The Who sees live music as the future of rock

By Robert Woodward
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LONDON (Reuters Life!) - Call them old fashioned, but the founding members of The Who don't think the Internet is the future of rock, are unhappy about radio's narrow musical focus, and convinced live music is what it is all about.

Announcing their 2007 European Tour on Thursday, including a headlining slot at Britain's Glastonbury festival in June, Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend said playing big venues remained the best way of showcasing their music to the world.

"The Internet promises a lot of things - some it delivers, some it doesn't," Townshend, 61, told a news conference, adding one thing it does offer is the ability to sell tickets. "It is probably the most powerful informational, promotional tool today. It's a very effective, focused machine for promotion. I look forward to using it for live events, there's a big scope for live music and live events."

But Townshend said live music is what it is all about today, with the British rock band that dates back to the 1960s embarking on a 29-date tour starting on May 16 in Lisbon.

"Festivals are really important, I'm not really into the Internet," Daltrey, 62, told a news conference which was live webcast on www.thewhotour.com.

The Who's role in rock history, assured by songs such as "My Generation," made them into one of the great live bands during the 1960s and 1970s before the death of drummer Keith Moon. Bassist John Entwistle died five years ago.

Last year the two remaining members -- Townshend and Daltrey -- began their first world tour for more than 20 years and released an album "Endless Wire" which, they complained on Thursday, got little airplay.

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"It's a fact that it's very hard for bands in our position to get airplay. It's a fact for every band," he said.

"There are really few DJs who love music. The music is selected by computer. There are very few music fans running radio shows."

Townshend was the group's main source of songs and he remains the more opinionated of the pair. Daltrey spent much of the conference listening to his younger friend expound.

For Daltrey the music is what drives him. For Townshend, it is the audience.

Their often rocky relationship is now on an even keel, according to Daltrey -- and on the up, according to Townshend -- as age eats away at their ability to wind each other up.

"We weren't a gang band. We weren't brought together by a love of common music. What drew us together, I think, was a love of show business," said Townshend.

"We've known each other since school years and, after losing (Moon and Entwistle) we know we have each other. It's great to have that friendship, that relationship. To have friends who go back 45 years - it's very cool."
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