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VT PULSE

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Quote of the Week

"He always considered himself fortunate, living the dream, because of his job, his family, his friends."

— Portland (Ore.) Center for the Performing Arts GM Robyn Williams on Rodney Smith of the Tobin Center in San Antonio, who passed away March 27.

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Greetings Dave,

Welcome to VT Pulse, your weekly guide to the "News Behind the Headlines." Our April issue is out now and will be mailing this week. Check your inboxes for the latest issue.

VT NEWS

CURTAIN CALL

PAC PERSONALITY RODNEY SMITH NEVER STOPPED LIVING THE DREAM

Rodney Smith



The untimely death of Rodney Smith, 58, executive director of the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts in San Antonio, Texas, on March 27 has left a pall over the venue industry.

Smith was larger than life to his peers in the performing arts field, renowned for his leadership, mentoring and volunteerism. Chris Miller, McCaw Hall, Seattle, was among several who couldn't count "the number of times I talked to him about a challenge I had here. He was always generous and available. He is irreplaceable. His passing left an enormous hole in the field and in all of our hearts."

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One of Smith's industry legacies is his role as emcee of the popular Performing Arts Managers Conference Town Hall. He moderated the Town Hall for several years at the annual conference, and many a note-taker has a quip attributed to Smith after participating in one. Robyn Williams, Portland (Ore.) Center for the Performing Arts, noted his quick wit and innovative style that put PAMC Town Halls on the must-do list year after year. It had even evolved into a two-parter.

"He had a way about him as an emcee and the knowledge base to lead discussion about anything and everything attendees could have questions about," said Ted DeDee, McCoy Center for the Arts, New Albany, Ohio. Smith was always forthcoming about his own experiences while drawing out diverse opinions that kept the conversation flowing, DeDee noted. "And not a Town Hall would go by that Rodney wouldn't have a way of interjecting a bit of humor."

Both Williams and DeDee attended Smith's funeral service at Saint Mary Catholic Parish, Littleton, Colo., April 4, as did Jack Hagler, Shuler Shook, who chose "genuine person and friend" to describe Smith. "Someone else said it at the funeral, but I agree: Rodney was friends with everybody, from millionaire and CEO to homeless person. He treated everyone with the same respect. When I think of Rodney, I think of him as a friend more than a work colleague," though work was the connection.

One of Smith's trademarks was his response to "How are you?"

"I'm livin' the dream," he would say, and he meant it, Williams recalled. "He always considered himself fortunate, living the dream, because of his job, his family, his friends."

His legacy within the industry includes helping found and form the very successful PAMC, teaching annually at the International Association of Venue Managers school at Oglebay in Wheeling, W. Va. (which he was scheduled to do again this June); and serving on the IAVM board.

Smith died at his home in San Antonio of an apparent heart attack. He had moved to San Antonio in 2009, just over two years ago, to become managing director of the Bexar County Performing Arts Center Foundation, which is renovating the old Municipal Auditorium into the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts.

His wife, Donna, who survives him, was in the process of moving to San Antonio after wrapping up her own career in Denver with the SCFD (Scientific and Cultural Facilities Division) just weeks ago.

Besides his wife, Smith is survived by his son, Nicholas Smith; a daughter, Chelsea Marx, and grandson Kieran Marx. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Robyn Williams, (503) 274-6558; Chris Miller, (206) 733-9711; Ted DeDee, (614) 245-4701; Jack Hagler, (214) 747-8300

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

ARIZONA FIREARMS LAW COULD MEAN CONCEALED WEAPONS AT EVENTS

Just months after a deadly January shooting that left six dead in Tucson, Ariz., and critically wounded U.S. Rep Gabrielle Giffords, state lawmakers are pushing legislation that would allow gun owners to carry concealed weapons into public events. The new "Fire Omnibus" bill — bill SB 1201 — would require universities, government buildings, festivals, sporting events and public buildings to allow people to bring concealed weapons into their facility.

Under the proposed law, a venue could ban patrons from carrying concealed weapons only if it followed a number of regulations and provided armed security, implemented metal detectors to screen patrons traveling in and out of the facility, and provided a gun locker for patrons to secure their weapons while visiting the facility. The law has already passed the state senate and has cleared two house subcommittees. It's unclear when the full house will vote on the law, or whether Republican Governor Janice Brewer would sign the bill if it passed.

Terry Burke, president of promoter Live Nation Southwest, deemed the bill "unclear" in regard to venues with a liquor license. If a venue has a liquor license, it can prohibit people from bringing guns on the premises when alcohol is being served; however, when no alcohol is served, firearms must be allowed inside the venue. With all the exceptions and paperwork, Burke said, "venues don't know what to expect."

Some think that artists would refuse to play at venues that allowed audience members to carry

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concealed weapons. Burke agreed that there could be a chilling effect, both on the artist and the audience. “The artist might say they’re not going to play somewhere that will let guns in and the public might say they don’t want to go to an event where they let guns in,” effectively forcing venues to institute the new requirements. “It appears that what would happen is all public venues that do public events would have to institute these security measures,” Burke said.

Burke said each venue would face “upwards of \$50,000-\$80,000” for metal detectors, armed guards and firearms lockers. He also said there would be a considerable increase in the time it would take for audience members to enter a venue that implemented extra security. At the moment, some Arizona venues will perform pat-downs and purse searches – a relatively quick process. Most venues in Arizona don’t currently use metal detectors to screen patrons.

Proponents of SB 1202, such as the Arizona Citizens Defense League, insist that it is about securing buildings for everyone. They assert that if an establishment isn’t willing to take necessary precautions to insure that no one brings in firearms, then the honest, open gun-carrying citizen should not be disarmed. Supporters of the bill claim that the threat of people carrying a concealed weapon discourages criminals from attempting violence. Under the current law, gun owners do not need a license to carry a concealed weapon.

Burke sees it differently.

“The pointless part of this bill is that it sends out the message that you can carry concealed weapons no matter where you are – but then there are all these exceptions.” He thinks the solution should be restricting guns at public events and insists that “it’s not anti-gun, it’s time and place.” He contends that guns are fine in the correct context, but “you don’t need a gun at a Phoenix basketball game, and you don’t need a gun at a Barry Manilow show.” – Jessica Boudevin

Interviewed for this article: Terry Burke, (602) 870-5300

HOT Tickets

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 March 9.

OMG! USHER POCKETS \$7.7 MIL WITH FOUR SHOWS AT ACER

15,001 or More Seats	10,001-15,000 Seats	5,001-10,000 Seats	5,000 or Less Seats
<p>1) Usher Gross Sales: \$7,747,630; Venue: Acer Arena, Sydney; Attendance: 55,792; Ticket Range: \$825.06-\$103.68; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: March 23-29; No. of Shows: 4</p>	<p>1) George Strait, Reba Gross Sales: \$1,261,446; Venue: United Spirit Arena, Lubbock, Texas; Attendance: 14,944; Ticket Range: \$89.50-\$69.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Barbara Hubbard Productions, The Messina Group; Dates: March 26; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>1) Furthur Gross Sales: \$1,109,565; Venue: Radio City Music Hall, New York; Attendance: 17,827; Ticket Range: \$65-\$45; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: March 25-27; No. of Shows: 3</p>	<p>1) Celine Dion Gross Sales: \$5,551,925; Venue: The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas; Attendance: 33,367; Ticket Range: \$250-\$55; Promoter: AEG Live, Concerts West; Dates: March 15-26; No. of Shows: 8</p>
<p>2) Kenny Chesney Gross Sales: \$4,399,810; Venue: Raymond James Stadium, Tampa, Fla.; Attendance: 50,548; Ticket Range: \$254.50-\$29.50; Promoter: AEG Live, Tampa Sports Authority, The Messina</p>	<p>2) Elton John Gross Sales: \$1,133,431; Venue: DCU Center, Worcester, Mass.; Attendance: 13,719; Ticket Range: \$137-</p>	<p>2) Usher Gross Sales: \$1,047,908; Venue: Newcastle (Australia) Entertainment Centre; Attendance: 6,941; Ticket Range: \$811.98-\$102.03; Promoter: Frontier Touring Company; Dates: March 22; No. of Shows: 1</p>	<p>2) Wicked Gross Sales: \$4,572,182; Venue: Bob Carr Perf. Arts Center, Orlando, Fla.; Attendance: 59,230; Ticket Range: \$150-\$37; Promoter: Broadway Across America Orlando, Florida Theatrical</p>

RNA Convention and Events Centre, Brisbane, Australia - GM of Operations and GM of Sales/Marketing

Snohomish County (Monroe) Parks Department, Wash. - Fairgrounds/Events Mgr.

The Township Auditorium, Columbia, S.C. - Executive Director

WIN Sports and Entertainment Centres, Wollongong, Australia - Operations Supervisor

Spotless, Australia - Retail Services Manager

Spotless, Australia - Senior Corporate Manager

St. Catharines (Ontario) Performing Arts Centre, Canada - Founding Executive Director

Melbourne (Australia) & Olympic Parks - General Manager

Ticketmaster, Perth, Australia - Client Manager (Ticketing)

WME, New York - Tour Marketer

Cirque Du Soleil, Montreal - Marketing Manager (Arena Shows)

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Group; Dates: March 19; No. of Shows: 1

3) Ricky Martin
Gross Sales: \$3,908,348; Venue: **Coliseo De Puerto Rico, San Juan**; Attendance: 53,953; Ticket Range: \$200-\$20; Promoter: Tony Mojena Entertainment; Dates: March 25-28; No. of Shows: 4

4) Pacific Life - Pac 10 Basketball Tournament
Gross Sales: \$2,927,827; Venue: **Staples Center, Los Angeles**; Attendance: 42,328; Ticket Range: \$175-\$27.50; Promoter: Fox Sports Net, Inc.; Dates: March 9-12; No. of Shows: 12

5) Neil Diamond
Gross Sales: \$2,638,314; Venue: **Acer Arena, Sydney**; Attendance: 17,497; Ticket Range: \$205.58-\$82.17; Promoter: Live Nation, Dainty Consolidated Entertainment; Dates: March 26; No. of Shows: 1

\$27; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 12; No. of Shows: 1

3) Cirque du Soleil "Quidam"
Gross Sales: \$729,971; Venue: **Valley View Casino Center, San Diego**; Attendance: 10,704; Ticket Range: \$115-\$32; Promoter: Cirque du Soleil; Dates: March 30-April 3; No. of Shows: 8

4) Atlantic 10 Men's Basketball Championship
Gross Sales: \$641,631; Venue: **Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall**; Attendance: 22,305; Ticket Range: \$65-\$15; Promoter: Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority; Dates: March 11-13; No. of Shows: 4

5) Yanni
Gross Sales: \$485,647; Venue: **Sears Centre, Hoffman Estates, Ill.**; Attendance: 5,935; Ticket Range: \$123-\$53; Promoter: Jam Productions; Dates: March 26; No. of Shows: 1

3) Western Athletic Conference Basketball Championship

Gross Sales: \$668,083; Venue: **Orleans Arena, Las Vegas**; Attendance: 14,478; Ticket Range: \$500-\$15; Promoter: Western Athletic Conference; Dates: March 9-12; No. of Shows: 4

4) Espinoza Paz
Gross Sales: \$641,905; Venue: **Nokia Theatre L.A. Live**; Attendance: 9,900; Ticket Range: \$150-\$25; Promoter: AEG Live, Goldenvoice; Dates: March 18; No. of Shows: 2

5) April Fools Comedy Show
Gross Sales: \$353,665; Venue: **The Theater at Madison Square Garden, New York**; Attendance: 5,512; Ticket Range: \$95-\$45; Promoter: Marquee Concerts; Dates: April 1; No. of Shows: 1

Association; Dates: March 1-27; No. of Shows: 32

3) Allman Brothers Band
Gross Sales: \$3,656,229; Venue: **Beacon Theatre, New York**; Attendance: 35,984; Ticket Range: \$145.99-\$45.99; Promoter: Live Nation; Dates: March 10-26; No. of Shows: 13

4) Blue Man Group
Gross Sales: \$1,001,686; Venue: **Durham (N.C.) Perf. Arts Center**; Attendance: 20,727; Ticket Range: \$60-\$20; Promoter: Nederlander, PFM; Dates: March 15-20; No. of Shows: 8

5) Barry Manilow
Gross Sales: \$605,388; Venue: **Paris Theatre, Las Vegas**; Attendance: 4,811; Ticket Range: \$250-\$65; Promoter: AEG Live; Dates: March 18-27; No. of Shows: 8

Compiled by Josh Huckabee. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714) 378-0040.

THE BEAT

FACES & PLACES

AEG ANNOUNCES TWO HIGH PROFILE HIRES FOR EURO DIVISION

AEG has snagged two more high profile executives for major management roles, plucking away executives from Madison Square Garden and the Obama Administration.

On May 9, Jay Marciano will take the helm of AEG Europe, which has grown to include 20 venues in nine countries. Working under Marciano will be Rod O'Connor, former chief of staff at the Department of Energy for the Obama Administration and former GM of the Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif.

The two hires inject some serious experience into a growing marketplace for AEG. Both men will be headquartered in London at the O2 Arena, the highest grossing arena in the world for its size category according to Venues Today Year-End Top Stops.

Marciano is the former president of Madison Square Garden Entertainment, overseeing booking and traveling shows for Radio City Music Hall, Madison Square Garden, WaMu Theater at Madison Square Garden, the Beacon Theatre and the Chicago Theatre. From 2003 to 2005 he was the Chief Strategy Officer at AEG Live, where he helped the company grow its festival division and acquire the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

Marciano will report directly to AEG's board of directors and help build a European team, with O'Connor as his primary lieutenant. Both men were instrumental in the development of the O2 Arena during their tenure with the company.

“My role at the time was to focus on the operations of the venues we acquired,” O’Connor said. “Just before I left, we had a conversation about expanding the role to Europe, and then I got a phone call out of the blue from the transition team for President Obama.”

O’Connor is a longtime Democrat and former CEO of the Democratic National Convention in Boston, where he managed 300 employees with a budget of \$300 million. He first met AEG CEO Tim Leiweke while organizing the 2000 convention at the Staples Center.

He said working for the President was a great experience, but came during a particularly difficult time for energy policy in the United States. One of the most difficult experiences for O’Connor was assisting with the aftermath of the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico, an event that he said resulted in many “sleepless nights and long days.”

In his new role, O’Connor said he will be responsible for managing AEG’s expansion throughout Europe and assisting with operations and bookings for partner venues.

— Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Rod O’Connor, +44 (20) 7536 2600

BOOKINGS **MADAGASCAR LIVE! TO CLOSE AFTER RADIO CITY RUN**

Penguins from Madagascar Live! pose for a press event outside Rockefeller Center in New York (Photo Credit: Kristen Blush).

REPORTING FROM NEW YORK - The Oscar-winning film team at DreamWorks studios have halted bookings for the first musical for their new touring division. Originally slated for a 30-city tour, Madagascar Live! will now make a final nine-day run at Radio City Music Hall in New York before going on temporary hiatus.

The live family show is based on the popular film series of the same name and is directed by Gip Hoppe. The show was being co-promoted by Broadway Across America and had already played 20 dates before announcing its cancellation following its April 15-24 run at Radio City Music Hall.

“I don’t know how everyone else was showing, but our show was selling fine,” said Ted Heinig from the Tennessee Theater in Knoxville, the next stop on the tour for Madagascar Live! after New York.

Heinig said he was given no reason for the cancellation, which was announced about two weeks ago. Tickets to the show have been refunded to the public.

Booking agents Alison Spiriti and Tivon Marcus from AWA Touring handled the dates for the show.

John Tellum, who handles publicity for the show, said, “Ultimately it was a cost decision” and noted that the money required to stage the show had eclipsed the success of Madagascar Live!

What this means for future DreamWorks productions is unclear. The studio is planning an arena tour based on How To Train Your Dragon, produced in association with Global Creatures, the Australian outfit responsible for creating Walking with Dinosaurs. DreamWorks Theatrical is also working on an arena show based on Kung Fu Panda, produced in association with Franco Dragon Entertainment. — Kristen Blush and Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Ted Heinig, (865) 684-1200; John Tellum, (310) 210-8779

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