



# NIGHTLIFE

Videocam parties backstage, taped concert series, ratings vs. demographics—from “Letterman” to “Lopez,” from “Kimmel” to “Fallon,” the art of booking and getting booked on late-night shows is a whole new—and ultra-important—game

**BY PHIL GALLO**

Foo Fighters agreed to perform on the April 12 episode of “Late Show With David Letterman,” but the late-night program’s producers needed to differentiate the performance from the band’s appearance on “Saturday Night Live” four days earlier.

Letterman requested the Foos encore with “Everlong,” the song they played when the host returned to the air following quintuple bypass surgery in 2000. The band was happy to grant his request, but

the Foos also wanted to pay homage to the Beatles—and celebrate the fact that they were playing in the Ed Sullivan Theater, where the Fab Four made its American TV debut in 1964. The group ended up playing its entire new album, “Wasting Light,” dressed in Beatle-style dark suits and were shot in black and white, a video of which is on the CBS website. A webcast of the performance—with a total running time of 109 minutes—also includes renditions of older songs shot in color.

**ILLUSTRATION BY DREW FRIEDMAN**



It's a striking example of how today's late-night TV plays a key role in the promotion of new albums. The Foo Fighters took advantage of the new opportunities that late-night TV has been integrating into its programs. During the past two seasons, one show after another has ramped up ways to help music acts promote their albums and tours by posting bonus content online and expanding show performances into mini-concerts. Producers pride themselves on offering a party atmosphere backstage to help garner return visits.

"Music permeates a lot of different shows, but we've always tried to distinguish ourselves by presenting it in a unique way," "Letterman" talent producer Sheila Rogers says. "We had a lot of fun with the Foo Fighters because they had a concept. It worked. It's probably one of our best webcasts."

Foo Fighters are among the bands at the top of the late-night food chain, an ecosystem dominated by acts that get little radio airplay and prefer selling albums rather than singles. More than ever, late-night TV is finding a balance between booking the latest act working a new single and the great artists of yore. The result: an increasing number of veteran performers making room in their schedules to visit TV studios in Los Angeles and New York. "Television is not just television anymore," says Linda Carbone, CEO of New York publicity firm Press Here. "New media has changed everything. It's no longer just the hit you get from a late-night performance. There's a multiplying factor."

At "Jimmy Kimmel Live!," says co-executive producer Doug DeLuca, who oversees the show's digital operations, the program interacts with its fan base "to the extent that we can. We'll create with them. The Web allows us to tap into what fans want to hear and want to see. Hopefully we're picking the right bands."

With the exception of "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno," every late-night program with a consistent music component has tweaked itself to better connect with the red-eyed, younger, post-midnight demographic. "Leno," as most publicists and managers say, provides a broad audience and is the best place to bring a mainstream act.

Attracting acts is as tied to creating bonus Internet content as it is to a well-stocked, comfy backstage area and an opportunity to play exclusive mini-concerts for invited fans.

"Kimmel" has three different performance areas. "Lopez Tonight" has Flip cameras backstage for acts to play with and post videos, plus the show promotes albums visually onscreen throughout an act's performance. "Conan," which plans to upload backstage performances and conversations, has a track record of breaking rock bands for nearly two decades. "Late Night With Jimmy Fallon" offers acts the opportunity to perform with house band the Roots. "The Daily Habit" boasts a midday shoot—and the shortest time required to be on the set.

"Letterman" continues to bulk up on webcasts; recent ones include Ray LaMontagne & the Pariah Dogs, Tinie Tempah, Ben Harper and, on June 22, Beady Eye. The webcasts on CBS.com have been sponsored by AT&T since they started last fall.

Although late-night performances have led to bookings on the morning show circuit, that time of day is largely reserved for pop stars pushing a new single. "More than ever, daytime will not take a chance on a new artist," says talent manager Ron Shapiro, who manages Regina Spektor, among others. "Niche genres are not served."

Which makes late-night TV prime time for rock-'n'-roll. Daniel Glass, whose Glassnote Records roster has greatly benefitted from talk show exposure, contends that late-night TV, despite the numerous shows on the air, is stronger than ever.

"We consider them our partners and allies," says Glass, whose bands include Mumford & Sons and Two Door Cinema Club. "Our bands go to 'Kimmel' and



## HOW SXSW INFLUENCES LATE-NIGHT TV

Every year, the South by Southwest (SXSW) conference creates a feeding frenzy for late-night TV show bookers. This year was no exception.

One act that attracted considerable interest: Givers, a quintet from Lafayette, La., that signed with Glassnote Records in February. "Last Call With Carson Daly" shot a profile piece on the band that aired March 25. "We expect big things from them," "Last Call" music booker Davis Powers says. The group is also booked for "Late Night With Jimmy Fallon" on June 13.

Besides Givers, "Last Call" shot three shows' worth of SXSW performances. Among the bands featured were Mona, a Nashville-based quartet whose debut came out May 16 on Zion Noiz/Island; Interscope hip-hop duo the Knux; and soul singer Charles Bradley. Daly's show also profiled Walk the Moon while the Cincinnati band was seeking a European agent and a U.S. label.

Merge Records' Wye Oak was the first act seen at SXSW that Jonathan Cohen booked for "Late Night With Jimmy Fallon." The band will appear on the show in mid-July. Cohen, who booked Passion Pit, Japandroids, Best Coast and Local Natives after seeing them perform at earlier SXSW festivals, says Brooklyn's Twin Shadow delivered one of the best sets he saw this year. The act appeared on the show May 5.

Elsewhere, "The Daily Habit" booked Los Angeles band Foster the People, whose debut, "Torches," will be released May 24 on StarTime International/Columbia. And "Conan" booker Jim Pitt has snared two bands so far: Seattle's the Head and the Heart, which recently signed with Sub Pop, made its TV debut on April 21, and Atlantic Records' Welsh rock trio the Joy Formidable, which appeared one night later. —PG

they return with a smile. They go to 'Fallon,' they return with a smile. I've never seen—and I've been doing this a long time—more integrity among television music bookers than right now."

## THE POWER OF LATE NIGHT

According to Nielsen, the current ratings leader is NBC's "Leno," with an average viewership of 3.9 million viewers per episode in first-quarter 2011. CBS' "Letterman" is on its heels with an average of 3.6 million viewers per show. But as all shows are quick to point out, the important element is the demographic.

TBS' "Lopez" and "Conan" are neck and neck when it comes to the youngest demo: Their average viewer is 30 years old. Producers for "Last Call With Carson Daly" claim that their 1 million viewers at 1:30 a.m. are music-centric. The "Kimmel" staff likes to mention the host's days as a college DJ. "Fallon" says it aims for a unique blend that's not too mainstream, not too indie. And "The Daily Habit," Fuel TV's late-night show that combines extreme sports and music, is aiming for males in their 20s.

"Lopez" booker Alisa Gichon Malo says that when she worked at "The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson," "Kimmel" was just starting out, "and that was the place to be. At CBS we had the numbers, but they had the stronger demo. In music, it is more important to have the demo."

Publicist Carbone, whose company placed Alison Krauss on "Lopez," Raphael Saadiq on "Kimmel" and "Conan," Lykke Li and Mona on "Daly" and the Go! Team on "The Daily Habit"—all in the month of April—takes it a step further: "It's a real image thing when you pick a show. There's a lot about the vibe of a show that has to do with what you choose."

Shapiro, who scored a victory last year when Spektor was booked on "SNL," has a different view. "There is very little preciousness in the picking and choosing of a show by 98% of the artists who have television available to



them," he says. "TV is important for artists without a steady stream of radio hits. It's somewhat rare that an individual TV appearance can catapult a career, but it does happen enough that it's always worth taking a shot."

Of course, anyone talking about late-night TV success stories will mention the blockbuster "SNL" bookings of Adele, Arctic Monkeys and James Blunt. But the norm still poses big challenges. There's also the bandwagon effect. When Dangerbird Records released Fitz & the Tantrums' "Pickin' Up the Pieces" album in August 2010, "Daly" was one of the first shows to express interest in booking the band, ultimately filming a sold-out show at the 800-capacity El Rey Theatre in Los Angeles. In attendance were bookers from "Kimmel" and "Conan," each of whom booked the group for their shows. In April, the band performed on "Leno." That will be followed by appearances on "Lopez" this month and on "Letterman" in June.

"Late-night TV gives a band a national profile and cer-

# THE BOOKER PRIZE

Four Late-Night Talent Sharks Discuss Methods To Their Madness

## JONATHAN COHEN

"Late Night With Jimmy Fallon"

Jonathan Cohen was hired as music booker only two weeks before "Fallon" debuted in March 2009. One of the first guests he was told to book, Randy Newman, made his debut appearance on the show May 16. "It's a milestone," Cohen says. Which may sound surprising considering that "Fallon" has booked members of the Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen and, in April, Aretha Franklin. "From the beginning," Cohen says, "Jimmy wanted to emphasize variety—it's Paul Simon one night and a new indie band the next." Appearances by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards during the show's Stones week were a turning point. "That whole week showed a lot. We offer a fun, loose environment for artists of that caliber," says Cohen, a former senior editor at Billboard.

Add to that Springsteen's comedic debut—singing Willow Smith's "Whip My Hair"—and the pairing of Itzhak Perlman with house band the Roots. The group continues to be the show's secret weapon—musicians of every stripe have jammed with the act, and Paul Williams is booked to sing "Rainbow Connection" with the band in June. "Even major acts want to play with the Roots," Cohen says, "but we'd never say, 'You must play with the Roots.' The essence of the show is letting people do something out of the ordinary." —PG

## ALISA GICHON MALO

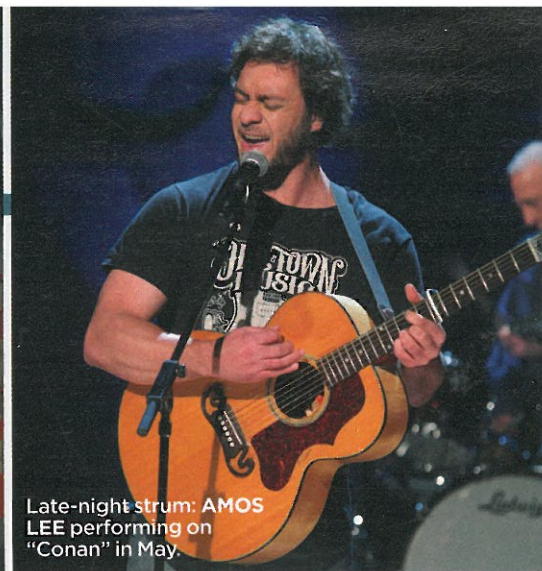
"Lopez Tonight"

Prince recently complimented George Lopez. He said: "You have a show that represents all people—I see all kinds of guests on here." At that moment, Alisa Gichon Malo knew she'd made the right decision to join TBS' "Lopez Tonight" as musical booker. "That's what drew me to the show," Malo says. "I knew they'd make music very important." Malo booked musical talent—for E!, "Mad TV" and "The Late Late Show" (with Craig Kilborn and Craig Ferguson)—for six years before starting her own Anomaly Talent in 2007. Malo books awards shows and benefits in addition to "Lopez."

"Lopez" launched in November 2009 with Carlos Santana as the first musical guest. During the next two weeks, Malo wrangled such stars as Mary J. Blige, Shakira, Slash, LMFAO and the first late-night appearance by Justin Bieber. "It all stems from George's love of music," she says. "George is a big fan of old-school rock, so you see it sprinkled throughout—Devo. Foreigner. George met Kevin Cronin at [Broadway show] 'Rock of Ages' and came back and said, 'We have to book REO Speedwagon.' We try to keep [the music] upbeat. George calls it a late-night party." —PG



Beatle mania: **FOO FIGHTERS** pay tribute to the Fab Four during their "Letterman" webcast.



Late-night strum: **AMOS LEE** performing on "Conan" in May.

tainly contributes to bigger venues on tour," says Fitz & the Tantrums' co-manager, Lisa Nupoff. "Festivals view us as an important national band and not just an L.A. band, and it makes us valuable to licensing people." Album sales—now at 51,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan—have spiked each time the band has appeared on TV. The song "MoneyGrabber" has been a big beneficiary of TV exposure: After a promotional email blast was sent out with tour dates and two late-night performance clips, the song generated its first 5,000-download week, according to SoundScan. (Total sales are at 92,000.)

Fitz & the Tantrums, though, offer something that many hitmakers don't: a great live show. Each late-night program has an individual strength, but all bookers say that a strong live performance is paramount to getting a slot. Which is why all of them insist on first seeing the bands perform live. "There's nothing worse than trusting a YouTube link," "Fallon" booker Jonathan Cohen says. "Usually it only takes one show and I can

tell if a band is ready for TV."

"Conan" booker Jim Pitt has two requirements: They must be able to perform live, and stir anticipation. "All of the shows like to identify the up-and-coming artists to become the first to book them," says Pitt, who has booked musical acts for host Conan O'Brien for the 18 years he's been in TV. "We love it when the introduction is, 'Making their American television debut.' You end up with a list that's nice to hang your hat on."

This summer, several late-night shows will bring even more stars into view with a number of special concert series. In celebration of the 80th anniversary of Los Angeles' Greek Theatre, "Daly" will broadcast shows from the legendary venue under a "Greek Week" banner. "Conan" will shoot a four-part concert series on a soundstage built to accommodate 1,000 fans that's set to air in June and July. Each band will perform four or five songs; "Conan" will air one; the others will be posted online at TeamCoco.com.

"Kimmel," which in the past has shut down Hollywood Boulevard outside its studio in the El Capitan Theatre for the likes of Depeche Mode and Mariah Carey, has another superstar booked for the summer, and is finalizing plans for a Live Nation summer preview week to be filmed on the outdoor stage behind the theater. CBS' "Ferguson," which doesn't present music on a regular basis, will tape episodes on a new stage at the Grove shopping center adjacent to CBS Television

City where the show is produced.

Those concerts present a unique opportunity that Glassnote Records' Glass has suggested his bands take advantage of, and play different songs at each show.

"It's more representative of a real album," he says. "You can see the contrived marketing plan when an artist does the same song over and over and is on one show after another. Each show should be a different experience. With a gradual build you get a nice representation of the band . . . and how the band evolves through the different songs performed."

As the big music labels have all but eliminated budgets for acts to fly coast to coast on release week, an artist needs to carefully orchestrate his or her schedule to make the most of late-night possibilities, picking shows to coordinate with an album launch, follow-up appearances in support of a tour and even additional shows for a tour's second or third leg. Amos Lee, whose "Mission Bell" debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 in January, could win an award for navigating the late-night waters.

Lee performed "Windows Are Rolled Down" on "Leno" on Jan. 26, the day after the album was released. (He had begun an 18-show tour on Jan. 20 and had daytime bookings soon after the release.) He sang "Violin" on "Letterman" on Feb. 16, two weeks after the song was offered for free on iTunes. He next appeared on "Conan" on May 9, just four days before his tour resumed. On May 26, he will perform "Jesus" with the Roots on "Fallon." Lee has festival dates in June and early July before starting a tour with Lucinda Williams in July and August, during which time he will appear on "Kimmel."

For all of that coverage, "Mission Bell" has sold 119,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"A performance can have an impact in many ways," "Conan" booker Pitt says. "It can be building the story, or another booker may see it and say they're ready for the next level. The way the business is going, you can say late-night television is planting seeds for [future stars]. It's nice to establish a relationship and keep it going." ●●●

## SHEILA ROGERS

"Late Show With David Letterman"

Sheila Rogers began her tenure with David Letterman in 1992 as a music booker. Though she's been elevated to talent producer, she continues to have a hand in the music bookings.

**What's a constant throughout your years at "Late Show"?**

We're always trying to represent an eclectic mix. One night we'll have a huge star and the next night debut someone not that well-known. Upcoming is a mix: Lupe Fiasco, Twilight Singers, Emmylou Harris. We're doing a scene from the Broadway show "Catch Me If You Can."

**How can musical acts make you believe they're worthy of booking?**

Sheryl Zelikson is day to day with the music. I keep my hand in it but Sheryl is the one listening to everything. She gets out there to see shows and hear what's going on with other bands. I listen to as much as I can. If we can't get an exclusive, we want to be first. I book the top guests as well, and I would say that the same philosophy applies. You don't want the market to be saturated. We don't just book the artists at the top of the charts or whoever has an album coming out.

**Are artists becoming more open to doing more than just a performance?**

When Jay-Z and Eminem were on the show to-

gether, Jay said he wanted to do an interview. Eminem was game for a Top 10 [list] and he really sold it. When we had the Beastie Boys on the show, our director shot them coming up out of the subway and into the theater. It really built anticipation and momentum. Or, we had Eagles of Death Metal play out on the street. It was making fun of everybody, ourselves included, who does these outdoor concerts. We just put a band out on the corner, no explanation. It was very funny. When U2 was here for the week, in addition to performing they did a Top 10. When it was snowing they were out shoveling snow. They did comedy. It showed a different side of them.

**It seems legendary artists get three minutes to perform on a talk show and a singer who's hot at the moment gets a full interview on the couch. Why not do more interviews with musicians?**

[But] on the other hand, you get a whole show dedicated to Paul McCartney. You do want to reflect what's out there in popular culture at the time. If someone is dominating popular culture, we might want to get to know them a bit even if we don't hear from them again in five years. I wish we could talk to more musical guests. Jay-Z is great—he's wry, he's smart, he's quick. Elvis Costello is a good interview.

**What happens when an act shows up with a rider? I never look at them.** —PG

## FERNITA WYNN

"The Mo'Nique Show"

Returning for its third season in September, Atlanta-based "The Mo'Nique Show," hosted by Academy Award winner Monica "Mo'Nique" Imes, is the only late-night talk show shot outside of New York and Los Angeles. Its guests, who come from the realms of R&B, hip-hop, gospel, country, dance and rock, often need to make special travel arrangements to get booked on the show, which airs Tuesdays through Thursdays.

The program is taped—two shows per day, three days per week—from September to mid-May, which means tour schedules don't always coincide with shooting. But "Mo'Nique," which pulls in about 800,000 viewers per episode (according to Nielsen), delivers a unique bonus: Each musical performer gets to perform at least two songs and is always interviewed.

"As Mo'Nique says, 'You don't invite somebody into your house and then don't speak to them,'" says Fernita Wynn, the show's senior talent executive who books the program's guests. In a few cases during the show's 130 episodes per season, "Mo'Nique" has been turned over to an hourlong mini-concert. Jill Scott, John Legend and Bootsy Collins premiered new albums this season, which wrapped May 19.

"Most of the time it's artists on the charts," Wynn says, noting that the show had a country episode this season with Colt Ford featuring legendary rapper Darryl "D.M.C." McDaniels. "We're always looking for something new, something fresh—it could come from anywhere." —PG

## THE 8 LATE-NIGHT MUSIC BOOKERS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

**JONATHAN COHEN**

@brainofjoacohen  
"Late Night With Jimmy Fallon"

**Fun fact:** He keeps a lively Twitter feed.  
**Best way to get his attention:** An amazing live performance.

**SCOTT IGOE**

"Jimmy Kimmel Live!"  
Fun fact: He started out at Interscope in the '90s.

**Best way to get his attention:** A great live show.

**JOHN KATOVSIKH**

"The Daily Habit"  
Fun fact: He was a music coordinator for the films "Jackie Brown" and "Never Been Kissed."

**Best way to get his attention:** Put on an unforgettable live performance.

**ALISA GICHON MALO**

@AlisaGichonMalo  
"Lopez Tonight"  
Fun fact: Past and present clients of her Anomaly Talent include BAFTA, Yahoo and InStyle magazine.  
**Best way to get her attention:** CDs. Or get @GeorgeLopez to like your act.

**JIM PITT**

@jimpitt13  
"Conan"

**Fun fact:** His dream get is Bob Dylan.  
**Best way to get his attention:** An amazing live performance.

**DAVIS POWERS**

@davispowers  
"Last Call With Carson Daly"  
Fun fact: He manages punk band Roll the Tanks.  
**Best way to get his attention:** He wants to see how good you are live; YouTube links.

**FERNITA WYNN**

"The Mo'Nique Show"  
Fun fact: She used to be a producer for "The Sharon Osbourne Show."  
**Best way to get her attention:** Emails with MP3s and video links.

**SHERYL ZELIKSON**

"Late Show With David Letterman"  
Where she hangs out: Well, she does have a LinkedIn profile.  
**Best way to get her attention:** CDs and YouTube links.