

POLLSTAR

The Concert Hotwire

NICKELBACK



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Supporting acts include Gang Bang Models, Chicks Got Dicks, Puritan Sex, Fetish Machine, Sex Centrefolds, Asian Peaches, Upskirt Teenies, and Lesbo Express.

This appears to show quite a radical change in booking policy as acts on the bill at last year's 20,000-capacity bash included Therapy?, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Iggy Pop, and Das Pop – although a few eyebrows might be raised when it's noticed that Backyard Babies and Nashville Pussy also appeared.

The home page carries a warning that reads, "Beware – This site contains only 100 percent uncensored extreme sex," and points out that it's only designed for the over 18s.

For last year's POLLSTAR Talent Buyer directory, the festival gave its site as the dot-com address, but now it seems the "com" has been replaced by "be" for Belgium.

A spokesperson for the event would only say, "Yes, we know about the problem."

Russia: IT'S BEGINNING TO TURN out the way that a lot of people may have suspected for quite some time now. Many acts have been encountering great difficulties and long delays when entering the country, which have generally been attributed to the incredibly complicated documentation involved and the intransigence of the customs staff.

The last act to encounter such problems was **Roxette** and on this occasion, it started to become clear that the problem may not be down to intransigence as much as corruption.

That's not to say the Swedish pop stars were delayed because they weren't offering a fat enough bribe. Basically, it was because the country's government decided to investigate exactly what was happening at the border crossing points and sent in a police squad to find out.

Unfortunately, having customs officers checking documents while police officers were standing at their shoulders meant the laboriously slow process pretty well ground to a halt altogether.

Valery Feofanov of JSA Professional Stage, which co-promoted the November 7 show at the 15,802-capacity Olympiyskiy with Baltic Development Group (BDG) and Sweden's EMA Telstar, told POLLSTAR, "It's obviously not a bad thing when a government institution launches an internal anticorruption campaign in order to spotlight officials who are making ill-gotten gains, but it shouldn't upset the interests of people who've nothing to do with these domestic affairs.

"Having had five trucks and two buses stuck in the neutral zone for hours while this anticorruption investigation went on, we were faced with the problem of finding a legal way for them to jump the queue in order for them to drive to Moscow in time for the show.

"Once we'd explained the importance of the truck getting through quickly, a customs officer and two border guards drove into the neutral zone and brought the trucks through. Sometimes this can be difficult because other drivers further up the queue can get very angry when this happens."

After doing nearly 80 percent business there, Roxette moved on to St. Petersburg's New Arena (9) where Nord Concert Alliance was the local promoter and sold all 10,000 tickets.

Next stop was Tallinn (10), which meant leaving through another Russian border checkpoint. As the investigative clampdown had ended, the customs officials no doubt felt free to make more trouble and exacted their revenge by detaining the act's production and delaying it for four hours.

When asked why this had happened, Ingrid Peek of BDG, which promoted the Tallinn show in a sold-out 8,500-capacity Saku Suurhall, said, "That's what the Russian customs do."

• **THE IRONY OF THE RUSSIAN** customs situation is that German rock act **Rammstein** had no problems either getting in or out even though it was probably carrying enough pyrotechnics and explosives to turn the border crossing buildings into piles of rubble.

All these fireworks are for the band's outrageous stage show, which is reportedly like standing in the middle of a battlefield.

It's certainly popular with the punters as all 9,169 tickets for Moscow Luzhniki (November 17) went in advance, and the walk-up took the St. Petersburg Ledova Arena show (19) to its 12,497-capacity.

Both were co-promoted by Ed Ratnikov of Talent Concert International and Nick Hobbs of Charmenko, with the latter continuing his involvement in the tour by putting on shows at the 15,000-capacity Vilnius New Sports Hall in Lithuania (21), Latvia's 10,000-capacity Skonto Hall in Riga (22) and Estonia's 8,500-capacity Saku Suurhall in Tallinn (23) with Peeter Rebane of Baltic Development Group.

Then the act was scheduled to move on to a 6,500-capacity Helsinki Ice Rink (25), which Risto Juvonen's WellDone Agency had sold out over a month ago, Stockholm's 3,500-capacity Sonahallen (27) – where EMA Telstar's David Maloney is already cursing the fact that no bigger venue was available – before finishing in Scandinavia at Copenhagen's 3,000-capacity KB



OCEAN COLOUR SCENE tops the three-day bill of *Music Live*, sponsored in part by Coe-tech pro lighting. The massive exhibition was held at the NEC Arena in Birmingham, England, November 2-4.

Halle (29), which International Concert Organisation had also sold out more than a month ago.

Selling out in advance is already something of a happy habit for the band, as the next batch of shows have already gone in advance; they are a 4,200-capacity London Brixton Academy (December 2) – promoted by Metropolis Music – three 5,500-capacity Amsterdam Heineken Halls (3-5) promoted by Rob Trommelen of Mojo Concerts, and Belgium's 6,000-capacity Leuven Brabantthal (6), promoted by Herman Schueremans of Rock Werchter.

Then it's home to Germany for a December 7 show at Freiburg's 10,000-capacity Messehalle, promoted by Scumbeck Sabottka of MCT Konzertagentur, who is also the agent for all the European dates.

Prior to the Moscow shows, Rammstein did all but 1,000 of the tickets in the 14,000-capacity Paegas Arena in Prague (November 12), which was co-promoted by Tomas Purkart of Poorky Entertainment and Tim Dowdall of Multimedia, and just more than 65 percent of the 9,000-capacity at Poland's Spodek in Katowice (13), which was promoted by Multimedia and Steve Todd of Odyssey.

Switzerland: WHO THE HELL ARE the Tarantinos?

Alon Renner of Gadget, who books the act throughout mainland Europe, explained, "The show is part music, part acting and part mime and features songs from the Tarantino films 'Pulp Fiction,' 'Reservoir Dogs' and 'Jackie Brown.' Imagine The Blues Brothers but with more soul, funk and rap."

The U.K.-based tribute to expletives and gratuitous violence has made a much bigger impact in mainland Europe than it has at home, and a December tour is scheduled for Switzerland's 850-capacity Bierhubeli in Bern, Germany's 800-capacity Bochum Zeche, Dusseldorf's 800-capacity

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Rating Hof, Austria's 800-capacity Vienna Arena, the 250-capacity Aflenz Sublime, Tirol's 300-capacity Stadtsaal and Dornbirn's 150-capacity Sonderbar.

The band then returns to Switzerland for Lucerne's 650-capacity Schuur, Aarburg's 500-capacity Moonwalker, Vevey's 600-capacity Rocking Chair, Winterthur's 650-capacity Salzhaus, St. Gallen's 500-capacity Grabenhalle, Thun's 800-capacity Café Mokka, Stafa's 400-capacity Rossli and the 500-capacity Davos Bolgenschanze.

With the exception of two dates, all Swiss shows are backed by Radio 105 and supported by Radio Bel and Radio 32, respectively. Unfortunately, nobody will notice the benefit of it on radio but another plus – Renner explained – is that “they have a girl singer who looks just like Uma Thurman.”

Turkey: HE'S ARGUABLY THE biggest national star with 3 million album sales in the domestic market and a further million internationally for his *Olurum Sana* album, which is only his second, but **Tarkan** is running the risk of upsetting some locals because he's seen passionately kissing a model in his new video.

In August, he sold out open-air shows at holiday resorts averaging capacities of 10,000 at Izmir, Bodrum, Marmaris and Anatalya (August 16-22), but the country's *Milliyet* newspaper warned (November 18) that Turkish media watchdogs may consider banning the film from television stations.

According to the paper, nearly 100 callers left messages on the watchdog's hotline complaining that this passionate kiss verged on pornography.

Tarkan appears to be somewhat nonplussed by this media attention and is reported as telling *Milliyet*, “What is worrying is that the kissing scene is being considered pornographic.”

His live work is sorted out by Mydonose Productions, which replied to questions on the “video snog” by coyly saying, “We have forwarded your inquiry mail to the management of Tarkan.”

GERMAN NEWS

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• THE UPCOMING AMENDMENT OF the **withholding tax** for foreigners is going to be a major issue for German concert industry companies, both large and small.

POLLSTAR asked the opinions of representatives of some of these companies, revealing that it is generally believed the amendments have not gone far enough to meet the needs of all the parties involved.

Marek Lieberberg said: “For me, this regulation is only a fig leaf to cover up the fact that the law itself is wrong. Of course, the amendment to the tax allowance for smaller fees might be helpful, but it remains to be seen how bureaucratic the procedures involved are going to be.

“However, in general, I cannot agree at all with this tax. I neither see the point of artists being treated differently from people in other professions nor why foreign artists are taxable in Germany. And where else in the world is a differentiation being made between solo artists and a band? Bands are being taxed at 32.12 percent while solo artists have to pay 34.49 percent.

“However, the regulation is only bureaucratic and therefore, the whole tax is simply false.”

Guenther Linnartz of Karsten Jahnke Konzerte commented: “Although one could say the changing of the law is a first step in the right direction, the fact is it isn't because the amount of 250 Euro per show that is tax free is just peanuts in comparison to the actual costs an artist incurs whilst on the road.

“For example, when you are traveling as a six-piece and have normal twin rooms in hotels, this amount is already spent and the artist still has to pay his crew, flights, backline hire and transportation costs.

“Some years ago, a German Revenue Office spokesman confessed on a panel during Popkomm that an artist had costs of approximately 4,000 DM per day. When the new law is regarded as a sign of German open-mindedness, I would call this a lie or at least a very strange view on reality.”

Michael Bisping of ASS told POLLSTAR, “We think that this is a very important step in the right direction toward a fairer tax system for non-German artists, although we were hoping for a higher tax-free allowance since expenses (such as travel expenses) are still nondeductible.”

Klaus Maack from Contour Music Promotion said, “The new law

is utterly insufficient. The absurd taxation of travel expenses and the so-called ‘Monetary value benefits’ that are needed to make artist performances possible still remain. The minimum granted tax allowance for smaller fees is going to be canceled out by the remaining tax regulations.

“This is the wrong way of getting rid of the ‘foreigner hostile image’ of Germany and of avoiding driving youth culture into the underground.”

Dirq Niemann from Powerline Agency argued, “On first sight, it doesn't seem so bad but the amendment itself comes much too late. There are parts of this law that are not going far enough and the general problems of this tax cause economic restrictions that are hard for our business to deal with.”

Peter Schwenkow, CEO of DEAG, was one of the very few to comment positively on the new regulation.

He told POLLSTAR, “I believe that all involved parties, especially during the hearing organized by the parliamentary faction of the SPD (social democrats) and the Green Party, proved this taxation prevents cultural offerings in Germany.

“That is definitely not the aim of the red-green government (red is the colour of the social democrats and green is the colour of the Green Party). The hearing caused a political awareness that comes at a time where it is very difficult to enforce tax reductions for interested parts of the population.

“I do not expect that there will be any kind of resistance in the Bundestag or Bundesrat, where the amendment has to be ratified so that



GLP ARTIST MARKETING'S George Leitner gets the point from **George Clinton** at the Montreux Jazz Festival during the final night of Clinton's European tour earlier this year. Sister **Christine Leitner** managed the tour.

the new regulation can be valid from January 1 onward.

“But, the reform is only the first step. Our ultimate request consists of two points: first, that the reduction of this taxation goes down to 15 percent and second – which is even more important – that the taxation of travel expenses is removed, especially in the smaller segment because for 250 Euro, you can only buy a train ticket and a stay in a three-star hotel.

“As well, I do not agree with Berthold Seliger who claims that the new regulation is only a coup for the upcoming election campaign. A closer look at the amendment reveals that, in particular, smaller groups and artists will benefit from the new regulation.

“That does not mean that the live music business will experience the

Dr. John

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