

Disco Forum Report

Live Talent Group Critical Of Labels' Failure To Support Tours

Participants in the forum's live talent panel criticized record companies for failing to support performing tours. They also encouraged disco owners to book more live talent into their clubs.

Speaking on "All Facets Of The Development Of Live Talent," were Bob Caviano of Bob Caviano Associates, Joe Iantosca of Celebration, Don Miley of David Rubin & Friends in San Francisco, Henry Schissler of Spin Entertainment Inc., **Norby Walters** of **Norby Walters** and Associates and Judy Weinstein of For The Record.

Moderator **Walters** opened the session with a brief history of the disco industry, blaming record companies for the current woes of performing artists.

"Once disco became the pop culture rage of the 70s, **Walters** said, "the great corporate structure thought it was the cure-all and the end-all for the music industry. They thought it was rock 'n' roll all over again, and it would sell like rock'n'roll. But they made a big mistake. Now, in a fast 12 months, the corporate structure has abandoned us."

"Record companies are not developing their disco artists as in the

past," Caviano added. "In particular, they have drastically cut financial support for live tours," he said.

Norman Rubin of TK Records rose from the audience to respond that the companies have not "abandoned" disco. "They've just cut it down to where it makes sense," he said, explaining that "for the first time, the record industry has felt the crunch of the recession."

Club patrons as well as owners are tightening their belts, according to the panelists. "Live acts are dying on the road," said Don Miley. "We've had to cancel several concerts because tickets were not selling. We're a little confused as to what's happening."

Henry Schissler reported that he has had success booking rock performers into clubs. "It's the new wave acts that are doing it right now," he said, citing Squeeze's recent sellout shows in the New York area.

After a plea from the panelists that club owners schedule more live acts, an audience member complained that owners of small clubs cannot afford to pay the current rates being asked by promoters. "There was a time when all the acts

came to the clubs," he said. "Now they want some astronomical figure."

Walters replied that disco owners must take a broad view on the potential value of live acts.

"Club owners have to realize that a live show will create and generate enough excitement so that the community will show up when you're not booking live acts.

"Live entertainment is a form of advertisement and promotion, in the same way that a live act loses money on the road in order to gain exposure and develop a following," he stated.

The key for owners is selectivity, the panelists concluded. To stage a successful show which will boost long-term attendance, owners must "pick an act that is currently riding the charts and is in a cross-over position," Miley said. "The timing is important."

"As buyers, you have to make your best deals," **Norby Walters** added. "You should know what's on the radio and what's selling in the local stores. All performers want to work. You have to find the right act for your club on the right night, so that it will work for you."

Top to bottom, **Norby Walters**, **Norby Walters** & Associates; Don Miley, David Rubinson & Friends; Henry Schissler, Spin Entertainment.

Top to bottom, Joe Iantosca, Celebration; Norm Rubin, TK Records; Michael Brody, Paradise Garage.

