AUDIENCE

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY MUSIC INDUSTRY

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Hey There, world

Plain White T's target international festivals

AEG rivals Live Nation in The Gulf

Competitors go head-to-head in growing market

Always seeing the bigger picture

Exclusive interview with promoter Marcel Avram

Charmenko's Nick Hobbs in Turkey

"Last year was the toughest for live music here since 2000"

Marcel Avram, Marek Lieberberg, Huey Lewis and Carl Leighton-Pope

successful musical extravaganzas *Merchants of Bollywood* and *Night Of The Sultans* playing theatres in central and south-eastern Europe.

All the while though, his real efforts have been focussed on opening up the markets of Romania, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavian republics and neighbouring Turkey, where he now has an office and spends much of his time.

"I was born in Romania. This is the part of the world I come from. I understand the mentality. I like the people, I like the food, I like everything they have," he says.

In January this year Avram found his name in the headlines again when it was reported that he was to head a new consortium of local Balkan promoters and offer mini-tours of the region to top international acts such as Bruce Springsteen and Eric Clapton.

Avram denied those reports hotly to *Audience* at the time, and continues to do so now.

"There are already local promoters here who I am working with to try to build something like we did it in Western countries. But a consortium? Forget that, it would never work."

But there's no denying the existence of a new and potentially lucrative market on the eastern fringes of the European Union, and Avram is intent on helping to open it up.

"Audiences in this part of the world are growing more sophisticated," he says. "Just look at Istanbul. This year they will have Metallica, Bon Jovi, Kylie Minogue, Lenny Kravitz, Eric Clapton and more. Every other country would be happy to have these acts.

"It's the same with Sofia. Ask an American where it is and he won't know. But it may not be long before there are more big shows happening here than in San Jose, California. AUD

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