



# The Evolution of Coogan's Law and the Child Content Creator Rights Act

By Sanjana Chandrasekar

## INTRODUCTION

The entertainment industry is ever-changing, particularly due to the rise of the digital age. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok give more people access to entry, providing an easy way to showcase the arts and grow a fanbase quickly publicly. Primary demographics that utilize social media include child musicians and content creators, and these young musicians can often gain traction and create fanbases primarily through these digital platforms. However, legislation on compensation for minors in the digital space has only recently been developed. This new act is an extension on the Coogan's Law of 1939, which was first introduced to protect the earnings of minors in the entertainment and sports industries<sup>1</sup>. Most recently, the Child Content Creator Rights Act (CCC Act) was passed in California in 2024 as an addendum to Coogan's law<sup>2</sup>, addressing the rights and protections of child performers on digital platforms. This starts a changing precedent, developing and adapting legislation to evolving industries<sup>3</sup>. This article will explore the history, case studies, and evolution of legislation for minors in the entertainment industry. It will mainly focus on digital platform legislation in the modern-day industry and how this could combat many concerns on financial, ethical, and image protections for child musicians, content creators, and actors.

## THE HISTORY OF COOGAN'S LAW

Coogan's Law, which has protected minors, particularly child actors in the entertainment industry, for many years,

originated after the case involving child actor Jackie Coogan<sup>4</sup>. Coogan was discovered in 1919 by Charlie Chaplin and was soon cast in the famous comedian's movie, *The Kid*. Following this film, Coogan became an overnight sensation.<sup>5</sup> Shortly after his 21st birthday and the death of his father, Coogan realized that he had not received any financial compensation for his work as a child actor. Child labor laws were still underdeveloped at the time, meaning all earnings from a child actor's work went directly to the parent.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, traditional child labor laws did not apply to child entertainers, as this profession was considered "untraditional".<sup>7</sup> This situation was often informally referred to as the Shirley Temple Act.<sup>8</sup> After this realization, Coogan sued his mother and former manager to access his earnings.<sup>9</sup> This case led to establishing the Coogan Law, which safeguards a percentage of a child actor's monetary earnings. Though this was progress for young artists, the 1939 iteration of the Coogan Law was significantly flawed and contained many loopholes, resulting in long-term conflicts. Over the years, the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) have been successful in navigating some of these loopholes, including the key clarification stating that 15% of minors' earnings must be set aside in a trust fund, known today as the Coogan Account.<sup>10</sup>

As of January 2000, California law affirms that any monetary compensation earned by a minor for their work is the property of said minor.<sup>11</sup> Since minors cannot legally control their assets until they turn 18, California law allows parents to act

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Music Business Journal at Berklee College of Music is a student publication that serves as a forum for intellectual discussion and research into the various aspects of the music business. The goal is to inform and educate aspiring music professionals, connect them with the industry, and raise the academic level and interest inside and outside the Berklee Community.

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The Rise of Concert Ticket Pricing

Mental Health in the Music Industry

Legislation for Minors in the Entertainment Industry

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

Thank you so much for reading our first issue of 2025!

We are so thrilled to be putting out another physical journal. I am so honored to bring you an expanded representation of the modern, global music industry.

Our cover story features a deep dive into entertainment legislation for child performers, particularly addressing laws pertaining to content creators and social media. Next, Natalia Kabenge breaks down the uptick in concert ticket pricing, and how it compares to the income of the average American. I explore the music industry's mental health crisis and its many causes. And lastly, Max Rothman provides a day-in-the-life look into the world of concert photography through interviews with four different professional photographers.

Our podcast, Cut Time, is available on Spotify, featuring new interviews from former Berklee president Roger Brown, former BPMI artist Fifteen0eight, and many more.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the journal and that you continue to keep up with us!

Sincerely,



Anna Hudson  
Editor-in-Chief

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as fiduciaries, managing the minor's finances lawfully and ethically. This fiduciary relationship requires parents to act responsibly in the child's best interests, handling earnings, savings, and investments. They must prioritize the child's financial well-being, ensuring transparency, good faith, and loyalty in all decisions, such as managing income from acting contracts or saving for future needs like education.

To prevent misuse of this authority, California law imposes safeguards, such as court oversight or trusts, to ensure accountability. Any breach of fiduciary duty, such as mismanaging or misappropriating the child's assets, can result in legal consequences. This arrangement bridges the gap until the minor hits adulthood, ensuring their earnings and financial future are protected.<sup>12</sup>

### **THE EMERGENCE OF THE CHILD CONTENT CREATOR RIGHTS ACT (CCC) AND OTHER STATEWIDE PROTECTIONS**

While Coogan's Law addressed the financial exploitation of child performers in traditional entertainment, different forms of entertainment and opportunities for child actors and entertainers have started to emerge.<sup>13</sup> However, with the rise of social media, these laws have not yet adapted to digital spaces. From 2015 to 2019, the percentage of children watching online videos daily more than doubled so that by 2019, 56% of 8 to 12-year-old and 69% of 13 – 18-year olds were watching every day, spending on average 56 to 59 minutes a day.<sup>14</sup>

The Child Content Creator Rights Act, introduced in California in 2024 and enacted on January 1, 2025, ensures that creators under 18 who are featured in online content earn fair financial benefits from using their images. Content creators who feature minors in at least 30% of their content must set aside 65% of their earnings into a trust account, which the minor can access when they reach adulthood. However, the bill also specifies that while parents do not need formal contracts to record or post videos of their family, minors in these videos are not automatically entitled to profits generated by their likeness and participation unless the content meets the 30% threshold. This means that while parents can continue posting family videos without needing contracts, the law ensures that when a minor's involvement is substantial (30% or more of the content), a portion of the earnings from that content is

set aside for the child's future benefit. This helps prevent the exploitation of minors by ensuring they receive compensation for their participation once they come of age.<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, in August 2023, Illinois became the first state to enact legislation that gave rights to children featured in monetized family vlogs and content.<sup>16</sup> "Illinois's new child influencer law (effective as of July 1, 2024) requires vloggers that include children in their content to set aside a portion of the compensation they receive from that content into a trust for the minor".<sup>17</sup> Based on how much monetized content the minor is featured in, a percentage of their earnings is set aside until the creator turns 18 or is legally declared emancipated, like Coogan's Law. They must also provide minors with access to the amounts put into a trust fund and a clear record of how much money is being deposited into the account. Minors are entitled to a private right of action to enforce this law against the adults creating the content, given these requirements are not met.<sup>18</sup>

While the Child Content Creator (CCC) Rights Act and Illinois' child labor laws both aim to protect the financial and personal interests of minors in the entertainment and content creation industries, their approaches differ based on the mediums they target. Illinois' law addresses child influencers specifically, ensuring a portion of their earnings from online content is safeguarded, whereas the CCC Rights Act takes a broader approach, encompassing all forms of minor participation in content creation, from traditional media to digital platforms. Together, they reflect a growing awareness of the need to adapt labor protections to the evolving entertainment landscape.

### **CASE STUDY: ETHICAL AND LEGAL CONCERNS OF CHILD INFLUENCERS IN FAMILY VLOGGING**

Platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram place countless minors in many forms of monetized content without the protections afforded to their counterparts in film and television. One specific category of content is the rise of family vlogging, where families create and share video content that documents the daily lives, experiences, and activities of family members on social media. This genre often features parents and children as central figures, with content ranging from lighthearted

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moments to more intimate or staged portrayals of family life. Family vlogging is a form of entertainment, often monetized through advertisements, sponsorships, and brand collaborations, making it both a cultural phenomenon and a commercial enterprise. However, with children being at the forefront of a lot of this content, it can be argued that many personal and intimate moments in a minor's life are being documented and utilized for public consumption and exploitation. This can include instances where children's personal lives can be excessively exposed or their earnings are misappropriated, often due to the lack of explicit legal protections on digital platforms.

Shari Franke, the eldest daughter of Ruby Franke, a former family vlogger convicted of child abuse, testified before the Utah Senate committee in October 2024 to address the ethical and legal issues surrounding child influencers in family vlogging. She highlighted the lack of legal protection for children in the industry, where they often work without guaranteed compensation. Franke explained that, despite receiving some payment, this money was frequently used as a bribe for filming embarrassing or vulnerable moments, like personal breakdowns or illnesses, rather than fair wages.<sup>19</sup>

Franke described how children in these situations often believe they have agency but are manipulated into sharing private moments for content, a phenomenon she likened to Stockholm Syndrome: a psychological phenomenon in which a victim develops positive feelings towards their captor or abuser<sup>20</sup>. She emphasized that no amount of money or experiences, like vacations or shopping sprees, could compensate for the emotional toll of having one's childhood exploited online. Franke herself faced harassment and predatory attention due to her publicized life, underscoring the dangers children in the industry face, including loss of privacy and long-term psychological harm.<sup>21</sup>

Her testimony also addressed the industry's lack of accountability. She noted that many family vloggers avoid formal business structures like LLCs, leading to under-the-table payments and no guarantees that children are

fairly compensated. According to Franke, this perpetuates unregulated child labor, where children are exploited for revenue-generating content but are often left without financial security or proper consent for their participation.

Though Franke did not offer specific solutions, she urged lawmakers to act before the issue worsens, pointing out that child influencers may face emotional distress or legal complications as they grow older and realize the consequences of their filmed lives. She called for legal reforms to protect child influencers from exploitation and ensure they receive fair compensation for their labor. Ultimately, she argued that the risks and ethical concerns of family vlogging make it necessary to reconsider the industry's practices to protect children from long-term harm.<sup>22</sup>

### **HOW THESE LAWS IMPACT YOUNG MUSICIANS**

The challenges child influencers face in the digital space are not entirely dissimilar to those young musicians and performers encounter. Like family vloggers, child musicians often navigate complex dynamics of financial oversight, parental involvement, and public exposure, whether in traditional entertainment or digital platforms such as YouTube or TikTok. The Child Content Creator Rights Act, while primarily aimed at digital content creators, has implications for safeguarding the rights and earnings of young artists, offering a foundation for broader protections in the evolving entertainment landscape. This shift prompts a closer examination of how these laws can additionally support child musicians, ensuring they are also shielded from exploitation while enabling them to thrive creatively and financially.

### **CASE STUDY: JoJo vs. Background Records**

Joanna Levesque, known professionally as JoJo, is an American singer, songwriter, author, and actress who gained fame at 13 with her breakout hit "Leave (Get Out)." Born December 20, 1990, JoJo's early success in the pop music scene led to a string of hit singles and albums. While initially known for her pop hits, JoJo's musical style incorporates elements of R&B and hip-hop. Over the years, she has navigated challenges in the music industry and has written a memoir reflecting on her experiences, continuing to evolve as an artist with a loyal fanbase.<sup>23</sup>

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In 2014, JoJo concluded a nearly decade-long legal battle with Blackground Records, breaking free from a restrictive seven-album contract she had signed at just 12 years old. The contract, signed with her mother's consent due to her being a minor, was based on the label's and their lawyer's assurances that it was a "great deal." Coming from a modest background, JoJo and her mother were drawn to Blackground's promise of a family-like environment and stability. However, they lacked industry knowledge and trusted the label's guidance. She sued Blackground Records because New York State law prohibits minors from signing contracts that last more than seven years. JoJo claims that her parents signed a contract with the label in 2004, so, by law, her deal should have expired in 2011.<sup>24</sup>

Blackground Records is a record label founded in 1993 by Barry and Jomo Hankerson in efforts to sign their niece and R&B artist, Aaliyah, and operated under the parent company of Jive Records. Since then, they have been acquired by Universal/Interscope and have been home to many of today's R&B artists, such as Toni Braxton, Aaliyah, Ginuwine, and JoJo. However, Blackground Records also has a history of breaching and violating contracts.<sup>25</sup> A prime example includes the case of Aaliyah, in which the ownership of her masters was not transferred over to her estate after her death, resulting in the delay of the artist's discography being released on streaming services. Paul LiCalsi, on behalf of the estate, expressed that the desire to release Aaliyah's music on streaming services has been completely hindered due to the difficulty in transferring rights from Blackground to the estate.<sup>26</sup> Aaliyah's estate has criticized Blackground Records for withholding much of her music from streaming platforms for nearly 20 years, citing a lack of transparency and regular accounting. Despite recent releases of Aaliyah's catalog, the estate has demanded full disclosure of earnings and terms of the new distribution deal, pledging to continue defending Aaliyah's legacy legally while expressing a sentiment of forgiveness.<sup>27</sup> Since these controversies, Blackground has since restructured into Blackground 2.0, including a streaming service now possessing a distribution deal with Empire Distribution. They officially stated that artists would be compensated for everything according to their initial agreements. In response, JoJo tweets that she still has not been compensated for any of the streams of her original releases (before re-recording).<sup>28</sup>

Initially, JoJo experienced great success, becoming the youngest solo artist to top the Billboard charts with her 2004 hit "Leave (Get Out)" and then releasing her 2006 album *The High Road*. However, her career came to a halt as Blackground failed to release her subsequent works while refusing to let her out of her contract. Shortly after signing, she began hearing testimonies about the label's instability and witnessed it firsthand through frequent distribution changes and lack of communication. Her projects were consistently blocked despite her efforts to create new music, including collaborations with Drake's producer Noah "40" Shebib.<sup>29</sup>

JoJo refrained from leaking her music out of respect for her collaborators and instead released two free mixtapes, *Can't Take That Away From Me* (2010) and *Agápe* (2012), to connect with fans. Eventually, she filed a lawsuit to escape the contract, citing the lack of transparency and the stifling impact on her career.<sup>30</sup>

Now, JoJo has gone independent, starting her label called Clover Music, a joint deal with distribution from Warner Music Group, and since then has re-recorded her music for complete ownership of her content and possessing complete control and rights over her art.<sup>31</sup>

JoJo's legal battle with Blackground Records highlights the long-standing issue of minors being placed into restrictive and unethical contracts due to their lack of agency. Her case underscores the necessity of protective legislation like Coogan's Law and its modern digital extensions, such as the Child Content Creator Rights Act, to ensure that young artists and creators retain financial and creative control over their work.

## **CHALLENGES AND ETHICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF CURRENT PROTECTIONS**

The current protections for digital creators face several challenges and critiques, highlighting the need for more robust and nuanced solutions. One major issue lies in the unintended loopholes that make it difficult to enforce laws,

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especially for creators outside of California and Illinois, where such protections are not more explicitly defined. For instance, digital content often crosses state and national borders, creating ambiguity in enforcing these laws and jurisdictional authority. Another challenge is determining what constitutes “work” for digital creators, particularly in family or informal environments. There is a lack of differentiation between a formal content creator and an individual who makes videos for leisure. The question arises - Where does the line stand between a formal content creator and a recreational content creator? This ambiguity complicates efforts to protect creators, as the nature of digital content production often blurs the lines between personal and professional spaces.

Additionally, the balance between parental oversight and exploitation presents significant ethical dilemmas, especially in the case of family vlogs. While parental involvement is crucial for ensuring the safety and guidance of young creators, it also raises concerns about exploitation when parents prioritize profit over their child’s well-being. The case of Ruby Franke highlights the extreme risks of this exploitation. This case serves as a reminder of how the pursuit of profit can blur the lines of parental responsibility, putting children in harm’s way both emotionally and physically.<sup>32</sup> Addressing these issues likely requires a collaborative effort between policymakers, platforms, and advocacy groups to close loopholes, clarify definitions, and establish safeguards that protect creators across various contexts.

## CONCLUSION

Ensuring the ethical and sustainable treatment of young creators and performers requires a multifaceted approach that addresses legal, educational, and industry-specific responsibilities. Strengthening laws nationwide is likely a critical first step, including advocating for comprehensive

federal regulations, expanding the CCC Act to provide consistent protections across states, and implementing them into federal law. Additionally, establishing global standards could address the growing international nature of the digital and entertainment industries, safeguarding young creators worldwide from exploitation and unethical practices.

Education for parents and guardians plays an equally important role, as many families are unfamiliar with the complexities of navigating financial and legal responsibilities associated with their child’s participation in creative industries. Accessible resources, workshops, and guidance can empower families to make informed decisions, advocate for their children’s rights, and plan long-term financial security. Platforms that host and promote young creators must also likely take on significant responsibilities. These companies have the power and obligation to enforce protective measures, adhere to laws, and implement transparent policies that prioritize the safety and well-being of their youngest users. While TikTok and Meta have restrictions to age-regulate the content minors can consume,<sup>33</sup> there has not been a lot of development on the content minors can create.<sup>34</sup>

Reflecting on the progress made since Coogan’s Law, it is clear that while improvements have been made, legislation most likely must continue to adapt to the unique challenges posed by modern industries such as social media, digital content creation, and gig economies. These rapidly evolving sectors may require ongoing efforts to address existing gaps and anticipate new issues. Policymakers, parents, industry leaders, and platforms may need to take further action to collaborate in developing ethical frameworks that protect young creators while promoting a space for opportunity and innovation. By taking these steps, a future based on fairness, accountability, and sustainable practices, allowing young creators to succeed without compromising their rights or well-being will likely be ensured.

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# The Affordability of Live Music

by Natalia Kabenge

## Introduction

In a post-lockdown world, live music has allowed people the opportunity to reconnect with their communities, and year-by-year attendance is steadily rising. Concert attendance rose by 20 percent compared to 2022, with total revenue rising by 36 percent overall according to Live Nation.<sup>1</sup> However, an increase in live music event attendance has been accompanied by a major increase in concert ticket prices, leaving them inaccessible to thousands.

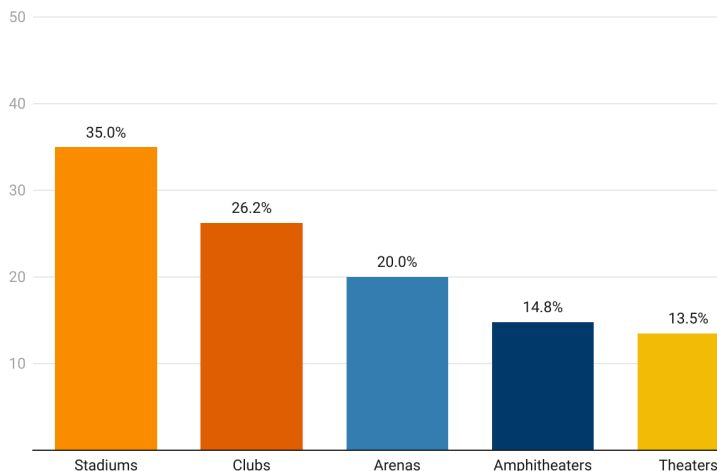
There are many theories as to why the cost of concert tickets has significantly increased, the most well-known being Ticketmaster. With Ticketmaster acting as a main ticketing vendor worldwide, many people hold generally antagonistic views towards the entertainment giant for their business practices. They feel certain that a single company is to blame for concert tickets becoming largely unaffordable for the average person.

According to Pollstar, concert tickets have seen an overall 27.38% increase in cost since 2019.<sup>2</sup> This data also showcases a worldwide increase in concert ticket pricing, with the average ticket costs ranging from \$40.80 at club venues, to \$124.47 at stadiums.

**Figure 1: Concert Ticket Costs from 2019 to 2023**

### Concert Ticket Cost from 2019 to 2023

Chart demonstrating the percent increase in the cost of concert tickets from 2019 to 2023



Most notably, stadiums have the highest increase in cost, showing a 35% increase in tickets from 2019-2023, which can be attributed to an overwhelming post-lockdown demand for live music events. This demand was driven by artists such as Beyoncé and Taylor Swift, who held record-breaking stadium tours in 2023; Beyoncé's tour generated \$4.5 billion for the economy, while Swift's tour helped to increase hotel revenue across the United States.<sup>3</sup>

There are a number of contributing factors that have led to increased concert tickets prices and a lack of accessibility. This article will examine where people are attending concerts, how much the average person

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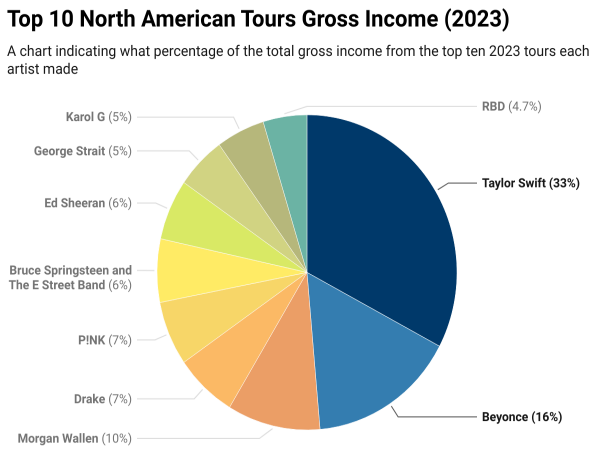
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has to work to afford a concert ticket, and what factors have contributed to concert tickets becoming increasingly expensive.

**Overview**

Concert ticket pricing is at an all-time high, but so is concert attendance. Live Nation cited attendance for their events rose 4% from 2023 to 2024, with a total of 151 million people attending Live Nation events in 2024.<sup>4</sup> According to Pollstar, the top 10 tours of 2023 brought in a total of \$2.7 billion in profit.<sup>5</sup> Here’s a quick breakdown of the tours:

**Figure 2 - Top 10 North American Gross Income (2023)**



The artists included in 2023’s top 10 tours are from the pop, hip-hop, country, rock, and Latin sectors. However, 2023 was completely dominated by two artists: Taylor Swift and Beyoncé. Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour and Beyoncé’s Renaissance Tour accounted for nearly half of all gross profit from the top 10 tours combined. Collectively, all 10 tours had 335 shows across North America, and despite the fact that the

Eras Tour and Renaissance Tour combined only made up 26% of those, they managed to generate almost half of the gross income of these tours. The revenue generated was purely the buying power of both artists.

**To What Lengths Are People Willing to Go for Live Music?**

After COVID lockdowns ended, people wanted live music. However, the sheer demand for tickets created a competitive landscape for obtaining them and made many people question how much they were able and willing to pay to see their favorite artists in concert.

Fans appear to be willing to splurge when it comes to concerts. When Innerbody surveyed 850 people across three generations, they found that on average, most people were willing to spend \$1,028.33 on floor seats to see their favorite artist live.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, 42.8% of respondents said they would be willing to travel up to 500 miles to see their favorite artist live. If a fan lives in Washington, D.C., the nation’s capital, this could mean traveling as far as Montreal, Canada, or just outside Atlanta for a concert.

**Figure 3 - Concert Distance Map**



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Traveling for concerts isn't an uncommon practice. In a study of 31 tours in the United States, Upgraded Points found that the top 10 most popular cities for concerts host 40.5% of all shows in the U.S.<sup>7</sup> That's 413 shows per year at some of America's most popular tour stops.

**Figure 4 - Top Cities for Concerts in the United States**

**Top Cities for Concerts in the United States**

The number of concerts held in the top 10 most popular tour stops according to Upgraded Points

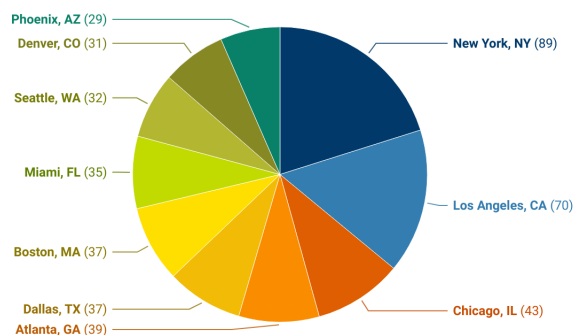


Chart: Natalia Kabenge • Source: Upgrade Points • Created with Datawrapper

New York City sees the most live music performances, hosting 89 shows from the most popular 2023 to mid 2024 tours.<sup>8</sup> On the West Coast, Los Angeles isn't far behind, with 70 shows per year, followed by Chicago (43 shows per year) and Atlanta (39 shows per year). One of the factors that can change ticket pricing is location, which varies in the United States depending on what city a fan resides in.

**Figure 5 - Average Concert Ticket Price in Top Ten Cities**

**Average Concert Ticket Price in Top 10 Touring Cities**

The cost of ticket prices in the 10 most popular touring cities in the United States

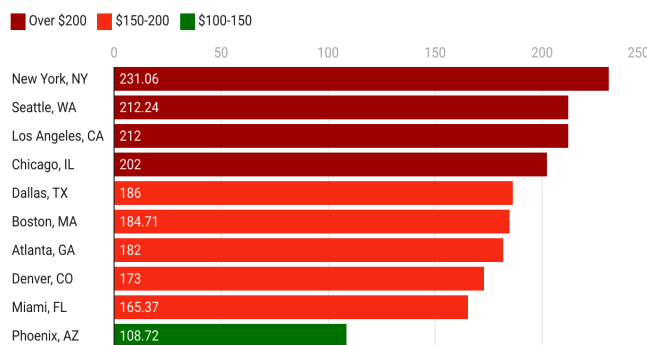


Chart: Natalia Kabenge • Source: Upgraded Points • Created with Datawrapper

New York has the most expensive average ticket price at \$231.06. The city that never sleeps also gets the most concerts per year and has the largest metropolitan population in the United States. Nationwide, however, people should be prepared to dish out an average of around \$150 per ticket for a live event.

If a fan lives in a concert hotspot, convenience comes at the sacrifice of ticket cost. Using these top ten cities as a guideline, this article will dissect what exactly it takes for the average American to attend a concert and what factors have contributed.

**How Much Labor Goes Into Buying a Concert Ticket?**

According to a study by USA Today, the average American spends about 260 days a year working.<sup>9</sup> This means just under a quarter of a year (23.74%) is spent working to earn a salary. Each hour is worth

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something different depending on where someone lives, and this ultimately determines how much work is required to afford a live music event.

in the average ticket cost versus the average pay for one day of labor is made evident.

**Figure 6 - Pay Per One Day of Labor**

**Pay Per One Day of Labor**

The average amount made from one day of labor in America's top ten touring cities

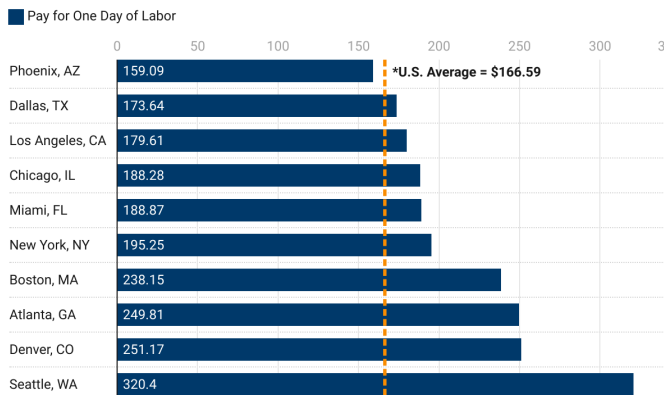
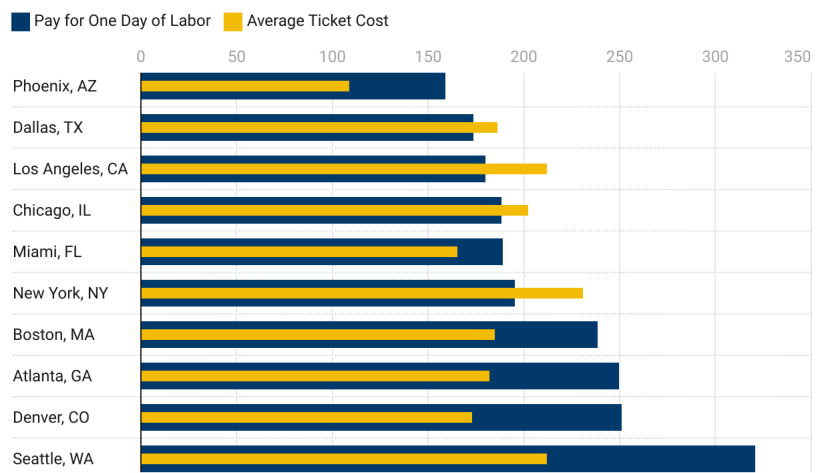


Chart: Natalia Kabenge • Source: Census Reporter • Created with Datawrapper

**Figure 7 - Pay for One Day of Labor vs. Average Ticket Cost**

**Pay for One Day of Labor vs. Average Ticket Cost**

A look at how many days of labor a concert ticket costs individuals living in the top ten touring cities



Created with Datawrapper

According to Census Reporter data, this graph demonstrates how much money is made from one day of labor in America's top ten touring cities.<sup>10</sup> The average American works 8 hours daily, resulting in a total of about 2080 hours a year. But not all eight hours are created equal—eight hours of labor in Seattle, WA is worth over double the same amount of labor in Phoenix, AZ. When graphing both Census Reporter data and Upgraded Points data, the disparity

The rows in which the yellow line exceeds the blue indicate cities where a concert ticket costs more than one day of labor. While income has remained rather stagnant due to inflation rates, the cost of concerts has continued to rise.

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**Figure 8 - Days of Labor Required to Purchase Average Concert Ticket**

**Days of Labor Required to Purchase Average Concert Ticket**

Days of labor required to pay for the average concert ticket in America's top ten touring cities

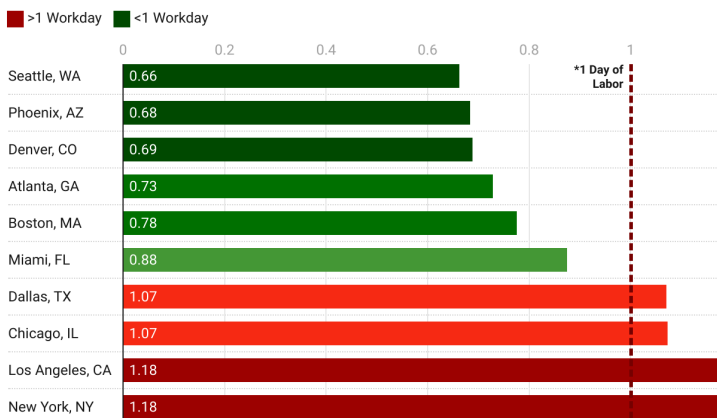


Chart: Natalia Kabenge • Source: Census Reporter • Created with Datawrapper

The average amount of labor required to purchase a ticket varies city to city. In both New York, NY and Los Angeles, CA, the average fan needs to work 9.44 hours. In Chicago, IL and Dallas, TX, people need to work a total of 8.56 hours. In Miami, FL the minimum is 7.04 hours; in Boston, MA it is 6.24 hours; in Atlanta, GA the minimum is 5.84 hours; in Denver, CO it is 5.52 hours; in Phoenix, AZ it is 5.44 hours and Seattle, WA is the lowest of the 10 cities, with a minimum of 5.28 hours.

The average amount of labor required is about 7.12 hours, meaning it takes almost one full day of labor to attend shows in America's most populated cities. In 4 out of 10 touring cities, more than one day of work is required to purchase a concert ticket. With most concerts lasting anywhere between 1 to 3 hours, this number represents a disproportionate relationship between the cost of live music and the income of the average American.

**Additional Costs**

When attending a concert, very rarely is a concert ticket the only cost for a consumer. There are an assortment of costs accrued, especially when traveling for a show. According to Upgraded Points data, the five common associated costs are as follows:<sup>11</sup>

**Food & Beverage:** The most common secondary cost when it comes to live music events, with almost 3/4 of people (70.9%) saying they accrue expenses on venue food and drinks when attending a concert.

**Travel:** 48.2% of people reported being willing to travel between 100 and 500 miles to see their favorite artist live, with 48.9% of people saying travel is a common secondary expense when attending live music events.

**Accommodation:** Going hand in hand with travel expenses, about half (48.5%) of respondents said accommodation expenses were also accrued when attending live music events.

**Merchandise:** Around a third (32.0%) of respondents said they purchase memorabilia when attending a concert. T-shirts, sweatshirts, posters, bags, keychains—the possibilities are endless!

**Transportation:** Transportation to and from venues is a cost that around a third (30.6%) of people accumulate when attending live music events. Fans often use rideshares such as Uber and Lyft, and for those who do drive, parking costs can hike up to around \$80 USD, depending on location.<sup>12</sup>

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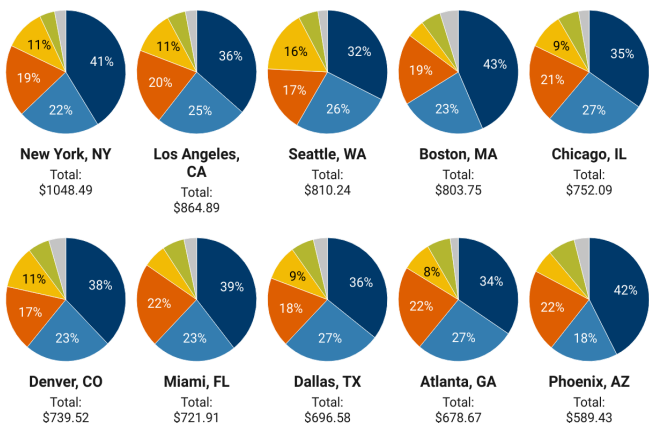
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### Figure 9 - Total Cost of Attending a Concert in Top Touring Cities

#### Total Cost of Attending a Concert in Top Touring Cities

A look at the cost of attending concerts including associated costs in the top ten touring cities

■ Accommodation ■ Ticket Cost ■ Food ■ Rideshare ■ Merchandise ■ Cost of Beer at Venue



\*Cost of Air Travel is not included  
Chart: Natalia Kabenge • Source: Census Reporter • Created with Datawrapper

This chart displays the total accumulated costs of traveling to attend a concert in America’s top touring cities. Notably, in all top ten cities, accommodation is around 40% of total expenses.

### Music Industry Insights

Clayton Durant, Adjunct Professor of Music Business at NYU, and Chelsea De Jesus, Booking Coordinator at Live Nation, offered their insights on what factors have contributed to the cost of live music skyrocketing. Both experts helped to raise attention to some of the contributing factors that have flown largely under the radar. According to both experts, the three main factors that have played into the increase of ticket costs were inflation, supply and demand, and most notably, streaming.

When asked about what touring costs might go

undervalued by the general public, De Jesus says that it can be easy for fans to underestimate the sheer costs of holding a tour for a performing artist, stating, “We’re all just busy bees trying to make one big thing come to fruition. Obviously, the impetus is the artists or their deal. But you’re paying for everything down to the person picking up the trash at the venue,”<sup>13</sup>

Both professionals cited the cost of touring combined with post-lockdown inflation to be the first reason for the increased cost of live music. Inflation rose 23.3% from 2019 to 2024, whereas the average cost of a concert ticket in North America rose 43.89%, almost double the inflation rate.<sup>14</sup>

### Figure 10 - Cost of An Average Ticket from 2019 to 2024

#### Cost of an Average Concert Ticket from 2019 to 2024

The cost of an average concert ticket in North America from 2019 to 2024 according to Pollstar data

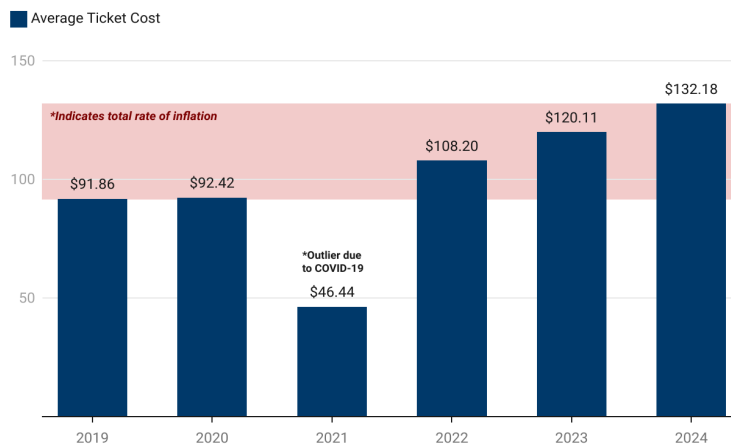


Chart: Natalia Kabenge • Source: Pollstar • Created with Datawrapper

While inflation has largely contributed to rising ticket prices, touring is inherently expensive, and as a result, there are many additional costs that have increased due to inflation. Costs that the average consumer may

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be unaware of include gas, transportation, physical labor, and the cost of equipment. De Jesus noted that, in addition, artists traveling internationally or even across state lines are faced with both state taxes and visa expenses that increase touring costs.<sup>15</sup> Simple costs like these can create a bottom-up effect that ultimately increases the price of tickets.

According to De Jesus, a largely underestimated cost of touring is the pure physical labor required to put on a stadium-sized production.<sup>16</sup> From the lighting riggers to the tour bus drivers, bigger productions require ample amounts of manpower. Each of the people working these jobs also requires health insurance and accident insurance, in addition to accommodation and food costs. As a Booking Coordinator, De Jesus has observed that the post-lockdown demand for tours has become higher than ever, allowing workers to simply charge more, and this has created a domino-like effect that ultimately reaches consumers.

The second cited factor that has significantly contributed to the rise in ticket costs is the supply and demand in the post-lockdown live music landscape. In November 2022, Ticketmaster hosted a presale for Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, and anticipated around 1.5 million fans would attempt to purchase tickets.<sup>17</sup> Instead, they faced the demand of around 14 million fans, causing the website to crash.

After facing potential legal trouble when Taylor Swift fans threatened to sue for the November ticketing catastrophe,<sup>18</sup> parent company Live Nation issued a company apology explaining that the increase in ticket costs isn't completely on them—there simply aren't enough tickets to go around.<sup>19</sup> To fulfill this demand, Taylor Swift would have had to perform 900 stadium shows, making the demand 536.9% more than the available tickets for the tour.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, this kind of demand creates a profitable resale market, because

people are willing to pay increasingly lofty prices for tickets on the secondary market to see their favorite artists live.

When asked about why the demand has soared, De Jesus noted, "I do think that with the age of the internet and this concept of 'experiential posting', attending a concert to say that you were there... it became this new vast demand where it became almost an exclusive experience to be able to go to the shows that would normally be accessible to the day to day fan."<sup>21</sup>

### **Streaming: The Silent Killer**

The third and most consequential factor the professors listed as a killer of affordable live music was the streaming era. The fact of the matter is, the streaming era has been a blessing for consumers but a curse for the business. Streaming royalties make artists considerably less amounts of money than physical sales, and is the primary form of music consumption today.<sup>22</sup>

From cassette tapes to CDs and vinyl, purchasing physical music for consumption has been uncommon since platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music entered the scene. The subscription model has enabled one of the best consumer deals in the world, shared Durant.<sup>23</sup> In the present day, one person pays \$9.99 a month for access to more music than they could ever listen to within that time, which he cites as "a much better economic deal for recorded music."<sup>24</sup>

However, this has caused the value of recorded music to plummet. Purchasing a song on iTunes used to cost around \$0.99 per track, and in the present day, the average stream generates about \$0.004 in profit

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according to Ditto Music.<sup>25</sup> While the payout for the average stream can vary and is dependent on multiple factors, it is clear that streaming has not been as profitable as physical sales. This has resulted in many artists seeking to make up for the loss in profit on the touring side.

While the rising cost of concert tickets can be attributed to a number of factors, Durant believes that, ultimately, live music has become unaffordable because of the streaming era.<sup>26</sup>

Naturally, the everyday consumer may not be concerned with the profitability of the songs they listen to, though many are aware that artists make mere pennies from a handful of streams. Music streaming services have seemingly created convenience for the consumer, but yet another hurdle for the music business to overcome—and the answer, for many, lies within live music.

### **Conclusion**

Since as early as 2010, people have openly expressed antagonistic views of Ticketmaster; simply put, the company's service fees and ticketing algorithm have been widely disliked by concertgoers throughout the years.<sup>27</sup> Many people have a less-than-favorable opinion of the ticketing platform, which has maintained control over around 80% of the ticketing industry for almost 30 years.<sup>28</sup> Since their merger with Live Nation in 2010, Ticketmaster has made it difficult for new companies to emerge as potential competitors.<sup>29</sup> As a result, both companies have been accused of utilizing monopolistic practices behind

the scenes, which many consumers believe is the root cause of increasing ticket prices.<sup>30</sup> However, the truth is that the ever-rising cost of concert tickets can also be caused by a perfect storm of external factors.

“[People] want music, but they look at music as a utility and not as a consumer product,” said Durant, emphasizing the devaluing of music as a product throughout the digital age. He implies that many believe they have the right to consume music at no personal cost to them, but provides the reminder that artists and their teams are also people trying to make a living.

“Consumers can't have the best economic deal in the history of recorded music on the streaming and the music consumption side, but then also get cheap tickets. It just can't go both ways.”<sup>31</sup> With this quote, Durant leaves consumers with an important question to reflect on: Is the public willing to revert to the era of \$30 albums and eradicate the convenience of streaming for the sake of affordable live music? Or are they willing to make do with the current state of live music to balance out the changes that have come with the streaming era?

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## Op-Ed: What is Causing the Music Industry's Mental Health Crisis?

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By Anna Hudson

It is not easy to be a musician. Success is often hard to come by for artists, managers, and A&Rs alike. It takes hard work, dedication, and sometimes even years of effort to find success as an individual working in music. But the industry has evolved fast, and its key players are struggling to catch up. The financial difficulties alone make working in music an intimidating task. Additionally, the fast-paced, quickly-changing state of the industry generates a need to be informed, prepared, and one step ahead at all times. The mental health of musicians and industry members has been sorely impacted by the change of the music industry over the past few decades. This music mental health crisis is being caused primarily by three big shifts in the industry: the rise of social media, changing financial sources & structures, and the changing of the very definition of what it means to be an artist. It is imperative that more and more attention be paid to mental health, and the shifts towards a better industry must continue to happen at greater levels.

### Changing Financial Sources & Structures

Perhaps the most prevalent catalyst of financial change for musicians is the rising trend of streaming since the 2010s.<sup>1</sup> Streaming is now the main source of musical consumption, taking up a whopping 91.3 percent of the U.S.'s total musical consumption activity in 2024.<sup>2</sup> Gone are the days of CDs, iTunes, and vinyl supremacy. As of 2024, artists typically earn anywhere from \$0.003-0.008 per stream from mainstream streaming services (Spotify, Apple Music, etc.).<sup>3</sup> In comparison, an artist typically makes \$1-3 from a CD priced at \$15 via traditional recording agreements.<sup>4</sup> If an artist sold 10,000 CDs with their most recent single, they'd make anywhere from \$10,000 to \$30,000. However, the same single streamed 10,000 times would only generate \$300-\$800.

It is now common knowledge that an artist can make little to no stable income from streaming royalties unless they are very, very successful. One song with 1 million streams can earn an artist anywhere between \$3,000-8,000. This amount of money can absolutely support an artist's career, but the money made from streaming royalties pales in

comparison to the amount artists used to make back when they primarily sold CDs. At present, artists are utilizing merchandise and live concert ticket sales as main sources of income, alongside sync (Film & TV) placements and brand partnerships.<sup>5</sup> Because of the loss of revenue from the music market's shift to streaming, the artist's primary income no longer is generated by their primary export: their music itself.

According to the Wellness in Music Survey of 2024 conducted by MusiCares, a charity founded by the Recording Academy, 78 percent of survey respondents reported an annual income of \$100,000 or less in the last year,<sup>6</sup> which is about 24 percent lower than the general U.S. household average of \$132,000.<sup>7</sup> 53 percent of respondents reported that their financial earnings have not stabilized post-pandemic. 69 percent reported they are "unable to comfortably cover expenses through their work in music alone".<sup>8</sup>

Another financial change that artists have been hit by in the new music industry is rather the *lack* of change surrounding record deals—still ripe with royalties, fees, and contracts used during the golden ages of Motown. For example, record labels are still deducting "distribution costs" from artist record sales, despite the industry's well-known shift to digital distribution—a much less costly method of releasing and making records.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the rise of the 360 deal has allowed record labels to take from every piece of their artists' income. Merchandise, sponsorships, songwriting, acting, modeling, and practically any other way an artist makes money can now be diverted to their label. This deal structure was generated in the early 2000s as a way to deal with the quickly rising financial crisis the music industry faced when first entering the digital age. 360 deals have now become a norm within both major and independent labels, and are another example of how an artist's income structure has changed over the past decade.<sup>10</sup>

MusiCares's Wellness In Music Survey of 2024 reported that 47 and 44 percent of respondents believe their stress and anxiety respectfully are directly related to financial concerns.<sup>11</sup>

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## Social Media

It is estimated that about 82 percent of the U.S. uses social media.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, many Americans are using it to find new music. According to the Infinite Dial Report of 2024, “48% of Americans age 12+ say it is ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ important to keep up to date with music. Among this audience, 40% use Instagram as a source to find out about music. TikTok trails behind at 36%, while Facebook maintains a solid presence with 32% of Americans using it for discovering music.”<sup>13</sup> The uptick in usage of social media as a means for connecting our world has given musicians another hat to wear. Recently, labels have also been encouraging artists to primarily utilize social media marketing in order to promote their music. Halsey, Charli XCX, and Charlie Puth are all mainstream artists who have publicly discussed the pressure felt from their labels to create TikToks. Halsey in particular was asked by her label to fake a viral moment on the internet before releasing a song. Her socials did in fact go viral after this request, which was caused by a video she ironically made detailing her frustration with having to go viral in the first place.<sup>14</sup>

Social media can feel daunting for artists who worry that they spend more time on content creation than their own music. Sara Quin, from the Canadian pop duo Tegan and Sara, told *The Guardian*, “Myspace or Facebook posts used to be an add-on but now it feels like making music is about making assets for social media.”<sup>15</sup> In 2023, former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy called upon Congress to enforce a warning label on social media, citing evidence and studies stating “adolescents who spend more than three hours a day on social media face double the risk of anxiety and depression symptoms.”<sup>16</sup> It is clear that the increased presence and pressure of social media is changing the music industry and having a negative impact on the mental health of the musicians navigating it.

## What Does it Mean Now to Be an “Artist”?

As the structure of the music industry has changed, the definition of the artist has changed as well. Musicians no longer solely rely on labels. Digital distributors such as CDBaby and DistroKid have allowed anyone to release music on their own terms. After having grown steadily over

the past few years, 30% of the total global recorded music market share is now held by music from independent labels and musicians.<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, artists of late have been calling out their labels for wrongdoing – using their platforms as high-profile individuals to spread awareness of common issues they face. Chappell Roan, a shining pop superstar and self-described “Midwest Princess”, has established herself as an active voice for change within the music industry. Her recent 2025 Grammy acceptance speech highlighted—and shared—her personal experiences with insurance, instability, and other financial difficulties that young rising artists like herself face.

The “Big Three” major labels (Sony, Universal, and Warner Music Groups) have agreements in place with the Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Televised and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), allowing all of their signed artists to qualify for insurance. Artists are eligible for health insurance through their label as long as they are signed; eligibility is not based on their annual earnings or royalties.<sup>18</sup> However, if an artist is dropped from their contract—like Roan was dropped from Atlantic Records in 2020—they immediately lose their insurance eligibility. Chappell Roan was signed out of high school and dropped a few years later—with no warning, college education, or training in another industry. In her Grammy acceptance speech this past year, she spoke about how this impacted her physical & mental health and called for more support for rising artists. Roan told the audience that “It was so devastating to feel so committed to my art and feel so betrayed by the system, and so dehumanized to not have health insurance. And if my label would have prioritized artist health, I could’ve been provided care by a company I was giving everything to.”<sup>19</sup>

Alongside these calls for change within the major label system, independent artists and labels are steadily disrupting the total omnipotence that major labels held over the industry in the past. Artists have more power over labels; they no longer *need* them. Some artists are so frustrated with the way major labels operate that they leave, choosing to become independent as an already established artist. James Blake is one of those independent musicians; he recently left Republic Records after over 10 years with the UMG-owned label.<sup>20</sup> Blake often criticizes the structure of the industry, and record labels in particular,

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emphasizing how difficult it is to be an artist nowadays, both financially and mentally. He stated on his Instagram in a recent post that “The majors have prioritised temporary virality over art for too long, and that’s why the model is crumbling.”<sup>21</sup> Blake also describes major labels in their current form as “a package holiday. None of it is aimed specifically at you and your needs.”<sup>22</sup> His frustration with and subsequent departure from the major label system is a prominent example of the mental health issues plaguing this generation of artists signed to large record labels.

Independent musicians, though growing in numbers, also have their own set of difficulties when navigating an industry still mostly dominated by major labels. Independent artists who tour do not have the same financial and logistical support as artists signed to a major label (hence the “DIY” name). Navigating insurance alone as a touring musician can be difficult, since insurances based in certain U.S. states do not necessarily cover all states a musician travels to. Renata Marinaro, managing director of health services at the Entertainment Community Fund, told *Rolling Stone*: “It’s frustrating for me to tell somebody that it’s easier for you to travel around Europe and see different doctors with travel insurance than it is for you to travel around the United States.”<sup>23</sup>

The added stress of full responsibility for every part of a tour can take a toll on the mental health of musicians. Billie Bentil, a Berklee College of Music student and bassist currently playing with the Boston-based band *Women In Peril*, describes her experiences with DIY touring:

“You’re in the car for hours with little if any personal space, sleeping on floors—consistently late nights. Sometimes, you’re up against the elements and hard shows and just unfortunate situations. It truly just is a mental game. I’ve always known being on the road is what I want to do, so fighting through the hard moments is always worth it.”<sup>24</sup>

Artists, now strong in numbers as both independent and signed musicians, are changing. There are more independent musicians now than ever before. There are more vocal figures in the mainstream industry calling for change. However, the major label system is disconnected and struggling to catch up with artists, who demand better

conditions and are no longer reliant on their labels. This change of the artist structure and the subsequent disconnect from outdated industry systems is another strong contributor to the ongoing mental health crisis of the music industry.

### **Positive Changes & Moving Forward**

Despite the alarming state of mental health in the music industry, more and more resources are being made available to artists to assist them as time passes. Backline is a company that specializes in providing counseling & wellness resources for musicians and other music industry professionals. The therapists employed by Backline are specifically trained and well-versed in the music industry, allowing them to better understand and assist their clients.<sup>25</sup> Chappell Roan recently made headlines by making a \$25,000 donation to the charity, which was then matched by Noah Kahan and Charli XCX respectively.<sup>26</sup> Charli and Noah both expressed how inspired they felt by Roan’s speech at the Grammys and made the donations as a way to “get the ball rolling”.<sup>27</sup> In fact, Chappell Roan and Backline have created a campaign together after the Grammys, called “We Got You!”. This campaign pioneered by the artist and mental health company has prompted donations from Sabrina Carpenter, LAUV, Live Nation, AEG, and Wasserman alongside Kahan and Charli XCX.<sup>28</sup> Alongside Backline, a similar company, Amber Health, provides similar support to music industry members. Amber provides trainers and nutritionists/dieticians alongside mental health clinicians, all specialized in working for music industry members.<sup>29</sup>

The rise of these organizations combined with the support of mainstream artists is proof of positive change within the music industry. More and more resources are becoming available to artists at all levels. More artists are speaking up, sharing their stories, and spreading awareness. Mental health is a very relevant part of the music industry that must be continually addressed, considered, and supported in order for musicians and industry members to be truly successful.

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## Freeze Frame: Behind the Lens of Concert Photography

By Max Rothman



Photo by Max Rothman, 2022

Photographs are memories, moments so special that we want more than just our mental image of it. Enter the concert photographer: the individual responsible for freezing that moment in time. The job comes with many difficulties, but at its core, the concert photographer has to give the audience a variety of photos to potentially connect to, and give the artist a collection of “usable” photographs for press, media, or marketing. The following conversations with four professional concert photographers shed light on their experiences and the various kinds of work that can come across the lens of a concert photographer.

At 7:00 AM, Mark Shur, who spent the summer of 2024 as the tour photographer and crewmember for Dipsea Flower (Berklee ‘23), is already up, making him the earliest riser of the four. The crew is small—just the three-to-four piece band plus Mark—packed in the car with the gear, driving from show to show. On tour, the band and crew try to stay with friends or family as much as possible to lower expenses. Mark spends the night on the floor, using extra couch pillows and blankets as bedding, saying, “I signed up for it, I promise.” His old Windows laptop only works when plugged in, so he has to wake up before the band to get his edits done. Note that edited photos are almost always due to the

artist the day after the show, meaning Mark has to edit either the night of or the next morning if he wants to send them on time. Mark gets as much sleep as possible and uses his 7:00 AM wake-up to work on edits before the crew starts driving to the next city, leaving around 8:00 or 9:00 AM.

Will Tiong (Berklee ‘24) is also a tour photographer, but on a much larger scale. Will is the tour photographer and media director for singer-songwriter Sasha Alex Sloan, who spent the winter opening Kelsea Ballerini’s area tour. Will typically wakes up in a hotel room booked conveniently near the venue. His crew is a similar size to Mark’s but they travel in a Mercedes Sprinter van. His photos are due to the artist’s team the day after the show, even if they play multiple days in a row, so he has to pull the occasional all-nighter. Because the tour is larger, they have to make the lobby call and get in the Sprinter at a certain time to set out for the next city - time Will can use to edit on his laptop. Over the course of a tour, Will learns the rhythm of the show and his shooting plan evolves around it. For example, “It takes a song to get from the (photo) pit to the top of the arena.”<sup>1</sup>

The life of a concert photographer can take on one of two styles: touring and non-touring - though for most photographers, it’s a healthy mix. Shane Fruchterman and Taliyah Fox fall into the latter style; both are based in Boston and shoot a vast majority of their work there.

Taliyah is a full-time student at Northeastern University and works part-time on the content team at °1824: Universal Music Group’s (UMG) student-led internal marketing division. She receives assignments from her managers at °1824 about which UMG artists are coming to Boston on tour and if & when she will shoot them. Note that because Taliyah works for the record label, she only shoots UMG-signed artists - this is a circumstance unique to her. It also means that she can be shooting at Brighton Music Hall on one day and TD Garden on the next. Because she

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isn't on tour, an early wake-up isn't as important for Taliyah. Living in the city the show is in, she is free to wake up as early or late as she wants, usually 2:00 PM. Taliyah likes to arrive around doors, get her pass, and head to the pit to start shooting. She is almost always shooting the headlining artist, and usually has a normal photopass - meaning that she can only be in the photo pit in front of the stage for the first three songs. Afterwards, she can either leave or shoot from elsewhere in the venue. Whether or not she stays for the whole show depends on two things: how long it takes to get the shots she wants and how much she likes the artist. Once Taliyah has the shots, she is free to go home and start editing. Like her peers, Taliyah prefers to edit the night of the show, and will often stay up early into the morning to do it; the photos are inevitably due the next day.<sup>2</sup>

Shane Fruchterman is a Boston-based freelance photographer who focuses on concert and sports photography. He represents a balance between the more varied lifestyle of a non-touring photographer, but unlike Taliyah, is employed by the artists or their management team, not the label. Shane's work is a constant cycle of shooting shows that come through Boston any given week while also doing the necessary outreach to line up shoots for the next week. This means that Shane is often collaborating with artists he doesn't know. To Shane, "Photography is a collaborative art form", a "two-man dance"<sup>3</sup> between the artist and photographer during the show. Day of show, Shane wakes up at home, sends some emails for the next or previous gig, and triple-checks that he charged his camera batteries and emptied his SD card for the night. Before he leaves for the venue, Shane does his final gearcheck. Gearcheck is Shane's religion, his "mise en place." To him, "It's not about having the best gear; it's about having *control* over your gear,"<sup>4</sup> just as it can be for musicians. To Shane, freedom over one's gear means freedom of expression in one's art. Day of show, Shane likes to surround himself with the artist's music, listening to their albums or influences' albums, watching their interviews, and checking their social media accounts for photo references. This diligence is so important

for Shane because he isn't on tour; he only has one chance to work with the artist and make a strong first impression. At the venue, Shane likes to arrive early and spend time with the artist if he can. This pre-show time spent hanging out in the Green Room or having dinner is critical for him because it helps build the relationship that can make a shoot even more magical; and lead to those "moments." During the show Shane shoots wherever he wants, for the whole show, with his all-access photo-pass. He likes to have all access in the venue, and is lucky enough to be in the position to ask for it after years of shooting concerts. "Concerts are uncontrolled environments; all you can control is yourself."<sup>5</sup> When the show is over, Shane goes home and sits down to continue editing; he likes to start editing at the show between sets or during breaks. The deliverables (final photographs) are, of course, due the next day, and Shane prefers to edit on the night of when he's still amped from the show. As a vinyl collector, he also tries to come home with a copy of the artist's newest record and edit to that, continuing to steep himself and his day in the artist's music.<sup>6</sup>

In a world where everyone at a show can take photographs on their cell phone, what is the purpose for a concert photographer? Concert photography can often be seen as a purely documentarian service, that the photos only exist to prove that the show occurred and to potentially sway future ticket buyers online into coming to the next one. However, something that all four photographers shared was the belief that photography is about much more than just documentation. The mindset instead was one of creativity, the pursuit of an artistic endeavor. Shane describes concert photography as "an intersection of storytelling,"<sup>7</sup> referring to the story the performance tells, meeting the story the photo tells. Mark called this intersection the process of finding "moments"<sup>8</sup> during a show; and Will discussed wanting to "find my own style," thinking of concert photography as "a stepping stone to something higher."<sup>9</sup> This pursuit of connection, collaboration, and perfection, both with the artist and the audience, marks concert photography as art, something higher than just documentary or press. What all four photographers are suggesting

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is that concert photography can be where these two artforms intersect, and if done well, work together to reach an even wider audience. There is, of course, an outlier: Taliyah. Unlike her peers, Taliyah works for a record label instead of being hired by the artist or their team, meaning that her goals are not at all aligned with their needs or wants. Taliyah's photos aren't for the artist; they're for the label, and this is a key distinction. Taliyah's work doesn't involve the formation of the artist-photographer relationship that was so central to the work of her peers. She still has creative freedom, something that has been equally important to all four photographers; but the artform isn't a two way street for her, like it has been for them.<sup>35</sup>

The modern concert-goer has a lot on their mind. Past just buying the ticket, they have to arrive early enough to find a spot with a good view, time their trip to the merch table so they might avoid a line without missing a second of the show, make sure not to lose their friends or family, get an appropriate

beverage, make sure to take a few photos or videos to share on social media, potentially leave before the encore to beat the foot-traffic, and get home in one piece. Capturing this world of live music for others to see later on is the role of the concert photographer. Though often overlooked, one can learn from artists like Mark, Will, Shane, and Taliyah that the world of concert photography is colorful, collaborative, and artistic.

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