

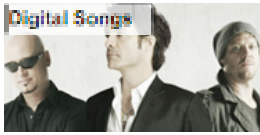
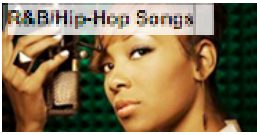
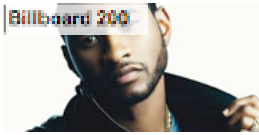
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# Public TV Donors To Pack Final Police Concert

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**M**adison Square Garden will be packed tonight (Aug. 7) with public television members who'll have gotten far more for their pledges than mere tote bags. Thanks to an unusual collaboration coordinated through New York-based Thirteen/WNET and WLIW21, they've landed exclusive seats to the Police's final concert.

"PBS just seemed like a great idea," said Kathryn Schenker, who manages Police frontman Sting. "They were doing more music programming, and they wanted to reach younger audiences, so it seemed like a great idea to help them raise money for arts and educational television."

The concert -- which will not be broadcast live, though the final encore will be a Best Buy-presented webcast -- is part of what the channels have dubbed "360 degrees of fundraising," and the partnership kicks off their "Public Television Rocks" campaign.

"We'd always talked about needing to reach out to a younger demographic," said Neal Shapiro, president and CEO of the Educational Broadcasting Corp., a licensee of Thirteen/WNET and WLIW21, which in the past seven months have made inroads to younger audiences that included airing independent films. "There's a younger generation out there after 11 p.m. looking for things to watch and will try some things that are consistent with our programming."

Admirable, but having the Police's representatives call and offer every ticket to their final concert so that your station can raise funds puts rebranding on a different scale. As of mid-June, pledges of \$150-\$750 could score members a pair of tickets to the concert; this week, a new block of single tickets opened for \$50. VIP packages were available for purchase at higher pledge amounts, while an auction of VIP packages on eBay raised \$40,000. A signed instrument auction went live Monday on eBay.

Insiders estimate that final earnings will be in the millions.

Entertainment's Bill Zysblat, who produced the Police's reunion tour with Live Nation, said finding the venue for the final blowout was important. But while the band would cover overhead, they didn't want to raise a large amount of money either (in addition to the free show, it has donated \$1 million to the city's Public Television Initiative).

Reaction on PBS, which already has an internal pledge system in place, amazed Zysblat with its response. "We sat there saying, 'There has to be something wrong,'" he said. "This can't be a win-win for us, but we can't come up with the flaw."

Still, fans might wonder: Is this really the last show, or will the Police just re-reform in five years and do it all again? Schenker says no.

"I would bet the ranch that this is absolutely the last show ever," he said. "Sting has been quoted as saying it's important that things have an ending, that it was never meant to be forever, and this is a happy ending -- for everyone."

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