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Date: March 19, 2010 1:59:44 PM PDT



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VT PULSE

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION FROM VENUES TODAY

March 17, 2010 • VOL. IX, Number 9 • ISSN 1547-4143

Quote of the Week

“The negative thing about doing television is you’re going to do things that barely qualify as art at your performing arts center.”

– Jay Thomas, Kodak Theatre, Los Angeles, on the pros and cons of outfitting PAC’s for broadcasting.

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Greetings,

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SHORT TAKES

>> **SUNSET SOCIAL** – Club owners on the Sunset Strip in Hollywood, Calif. will be presenting a panel on how they used social media Thursday at the Austin (Texas) Convention Center for the South By Southwest Music Conference. The panel begins at 3 p.m. and includes Nic Adler of The Roxy and Alf Lamont of The Comedy Store. Contact: Nic Adler, (310) 617-6669

>> **KINGDOM CLOSURE** –Kentucky Kingdom at the Kentucky State Fair & Exposition Center in Louisville is closing and rides are being moved to other Six Flags Inc. theme parks. The Kentucky State Fair was one of very few fairgrounds that include an amusement park, but a lease agreement could not be reached. Contact: *Harold Workman*, (502) 367-5000

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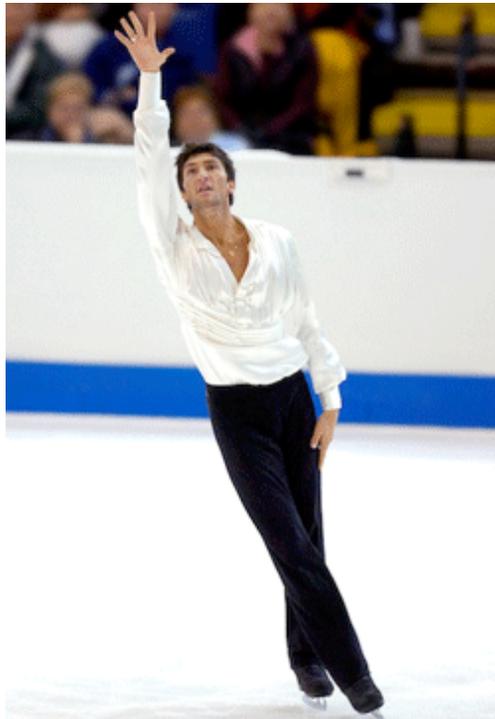
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VT NEWS

BOOKINGS

OLYMPIC MEDALISTS SPIKE STARS ON ICE TICKET SALES



Gold Medal Skater Evan Lysacek during the Winter Olympics

Following the success of North American figure skaters in the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, tickets for this year's annual Smucker's Stars On Ice tour are selling better than in years past. Several Olympians will be featured in this year's show, including American Gold Medalist Evan Lysacek, American Silver Medalists Meryl Davis & Charlie White, and Chinese Gold Medalists Shen Xue & Zhao Hongbo.

The 2010 tour, which carries the theme "The Concert," kicks off April 1 at Germain Arena, Ft. Myers, Fla., where it also rehearsing, and will visit 40 cities, ending at the Rose Garden, Portland, Ore., on May 30, 2010.

"This is the first time we've actually taken the tour out after the winter games," said tour Producer Byron Allen. The tour is usually held in the fall and winter months, but in order to accommodate the Olympians and ensure they could participate, this year's tour was scheduled to start after the conclusion of the Olympic games.

Allen said tickets are selling well and the show will definitely benefit not only from having Olympians headline the show, but also from the hype and excitement for the sport created by this year's games. North Americans performed well in figure skating, and there were also many media-grabbing stories that may have piqued the public's interest and helped boost viewership, such as that of Canadian Joannie Rochette, whose mother passed away days before she won the bronze medal in the ladies figure skating competition.

"The general public showed a tremendous interest in this year's games, especially in figure skating," Allen said. "There's definitely been an increase in ticket sales after the Olympics."

Elmer Straub, VP of Event Booking for the St. Pete Times Forum in Tampa, Fla., agreed with Allen. The arena will host an afternoon Stars On Ice Show Easter Sunday, April 4.

"We have seen a little bit of a spike, obviously after the Olympics, especially since the addition of Evan Lysacek," Straub said. During the tour, Lysacek will also be competing on ABC's "Dancing With the Stars" and will not be able to perform in all 40 cities.

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Sheila Francis, director of Public Relations for the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C. – also one of the venues where Lysacek will perform – said last year was the first year they hosted a Stars On Ice show.

“We’re actually out-pacing ticket sales from last year,” she said. “I think there was a lot of focus on figure skating after the Olympics.”

Ticket prices in most of the host venues start at \$25, with premium on-ice seats going for up to \$180 in some arenas. For each ticket sold, 50 cents goes to Boys & Girls Club literacy programs in the area where shows are played.

“We’re bringing the Olympics to the people,” Allen said. “It’s just a much more affordable ticket.”

While the U.S. Tour is taking place, Canada and Japan will also have a similar tour, with the same theme and choreography featuring different skaters. Allen said he was surprised that tickets have been selling so well in Vancouver, where the games just finished, and nearby Northern American cities like Seattle. Some shows in Canada have already sold out.

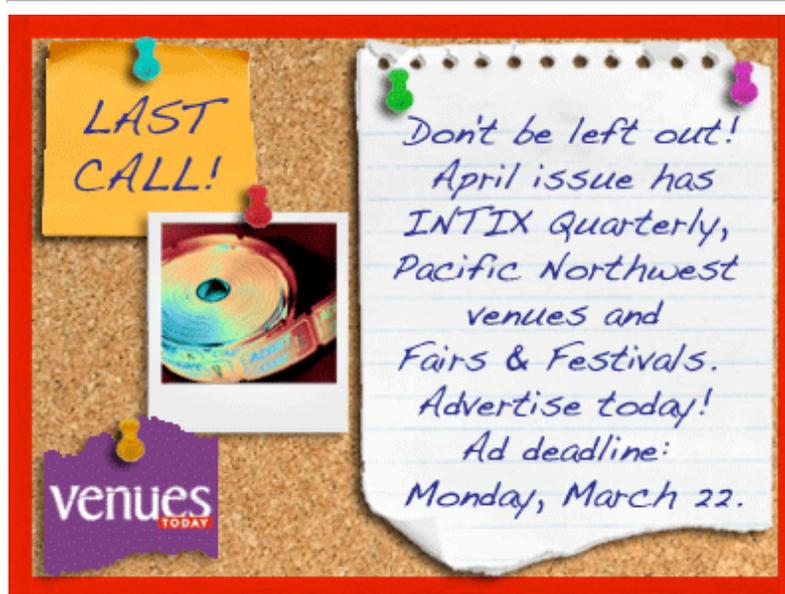
“In the Olympic year, you expect to be 50 percent or higher in ticket sales” Allen said, adding that the tour will definitely meet or exceed that this year.

Straub said that, in general, ticket sales for the annual skating show are up and down, but this year they have already sold close to 3,000. The Forum is offering an Easter-themed menu to help drive sales and attract families.

“This year, I think it’s going to be big,” he said. Between the on-ice seats and the first and second levels, arena capacity is 7,000 with the ability to increase if they open up sales for the top level seats.

The skaters are currently rehearsing in Southwest Florida for the fully choreographed family show. This year’s theme, “The Concert,” focuses heavily on a broad spectrum of popular music, featuring numbers from artists such as the Black Eyed Peas, Leona Lewis, and Dream Theater. – Lindsay Sandham

Interviewed for this article: Byron Allen, (212) 774-4590; Sheila Francis, (202) 628-3200; Elmer Straub, (813) 301-6900



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TRAVELOG

TELEVISION STILL A NUMBERS GAME FOR THEATER OPERATORS

Randy Vogel (left) of the Mesa (Ariz.) Performing Arts Center and Jay Thomas of the Kodak Theatre are broadcast into the McCaw Hall in downtown Seattle for a panel on broadcasting issues for performing arts centers.



REPORTING FROM SEATTLE – When the David H. Koch Theater in New York decided to build an in-house broadcast center to tape and televise its live content, there was little concern about the actual cost of such an endeavor.

After all, the building was about to undergo a \$100 million renovation and the critical mass needed to build a studio space to create theatrical DVDs, HD video and promotional materials seemed to finally materialize.

“We didn’t want to count on it being a commercial endeavor because it wouldn’t likely make financial sense,” said Mike Heiser, managing director of David H. Koch Theater. “We wanted to find ways to peel back the curtain and have a deeper understanding of ballet and the opera. The intent was to build more than a curtain up, curtain down video for the venue.”

The concept was simple at first, but things quickly started to get expensive.

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Heiser estimated that his facility spent \$1.5 million on design alone, and another \$3.5 million on equipment costs for things like robotically controlled HD cameras, video monitors and rail-mounted lenses. Building the broadcast studio and hard-wiring the equipment cost an additional \$6 million.

“The only thing green about media is the money you’re going to spend,” Heiser told the crowd gathered at the “Performing Arts Centers as Television’s Best Studios” panel during the Performing Arts Managers Conference in Seattle, March 6-9. “We have invested a little over \$11 million on a system that has yet to be fired up, has yet to have labor agreements totally resolved and has yet to have media rights totally resolved,” he said.

What Heiser didn’t anticipate was the difficulty he would face finding tenants and theater companies who could afford to use the recording equipment.

“If you’re going to build a broadcast center like the one at Koch Theater, identify who the users are and what their uses are,” said Television Producer Marc Bauman, who has taped dozens of programs at the Lincoln Center. “What’s the ability of the venue for these kinds of uses? What’s the affordability of the proposed system? What are maintenance costs and what are the labor costs?”

Many theaters build broadcast studios as a way to attract television producers to tape award shows or shoot movies in their facilities. While functionality is important, often the money is better spent marketing the theater to film commissions and lobbying state government to lure in production companies with tax incentives.

“Every year, we go to the Association of Film Commissioners International conference,” said Shelly Kleppsattel from the Fox Theatre in Atlanta. “We invite over location scouts and take them on top-to-bottom tours. We don’t just show them the pretty things. You never know what someone is looking for. Your furnace could be someone’s next big shot.”

Once a production has agreed to shoot on location, the next big sticking point is cost. Bauman said Radio City Music Hall in New York doesn’t charge its \$70,000 per day rate for marquee events like the Tony or BET awards.

“The cachet of the live broadcast is so important to them, and the markup they make on the stagehands is so significant, that they can amortize the rent,” said Bauman, who has helped produce both events for Radio City.

Wiring also needs to be addressed. Bauman said he often recommends facilities invest the money to pre-wire their entire facility for audio, video and telecommunications.

“This option makes sense if your venue is going to be used often for broadcast, or if it’s a large historical theater and you don’t want people running in and out 10 times per year,” he said. “There are also ways to offset the costs. The Ryman Auditorium in Nashville was looking for a pre-wire solution and partnered up with Country Music Television. They worked out a deal to wire the entire facility.”

Of course content is also a difficult issue, said Jay Thomas of the Kodak Theatre, who was broadcast into the meeting from his facility in Hollywood, Calif.

“The negative thing about doing television is you’re going to do things that barely qualify as art at your performing arts center,” he said. “We have to weigh that and ask if we’re just going for eyeballs, or are we going after the audience we need?” — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Mike Heiser, (212) 875-5288; Marc Bauman, (212) 875-5321; Shelly Kleppsattel, (404) 881-2054; Jay Thomas, (323) 308-6381



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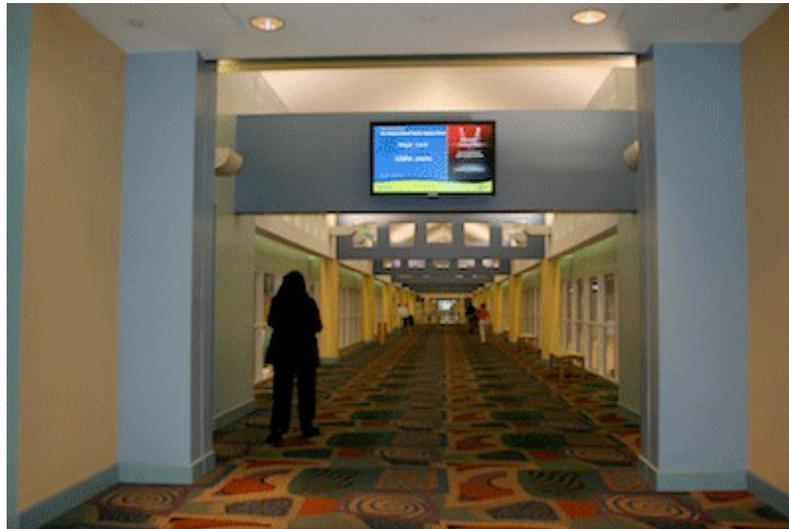
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TECHNOLOGY

MIAMI BEACH INSTALLS POPSTAR NETWORK DIGITAL SIGNAGE

Digital Signage at the Miami Beach Convention Center.



Olathe, Kan.-based digital media company Popstar Networks and Global Spectrum recently partnered in designing and installing a digital signage system for the 1.3 million-sq.-ft. Miami Beach Convention Center. The deal includes 14 Samsung 63-inch screens and three Samsung 50-inch plasma

screens. Prior to the installation, MBCC had no digital signage network. Global Spectrum's Bob Balsam, general manager of MBCC, said the convention center spent \$197,000 to purchase and install the new screens.

Global Spectrum began planning for implementation of digital signage in October of 2008 as an additional amenity for show organizers, and installed the system in August and September of 2009.

"The greatest benefits to implementing Popstar's digital signage are the ability to generate revenue for the building and our show organizers, provide show information for attendees, and host flight board arrival information directly from the Miami International Airport," said Balsam.

Popstar worked with MBCC to determine the number, layout and positioning of the screens within the center. "One of the primary reasons they chose to install was to add freshness to the environment," said Stacey Morse, senior director of sales and marketing, live events at Popstar Networks. "In the example of MBCC...when the Miami Boat Show held their event, we were able to promote information related to the event such as times of special features, the layout of the show floor, location of specific vendors, an agenda and other useful information for their attendees."

MBCC has divided its digital signage into sections: agenda and show information, which is customizable to event themes, advertising and sponsorship programs which rotate on timetables, location for concessions, and scrolling messages at the bottom of the screens which are also customizable to include information such as RSS feeds or Twitter updates. MBCC is also able to use the digital signage technology as an emergency system, to provide parking updates, or alert visitors of construction across causeways.

One of the greatest benefits that MBCC experiences from utilizing digital signage is its versatility. The center recently hosted the Society of Critical Care Medicine's Critical Care Congress. Due to economic factors, sponsorship budgets were released one by one, some not until a week before the event, but MBCC was still able to implement the ads. The SCCM invested \$1,500, and was able to make \$7,500 on ad sales, even with some sponsorships coming in at the last minute.

"It's definitely going to be a great avenue for revenue given how customizable and flexible it is with timing," said Jeff Rugg, marketing manager at MBCC.

Popstar provided guidance and training while implementing the system, including 24/7 tech support. "We were able to deploy this program somewhat effortlessly; it was a smooth transition," said Rugg. Popstar will continue to collaborate with MBCC on growing the system.—Linda Domingo

Interviewed for this article: Jeff Rugg, (786) 276-2619; Bob Balsam, (305) 673-7320; Stacey Morse, (913) 747-6321

HOTTickets

HOT TICKETS is a weekly summary of the top acts and ticket sales as reported to VT PULSE. Following are the top 20 concerts and events, the top 5 in each seating capacity category, which took place since Feb. 23.

THE EMPIRE STATE GIVES JAY-Z A WARM "WELCOME HOME!"

15,001 or More Seats

10,001-15,000 Seats

5,001-10,000 Seats

5,000 or Less Seats

1) Jay-Z

Gross Sales: \$1,362,821; Venue: **Madison Square Garden Arena, New York**; Attendance: 13,586; Ticket Range: \$668.42-\$35; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 2; No. of Shows: 1

2) Jay-Z

Gross Sales: \$1,271,352; Venue: **Verizon Center, Washington**; Attendance: 13,612; Ticket Range: \$122-\$42; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 3; No. of Shows: 1

3) Jay-Z

Gross Sales: \$1,250,739; Venue: **Philips Arena, Atlanta**; Attendance: 13,741; Ticket Range: \$129.50-\$49.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Feb. 27; No. of Shows: 1

4) Jimmy Buffet

Gross Sales: \$1,248,605; Venue: **Amway Arena, Orlando, Fla.**; Attendance: 13,013; Ticket Range: \$135-\$35; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: Feb. 25; No. of Shows: 1

5) Michael Bublé

Gross Sales: \$1,238,650; Venue: **St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Fla.**; Attendance: 14,549; Ticket Range: \$89.50-\$49.50; Promoter: Beaver Productions; Dates: March 13; No. of Shows: 1

1) The Motown Event

Gross Sales: \$639,730; Venue: **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; Attendance: 5,817; Ticket Range: \$165.27-\$17.86; Promoter: Sports & Entertainment LTD; Dates: Feb. 23; No. of Shows: 1

2) Diana Krall

Gross Sales: \$600,698; Venue: **Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre**; Attendance: 5,285; Ticket Range: \$118.83-\$19.20; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: March 3; No. of Shows: 1

3) Pixies

Gross Sales: \$539,193; Venue: **Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand**; Attendance: 10,641; Ticket Range: \$58.50; Promoter: Michael Coppel Presents; Dates: March 12; No. of Shows: 1

4) John Mayer

Gross Sales: \$466,774; Venue: **Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Mich.**; Attendance: 9,010; Ticket Range: \$66-\$46; Promoter: In-house, Live Nation; Dates: Feb. 28; No. of Shows: 1

5) Lady Gaga

Gross Sales: \$455,800; Venue: **Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand**; Attendance: 23,084; Ticket Range: \$58.30; Promoter: Michael Coppel Presents; Dates: March 13-14; No. of Shows: 2

1) Cirque du Soleil - Alegria

Gross Sales: \$1,466,680; Venue: **Dr Pepper Arena, Frisco, Texas**; Attendance: 20,236; Ticket Range: \$90-\$45; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: Feb. 24-28; No. of Shows: 9

2) Cirque du Soleil - Alegria

Gross Sales: \$708,444; Venue: **U.S. Cellular Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa**; Attendance: 11,389; Ticket Range: \$90-\$40; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: March 10-14; No. of Shows: 8

3) Black Eyed Peas

Gross Sales: \$548,675; Venue: **Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Conn.**; Attendance: 7,874; Ticket Range: \$105-\$85; Promoter: In-house, Live Nation; Dates: Feb. 27; No. of Shows: 1

4) The Prodigy

Gross Sales: \$425,738; Venue: **Hordern Pavillion, Sydney**; Attendance: 4,974; Ticket Range: \$93.22; Promoter: Future Tours; Dates: March 3; No. of Shows: 1

5) Fresh Fest with Salt N Pepa

Gross Sales: \$379,242; Venue: **The Liacouras Center, Philadelphia**; Attendance: 6,917; Ticket Range: \$75-\$44.50; Promoter: Spirit of Excellence Church of God; Dates: Feb. 27; No. of Shows: 1

1) Wicked

Gross Sales: \$6,434,767; Venue: **The David A. Straz, Jr. Center For The Performing Arts, Tampa, Fla.**; Attendance: 72,990; Ticket Range: \$160-\$25; Promoter: In-house; Dates: Feb. 3-28; No. of Shows: 32

2) Little House on the Prairie

Gross Sales: \$710,608; Venue: **The David A. Straz, Jr. Center For The Performing Arts, Tampa, Fla.**; Attendance: 12,989; Ticket Range: \$72.50-\$20; Promoter: In-house; Dates: March 2-7; No. of Shows: 8

3) Spring Awakening

Gross Sales: \$574,829; Venue: **Fox Theatre, Atlanta**; Attendance: 13,948; Ticket Range: \$55-\$18; Promoter: Broadway Across America; Dates: March 9-14; No. of Shows: 8

4) Furthur

Gross Sales: \$411,197; Venue: **Auditorium Theatre, Chicago**; Attendance: 7,724; Ticket Range: \$63-\$47.50; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 2-3; No. of Shows: 2

5) August: Osage County

Gross Sales: \$355,454; Venue: **Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (Iowa)**; Attendance: 9,890; Ticket Range: \$50-\$12.50; Promoter: In-house; Dates: Feb. 23-28; No. of Shows: 8

Compiled by Rob Ocampo and Riley Camarillo. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

Q&A**DAMIAN COLLIER, PRODUCER FOR JEFF WAYNE'S MUSICAL VERSION OF THE WAR OF THE WORLDS**

A scene from the arena production of War of the Worlds



REPORTING FROM SANTA MONICA, CALIF. — On any medium, *The War of the Worlds* conquers. Considered to be one of the English language’s greatest literary works of science fiction, the novel has been adapted for film twice and once captivated and frightened the American public during a 1938 Orson Welles radio broadcast.

Producer Damian Collier now believes the United States is ready for a live version of the show and is working to bring Jeff Wayne’s musical adaptation of the H.G. Wells classic to American arenas. The show has already grossed over \$30 million worldwide with its high tech theatrics and orchestral accompaniment. *Venues Today* caught up with Collier during a recent visit to Southern California to discuss his plans to invade the States.

The War of the Worlds is a classic story that’s had many incarnations, but the impetus for this show is actually a double album from the 1970s. What’s the story behind the record?

The album was created by New York composer Jeff Wayne in the 1970s. Wayne was looking for a challenging project and read H.G. Wells’ “*The War of the Worlds*” for inspiration. Jeff said he could immediately hear music in his mind when he picked up the first book. He approached CBS records in 1975, and they put up money and the project grew and grew into a double album. Actor Richard Burnham was hired as narrator, while Justin Hayward of the Moody Blues contributed much of the vocals. The album did great in the United Kingdom as well as Europe, Australia, New Zealand and South America. CBS passed on distributing the album in the United States, but realized they made a mistake and rushed it out with very little marketing. In Australia and New Zealand, the album went 27 times platinum and in the United Kingdom it’s something like 13 times platinum. It’s been number one in 11 countries and top 10 in 22 countries around the world, but it’s had limited success in the United States.

How did you make the decision to adapt the show for a theatrical tour?

Jeff originally wanted to launch the tour many years ago. He was trying to create a video of Richard

Burnham narrating the album. Richard agreed to do it, but wanted to go on holiday with his wife in Switzerland first. Unfortunately, he passed away on that holiday. When Jeff tried to stage the tour several years later, his father passed away. That pretty much put the entire project on hold.

How did you get involved with the album?

I was brought on in 2004 by Sony to help Jeff re-master the album. We released it in 2005 and sold about 600,000 copies in the United Kingdom, one of the best selling albums per capita, just above Mariah Carey. From there, we took a meeting with Clear Channel, which had the idea of turning “The War of the Worlds” into a live show with Jeff conducting a giant symphony. That show sold out within two hours. They came back to us and said they received enough calls to launch a 15-show arena tour. By April 2006, we played our first of 14 U.K. arena shows and they all sold out. We filmed the show at Wembley Arena in 2006 and I did a deal with Universal Pictures to have the film distributed. From there we made a deal with Chugg Entertainment to bring the show down to Australia where we sold 70,000 tickets. In 2009, we toured the United Kingdom and Europe again, making stops in Ireland, Holland and Germany. The DVD we shot in 2006 was shown on SkyTV in the United Kingdom, Europe, South America and on PBS here in the states. So that’s what prompted my visit to the states this time around. I’m starting discussions with U.S. promoters about bringing the show to the states.

Are you thinking of teaming up with the national promoters?

I’m sort of learning how promotion works in the states as I go. We don’t have a booking agent, so I’m doing it myself. I’ve had a fair amount of interest now and I’m sort of working out the best option, but it’s looking very positive for the U.S. tour.

Have you looked at the Walking with Dinosaurs model at all?

A lot of the people I’m talking to, whether it’s on the promoting side or the venue side, have worked on Walking with Dinosaurs and there’s a natural comparison.

What does your show look like?

We have a 100-foot screen in the back of the arena, which essentially shows the two hour, CGI animated movie created specifically for the tour that runs in perfect synch to a 36-piece orchestra and a 10-piece rock band, all conducted by Jeff Wayne. During the show, a giant animatronic Martian fighting machine appears from the lighting rig. When it fires its death ray, it’s actually scanning the audience with light and video cameras and the audience will be able to see themselves in the eye of the robot. It’s all very interactive and multimedia-intense at the same time.

Who narrates the show?

We made a decision that Richard’s voice and performance was so wonderful and so well associated with the album that we wanted to try and stay true to his recording. Richard is presented as a three dimensional head, over 11 feet tall, that lingers over the stage using lighting effects. We had an actor that looked like Richard videotape the performance, and then we touched up the image with photographs of Richard to give it a perfect likeness. Since we’ve first launched the show, we’ve found ways to improve the image with CGI modeling and animation.

If you were to tour through the United States, how much do you think it would cost to run the show?

It’s a difficult question to answer because it depends on how many shows you do back to back, how many cities you play, where you play, where you tour. We’d certainly get into the seven-or-eight figure range. When we tour in the United Kingdom, we tour for 15 to 16 shows over three weeks and probably \$6-\$7 million dollars total cost.

Do you have a U.S. ticket price in mind?

It’s the promoters who really make those decisions. I wouldn’t want to set a price that’s so high that people aren’t going to come. It’s ultimately a family show, and people will bring their kids, so we have to factor in the cost of bringing a family. We’re not the kind of people that just want to milk a cow for a couple of years and then get out, because we wouldn’t still be touring it five years later.

Are you shopping the show right now to promoters?

No, I wouldn't say I'm shopping it. I'd say that I'm meeting with selective people that I've come to know and discussing ways to bring the show to America.

Do you have a set timeline?

We are touring the United Kingdom and Europe in November. To try and cram in a U.S. tour before that would be folly because we'd have to put it together, cast it, which takes time, and the promoters would need enough time to advertise it, so I'd say it's most likely going to be next year after we finish in the United Kingdom and Europe. — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: *Damian Collier, +44 77 3333 8955*

FACES & PLACES

SMG'S SOLIS, WILSON AND PEDONE MAKE MOVES; GLENN TAKES HELM OF VMA

Marc Solis



Marc Solis has been named general manager of the city-operated **Alamodome**, San Antonio. He starts his new job March 29, 10 days after leaving his current position with SMG as director of AmericanBank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Solis has been with SMG for six and a half years. "I love the SMG family," he said, particularly singling out Joe Romano, regional VP, his direct report, but he also has his own family, his wife and kids, in San Antonio, which makes the move a return home. With twin boys turning three, it was time to stop commuting between San Antonio and Corpus Christi.

Jim Salamenta, current assistant GM for SMG in Corpus Christi, will be named acting general manager when Solis leaves. Solis joined SMG at the Laredo (Texas) Entertainment Center, where he was assistant general manager and executive VP of the Laredo Bucks hockey team. From 1989 to 1994 and again from 1997 to 2000, he was VP of operations for Paramount Events Services, which toured the Pink Floyd Laser Show.

Jim Mery continues as assistant director of the San Antonio Convention, Sports and Entertainment Facilities and will be Solis' direct report. Michael Sawaya is director of the division, which oversees the Alamodome, the convention center and the Municipal Auditorium, which is being converted to a performing arts center.

Larry Wilson is moving to Jacksonville, Fla., continuing as an SMG GM, but this time with even more venues to operate. SMG, on behalf of the **City of Jacksonville**, manages Jacksonville Municipal Stadium, Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville, Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena, Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, Prime Osborn Convention Center and Jacksonville Equestrian Center.

Jason Pedone



Wilson had been GM of the **John Paul Jones Arena** at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, where **Jason Pedone** has now been elevated from assistant GM to GM. Wilson served as the regional general manager overseeing day-to-day operations of the John Paul Jones Arena, the Paramount Theater and the Meadows Events Center (Virginia State Fair).

Bob Downey is leaving SMG. Wilson will take his Jacksonville post. SMG has operated the six facilities, or some part of them, for the past 15 years, Wilson said. Jacksonville boasts a population of 1.5 million and a National Football League team. Wilson brings a "fresh set of eyes" to the operation. He referred to SMG's great relationship with the Jaguars as one of the pluses of the new job.

Pedone used similar phraseology, referring to the University of Virginia as a top notch client/partner. "They get it," he said. "This is not just a basketball arena."

Pedone was hired as assistant general manager for John Paul Jones Arena in July 2007 and has been with SMG since 2002. Prior to moving to Charlottesville, an area he said his family loves, Pedone was director of Event Services for SMG at Reliant Park in Houston.

Noting that the JPJ Arena is on a good road, with lots of concerts for its market size, Pedone said his job will be to stay on course.

John Glenn will succeed John Benett as general manager of the **Venue Management Association**, based in Brisbane, Australia. Glenn is currently GM of the State Theatre, Sydney, Australia, where a search is on for a new manager. The transition takes place between May 3, when Glenn moves in, and June 30 when Benett leaves VMA. In between, Glenn will shadow Benett at the VMA Congress on the Gold Coast of Australia May 16-18.

“I’m an arts person,” Glenn said, noting his background is in music and the arts, including a strong foundation in finance and project management. He had not been a member of VMA or IAAM (the International Association of Assembly Managers) prior to taking this assignment. “I turned that into a positive during the interview,” he said. “I said we need to go out and ask why State Theatre isn’t in the VMA.” He’s confident the new State Theatre manager will be joining.

His contributions will include taking a fresh look at VMA, which is now 20 years old.

In his initial discussions with Steve Romer, the president of VMA, about the priorities going forward, Glenn said one “key area already identified is to see that all members small and large are represented on the membership. It’s probably a small gap that needs to be closed around performing arts centers.”

He also sees it as a great opportunity to “do a review of what it is to be a venue and what determines a venue. Is it a university hall, is it an entertainment venue, is it part of a licensed hotel facility? In the end all managers of those venues are dealing with the same kinds of issues, so I think there is enormous scope to broaden the membership in that way.”

The definition of venue can be broad or slim depending on the priorities of the organization, Glenn added. “The Council is ready for a review of all those things and a look at priorities. Asia is an exciting growth area.” – Linda Deckard

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