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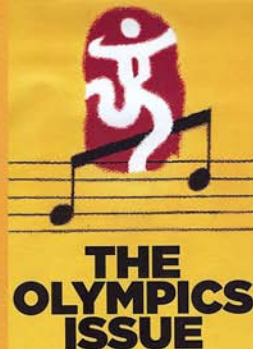
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**THE OLYMPICS ISSUE**

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# Billboard

## TOURING

### Clamping Down Live Biz Suffers Amid Restrictions By Berwin Song and Steve McClure

Beijing may be preparing to welcome the world to the Olympic Games, but with a clampdown on international touring still in place, some local execs are seeking new alliances to boost the live biz.

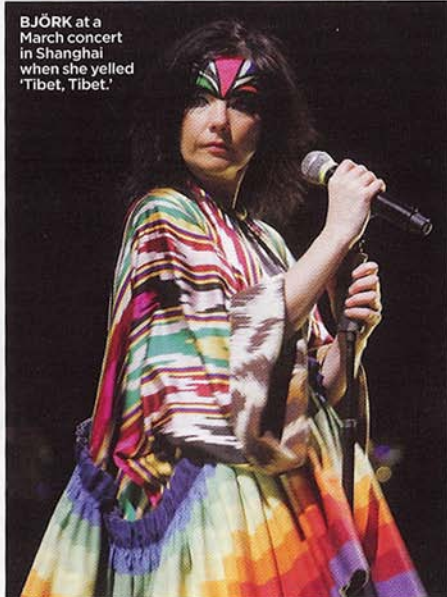
During the run-up to the Olympics, insiders say, authorities have been strictly enforcing venue-licensing regulations and placing so many restrictions on international acts that plans for most such shows have effectively been put on hold.

"I remember, following the announcement that Beijing would host the games, being constantly told that 'because of the Olympics,' Beijing was going to be the most exciting place to be on the planet, and

anyone working here in the music realm was bound to prosper," says concert promoter Jon Campbell, who promotes the Times Arts Jazz Series. "[Now] you hear, over and over, 'because of the Olympics' as an excuse for why yet another event, venue, visa, concert [or] whatever is canceled."

The local biz points to Björk's pro-Tibetan independence statements during her Shanghai show in March (billboard.biz, March 4) as the moment the authorities' attitude changed.

"It's all about security concerns now—there's a huge mood of paranoia," one venue operator who asked not to be named says. "No one wants to be held responsible if some-



BJÖRK at a March concert in Shanghai when she yelled 'Tibet, Tibet.'

thing happens again, so they're just removing any possibility."

The Ministry of Culture recently confirmed on its Web site that it will ban foreign artists and entertainers who have ever engaged in activities deemed to "threaten national sovereignty" (billboard.biz, July 21).

Jason Magnus, president of promoter Rock for China, expected 2008 to be "a banner year in terms of international recognition" for the Chinese music scene. "Everyone thought the government would have exploited the Olympics," he says.

Instead, Rock for China has

opted not to hold its annual Beijing Pop Festival—China's biggest international rock event—in September, due to the risk of last-minute cancellation by authorities.

Other music events affected by the clampdown include Beijing's Midi Festival, due to be held May 1-4 but postponed until October; the Shanghai Midi Festival, which was denied a permit; and Tunes in the Park, an outdoor series of summer concerts organized by Beijing club the Stone Boat.

"I really don't think the government is going to relax their regulations until well after the Olympics are over," says Jackie Subeck, president/co-founder of Footprint Worldwide, a newly formed brand marketing and entertainment company in Los Angeles focused on serving international clients in China. Subeck is former entertainment group president at CRC Jianian, a joint venture between Los Angeles-based consultancy firm AIM Group and state-owned China Record Corp.

Footprint recently signed a deal with China-focused youth marketing and media company Digicorp to provide brand-sponsored entertainment to university students through live

events and a targeted campus IPTV network. Subeck says the venture will also provide government-friendly touring opportunities for Western and Chinese acts at Chinese universities. Subeck says the first tour, featuring "a rising Chinese artist," will roll out in the fall. Footprint is seeking sponsorships for the tour from multinational and local brands.

"Through the IPTV network, we can specifically target the second-tier markets by simultaneously airing the show live in the dorm rooms," Subeck says.

Marina Del Rey, Calif.-based Digicorp has a long-term advertising and media rights deal with an operational entity of the China Youth League, the Chinese government agency that controls Internet access for 70 million students.

Subeck declined to reveal details of label partners, and awareness of the Footprint venture among Chinese music companies seems low. But Mathew Daniel, VP of digital content licensing firm R2G, praises the initiative for "extending the exposure footprint for Western artists to a more manageable platform, reaching a relevant audience." ...