

POUNCE THE STAR

Vanessa Carlton

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"It may be easier in some ways to sign one contract for the two territories, but I think we can make better offers than a Vienna office that's run from thousands of kilometres away in Germany."

Fechter, who took a two-year break from live bands in order to concentrate on family entertainment, has cooperated with Semmel Concerts on much of its family shows – Fechter said around 40 dates a year – and also worked with Marek Lieberberg Konzertagentur and Semmel on heavyweight acts including U2, Guns N' Roses, and Elton John.

Lieberberg, who sparked controversy as he opened the Vienna office by casting doubts on the abilities of Austrian promoters, was in no mood to dampen the flames as he said, "I think they should be rewarded euro 16,000 each for the pain they've had to endure."

"It's a ridiculous claim and we're patiently waiting for it to be sorted out sensibly by the Austrian judicial authorities."

Germany: "WITH WOMEX2002, North-Rhine Westphalia is now hosting Germany's second major international music fair after the Popkomm in Cologne, reinforcing our region's status as an outstanding location for the media and the music industry. It is a reputation we are understandably proud of, just as we are glad to see the trust the WOMEX producers have placed in the innovative power of the Ruhr area," said regional minister

Manfred Morgenstern as he closed out this year's conference-cum-festival.

The October 24-27 event, held at the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Zeche Zollverein in Essen, a Bauhaus style "industrial cathedral" of the '20s, attracted more than 1,800 registered participants from more than 80 countries – including 200 journalists – who networked in three Trade Fair Halls at 174 stands, presented more than 250 companies, discussed on 25 conference sessions and visited 40 WOMEX showcases.

For the first time, WOMEX included a film and TV market focusing on World Music content.

The highly international WOMEX community included producers, distributors, publishers, record labels festivals, booking agencies, cultural exchange organisations and more than 50 participants from North-Rhine Westphalia, the biggest geo-economical region in Germany. As for the quantity of deals and agreements set, WOMEX again proved to be the central marketplace for the international World Music community.

For a nominal access fee, many locals from the Rhine and Ruhr region welcomed the opportunity to visit 16 showcases per night presenting artists from all over the world.

The number of trade fair participants and individual delegates increased by 15 percent in relation to the last WOMEX in Rotterdam in 2001.

Next year's event is slated for Seville in Spain either late October or early November.

Scandinavia: ALTHOUGH 44,000 Bruce Springsteen tickets went out of the door in two hours and 15 minutes, DKB-Motor's Steen Mariboe was pretty cool about it all and said, "That's the same speed as they went last time and pretty much what I expected."

November 4 saw records broken by Springsteen and Clear Channel – in the shape of EMA Telster (Sweden), Gunnar Eide (Norway) and WellDone (Finland) – when 156,000 tickets available for shows in Gothenburg, Oslo and Helsinki were sold out in about the same amount of time. The collective box offices sold around 100,000 tickets in each of the two hours they were open.

Mariboe, which has two other shows penciled for Copenhagen Parken next summer, said he expected a quiet autumn because the acts aren't really out there, but those passing through the country include Alicia Keys, Ryan Adams, Coldplay, and The Foo Fighters – the latter having just had its December 5 show at the 1,500-capacity Store Vega upped to the 3,000-capacity KB Hallen.

- THE BEST LAID PLANS OF MICE and rock promoters can sometimes go a little pear-shaped as Sweden Rock Festival's kick-off at Stockholm's Hard Rock Café has been shifted from November 29 to November 30.

In this case, the plan was to announce seven or eight of the acts due on next year's bill and even introduce two members of one of the headliners for a high profile launch, but the headliners couldn't make November 29.

The festival press release gives scant clue as to who the mystery headliners are, other than saying, "The resurrection of this band is very special and because of that, two of the band members will come to the kick-off and make their reunion public."

"Saturday November 30 was the only date the band members were free to come over to Sweden."

- THE NORDIC AREA'S LARM LIVE & Seminar has announced its 2003 dates as February 13-16.

The press release said, "Stay in the loop and be at the market place where you can develop local contacts for your business and perhaps sign your own a-ha or Röyksopp."



DESPITE lower-than-expected attendance figures and general somberness following the Moscow theatre hostage crisis, Alice Cooper manages to laugh it up with promoter JSA's Alexander Strizhak backstage after a November 5 gig at Sport Palace Luzhniki.

First news of who will be playing and who will be heading the talking is expected at the beginning of December. The event takes place in the old Norwegian city of Trondheim.

Russia: THE TRAGIC AND BLOODY incident that cost nearly 120 lives when Chechen fighters took the entire cast and audience hostage during an October 23 production of "North-East" in Moscow's former House Of Culture has further dampened the live music market, according to Valery Feofanov of promoters JSA.

The company's November 5 show with Alice Cooper at the city's 8,000-capacity Palace Luzhniki did barely 50 percent business, which was extremely disappointing for an act that sold more than 10,000 tickets in a bigger room on his last visit to Moscow two years ago.

In a statement translated (roughly) into English, Feofanov said, "The hostages' accident that happened two weeks prior to Alice's show had a bad effect on ticket sales, while we counted on approaching 75 percent mark at this particular period of time."

"There is a local custom here in this country when a certain amount of concert-goers make so-called last-minute-decisions about buying tickets at a venue's box-offices as they're going in."

"This time being scared, they seemed to be mulling it over whether they should go or stay at home. Obviously, some of them preferred their homes as a last-minute-decision."

"As far as security was concerned, it should be said that as soon as it comes to big venues, safety requirements are really very strong here and a promoter would not be permitted even to start loading in gear without agreements made with both the



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venue's security department and municipal police signed in advance."

United Arab Emirates: THE LIVE music scene in Dubai took a bold step forward with the October launch of the region's premier music festival. The one-day **Heineken Festival**, staged in conjunction with the U.A.E.'s Formula One Power Boat Championships, was the first of its kind ever hosted in the Middle East.

Five bands playing live in front of a 6,000-plus audience was, without a doubt, the largest live music undertaking ever seen in Dubai.

Although the promotion of the festival was handled by the headline sponsor, Heineken together with Streamline Marketing – the organizers of the Power Boat Championships – the region's leading promoter, Mirage Promotions took credit for sourcing the three headline acts: Simple Minds, Beverley Knight, and Brand New Heavies.

Thomas Ovesen, general manager for Mirage Promotions' Dubai office, said, "Overall, we felt that the event was very successful. Obviously, there will always be room for improvement and we shall be reviewing these elements when planning similar events in the future."

"The most important thing to recognize is the fact that this was the region's premier 'festival' and certainly the largest such event of its kind in the Middle East. We feel that this simply reflects the growing demand for live music events."

Many of the major brands operating in the region have recognized the extensive publicity and media coverage that concerts attract and, as a result, Mirage is receiving a number of enquiries from companies wishing to develop their own brand-led musical events.

Working with companies to develop their own branded live music event is a relatively new concept in the Middle East. However, some companies are now far more aware that developing their own, or being associated with an annual event, offers a number of advantages. Not only does the promoter have the advantage of a longer lead time to source the "right" acts, but the brand and the event as a whole benefits from greater promotion time and awareness.

With the recent launch of the Visa Ticket Line, promoters and sponsors alike are sharing the benefits of a structured sale and distribution of tickets. The data provided by the

new ticket infrastructure is offering greater market knowledge and understanding of the region's concert-going and music-buying public.

AUSTRALIAN NEWS

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• SENIOR NEW SOUTH WALES Deputy Coroner Jacqueline Milledge ruled that 15-year-old **Jessica Michalik** was crushed to death by the crowd at Sydney's open air **Big Day Out** event in January 2001. She blamed headliners Limp Bizkit and Big Day Out promoters Creative Entertainment.

She said Creative Entertainment had not been prepared for the risk of crushing, adding, "For promoters to be taken by surprise because their headline act causes excitement and reckless behaviour shows they did not turn their mind to the crowd reaction to a particular performer."

She said there was "overwhelming evidence" that the crowd density before Bizkit went onstage was dangerous, "(But) there appears to be a reluctance on the part of the promoters and Mr. (Michael) Upton (a senior risk consultant) to accept that the situation on that day was completely unacceptable."

Milledge was critical of Bizkit singer Fred Durst for not stopping the show as soon as he realised there was a problem in the crowd. "He should have acted more responsibly," she pointed out. "I accept that it may have been difficult for him to stop because of the intensity of his performing."

But she called his language "inflammatory and indeed insulting to the security staff who were engaged in their best efforts to extricate crucially injured patrons from the crowd collapse."

Milledge recommended that high school students be educated in the dangers of moshing and crowd surfing at rock festivals.

In a statement, Durst said Limp Bizkit would only return to Australia when concerts were better organised. "No one is a winner in a court case where a young girl has lost her life," he said.

"When the industry is properly regulated, I look forward to bringing the Limp Bizkit band back to Australia."

Michalik's father, George, said, "Jessica's life was not wasted, a lot of positive things have happened."

In a statement, Creative Entertainment pointed out that they had learned from Big Day Out 2001, introducing an integrated 12 Point Safety Plan that combined revisions to barrier structures, age restrictions and music policy among others. The plan was devised to change audience behaviour at festivals and increase awareness of the dangers of mosh dancing and crowd surfing.

A secondary D barrier, which worked effectively at the 2002 event, will be used in 2003.

Government organisations now use Big Day Out's safety rules as a guide for safe crowd management at events of this type in Australia.

The statement concluded, "(We) believe that the facts put before the court indicate that we acted reasonably under very difficult circumstances. Although the finding is not an exoneration of all actions of Big Day Out promoters and staff, we acknowledge that we must accept the decision of the Coroner in this matter."

"We endorse the need for a national event safety code to be developed and applied to all large scale events in the future, making them safer for audience members. This should be the legacy of Jessica Michalik."

• FESTIVALS CONTINUE TO ADD international acts to their bills.

Big Day Out 2003 added Jane's Addiction, Underworld, Murder Dolls, Jimmy Eat World, Sparta, XZibit, Gonzales, and 2 Many DJs,

as well as Aussie acts Machine Gun Fellatio, Sydney DJ Kid Kenobi, Sydney trio COG, Melbourne's Augie March, Waikiki, the Waifs and Jebediah.

Austereo's **Rumba** pop festival has added DJ Sammy, Rayvon, and New York duo IIO of "Rapture" fame.

• SLINGSHOT TOURING AND HIVE Creative present "**Scratch**," the live act of several DJs from the movie of the name and the movie itself for four shows, December 19-22.

Spearhead's **Michael Franti** does an acoustic tour for Frontier Touring Company December 4-14, taking in 8 club shows.

Michael Coppel Presents brings **Marianne Faithfull** in for four theatre shows January 29 to February 6.

Modular Touring brings **Jon Spencer Blues Explosion** and the **Yeah Yeah Yeahs** for seven club shows December 4-13.

@llied @rtists is bringing four Canadian acts in one show in January. From January 23 to February 1, **The Wilkinsons, Paul Brandt, Jason McCoy, and Fred Eaglesmith** will be out for three appearances at the Tamworth Country Music Festival and two club shows in metropolitan Sydney.

• THE BIENNIAL WOMADELAIDE, the Adelaide version of the world music WOMAD festival, will become a yearly event.

Recently released figures show that in 2001, Womadelaide drew 70,000 people over its three days. Thirty-five percent were aged 41 to 54, and 42 percent were in the 25 to

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