



KINGS OF LEON IN LOGISTICAL FEAT

RATHER THAN LET A LAST-MINUTE CHANGE OF PLANS WREAK HAVOC WITH KINGS OF LEON'S ITINERARY, THE CREW USED IT AS A CHANCE TO BLAZE A NEW TRAIL THROUGH EUROPE. THE GEAR WAS HAULED ACROSS LAND, SEA AND AIR, FROM SPAIN, TO HUNGARY, VIA ICELAND. TPI'S STE DURHAM SPEAKS WITH THE TEAM TO FIND OUT HOW AND WHY THEY BECAME THE FIRST TOUR TO TAKE THIS REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE.

Although the new NiFi Festival in Sparta, Kentucky was in place to bookend a run of shows in Europe, its cancellation provided the opportunity to rethink the band's freight plans to Reykjavik, Iceland before heading to Budapest, Hungary for the Sziget Festival.

Kings Of Leon's Production Manager, Paddy Hocken, picked up the story: "We first had a pair of shows booked in Switzerland and Barcelona. Before the cancellation I was already talking with Rock-It Cargo about sea freighting the gear from Barcelona to the US, so the natural thing seemed to be to air freight it to Iceland, which is what most bands had previously done. We got a quote and then it occurred to us to truck the gear to Iceland (from Barcelona) as the local trucks in Iceland wouldn't be the rock 'n' roll style trucks but would be sea container style trucks, which

always makes life harder."

The decision was taken to drive two Redburn Transfer trucks from Barcelona to Hirtshals in Denmark and then catch the ferry to Seyðisfjörður in Iceland. From there, the trucks drove around 500 miles to Reykjavik, spending a total of two weeks in the country, due to ferry scheduling.

Managing Director of Redburn Transfer, Chris Redburn, said: "We've been working with Kings Of Leon for around 12 years. First they had a Sprinter from us, then an 18-tonner, then an articulated lorry - it's been a gradual build to the huge stadium shows they put on now."

Redburn stated that it would usually send five trucks for a festival-sized show, but the Icelandic venue was slightly smaller. While this did the team a favour in that the load was lighter, there was still the matter of negotiating

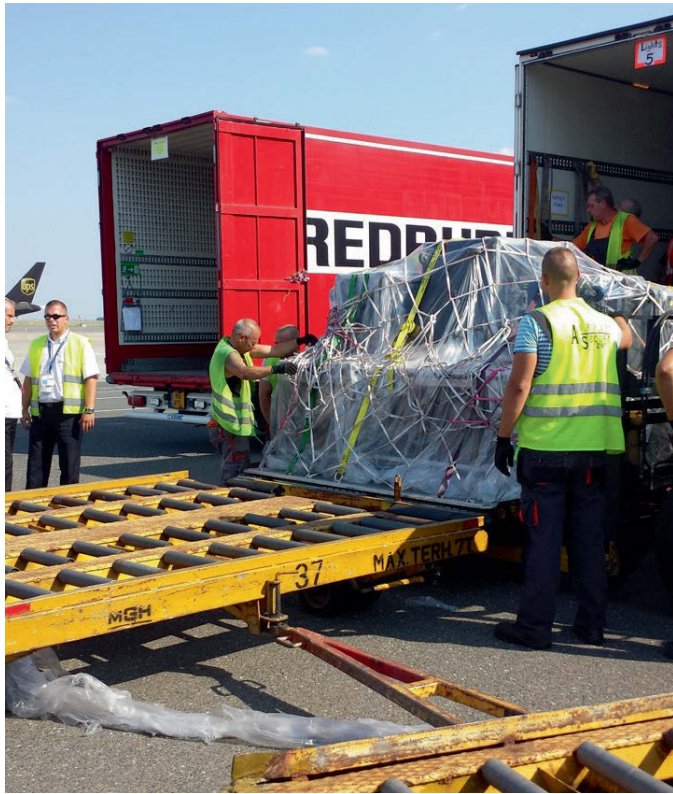
the long roads that snaked through glacial fjords.


He continued: "Iceland was an interesting one. We sent a trailer there once, years ago, but this is the first time we've sent trucks. It was quite an experience for our drivers due to the remarkable terrain. The country is also surprisingly big. I was personally shocked to find out that it was 500 miles from the port to Reykjavik. Luckily, as it was summer, the climate was not an issue - though I've no doubt it would have been if it was winter."

As the specified PA system, video screen and lighting rig were locally supplied in Reykjavik thanks to local rental house Exton, the trucks only set off from Barcelona with the band's backline, sound control, video control, lighting control, stage risers, production, wardrobe and some lighting specials.

EVENT FOCUS: Kings Of Leon


Opposite: After docking at Seyðisfjörður in Iceland, the trucks drove around 500 miles to Reykjavik through glacial fjords. Below: According to Kings Of Leon's PM Paddy Hocken, the drivers themselves were "quite the envy of the trucking world" during the Icelandic trip.





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While this was enough of a squeeze, the trucks also had to make a stop en route to take on more kit that was missing in Iceland.

Hocken explained: "The promoter could not supply enough barricades of a type that we felt were acceptable for the show, and we were also without a few other bits and bobs that weren't available in Iceland. We could have rented the gear from Denmark or the UK and had it freighted in, but that would have added unplanned expense for us and the promoter. We decided to pick up some barricades from eps in Cologne on the way. It was a win-win because the Icelandic promoter was grateful that he didn't have to freight in more barricades and we ended up with the ones we wanted."

Where the pace of the route to Reykjavik had been relatively languid, the next leg to Hungary had to happen in a fraction of the time. Straight after the show, the reloaded Redburn trucks drove to liaise with staff from Rock-It Cargo, who had agreed to fly all of the

Kings Of Leon gear overnight to Budapest on a chartered Boeing 737-400 Freighter.

Eddie Clarke, Freelance Special Ops for Rock-It Cargo, was onsite dealing with the load-in onto the plane. Hocken commented: "Luckily we didn't have to deal with any unforeseen problems. Eddie built the palettes on the plane and, although the style of gear and heavily-contoured shape of aircraft was a challenge, he's a total pro and made it happen."

Matt Wright of Rock-It Cargo added: "You always have to bear in mind the payload of the aircraft, and this route was near enough maximum take off weight. If the weather had gone against us we might have had to do a fuel stop or dump cargo, which wasn't an option. Luckily the weather was in our favour and it worked out pretty well."

Once safely touched down on a Hungarian runway, the plane then met another set of Redburn trucks ready to drive the gear to Sziget Festival and load-in at 11pm, as soon as Swedish DJ Avicii finished his headline set.

Below: It took a combination of Redburn trucks, a sea ferry and a Boeing 737-400 from Rock-It Cargo to complete the epic European trip.



So much was the success of the journey that Hocken and the team agreed that this was a route that could be used again in the future, if need be. Hocken said: "It ended up not being stressful at all. If anything it was a benefit that we could use more of our own people, so we felt more in control. Once you're in the realms of the external airlines, the situation is out of your control - which is why I like my longstanding relationship with Matt and Rock-It because they do have some influence once the gear goes airside."

He continued: "We also got Redburn Transfer in because we are used to using the company. They were our usual trucks and our

usual drivers, and this made things a lot easier once we got to Iceland. It also ended up £50 cheaper!"

Bolstered by the success of the adventure, Kings Of Leon recently embarked on another unconventional mission - again with the assistance of Redburn trucks and a Rock-It Cargo's 737-400. The team went from Konstanz (via Stuttgart Airport) to Gibraltar (via Malaga Airport) using the same protocols honed during the Iceland trip. While the outing was just as successful, it is not often that the drivers will be treated to such a view as they were from their cab as they breezed through Iceland's frozen wilderness.

Hocken concluded: "During the Icelandic trip, the drivers themselves were quite the envy of the trucking world! Barcelona for the festival was quite manic, then these guys set out on roads with zero traffic and breathtaking scenery. All told it's quite surprising that we were the first crew to have done it!"

TPI

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