

Promoter returns some money, deflects demands

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A canceled oldies concert has ticket holders frustrated about how to get their money back. They're angry with the promoter, Eddie Morelli, of SRO Productions in Florida. He's pointing his finger at the ticket handling company, Ticket Enterprises, also of Florida. Ticket Enterprises is saying Morelli is responsible for refunds.

The confusion builds as more and more people come forward to report they haven't received refunds for a "doo-wop" concert

May 12, Mother's Day, at Clarenceville High School. A recent story in the Observer about Tony and Esther Amadori of Livonia, who were out the \$75 they paid, generated 17 calls and e-mails from ticket holders who are trying to get their money back from Morelli. Michigan State Police records show that Morelli has been known by a number of different names including, Eddie Klutcho. Some of the ticket holders reportedly were charged hundreds of dollars more than the ticket prices on their credit cards. Morelli said he's not to blame for most of the money that hasn't

been refunded. He said the ticket handler, which has changed names five times, according to Morelli, should give them their money back.

Meanwhile, Amadori received his refund from Morelli on Aug. 28, four months after the canceled concert and three days after the first story about how he was trying to get his money back ran in the Observer. Monday evening, Morelli said, "it was probably a mistake" to refund Amadori the money, because he wasn't sure if it was his responsibility.

Amadori said he was surprised to get his refund.

"I'm sure that the conversation (the Observer) had with Eddie Morelli a week before the article appeared had a big influence on him and without that I don't feel I would have received the money back," Amadori said. "But, there are still these other people who haven't gotten their money back. And other people who were over-billed."

CHECK THE RECEIPTS

Morelli said ticket holders should check their receipts. He said he'll refund money for tickets that say, "SRO Productions." If the

ticket says, SRO Enterprises, the ticket handler is responsible, Morelli said.

"I hired a company to process these tickets," he said. "I'm suing that company. If it says anything but SRO Productions, they need to contact this other company. I didn't get their money. I didn't process their tickets - the other company did and the other company didn't pay me for it."

Ticket Enterprises employee Art Fawcett said Ticket Enterprises handled ticket sales by processing the credit cards.

"We paid (Morelli) for the credit cards we processed," Fawcett said.

"When the concert didn't come about the people contacted him, sent back the tickets and he was to refund the money."

"Ticket Enterprises, Fawcett said, refunded \$4,000 worth of tickets to people asking for ticket refunds.

"That's caused us a lot of grief," he added. "We're still trying to get a hold of (Morelli) and get our money back. There's no confusion as far as who owes who."

Morelli said he was planning to sue Ticket Enterprises for his money, including a \$2,817 check that bounced. Two other recent oldies concerts promoted by Morelli were a big success, and a lot of fans were looking forward to the third show, first scheduled in April and rescheduled for May 12, that never happened. Morelli said his own health problems and insufficient ticket sales put an end to the third show.

AWAITING REFUNDS

Not all ticket holders were as lucky as Amadori. Like, Gail Szukielowicz, a Garden City resident, who paid \$70 for the concert. She watched an oldies show in February and liked it so much she bought tickets for an April 5 "doo-wop" show.

"I didn't know it was canceled and we went there (April 5)," Szukielowicz said.

She and her husband changed their plans with their three children for Mother's Day and were among "about 200 other people" who showed up for the May 12 concert. They waited and waited, but no one opened the doors, she said. Since then, Szukielowicz said she called Morelli four times and sent a letter, but never got a response. Theresa and Kenneth Byrd, of Livonia, along with Kenneth's sister and her husband, Cheri and Harold Higgins, are also waiting for their refunds.

"For the past three weeks I've been leaving voice mails (with Morelli)," Theresa Byrd said explaining that she told him she would take him to Small Claim's Court.

"I asked him to at least call and say what happened," Theresa said. "It was a total non-response. I want my money back."

Cheri Higgins, a Livonia resident, said: "I kind of gave up. But, it's the principle."

For the initial story, Morelli told the Observer that he planned to pay back all ticket holders. He said he had to cancel the April 5 concert due to his health problems. He said he tried to reschedule, but the only available day was Mother's Day.

Morelli said that people mistakenly think that because they called him for the tickets that he's responsible for reimbursements, when in many cases Ticket Enterprises is responsible.

"I can understand that, but it's not reality," Morelli said.

Morelli hasn't been daunted by demands from unhappy ticket holders. He continues to promote concerts listed on his Web site, www.eddiemorelli.com, in Ohio, Oct. 12; Milwaukee, Nov. 1; Chicago, Nov. 2; Saginaw, Michigan; Nov. 15, Ohio, Nov. 16; and Florida, Nov. 30 and Feb. 21, 2003.

"I stopped dealing with that company after this Mother's Day fiasco," Morelli said. "That's when I found out that they were charging two and three and four times and at one time five times (the ticket price). I'm not sure what they collected or who they collected it from."

"The company (Ticket Enterprises) charged the handling fee (\$5). They weren't an employee of mine. They were an independent company. If it's not me, (ticket holders) need to contact that company (Ticket Enterprises) or their credit card company" for refunds.

Amadori said that even though he's received his refund, for a short time he'll continue collecting names of other ticket holders who might want to take action.

RECOGNIZED NAME

Morelli isn't new to the local concert circuit. He was manager of the ill-fated Omni Star Center in Livonia that opened at the old Mai Kai Theater on Feb. 25, 1988. It closed in May 1988 after shows by Paul Anka, Dionne Warwick and Joan Rivers were canceled. Left in the lurch were season ticket holders, investors in the theater and workmen and contractors who had renovated the theater.

Anyone who lost money from the May 12 oldies concert at Clarenceville is invited to contact Amadori at tony-amadori@msn.com.

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