

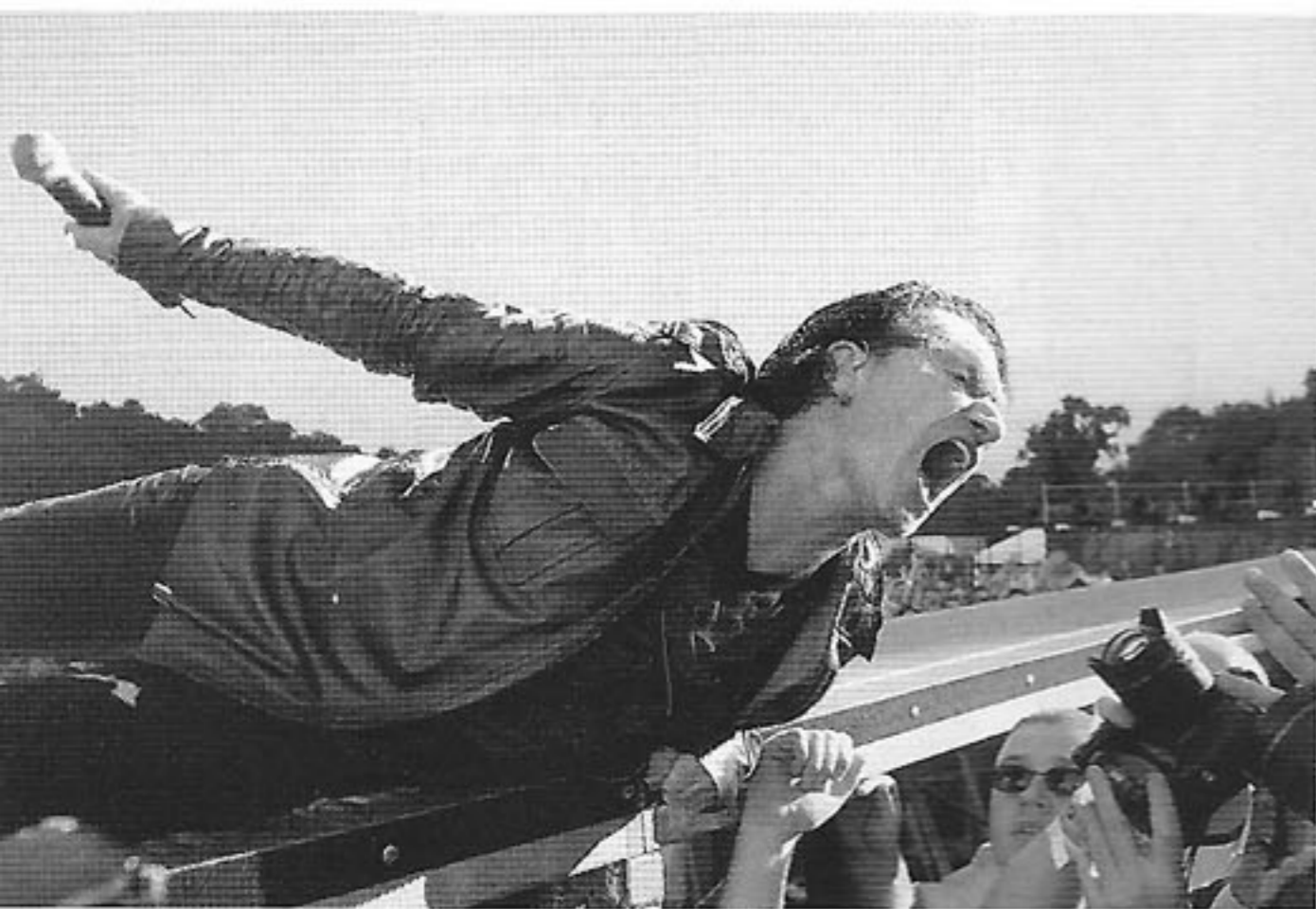
POWELLSTAR

The Concert Hotwire



SEPTEMBER 3, 2001





AP Photo/PA

BONO does his land shark imitation during U2's concert at **Slane Castle** in County Meath, Ireland, August 25. The band played to 80,000 fans, its largest crowd ever in Ireland. It was one of two sold-out shows for U2 at the castle. Approximately 800 police were on hand in one of the biggest one-day police operations in the history of the republic.

Tour has earned many newspaper column inches for its ticket prices and gross earnings, as well as various speculative articles about who gets how much of the money. That didn't seem to matter to the 80,000 music fans who came to see the band's triumphant return.

In the years between that '81 show and last weekend, either availabilities or the country's protracted planning permission laws prevented the act from doing a Slane show. After the date sold out in no time at all, the government intervened to change the planning laws, stopping the eight-month delay in getting the relevant licences and paved the way for a second U2 date at Slane on September 1.

• AS PREVIOUS ENTRANTS have included Samantha Mumba and Reel, the third annual **Speakeasy Pop Saturday** showcases deserve some attention.

The Digifone-sponsored event, run with radio 2FM as a media partner and organised by Aiken Promotions, began on Saturday, September 1, at Dublin's 700-capacity Vicar Street. The shows give upcoming Irish talent a chance to appear alongside the country's better-known acts, while fans can enjoy an attractive lunchtime bill for £5.

Vicar St. will be hosting the event every two weeks. No Angels D.C.

was the main act for the first show. Fifth Avenue, which was last week celebrating an Irish midweek chart position of No.6 for its first single, appears five times in the coming weeks.

The intervening weeks will be held at Waterford's 800-capacity Forum (September 8), Cork's 600-capacity Everyman (22) and Galway's Black Box (October 6).

Although the event is structured more like a showcase than a competition, a panel of music industry reps will pick the best new pop act and Esat Digifone will give it a cash prize of £1,000. When the competition ends mid-October, the Irish may well be saying they've just seen

the new Westlife, Ronan Keating, etc., etc.

Norway: PEOPLE IN THE U.K. MAY wonder about some of the choices the Prince Of Wales makes regarding female companions. Still, it would be interesting to consider how the ruling Windsor family would have felt if Charles hitched up with a single mother from the drug-fueled club scene of the '90s whom he'd met at a pop festival.

On August 25, Norwegian **Crown Prince Haakon** married Mette-Marit Tjessem Hoiby, whom he met at the 15,000-capacity Quart Festival in '98.

No doubt seduced by the soothing and dulcet melodies of Beastie Boys, Iggy Pop, Lo Fidelity Allstars, Teenage Fanclub, and Hellcopters, they fell in love. The best man was **Crown Prince Frederick of Denmark**, known as the "turbo prince" for the impressive amount of speeding tickets he's collected.

Although the country has largely been set against this marriage of king-to-be and commoner, the people of Oslo gave the couple a very warm wedding day reception. That may be because the state relaxed its somewhat Draconian drinking laws to allow open-air stalls to sell wine and beer all day.

Hungary: SZIGET FESTIVAL'S Dan Panaitescu and Nick Hobbs of Charmenko must be feeling very relieved that ILMC founder Martin Hopewell gave such a quick and positive response for "contracts and cancellations" to be discussed at next spring's gathering.

As Hopewell's reaction came before the recent **Yourope** (Europe Festivals Association) meeting in Cologne on August 18, Panaitescu was no longer reliant on that organisation's support. It's just as well, as he must have left the meeting ruefully reflecting that his chances of getting it were always slim.

Hopewell said the issue has been discussed at the ILMC before, saying, "We've had practice discussing this without ever actually finding a practice for dealing with it." It seems Yourope is in the same position.

Its chairman, Gunnar Lagerman of Sweden's 30,000-capacity Hultsfred Festival, acknowledged that cancellations "for no reason or for a poor reason" is a problem for all festivals every now and then, but it's a matter on which Yourope members don't seem able to reach an agreement.



AP Photo

U2's BONO is a pallbearer at the funeral of his father, Bob Hewson, at the Church of Assumption in Howth, Ireland, August 24. His father died August 21 at the age of 75 after a long bout with cancer. U2 drummer **Larry Mullin** is directly behind Bono.

Lagerman explained, "This is a very difficult matter which we have discussed several times, both as members and at board meetings, and for the moment, we don't see any possibility of uniting on the issue, despite its importance.

"Possible actions include the banning of artists but, while that has been discussed, it wouldn't work unless all members supported such an action.

"It's difficult for a festival that has had a successful show with a certain artist to join in a ban on that artist because another member festival has had problems over a cancellation with it."

Although he's failed to get the support of the Yourope board, which includes Switzerland's 30,000-capacity Open Air St. Gallen, Denmark's 70,000-capacity Roskilde and Greece's 40,000-capacity Rock Wave, as well as Hultsfred and the 70,000-capacity Sziget, it doesn't mean Panaitescu had the door slammed in his face.

Lagerman noted that the failure of Panaitescu's efforts to get support from the board doesn't necessarily mean the issue can't be brought up again at the next full members' meeting in Amsterdam on October 20.

"If some members want to bring it up for discussion again, then we'll do so," he added.

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Hobbs was clearly put out by the cancellations of The Wailers and Blood Sweat & Tears for this year's Sziget, both of which were headliners, and also that of Fun Lovin' Criminals, which had a prominent billing. To make matters worse, The Cult pulled its August 28 headline appearance at Slovenia's new Pop Arts Festival in Ljubljana, another booking he arranged.

At the time, Hobbs said, "Somehow, the e-mail, the fax and the (generally unsigned) contract seem to be becoming documents that exist for the artists' convenience and not as a confirmation of mutual commercial responsibility."

Although neither Hobbs nor Panaitescu attached any blame to the agents, so far GLP Artist Marketing in Austria (for Blood Sweat & Tears), Matoma in France (The Wailers) and Helter Skelter in the U.K. (The Cult) haven't responded to requests for comment, although Paul Boswell of the U.K.'s Free Trade Agency said, "I told the festival that the Fun Lovin' Criminals cancellation was for personal reasons, and I'm not in a position to add anything to that at the moment."

Sweden: NOW THAT NICOLAI Dunger is due to start his support slot on Mercury Rev's European tour (October 2), and with the International Noise Conspiracy opening for Manic Street Preachers in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Holland, plus Meshuggah backing Tool on 11 U.S. dates, agency/promoter **Luger** can concentrate on its hectic autumn schedule while its Scandinavian acts spread their wings abroad.

Back on the home front, it's a particularly busy time. American act Bright Eyes started it off with appearances at Gothenburg's 275-capacity Pusterviksbaren August 29 and followed up with shows at Stockholm's 400-capacity Teatern and Malmo's 750-capacity KB.

Between that Gothenburg date and a Waterboys' show at Stockholm's 1,500-capacity Arena on November 23, Luger will be working on 30 shows by 18 bands from seven different countries. The list includes Stereolab, Air, Ed Harcourt, The Beta Band, Mercury Rev, Nitin Sawhney, Cowboy Junkies, and Lamb.

• **CLEAR CHANNEL COMMUNICATIONS** (CCC) has acquired **Eventum**, the US\$4 million turnover event company that produces such events as Stockholm's annual ATP tennis tournament, the Swedish car rally

and will also organise next year's celebrations for the 750th anniversary of the Swedish capital.

The deal was completed by CCC's EMA Telstar, whose managing director, Thomas Johansson, described Eventum as the biggest event organiser in Scandinavia. Eventum will continue to trade under its own name and founder Mats Laftman and his staff of 24 will stay with the company.

Russia: ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S top production companies will take a further step toward building a reputation as a promoter of international acts when **JSA Professional Stage** teams up with Sweden's EMA Telstar to present Roxette at Moscow's 15,000-capacity Olympiyskiy Sport Arena on November 7.

Last year, JSA promoted Deep Purple at Moscow's 8,000-capacity Luzhniki Sports Palace and Alice Cooper at Olympiyskiy - both deals done with The Agency's London office - and also Guano Apes at the 40,000-capacity Khodynskoe Field in May.

The company's main strength, though, has always been in production. Credits on that score include Michael Jackson at 70,000-capacity Moscow Dinamo Stadium in '96, The Rolling Stones' "Bridges To Babylon" show at the 100,000-capacity Moscow Luzhniki Stadium in '98 and also in Moscow the same year, shows at the 5,800-capacity Kremlin Palace for Montserrat Caballe, Chris Rea and Julio Iglesias.

Last year, the company staged the Red Hot Chili Peppers performance in front of a huge crowd in Moscow's Red Square, which was part of MTV Russia's first birthday celebrations.

JSA's Valery Feofanov said his company was particularly attracted to promoting Roxette because it has proven to be one of the most popular acts in Russia for nearly 10 years.

EMA's Thomas Johansson told POLLSTAR, "They approached us with an idea for doing the show and conducted themselves in a very professional manner. This is obviously the first time we have worked with them and we spent some time discussing the deal.

"When that was all agreed, we went ahead. I must say they continue to operate in a very efficient manner in all aspects of the business, from involving radio stations in promotion right through to sending art work for approval."

Johansson believes the Baltic region has massive potential if agents and promoters show some patience. "It's not like digging for gold in California and finding it in a minute," he explained, "but Helsinki to St. Petersburg is less than a five-hour drive and, of course, there is the 10,000-capacity Saku Suurhall en route in Tallinn. There can be hold-ups for the trucks on border crossings, but I don't believe that will be a problem in years to come."

• THE 1,100-capacity **Tochka Club**'s failure to establish itself as a venue for upcoming international talent has left promoters with a big problem over where to put such acts. A quick analysis of the summer's ticket figures, though, suggests anyone not capable of doing multiple nights at arena venues like the 8,000-capacity Luzhniki or the 5,800-capacity Kremlin Palace is going to struggle in Moscow.

Red Snapper's show at Tochka in June, promoted by Myelnitsa, made a modest profit as 1,010 of the 1,100 US\$18 tickets were sold.

However, the company (which has only promoted national acts until this summer) took a massive dive on Placebo and Deftones shows

at the city's 10,000-capacity Gorky Park Green Theatre. Placebo sold 2,500 US\$15 tickets on June 20 and Deftones shifted 1,500 at the same price on June 26.

The Feelee Promotions' Tindersticks show at Tochka came close to breaking even, with 809 sales of US\$12 tickets, although the same act's Soundlab-promoted show at St. Petersburg's Theatre For The Young Audience moved less than half of the available 750 US\$10 dollar tickets.

Megadeth's July 6 show at Luzhniki, which was promoted by Talent Concert International (TCI), only managed to sell 3,337 of the 8,500 US\$ 15 tickets, and the same company also took losses on both its visits to Tochka.



A PLACIDO DOMINGO CONCERT in Red Square is prepped by JSA Professional Stage July 18. The production company, which has produced Moscow shows for Red Hot Chili Peppers and Michael Jackson, will be promoting a Roxette show in November.

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