

THE NEWS BEHIND THE HEADLINES : SPORTS : MUSIC : FAMILY SHOWS : CONVENTIONS : FAIRS

Venues TODAY

Dear April,

November 26, 2007 VOL. VI, Number XXXVII ISSN 1547-4143

Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Due to a technical error, we are late this week. We beg your indulgence. Our next e-newsletter will be Dec. 5. Look for our monthly magazine about that same time. Congratulations to the 2007 Venues Today Hall of Headlines winners: Wes Westley, Brad Parsons and Bruce Mactaggart, Larry Wilson and Ken Young. For more on their accomplishments or to congratulate all our nominees, look for our December 2007 magazine. For further information or to subscribe to *Venues Today* visit www.venuestoday.com.

AND...we hope you had a...



HAPPY THANKSGIVING

and are on track for a great New Year,
from the staff at *Venues Today*!!

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"There are plenty of artists out there and they're touring, not staying home. Nothing will ever take the place of live entertainment." — *Wilson Howard of Live Nation during a promoters panel at the International Conference of Sport and Entertainment Business at the University of South Carolina in Columbia.*

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Cirque De Soleil Announces Permanent Residency in Tinseltown
 - Finding a Niche Can Save a Small-Market Venue
 - Industry Scratches Head Over Celine's Early On-Sale
 - Paid Shows, Visitors' Center, Wedded Bliss Help The Big E
 - Hot Tickets: Springsteen Shows Detroit Who's The Boss
 - Major Promoters Diagnose Concert Biz As Healthy
 - Grassroots Marketing Is Back, Only It's Internet Based
 - 'Tis The Season To Appreciate The Staff: A Santa Sampling
 - Short Takes
 - Help Wanted
-

VENUE NEWS



Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa poses with one of the performers from Cirque de Soleil during a press conference at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood. (VT Photo)

CIRQUE DE SOLEIL ANNOUNCES PERMANENT RESIDENCY IN TINSELTOWN

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Cirque de Soleil is launching a permanent show at the Kodak Theatre on the famed Hollywood Blvd., home to the Hollywood Walk of Stars and the destination point for millions of visitors each year.

Just blocks from Hollywood icons like the Graumann's Chinese Theatre, the El Capitan Entertainment Center and the Capitol Records building, officials from Cirque de Soleil announced plans for a \$100 million renovation of the Kodak Theatre to make way for the 2010 launch of a permanent Cirque de Soleil show scheduled to run for 10 years.

When asked if he could reveal any details of the product, Cirque founder Guy Laliberte exclaimed "absolutely not," but did say the show would focus on the history of Hollywood cinema. The content will be developed at Cirque's headquarters in Montreal, Quebec, and will be directed by Frenchman Philippe Decoufle, who staged the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, France. Ticket prices would average \$80 to \$90, he said.

The agreement comes at a time when the 3,400-seat, \$94 million Kodak, designed by architect David Rockwell, is struggling to book successful shows and is facing increased competition from the newly opened Nokia Theatre L.A. Live downtown.

The Kodak Theatre is also home to the Academy Awards, held every year in February. Laliberte said Cirque will take a month-and-a-half off near Oscar time so staff can prepare for the massive awards show.

Shaul Kuba, founder and principal of the Kodak's owner, CIM Group, said a Cirque show is the company's chance for a permanent entertainment presence among growing competition. "L.A. theaters are all competing for the same product," Kuba said. "The downtown theaters, the Pantages, the theaters in Beverly Hills are competing for the same market of touring shows. So from our perspective, we had to do something unique." CIM owns 12 properties in Hollywood and is helping to usher in a period of redevelopment along the entertainment corridor.

Laliberte said the facility would undergo some renovations to prepare for Cirque, although it would not be making any structural changes.

"The building is already at the height and scale we need for Cirque," he said. He plans to reduce the seating capacity from 3,400 feet to 2,500 for most shows, he explained. The production will have a cast of 75 artists and will host 368 shows per year.

"I can't think of a better place to have a circus than on Hollywood Blvd., where every night is a circus," joked Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who also spoke at the ceremony.

Cirque de Soleil got its start as an international touring force in Los Angeles. The Canadian troupe launched their first American show during the LA Film Festival in 1987.

"At the time we were broke. We literally had no money to put gas in our truck to go back home if we failed. We knew we either lived or died in L.A.," Laliberte said.

Since the first performance, Cirque de Soleil has transformed into an international touring force with nine shows that hit Los Angeles in the past two decades. Cirque currently hosts seven permanent shows: O at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, Mystere at Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas, Zumanity at the New York, New York Hotel in Las Vegas, La Nouba at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Ka at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, Love at the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas, and Wintuk at the Theatre at Madison Square Garden in New York. Cirque has six touring shows: Varekai in the Asia-Pacific region, Dralion in Europe and Japan, Quidam in Asia-Pacific, Alegria in Europe, Corteo in North America and KOOZA in North America. The troupe is also touring two arena shows — Delirium and Saltimbanco.

Next year, Cirque will open a magic show in Las Vegas and permanent shows in Tokyo and Macao. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Guy Laliberte, (514) 723-7464; Shaul Kuba, (323) 817-0220

From left, Ron Spencer, Robyn Schon, Joe Tsao, and moderator Dr. Robin Ammon Jr., Department of Sport Management, Slippery Rock University.



FINDING A NICHE CAN SAVE A SMALL-MARKET VENUE

COLUMBIA, S.C. – So many venues have been built so close in size and proximity that it has become a survival skill to run an arena in a secondary or tertiary market. Three managers of such venues shared their secrets on how it's done during the ICSEB here at the University of South Carolina Nov. 15-17.

Joe Tsao, Hampton (Va.) Coliseum, competes with four similar-size arenas in his market, two of which are privately managed, as well as two amphitheatres and three performing arts centers. "There are more public assembly facilities in Hampton Roads than there are 7-Elevens," Tsao described the market of 1.6 million people.

He has found it is important to compete head to head, going after all the shows, but, at the same time, it's prudent to build one's own inventory by creating branded events that can't be lost to another building. The signature event for Tsao is the Hampton Jazz Festival, which is 42 years old and sells 29,000 tickets each June. They have also created an amateur boxing series and have used the parking lot for an outdoor carnival and ride-and-drive events.

He specifically hasn't tried to make a niche of minor league sports because John Rhamstine, just down the road at the Norfolk (Va.) Scope, has cornered that market and "there is no point in two arenas doing mediocre business. We chose not to have a sports franchise, but we do have an auto racing series," Tsao said.

His other emphasis is urban events, a concert genre that has not been gobbled up by the giant promoters, he added.

The final key - guest services. The fan has to be treated well or he will not be back, Tsao said.

Robyn Schon, Roanoke (Va.) Civic Center, faced the music when the John Paul Jones Arena opened in Charlottesville, Va., "our first competition." They also lost two minor league teams, hockey and basketball but, on the positive side, that opened up 62 dates, mostly weekends. Team rent versus a concert that could have netted \$100,000, that was not hard to weigh, Schon said. Add the fact that the Salem (Va.) Civic Center "does sports better than anyone else does sports," and Schon has a real challenge right now.

"We've decided we're not a sports venue. What we do really well is concerts; then the concert industry changed," she said, observing they tend to play 16,000 seats or

3,000-5,000 seats, and Roanoke is that awkward 11,000. So they bought a curtain and the half-house setup is working well.

They also found a niche in flat shows – garden, outdoor and crafts-type shows. Those generally take weekdays, leaving weekends for concerts.

The Roanoke building opened in 1971. It's 36 years old, "worn but a good, solid, well designed building," Schon said. All it needs is a facelift, and that is underway. The first improvement was the concourse. Next, they will concentrate on the backstage amenities.

Ron Spencer operates the Tallahassee (Fla.)-Leon County Civic Center in not only a crowded market, but also a crowded state. When competing for tours, he knows the 13,000-seat hall will have to take a back seat to Miami and its 4 million-person market and Tampa, 3 million, and probably Orlando. So he competes with Jacksonville, Pensacola, Ft. Myers and Gainesville for that one other date an act will play in its swing through Florida.

Like the others, Spencer finds "competition is fierce," but he's also found his "niche" is always changing. Tallahassee was the first arena to develop its own theatrical grid system, for instance. Broadway plays saved them for awhile, and it's still a viable market, though it has its own issues.

Spencer also concentrates on the fact there are two universities with 74,000 students in Tallahassee, which opens up a lot of opportunity, particularly in the urban market. "The small market manager has to be creative and forward-looking to just survive," he concluded, quoting the legendary promoter, Lon Varnell, who said he would rather have three nickels than a dime. "Develop the small shows," Spencer advised.

Like other panels at the International Conference on Sport & Entertainment Business, this one saw a sunny outlook for a new touring genre spawned by Hannah Montana. "The Cheetah Girls, Raven and the Jonas Brothers are all going out this year. That's a new industry that wasn't around two years ago," Spencer said. "That's four to six major tours." – Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Joe Tsao, (757) 896-1235; Robyn Schon, (540) 853-6861; Ron Spencer, (850) 487-1691.

Celine Dion



INDUSTRY SCRATCHES HEAD OVER CELINE'S EARLY ON-SALE

Celine Dion isn't taking any chances on her upcoming "Taking Chances" tour, promoted by AEG.

The super diva is selling tickets to her 45-city tour far in advance—in some cases over a year ahead of the performance date. The move has caused confusion in box offices over the early on-sale.

The tour hits 45 arenas from August 2008 to January 2009, and prices range from

\$55 to \$900. So far, Dion has announced that she has sold out shows in major markets, including four Toronto concerts which sold out in 32 minutes, according to her website. This is Celine's first tour after wrapping up a five-year residence at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

"The on-sale of her upcoming tour is set to coincide with the release of her new album," said her husband and manager Rene Angelil. "Over the next year, we're going to be actively promoting both the album and her 45-city tour."

The sale also coincides with her recent appearance on Oprah and her final 13 shows in Las Vegas.

While major market shows are selling well, smaller market venues said they haven't seen brisk on-sales and in some cases worry that the show is creating too much confusion for ticket buyers.

Dave Olsen of the RBC Center in Raleigh, N.C., said the venue's Jan. 20, 2009, show went on sale on Monday.

"I think we did okay. I wasn't overly optimistic because it's so far out, but we're on track to do fine," he said.

Jeffrey Mann of the Jobing.com Arena in Glendale, Ariz., said there was more anticipation than confusion about the arena's Dec. 6 show, which also went on sale on Monday.

"There's so much excitement around this concert that I don't think an early on sale date will really stop ticket sales," which he said were doing quite well. "Could this be a trend for other big ticket tours? Possibly. It definitely creates a larger window to move tickets when you go on sale a year out."

Olsen said some fans have called to order tickets, thinking the concert was scheduled for January 2008. Others said they were nervous about buying tickets so far in advance because they didn't know what their schedule looked like.

"We had one woman in her 60's standing at our box office," he said. "She joked with the ticket person that she didn't know if she was still going to be alive by the time Celine came to town. I think that's a sign that it's really hard to put your arms around a date that is so far out."

There's also concern that Celine fans will accidentally show up at the wrong concert.

"We have a concert by Barry Manilow scheduled for that same date in 2008 and I know people are going to show up with Celine tickets," Olsen said,

"As an industry, none of us have gone with a show this far out. She's done well in some markets, but in other markets, it's just chugging along. It's not making the splash they were hoping for in the B-markets," Olsen continued. "When people buy tickets for events, there's an inherent anticipation about getting excited for the event. To me, it would be an emotional roller coaster. You spend the money to buy the tickets, only to have to wait 14 months for the concert."

Ticketmaster spokesperson Bonnie Poindexter said she wasn't aware of any plans to issue refunds to ticket-holders who were confused about the dates of their tickets. Generally, refunds are only issued for concert cancellations.

Ticket broker Harris Rosner of VIP tickets said he can't predict the effect the early on-sale will have on the resale of tickets. While the long lead-time generally gives brokers a longer window to sell tickets, it also means more fluctuations as the concert approaches.

"Having more time just gives you more variables to deal with," he said, later adding, "we generally try to sell tickets as soon as we get them."

Rosner said his Las Vegas office has sold over 700 tickets to Celine Dion concerts at Caesar's Palace.

Interviewed for this story: Rene Angelil, (450) 978-9555; Dave Olsen, (919) 861-6173; Jeffrey Mann, (623) 930-430; Bonnie Poindexter, (310) 360-2321; Harris Rosner, (818) 907-1548



Big E CEO Wayne McCary accepting salute of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; mascot Biggie and young friend; inside Commerford's Petting Zoo

PAID SHOWS, VISITORS' CENTER, WEDDED BLISS HELP THE BIG E

Near-perfect weather helped account not only for a 10 percent increase over last year's attendance at the Eastern States Exposition, but also the second highest attendance ever at the West Springfield, Mass.-based fair.

Attendance was 1,227,889 at the Sept. 14–30 fair, compared with last year's 1,116,353, said Noreen Tassinari, director of marketing. The all-time record was set in 1998 with 1,254,523, 2 percent higher than this year's figure.

"We had beautiful summer-like days and clear, crisp autumn days with a clear blue sky," Tassinari said. "We had good weather on key days, which are our six weekend days."

Both Tassinari and president and CEO Wayne McCary also noted the success of several promotions, including a \$5 after 5 p.m. admission fee Mondays through Thursdays; the wedding on the midway; the second year of mixing in a few larger, ticketed concerts with previously all free shows; and a Visitors' Center that serves as a helpful resting point for the numerous bus groups the fair has worked to attract.

"The \$5 after 5 promotion has dramatically increased our weekday attendance in the last two years," McCary said.

McCary does not release budget figures, but he did reveal that gate revenues were up 10 percent over last year, and that the Los Angeles-based North American Midway Entertainment carnival was up 23 percent this year. Last year, NAME was up 20 percent over 2005.

"We think they are doing an outstanding job," McCary said. "In two years, the grosses have increased over 40 percent."

NAME placed about 50 rides on the midway, Tassinari noted. A good midway is especially important at the Big E, McCary said, as Six Flags New England, also located in Springfield, is so close. "It's crucial for us to have a midway that makes a significant impact," he said.

The carnival held the "Marriage on the Midway" for the third year in a row, Tassinari said, and the event draws a lot of media attention to the fair as well as people to the grounds.

Planning begins prior to the fair with the selection of the bride and groom. "Then we have 10 days to plan their wedding," Tassinari said. NAME provides food and ride bracelets for the wedding party and 100 guests, said Tassinari. The couple also receives a dress allowance and the fair provides a justice of the peace to perform the ceremony. "We work with a radio station for the band, the honeymoon and the wedding night stay," Tassinari said. Special touches include a dove release and, in honor of the Big E's signature treat, a cream puff wedding cake.

Last year, the bride arrived at the ceremony in the R.W. Commerford & Sons Traveling Petting Zoo's pumpkin carriage, but this year, the only rain during the fair occurred just before the ceremony, so the bride had to "settle" for a Rolls-Royce instead. The couple came from lower Connecticut, Tassinari said, which worked well with the fair's plans to draw people from a wider area to the fair.

In entertainment, former "American Idol" contestant Daughtry sold out the 6,100-seat Comcast Arena Stage, Tassinari said, in one of the three ticketed concerts. Ticket prices for that concert were \$38. Tickets for Montgomery Gentry and Trace Adkins cost \$30 and they sold out about three-fourths of the house, Tassinari said.

All of the Big E's concerts had been free for several years until last year, when a ticketed Brad Paisley show was thrown into the mix in an effort to step up offerings for the fairgoers. "Because of the rising cost of talent, there were so many acts that were beyond our reach for a free show," Tassinari said.

The new mix of free and paid shows has been successful, she said. "We are absolutely pleased. We're finding that the biggest fans of the particular talent are enthusiastic because they have a ticket ahead of time and a reserved seat, so they avoid the waiting involved in a free show and having to get there early to get a good seat."

Without charging for the concert, McCary said, the fair could not book acts with guarantees ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000. The goal is to break even as opposed to make a profit. "If there are opportunities to present concerts that we think will be attractive to the visitors, we may add to the equation and charge accordingly," McCary said.

Acts that played at free shows included Joan Jett, Brooke Hogan, Josh Turner and Taylor Hicks, Tassinari said. They mostly played to full houses.

Gate admission remained the same as last year – \$12 on weekdays and \$15 on

weekends, Tassinari said. Advance tickets cost \$10 for all days, so that was even a better deal on weekends. An advance value pack for \$34.95 for adults and \$22.95 for children provided admission for all 17 days of the fair. During the fair, those prices rose to \$39.95 and \$29.95.

Pay-one-price carnival wristbands cost \$25 Monday through Thursday, and coupons were used during the weekends.

Last year's event was the first fair after the completion of a \$4 million, 19,000-square foot Visitors' Center featuring shower facilities and a 75-foot-tall clock tower. Its value continued with more growth this year in fairgoers who came a longer distance.

The fair draws large bus groups and periodically sends representatives not only out into the region to New England, New Brunswick, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, but also to American Bus Association meetings in an effort to draw more people who come to the fair by bus.

"That's part of our strategic plan to grow," McCary said. "That piece of business is fixed. It's almost an insurance policy. Those folks that make that commitment are coming, regardless of the weather."

Next year's dates are Sept. 12–28. – Mary Wade Burnside

Interviewed for this story: Noreen Tassinari and Wayne McCary, (413) 737-2443.



Advertise in our Spotlight on Vegas!

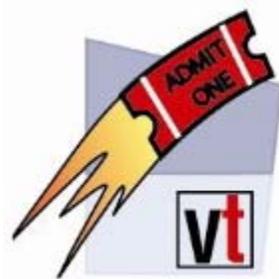
In February '08 we will publish our first **Spotlight on Las Vegas**. How do you stand

out in that world saturated with venues, acts, attractions, events and money?
 ADVERTISE in *Venues Today*! That will also be our annual **Spotlight on university venues** and our annual **Focus on performing arts centers**.

Reserve space by **January 18th** by contacting...

Eastern U.S. * **Sue Nichols** * (615) 662-0252 * sue@venuestoday.com
 Texas * **Pauline Davis** * (615) 243-7883 * pauline@venuestoday.com
 Mid & Western U.S. & International * **Rich DiGiacomo** * (310) 429-3678 *
rich@venuestoday.com
[Click here to visit our website](#)

BOOKINGS



HOTtickets

SPRINGSTEEN SHOWS DETROIT WHO'S THE BOSS

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. 30, 2007. 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:* \$6,255,510; *Event:* Justin Timberlake; *Venue:* **AcerArena, Sydney, Australia**; *Attendance:* 58,788; *Ticket Range:* \$497.31-\$88.06; *Promoter:* Frontier Touring Company; *Dates:* Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 13; *No. of Shows:* 3
- 2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,466,109; *Event:* Van Halen; *Venue:* **TD Banknorth Garden, Boston**; *Attendance:* 14,261; *Ticket Range:* \$149.50-\$49.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Oct. 30; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,246,480; *Event:* Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band; *Venue:* **The Palace Of Auburn Hills (Mich.)**; *Attendance:* 14,559; *Ticket Range:* \$91.50-\$457.50; *Promoter:* Palace Sports & Entertainment, Live Nation; *Dates:* Nov. 5; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 4) *Gross Sales:* \$980,168; *Event:* Stevie Wonder; *Venue:* **Verizon Center, Washington**; *Attendance:* 10,621; *Ticket Range:* \$128-\$68; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Oct. 30; *No. of Shows:* 1
- 5) *Gross Sales:* \$742,654; *Event:* Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus; *Venue:* **Rose Quarter, Portland, Ore.**; *Attendance:* 14,876; *Ticket Range:* \$55.50-\$26; *Promoter:* AEG Live; *Dates:* Oct. 30; *No. of Shows:* 1

10,001-15,000 Seats

- 1) *Gross Sales:* \$709,438; *Event:* The Killers; *Venue:* **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; *Attendance:* 9,671; *Ticket Range:* \$76.41; *Promoter:* The

Frontier Touring Company; *Dates:* Nov. 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$623,356; *Event:* Trans-Siberian Orchestra - East; *Venue:* **Verizon Wireless Arena, Manchester, N.H.**; *Attendance:* 12,100; *Ticket Range:* \$56.50-\$40.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation, In-house; *Dates:* Nov. 7-8; *No. of Shows:* 2

3) *Gross Sales:* \$599,718; *Event:* Ozzy Osbourne, Rob Zombie; *Venue:* **The E Center, West Valley City, Utah**; *Attendance:* 10,299; *Ticket Range:* \$77.75-\$39.75; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Nov. 11; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$580,300; *Event:* Ozzy Osbourne, Rob Zombie; *Venue:* **MetraPark Arena, Billings, Mont.**; *Attendance:* 8,931; *Ticket Range:* \$89.75-\$49.75; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Nov. 9; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$484,168; *Event:* Keith Urban; *Venue:* **Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich.**; *Attendance:* 8,871; *Ticket Range:* \$57.50-\$37.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Nov. 2; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,001-10,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$2,542,514; *Event:* Vicente Fernandez; *Venue:* **Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal CityWalk, Universal City, Calif.**; *Attendance:* 23,625; *Ticket Range:* \$165.50-\$67.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Nov. 1-4; *No. of Shows:* 4

2) *Gross Sales:* \$556,488; *Event:* John Edward; *Venue:* **Hordern Pavilion, Sydney, Australia**; *Attendance:* 5,835; *Ticket Range:* \$115.93-\$84.18; *Promoter:* Jenus, Inc.; *Dates:* Nov. 11-12; *No. of Shows:* 2

3) *Gross Sales:* \$399,074; *Event:* Gwen Stefani; *Venue:* **Stockton (Calif.) Arena**; *Attendance:* 8,066; *Ticket Range:* \$65.75-\$35.75; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* Nov. 1; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$367,928; *Event:* Ozzy Osbourne, Rob Zombie; *Venue:* **Tyson Event Center, Sioux City, Iowa**; *Attendance:* 6,486; *Ticket Range:* \$69.75-\$49.75; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Nov. 4; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$331,562; *Event:* Ozzy Osbourne, Rob Zombie; *Venue:* **Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Arena, Rapid City, S.D.**; *Attendance:* 7,030; *Ticket Range:* \$69.75-\$49.75; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West; *Dates:* Nov. 6; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$8,931,975; *Event:* Elton John, Red Piano; *Venue:* **The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas**; *Attendance:* 52,633; *Ticket Range:* \$250-\$100; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West, In-house; *Dates:* Oct. 16-Nov. 5; *No. of Shows:* 13

2) *Gross Sales:* \$1,204,681; *Event:* "Whistle Down Wind"; *Venue:* **Sacramento (Calif.) Memorial Auditorium**; *Attendance:* 25,143; *Ticket Range:* \$65-\$15; *Promoter:* California Musical Theatre; *Dates:* Oct. 31-Nov. 11; *No. of Shows:* 16

3) *Gross Sales:* \$1,132,560; *Event:* Phil Lesh and Friends; *Venue:* **Nokia Theatre Times Square, New York**; *Attendance:* 21,000; *Ticket Range:* \$55; *Promoter:* AEG Live; *Dates:* Oct. 31-Nov. 11; *No. of Shows:* 10

4) *Gross Sales:* \$536,856; *Event:* Avenue Q; *Venue:* **Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (Iowa)**; *Attendance:* 13,033; *Ticket Range:* \$55-\$20; *Promoter:* In-house;

Dates: Nov. 13-18; *No. of Shows:* 8

5) *Gross Sales:* \$412,113; *Event:* Smashing Pumpkins; *Venue:* **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; *Attendance:* 7,472; *Ticket Range:* \$102-\$42; *Promoter:* AEG Live, The Messina Group; *Dates:* Nov. 15-16; *No. of Shows:* 2

Compiled by Rob Ocampo, HotTickets@venuestoday.com

Wilson Howard; Tom Paquette, Colonial Center, Columbia, S.C.; Allen Corbett



MAJOR PROMOTERS DIAGNOSE CONCERT BIZ AS HEALTHY

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Representing Live Nation and AEG, the two major promoters in North America in that order, Wilson Howard and Allen Corbett pooh-poohed concerns about the aging of the major acts and declared the concert business healthy.

Speaking at the International Conference of Sports and Entertainment Business, the two presented evidence of positive change and plenty of up-and-coming talent. Howard offered up the supporting

statistics, waving a stack of papers his assistants had compiled for his presentation, listing 2,000 different artists that toured this year for Live Nation.

Live Nation promoted 10,000 concerts, selling 3.5 million-plus tickets at 140 venues, he said.

But it's not business as usual. "We are totally involved with the artist's career," he said. The obvious evidence is last month's announcement that Live Nation, through its new arm, Artist Nation, has struck a deal to manage every aspect of Madonna's career. And she's not the only one with whom they have far-reaching or at least extended agreements, he said, particularly with merchandise. Live Nation has also bought Signatures Network, announced as a done deal last week (VT Oct. 24 e-newsletter).

"We produced 50 tours in North America; five to seven global/worldwide tours," Howard said. How could that be a declining business? he asked rhetorically.

AEG is a private company so Corbett was not quite so free with numbers, except for the astounding fact that AEG has grown from a staff of 40 to a staff of 5,000 in less than a decade. They promoted 22-24 national tours. "We cater to the artists; we're in it for the long-term relationship," he said.

So what if the Rolling Stones and Jimmy Buffet finally park the tour bus? "I just hope they take me with them," Howard quipped, quickly adding that Dave Matthews, John Mayer and many more, especially country acts, are still out there, filling arenas and stadiums.

"Country is thriving," Corbett added. "There's no void there." As to the age of the Rolling Stones, he pointed out that "we've had this concern for 20 years," and they're still at it. And while certainly they will retire, there are new genres coming along every

day. The Cheetah Girls and Hannah Montana are prime examples. "We've created shows that didn't exist in the past."

Howard added Cirque du Soleil to that list. And he also noted a great trend in his eyes – the revival of the club acts. "Some of our most successful venues are the smallest, the House of Blues clubs and the Fillmores and the 5,000-seat amphitheatres and tented venues. The business, in my mind, is healthy."

Buffet has even taken the game to stadiums, drawing 110,000 people, grossing \$10 million in two stadium dates last year. "He's decided he likes stadiums," Howard said.

It's true Live Nation cut back on the number of shows in its amphitheatres, but Howard put that in a positive light. "We did 22-23 shows instead of 28 last year, but they were healthier shows. There are plenty of artists out there and they're touring, not staying home. Nothing will ever take the place of live entertainment."

Another positive trend is the inclination of big-name artists like Kenny Chesney and Buffet to mix it up, playing stadiums, arenas and clubs. Some even play mostly alternative venues. "Jack Johnson will tour as green as you go, parks and even oceans," Howard said.

The other age-old death knell cited for the touring industry is ticket prices, and again the majors mocked the thought. Widespread Panic was ticketed \$35, that's reasonable, Howard pointed out. On the other hand, the Police were pricey, but they had 18 trucks and 120 people on the road; they had to pay the bills.

It's just that "reasonable" has to be redefined today; it's \$25-\$40, not \$10, he said.

The usual argument that tickets must be worth more, look at what scalpers are getting, did not surface on the panel, but rather from the floor. Howard concurred that scalpers are a serious problem "but they won't go out of business unless the consumer quits supporting them."

The other perennial concern, less dates per tour, is also a new fact of life. Any given tour used to play six to seven dates in the Carolinas, now it's two or three, Howard said. It's simple budgeting; they can't afford 6,000-seaters when they have a big production and the productions are bigger. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Allen Corbett, (803) 699-8181; Wilson Howard, (803) 782-6239



The 2008 Fairs & Festivals Resource Guide is underway

This is our third edition of the Fairs & Festivals Resource Guide and it will be better than ever. Every edition has the most updated information possible and bonus features include such perennial favorites as the Top 50 Fairs in North America, a chart of equestrian center and fairground improvements under construction (all printed in the *Venues Today* magazine) and our unique Talking Points - which illuminates what makes movers and shakers in the industry tick.

New in the 2008 edition (as supplied to Venues Today):

- **Multiple contacts listed - such as General Manager, Director of Marketing and Talent Buyer
- **Carnival Company used by Fair or Festival
- **Concessionaire
- **Listing of major Booking Agents
- **Listing of major Carnivals

Don't miss your chance to be included in this comprehensive guide. **Advertise Today!**

Reserve space by 1/15/08 by contacting:

Eastern U.S. * **Sue Nichols** * (615) 662-0252 * sue@venuestoday.com
 Texas * **Pauline Davis** * (615) 243-7883 * pauline@venuestoday.com
 Mid & Western U.S. & International * **Rich DiGiacomo** * (310) 429-3678 * rich@venuestoday.com

[Click here to visit our website](#)

MARKETING

Jeff Meyer, Andrai Halloman; Dr. Samuel Todd, Kim Shiver



GRASSROOTS MARKETING IS BACK,

ONLY IT'S INTERNET BASED

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Mining and scrubbing databases, grassroots approaches and flexibility were buzzwords in marketing today's shows, according to a panel of experts at the International Conference on Sport and Entertainment Business put on here by the University of South Carolina Nov. 15-17.

The topic was "Changes and Trends in Entertainment Marketing." Panelists were Jeff Meyer, senior vice president, event sales and marketing, Feld Entertainment; Kim Shiver, vice president, marketing, Live Nation Carolinas/Virginia; Audrai Halloman, Township Auditorium, Columbia, S.C. and Dr. Samuel Todd, assistant professor, Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Family Consumer Sciences, Georgia Southern University.

As a family show producer, Feld is marketing "shows for the masses, not the classes," but that doesn't mean they don't have to target and prioritize, Meyer said. They have determined the target for the circus and ice shows is moms with kids aged 2-10. Then they have to tailor outreach to working moms versus stay-at-home moms.

The answer of late has turned out to be place-based media, Meyer said, meaning they take the message to the grocery stores, the schools, the soccer field, wherever the moms may be. "As a company, we have shifted dramatically in how we reach our consumer," Meyer said.

One example of that trend is Tide detergent. The manufacturer's decision to "be where the dirt is" meant non-traditional advertising, Meyer said. Hence, Tide napkins appeared at Pizza Hut, "the right message at the right time."

That's not to say Feld doesn't still use traditional media. They still buy radio, "but at certain times of day, when she will be listening," he said of the target mom. The same is true with TV.

And cell phones are starting to surface as a viable outreach for Feld for some shows. "We're text messaging in Auburn Hills with the circus this week," Meyer said of the Ringling date at the Palace of Auburn Hills (Mich.).

Adding Internet has been the biggest change for Shiver. The target demographic constantly shifts for the concert promotion company, depending on the act they are marketing. That's one beauty of the Internet; they can send e-cards and e-calendars to people who have an interest in the genre. Live Nation has 400,000 e-mail addresses in North and South Carolina, she said.

She doesn't do much print advertising anymore, unless it's an older demographic, but radio continues to be a media of choice because radio is making its own grassroots outreach. "If we don't use radio, shows don't do as well," she said. Charlotte, N.C., has a strong radio station that goes out to the clubs and promotes itself.

The increased budget for on-line advertising is usually placed through ADRight, which can place ads on niche web sites, as targeted as, for example, people with tattoos and piercings who love Goth music, she said.

Live Nation also like to cross-promote with its own House of Blues and Fillmore clubs, Shiver said in answer to a question from the largely student-filled audience. That very much ties to the trend toward "a lot more grassroots marketing."

More strategic marketing helps avoid the appearance of a discounted box office, Meyer

added. The ticket price for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus is pretty much set at the right benchmark for the next few years now, Meyer said. The company wants to avoid too many discount promotions, albeit they still need to drive traffic on a Wednesday night.

But that can be done more strategically, particularly with the Internet. Feld has marketing information on in excess of five million active households, including 3.5 million active e-mail addresses, Meyer pointed out. "It's a lot of work to make sure those lists are scrubbed. The future is about the database we have," Meyer said. As to any other new media marketing, Meyer said, "We are open to anything, as long as we can measure it."

One audience member suggested flexible pricing might be a great marketing tool. Shiver responded that Live Nation does do some flex pricing already, holding back sections as the show goes on sale to decide on the correct price. The amphitheaters have been auctioning premium seats through Ticketmaster and its own in-house ticketing. It's still minimal, compared with flex pricing in industries like the airlines, but "people are getting more used to it," she said.

There is even room for some retro-advertising concepts, like mail. "It's not just one thing anymore," she said, but it is still the same basic principle - repetition. - Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Jeff Meyer, (703) 448-4000; Kim Shiver, (803) 782-6239 x 10; Audrai Halloman, (803) 576-2353

CONCESSIONS



Hosts with the most, AEG's Michael Roth and Lee Ziedman, Staples Center, Los Angeles; American Airlines Center invitation.

'TIS THE SEASON TO APPRECIATE THE STAFF: A SANTA SAMPLING

From a million-dollar dinner and show to dinner with the CEO, it is the season when venues and vendors are showing appreciation for their hard-working staff.

AEG held its holiday soiree early this year, to accommodate Rod Stewart's schedule. He was the star attraction, though Levy Restaurants also put on a good dinner. Most holiday appreciation parties are set for December, often tied with a "rest of the day off" offer.

Budgets vary from \$1,000 to \$1,000,000, but the goal is universal - appreciation. Following is a sampling of what employers are doing this holiday season:

AEG/Staples Center, Los Angeles

When: Nov. 14

What: Dinner on the concourse and/or at the Arena Club, and an hour-and-a-half concert by Rod Stewart

Attendance: 4,500

Budget: \$1,000,000

Goal: To show appreciation to the staff of Staples Center, Nokia Theatre L.A. Live and Home Depot Center, Carson, Calif., along with suite holders, founding partners, courtside seatholders (Jack Nicholson did not RSVP) and some media.

San Diego Padres/Petco Park

When: Dec. 14 at San Diego Senior Vice President Richard Andersen's home

What: Catered dinner, white elephant gifts

Attendance: 50-60 people, Petco Park management team

Budget: \$5,000

&

When: Dec. 7, Hotel del Coronado

What: Dinner and entertainment

Attendance: 150-200 people, all Padres staff, human resources, cross-departmental group

Budget: Not released

Feld Entertainment

When: October

Where: Claude Moore Park

What: Outing, picnic, prizes, games

Attendance: 450 employees, full and part time employees in the Washington, D.C. area.

Goal: This is the holiday appreciation celebration because the Feld staff is in full production-mode in December.

&

When: First Week of June 2008

Where: Ritz Carlton, Naples, Fla.

What: Meetings, games, sports and entertainment.

Attendance: 400-450 managers around the globe, all non-performers

Goal: Team building

Budget: Close to \$1 million

Tallahassee (Fla.)-Leon County Civic Center

When: December

Where: Director Ron Spencer's house

What: Santa Claus, gifts, hayrides, food and drink

Who: Staff and families. It's for the kids.

Budget: \$3,000
 &
 When: Last day before the Christmas holidays
 Where: The arena
 What: Luncheon, usually lobster
 Attendance: 40-42 on the arena staff
 Budget: \$2,000

American Airlines Center, Dallas

When: High noon to 2:30 p.m., Dec. 3 (There are only about three days off in the month of December so it's short; lunch, two hours long, then they get to go home)
 Where: Eddie Dean's Ranch
 What: Dinner, entertainment, gifts ranging from a T-shirt to \$50 American Express gift cards to roundtrips for two on American Airlines. One lucky person gets a two-week paycheck based on a \$100,000 salary.
 Attendance: 175 fulltime staff.
 Budget: \$20,000 in cash and kind

Hampton (Va.) Coliseum

When: Dec. 21
 Where: The coliseum
 What: Breakfast, with door prizes that are mostly all the gifts the venue has received, which, as a public employee, the GM can't accept. The employees love the monster trucks and baskets of goodies and they are guaranteed early release so they can go shopping. "We keep it to an hour, 9-10," said Joe Tsao, director.
 Who: 200 part-and full-time staff and invited guests like police and park department personnel
 Budget: \$2,000-\$3,000
 Why: Staff appreciation.

RBC Center, Raleigh, N.C.

When: December
 Where: The arena
 What: Awards program, dinner and drinks. The full-time staff bartends, greets, and serves the part-timers.
 Attendance: 700 part-time staff
 Budget: \$15,000
 &
 When: Dec. 12
 Where: City Limits Saloon
 Attendance: 200 full-time staff
 Budget: \$5,000
 Goal: Get together to build morale. Considered so important that these events were budgeted in even during the lockout year. – Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Lee Ziedman, (213) 742-7255; Richard Andersen, (619) 795-5060; Jeff Meyer, (703) 448-4000; Ron Spencer, (850) 487-1691; Joe Tsao, (757) 896-1235; Davin Olsen, (919) 861-6173; Brad Mayne, (214) 665-4220

SHORT TAKES

MANAGEMENT FIRMS EXPRESS INTEREST IN CHEVROLET CENTRE

Seven management firms have expressed interest in running the city-owned Chevrolet

Centre in Youngstown, Ohio, according to a report by Kyle Miasek, the city's deputy finance director. Companies that have requested information about the facility's operations and finances include SMG, Global Spectrum, International Facilities Group, Cavaliers Operating Co., Silicon Valley Sports & Entertainment, Mahoning Valley Scrappers minor league baseball team and AML Entertainment. On Oct. 31, the city parted ways with management company Global Entertainment after the facility lost \$254,388 during its second fiscal year.

Contact Kyle Miasek, (330) 742-8944

RED BULL TAKES OVER HARRISON STADIUM

Red Bull New York of Major League Soccer has gained total control of the new soccer stadium being built in Harrison, N.J., after purchasing the Anschutz Entertainment Group's 50-percent interest in the development of Red Bull Park. Terms of the deal were not disclosed by the Major League Soccer team. Red Bull New York now will oversee all aspects of construction and stadium management on the 25,000-seat stadium that has a projected completion in 2009.

Contact: Matthew Chimura, (201) 583-7000

WWE BODYSLAMS EUROPE

WWE's Survivor Series tour of Europe finished as one of the most successful in WWE history, selling out all 14 events in the United Kingdom through both its Raw and SmackDown brands and generating more than \$11 million in ticket sales revenue. More than 146,000 fans attended events in the U.K., Germany, and Belgium. WWE recently announced the on-sale of the WrestleMania Revenge Tour, which will bring 10 events to the UK this upcoming April. More than 50,000 tickets were sold during the initial on-sale.

Contact: Gary Davis, (203) 353-5066

PISTONS LAUNCH PLANS TO GIVE BACK TO SOLDIERS

The Detroit Pistons of the National Basketball Association are launching a holiday ticket program called "Seats for Soldiers," where existing ticket holders may donate their seats for the Dec. 23 Pistons vs. Rockets game to families of troops and veterans. Everyone else in the community may also pitch in by purchasing a ticket with a \$25 donation. These tickets are regularly up to \$40. The Pistons are working with Selfridge Air National Guard base to get tickets donated to military families.

Contact: Hela Sheth, (248) 375-4055

ATLANTA SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES NEW HIRES

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra announced that Clay Schell has been hired as the general manager of popular venues and presentations for Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre at Encore Park, which opens in May 2008, and Chastain Park Amphitheater in Atlanta. Additionally, Holly Clausen has been hired as the director of marketing for popular presentations at both venues as well as Jill Lovell as the director of sales for Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre at Encore Park. Schell brings 30 years of professional and managerial experience. He most recently has served as tour manager of Joe Cocker.

Contact: Charlie Wade, (404) 733-4247

HELP WANTED

For more information or to submit listings, e-mail April Parnell, Director of Marketing & Sales at: april@venuestoday.com

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE FULL EMPLOYMENT LISTINGS BELOW](#)

Burnsville (MN) Performing Arts Center /VenuWorks - Executive Director - VenuWorks, Inc., www.venuworks.com, a fast growing firm specializing in public assembly...

New Jersey Sports & Exposition Authority (IZOD & Giants Stadium) - Event Marketing Manager - The New Jersey Sports & Exposition Authority (Meadowlands Sports Complex) is seeking...

New NFL Stadium - Chief Executive Officer - Turnkey Sports & Entertainment seeks interested and qualified candidates to be the CEO...

City of Sydney (Australia) - Outdoor Event Coordinator - The City of Sydney is seeking an experienced Outdoor Event Coordinator to join the...

Telstra Stadium, Sydney, Australia - IT Business Systems Administrator - Telstra Stadium is Australia's premier sports and entertainment venue. Since opening in...

Auckland (New Zealand) Regional Council - Asset Coordinator - This is a fantastic chance to utilise your experience in asset management...

VEE Corp., Minneapolis - Promotion Manager - Serve as overall campaign manager for the presentation of VEE Corporation...

Eastern Kentucky Expo Center - Director of Finance - SMG, the leader in privately managed public assembly facilities has an...

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE FULL EMPLOYMENT LISTINGS ABOVE](#)

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, Senior Writer & Assignment Editor
(714) 378-5400, ext. 24
dave@venuestoday.com

Rob Ocampo, Hot Tickets/Top Stops Manager
(714) 378-5400, ext. 21
rob@venuestoday.com

For advertising information, contact:

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

Pauline Davis, Texas
(615) 243-7883
pauline@venuestoday.com

Rich DiGiacomo, Mid & Western U.S., International
(310) 429-3678
rich@venuestoday.com

April Parnell, Director of Marketing & Sales
(714) 378-0056
april@venuestoday.com

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

Nazarene Kahn, Resource Guides Coordinator
(714) 378-5400 ext. 25
resourceguides@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](#)

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



[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.