

## John Valentino Memory

I have produced many shows at the Miami Marine Stadium including Willie Nelson, The Beach Boys, Bonnie Raitt and Al Jarreau. I have many fond memories of balmy tropical nights and cheering fans in front of the stage seated in the grandstand as well others in boats and yachts floating behind the stage enjoying a much different but unique experience as the sound emanated across the water.

On the afternoon of the Al Jarreau show however a typical summer rain shower moved overhead during set up. We saw the clouds forming and had plenty of time to cover up the equipment and protect the electrical cables. Al Jarreau however, became very concerned, frightened as a matter of fact about the barge being on the water and the possible effects of a soaking afternoon shower on the metal structure. He wanted to cancel the show. We explained to the tour manager that we were totally prepared and once the equipment was uncovered and power restored that we would be good to go.

The word was not getting through. We were told that Al, still fearing the worst, wanted to cancel. As the afternoon turned into early evening, the showers subsided the ticket holders began to line up at the gates in anticipation of the show. We couldn't open them however until we could convince Mr. Jarreau to play. I asked if we could speak with him directly and explain the nature of the Florida climate, and that in a few minutes, after uncovering and careful inspection that we'd be good to go. George Perley, my production associate and I got the chance to speak directly with Al and give it one more chance to convince him personally that it would be safe to proceed. Al said he didn't want to play because it rained and that he'd come back and make it up to us at another time.

We walked him to a vantage point where he could see the line of people waiting to get in, explaining that they've already planned their night, hired the baby sitter, been to dinner, parked their cars and that they wanted to see and hear him play tonight. We told him the equipment had been covered prior to the rain and kept dry, and that although the barge was metal that there was a wooden sub stage on it and that there would be no electrical issues. He still wasn't convinced.

Knowing that we'd been down this road dozens of times in Florida before, I turned to Mr. Jarreau and said "I'll tell you what. We'll turn the power back on and George and I will walk out onto the barge, and if we don't get electrocuted, you'll play the show." I looked at George who was doing a great job keeping a straight face, I turned and looked at Mr. Jarreau, he looked back and said .. "OK."

Needless to say the equipment was dry, the electrical cables were not compromised, and there were no issues when we walked onto the stage as Mr. Jarreau held his breath. The gates opened, Al and his band played on a floating stage to an enthusiastic Miami jazz audience on a beautiful tropical night in a gorgeous setting, with the Miami skyline bathed in nightlights in the background....An experience in the 80's that could only take place in Miami... and only at the Marine Stadium....