



Alex Wigglesworth | Posted August 28, 2012

Madonna will break out the big guns for MDNA Tour's North American debut in Philly

The North American leg of Madonna's MDNA world tour is touching down in Philadelphia with a performance at the Wells Fargo Center Tuesday night. Concerts in other countries have already left behind a wake of controversy due to the icon's X-rated stripteases, politically-charged statements and use of prop guns. The last issue is especially salient for Americans in light of several high-profile mass shootings that have recently rattled the nation's consciousness.



Philadelphia alone has seen roughly 1,350 gun-related robberies and assaults and 79 homicides, the majority of them gun-related, just since the tour launched in late May. “Philadelphia is known around the country as ‘Killadelphia,’ so it just isn’t a good image that we need right now,” said style director and CEO of Evoluer Image Consultants Cheryl Ann Wadlington. “Of course entertainers have the excuse, ‘It’s just art,’ but, well, they need to take their art somewhere else. ... Madonna has always used, whether you want to call them publicity stunts or rebellious acts and behavior, sometimes lewd, to gain attention.”

Wadlington said that in a cutthroat landscape where image is king, the pressure to one-up competitors is crushing. “I just think that, again, it’s a Madonna antic,” she said. “Sometimes celebrities will do whatever it takes to stay relevant and stay on top. She’s not ready to give up her crown.”

But in an email to Metro yesterday, Madonna shared an “MDNA Show Manifesto” defending her performances. “It’s true there is a lot of violence in the beginning of the show and sometimes the use of fake guns – but they are used as metaphors. I do not condone violence or the use of guns,” she wrote. “Rather they are symbols of wanting to appear strong and wanting to find a way to stop feelings that I find hurtful or damaging. In my case it[‘s] wanting to stop the lies and hypocrisy of the church, the intolerance of many narrow minded cultures and societies I have experienced throughout my life and in some cases the pain I have felt from having my heart broken.”

Madonna’s publicist Liz Rosenberg said there are no plans to tone down the use of fake firearms during the artist’s American tour dates. “It’s ludicrous to blame Madonna for the recent tragedies in this country and elsewhere,” she said.

Madonna called her show “the journey of my story” and said its performance brings the audience along to her discovery that the enemy is within and the only way to change the world is to change oneself. “When you watch a film there are usually good guys and bad guys to help illustrate this point,” she wrote. “Sometimes I play both.”

To read the full “MDNA Show Manifesto,” [click here](#).

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