

STATE Scene

February

- 02/20 **LeAnn Rimes** at Astrodome in Houston.
- 02/20 **Dido** at La Zona Rosa in Austin.
- 02/21 **The Judds** at Astrodome in Houston.
- 02/22 **Dallas Symphony Orchestra** at the Bass Concert Hall stage in Austin.
- 02/23 **Chick Corea** at One World Theatre in Austin.
- 02/24 **Urban Bush Women** at Paramount Theatre in Austin.
- 02/25 **Houston Symphony with Pavel Kogan** at Jesse H. Jones Hall in Houston.
- 02/25 **Soulhat** at Fabulous Satellite Lounge in Houston.
- 02/25 **The Suspects** at Fitzgerald's in Houston.
- 02/26 **Smokey Robinson** at Astrodome in Houston.
- 02/26 **Sammy Kershaw** at Astrodome in Houston.
- 02/26 **Lucero And Pablo Montero** at Aerial Theater at Bayou Place in Houston.
- 02/26 **Ian Moore** at Fabulous Satellite Lounge in Houston.
- 02/26 **Luna** at La Zona Rosa in Austin.
- 02/26 - 02/27 **Ian Moore** at Fabulous Satellite Lounge in Houston.
- 02/26 - 02/28 **Houston Symphony with Kogan and Shaham** at Jesse H. Jones Hall in Houston.
- 02/27 **Jaguars** at Aerial Theater at Bayou Place in Houston.
- 02/27 **Lords Of Acid** at Numbers Night Club in Houston.
- 02/28 **Marc Anthony** at Aerial Theater at Bayou Place in Houston.
- 02/28 - 02/29 **Backstreet Boys** at Compaq Center in Houston.
- 02/29 **Rod Stewart** at Astrodome in Houston.
- 02/29 - 03/05 **STOMP** at Paramount Theatre in Austin.

March

- 03/01 **Brooks & Dunn** at the Astrodome in Houston.
- 03/03 **Steve Miller Band** at Astrodome in Houston.
- 03/03 **Chris Cornell** at Aerial Theater at Bayou Place in Houston.
- 03/03 **Hollisters** at Fabulous Satellite Lounge in Houston.
- 03/04 **Robert Earl Keen** at Astrodome in Houston.
- 03/04 **Eddie Griffin** at Houston Arena Theatre in Houston.
- 03/01 "Soul Brains" **Bad Brains Reunion Show** at The Back Room in Austin.
- 03/11 - 03/12 **The Apocalytes and The Tetragons** at The Vortex in Austin.
- 03/10 - 03/20 **Texas Bach Festival** at various locations around Austin.
- 03/22 **Swingtime The New York City All Star Swing Band and the Jivin' Lindy Hoppers** at Paramount Theatre in Austin.
- 03/23 **Afro-Cuban All Stars Rumba with the Afro-Cuban All Stars** at Paramount Theatre in Austin.
- 03/10 - 03/26 **Star of Texas Fair and Rodeo at Travis County Expo Center** in Austin.
- 04/17 **Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band** at Frank Erwin Center in Austin.
- 03/04 **Chris Cornell** La Zona Rosa in Austin.
- 05/02 **Red Hot Chili Peppers, Foo Fighters, Bicycle Thief** at the Frank Erwin Center in Austin.

Australian band to tour America in inflatable arena

NEW YORK (AP) — If the rock band Newsboys complains about drafty concert halls or spotty sound quality on its upcoming tour, its members won't have anyone to blame but themselves.

The contemporary Christian band is taking along its own inflatable arena, in what is believed to be an American concert industry first.

The 3,500-seat venue will be set up on fairgrounds or in parking lots dur-

ing a 66-date trek that starts Feb. 18 in Fort Myers, Fla.

"What we're doing is just applying 21st century technology to the oldest form of entertainment available — the circus tent," said Wes Campbell, the band's manager.

Newsboys, an Australian band now based near Nashville, have sold nearly 3 million records and earned three Grammy nominations on the religious rock circuit.

In certain parts of the country, they can sell out 8,000-seat halls.

They have often wondered what it would be like to create their own concert environment.

Playing in arenas is fine, but some fans are uncomfortable coming there, singer Peter Furler said. Some prefer concerts at large churches, but others refuse to go to a church that's not their denomination, he said.

With their concerts increasingly attracting families, the Newsboys wanted to make sure everyone felt welcome.

So they contracted with a Florida business that built a temporary arena for the Atlanta Olympics, and asked for something to take on the road. The band actually ordered two custom-built arenas; while one is in use, the other will be en route to the next city on the tour.

The blow-up air domes contain 2,500 bleacher seats and standing room for 1,000 more people. They also have a 40-by-40-foot, in-the-round stage.

The entire production moves from town to town on seven tractor-trailers, with 55 crew members.

While some acts have tried temporary arenas in Europe, no one has done anything like this in the United States, said Gary Bongiovanni, editor of the concert trade publication Pollstar.

Bongiovanni said the Newsboys tour will be watched closely in the industry, and it's likely others will try the same thing if it's successful.

"They probably wouldn't play Limp Bizkit in a tent like that," he said.

"They might tear it down."

One headache for tour organizers was dealing with skeptics. The Newsboys have had to assure people the arena will be safe.

To bass player Phil Joel, the experience promises to be a little like the movie *Groundhog Day*.

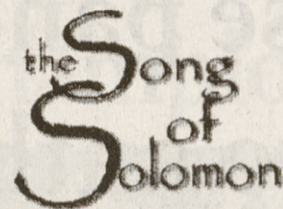
"No matter what city we're in," he said, "we're going to be in the same hall every night."

"They probably wouldn't play Limp Bizkit in a tent like that. They might tear it down."

— Gary Bongiovanni
Editor of Pollstar magazine

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