

A Look Inside The Concert Committee

by Eric Bernstein

The modern pop rock music industry is composed of entertainers, not artists. I would also like to add that they are very well paid. Thru the next few hundred words or so I'd like to tell you a little bit of how concerts get put together, why some work and why we at PSUC don't always get the entertainers you'd like to see.

This year, the SA allocated \$20,000 for the fall semester with a carry over of approximately \$8,000 from the end of last semester. We, the concert committee, have \$28,000 to lose to bring you the best shows we can.

Over the last two years, a good friend of mine was concert committee chairman and with all that's been said about him, he's probably done a better job than anyone in the past and probably for some time to come.

For those who aren't aware of the concerts we've had in the past the list runs as follows: Shana-na, James Taylor, Peter Frampton, Todd Rundgren, Elvin Bishop, Labelle, Loggins and Messina, Frank Zappa, Stephen Stills, Charlie Daniels Band, Pousette-Dart Band, Livingston Taylor and a few other smaller acts. Do me a favor and read the list again; it's nothing to sneeze at and the school has a good rapport with the music business because of it. As far as I can remember (and I've been to all the shows and worked most) they were all really good except for Stills (his wife just left him and we were the last show of a 3 month tour).

I'd like to talk some business now. First, a bands tour is booked in the neighborhood of 3 or 4 months ahead of time. A band's management will announce to the music world (i.e., concert promoters) that these acts will be available on such and such dates at such and such a price (i.e., Loggins and Messina \$15,000, Todd Rundgren \$6,500, James Taylor \$12,500).

The management company then waits for offers, referred to as bids. Bids are binding yet non binding - they don't commit the act to us but they do commit us to the act. Let's say now that the bid is accepted, we have sort of a gentlemen's agreement (since there is no signed contract) and the band's management will send us this contract listing their requirements. We go over the contract and from there we decide the size stage we need, how many supertroopers (spot lights), how much food and booze, how many people are needed to set up and take down equipment, etc., etc. Many long distance phone calls are made to iron out small discrepancies between what they want and what we can deliver. Then it's on to advertising. We are a college concert committee, we never book an act for the general P'burgh area, all the concerts picked are what we feel as a committee the school would like to see. We have found that attendance is usually better when we have either a Southern rock band or a performer that appeals to the ladies of this campus. Our choice for concerts is limited by dates available and how much they cost (if we could afford to gamble with \$40,000, we could probably get Emerson, Lake and Palmer). We are concerned with the student money but we don't talk about it much, if you had \$28,000 you could get really upset if you took every penny seriously.

Back to business, the advertising is out, posters and radio spots on WEAV, QCR, CHOM, WPLT. An ad in this paper a week or two before the show and then we sit and wait. A good attendance means money to put on more shows, bad attendance means maybe one more show this semester. The America concert is like that so I hope you all come out and loosen up even though it's a Tuesday night (we got them \$5,000 cheaper because we took them during the week

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