Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Made in America Comes to LA

Chiwan Choi · Wednesday, April 23rd, 2014

I've been bedridden for about a week and a half now, since the day after the LA Times Festival of Books (*Damn you, LATFOB!*) when my right ankle stiffened up and then both of my legs became only good for transmitting a whole lot of pain.

Fine, fine. That was overly dramatic.

Speaking of dramatic, during my 10 days sitting and lying in bed all day, I've managed to watch all the episodes of *Game of Thrones* (*Half-Man! Half-Man! Half-Man!*), which has led me to, among other things, thinking of the mechanisms of society, the inevitability of politics, and the vicegrip around a community's nutsack.

A bit of big news coming out of LA, out of DTLA, is that our mayor, Eric Garcetti, went over everyone to make a deal with Jay-Z, Live Nation, and Budweiser to bring the Made in America rave to Grand Park, the supposed park for the people.

The Mayor says it's to create an *inclusive* music festival.

Inclusive at $155 a ticket. For a fucking rave. A rave with Jay-Z. At a free public park.

I don't even want to get started about how much it's going to cost taxpayers, about the supposed benefit to local economy, nor about using a public park that has been selling itself as a park for the community, a park for the people.

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Jay-Z is a superstar. More importantly, he is a *safe* superstar. What will the Mayor do when, I don't know, ICE-T wants to do a weekend festival at the park? At least he's LA! How about Slayer? What will he say when the Insane Clown Posse say they'd like to hold the Gathering of the Juggalos at Grand Park?

[embedvideo id="rloidlFbi4w" website="youtube"]

What will he say? What will be the criteria that he will use to approve or not approve? Safety? Money? Whether he likes the music or not? The racial make-up of the audience?

What if we want to sell booze at next year's Grand Park Downtown BookFest? Will we be allowed to do that? If Budweiser and Jay-Z can, why shouldn't we be allowed?

If what Mayor Garcetti wants is for this city to have a world class festival, why not give Writ Large Press a budget? We'd fucking create an event like this city's never seen, featuring nothing but the incredible artists that *actually live in this fucking great city*. Let Leigh Ann Hahn and her crew from Grand Performances take over the city. They'd put on a killer festival (they already do with their summer stage).

There was *zero* reason to go over everybody's head, including our Councilman Jose Huizar, to bring Hov and Bey to LA.

Zero artistic or community reasons.

Jay-Z even exploits the very artists that *he invited* to put more coin in his pockets.

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The bigger concern is this.

Judeth pointed out that the Mayor isn't making himself the gatekeeper of all cultural events in LA. He might be handing over that power to Live Nation, a multi-billion dollar corporation.

Paranoia? Sure. I mean I have been running a crazy fever and have been seeing dragons flying around my apartment. So there's that.

But I doubt that once the Made in America event is done and the Mayor deems it a *huge* success, whether that is anywhere remotely close to the truth or not, that he can tell Live Nation that it was a one shot deal, that they can't hold concerts, festivals, and other extravaganzas in LA that have *nothing* to do with LA.

Live Nation is also known to buy venues in the name of preserving them, convincing locals with diminishing budgets that LN can take the cost off their hands, making more and more spaces inaccessible to local artists. There are rumors going around about them looking to take over some historic venues down by the South Bay area.

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Hopefully by the end of the week I'll be up and walking around. By then, maybe the fevers will be all gone and my hallucinations with it. Maybe I'll learn that there is no such thing as a Made in America festival curated and hosted by Jay-Z. Maybe I will no longer be convinced I'm a dragon.

Maybe I'll learn that Mayor Eric Garcetti didn't really fuck us with an EDM pulsing Budweiser glowstick.

Maybe I'll wake up and see that he didn't just spit in the face of all the hardworking artists who live and work in LA, spending every last ounce of our blood and money to make this the incredible and singular city that it is.

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