

As Dollars Go By! Stones Tickets Being Resold for Four- and Five-Figure Sums

By Chris Willman | Stop The Presses! – 21 hours ago

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The last time the Rolling Stones toured, there wasn't quite as much of a panic over tickets. But then, that previous trek involved 147 shows.

This year's tour? Four gigs.

No wonder there's an international mania to get into the group's arena shows in London Nov. 25 and 29 and New Jersey on Dec. 13 and 15. Tickets for the two Newark gigs haven't yet gone on sale. But it's already "As Tears Go By" time for the millions of fans who tried and failed to get the 30,000 or so tickets that went up for grabs Friday for the two O2 Arena shows in Britannia.

Just remember, though, hope is never lost... if you're Donald Trump. Because there's always the secondary market, where scalpers are already asking record sums. It's been reported that the Getmein.com website has tickets listed for up to \$21,120, although it's hard to imagine any seat that is not actually on Mick Jagger's lap going for a penny over 20K.

These exaggerated fees won't go to the Stones themselves. Face values for the London tickets ranged from about \$152 to \$601 in American dollars. Fox News suggested in a headline that these were "the most overpriced gig(s) ever." But given that a huge percentage of the tickets will be scalped for several times their initial value, it's clear that overpricing is in the eye of the reseller, and as far as scalpers are concerned, 600 bucks is bargain pricing.

Mysteriously, tickets for the Newark shows are already being auctioned on eBay, even though a limited presale doesn't begin till Saturday and the general on-sale date isn't until Oct. 26. Six seats (or non-seats, actually) in the pit for the Dec. 15 show are being offered for a "buy it now" total of \$49,999. Someone else is offering pairs of floor seats for \$33,999 and \$29,999 ("or best offer").

Do these scalpers already have those tickets somehow in hand to sell, or are they just optimistic about their many employees being able to break through the Ticketmaster firewall when ducats do go up for grabs? Possibly only the New Jersey attorney general knows for sure.

London tickets on eBay currently top out at a \$3,702.52 USD offer for a pair of standing-room tickets in the "tongue pit." (Normally the combination of "tongue" and "pit" is something people shy away from, so that could explain why these haven't been snapped up.) As of this writing, the highest priced tickets that actually have a bid in place are a pair going for \$1,532.64... but that's with two days left to go in the auction, so don't book your flight to England just yet if you don't have more than two grand to spend.

There was a touch of this mania in the mid-2000s when the Stones did some very rare club and theater dates, for novelty value, in cities where they were also playing arenas or stadiums. But most fans would agree that it's a little nutso to see these kinds of resale prices now for shows that aren't exactly taking place in intimate venues.

The gamble being taken by anyone buying or selling at that high a level is that the Stones won't be back. Which doesn't seem like a very smart bet. As Ronnie Wood said Thursday night, "Once this wheel is turning I don't think

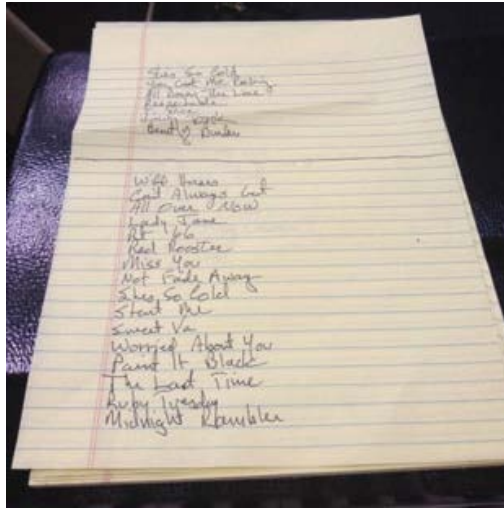


The Stones (Photo by Getty Images)

it will be able to stop." The Stones evidently thought it was symbolically important to get out and do **something** in this, the year of their 50th anniversary as a band. But that hardly means they aren't planning on pulling out the big guns in years 51-52.

They've said they're rehearsing 70 songs, which is a good deal more than they could get to in four gigs, even with a decent variance in the set list each night. You remember the song "Love in Vain"? It's highly unlikely the Stones believe in rehearsal in vain.

But if you absolutely have to go on StubHub for your Stones fix in the coming days and weeks, just remember, it's not all about the Benjamins... it's about the William McKinneys and Grover Clevelands, in this pricey case.



The "leaked" Stones rehearsal setlist