

**April Parnell**

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**VENUESToday**  
The news behind the headlines

Dear April,

May 16, 2007 VOL. VI, Number XVI ISSN 1547-4143

Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. This e-news is chock full of original stories on deals, moves, hot tickets and top stops. For more news coverage, look out for our May issue of *Venues Today*. For further information or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit [www.venuestoday.com](http://www.venuestoday.com).

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## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The power was out in the building at that time and I literally walked into my office, thought about what I should take, and then quietly closed the door and left because there really was nothing. You kind of cross your fingers and hope." — *Rena Wasserman of the Greek Theatre, Los Angeles on her plans to possibly clear out her office because of a dangerous fire burning a few hundred feet away.*

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**VENUE NEWS**



*Pictured, from left: Rick Merrill, general manager of Gibson Amphitheatre; Rena Wasserman, general manager of the Greek Theatre; John Valenzuela, Gibson Amphitheatre box office manager; MaryAnn Collins, Greek Theatre box office manager; Denise Minatoya, Greek Theatre operations manager; Mike O'Neal, Gibson Amphitheatre operations manager; Natalie Caplan, Greek Theatre artist liaison; Ron Williams, Gibson Amphitheatre backstage security; Mark Sidlow, Gibson Amphitheatre production manager; Brett Carver, Greek Theatre production manager.*

#### **Q&A: RENA WASSERMAN ON THE GREEK'S RING OF FIRE**

On May 8, a wildfire in Los Angeles' Griffith Park burned dangerously close to the Greek Theatre, forcing the relocation of its May 10 show with Loreena McKennitt, May 11 concert with Keane and May 13 show with Modest Mouse.

*Venues Today* caught up with Greek Theatre General Manager Rena Wasserman to discuss how the Nederlander staff responded to the disaster.

#### ***Venues Today:* Where were you when you got news of the fire?**

**Rena Wasserman:** I was actually having lunch in Hollywood and received a series of phone calls on my cell phone, and by the fourth call I looked up at the party I was eating with and said, "I'm really sorry, I think something's going on. I should take this." Whoever called me said, "Are you alright?" and I said "Why, are we on fire?" It was just one of those hot days where you knew something was going to happen.

#### **VT: What were the first things you saw when you showed up to the Greek?**

**RW:** I could see fire as I was hiking down and flames were kicking in at the park. The fire probably started at 1 or 1:30 (p.m.) and I was back at the park by 2:30 (p.m.)

#### **VT: How did the L.A. Fire Department get hold of you?**

**RW:** They didn't have to get hold of me, they were in the parking lot setting up a

command post. It wasn't something we were notified about, we were in the mix from the beginning. The fires did get really close and we provided them with a land-line, which was essentially to their calling in for backup.

**VT: Was there anyone at the Greek when the fire hit?**

**RW:** Our whole staff was there. They jumped into emergency action to help the fire department get what they needed, be it water, restrooms or telephones.

**VT: Did you have any emergency preparation plans to handle this kind of emergency?**

**RW:** Of course we do. Every venue does. You're driven at a certain point by what's happening and the magnitude of what's happening. In this case you're directed pretty explicitly by fire and police departments.

**VT: At what point did you realize you were going to have to cancel some shows?**

**RW:** We decided about 24 hours before the show, but having said that, it's not a decision that we made on our own. The mayor told us we had to move the first show. Nobody was being allowed into the park and as of today [May 16] no one still is.

**VT: Did he call you and tell you this?**

**RW:** No he told me directly to my face. You've got to understand what a command post is. There are hundreds of fire fighters in the parking lot, there are backup generators, there are police battalion companies all backing up the fire department, there are city entities and they're all housed in the parking lot. It was never a question of someone calling me; I was out there all day and night.

**VT: What was the most difficult moment for you?**

**RW:** I would say at about 10:30, Tuesday night when I stood here and saw just how close the fires came. The power was out in the building at that time and I literally walked into my office, thought about what I should take, and then quietly closed the door and left because there really was nothing. You kind of cross your fingers and hope. I would say the fires were only an eighth-of-a-mile from the Greek. It's remarkable we still have a bowl that's filled with trees and evergreens.

**VT: Back to rescheduling the show. The mayor says you have to reschedule the first show. What happens next?**

**RW:** We all leaped in emergency mode and found a venue that's available; in this case, it's the Gibson Amphitheatre (Universal City, Calif.) which is a great venue to move to because it's virtually the same size as the Greek Theatre. We know all of the people in the same positions we have here and we immediately jumped into a meeting about how a ticket exchange would work. We then got a press release going and sent that to everybody we could. In our case it was great because press conferences were happening every few hours.

**VT: How did you notify the fans?**

**RW:** We did move the concert time by one hour and everyone who bought a ticket on the Internet was e-mail blasted by Ticketmaster. Anyone who bought a ticket by phone was called by Ticketmaster and anyone who purchased a ticket from our box office was called by our staff. Remarkably, eight people showed up at the Greek Theatre on that first show day. Very different from the old days when you wonder "How do you get in touch with all the people who were planning on coming up?" Plus the fires were huge news in Los Angeles and the phones were ringing off the hook.

**VT: What about getting people into the right seats?**

**RW:** It was a great venue to move into because the sizes are so similar. For example,

our Section A has 18 rows; so does Gibson's. Our section B has 18 rows; so does Gibson's. If you were in Row A, you were in Row A at Gibson. We also had great signage and laid out 10 tables so that every section in the Greek was represented. If your ticket said "Pit" you would get into the line that said "Pit" and that person would give you a ticket of an equal, comparable location. It was remarkable; no one waited.

**VT: When do you plan to reopen?**

**RW:** This Friday [May 18], we're having Harry Connick Jr.

**VT: Will the concert-goer notice anything different?**

**RW:** One thing. They're not allowed to smoke any more. There is no smoking of any kind in the buildings, in front, or anywhere in the parking lot.

**How is the cleanup going?**

**RW:** I think everybody imagined there's tons of tons of ash here and I think we were very lucky. The wind must have been going in a different direction because there's really not a lot of cleanup. We feel really lucky and know that it took a lot of amazing work by a lot of firefighters and our own staff. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this story: Rena Wasserman, (323) 644-5018*



***Henry Winkler signs books at the Central Florida Fair; Wade Shows did good business with rides like the Enterprise, one of 66***

**CELEBRITIES, THE INTERNET AND NEW DATES IMPACT ORLANDO FAIR**

After a bad year in 2006 that saw attendance dip because of bad weather and a date change, the Central Florida Fair, Orlando, drew about 200,000 for the April 19-29 fair.

"In 2006, the dates were changed by five weeks and we were down substantially," said Frank Zaitshik, owner of Spring Hill, Fla.-based Wade Shows, which placed 66 rides on the fair's midway. "This year, we made up half that, which is probably on target for the fair to bounce back. It takes people a while to get used to date changes."

Neither Zaitshik nor the fair's director of marketing, Heather Gibbs, provided attendance figures for 2006.

However, Gibbs noted that good weather probably only accounted for part of the increase. The fair brought in celebrities such as Henry Winkler and Erik Estrada for appearances and also employed viral marketing for the first time, utilizing both My Space and taking out leaderboards on radio station Web sites that linked directly to a

specific part of the fair's Web site, such as the entertainment page.

"We also did pop ups, where maybe if somebody was listening to a radio station by online streaming on the Internet, they can break away from the normal programming and say, 'Look on the upper right-hand screen to buy Central Florida Fair tickets,'" Gibbs said. "That kind of Internet savvy was good to us."

The celebrity appearances also were new and featured autograph sessions. Estrada appeared on Police and Military Appreciation Day and gave a talk, while Winkler signed copies of his book.

"It brought in a new demographic, but in addition to that, the weather was beautiful," Gibbs said.

The fair also rented a 35-foot blimp, smaller than the traditional Goodyear blimp, which flew lower to the ground and featured the fair's name and dates.

"We flew it over I-4 in rush-hour traffic, and also Colonial Drive, which are high-traffic areas, and over the mall," Gibbs said. "Those kinds of things were very eye-catching and different."

The fair does not bring in headline concerts, but Gibbs said the concept has been under consideration for the near future, possibly next year. Instead, the fair relied on what Gibbs called "grassroots" shows, such as an "American Idol"-type show as well as a step-battle show with teams from area junior high and high schools, with actor Gary Coleman giving out awards.

The price of admission was \$10 for adults at the gate or \$5 in advance, and \$5 and \$2 for ages 6-10, Gibbs said. The fair did a pre-sale with a sponsor for the first time, using Albertsons grocery chain.

Carnival wristbands cost \$20, although fairgoers could get a \$5 discount coupon at the drive-through of Pollo Tropical, a Caribbean fast-food restaurant, Gibbs said. Popular rides included the flume, the roller coaster, the giant wheel, the Himalaya and the Fireball, Zaitshik said.

He noted that he supported the date change. The fair used to take place in late February and early March, at the same time as standardized testing is given in area schools and also at the same time as other popular fairs, such as the Florida Strawberry Festival in Plant City.

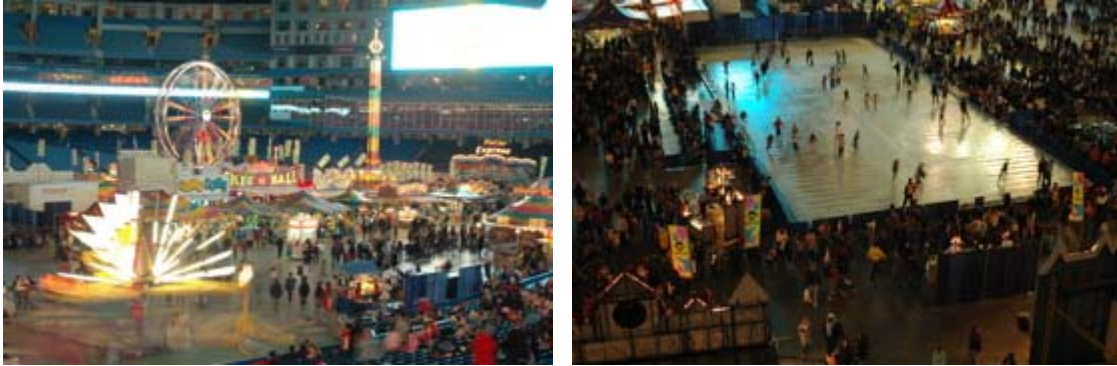
"I was disappointed," Zaitshik said. "I was disappointed in my judgment. I thought the date change was a natural. I also underestimated the power of tradition."

In general, however, the fair season so far has been good, Zaitshik said, and he reported increased sales at all of his fairs. However, he noted gas prices only spiked toward the end of his Florida fairs, approaching \$3 a gallon.

"A lot of people look to Florida as a barometer for the upcoming season, and I think if somebody is doing that, they should be encouraged," he said.

But, he noted, if gas prices continue to rise, they could become a major factor in the way carnivals operate. "There may come a day when we're just a Florida carnival or an Oklahoma carnival or a New York carnival," he said. "That's not something I look forward to, but it's something we'll take a look at if transportation costs continue to rise." – Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this article: Frank Zaitshik, (352) 754-7284; Heather Gibbs, (407) 295-3247



***Inside the Spring Fling at the Rogers Centre, Toronto; Disney On Ice let the Rogers Centre use its ice for an ice skating rink***

### **WEEKLY RUNDOWN: ROGERS CENTRE BRINGS IN THE CARNIVAL; HOK LANDS PENGUINS DEAL; ROCKFORD TEAMS UP WITH ROAD RANGER FOR NAMING RIGHTS**

**EVENTS:** The **Rogers Centre** in Toronto wrapped up its annual **Spring Fling** indoor carnival, drawing over 41,000 individuals from March 13-18.

Using 143,000 square-feet of exhibit space on field level, the Rogers Centre packed in 18 amusement rides and other games by operator World's Finest Shows into the space. With a roof rising 282-feet in the air, the Rogers Center, home to Major League Baseball's Toronto Blue Jays, was able to bring in such rides as the Century Ferris Wheel and the Cannonball, which drops riders 10 stories in less than two seconds.

For those not interested in carnival rides, the Rogers Centre also set up an indoor skating rink measuring 60 by 135 feet.

"We had Disney on Ice a few days before the carnival and we asked them if we could keep their ice. It was pretty neat having the actual ice from the show," said Rogers Centre Communications Coordinator Nadia Flaim. "We didn't want to get into the business of renting skates, so we had kids bring their own. We included that message in our media campaign and the ice was definitely a hit."

In fact, the event saw an attendance increase of over 46 percent over the previous year, partially propelled by new passport requirements that limited traveling in and out of the country.

"We had 6,500 people for our first day, which on a Tuesday is unheard of," Flaim said.

The Rogers Centre has intermittently hosted the festival since the building first opened in 1989 and has consecutively held the event since 2001.

Other highlights of the carnival was an appearance by the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and the Rogers Centre's use of the center scoreboard to broadcast clips from

their new movie, as well as maps and directions around the arena.

**DEALS:** **HOK Sport** has been chosen by the **Pittsburgh Penguins** to design a new arena.

No financial terms were disclosed of the deal, that will help the National Hockey League team remain in Pittsburgh, with the state providing money from slot machine revenue to build a new arena to replace 46-year-old **Mellon Arena**, the oldest venue in the league.

HOK Sport Managing Senior Partner Rick Martin said the firm had been consulting with the Penguins for some time.

"Our previous work with the Pirates and Steelers gives us a strong sense of the history of the region and its sports teams, and we plan to utilize that knowledge with this very special arena project," he said.

Also chosen was **ICON Venue Group**, which will oversee the construction process.

ICON Venue Group and HOK Sport have worked together on a number of projects, including the new **Prudential Arena** in New Jersey, future home of the **New Jersey Devils**; the **Jobing Arena** in Glendale, Ariz., the **Pepsi Center** in Denver; and the new **Sprint Center** in Kansas City, which would have been home to the Penguins had they moved to that city following lengthy negotiations.

**NAMING RIGHTS:** The home of the **Rockford (III.) RiverHawks** got a new name Tuesday. The RiverHawks and **Road Ranger**, a Rockford-based gasoline and convenience-store chain, announced a naming-rights partnership that changes the name of the team's multi-purpose facility to **Road Ranger Stadium**.

"This really gives us the credibility we've been looking for in our market and in this league," said RiverHawks General Manager Josh Olerud. "It makes a big difference to have such a big brand name backing our product.

The deal covers five years with options for an additional five years. The financial and other terms of the agreement were not released.

"We were originally shooting for 10 years, but they have the option to re-bid on the name in year four and we want to make sure this is a partnership that lasts," Olerud said,

Among the benefits to the RiverHawks are that the team's tickets and merchandise will be marketed in all of Road Ranger's area locations. Graphics with the Road Ranger's logo will appear on the entry to the ballpark, as well as the scoreboard and two stencils near first and third base.

"Signs directing motorists to Road Ranger Stadium have been in place on Interstate 90 for more than a month," said Olerud. "Signs for the stadium have been ordered but probably won't be installed in time for the May 25 home opener."

*Interviewed for this story: Nadia Flaim, (416) 341-1119; Rick Martin, (816) 221-1500; Josh Olerud, (815) 885-2255*

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## BOOKINGS



### HOTtickets

### PINK WELL UNDERWAY DOWN UNDER

**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 April 24, 2007. 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*: \$1,432,857; *Event*: Amp'd Mobile AMA Supercross Series Finals; *Venue*: **Sam Boyd Stadium, Las Vegas**; *Attendance*: 31,720; *Ticket Range*: \$66-\$24; *Promoter*: Live Nation Motorsports; *Dates*: May 5; *No. of Shows*: 1
- 2) *Gross Sales*: \$1,038,080; *Event*: Kenny Chesney; *Venue*: **Xcel Energy Center, Saint Paul, Minn.**; *Attendance*: 15,668; *Ticket Range*: \$68.75-\$58.75; *Promoter*: AEG Live, G.A.M.E., Inc., The Messina Group; *Dates*: May 13; *No. of Shows*: 1
- 3) *Gross Sales*: \$637,247; *Event*: Gwen Stefani; *Venue*: **Cricket Pavilion, Phoenix**; *Attendance*: 20,101; *Ticket Range*: \$65.25-\$20.75; *Promoter*: Live Nation, LN Touring; *Dates*: April 28; *No. of Shows*: 1
- 4) *Gross Sales*: \$601,878; *Event*: El Gran Combo; *Venue*: **Coliseo De Puerto Rico, San Juan**; *Attendance*: 14,783; *Ticket Range*: \$75-\$20; *Promoter*: Tony Mojena Entertainment; *Dates*: May 4-5; *No. of Shows*: 2
- 5) *Gross Sales*: \$559,379; *Event*: The Killers; *Venue*: **Madison Square Garden Arena, New York**; *Attendance*: 14,839; *Ticket Range*: \$40.50-\$25.50; *Promoter*: Live Nation; *Dates*: April 28; *No. of Shows*: 1

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

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$1,866,121; *Event:* Pink; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 21,462; *Ticket Range:* \$71.64; *Promoter:* Michael Coppel Presents; *Dates:* May 4-5; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,644,037; *Event:* Kenny Chesney; *Venue:* **Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich.**; *Attendance:* 24,056; *Ticket Range:* \$68.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Mischell Productions, The Messina Group; *Dates:* May 10-11; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,427,432; *Event:* Keith Urban; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 15,998; *Ticket Range:* \$95.99-\$67.97; *Promoter:* Chugg Entertainment; *Dates:* May 11-12; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$868,269; *Event:* Rod Stewart; *Venue:* **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; *Attendance:* 8,872; *Ticket Range:* \$113.33-\$68; *Promoter:* AEG Live; *Dates:* May 15; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$478,171; *Event:* Gwen Stefani; *Venue:* **Rabobank Arena, Bakersfield, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 8,008; *Ticket Range:* \$69.50-\$39.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation, LN Touring; *Dates:* April 25; *No. of Shows:* 1

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

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$1,170,350; *Event:* George Strait; *Venue:* **Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Conn.**; *Attendance:* 17,995; *Ticket Range:* \$100-\$70; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* April 26-27; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$890,100; *Event:* Pink; *Venue:* **Newcastle (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 13,207; *Ticket Range:* \$74.80; *Promoter:* Michael Coppel Presents; *Dates:* May 8-9; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$882,295; *Event:* Chayanne; *Venue:* **Theater at Madison Square Garden, New York**; *Attendance:* 10,656; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$65; *Promoter:* CMN; *Dates:* May 3-4; *No. of Shows:* 2
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$790,466; *Event:* Van Morrison; *Venue:* **Chastain Park Amphitheatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 6,700; *Ticket Range:* \$128-\$55; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* April 28; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$766,314; *Event:* Van Morrison; *Venue:* **Theater at Madison Square Garden, New York**; *Attendance:* 5,425; *Ticket Range:* \$170.50-\$85.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* April 29; *No. of Shows:* 1

**5,000 or Fewer Seats**

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$347,955; *Event:* Van Morrison; *Venue:* **Opera House, Boston**; *Attendance:* 2,640; *Ticket Range:* \$150-\$75; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* April 30; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$255,720; *Event:* Bjork; *Venue:* **Auditorium Theatre, Chicago**; *Attendance:* 3,790; *Ticket Range:* \$134-\$44; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* May 12; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$248,068; *Event:* David Copperfield; *Venue:* **Rosemont (Ill.)**

**Theatre**; Attendance: 5,129; Ticket Range: \$56.50-\$27.50; Promoter: Live Nation, In-house; Dates: April 27-28; No. of Shows: 2

4) Gross Sales: \$232,736; Event: KISS FM Mother's Day Concert; Venue: **Beacon Theatre, New York**; Attendance: 4,200; Ticket Range: \$75-\$45; Promoter: Marquee Concerts; Dates: May 12; No. of Shows: 2

5) Gross Sales: \$173,615; Event: Earth, Wind & Fire; Venue: **Mizner Park Amphitheater, Boca Raton, Fla.**; Attendance: 2,476; Ticket Range: \$98-\$38; Promoter: Fantasma; Dates: April 27; No. of Shows: 1

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

## Prince



### PRINCE SETS UP SHOP IN LONDON

In a career built on doing things his own way, Prince has once again broken the mold with his upcoming residency at London's O2 Arena. For his first arena shows in the UK in over a decade, the purple one has scheduled a record breaking 21 nights in London, with the first 15 at the O2 selling out in less than a day.

Tickets for the first seven shows in the 20,000-capacity O2 Arena went on sale on the morning of May 11 and, according to Sarah Aspinall, spokesperson for Prince's English PR firm, the Outside Organisation, they sold out in 20 minutes. Another eight shows were put on sale soon after and sold out by the end of the day. Aspinall said it has not yet been announced where or when the remaining six shows will take place. "The response has been phenomenal," Aspinall said.

Asked why the shows seemed to be such a hot ticket, Aspinall said, "He hasn't played an arena show here in over 10 years ... and it's Prince performing his hits for the last time ever." And, unlike another hugely hyped London show by a reclusive American star, Barbra Streisand – who made jaws drop with top ticket prices over \$1,100 – Prince has purposely kept prices for his shows very low.

In a typical move for the artist known for keeping things symbolic, Prince set the ticket prices for the show at £31.21 (just over \$60 US), a reference to his 2006 album, "3121." Each ticket will come with a copy of Prince's new album, which is believed to be titled "Earth." The scheme is similar to the one Prince pioneered in 2004, when he bundled his "Musicology" album with ticket sales, giving him one of his best-charting albums in more than a decade. Prince recently ended a Las Vegas residency at a signature club set up for him at the Rio hotel that also bore the "3121" name. Aspinall said the London shows were meant to be affordable, with additionally low surcharges (£3.50, plus £2.50 postage and packing per order), so as to appeal to as many fans as possible.

The gigs have sold so quickly they've broken arena sales records set by the iconic English rock act Pink Floyd, which previously held the record with 14 nights in one

arena. In a statement, Rob Hallett of promoter AEG Live said, "Prince is one of the greatest live acts of all time so we anticipated a big reaction and we weren't disappointed. The fact the ticket price is so reasonable and also included a copy of Prince's new album made this an un-missable opportunity for music fans and is perhaps a message to the entire industry."

Extra ticket agents were brought on to deal with the rush demand for tickets, which, at one point, were selling at a rate of 1,000 per minute, according to AEG. In addition to newspaper and other media advertising in the weeks leading up to the on-sale date, a secret performance by Prince at the small club Koko's in Camden on May 12 continued building buzz for the residency.

The O2 shows, played center stage in the round, will kick off on Aug. 1 and include dates on Aug. 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 28 and 31, as well as Sept. 1, 9, 12 and 13. Prince has promised that the shows – during which Outside said he will play his biggest hits for the final time – will feature a number of special guests and different set lists nightly.

Speaking at a press conference announcing the gigs last week, Prince said, "Last time I was here, a lot of people didn't get to see me, so we're trying to make it affordable for everybody ... We play so many different styles of music, it's really hard to get a full dose of what we do unless you come to several shows. I also have a wide fan base that comes to multiple shows all the time." — Gil Kaufman

*Interviewed for this story: Sarah Aspinall, (44) 20-7436- 3633; Lucy Ellison, (44) 20-7536-1625*



## MARKETING

### LIVE EARTH PARTNERS WITH TICKETING RIVALS FOR U.S. SHOWS

Can global warming bring two ticketing foes together?

Live Earth has announced partnerships with both Ticketmaster and eBay for its upcoming July 7 concert, scheduled to take place simultaneously in nine countries around the world to raise awareness about global climate change. Organized by former Vice President Al Gore and Live 8 promoter Kevin Wall, the giant concert features acts like Bon Jovi, Madonna, the Police, Melissa Etheridge, Roger Waters, Sheryl Crow and the Smashing Pumpkins and is hoping to attract millions of viewers through its web simulcast.

For its U.S. show at the Meadowlands in East Rutherford, N.J., Live Earth has contracted with Ticketmaster to provide primary ticketing, while eBay will be the official

secondary ticketing provider.

Live Earth spokesperson Yusef Robb said the concert opted to go with eBay because it's "the major player in online auction sites," he said, adding "partnering with eBay will allow us to benefit from as many resellers as possible because eBay is the place where we believe the most reselling of tickets will take place."

Under the deal, ticket-holders will be allowed to resell their tickets using eBay's Giving Works program and be required to donate a minimum of 20 percent of the final sale price to Gore's Alliance for Climate Protection. Last year eBay donated over \$20 million to charities.

Anyone selling tickets for the U.S. or London concerts on eBay will be required to donate a portion of their sale, said eBay spokesperson Nichola Sharpe, adding that eBay officials will be monitoring all Live Earth transactions to make sure sellers follow the rules.

"Any listing that isn't within our guidelines will be removed," Sharpe said. "When dealing with online auctions, we have a lot of rules and regulations and this is one more guideline people will have to follow."

The deal snubs Ticketmaster's own secondary site TicketExchange, and sets up a strange relationship between Ticketmaster and eBay, who are currently locked in a lawsuit over ticket sales for the upcoming Rowdy Frynds tour featuring Hank Williams Jr. and Lynyrd Skynyrd (*Venues Today* April issue).

Ticketmaster is suing eBay and its subsidiary StubHub! after promoter John Ruffino of Red Mountain Entertainment began purchasing artist hold tickets for the front row seats along the 20-city tour and reselling them on StubHub! Ticketmaster is alleging that StubHub! is violating Ticketmaster's exclusive primary ticketing contracts with 18 of the participating venues.

With each company conducting ticket sales independently of the other, it's unlikely the two will have to interact for this sponsorship to take place. eBay officials said this is the first time that their company has been the official secondary sponsor of a festival and that it was a no-brainer to require a portion of the ticket sales be donated to charity.

"Although the charity will have benefited from the original sale of the ticket, we think it makes sense to use our charity fundraising program to ensure that good causes benefit from the resale of any spare tickets on the site," said Gary Biggs, eBay's senior vice president of marketing who helped orchestrate the deal.

As of press time, eBay had about 20 sets of Live Earth tickets for sale on its website, ranging from \$75 to \$1,200 a piece. That amount is expected to climb much higher as the July 7 concert approaches.

"We knew there was no way to stop the reselling of tickets, so we thought this would be a good way to help raise some additional money for charity," Robb said.

Only tickets for the U.S. show will be sold through Ticketmaster, with both the London concert at Wembley Stadium and the U.S. concert selling secondary tickets on eBay. Both concerts are being promoted by Live Nation. The London concert, which includes headliners the Beastie Boys, will move its 60,000 available tickets through a lottery system.

Sharpe said eBay wouldn't require ticket sellers in other countries like Australia or

Japan to donate a portion of their sales to charity because those country's eBay sites didn't have charity components.

Other concerts scheduled to be part of this year's Live Earth festival include:

**Australia** — Held at Aussie Stadium, Sydney, with headlining support from Jack Johnson and Wolfmother. Producing the event will be Australian concert promoter Michael Chugg of Chugg Entertainment; Mark Pope, event producer of the ARIA Awards and Joe Segreto of IMC and founder and promoter of Sydney's annual Homebake Festival. Ticketing services will be contracted to Ticketek

**Brazil** — The Copacobana Beach, Rio de Janeiro, event will be the only free concert during Live Earth. Organizers are expecting over 1 million people to attend with performers by Gilberto Gil, Lenny Kravitz and Jennifer Lopez.

**China**— The concert will be held in Shanghai at a yet to be determined location.

**Germany** — The AOL Arena, Hamburg, show will feature Shakira, Pink, Paul McCartney and Katie Melua.

**Japan** — To be held at the Tokyo Dome.

**South Africa** — Held at the Cradle of Humankind, Johannesburg.

**Turkey** — The concert will be held in Istanbul in a yet-to-be-determined venue and promoted by regional promoter Purple Concerts. — Dave Brooks

*Interviewed for this story: Yusef Robb, (310) 550-3888; Nicola Sharpe, (408) 376-8717; Gary Biggs, (408) 376-7458*

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In **June**, we are once again focusing on **Concessions**. It's a great time to tout your skills and share your news. This issue is going everywhere: EAMC in Dallas, ALSD in Phoenix, and the joint IAAM/NAC convention in Salt Lake.

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## CONCESSIONS



### NOYES TO BE HONORED BY NAC; TEENS AND REVENUE-GENERATING DESIGNS ON THE AGENDA

This just in: Phil Noyes, Proof of the Pudding, will receive the National Association of Concessionaires (NAC) Mickey Warner Award for professional accomplishments and service to the industry during the NAC's 2007 convention in Salt Lake City. Once again, the NAC will meet in conjunction with the International Association of Assembly Managers, starting one day later, July 21, and going through July 24.

Highlights will include the second annual joint meeting open to attendees of both conventions, said Chris Bigelow, The Bigelow Companies, who received the Mickey Warner Award last year and who will moderate the joint meeting panel titled "Food Service Design and Renovation." It will be held at 3:30 p.m. Monday at the Salt Palace Convention Center, where most IAAM functions take place.

Last year, the joint meeting was standing room only, said Susan Cross, NAC director of communications. One of the most popular aspects of the gathering was the question and answer session which could have gone on much longer, she said, so this year, they decided to pre-load questions with the enticement of free advice. IAAM and NAC members are being invited to send in questions, complete with photos and details, relating to specific food issues at venues and the panelists will address those problems, she said.

The panelists include Bob Shimmin, vice president of food and beverage, Cinemark, who has considerable international experience; Sal Ferrulo, senior vice president, Boston Culinary Group, who will talk about the massive renovation of Dolphins Stadium, Miami, which will have the biggest concourses in the National Football League when work is complete, all the better for food service; Jeffrey Schult, Schult Industries, whose specialty is signage; and Tracy Taraski, manager, design services for Bigelow Companies, who comes armed with the nuts and bolts. There will also be an architect, to be determined, on the panel, Cross said.

Another new and likely hot topic will be how to deal with a teenage work force. Ken Whiting, Whittings Foods, who handles concessions at the Santa Cruz (Calif.) Beach Boardwalk and at various fairs and festivals, said adjusting to today's teens is different. "They are a product of the information age; they've got to have it now; it's a 24-7 world," he said. Speed is everything and employers must recognize that and create an environment that keeps things fresh. "Give them new things to do," Whiting said. They have accessed more information than any generation prior and they need to be given more responsibility, he said.

Communicating with today's teen is best done visually. They are not inclined to sit through lectures. Sit them in front of a computer screen or video monitor for training, he suggested.

This shift in attitude has been going on for some time, but it is now happening at an exponential rate, Whiting said. Today's 20- and 30-year-olds knew life a little bit without e-mail, cellphones and texting in their teenage days, but teens today never knew anything else. "They live in a branded franchise world, and they communicate in the same kind of way," he said.

Besides those two sessions, Cross predicted the venue breakouts would again draw the big crowds. At the beginning and again at the end of the convention, attendees break into interest groups. Stadium, arena and convention centers food directors will be one group; movie industry pros another. Depending on registration, there may also be a zoos and amusement parks breakout. "People tell me the best ideas come from these break outs. They are consistently the highest rated," she said, noting it is partly because there is no competitiveness, just sharing of useful information.

The NAC has 500 member companies. The convention traditionally draws about 200 attendees. To encourage more venue participation this year, NAC is offering a first-timer discount, half price, for venue food directors signed up by their IAAM-registered boss. The offer is good only for first timers and only if they accompany a fully-registered IAAM member. Cross said the promotional materials just went out and there has been some interest.

The NAC convention headquarters hotel will be the Sheraton City Center. Social events will include a rodeo, Days of 47, at the Energy Solutions Center Tuesday night and an opening night party sponsored by Anheuser-Busch at the hotel. — Linda Deckard



Interviewed for this story: Susan Cross, (312) 236-3858; Chris Bigelow, (816) 483-5553; Ken Whiting, (831) 423-1890



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## SHORT TAKES

### LAS VEGAS MOVING AHEAD ON \$890 MIL CONVENTION CENTER RE-DO

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) Board of Directors has approved plans for the proposed \$890-million Enhancement Program for the Las Vegas Convention Center; a full-facility makeover for the 50-year-old venue. The majority of the work is set to be complete by the end of 2010. The facility will be adding a Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Substation and a Clark County Fire Station, becoming the only facility in the country with these on-site amenities. Both units will feature state-of-the-art equipment and personnel focused on homeland security. The LVCVA will finance \$822 million in debt securities and provide the remaining \$68 million from capital funds.

Contact: Vince Alberta (702) 892-7663

### FACES: PROMOTIONS APLENTY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

**Anne Ewers**, who has been president and CEO of the Utah Symphony & Opera since 2002, will take over as president and CEO of **Kimmel Center**, Philadelphia, on July 9. Ewers replaces Janice Price and ends a 10-month search. Natalye Paquin, executive vice president and CEO, has served as interim president. **Curtis Webb** has been named general manager of the **South Okanagan Event Centre**, Penticton, B.C., for Global Spectrum. He had been director of operations at the Budweiser Events Center, Loveland, Colo., for the private management firm. The complex includes Memorial Arena and the Penticton Trade & Convention Centre. He starts there May 22. **Joe Mazur** and **Sandie Aaron** have been promoted to regional vice presidents for **SMG**. Mazur is currently an SMG senior general manager residing at the Wolstein Center at Cleveland State University in Cleveland. Aaron is a regional manager for SMG facilities in Pensacola, Fla., Saginaw, Mich., Pikesville, Ky. and Evansville, Ind.

Contacts: Natalye Paquin, (215) 790-5815; Ike Richman for Global Spectrum, (215) 389-9552; Alison Rock for SMG, (215) 592-6619

### KFEC KENTUCKY DERBY WINNERS ABOUND

The 23rd annual Kentucky Derby Bet promotion spearheaded by Deborah Burda, for Freedom Hall at the Kentucky Fair & Expo Center, Louisville, generated goodwill and plenty of publicity once again. Bets are limited to people in the industry who do business with KFEC. The fair places \$2-to-win bets for its business associates, heralding the event with a basket of goodies delivered just days before the race. Winners this year, all betting on Street Sense, included Burda, as well as Brad Garrett, Police Productions, St. Louis; Danny Zelisko, Live Nation, Phoenix; Andrea King, Beaver Productions, New Orleans; Annie O'Toole, Live 360, Indianapolis; John Porco, World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), Stamford, Conn.; and T.V. Director Steven DePaul, who once promoted Farm Aid at the fairgrounds. Street Sense paid \$10.80.

Contact: Deb Burda, (502) 367-5173

### EVERGREEN STATE FAIR ANNOUNCES CONCERT LINE-UP

Tickets go on sale May 25 for the Evergreen State Fair, Everett, Wash., grandstand shows. The lineup includes: Spirit 105.3 Presents Jeremy Camp, Aug. 26, priced \$28 and \$15; 100.7 The Wolf Presents Josh Gracin and Joe Nichols, Aug. 27, \$28 and \$23; Jesse McCartney, Aug. 28, \$18 and \$13; John Kay & Steppenwolf, Aug. 29, \$23 and \$18; and Keith Anderson and Josh Turner, Aug. 30, \$28 and \$23. Other paid shows include Monster Trucks and Freestyle Motocross, Aug. 23-24, \$20 adults, \$10-\$15 ages 2-15. Tickets purchased at the fairgrounds do not include service charges. Tickets are also available through Ticketmaster. Advance sales include admission to the fair.

Contact: Elizabeth Grant, (360) 805-6709



**June** is Family Show month at *Venues Today*. Whether you want to show off your family show package or thank one for an awesome run, get your message to the right people by advertising in our annual **Focus on Family Shows** issue in **June**. That issue will also contain our **Focus on Concessions**, with bonus distribution everywhere: EAMC Conference in Dallas, Association of Luxury Suite Directors in Phoenix, and the joint IAAM/NAC convention in Salt Lake City.

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To update your Fair or Festival Listing for the Resource Guide, contact:

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