



Transmission key to jump-start? Attendees gear up to chart biz's future

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The Province

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SPECIAL EVENT

Transmission 2007

Where: Centre For Digital Media, 577 Great Northern Way

When: Tomorrow and Friday, 7 p.m.

Tickets: First-come/first-serve free public passes to showcases are available at Zulu Records, 1972 W. 4th Ave. Limit four passes per person.

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If there is one thing the music industry's bigwigs can agree on, it's that it's not business as usual any more. Anything else regarding this point is a launching pad for fierce debates.

Transmission 2007 (transmitnow.com) just may be the place where these heated discussions spawn new global environments to foster, deliver and profit from sound arts.

In its inaugural year, the Telus-sponsored annual music and digital-tech conference blew open traditional concepts of what a music-industry session could be. Designed as a hub in which stakeholders in the music business could get face to face with one another in intense sessions devoted to key challenges facing the industry today, it wasn't your usual sit-down-and-trade-stories-in-front-of-adoring-fans time-killer. Far from it.

The 250 participants were label heads, leaders in digital distribution, and those behind emerging technologies such as satellite radio. All were carefully screened. The concept was to avoid wasting valuable time by bringing the right players together. That way, the attendees could tackle tough questions such as: Is it possible for a widely disparate and often disagreeing group of stakeholders to design a new, global music economy -- and then put it in place?

"That's certainly where we would like to see this year's event lead," says

event co-producer Tyl van Toorn. "There is certain to be a lot of very lively debate following the keynote by Scott Cohen around the idea of an ISP levy."

This is the proposal of a worldwide levy to enable copyright remuneration when content (songs, etc.) is traded across the Net. It's a very controversial idea.

Nic Harcourt, the acclaimed host of the show *Morning Becomes Eclectic* and music director of taste-making Santa Monica, Calif., public-radio broadcaster KCRW (kcrw.com), is interested in what comes out of the sessions around this, and other, "hot-button" topics.

"The difference between this event and something like, say, *South By Southwest*, is that you rarely get this many people with an active role in the industry together talking business," says Harcourt. "I expect to learn things, look forward to hearing the views of people from around the world, plus seeing some of the scheduled bands."

Ah, yes. There will be music. How could there not be?

Harcourt is quite a fan of Los Angeles-based Meiko. Other "export-ready" talent that will showcase its wares in front of the pros includes Montrealer Patrick Watson, Finland's Rubik, Australia's Clare Bowditch and Vancouver's very own Dan Mangan, *Mother Mother* and *Pride Tiger*. Another big deal this year is the many industry leaders from Japan coming to town. Canadian talent has been developing quite a solid market in Japan and China, while musical acts from these Asian powerhouses are making inroads over here, too.

The public will have an opportunity to sample the 20 artists from Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Europe and the Asia Pacific area appearing at *Transmission 2007*.

"Last year, we did the show on the Art Gallery grounds, but this year we moved away from that because of weather and so on," says co-producer Brad Josling.

"Instead of a big outdoor show, we're letting a limited number of the public into the indoor showcases on a first-come/first-served basis."

It's important to have some punters there, too. Particularly if some unknown in the audience happens to be the one with the key to the whole problem of how to revive the flagging sales of the music biz back up to the monumental earnings of the past.

If you're out there, transmit now.

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Catch Stu's *New Music Tuesdays* on *Global's Morning News* at 8:45 a.m., *Tuesdays*, and *Stu's Weekend Fun File* on *Global's Weekend Morning and Noon News*.

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