

Talent & Venues

Booking Agents Predict Upsurge In Concert Business

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some acts who did go out last month generated better business than expected, notably Aerosmith, who are nearly SRO on an arena tour, and Judas Priest, who extended their tour into January because of the virtual absence of competition.

"What you have now is a lot of bands doubling up on a tour, which means there are fewer tours on the calendar, but better shows," says William Elson, president of ATI Ltd. "Also, a lot of bands don't like to work in January, which helps those bands that do stay out. Judas Priest had finished their tour but decided to stay out longer because of this."

Currently out for ATI is Neil Young. Going out this month will be Rush, the Stray Cats, Firefall, Vandenberg (who are touring with Ozzy Osbourne) and the Plasmatics, who may be doing shows with Kiss. Due in March and April are Ozzy Osbourne, Molly Hatchet, Def Leopard, Foghat (who are playing with Triumph), Lene Lovich and Joni Mitchell.

Going out this month for Concerts West is Eric Clapton.

"Last year and this are very similar in that many bands have decided in advance to record during January and February and then go out on the road later in the spring and summer," says David Leone, president of the Detroit-based DMA agency. "But they can maximize their draw if they go out in January and February, because there may be less competition."

Currently out for DMA is Aerosmith, but most acts signed to the agency will not be going out before June or July. Among them are Blackfoot, Alliance, Burning Rome, Chilliwack, the Church, Classix Nouveau, Girlschool, the Deserters, Motorhead, Fist, Mental As Anything, Nazareth, Scorpions, Payolas, Toronto and Billy Thorpe. Expected to do dates in March and April are Alvin Lee, the Guess Who, Rose Tattoo, and Accept, a German band.

"January was the first time in three years I was able to take some time off. I only had five acts on the road," says Ian Copeland, head of Frontier Booking International, commenting on this year's slow winter. However, a world tour by the Police starts in Kenya in March and will see the band visiting India, Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, Japan, Indonesia and South Korea before going to Europe, and then to the U.S. in June.

Other FBI acts getting ready to hit the road include the Stranglers, beginning April 1; Simple Minds, also in April; Joan Jett in May; the English Beat, March 12-April 2; the Thompson Twins, March 4; the

Cramps, March 4; and Grand Alliance, featuring former member of Climax Blues Band and Nektar. Either out on the road now, or set to begin touring in February, are the Anti Nowhere League, Lords Of The New Church, Wall Of Voodoo, Iggy Pop, Gang Of Four, Bow Wow Wow, the Rockets, the Smart, and the Producers. Joan Jett is doing some weekend dates while recording her next LP.

"The first quarter is usually slow, because acts like to record in bad weather," says Tom Ross, vice president of ICM. "But things are getting a lot more active this year. With record sales down, a lot of acts are looking to pick up some extra money. We are expecting to get back to pretty decent business."

Currently out for ICM, or going out this month, are America, through April; Adam Ant, through April and doing 90% (and better) business; the Blasters, through April; Catholic Girls, doing club dates; Christopher Cross, currently in the Far East, then coming to the U.S.; Culture Club, their first major tour, through March; Sammy Hagar, through March in his first major arena tour, with Night Ranger opening; and Kenny Loggins, after recovering from a recent fall off the stage.

Also, Hall & Oates, doing their first major arena tour, its first leg ending May 10; Jefferson Starship, doing 10 dates in February; Bette Midler, doing a big ticket tour, including an extended date at Radio City Music Hall; Poco, through April 15; Red Rider on the REO Speedwagon tour through June; Bob Seger, an arena tour with a \$5 million gross expected; and the Marshall Tucker Band, through April. Going out in March or later are the Kinks, March through May; Gordon Lightfoot, in the spring; Quarterflash, after April 1; Rick Springfield, in late spring; Triumph, March through May; and Tommy Tutone, starting in April.

Biggest act going out from the International Talent Group is David Bowie, whose worldwide tour will begin in the spring. In March, there will be the Psychedelic Furs; Joe Jackson will begin his tour at the end of March; Ultravox will be playing in March and April, as will Golden Earring, part of whose tour will be with Rush. Currently out are Phil Collins and Missing Persons.

Out now for Monterey Peninsula are the Michael Stanley Band, Judy Collins, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Nicolette Larson and Emmylou Harris, who is going out next week with a tour of honky tonks and ballrooms. Juice Newton is going out in April, playing smaller arenas and fairs, opening for Alabama. Coming in the summer are Toto, Michael McDonald, Kansas, and the Tubes,

according to Fred Bohlander, vice president of the agency.

According to Randy Garelick, an agent at William Morris, the Barry Manilow tour—which will see Manilow do an extended date at the Uris Theatre on Broadway—will continue into the summer with a number of summer festival dates. Also doing select dates in the summer will be Melissa Manchester, Donna Sum-

mer and George Benson.

Crosby, Stills & Nash are expected to be out in the spring; Chuck Berry is "always playing," according to Garelick; Steel Breeze will have some dates on the Hall & Oates tour, while Joe Cocker will be out in the summer. Pat Travers is on the road through March. Also going out will be Roberta Flack, Al Jarreau, Kenny Rankin and Lou Rawls.

Out now for Regency Artists are the Pointer Sisters, Chaka Khan, Tina Turner and a nostalgia show featuring the Four Freshmen, the Four Aces, and the Ink Spots, says David Snyder, agent at Regency.

Acts due to tour in spring include Berlin, Patti Austin, Ray Charles, Rita Coolidge, Moving Pictures and Lee Ritenour, while the summer will see tours by Razy Bailey, Glen Campbell, Cleo Laine, the Little River Band, Randy Meisner, Helen Reddy, Tom Scott, B.J. Thomas, Mel Torme, Jerry Jeff Walker and Sarah Vaughn. Men At Work will be doing some shows at the end of May, primarily at the second US Festival, which is now scheduled for the Memorial Day weekend.

The current tour booked by Premier Talent is Pat Benatar's, which is expected to resume Wednesday (9). Also beginning tours are Billy Squier and Tom Petty, both of whom are headlining arena dates. Journey is expected to go out in April or May, says Premier agent Barry Bell. Among the newer Premier acts on the road are the Nitecaps, Little Steven & the Disciples of Soul, and the B'zz, a Midwestern rock band.

Going out from Norby Walter in the next couple of months will be Rick James, Kool & the Gang, the Gap Band and Natalie Cole.

Rock 'n' Rolling

Culture Club's Focus: Boy George, He's Got It

By ROMAN KOZAK

Culture Club, one of the hottest of the new bands, is home in Britain these days rehearsing for its first major U.S. tour, which will begin Feb. 21 and will take the band to 19 cities.

The tour is in support of the "Kissing To Be Clever" LP and the single "Do You Really Want To Hurt Me" (the best song never made by Smokey Robinson), which, says Epic Records, has been No. 1 in 10 countries already. It is in the top 20 in the U.S.

Culture Club was in New York not too long ago for two warmup concerts at the Ritz and some promotion, so we got a chance to meet them. It wasn't the best of interviews. For one thing, we only had a few minutes; for another, they insisted that all four members of the band be interviewed together, which made it that much harder to focus on the real interest in the band. That is Boy George, the lead singer.

He's the one with the braided hair and the feminine makeup. We asked about the band's image.

Boy George says that's the way he's always looked, "like a tramp on the streets," and there was no attempt to create any specific image for the band. "I try not to justify things," he says. "I'm just a musician."

In fact, he says, a specific image can be detrimental for a band starting out in the U.S., because the American and specifically New York music scene is very professional and very production-oriented, and a band that comes across from Britain trying to make it primarily on image is going to have a hard time.

Though the band members say that their fans in Britain do dress up like them, they do not feel part of any particular musical movement, not even techno-pop, pointing out that their basic lineup is guitar, bass and drums, which they occasionally augment with keyboards, brass and backup vocals.

They say—and certainly their success around the world has borne it out—that they are looking for a broad-based pop audience. There was never any attempt, a la Village People or Grace Jones, to first attract a gay audience, despite Boy George's androgynous looks and vocals. Anyway, Boy George says he doesn't "have sex."

"We don't ask people at the door, 'Hey, are you a fag?'" he continues. "It doesn't matter. Pop music is pop-

ular. And popular is everyone. As long as people enjoy our music, that's what we are there for."

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You have seen all those polls for favorite this and favorite that, and best singer here, and best guitar player there. But the staff at the Mushroom Records store in New Orleans had a different idea: why not poll their customers as to "what

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Australia, Japan, B'way On Manilow's Itinerary

By PAUL GREIN

LOS ANGELES—Barry Manilow is in the midst of the most extensive tour of his career, a series of shows dubbed "Around The World In 80 Dates." The tour includes the entertainer's first shows in Australia and Japan and a return 12-day engagement at the Uris Theatre on Broadway. The Uris shows sold out in a single day, grossing more than \$750,000.

Despite the rising costs of everything from transportation to hall rentals, there hasn't been much movement in Manilow's ticket prices

over the past couple of years. The show's top ticket still averages \$12.50 to \$15 (except on Broadway, where it's \$35).

"We're very careful about not over-pricing," says Les Joyce, Manilow's tour manager for the past three years. Joyce credits his ability to hold the line on ticket pricing to three cost-saving factors: a slight reduction in Manilow's entourage (to a current total of 40), an ability to control supplier costs through long-standing relationships with sound

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Light Firm Gets Joel Concert \$\$

LOS ANGELES—Local Superior Court Judge Robert W. Zakon has granted a writ of attachment to O.J. Electric here for \$20,818.50 on the fees from a Dec. 14 Billy Joel concert at the L.A. forum.

The Superior Court action followed a hearing before the judge wherein the lighting firm, owned by Dave Oberman, alleged it was owed the amount from an Oct. 27 Who concert staged by Rissmiller Productions. Oberman stated that he received \$5,000 in advance on a billed \$25,086.50 amount for the Who show.

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