



Wissman (back row, second from left) and friends at the Tuscan Sun Festival

discover these opportunities. The reason we have offices in all these places – which now includes New York, London, Paris, Lucca, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore – is build relationships with local organisations, ministries of culture and so forth.

Nevertheless, building such a network is only valuable if it is used in the right way. Wissman believes that the key to unlocking this potential lies in creating events. 'It is essential for us as managers to keep the business of music making alive. You see this on the pop side of the fence with constant thinking about marketing and publicity – always coming up with new

ways of getting people interested. I don't believe that we should necessarily copy that and I am absolutely certain that our art should remain pure but I am quite sure that there are other ways of getting people interested. We want things that become infectious; success stories that everybody wants to buy into. I want to try to create events that bring people together, events that artists really want to come to, events that encourage audiences to get involved and to engage more with the performers.

Four years ago Wissman founded the Tuscan Sun Festival, which is a combination of music, art and litera-

ture. Not only that, he also introduced food and wine events into the mix. 'The idea is that people come and try different things and gradually become more and more involved. It might take a couple of days or three years but we're encouraging a new audience. The Tuscan Sun Festival has been so successful that we've extended the idea to include Napa Valley in the States that will unite the world's best and most adventurous music making with the visual, literary and culinary arts.'

Singapore is interested in hosting a similar event and in China IMG Artists started a huge music education festival called the Canton Summer Academy with Charles Dutoit as music director. More than 800 students from all over Asia participate in concerts and master-classes during a week and a half of activities.

None of this is to suggest that IMG Artists is no longer engaged in the day-to-day business of negotiating and scheduling for a large roster of artists.

Wissman, however, is convinced that without generating new interest, there will be nothing to book his artists for. 'The notion of arts management as a booking service is gone. The landscape has changed dramatically in terms of funding and in terms of what people actually want. We have to keep the business alive and at the moment I don't see other agencies doing this. It might mean that we don't get rich but we have to generate successful platforms for our art. If our festivals are of a high enough quality and create the right atmosphere then they will be such platforms.'

'As long as we don't actually lose money, it's worth it to me.' **FACT**