

# US Festival's fate is on line

DEVORE, Calif. (AP) — Tickets sales for this weekend's US Festival are running below the level organizers say they need to break even, and the number of rent-paying computer exhibitors is also well below last year.

Officials at UNUSON, organizers of the music-technology fair, say they need to sell at least 600,000 tickets to break even. But only 250,000 had been sold by Tuesday afternoon, according to UNUSON publicist Matt Helrich.

However, he said, promoters are confident that many festival-goers will purchase tickets at the gate, even though the price increases to \$25 from the \$20 advance ticket price.

Only 45 electronics firms have rented exhibition booths for the second festival, Helrich said. There were 150 at the first US Festival.

Steve Wozniak, inventor of the first Apple computer, hopes to attract 1.2 million music fans for the festival, which begins Saturday at Glen Helen Regional Park. It features three days of rock 'n' roll over Memorial Day weekend and a country music show the following Saturday.

The entertainment budget is estimated at \$8 million, including a reported \$1.5 million for one-day appearances by David Bowie and the group Van Halen. Also scheduled to appear is the British new-wave group The Clash. There will also be non-concert entertainment



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

US Festival organizer Steve Wozniak mows a section of the grass recently at the site of this weekend's rock concert in San Bernardino.

— 300 performers, including Japanese and native American dancers, Afro-Cuban drummers, a magician, clog dancers, clowns and jugglers.

Wozniak has said the festival may be his last if it doesn't turn a profit.

"We were hoping for a bigger advance sale, but our impromptu surveys show us about 50 percent of the people will be buying tickets at the gate," Helrich said. "Steve is very optimistic about at least breaking even. He won't lose like he did last year."

Wozniak reportedly lost \$5 million at the first US Festival here over Labor Day weekend, although no one at UNUSON will confirm that figure.

UNUSON projects total expenses for US II will exceed \$12 million, with \$1.5 million for security and more than \$6 million for performers.

Electronic firm officials said they preferred to concentrate their exhibits on trade shows rather than showing their products to music fans.

Even Apple, a major exhibitor at the last festival, will not have an exhibit in the technology fair. Atari and Mattel, big exhibitors at the last festival, also are staying away.

"You seriously have to consider if it is worth being at the US Festival," said Bruce Entin, a vice president of Atari. "We had to examine what we would get out of it. At this juncture we decided to go with the trade show."

Marlen Wightman, trade show manager for Apple, said she was not able to work the US Festival into a schedule of trade shows.

"It's an incredible period for everyone. We have done 13 shows since February and we have two others to go to in June."

Celia Gray, who is organizing the computer fair for UNUSON, said exhibits will concentrate on new careers, electronic music and new technology in industry. Texas Instruments, Western Union, Ford, General Electric and several schools involved in technological training will participate.

# Rock video injects energy into sagging recording industry

By YARDENA ARAR/ The AP

LOS ANGELES — Duran Duran's Simon Le Bon runs panting through the jungles and bazaars of Sri Lanka. Styx's Dennis De Young is trapped in a futuristic prison guarded by robots. A sidewalk lights up under Michael Jackson's feet. All move to a rock beat.

These videotaped images — in sync with a song — are shown in dance clubs and on commercial and cable television programs.

Rock video is fast becoming as pervasive as the video game, while injecting new energy into a sagging recording industry. And it's expected to get even bigger. Sony Corp. recently released the first "videos" available to consumers.

New bands and their financially troubled record labels are its chief beneficiaries, thanks to MTV, a cable television channel that's being called a national radio station with pictures.

The channel beams videos and stereo sound to more than 12 million viewers nationwide 24 hours a day. It plays 200 different tapes a day.

"The two most powerful forces in our culture over the past two decades have been television and rock 'n' roll music," says MTV programming director John Sykes. "This is the first time they've ever been put together, and the impact has been incredible."

"We're seeing acts like Men at Work, Stray Cats and Bow Wow Wow, that really had no FM airplay, that got

a great deal of use on MTV and their record sales just went crazy," said Scott Ross of San Francisco's One Pass Film & Video Inc., a major producer of concert videos.

"It's almost like MTV is dictating the formats of major radio stations across the United States," Ross said. "Where radio used to be one of the largest forces in breaking records, it's really slipping into second place."

A recent A.C. Nielsen survey of 2,000 MTV viewers indicates that what people see is what they buy.

Asked what media influenced their record purchases, 68 percent of those surveyed ranked MTV as important or very important; 62 percent put radio in the same categories.

The survey found that 85 percent of MTV viewers fall into the prime record-purchasing age bracket of 12 to 34; that 63 percent had bought an artist's album after seeing the act's video, and that 81 percent had been introduced to new bands by MTV.

Jo Bergman, head of video for Warner Bros. Records, says a prime consideration in deciding whether to make a video for a band is the chance of getting on MTV's playlist. Like most album-oriented rock radio stations, MTV uses no country and few black acts — a policy which has drawn some criticism.

"The record companies are realizing that they (bands) can get more exposure per dollar for video than they can touring," says Craig Sexton, general

manager of Video Pac Systems Studios.

At first, videos simply showed a band performing. Now, bands seem to be making the more expensive "concept" videos with a story or images related to the song, often using band members as actors.

Some videos combine elements of performance and concept. The Clash's whimsical "Rock the Casbah," cuts from the band performing in front of an oil rig to shots of an Arab giving a Hasidic Jew a lift in a Cadillac.

The artistic repercussions of rock video are being felt in music and, increasingly, filmmaking circles.

Paramount's current hit movie, "Flashdance," became a profitable partnership of theatrical film and rock video. Musical segments from the film have been packaged into video clips shown on MTV.

Videos are a powerful promotional tool, but expensive to produce. A clip costs anywhere from \$5,000 to more than \$100,000 for Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder's "Ebony & Ivory."

Record companies foot the bill, and for the higher-priced videos, the artist may share the costs.

Despite its large audience and free programming sources, MTV has yet to show a profit. MTV's parent company, Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Company, announced last week that it would start charging local cable operators 10 cents to 15 cents per subscriber per month for the service. Previously it had been offered free to cable operators.