

focused on one artiste's career.

Tours are planned at the very least a year in advance with J&R Adventures promoting shows in North America, Australia, Asia and Germany while agent Neil O'Brien oversees much of Europe.

O'Brien first began working with Bonamassa and his team nine years ago. "When I got involved I was booking him at The Borderline [275] in London and that was the level he was at throughout Europe, it was between 200-300 tickets, the fees were fairly derisory and pretty much everywhere there was a similar picture," he says.

After two shows at The Borderline, O'Brien told Bonamassa that in two years time he would be playing the prestigious Royal Albert Hall [5,272]. "He looked at me and said 'you're mad'. But we did it and Eric Clapton came on stage and played two songs with him," he says.

O'Brien now works with J&R Adventures to promote UK shows and aside from the four concerts at London's Eventim Apollo, on sale for March 2015, he is due to announce a further six UK dates outside London at cut down arenas with configurations of 3,500-4,500 seats.

"In all the European territories we have gone to, we have taken Joe from 300 capacity clubs,



Kevin Shirley



Neil O'Brien

to 700, 1,500, 2,500 up to 3,500-capacity venues, it has been a very classic development," says O'Brien.

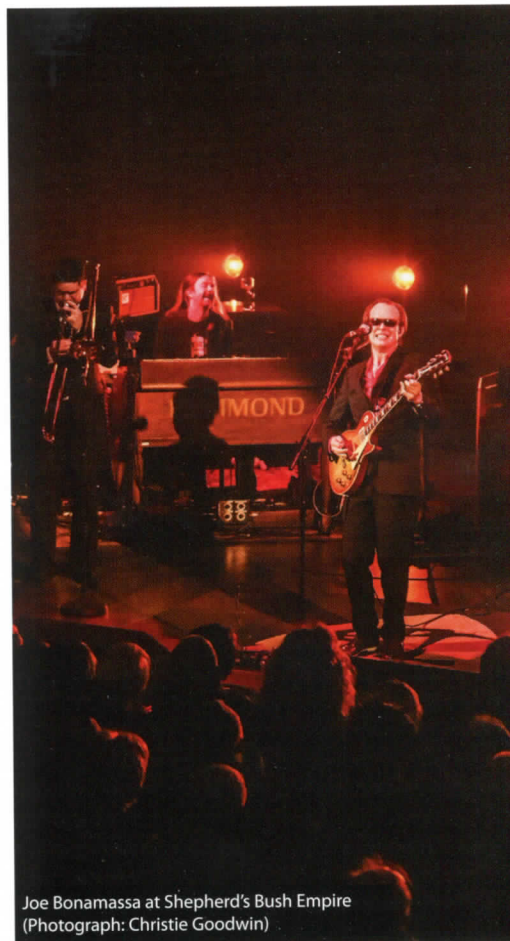
### Conquering Europe

Marco Ercolani of Barley Arts Promotion in Italy has been working with Bonamassa since he promoted his first club tour there in March 2007. Since then he has returned on numerous occasions, both as a solo act and with the band Black Country Communion.

Shirley coupled Bonamassa with bassist and vocalist Glenn Hughes, drummer Jason Bonham and keyboard player Derek Sherinian to form Black Country Communion. Based in LA and managed by J&R Adventures, the band released three albums before Bonamassa left in 2013.

Other key collaborators include singer-songwriter Beth Hart, their second album together, *Seesaw*, saw Bonamassa win his first Grammy nomination for Best Blues Album.

Ercolani recalls that when he started working with Bonamassa the audience tended to consist primarily of guitar enthusiasts, but has since increased not only in numbers but also in variety. "The demographic in Italy now ranges from 30-year-olds to 60-year-olds, with much more women than in the past," he says.



Joe Bonamassa at Shepherd's Bush Empire (Photograph: Christie Goodwin)

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