28,235; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$39.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation, Cirque du Soleil; *Dates:* Oct. 10-12; *No. of Shows:* 3

2) *Gross Sales:* \$2,634,078; *Event:* Delirium; *Venue:* **Rexall Place, Edmonton, Alberta**; *Attendance:* 28,186; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$39.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation, Cirque du Soleil; *Dates:* Oct. 13-15; *No. of Shows:* 5

3) *Gross Sales:* \$2,101,235; *Event:* Eric Clapton; *Venue:* **TD Banknorth Garden, Boston**; *Attendance:* 21,891; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$60; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Oct. 3-4; *No. of Shows:* 2

4) *Gross Sales:* \$1,840,475; *Event:* Sweet Adelines International Conference; *Venue:* **Thomas & Mack Center, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 52,585; *Ticket Range:* \$35; *Promoter:* In-house; *Dates:* Oct. 9-14; *No. of Shows:* 6

5) *Gross Sales:* \$1,208,079; *Event:* Eric Clapton; *Venue:* **Wachovia Complex, Philadelphia**; *Attendance:* 14,622; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$67; *Promoter:* Electric Factory Concerts; *Dates:* Oct. 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

### **10,001-15,000 Seats**

1) *Gross Sales:* \$2,261,200; *Event:* Barry Manilow; *Venue:* **Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall**; *Attendance:* 12,248; *Ticket Range:* \$275-\$75; *Promoter:* Atlantic City Hilton & Resorts Atlantic City; *Dates:* Oct. 14; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,413,108; *Event:* Dixie Chicks; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 17,068; *Ticket Range:* \$85.34-\$70.46; *Promoter:* Chugg Entertainment; *Dates:* Oct. 6-7; *No. of Shows:* 2

3) *Gross Sales:* \$844,555; *Event:* Eric Clapton; *Venue:* **Jacksonville (Fla.) Veterans Memorial Arena**; *Attendance:* 10,561; *Ticket Range:* \$95-\$55; *Promoter:* Fantasma; *Dates:* Oct. 21; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$602,742; *Event:* Disney's Mickey & Minnie's Magical Journey; *Venue:* **ipayOne Center at the Sports Arena, San Diego**; *Attendance:* 39,600; *Ticket Range:* \$51.50-\$13.50; *Promoter:* Feld Entertainment; *Dates:* Oct. 11-15; *No. of Shows:* 9

5) *Gross Sales:* \$470,832; *Event:* Def Leppard, Journey; *Venue:* **Save Mart Center at Fresno (Calif.) State**; *Attendance:* 8,180; *Ticket Range:* \$74-\$38; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Oct. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1

### **5,001-10,000 Seats**

1) *Gross Sales:* \$432,270; *Event:* Bamboozle Festival; *Venue:* **Cal Poly Athletic Field, Pomona, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 13,519; *Ticket Range:* \$33.33; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Goldenvoice; *Dates:* Oct. 14-15; *No. of Shows:* 2

2) *Gross Sales:* \$404,966; *Event:* Paul Simon; *Venue:* **Greek Theatre, Los Angeles**; *Attendance:* 4,068; *Ticket Range:* \$129.50-\$39.50; *Promoter:* Nederlander; *Dates:* Oct. 4; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$323,378; *Event:* Paul Simon; *Venue:* **Magness Arena, Denver**; *Attendance:* 5,238; *Ticket Range:* \$69.50-\$49.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Oct. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$267,179; *Event:* Iron Maiden; *Venue:* **Agganis Arena, Boston**; *Attendance:* 5,939; *Ticket Range:* \$49.50-\$39.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Oct. 6; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$207,207; *Event:* Widespread Panic; *Venue:* **Macon (Ga.) Centreplex**; *Attendance:* 6,540; *Ticket Range:* \$33; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Oct. 7; *No. of Shows:* 1

#### **5,000 or Fewer Seats**

1) *Gross Sales:* \$7,200,175; *Event:* Elton John; *Venue:* **The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 40,462; *Ticket Range:* \$250-\$100; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West, In-house; *Dates:* Oct. 10-22; *No. of Shows:* 10

2) *Gross Sales:* \$464,665; *Event:* Calvin Trillin; *Venue:* **Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Portland, Ore.**; *Attendance:* 1,891; *Ticket Range:* \$31.25-\$12.50; *Promoter:* In-house; *Dates:* Oct. 10; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$309,479; *Event:* Paul Simon; *Venue:* **Santa Barbara (Calif.) Bowl**; *Attendance:* 4,423; *Ticket Range:* \$91.50-\$37.50; *Promoter:* Nederlander; *Dates:* Oct. 7; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$280,775; *Event:* Paul Simon; *Venue:* **Rosemont (Ill.) Theatre**; *Attendance:* 3,815; *Ticket Range:* \$85-\$65; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* Oct. 16; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$238,489; *Event:* The Producers; *Venue:* **Morris Performing Arts Center, South Bend, Ind.**; *Attendance:* 4,782; *Ticket Range:* \$61-\$48; *Promoter:* Broadway Theatre League of South Bend, Inc.; *Dates:* Oct. 13-15; *No. of Shows:* 5

*Compiled by Rob Ocampo, [HotTickets@venuestoday.com](mailto:HotTickets@venuestoday.com)*

[Click here to submit your scores online](#)



**Axl Rose**

## **DRAMA BEHIND THEM, GNR KICKS OFF TOUR**

Once one of the most feared rock bands on the planet due to their ferocious energy, unpredictable personalities and voracious partying, Guns 'N Roses have established a far different reputation over the past 20 years when it comes to playing live.

The hard rock group led by enigmatic singer Axl Rose has been known to cancel dates, leave the stage in the middle of shows or not show up at all, leading to riots and damage to venues. But judging by the early word on the group's just-launched U.S. tour, in addition to the fresh energy on stage thanks to the nearly 100% new line-up around Rose, band members are conducting themselves in a whole different way this time around. So far, anyway.

"I've heard all these rumors about how difficult he [Rose] is, but we haven't seen any of that," said Jeff Hickcox, the marketing director for Florida

radio station 96.1 KRock, which is promoting the Oct. 27 GNR date at the 6,800-capacity Germain Arena in Estero, Fla., as part of the station's 20th anniversary celebration.

Though the show was still 1,000 or more tickets shy of a sell out as of Oct. 23, Hickcox said he was excited about the band's first-ever gig in Southwest Florida and he said no special preparations had been made to guard against GNR's unpredictable reputation. "It hasn't been much different than any other show," said Hickcox. "They're the biggest group we've ever done, and with a supergroup like this there's bound to be more hoops to jump through, but we didn't have to buy any extra insurance or anything like that."

In fact, Hickcox said GNR management even called him to let him know that they were shifting around a few dates – including two canceled California shows – in order to change the routing a bit and add on a show in San Juan, Puerto Rico on Oct. 29. The heads up was a pleasant surprise courtesy that Hickcox said he appreciated, and given the group's reputation, didn't necessarily expect.

Tickets for the tour range from \$38 to a just under \$80 and most of the shows will take place in 7,000-20,000 seat venues. "They've been real good about communication," Hickcox said of GNR management. "I expected everything you've heard, but none of that has happened."

The band's history is dotted with concert catastrophes, from the death of two fans in a crowd crush in 1988 at a show in England to charges against Rose in 1991 for inciting a riot in St. Louis after he jumped into the audience to stop a fan from filming the show and eventually walked off stage, which led to fans ripping out seats and destroying equipment.

A riot also broke out at a show in 1992 when Rose left the stage early during an AIDS tribute concert and in 2001 the group pulled out of a planned summer European tour, as well as a rescheduled winter European trip that same year. In November of 2002, the band were scheduled to play GM Place in Vancouver, B.C., to open a North American swing, but the show was cancelled at the last minute when Rose was reportedly waylaid due to a travel delays, resulting in yet another fan riot that caused damage to the venue. A month later fans again got worked up when a show at the First Union Center (now Wachovia Center) in Philadelphia was cancelled with no explanation. Days later, the rest of the tour was called off.

So far so good, though, according to Sid Greenfeig, director of Event Programming for Sunrise Sport and Entertainment's BankAtlantic Center, where the tour kicked off on Oct. 24. "I don't know that the preparations have been any different from any show we do," said Greenfeig. "Our event managers have dealt closely with management in advance of the show and with any rock show we have with above normal security requests our director of security will get with their security to make sure everyone is safe and is having a good time."

Without going into specifics about the size or cost of the security contingent, Greenfeig said the GNR show will have a little more security than other rock shows at the venue, but no more than any show of its caliber and certainly "nothing out of the ordinary." The same rules apply for most rock shows of its type: no weapons, no wallet chains, bag checks, no lighters and wandering for fans who are going to be on the general admission floor.

One of the precautions the venue is taking is making sure that all security personnel have the message that if anything happens out of the ordinary – from one of the bands not showing up to any violence or security breaches – those events are not to be discussed over the public address system or on the venue walkie-talkie system. "We've discussed that, if, God forbid, something happens, how we will relay those messages to the crowd," Greenfeig said. "Nothing over the PA's or work radios. Because word travels fast in these venues and that's the last thing we want."

Despite the band's reputation for blowing the kick off of tours, the one thing Greenfeig is not worrying about is the tour launching at his 12,000-seat venue. "We're anticipating a great show and a great kick-off to the tour," said Greenfeig. "You become the benchmark for the whole tour. And there's some nervousness, because you never want anything to go wrong, but you're the one people will start calling after the show and being thought of enough to start the tour here in South Florida and doing it right is exciting." Greenfeig would not discuss ticket sales.

A spokesperson for GNR could not be reached for comment for this story. — Gil Kaufman

*Interviewed for this story: Jeff Hickcox, (239) 495-2100; Sid Greenfeig, (954) 835-7713*

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## MARKETING



***Tom Petty laughs during a press conference in which he received a key to the city of Gainesville while at the University of Florida O'Connell Center; fans cheer during Petty's sold out performance at the O'Connell Center.***

### **HOOPLA HELPS MARKET TOM PETTY'S HOMECOMING IN GAINESVILLE**

On Sept. 21, the Stephen C. O'Connell Center at the University of Florida in Gainesville celebrated Tom Petty Day with a national news conference and the first concert this artist has held in his hometown in 13 years.

"We were fortunate to be the only venue in the state that Tom Petty visited on his 30th anniversary tour, which was great recognition for us," said Lynda Reinhart, assistant director of the O'Connell Center. The tour officially began on June 9 and ends Oct. 28.

The venue also benefited from extensive press coverage of this event. Approximately 40 members of the local and national press attended the conference at the venue, where Gainesville Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan presented Petty with his second "Key to the City" and declared September 21 Tom Petty Day. The artist also received the University of Florida's Outstanding Achievement Award from the wife of the university's president Chris Machen, which was originally bestowed upon him back in 2001.

"We have been trying to get Tom Petty to come back to Gainesville for several years to present him with this award and to perform," Reinhart said. The concert sold 8,500 tickets.

Petty, a native of Gainesville who worked at the university at one time, has played a part in putting this college town on the map for music. "He has ties to this community. There are not a lot of bands we would dedicate a day to," Reinhart said. Although he never attended the University of Florida, he had worked in the grounds department for several years and even planted a tree that is now affectionately known as the "Tom Petty Tree."

Although Petty's publicist played a key part in arranging the press conference and marketing the event, the university provided the venue, coordinated the award presentation and distributed press releases to local media. Tickets for the concerts ranged from \$49.50 to \$59.50.

According to Renee Musson, the O'Connell Center's business manager who was in charge of marketing this event for the venue, entertainment producer and promoter Fantasma Productions of Florida did media buys through standard outlets to help get the word out. "What sold this event was the fact that Tom Petty hasn't been back to his hometown in 13 years. For this reason, there was extensive coverage about his homecoming," she said.

The event was publicized on marquees around campus. "But what sold this event was word-of-mouth, in addition to the phenomenal publicity," Musson said.

Because Petty's tours typically take place in the summer, the timing was not right for this college arena to host a performance in the past. "When he decided to extend this tour into the fall, the timing was right and the date was available," Musson said.

The O'Connell Center, nicknamed the "O-Dome", is a 12,000-seat multi-purpose arena which is the fourth on-campus home of the university's Gators teams. It replaced the old Florida Gymnasium, nicknamed "Alligator Alley," which was the home of the Gators for the previous 31 seasons and is still located to the east of the football stadium.

Another hometown band, Sister Hazel, will be appearing at the O'Connell Center for a concert on Nov. 9. — Lisa White

*Interviewed for this article: Renee Musson, (352) 392-5500; Lynda Reinhart, (352) 392-5500.*

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## CONCESSIONS



***Supreme nachos at Busch Stadium; dessert carts by Delaware North's Sportservice were used at both World Series ballparks***

## **DELAWARE NORTH MOVES FOOD FOR BOTH WORLD SERIES TEAMS**

Delaware North has the concessions contract for both of this year's World Series venues – the Detroit Tigers' Comerica Park and the St. Louis Cardinals' Busch Stadium. As the rivalry between the two teams and stadiums moves through seven games, Delaware North employees are working together behind the scenes to provide unique menu options for both teams.

"We always want to beat those guys in St. Louis, on the field of course," said John Verespie, general manager of Sportservice at Comerica Park. "As a company, we're proud to host the World Series, working as a team behind the scenes to create the ultimate fan experience."

This is the fourth time that Sportservice has hosted both teams participating in the World Series, and the second time they have handled a Cardinals/Tigers series — the first being in 1968.

Fans at the Detroit Tigers' Comerica Park will be marketed the city's traditional "working man's menu," a combination of Eastern European dishes and traditional mid-east U.S. fare. Big menu items this year include pirogues with sour cream, onions and apple sauce (\$5); bratwursts (\$5); tangy Buffalo Wild Wings (\$8); and Hebrew National hot dogs (\$5).

Fans with Club-level access to Comerica's Champion's Club will spend Game 1 dining on a self-service buffet with sushi and sashimi, Brazilian flamed beef and pumpkin seed-coated chicken. Dessert includes Spanish strawberry shortcake and Mexican chocolate ice cream. Future menu options will include Wagyu pomegranate strip loin, herb Parisian vegetables and Brazilian flamed beef.

Fans sitting in Comerica's on-deck circle also have access to a special concessions area called the "Tiger's Den" with meals included. On the menu are one-pound hamburgers, steak fries, pizza and Monterey Inn pulled pork and chicken.

Fans at the St. Louis Cardinals' all new Busch Stadium are slated for more traditional baseball fare, with concessionaires planning to move lots of hot dogs (\$3.50); jumbo dogs (\$4.75); brats (\$4.75); hand-rolled pretzels (\$4.75) and supreme nachos (\$7.00).

Fans with access to the club level's Red Bird Club will dine on a pre-game and post-game fare of sushi, Charleston oyster stew, Veal Osso Bucco, pan-seared Alaskan halibut and Chicken roulade on the first night of the series. The club will include two mobile food stations, one serving Asian noodle stir-fry dishes and the other operating a Mediterranean pasta action-station.

Executive Chef for Comerica Park Mark Szubeczak said they start working on the play-offs and World Series menus mid-summer, depending on how the team is performing so as not to get too far ahead of themselves. Taking local fan fare, popular regional dishes, seasonal availability of ingredients, and the visiting team into consideration, this year's World Series menu line-ups were mapped out ahead of time by a team of collaborating chefs and food and beverage experts, all led by Delaware North's Corporate Chef Rolf Baumann.

"We're always trying to outdo ourselves, building on freshness, creative displays, local and regional fare, and top-of-the-line foods," Szubeczak said. "We offer different menus every single game with more and more flavors each time. We can tell by expressions and comments from the fans that they're really enjoying it."

This year's World Series spectators will be served by some of the country's top chefs, including Cleveland's Eric Borgia, Matt Auck, and Mark Donohoe; Tim Radack and Bill Bateman of Reno, Nev.; San Diego's Oscar Lira; Cincinnati's Scott Pobuba and Mike Marcus and Pastor Jimenez of Milwaukee.

"We bring in regional chefs experienced with large-scale events," said Szubeczak. "Chef Rolf is constantly traveling and he always knows who is available when and where. Often, chefs will have experience with dishes from their region, in which case we can help other chefs learn from the experts in various niches while bringing in experts to prepare regional fare. During the World Series (Game 2), our West Coast chefs worked on the Pacific seafood bake and served it in the dining room on game day."

Szubeczak said the fact that Delaware North is catering both venues just adds to the excitement of the World Series.

"We rise to the occasion and enjoy the level of intensity," he said. "Fans are into baseball more than ever right now, the seats are packed, and it's contagious. It's been an excellent experience." — Lindsay Sandham

*Interviewed for this article: John Verespie, (313) 962-4000; Mark Szubeczak, (313) 962-4000*

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## SHORT TAKES



*Mayor Elaine Scruggs, City of Glendale; Jerry Moyes, owner of Phoenix Coyotes; Aaron Matos, founder & CEO of Jobing.com; Douglas Moss, president & COO of Phoenix Coyotes; and Wayne Gretzky, managing partner & head coach of Phoenix Coyotes.*

### **GLENDALE ARENA SELLS NAMING RIGHTS TO JOBING.COM**

The Glendale (Ariz.) Arena and the Phoenix Coyotes announced that Arizona-based Jobing.com has acquired the naming rights to Glendale Arena. Effective immediately, the new name of the facility is Jobing.com Arena. This will be the first naming rights deal for both the arena and Jobing.com. Under the terms of the agreement, Jobing.com will receive naming rights, premier signage and a variety of additional advertising, marketing and merchandising opportunities at the arena. Specific financial terms of the deal were not being disclosed.

*Contact: Suzanne Kimball, (623) 772-3368*

### **24-HOUR FITNESS WORKS OUT GYM DEAL WITH CONVENTION CENTER**

The Saint Charles (Mo.) Convention Center has reached an agreement with 24-Hour Fitness Centers to be the convention center's fitness services provider. A major component of the new partnership will include the potential for convention center visitors to schedule group fitness classes through independent instructors from the local 24-Hour Fitness Center in Saint Charles. With this new partnership, 24-Hour Fitness provides Saint Charles Convention Center clients with a new offering for those interested in a fitness break during conventions, trade shows, exhibit shows, and corporate meetings.

*Contact: Jonathan Frost, (636) 669-3009*

### **LIVE NATION WINS BID TO OPERATE JACKIE GLEASON THEATER**

Live Nation has announced it won an initial bidding proposal to operate Miami Beach's historic Jackie Gleason Theater. The Jackie Gleason deal will give the company an important 2,700-seat live music venue in the south Florida market, adding to its portfolio of mid-sized venues including The Wiltern Theatre in Los Angeles, The Fillmore in San Francisco, The Tabernacle in Atlanta and London's Apollo Theatre.

*Contact: John Vlautin, (310) 867-7127*

### **CENTERPLATE ADDS TWO EXECES**

William H. Peterson has been named executive vice president – Operations, effective Nov. 13, and Kevin F. McNamara the new executive vice president and chief financial officer as of Nov. 27 for Centerplate. Peterson had served as senior vice president, AEG Sports, a division of Anschutz Entertainment Group, where he also served as managing director of the Home Depot Center, Carson, Calif. Prior to that, he was with the National

Football League where he served as president of NFL Europe. McNamara joins the company from the Procter & Gamble Company where he served as vice president, Finance – Gillette Global Grooming. McNamara succeeds Kenneth R. Frick at Centerplate.

*Contact: Gael Doar, (203) 975-5941*

### **WEMBLEY ARENA ENJOYS SOLID SIX MONTHS**

London's Wembley Arena has welcomed over 500,000 visitors through its doors and more than 60 events in the venue since it reopened in April 2006 after its \$65.7 million facelift. Depeche Mode were the first act to play the venue back in the spring, and the arena hasn't had a dark week since, with major runs from Il Divo, Michael Flatley, Take That, Westlife, and Billy Joel. The autumn season is set to be equally busy with George Michaels, Cliff Richard and Christina Aguilera among the headliners.

*Contact: Peter Tudor, (020) 8782 5620*

### **AUTO SHOW AND TATOO EXPO SIGN DEAL WITH FRESNO**

The Fresno Convention and Entertainment Center has signed multi-year deals with the Central California Auto Show and the Fresno Tattoo Expo. The auto show is produced by Motortrend Auto Shows Inc. and sponsored by Fresno-Clovis New Car Dealers Association and will operate at the center for three years. The Fresno Tattoo Expo has committed to a five-year deal at the convention center.

*Contact: Tish Vargas, (559) 445-8167*

### **WACHOVIA HOSTS UNIQUE WEDDING FOR X-TREME SCREAM PARK**

Dressed in full gothic attire with their wedding party, Kimberly Cruz and Julio Angel-Torres of Philadelphia will have a chance to walk down the gauntlet as they get married in front of a gothic castle with characters from Nightmares X-treme Scream Park in the Wachovia Spectrum on Oct. 28. The couples were winners of the Masquerade Wedding, beating out 200 other couples to win fittings for all members of the ceremony from the Masquerade Costume Superstore, ceremonial rings, a reception for 50 guests, \$1,500 for their honeymoon, and passes for all members of the party to experience Nightmares X-treme Scream Park.

*Contact: Ike Richman, (215) 389-9552*

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