

Rick Saas

Subject: FW: Sept. 21, 2005 Newsletter



VENUES**today**

"The news behind the headlines"

Dear April,

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Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Look for the latest trend features in our October magazine. For a full calendar listing, to view archives or subscribe to *Venues Today*, visit our Web site at www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Festivals are the new emotional marketing hook to bundle tourism product around." — Colm Croffy, Association of Irish Festivals & Events

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VENUE NEWS

Dave Matthews rocks Red Rocks for hurricane victims



SLEW OF CONCERTS COMES TOGETHER QUICKLY FOR HURRICANE RELIEF

The Dave Matthews Band took the stage at Denver's Red Rocks Amphitheatre Monday night for one extra show, but they didn't get paid. With the help of the city's Theatres and Arenas division, the sold out concert, which also featured New Orleans' Neville Brothers, raised more than \$1.25 million for Hurricane Katrina relief.

Red Rocks isn't alone. Venues nationwide have opened their doors, waiving or rebating everything from rental fees to concession commissions and seat taxes to help victims along the distressed Gulf Coast.

"Fortunately the city was really ready to come to the table and pitch in so the band could donate the most money possible to the relief effort," said Ann Williams, director of communications for Red Rocks.

The city waived the \$25,000 rental fee, an estimated \$47,000 in seat taxes, and a \$30,000 facility fee that covers their parking lot. Denver also passed on \$40,000 - \$50,000 in concession commissions and about \$2,000 in equipment rentals. That brought the city's contribution to more than \$150,000.

Red Rocks' concessionaire, Aramark, donated 100 percent of their net proceeds for the night to the relief effort. Those proceeds were bolstered by some of Aramark's suppliers — including Coors and Sysco — who donated their goods. Tad Bowman, facility manager for the Red Rocks Amphitheatre, said Aramark's contribution would be \$90,000-\$100,000.

Aramark Housekeeping donated its services for the night, and Contemporary Services Corp. picked up the tab for its personnel, about \$18,000. Even Local 7 of the stagehand union agreed to contribute an amount equal to the money their members earned Monday night. Paramedics, firefighters, police officers and a shuttle service for disabled patrons all donated their time too.

"That's literally everyone we do business with," said Williams. "Everyone's come to the table."

The band performed at Red Rocks the three nights prior to the benefit and asked to add the fourth show. Through their promoter, Chuck Morris Presents, the request came to the city. A single press conference with Morris and Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper was enough to sell out the 9,450-seat amphitheater at \$58.50 a pop within minutes.

"People were all over it," Williams said. "It spread like wildfire. We got excellent coverage. All the radio stations came to the table and did a ton of promotion, not just the presenting sponsors."

Premium tickets, which included a pre-concert reception with the band, sold for \$500 and \$1,000, with all but the \$58.50 face value being tax deductible as a donation. Greenwood Village, Colo.'s Company First Data bought all the unsold premium tickets and gave them to evacuees housed at nearby Lowry Air Force Base.

Bowman said city officials didn't hesitate when the idea surfaced. "It was, 'Hey, let's help them out. Let's take care of this,'" he said. "They were right on board from the get-go."

The University of Texas didn't flinch either when Clifford Antone, owner of renowned Austin jazz club Antone's, suggested a similar event at the school's Frank C. Erwin Center. That benefit, with Willie Nelson headlining in front of Jimmie Vaughan, Ray Price, Eric Johnson, Patti Griffin, The Flatlanders, Bob Schneider and others, will take place today, Sept. 21, in the 10,000-seat arena.

"It's a collaborative effort," said associate athletics director Jimmy Earl. "Cliff Antone and Freddie Fletcher, who works with Willie Nelson, came to us with the idea. We had a date available — Sept. 21 — and we just got started working on it from there."

Most tickets will sell for \$20-\$30, with a few \$500 packages that include two floor seats, an Epiphone UT guitar and passes to a hospitality room. The \$100 VIP tickets get the seats and the hospitality room, but no guitar.

"Fortunately, the two top prices are all sold now," Marketing Manager Liz Land said Tuesday. "We could raise nearly \$300,000 if we sell all 10,000 tickets. We plan to."

John Graham, associate athletic director for the Frank Erwin Center, said the university would waive all fees and absorb virtually all costs associated with the concert. The venue has not discussed a possible contribution from the arena's concessionaire, Sodexo. "We haven't had that discussion yet with the concession people and I'm not sure we will," Graham said. "They have to make a living."

Like the Red Rocks event, a press conference and a few calls to media partners got the word out.

"We are sending releases to local media and we're asking all of our media partners to donate space or time," Land said. "Those that can are doing so. It's been received well."

But unlike the Colorado show, where the Dave Matthews Band was already scheduled and able to add a night after a three-day run, the Texas concert is coming together from scratch and follows a Sept. 20 visit by the Dali Llama.

"We've just been scrambling to get all the details together," Land said. "It's not that tough because the staff here has been here for years and we all know how to do this. All we need to know is when and a few details."

In New York, there will be two benefit concerts today (Sept. 21) — one at Madison Square Garden, the other at Radio City Music Hall.

Madison Square Garden is underwriting all costs related to the twin shows, labeled "From the Big Apple to the Big Easy." Madison Square Garden has also pledged a \$1 million dollar donation to begin the event's fundraising efforts. One hundred percent of the event's proceeds will go directly to organizations involved in the region's relief and rebuilding efforts, including the Bush Clinton Katrina Fund, Habitat for Humanity, MusiCares Hurricane Relief Fund and the Children's Health Fund.

The shows are promising big names, with Bette Midler, Diana Krall, Elton John, Elvis Costello, Jimmy Buffet, John Fogerty, Lenny Kravitz, Simon & Garfunkel, Stevie Nicks, Fats Domino, Dave Matthews and the Neville Brothers.

American Express is donating \$20 for every ticket purchased with their card. Tickets to each show range from \$50 to \$500.

Smaller venues are hosting their own benefit concerts. The Grand Ole Opry, owned by Gaylord Entertainment, scheduled "Country Reaches Out: An Opry Benefit for the American Red Cross" to assist with hurricane relief. The Sept. 27 event will be broadcast on cable television's Great American Country channel, where pledges from viewers will be added to ticket revenue for the relief effort.

Alan Jackson, Keith Urban, Alison Krauss, Terri Clark, LeAnn Rimes, Craig Morgan, Marty Stuart, Julie Roberts and Billy Currington have committed to appear.

"Without fail, country music and its fans show compassion and support for those in need," Colin Reed, chairman and CEO of Gaylord Entertainment, said in a prepared statement. "The Opry is the heart and home of country music, and the Opry family — its employees and artists alike — wants to do everything it can to make sure country's heart is extended to our neighbors who have suffered such unspeakable losses." — Ted Streuli

Interviewed for this story: Ann Williams (303) 640-5612, Tad Bowman (303) 640-5612, Jimmy Earl (512) 471-7744, Liz Land (512) 471-6703, John Graham (512) 471-4716

Chad Emerson (VT Photo)



OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAWSUITS LURK THROUGHOUT FESTIVALS

SAN ANTONIO — Amusement locations are rife with lawsuit opportunities, some of the most damaging of them unexpected, according to Chad Emerson, professor at Faulkner University's

Thomas Goode Jones School of

Law. "Balancing risks is one of the biggest challenges facing events, facing festivals," he said.

Emerson provided an overview of pitfalls to an audience at the IFEA (International Festivals & Events Association) 50th Anniversary Reunion Convention held here Sept 12-16.

In the event of an accident, "years ago, your first thought was to help the guest. Now your first thought is, 'What is my legal liability here?' That's just reality," Emerson said.

Insurance companies are starting to provide inspections to help mitigate risks, Emerson said. "They try to keep the most common, easiest screw-up from happening," he said, but festival organizers need to look deeper.

Insurance is the biggest protection against risk, but signage and written waivers are other approaches, Emerson said. "That's becoming an increasingly popular, but disputed, approach." One way to handle waivers is to have a checkbox that online ticket-buyers must mark.

When an accident occurs, "reporting is extremely, extremely important," Emerson said. Employees and volunteers witnessing an accident should write down what they saw immediately, and there can be an on-site risk management team, sometimes headed up by a lawyer.

And everyone on site must be protected by a program such as workman's comp or a volunteer clause in the overall insurance package. "Volunteers are just as likely, if they are somehow damaged, somehow hurt, to sue you," Emerson said.

There are two kinds of risks to festival organizers — civil and criminal suits. "It's the sue-by-shotgun approach now," Emerson said. "Sue everyone and you can dismiss them later." Short statutes of limitation have created this problem. Lawyers don't want to lose their window to sue the responsible parties just because it took a long time to gather all of the facts.

Civil suits cost money, but criminal suits can put an operator in jail. "There is a trend toward prosecutors bringing criminal suits for amusement accidents," Emerson said. "In the last five years, there have been more criminal charges brought against amusement and festival operators than in the last 50 years combined." Defendants can include event management, state inspectors and even architects.

The Internet allows news of deaths and accidents to spread quickly, so there is public pressure to bring charges in cases, Emerson said. "If it's a criminal risk, that's the priority to respond to. You can start another company [if you are sued], but you can't start another company if you're in jail."

There are two kinds of risk factors — internal and external. The major internal problem is employees and the major external problem is guests, Emerson said.

One area of liability is drunken driving by guests, Emerson said. "This is actually a huge potential criminal risk to you and your event. ...Your risk does not end when they leave your festival or event. If they leave your festival or event blowing an 8.0 and hit a minivan and kill a family, you will be sued for that."

Another external risk is band cancellation, either because of illness or ego issues, resulting in demands for refunds, Emerson said. One way to manage that risk is a

disclaimer that reads, for example, "You're not buying a ticket to come see Lynyrd Skynyrd, you're buying a ticket to come to this festival." Other wording is that bands are "subject to cancellation" or "scheduled" to appear.

External risks include riots. "You'd be surprised the number of riots," Emerson said. "Generally, you find riots at music festivals more often than other festivals...music creates emotion and emotion is what leads to riots."

Riots can cause destruction of property and personal injury, where the operator can be liable for not properly controlling the situation. "It gets to the point that you have to have a security guard standing next to every person to make sure they don't do anything," Emerson quipped.

One event resulting in both refund and riot problems was a Guns 'n' Roses concert at GM Place, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada in 2002. The show was canceled after the opening act, and the audience trashed the arena, including millions of dollars worth of sound and lighting equipment. "What's your exposure to your vendor if someone else destroys their property?" Emerson asked. That needs to be written into a contract.

Lawyers can use "track record" in determining liability for this type of occurrence, Emerson said. Has this band cancelled before? "If you hire Guns 'n' Roses, you know there's a much greater chance of cancellation than if you hire Jars of Clay or the Newsboys."

Also, organizers can be held responsible for the type of crowd they draw if a fight between rival motorcycle gangs or hip-hop groups results in injury, Emerson warned. That occurrence would be considered "foreseeable" in legal terminology. "You have to look and say, 'If I have this type of event, who do I think is going to show up?'"

"If you market to 60-year-olds for a Wayne Newton concert, they're going to be less likely to break out [into fighting] than if you have 17- and 18-year-olds with their hormones raging listening to a grunge band."

Overselling tickets is another mistake that can cause riots, Emerson warned. He advised closing the gate when capacity is reached.

Another big area of liability is disease. "If there's a food element or a drink element, those are two huge ways to manage the risk," he said. A lack of sanitation facilities and portable toilets can be grounds for a disease lawsuit.

Toxic risks from chemicals and weather risks are also present. Lightning can be both a cancellation and personal injury risk, he noted, advising that organizers ask, "Am I scheduling this at the right time of the year? Should it be outdoors?"

Emerson also recommends providing shelter. "The more people you can shelter, the less people can sue you." And he recommends telling people to return to their cars to lessen lightning risks.

"Every action has a reaction," he conceded. "You manage this risk, but you might be creating another risk."

One overall way to reduce risk is to "transfer" the risk to the patron. "Assuming the duty" for things that could go wrong is bad, Emerson said. "Laws will automatically assume some duties for you. You can modify what the law would normally cover with contracts," he said. "However, you can't waive laws."

Internal risks can include the hiring of unstable employees. "If someone commits suicide at your event...there's the risk to your event's reputation. Sometimes it's not all about money." But there's also the risk that a patron could be hurt in this situation.

And there's the risk of hiring a child molester, which happens with mascots sometimes. "You find more often than not that masked characters are more likely to engage in inappropriate behavior than non-masked employees," he said.

Performing background checks on employees can mitigate the risk for the operator, Emerson said.

Lastly, Emerson mentioned intellectual property, such as a long-time naming rights sponsor pulling out of an event and taking the name of the event with them. "Do you have all the legal protections in place?" Emerson asked.

Emerson suggested that festival organizers visit his Web site, www.themelaw.com, for more information. — Natasha Emmons

Interviewed for this story: Chad Emerson, (334) 386-7536

Sims Hinds



FACES & PLACES: SIMS HINDS RETURNS TO THE SMG FOLD

As senior vice president of sales and development for SMG, Sims Hinds will be doing a lot of what he did at the beginning of his career, but with a lot more experience under his belt. Hinds rejoined SMG Sept. 13, after spending the last four years with Richard Childress Racing.

To some extent, he replaces Joe Briglia, who left months ago, though the appointment didn't follow on the heels of that development in any way. In fact, it was pure happenstance, an airport encounter, that led to this new chapter for Hinds.

"True story. Last month I was on my way to Indianapolis for the Brickyard 400. Changing planes at the Charlotte airport in the morning, I go to buy a newspaper and I run into Wes [Westley, SMG president and CEO]. We exchanged business cards and started talking. Wes threw out the idea of would

I be interested in coming back? I never would have thought of it, but the more we talked about it, the more it made sense for everyone concerned."

Now Hinds' next trip will be for SMG, probably to Tulsa to bid on management of the new arena being built there.

Hinds started in the business in 1975, spending 10 years with Concerts West. In April, 35 Concerts West alumni and the "current version" gathered for a reunion in Las Vegas. "We had a blast," Hinds said.

He then spent four years with Warren Miller Films, before joining SMG in 1988, where he started in the Resorts division, providing consulting services to ski resorts, then worked his way up in the firm.

In 1996, he joined the Carolina Hurricanes, helping open the hockey team's new RBC Center, Raleigh, N.C. In 2001, he started with the NASCAR racing team. Hinds particularly enjoyed the NASCAR circuit. "It reminded me of the concert entertainment industry 20 or even 30 years ago. It's a lot of fun. It's like the last bastion of true promoting. You have a 10-month season and you go to a lot of markets twice so you can try ideas like great, old-time carnival promotion ideas. People think it's great. They're not cynical about it. It's a very unpretentious environment," he said.

Hinds was head of sponsorship and business development for Richard Childress Racing before he took that last Indianapolis flight.

"I've always been traveling. Who am I going to kid at this point? I will have an office in my house in High Point [N.C.]. I'll be up here [Philadelphia] very regularly. Being on the road, and with computers, Blackberries, and cell phones...I'll be here as much as the other guys will be," Hinds said. — Linda Deckard
Interviewed for this story: Sims Hinds, (215) 592-6628

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BOOKINGS

**HOT**tickets**BUFFETT BESTS
COLDPLAY AND GREEN
DAY**

HOT TICKETS is a weekly summary of the top acts and ticket sales as reported to **Venues Today** e-newsletter. Following are the top 10 such concerts and events which took place since

Aug. 31, 2005. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

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

- 1) Gross Sales: \$7,897,550
Event: Jimmy Buffett
Venue: **Wrigley Field, Chicago**
Attendance: 78,755
Ticket Range: \$130-\$90
Promoter: Elevated Concerts (CCE)
Date: Sept. 4-5
No. of Shows: 2

- 2) Gross Sales: \$1,767,792
Event: Coldplay
Venue: **Madison Square Garden Arena, New York**
Attendance: 31,861
Ticket Range: \$66-\$36
Promoter: Ron Delsener Presents (CCE)
Date: Sept. 6-7
No. of Shows: 2

- 3) Gross Sales: \$1,006,421
Event: Green Day
Venue: **Gillette Stadium, Foxboro, Mass.**
Attendance: 26,781
Ticket Range: \$40
Promoter: Tea Party Concerts (CCE)
Date: Sept. 3
No. of Shows: 1

- 4) Gross Sales: \$822,817
Event: Destiny's Child
Venue: **Staples Center, Los Angeles**
Attendance: 13,841
Ticket Range: \$97-\$22
Promoter: Avalon Attractions (CCE)
Date: Sept. 2
No. of Shows: 1

- 5) Gross Sales: \$716,310

Event: Marc Anthony
Venue: **Tommy Hilfiger at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.**
Attendance: 9,587
Ticket Range: \$95-\$40
Promoter: Ron Delsener Presents (CCE)
Date: Sept. 3
No. of Shows: 1

6) Gross Sales: \$696,859
Event: Coldplay
Venue: **PNC Bank Arts Center, Holmdel, N.J.**
Attendance: 16,976
Ticket Range: \$66-\$31
Promoter: Ron Delsener Presents (CCE)
Date: Sept. 3
No. of Shows: 1

7) Gross Sales: \$688,987
Event: Chicago
Venue: **Greek Theatre, Los Angeles**
Attendance: 10,525
Ticket Range: \$89.75-\$49.75
Promoter: Avalon Attractions (CCE)
Date: Sept. 6-7
No. of Shows: 2

8) Gross Sales: \$681,307
Event: Green Day
Venue: **Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul, Minn.**
Attendance: 16,236
Ticket Range: \$43-\$38
Promoter: Jam Productions
Date: Sept. 16
No. of Shows: 1

9) Gross Sales: \$672,636
Event: Dave Matthews Band
Venue: **Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, The Woodlands, Texas**
Attendance: 13,985
Ticket Range: \$58-\$40
Promoter: Pace Concerts (CCE)
Date: Sept. 5
No. of Shows: 1

10) Gross Sales: \$664,072
Event: James Taylor
Venue: **Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Ill.**
Attendance: 12,204
Ticket Range: \$70-\$25
Promoter: Elevated Concerts (CCE)
Date: Sept. 2
No. of Shows: 1

Compiled by Rick Saas, HotTickets@venuestoday.com

Nine Inch Nails



NINE INCH NAILS WORKS TO HINDER SCALPERS

In an effort to combat scalpers and to get tickets into the hands of actual fans, Nine Inch Nails launched a special ticketing program for its fall tour. Under the new plan, fan club members who take advantage of the pre-sale will show ID's to pick up tickets at the venue the day of show and then will march right into the arena, eliminating the option of buying multiple tickets for re-sale.

It is a two-tier program. The first phase will get tickets to members of the band's fan club Spiral. The second phase will include a series of online auctions conducted through Ticketmaster that will put the proceeds above face value of the ticket prices into a non-profit organization.

Eric Fermin, Rebel Waltz Management, the management company for Nine Inch Nails, said in the first phase e-mails will go out alerting fan club members of the pre-sales.

- "What happens, so many times, is that brokers or scalpers will register as a member of fan club as many as 20 or 25 times," Fermin said. "When the pre-sale happens, they go after the tickets and buy as many as they can. Sometimes just minutes after a pre-sale starts, we will see the tickets going on sale on eBay."

So with the cooperation of Ticketmaster, Spiral members who have paid an annual membership fee, will get the e-mail about the pre-sale. They are allowed to buy only two tickets to that performance. They are allowed to purchase tickets to other performances but only two per performance. The tickets aren't e-mailed to them, however. They have to pick them up at a designated Spiral Will Call at each venue.

The tickets are to be special commemorative tickets embossed with the members' name. The members have to show their membership cards and the names have to match. The members then enter into the venues through dedicated Spiral entrances. This adds to the overall fan club experience. The tickets still have the barcodes provided by Ticketmaster and are still scanned.

"We have touring personnel that will deal specifically with the Spiral Will Call," Fermin said. "This way we know the members of the fan club will get the best tickets in the house."

The online ticket auction is the next phase. For the Nine Inch Nails tour, those online auctions started Aug. 8 for tickets for 19 venues. Auctions for additional shows went live Aug. 22.

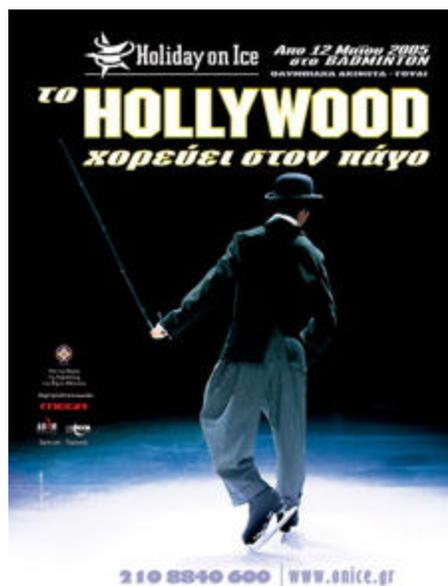
Bonnie Poindexter, corporate spokeswoman, Ticketmaster, said the company started offering online auctions in general in 2003. The first was held April 1, 2003, for the Lewis/Johnson fight at Staples Center, Los Angeles. The auctions allow the buyers to determine the fair market value of the seats.

There were 374 online auctions in 2004. In the first half of 2005, there were 440. "The auctions are a great tool for our clients," she said. "Some acts will use the money the tickets bring in above the face value for non-profit organizations. Some will use it to discount the back-of-house tickets."

Nine Inch Nails will allocate a number of tickets from each performance for the auction. The remaining tickets will be sold through the general public on sale. Nine Inch Nails plans to send ticket auction proceeds to the Innocence Project, a nonprofit legal clinic handling cases where postconviction DNA testing of evidence can yield conclusive proof of innocence.

The following are some of the Nine Inch Nails touring dates: Cox Arena, San Diego, Sept. 16; Tucson (Ariz.) Convention Center, Sept. 17; America West Arena, Phoenix, Sept. 19; Selland Arena, Fresno, Calif., Sept. 20; KeyArena, Seattle, Sept. 23; Rose Garden Arena, Portland, Ore., Sept. 24; Pacific Coliseum, Vancouver, British Columbia, Sept. 26; Arco Arena, Sacramento, Calif., Sept. 28; Oakland (Calif.) Coliseum, Sept. 30; Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles, Oct. 1; E Center, Salt Lake City, Oct. 4; Pepsi Arena, Denver, Oct. 5; Allstate Arena, Chicago, Oct. 7; Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Oct. 8; Gund Arena, Cleveland, Oct. 9; Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul, Minn., Oct. 11; Alliant Energy Center, Madison, Wis., Oct. 13; and Savvis Center, St. Louis, Oct. 14. — Pam Sherborne

Interviewed for this story: Eric Fermin, (949) 499-4497; Bonnie Poindexter, (310) 360-2321



Hollywood on Ice, left, and poster for G-Fest event, both in Athens

ATHENS OLYMPIC VENUES PROVIDE VARIED SPACES FOR PROMOTERS

Venues built for the Athens Olympics last year have opened up new opportunities for Broadway-style show promoters and concert promoters in this metropolitan area of 5 million people.

When the Athens 2004 Olympics celebrations came to an end, the Greek Government and Olympic Properties S.A., which is responsible for the sustainable and social oriented

development of the venues, went to work.

Feb. 18 at the restored 800-seat Equestrian Center of the Olympic Complex in Goudi, the Les Art Sauts Show, Ola Kala, which features 15 acrobats on a trapeze, began its 17-day run. Ola Kala was sponsored by Mega Channel, Vimagazino, Radio Galaxy FM, Skai news FM, A.Libers Publications, SONY Hellas & French Institute. It was a sellout with 11,000 tickets, priced \$33-\$43 (U.S.).

Two months later, the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical "Cats" played the 800-capacity Badminton Center March 21-April 24. Sponsors included Cosmote, Sony Hellas, and Grecotel Athens Imperial. There were 100,000 tickets sold, priced \$20-\$54. Hellenic Olympic Properties S.A. earned 15 percent of the gross as rent.

The long runs of "Cats" on Broadway and London's West End made the show a safe bet, according to Michael Adams, CEO of Athens-based Adams & Silver Moon Productions, which was official producer of the derivations of Ola Kala, Cats and Hollywood on Ice.

"After the Olympic Games of 2004, a new situation was created concerning the venues that were available for spectacular shows. Until now, we had a problem mounting those kinds of shows," Adams said. "The theatres were small and the scenes were limited; that is why we believe that we can take advantage of the new venues and bring more productions at Cats' level."

Hollywood on Ice, sponsored by the Athens Municipality and by Mega Channel, sold more than 75,000 tickets at \$8-\$43 from May 12-24. John Williams was the composer, Antony Van Laast the stage director, and Robin Cousins the choreographer.

The Rocky Horror Show played Lycabettus Sept. 14-17. It is sponsored by Sony Hellas, Vima newspaper, Alpha TV and Nitro Radio.

The Olympic Beach Volley in Faliro, a southern suburb of Athens, has been developed as part of the greater seafront zone, extending from the Peace and Friendship Stadium to the Agios Kosmas Marina, and has hosted several large concerts recently.

The development combines the city's new convention center, aquarium, waterfront plazas, marina, and a variety of athletic facilities, with an outdoor theater joined by a broad pedestrian walkway and esplanade. The complex is located 4 miles from the center of Athens and 15 miles from the Athens International Airport. While it is accessible via major roadways, it is also served by a public transportation network.

Under Minister of Culture Fani-Pali Petralia has put the focus on turning them into moneymakers as soon as possible.

June 15-July 13 a new Festival, Gagarin, produced by Astra, was held at the 10,000-capacity volleyball venue, and the goal is to make it an annual event. The month-long run featured Queens of the Stone Age, Megadeth, Kraftwerk, Dream Theatre, White Stripes, Earthbound, Tonino Carotone, Skatalites, Thanasis Papakonstantinou and Chimerinoi Kolymbites (Winter Swimmers).

G-Fest was sponsored by Heineken and Jose Cuervo. Estimated income was up to \$1 million, 15 percent of which went to Hellenic Olympic Properties S.A.

Nickos Triantafyllidis, vice president of Astra, was pleased with the results. "Creating a on-going, synchronized cultural and entertainment park is something that we [really] wanted, but until now we have faced some bureaucracy problems, which is one of Greece's most [difficult] issues. The Greek Government must solve these kinds of

problems immediately so they can proceed faster with the Olympic Properties development.”

According to John Alavanos, president of the Greek Technical Chamber, the venues must also become permanent hosts for international athletic competitions as part of tourism, trade and entertainment goals. — Georgia Flessa
Interviewed for this story: Olympic Properties, 30.210.92.50.033; Ministry of Culture, 30-210.82.01.100; Athens Economics University, 30.210.82.03.911; John Alavanos, 30.210.32.91.200; Nickos Triantafyllidis, 30.210.85.47.600; Michael Adams, 30.210-88-47-121

MARKETING

Colm Croffy (VT Photo)



NORTH AMERICAN FESTIVALS CAN LEARN FROM EUROPEAN PRACTICES

SAN ANTONIO — European festival guru Colm Croffy, operations director of the Association of Irish Festivals & Events (AOIFE), told a mostly North American audience at the IFEA (International Festivals & Events Association) 50th Anniversary Reunion Convention held here Sept 12-16, how to get the attention — and funding — of local tourism bureaus.

“Festivals are the new emotional marketing hook to bundle tourism product around,” Croffy said.

The first step is to commission a study proving the worth of festivals to the local economy. AOIFE’s first report came out in December 2004. “Irish Festivals, Irish Life” was partially funded by Failte Ireland, the national tourism board.

Regional events with international attendance make for good public relations for an area, Croffy said. “It really has put the cultural and tourism industries right up to the top of the pile,” he said. “It gives instant recognition of what it means to be Scottish, what it means to be Welsh.”

European events have become easier to travel to with the advent of Ryanair, a cheap airline modeled after Southwest in the United States. “It has made getting on an airplane as commonplace as getting on a bus or a train,” Croffy said.

A trend toward more three- and four-day mini-vacations in Europe has also supported the festival scene, Croffy said. “The three-week notion of a vacation is removing itself from the European holiday [mindset].”

A 2004 Irish tourism report showed that six out of 10 families research their vacations on the Internet. About 95 percent of Ryanair’s tickets are sold online, and festivals

should be as easy to access, Croffy said. "If they can't get [buying a ticket] all done with a mouse, they don't want to know about you."

Web sites that ask users to make phone calls or send letters are ineffective, Croffy said. "Lazy use of technology — this is my bugbear," he said. "If you're not three clicks away from the purchase, you're not getting it."

Farmers have, in general, been replaced by artists in European culture, Croffy said. "Manufacturing is going East, so there's growing awareness that the last true indigenous [culture] is creative culture and the arts," he said. "There's a huge, huge desire for authority. They don't want a theme park product."

Beware of the "parachute options" when planning a community festival, however, Croffy warned. These are outside festivals that are brought to an area. It's much wiser to grow a small festival that an area already has — generic vs. grafted. This is called "legacy management."

But work has to go into it. "Destination tourism is dead; experience tourism is the thing," Croffy said. "People don't come to your town to see the mountains anymore — they want to experience the mountains." This must include all five senses — sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. And they want to learn something because they don't want to feel "old," Croffy said.

A successful festival must appeal to three generations of a family, he said.

International audiences are important because they spend three times as much as local audiences, Croffy said. In fact, two-thirds of the audiences for English literature festivals built around authors such as William Butler Yeats and James Joyce come from Southeast Asia.

However, locals cannot be excluded from the festivities, or they won't support them, he said. Taxi drivers and hotel operators may tell visitors not to go to a festival or a hotel. "Why? Because they've been left out of the loop," Croffy said. "The only way you'll get them on board is if you reach out to the front-liners."

One way to get local businesses on board is create a "Friends of the Festival" type of program where you link to each other's Web sites. "It's a huge marketing experience for very little money."

Another tack is to create a local ambassador program. "Word-of-mouth is still a huge, huge selling point," Croffy said.

And the festival should be transported out into the community. For example, an opera festival could feature singers in local restaurants and involve local kids in dress rehearsals.

This is important in building support for funding mechanisms such as bed night taxes, Croffy noted.

One of the best things to happen to festivals in Great Britain in terms of developing sponsorship and tax base support was the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease, Croffy said. All of the festivals were cancelled, which made hotels and restaurants realize how much money they lose without them. Sponsorship increased 25 percent after that.

Hotels and restaurants don't want festivals to move out of city centers because they

take food and beverage revenue with them.

The Irish 2004 report found that training is desperately needed within the festival industry. About 58 percent didn't have a strategic plan, only 41 percent provided volunteer training, 33 percent had no risk assessment, and 31 percent had no safety officer.

Good examples of countries with effective festivals and festival networks that are integrated into overall tourism plans are Scotland, Canada and Australia, Croffy said.

An up-and-coming area is Northern Ireland, he said. The government "has accepted that festivals are a way to improve the image of a country ridden with such difficulties and bad, negative perceptions." — Natasha Emmons

Interviewed for this story: Colm Croffy, 353 (0) 90 964 3779

Fan Tony Cappabianco breaks Redhawks' attendance record



OKLAHOMA REDHAWKS REAP REWARDS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Oklahoma RedHawks set many records on the field this season, including 152 home runs, a 12-run inning and 33 stolen bases by player Esteban German. But the AAA affiliate of the Major League Baseball Texas Rangers set one of its most important records at the turnstiles.

When 10-year-old Tony Cappabianco passed through the gates of SBC Bricktown Ballpark at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 30, he was fan number 491,037, breaking the season attendance record set in 1998.

"I was surprised," said Cappabianco, who came with his father, John. "We just walked in the door and they said, 'Come with us.'" As a reward, he watched the game from Managing General Partner Scott Pruitt's suite.

With an average per-game attendance this season of 7,758, the RedHawks will likely finish the year with a gate of about 530,000, a 15 percent increase over 2004 and more than 11 percent better than The Brick's 1998 inaugural year. The best seat in the intimate 13,066-capacity stadium sells for \$14.

The RedHawks are now fifth in attendance for the Pacific Coast League's 16 teams, trailing Sacramento, California's Rivercats, who average 10,420 fans per game at Raley Field; the Memphis Redbirds, who draw 9,991 per game at AutoZone Park; and the Round Rock (Texas) Express, who put 9,726 per game into the Dell Diamond.

The RedHawks are right on the Albuquerque (N.M.) Isotopes' tail. Isotopes Park averaged fewer than 500 more fans per game this season than the RedHawks with 8,095.

Pruitt — who, with local businessman Bob Funk, bought the team just before the 2004 season — was so intent on improving attendance that during the off-season he took a cadre of staffers to California's Disneyland to study customer service during the

baseball winter meetings in Anaheim. Disney gave the eight-member group a free afternoon session with a guide, who walked them through the park explaining the behind-the-scenes procedures for everything from cleanliness to music and customer interaction. Pruitt even puts his e-mail address on the outfield screen during games to encourage customer feedback.

This season, they added free concerts, including Def Leppard/Bryan Adams and contemporary Christian bands Avalon and Jeremy Camp. There were more promotions including weekly fireworks, more sponsored giveaways and more opportunities for children to interact with players, including weekly autograph nights. Allgood said the most successful promotions were giveaways of Mickey Mantle, Johnny Bench and Warren Spahn statues (all have ties to Oklahoma City baseball) and a Nolan Ryan bobble head doll when the team he owns — the Round Rock Express — was in town.

The team put an emphasis on accommodating fans — from adding waiters and waitresses in the club level seating sections to answering each word of thanks received with, "My pleasure." They also kicked a season-ticket sales effort into overdrive as soon as the 2004 season ended. A combination of direct mail and a telephone campaign paid off, boosting season-ticket sales by 63 percent.

General Manager John Allgood said he hasn't tallied the take yet, but expects that the per-cap food and merchandise numbers are up as well, which he credits to new menu items, including authentic Fenway Franks from Boston, Dodger Dogs from Los Angeles, Milwaukee Brats, Cincinnati Coneys and Chicago Red Hots. Peanuts — roasted at the park to add some aroma — were also added. Specially prepared dishes for suite holders were available from a newly-hired chef.

Sponsorship sales also set a record this season, up 20 percent over 2004.

George King, director of business and baseball operations for the Pacific Coast League, said the increase in RedHawks admissions helped spur the league to an all-time attendance record also, with sales surpassing 7 million for the first time in minor league baseball history.

King said Pruitt and Allgood exemplify the philosophy that pervades the top clubs. "Minor league baseball's always been about the show, about the entertainment," said King. "I know they've gone to bringing in Big 12 regional games, causing the community to perceive the ballpark as a place for community activities. They're doing the Fourth of July, the concerts, the promotions. It's becoming a venue recognized as a place where community things are happening."

The Brick, designed in the trendy "old-but-new" style by Oklahoma City's Architectural Design Group and built for \$34.2 million is one of the top five quality venues in the league. "Once you provide that atmosphere, the word spreads," King said.

Beverly Vilarodofsky, an attorney at Phillips McFall who has missed just two home games in the seven years The Brick's been open, said this season's concession improvements, staff accessibility and friendliness significantly improved the overall experience. "Scott Pruitt's great, too," she said. "He's very accessible. You e-mail him and he takes care of it. I got a response in 30 minutes.

"I'm not your typical fan," she said. "I don't care about the promotions — I'm there to watch baseball. But Rowdy's [the team mascot] great. He's there playing with the fans. They have the playground area, the two-for-one hot dogs, autograph Fridays. There's enough to do there that it attracts even people who aren't baseball fans."

Federal judge Tim Leonard has noticed a difference this season, too. "It's one of the friendliest ballparks I've ever been in, from ushers to ticket takers, everybody's very accommodating," he said.

Team Manager Bobby Jones said that big crowds make a difference in how the team performs on the field. "It affects them a lot," Jones said. "It's fun playing in front of a big crowd. It gets the players fired up. It's a big plus for us."

King said the markets with the highest attendance are those where the community feels a special connection to the club, an ownership. "What Scott Pruitt and John Allgood have done there are bastions of what we hope everyone aspires to," King said. "Once fans are inculcated that this is Oklahoma City's team, when it's an inculcated part of their summer plans, an immediate thought when they want go out with their family – when they take that kind of ownership, that's when you'll see those numbers."

Next year, Allgood said, there will be even more additions to the food and beverage menu, although F&B manager Samuel Brooks hasn't yet identified specific items. There will be more promotions too, possibly including a snow tube slide from the upper deck to the field. "Everything we did this year focused on making it as customer-friendly as possible. Secondly, we added value to our season tickets with Bedlam [the hugely popular Oklahoma State University-University of Oklahoma NCAA rivalry], priority ticketing for the Big 12 tournament and concerts. Our sales staff did a great job of selling groups this year – they recognized they buy 25 or more."

Company outings, youth sports teams and church groups make up the bulk of the group ticket sales, which are handled by a staff of 4.

"I think we have to continue building on our base, our season ticket sales," Allgood said. "We'll look to see how we can create more value – maybe we can create something that will allow a company to buy four tickets instead of two. Maybe we extend promotions beyond Saturday night to Wednesday and Thursday nights."

Allgood will consider the specifics of those options now that the season's over, but season ticket sales for 2006 started Aug. 18, and Allgood said the renewal rate so far is the highest in anyone's memory. "I think it's a great sign for us that we may be doing something right," he said. — Ted Streuli

Interviewed for this story: John Allgood, (405) 218-1000; Bobby Jones, (405) 218-1000; Tim Leonard, (405) 609-5300; Beverly Vilarofsky, (405) 235-4100; George King: (719) 636-1199

CONCESSIONS

Qwest Field, Seattle



QWEST FIELD PUTS FOOD CONTRACT OUT TO BID

After four years of operation, management at Qwest Field, home of the Seattle Seahawks National Football League team, has decided "we owe it to our fans to raise the bar," said Susan Darrington, stadium vice

president of facility operations and services. To that end, they have put the concessions contract out to bid. Proposals are due back Sept. 30, with a decision expected by early in the new year.

"We had tours the night of our opening preseason game against Dallas, Aug. 22, and a prebid conference the next day, Aug. 23," Darrington said. In attendance at the prebid were the incumbent concessionaire, Aramark, and Boston Culinary Group, Levy Restaurants, Centerplate, Sportservice, and some local firms. Aramark's contract is officially up at the end of the next football year, January 2007, but basically, "It's up. There were options," said Chris Bigelow, The Bigelow Companies, consultant on the bid process.

With a new management team in place, the issues and needs are different than when the facility opened, both Darrington and Bigelow pointed out. It's also a somewhat unusual operation for a football stadium, with the attached Qwest Field Event Center part of the deal.

Darrington has toured executives from other football clubs who are interested in the convention side of the business, including the new Arizona Cardinals stadium management team from Phoenix and the new Jets Stadium team from New York. "I tell them that what you're running is a convention center that hosts 10 football games a year," Darrington said. "While football is the biggest thing you do, it's easy compared to the rest, because you work so closely with the team and you're involved in all that planning. It's the other events that come in from time to time. It can be challenging to work them around football and make them happen in a new building."

Combined, there is 360,000 square feet of event space in the Qwest Field Event Center and Qwest Field Plaza, which holds over 250 consumer shows, trade shows, corporate events and concerts per year.

In addition, stadium management believes there is great food and drink potential in the 40,000-square-foot Wells Fargo Club Level at the football stadium for small trade shows, corporate and social events.

"Now that we understand the flow of our facility and what we can and can't do, we're looking to enhance our club level experience, perhaps look at some all-inclusive food and beverage options," Darrington said. "Right now the entire club level is open to all of our club ticketholders. We're looking to see if there is an opportunity to provide exclusive spaces for some of our higher-end ticketholders."

It has been left to the food and beverage companies to provide models to enhance future business, she added. The key concern is the fan experience. The Seahawks have enjoyed 19 consecutive sellouts (67,000 seats per game) for regular season games. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Susan Darrington, (206) 381-7576; Chris Bigelow, (816) 483-5553

SHORT TAKES

MESSINA JOINS GRIDIRON STADIUM NETWORK

The Gridiron Stadium Network (GSN) and concert promoter Louis Messina have entered

into a non-exclusive agreement, whereby The Messina Group, along with partner AEG Live, will work with GSN to develop, produce and promote a variety of events for GSN member venues, including concerts, motor sports, festivals and corporate functions. GSN member stadiums are home to 11 NFL teams. Steve Eckerson, director of sales and marketing, Qwest Field, Seattle, is chairman of the GSN, and Pamela Fallon is executive director. The group was launched in January. Messina co-founded PACE Concerts in 1975, founded the Messina Group in 2001, and entered into a partnership with AEG Live in 2003.

Contact: Pamela Fallon, (978) 562-2551

HORNETS TO MOVE TO OKLAHOMA CITY

The *Associated Press* reported that the National Basketball Association New Orleans Hornets plan play at least part of their upcoming season at the 19,675-seat Ford Center in Oklahoma City. A city council meeting was scheduled for this morning to review the contract, according to the mayor. The team is expected to bring 100 employees from Louisiana and hire 50 more on site.

Contact: Hornets, 504-301-4000; Ford Center, (405) 602-8700

GAMETIME WINS CONCESSIONS CONTRACT IN BLOOMINGTON, ILL.

Central Illinois Arena Management has partnered with GameTime Food and Beverage Services, Buffalo Grove, Ill., to manage the food service at the U.S. Cellular Coliseum, Bloomington. The \$37 million, 7,000 seat arena is scheduled to open in the spring of 2006.

Contact: Steve Blumenthal, Game Time, (312) 213-8761

MARINACCIO TO RUN ELMIRA ARENA

Michael Marinaccio, former general manager of the 4,700-seat Broome County Veterans Memorial Arena, Binghamton, N.Y., will become general manager of the 4,000-seat First Arena in Elmira, N.Y., Oct. 17. First Arena houses the United Hockey League Jackals. Marinaccio ran Memorial Arena for five years, until he became director of development at the Family Enrichment Network of Johnson City three months ago.

Contact: First Arena, (607) 734-7825

JERRY SPRINGER OPERA TO TOUR ENGLAND

Avalon Promotions Ltd. plans to launch a tour of "Jerry Springer — The Opera," a popular London West End stage show, hitting 21 theaters in England starting Jan. 27 at Plymouth Theatre Royal. A small vocal group, Christian Voice, has caused high-profile problems for the show. A \$13.9 million Broadway version is on hold because one of the financial backers pulled out due to Christian Voice's protests.

Contact: Avalon Promotions, 44 (0) 20 7598 7333

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