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UPFRONT

Kid Rock

Yo Gabba Gabba! Live Offers A Different Spin On Family Shows

It's party time. Yo Gabba Gabba! is the latest **Michael Cohl** venture that looks like a winner.

Yo Gabba Gabba! Live: There's a Party in My City, the first live U.S. touring show for the popular Nick Jr. TV show "Yo Gabba Gabba!," is going to be a hit, as well as perhaps the newest staple in the profitable family entertainment genre.

Conceived by the animation/entertainment company W!ldbrain and produced and promoted by Cohl's Miami-based S2BN Entertainment, Yo Gabba Gabba! Live put doubles on sale in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles and sold them out immediately, adding more dates in all three markets. The tour begins Nov. 14 at L.A.'s Shrine Expo Hall, then heads to New York's Beacon Theatre Nov. 21 and the Rosemont Theatre outside of Chicago Dec. 5.

Cohl is best-known as the promoter of **the Rolling Stones'** world tours since 1989, and he was a key player in orchestrating Live Nation's mega-deals with acts like **Madonna, U2, Jay-Z** and **Shakira**. Cohl resigned as chairman of Live Nation and CEO of Live Nation Artists in June 2008 and launched S2BN later that year.

Overseeing Yo Gabba Gabba! Live for S2BN is **Mike Luba**, the company's president of music and family entertainment. Luba founded the artist management/marketing firm Madison House (**String Cheese Incident, Drive-By Truckers**), then left to join Cohl at Live Nation Artists two years ago. When Cohl split with Live Nation, Luba followed him, eventually bringing "Yo Gabba Gabba!" to his attention.

Luba says he heard about the show from friends with children. "I have a 3-year-old who actually saw it and went totally mental," Luba says. "Then I saw it on TV and went

kind of mental."

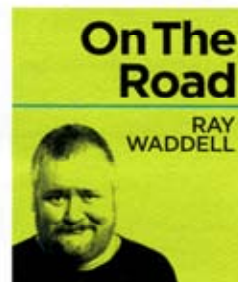
The 2-year-old TV show, which was conceived by **Scott Schultz** and **Christian Jacobs**, stands apart from other kids' programming thanks to the surprisingly hip mix of acts it has featured, including **MGMT, the Roots, Mates of State, the Shins** and **the Ting Tings**.

"Christian is the front guy for **the Aquabats**, so the show has a kind of punk rock sensibility to it," Luba says. "When I first saw it I had that moment of like, 'Holy mackerel, this could be "Sesame Street" for my generation.' Not only something that a kid really loves, but something I love for a whole different set of reasons."

Yo Gabba Gabba! Live jumps into a lucrative but competitive family entertainment field that annually fields longtime winners like **Dora the Explorer, Sesame Street Live, Clifford the Big Red Dog** and others. Luba thinks the rock sensibilities, and the expertise at S2BN, offer a different spin on the genre.

The tour will have a major video element and rock show production values, with former **Neil Young** lighting director **Mike Baldassari** designing the lighting rig. "There's a moveable portal which kind of frames it with lights, a giant LED screen which splits in two and moves around, and the rest of the time it's singalong and dance-along with what's going on onstage," Luba says. "It won't look like most kids' shows, and it won't feel like Broadway. It will feel like a party."

Luba says the target demographic for the tour ranges from "newborns all the way up to probably 6 or 7." That type of demo provides the opportunity to market to both kids and parents and to sell four tickets instead of two.



On The Road

RAY WADDELL





Super music friends: The characters of 'Yo Gabba Gabba!'

Prices range from \$33 to \$75.

"Yo Gabba Gabba!" host DJ **Lance Rock** will be on hand for the tour, as will be the show's characters Muno, Foofa, Brobee, Toodee and Plex, as well as as-yet-unidentified musical guests.

"It's up to us to not only let people know the show's coming, but to educate people as to what it's all about so they know what to expect, and then to blow their minds when they get there," Luba says.

Options for touring North America in 2010 are being weighed, and the global touring opportunity for Yo Gabba Gabba! Live seems obvious, given Cohl's background as a global producer.

"The family entertainment market plays right to our strengths," Luba says. "We're glad that we found one that we all really feel passionate about and one we think has a really big run ahead of it." ...



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