

AUDIENCE

FOR THE INTER

MUSIC INDUSTRY

Issue 89
UK: £5.85 • EU: €10 • ROW: \$12.00

They feel like dancin'

Scissor Sisters set to blast Europe

London back on top

New stadium, arena and concert venue

More than just a tribute

Arena dates for Australian Pink Floyd Show

*Baltic Development Group
MD Peeter Rebane*



“ People only have a limited amount of income to spend on entertainment and they have many alternatives ”

London leads the world Shows bonanza as major venues open

UNITED KINGDOM The arrival in London of three new venues - the 75,000-capacity Wembley Stadium, The O₂ arena (cap. 20,000) and its sister venue IndigO₂ (2,300) - has put the capital well and truly back on the global touring circuit and also given the domestic scene a significant boost.

For seven years the city has had no stadium, its biggest but rarely-available indoor venue was exhibition complex Earls Court (20,000), Wembley Arena holds just 12,000 people and the most luxurious concert venue was the 136-year-old Royal Albert Hall.

Now, in the space of a few weeks, the capital has the three most modern stadium, arena and concert/club venues in the world.

Wembley Stadium, having taken a troubled seven years to build at a cost of £800 million (\$1.6bn), opened with shows by George Michael and Muse, played host to two mammoth Live Nation-produced televised events - the Concert for Diana and Live Earth - and will close its two-month summer window with Metallica.

"Although it is owned by the Football Association, Wembley has been designed with music in mind," says head of music and new events Jim Frayling. "Concerts will account for approximately one in three of all major events here during any given year."

Acoustics specialist Vanguardia, aided by U2 sound engineer Joe O'Herlihy, installed a range of features in the stadium to improve



Jim Frayling



The O₂ complex

live performance sound, from extensive use of the latest sound absorption materials to an integrated in-house delay system, which can be plugged into a visiting artiste's front-of-house mixing desk.

Dome transformation

Vanguardia played a similar role in computer-modelling both rooms in The O₂ entertainment complex, which US venue owner and event promoter AEG built inside the city's former Millennium Dome.

An ambitious £350m (\$703m) build was completed in time for Bon Jovi to open the venue on 25 June, with the complex including not only an arena and luxury concert/club, but an 11-screen cinema, 24 restaurants and cafes, an exhibition centre and two giant piazzas.

Even before opening, more than a million tickets had been sold for shows by acts such as the Rolling Stones, Prince, Barbra Streisand, Justin Timberlake and Snow Patrol.

"We want it to be the easiest place to rig a show anywhere in the world," says The O₂'s general manager Mike Potter. "Trucks can offload straight onto the back of both venues' stages and the IndigO₂ also offers comprehensive in-house sound and lights systems, so that many acts will only need to turn up with their backline."

The O₂'s 96 corporate boxes - costing £120,000-150,000 (\$240,000-\$300,000) per year to rent - were sold to companies such as BMW, Philips and Credit Suisse, while David Beckham and Chelsea Football Club owner Roman Abramovich are believed to be among the buyers of 160 similar suites at Wembley.

AEG is already building a similar state-of-the-art arena in Berlin and others will no doubt be planning similar venues elsewhere, but for the moment, London is enjoying its renewed status as a top concert destination.



Wembley Stadium

Investment firm buys SMG

UNITED STATES An investment company has bought North America's biggest arena and stadium operator in a deal worth \$631 million.

American Capital, a Bethesda, Maryland-based investment firm bought Philadelphia-based SMG, which operates about 180 publicly-owned worldwide facilities.

Venues include the Reliant Stadium (cap. 69,500) in Houston, the UK's Manchester Evening News Arena (20,000) and Germany's Konig-Pilsener

Arena (10,300) in Oberhausen.

An SMG spokesperson tells *Audience* that she could not comment at this time, but according to a published letter sent by SMG CEO Wes Westley to the company's venues, there will be no changes in the management or operations of SMG's facilities.

American Capital claims to be the second largest publicly-traded alternative asset manager in the US with \$11bn in assets.

JSA opens European office

LATVIA Leading Russian staging and production company JSA Professional has founded an affiliate operation, JSA Europe Production, in the capital Riga.

Having built festival stages in Finland and worked on such shows as Metallica's 70,000-capacity sell-out in Estonian capital Tallinn, the company is keen to expand further into Europe.

"We are now in a position to offer partial or full production services in any part of the

Russian Federation and European continent," JSA president Alexander Strizhak tells *Audience*, adding that the company can offer very competitive rates compared with Western European operations.

The company's Russian offices are in Moscow and St Petersburg.



Alexander Strizhak



Joe Cocker, Red Square, Moscow



Shakira, Black Eyed Peas, Red Square, Moscow



Rammstein, HIM, Ruisrock, Finland

Staging Russia the way you like it the way we make it



Roger Waters, Red Square, Moscow



Rock Festival Nashествie, Ryazan



Andrea Bocelli, Place Square, St. Petersburg



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We have worked with Paul McCartney, The Rolling Stones, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Metallica, Rammstein, Roger Waters, Joe Cocker, Shakira, Black Eyed Peas, Andrea Bocelli, Roxette, Placido Domingo, Muse and many others.

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