

# Concert promoters move offices to North Hills

Ross has a new \$125,000 an hour business.

Actually, DiCesare-Engler Productions, Inc., promoters of entertainment shows, has moved to 3367 Babcock Blvd., Ross.

Rich Engler of Ross, for whom the partnership is half named, said the firm promotes about 200 concerts a year in as many as 15 states.

What's the most the firm ever paid an entertainer who performed in Pittsburgh? Engler said:

"Eric Clapton was guaranteed \$125,000 for one hour."

Clapton, considered by some the greatest guitarist, drew 42,000 fans to Three Rivers Stadium last July 5. The show grossed \$427,000, Engler said.

Pat DiCesare, 36, is the elder statesman in the firm, but Engler is an equal partner. Engler joined DiCesare and the corporation was formed in late 1973. Not long ago, DiCesare was the only ballgame in town in the pop-rock entertainment promotion field.

Engler, 28, looks all of 10 years younger.

He claims his firm is one of the top 12 entertainment production firms in the nation.

Engler said four of the firm's people will be based in four offices at the Ross building, a very modern-looking structure. Some offices of the firm will stay in Monroeville, near DiCesare's home. Why the move to Ross at all? Engler said:

"I used to drive 45 minutes to work. I figured out that last year alone, I wasted 700 hours traveling to and from work. Now I live one mile from the office. I can just devote all those hours to work now."

### Get off the phone

Engler lives at 109 Colwin Road in a house he called "California beach style... it has eleven levels" as he showed the reporter a photo of the house. It sure doesn't look much like most of the homes in Ross.

Engler's wife, Cindy, is a model. He called her "one of the best and most successful models in the city... she's always in the paper in ads."

The hardest part of interviewing Engler was getting him off the phone. Most of his job is hammering out details of concerts — talking by phone to artists, managers, ticket makers, hall managers, etc. Engler said, when he finally got off the phone.

"It's not unusual for our phone bill to be \$3,000 a month."

While this reporter was in his office, Engler firmed up a concert date with Paul Anka, some people's candidate for male chauvinist of the decade (with due respects to Bobby Riggs). Anka was put on hold while Engler talked to Syria Mosque officials to get the hall for Anka's Feb. 27, 8 p.m. performance. Back to Anka with a quick "I'll be right with you... do you want some coffee?" to the reporter.

Toward the end of the interview, the other end of the feminist movement called from New York — Helen Reddy. Engler said:

"Some guy is here trying to interview me, Helen. I'll call back in about 15 minutes."

I'll bet nobody hung up on Helen Reddy to talk to you last week (the reports typed, smugly).

### Concert business ok here

Engler called DiCesare "kind of inactive," and said he directs most of the firm's chores now.

Engler, a native of Creighton, started as a drummer in a band in High School. He became the band's manager then got into the management and production business prior to joining DiCesare. Engler said DiCesare approached him, the two formed the partnership and the rest is history.

Rolling Stone, one of the rock world's premier publications, has said the concert business is off 20 to 33 per cent due to economic conditions.

Engler agreed, but added:

"But it has not hit Pittsburgh yet."

He said a Feb. 25 set for the Stanley Theater downtown with three groups not classified supergroups — Styx, Queen and Kansas — sold out (4,000 seats) after only three newspaper ads. The Johnny Mathis concert at Syria Mosque this month sold out.

Engler said the promoter is the "gambler" of the business. Concerts can lose a promoter "\$12,000 in one night," he said.

But Engler stays in it. Why? He said:

"That's what I know best. I have a good feel for music. It's a trying business but I've had the stomach for it. From the outside it looks glamorous. But it is a tough job to do. It is constant negotiations with artists, managers,

record companies, hall owners...

### Rolls Royce, inner peace

And then there is the remuneration. Engler has the trappings — a beautiful house replete with swimming pool and a \$22,000 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud. If that is not enough, he said he will soon buy a Citroen Maserati, an auto worth \$15,000.

It appears he is chasing the American dream — material prosperity. Is he? He said:

"Material things are not really what make people happy. I think I have inner peace. I enjoy what I have. I don't try to be a status seeker. It's just that I have expensive tastes."

"But I like to get away and camp and fish and hunt."

What about the entertainment field in terms of drugs? Engler said:

"Drugs used to be big among artists. But I think it is dying out. But I am probably considered super straight in this business. I may dress differently than many people, but I don't take drugs and I don't even drink. I might

have a social drink now and then.

"I can't be stoned and handle the flow of business I have to. It just can't be done."

Engler does not often hobnob with the entertainers he promotes. Most are just in and out of town.

Some of his firm's biggest promotions have been Liza Minelli, Sonny and Cher (remember them?), Led Zepplin, Bachman Turner Overdrive, Moody Blues, George Carlin... the list goes on.

Some of DiCesare-Engler's coming attractions are:

Jackson Brown, Phoebe Snow, March 29, Syria Mosque; Sha Na Na, April 11, Mosque; ZZ Top, April 23 Civic Arena; Tony Orlando and Dawn (soon).

But Engler, who says he hopes to some day manage a top attraction and is working on it, displayed a flair for the showman himself. He said he expects to pull 65,000 people into Three Rivers Stadium July 18th. What's the big attraction, the reporter asked matter-of-factly? Engler incredulously blurted:

"Oh, I'm not telling yet."



Rich Engler talking on the phone (what else?) at his Ross office

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