

CHALLENGES IN INTERNATIONAL TOURING

Chaired by Martina Pogacic, cShow Production Ltd (HR) with Panellists Alberto Artese, Assomusica Associazione (IT); Paddy Hocken, Paddy Hocken Productions (UK); Renatas Nacajus, Falcon Club (LT).

By way of introduction, the panel recalled notable incidents where, in general, the needs of international tours and local production crews failed to align – with the response from the latter being, invariably, “What did you expect? This is [country name]!”

Nacajus said promoters often feel ashamed to ask if they don’t understand something on the production side, especially in the Baltic region. Hocken agreed, saying his company’s approach is to “use lots of drawings and pictures. In the documentation we send out, we also don’t use any colloquial terms that might be common in North America or Britain but not understood elsewhere.”

Pogacic asked if there should be a standardised list of terms common to production crews anywhere in the world, saying she remembers (in the pre-Google era) receiving technical riders and being bewildered by some of the jargon. The key to working together successfully, suggested Hocken, is open and transparent communication from both sides, with local crew being honest about what’s possible, and incoming tours being realistic in

their expectations.

Speaking from the floor, independent Production Manager Keith Wood said he’s disappointed to hear that there’s a culture of being too scared to ask questions – saying if one of his tours arrives and the staff and infrastructure aren’t there, “I’ve failed in my job, in advancing that show properly.” “It’s about sharing the problems,” echoed promoter-turned-Production Manager Artese. “Sometimes it can be tricky if you don’t know the other guy, but it’s essential that everyone tells the truth, 100% of the time.”

Talk then turned to the difficulties of planning for events which, in many cases, have been oversold beyond what would be the optimum configuration for the venue. One audience member suggested that – with demand for tickets at an all-time high – agents are trying to extract the maximum revenue by making the show as big as possible, posing difficulties for local crews.

Another said they’d like to see promoters step in to dictate the boundaries of their shows. “This is one of the few businesses in the world where you agree on something without knowing what you’re even signing up to,” he commented. “It should be down to the promoters to say, ‘Here are the parameters, and that’s that’.”

I LIKE TO MOVE IT, MOVE IT

Chaired by Rick Smith, Rule Out Loud (UK) with Panellists Lester Dales, Dales Evans & Co Ltd (UK); Sebastian Tobie, eps holding gmbh (DE); Ceri Wade, Arcadia Spectacular (UK); Richard Young, Catapult Productions Ltd (UK); Steve Zapp, ITB (UK)

The ILMC Production Meeting’s (IPM) third panel mused transport and travel, as the expanding global touring market, miscommunication and short timescales complicate the movement of goods, people and money. Chair Smith opened the panel speaking of the growth of mega-events, particularly in the EDM sector, meaning that acts and touring festivals are travelling to “countries that were never on the touring map. For successful touring, the most important thing is to “manage expectations early on and call on the relevant experts,” said Smith.

Steve Zapp, reportedly the first agent to sit on an IPM panel, revealed that agents encounter the same problems surrounding miscommunication and last-minute changes that plague the production industry. “There needs to be conversations between the booking and production sides of tours,” stressed Zapp.

“No-one wants to cancel a show,” added Richard Young, explaining that, in times of crisis, it is crucial to have good partners as suppliers. “It’s important to get everybody on board from very early on,” said Young. Lester Dales, spoke of the impact of insufficient tax planning. “Pretty much every country has the right to first taxation on a show and the artists’ earnings,” said Dales. Tax can become a huge touring cost for some artists, and “before you know it, there’s no profit left”.

Talk turned to the movement of people with Arcadia’s Ceri Wade, who spoke of the “duty of care” she has for her team. “It’s about logistics and planning but also your duty of care with people; with timelines this is a huge challenge,” said Wade, who received 12 weeks’ advance notice for the



Arcadia New Year’s Eve show in China.

The lack of communication down the line from event promoters to those working on site also proved a main subject of conversation.

“Vendors wait desperately to find out which materials we need for different tours,” said eps Holding Gmbh’s Sebastian Tobie, explaining that his team always plans for multiple scenarios due to lack of information. Young responded, highlighting the many unpredictable factors that exist early on in the production process: “vendors and crew need to understand that, if they’re going to be engaged earlier, it’s all tentative.”

Smith closed the session urging increased input and cooperation from all agencies involved in the ever-expanding world of touring.