

'Historic' Christian Concert to be Streamed Live Online

✖ Despite its \$1,000 per ticket price tag, a fundraising concert for the cash-strapped Gospel Music Association (GMA) is expected to draw thousands of attendees from around the globe.

The Monday event, being billed as the "Concert of the Decade," is to be streamed live online from Nashville, Tenn., which organizers say will make it the largest Christian concert ever to be viewed in that format.

The concert—featuring some of the industry's leading artists including Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Kirk Franklin and Casting Crowns—is part of an effort to save the GMA, which organizes GMA Week in Nashville and hosts the Dove Awards.

A 20 percent drop in membership coupled with the economic downturn and the impact of digital sales has left the organization fighting to survive, leaders say.

Its president and CEO, John Styll, stepped down in September as part of a concentrated "re-set" of the organization that includes using more volunteers, *Christian Retailing* reported. A managerial position will oversee a reduced staff, said Ed Leonard, president of Daywind Music Group and new chairman of the GMA board of directors.

(Read "GMA Regroups for Survival as Full-Time Head Steps Down.")

Leonard said the fundraising concert—spearheaded by EMI CMG Publishing President Eddie DeGarmo and The Premiere Group

founder Roy Morgan—was intended to retire ongoing debt incurred from a last-minute sponsorship drop for the Dove Awards five years ago.

The concert venue, the Loveless Café & Barn in Nashville, “seats around 800 and our payables are about \$800,000,” Leonard told *Christian Retailing*. “If we sell it out, we pay off the debt and reset the organization. That’s what we’re trying to do.”

Online concertgoers must reserve a ticket at . Although attending the concert online is free, participants will be encouraged to make tax-deductible donations to the GMA Foundation.