

## Live Discs a Hit With Fans

***DMB to follow Pearl Jam, Allmans and offer "official bootlegs"***



**"A great market."**

On his way out of a recent Moe show in Knoxville, Tennessee, James Malone stopped at a concession stand for a souvenir. He didn't buy a concert T-shirt for fifteen dollars or a poster for ten. He paid twenty dollars for a CD set that contained the entire three-hour concert he'd just seen. And he had to wait only five minutes. "It's always fun listening to where you've been," the thirty-three-year-old computer technician says. "You can't remember a show after you have a few drinks, or you walk to the bathroom and you miss a nice little riff."

Malone was one of 175 fans who bought the show on CD that night -- and he later spent another \$320 on recordings of other nights from the same tour. Moe have grossed approximately \$38,500 from the tour's eleven shows so far (there are twenty-eight shows in total), half of which goes to Clear Channel Entertainment. The CDs are part of Clear Channel's new Instant Live program, which has produced live recordings for Moe, the Allman Brothers Band and thirteen other acts -- making them all available within minutes of the shows' end. In a time of declining record sales and industry layoffs, many bands and managers see the growing market for "official bootleg" recordings as a trend that will bring new profits and provide a great service for fans. "It's the future of the touring merchandise business," Eagles manager Irving Azoff said recently.

Aside from Clear Channel's Instant Live program, many enterprising bands are producing their own live CDs to sell to fans on their Web sites and in stores. The trend is going big: Artists ranging from the Dead and Peter Gabriel to Duran Duran, Jimmy Buffett and Incubus are getting into the live-CD business.

The live-CD boom began with Pearl Jam's pioneering series of seventy-two CDs that documented every show from their 2000 tour. String Cheese Incident and other jam bands followed. Then last year, through startup the Music.com, the Who jumped on the idea and wound up grossing \$1.2 million on live CDs from their 2002 tour. Early this year, Phish made every 2003 show available -- within forty-eight hours -- on livephish.com; the band has sold more than 150,000 of the recordings and earned more than \$2 million.

"I don't think most people know what the hell's going to happen with the music industry," says Les Claypool, frontman for Primus, who are offering downloads of their November tour dates. "But I know if I could have purchased a copy of the [Graham Central Station bandleader] Larry Graham show I saw in 1980 or 1981, where he opened for the Isley Brothers at the L.A. Coliseum, I would love to have that."

Early next year, the Dave Matthews Band is planning to offer CDs and downloads modeled in part after livephish.com. "There's a great market out there for this," says DMB manager Coran Capshaw, who plans to make similar services available to the 200 artists he represents with his retail company, Musictoday.com.

Steve Simon, Clear Channel Entertainment's executive vice president, who heads Instant Live, sees a potentially huge client base for the program, though he acknowledges that there are significant technical hurdles involved in producing thousands of CDs to sell instantly after a larger amphitheater or arena show. But Mark Goodman, program director for Instant Live, predicts the service will be adaptable for larger bands by next summer.

So far, the biggest Instant Live artist was the Allman Brothers Band for which Clear Channel produced about 1,000 CDs per night for several nights last summer. "We'd definitely do it again," says the band's manager, Bert Holman. "We were satisfied with the quality of recording they were getting for what it was: mixed on the fly. Are we going to retire on it? No. But it's a nice ancillary revenue stream."

Peter Gabriel had a similar reaction. "Peter had to get his head around the idea that this was something you basically let go of," says Mike Large, Gabriel's general manager. "He realized it was consistent and sounded exactly like a high-quality recording of the concert, with all its mistakes."

Putting out full-show live CDs on a regular basis isn't cheap, either. Mike Hobson, CEO of the Music.com, which produces, in addition to the Who, live CDs for Gabriel and Duran Duran, says many larger venues charge thousands of dollars for bands to record their performances. And although Clear Channel employees won't detail Instant Live's operating costs, Jake Walker, co-founder of competitor Disclive, says his company charges artists about six dollars per CD. Most bands charge fans between fifteen and twenty-five dollars for each CD set.

On tour with Moe, the Instant Live crew uses thirty or forty burners, each churning out multiple CDs in ten minutes. After the

encore, employees run the CD master from the soundboard to a "burning room," then zoom the final three-disc set to the merchandise table.

For their own live-CD program, String Cheese Incident have sold between 75,000 and 100,000 copies of about 120 recorded shows -- almost twenty-five percent of what they've sold for all of their studio and "official" live CDs. But even String Cheese are concerned that live-recording sales might cut into studio-CD sales. And some, including members of Moe, wonder just how much live CDs at the merchandise table will affect T-shirt sales.

But mostly it's been a hit. After a Peter Gabriel show in July, University of Quebec student Olivier Fillion Boutin, 24, shelled out \$650 for nineteen performances. "For Montreal, I saw the show, so I remember all the mistakes," he says. "And when I listen to the CD, I can see some flashbacks of the shows. It's a really nice alternative that we have now instead of buying the T-shirt. It's surely a new kind of souvenir of a concert."

## **STEVE KNOPPER**

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