

# Features



## A BEAUTIFUL ROMANCE

With the World Cup kicking-off in South Africa, the mutually beneficial associations between music and sport go far beyond the beautiful game with concerts and sporting events making seemingly ideal partners

### Music and sport

By Christopher Barrett

**WHEN KATY PERRY TOOK TO THE STAGE** at the MTV Awards she chose to sport West Ham lingerie constructed entirely from team shirts, a move that inspired the club to produce a limited-edition underwear range.

A few months later it was the turn of Kasabian frontman Tom Meighan to show his true colours. Following a tie-in with Umbro, Meighan launched the new official England football away kit by donning it at a gig in Paris.

But thankfully the association between music and sport goes far beyond awful World Cup songs and the bums of pop stars. While the two entertainment forms have always been a close fit, recent months have seen the launch of a number of mutually beneficial synergies between the two sectors, not least with the launch of increasing numbers of concerts at sporting events.

Football and music have a long-established allegiance, but it was stepped up a gear this year with FIFA choosing to use music as the bedrock of its World Cup opening celebrations. Earlier this month Control Room founder Kevin Wall (Live Earth) oversaw the FIFA World Cup Kick-Off Celebration concert featuring acts including Alicia Keys, Amadou & Mariam and Black Eyed Peas.

And while the Liz Hobbs Group boasts a long-established reputation for aligning music concerts and horse racing, with Simply Red, James Morrison and Jools Holland just some of the artists set to play at racecourses around the UK this summer, a wide range of other sports are increasingly embracing music.

Renowned promoter Harvey Goldsmith is currently advising Formula One honcho Bernie Ecclestone on the F1 Rocks concert series, which last year pulled in a global TV audience of 30m. Meanwhile, a major multi-artist concert to herald the start of this year's Ryder Cup golf tournament in Wales is being planned for September 29.

Only last week the inaugural RugbyRocks London 7s event kicked off in Richmond Athletic Ground, a pioneering summer rugby sevens and music festival that combined the on-pitch action with performances by Feeder, The Parlotones and Just Jack. Along with 56 rugby sevens teams, an area was set aside for a music festival that included a main stage, sponsored by online music retail specialist zavvi.com, and an acoustic stage.

RugbyRocks co-founder Ed Kemp says that the event went so well that he is planning to hold it on an annual basis and expand it to other sites around the UK.

"It went extremely well," says Kemp. "As a result we

are thinking of making it a two-day event next year and have plans to launch it in other areas around the UK and possibly abroad."

Beyond actually devising and promoting events that combine musical and sporting entertainment, the scope to effectively promote music within the sporting environment is huge and something that has been embraced in recent years by Shoot Music Promotions.

Set up in 2007 by former music PR Tom Roberts to "promote new and established artist campaigns across the sports market", Shoot Music

Promotions counts a number of major and independent labels among its clients including Korda Marshall's Infectious Records and Fiction.

A key area of Shoot Promotions' activity is getting music used in the sporting environment. Whether that be teaming up with the Football League to exclusively air a Robbie Williams album track at stadiums around the country 10 days before it's official launch, or arranging for the England cricket team to use the Detroit Social Club track *Prophecy* as their walk-on music during the summer season, Shoot is bringing music to the sporting masses.

"Music and sport are intrinsically linked. We mirror a lot of music-marketing techniques and methodology, but place it in the sports area," says Roberts. "There are many parallels. Instead of Radio 1 it is Talk Sport, our NME is Four Four Two and instead of club promotions we have stadium promotions."

Aside from PR and marketing music through sport utilising TV, radio, online, press and stadia to reach an audience of more than 25m, other Shoot initiatives include the first bespoke-for-the-music-industry fantasy football league and building a digital delivery system especially for TV sports producers.

When it comes to sport utilising music, Roberts says that it is not just football and rugby. While sports such as ice hockey and basketball use a considerable amount of music at events, sports like cricket and athletics are both proving areas of increasing opportunity.

"Cricket is the one that is becoming very interesting because you have a young England team very interested in music. Graeme Swann is a musician and he has been instrumental in choosing music with us to be heard at cricket grounds this season and the ECB [England and Wales Cricket Board] want to attract a younger audience.

Breaking preconceptions that it is just lad-rock that appeals in the sporting environment, Roberts is working

with a range of artists and genres from classical to rap.

"It doesn't have to be The Pigeon Detectives and Kaiser Chiefs. They have a big part to play in the market, but so does Eminem and a lot of dance acts. Most genres have a place. A lot of sport are trying to attract a different audience. We work very closely with the Football

League. We run a playlist for them at grounds and their objective is to turn the sport into a family game, so they want a mixture of music."

Fiction Records managing director Jim Chancellor, whose label has been a client of Shoot for the last two years, says that sport promotion was "a big hole that needed to be filled". Fiction's association with Shoot has been "brilliant", but he emphasises that it does not work for all his artists.

He says: "It's not relevant for all the acts. Detroit Social Club's *Prophecy* is anthemic, has a good beat behind it and works well with the world of sport because it's uplifting, energetic and makes you want to jump around. It's very much on a case-by-case basis but we are seeing some really good results - exposure for bands that might be struggling in the more traditional areas."

Aside from the launch of combined music and sport festivals and increasingly widespread and effective promotion of music throughout the world of sport, synergies between the two entertainment forms are also being examined in the arena of education.

At Guildford's Academy of Contemporary Music, A&R consultant Mark Bounds has been working closely with Australian Institute of Sport manager of high-performance coaching Darlene Harrison to examine the similarities within the two areas with the aim of sharing ideas and ultimately strengthening both sport coaching and artist development programmes.

"We have been examining the skills, knowledge and behaviour required to consistently deliver performance," says Bounds. "With sport it is the coach and athlete and in music it is the artist and executive, whether that is the A&R or manager. There is also the psychological aspect which relates to both performers and business personnel: how to deal with reputation, how people change given certain circumstances and the psychology of how to manage your team.

"There are so many areas of convergence between sport and music training that are relevant to both our business and performance programmes because essentially you are looking to build and develop a performer and their ultimate performance," says Bounds.

### ABOVE LEFT

The 'music' and sport link currently making the headlines: fans in South Africa make themselves heard with the ubiquitous vuvuzelas

### LEFT

Rugby Rocks combines sport with a music festival while (far left) Katy Perry creates a stir in West Ham lingerie

