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SUMMIT**

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– MAY 17 & 18, 2021 –

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the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association
May 17-18, 2021

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Mastercard Charges into Audio Branding: A Case Study

David Allan
Saint Joseph's University

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Abstract

Audio branding is not new. Neither are audio logos. What is new is an even greater appreciation of sound. Not surprising, sound is riding the wave of smart speakers. The father of “atmospherics” Philip Kotler (1973), believes that today’s atmospherics (sound) must be designed for devices as well as spaces.¹ Houses are becoming more voice-activated every day turning on lights and sound. We are telling Alexa and Google daily to not only play our favorite music and podcasts but to buy our groceries and clothes. By the end of 2021, 23.5 million people will have made a purchase using a smart speaker.² Voice shopping is expected to jump to \$40 billion in 2022.³ Mastercard charged into audio branding in 2019 because they clearly believe that, “brands without an audio presence will have no presence.”⁴ Raja Rajamannar is the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at Mastercard. In this case study we will hear firsthand why Mastercard turned up the sound, where they are now, and where they are going.

Keywords: audio branding, audio logos, atmospherics, Mastercard, Raja Rajamannar

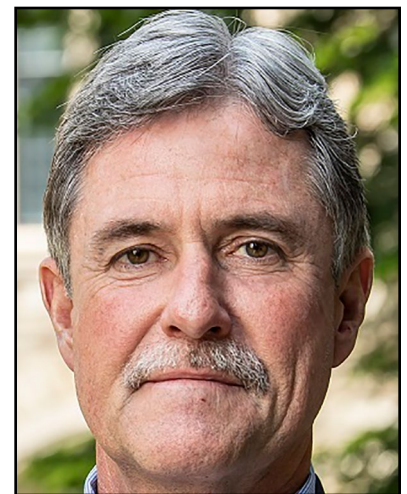
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David Allan is Professor of Music Marketing at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Allan brings to his academic career the experience from a twenty-year-plus career in radio broadcasting that began as a disc jockey in Oxford, Ohio at 97X in 1981 and ended as a VP/GM for Clear Channel where he left in 2002. Allan has a BA in Communications from American University, an MBA in Marketing from Saint Joseph's University, and a Ph.D. in Mass Media & Communication from Temple University. Allan is widely published including two books (*Hit Play: Soundtracks and Playlists in Everyday Life* and *This Note's For You*) and countless journal articles (*Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, and the *Journal of Advertising Research*). Allan has been quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Washington Post*, and *Billboard*.

The Next Big Thing for Online Networking in the Entertainment Industry or a Fleeting Online Platform: A Case Study on Clubhouse

Jeff Apruzzese
Drexel University

This paper was presented at the [2021 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association
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Abstract

Over the past year while most of the world has been sheltering at home and quarantining, we have seen a significant increase of listenership of podcasts and audiobooks. Instead of reaching to turn on a playlist on Spotify or Apple Music for passive listening experiences, many people are turning to conversational platforms to provide their background noise. Enter Clubhouse, one of the newest and most talked about audio-only social media platforms. The invite-only platform is built around hosting audio conferences from one or several users on a topic of their specialty. Live programming is available 24/7 and the discovery process to uncover new content and conversation is powered by sophisticated algorithms, similar to TikTok, to create endless recommendations.

The user experience is set up to mimic the atmosphere of attending a conference where attendees can enter and leave the live conversations as they please and “raise their hand” to ask questions or interact with the hosts. Music Industry programming has ranged from conversations with labels, sync, concert promoters, and booking agents, to a conversation between Elon Musk and Kanye West. In a period in which we are all experiencing “zoom fatigue” and burnout, it can be somewhat perplexing as to why this platform has seen massive growth from its early user base and is currently valued at \$1 Billion. Is this the future of audio creation and consumption or a technology that will get left behind post-pandemic? This presentation provides an in-depth analysis of the platform and argues the benefits for music industry leaders and educators to host panels, networking/recruitment events, and educational experiences.

Keywords: Clubhouse, social media, TikTok

Jeff Apruzzese has over a decade of experience in the music industry and is a graduate of Berklee College of Music. Upon receiving his diploma, he became the bassist of Passion Pit (signed to Columbia Records) and was a member of the band for eight years. During his time in Passion Pit, he toured the world extensively, performed at some of the largest festivals (Lollapalooza, Coachella, Summer Sonic, Austin City Limits, Glastonbury, Made in America), and played on some of the highest profile late night shows (Saturday Night Live, David Letterman, Jimmy Kimmel).



Apruzzese also has experience in PR and marketing and spent time working in New York City at the boutique agency Girlie Action Media with such clients as Surfer Blood, Kate Pearson (B-52's), Holy Ghost!, Mitski, Hop Along, Palehound, and many more. He returned to Berklee College of Music in 2015 to help establish the Berklee Popular Music Institute (BPMI) which provides students with experiential learning in live music and performance. Under his guidance, BPMI booked major festivals including Lollapalooza, Outside Lands, Osheaga, Essence, Governors Ball, Chicago Open Air, and Music Midtown. Career highlights include selling out the iconic Madison Square Garden in New York on February 12, 2013 during a blizzard and having the Passion Pit record *Gossamer* debut at number four on the Billboard 200 chart.

Teaching the Live Music Industry: A Hands-On Approach

Adam Caress
University of New Haven

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Abstract

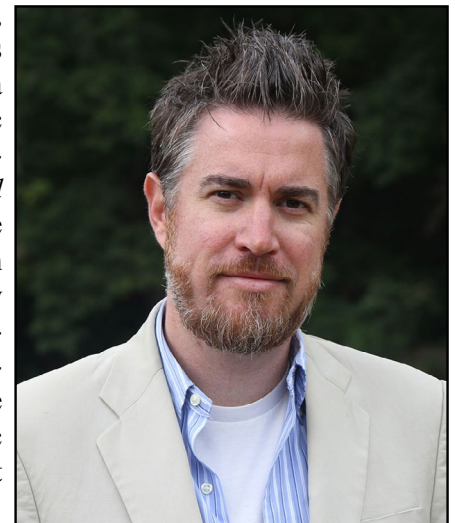
Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the live concert industry had been growing exponentially for many years generating five times as much revenue in 2018 as it did in 1998. U.S. live concert revenue topped \$10 billion in 2018, more than half the revenue generated by the recorded music industry. While the pandemic has been catastrophic for the industry in the short-term, there is hope that the industry will recover quickly in the coming months and years. And the live music industry continues to offer many opportunities for students interested in music industry careers. However, while there are many books and resources available for teaching about the recorded music industry, there are few resources available for music industry programs seeking to educate students about the live music industry. Having managed live music venues for a decade, I also believe that students learn more from gaining hands-on experience in the nuts and bolts of live concert planning than they do from a lecture-based format. The knowledge and experience gained from such a project will be valuable in any aspect of the live concert industry. And so, in 2017, I developed the curriculum for a class called Live Concert Planning and Promotion in which students plan and execute a professional live music event from start to finish. The students act as concert promoter, engaging in branding, artist and venue booking, sponsorship acquisition, accounting, marketing, ticketing, and event coordination. I began teaching the class that fall at Montreat College and it was an immediate success. Students were engaged, took ownership of the project, and produced the most successful live concert event on campus that year, the CODA Music Festival in April of 2018. The following year's students again produced a successful concert in the spring of 2019. When I accepted

a teaching position at the University of New Haven in the summer of 2019, I proposed the Live Concert Planning and Promotion course, which I have taught successfully for the past two years. The pandemic has presented challenges, but these, too, have provided learning opportunities as we have incorporated livestreaming into the course and been able to successfully put on concerts in spite of the pandemic.

In this presentation, I first outline the positive outcomes and student benefits of the Live Concert Planning and Promotion class. These include student engagement and hands-on experience—what my university calls “high impact practices”—as well as the ability to list tangible event planning experience on their resumes. I then outline the content of the course curriculum and conclude with some lessons learned about executing the class. I am hopeful that my experience will be of value to other music industry educators seeking to teach about the live music industry.

Keywords: music industry pedagogy, concert industry, live music, concert promotion

Adam Caress has worked in the music industry for the past twenty-five years as a venue manager, talent buyer, recording and performing artist, booking agent, sound engineer, writer, editor, and professor. He is also the author of a book on the music industry *The Day Alternative Music Died* (New Troy 2015). He currently teaches in the music industry Program at the University of New Haven. Prior to that, he taught in the music business program at Montreat College.



The Music Business, Blockchain, and NFTs: The Future of Music Ownership, Merchandising, and Monetization

Imraan Farukhi
Syracuse University

Ulf Oesterle
Syracuse University

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOVkbtHuc5I>

Abstract

This paper explores the technology and opportunities presented in selling or owning verified digital assets within the music business. Blockchain technology, an open source ledger supported by a collective of users who are responsible for verifying transactions, offers new opportunities for tracking assets, ownership, and is the foundation of new revenue streams via non-fungible tokens (“NFTs”). We are currently experiencing growth in consumers seeking verified ownership of digital assets via NFTs, which are unique and non-replicable. The use of Blockchain technology provides the ability to embed ownership and monetization structures within smart contracts stored on the chain to establish the rightful ownership of these assets. Until this point almost all digital content could be replicated. The use of blockchain ticketing has been explored with companies including YellowHeart but it’s only been within the last year or so where NFTs have grown in popularity as a way to release art and music, with 3lau releasing the first NFT album in February 2021.

The consistent use of NFTs to buy and sell music goods may lead to an entire new market system based on music-specific cryptocurrency. Given the devaluation of “purchased” music assets (e.g., recordings) in the wake of streaming’s rental-based business model, it is possible that new values may be reassigned to music rights in an alternative marketplace not based in dollars.

Notwithstanding the potential for NFTs to build the future of music asset management, there are limitations to their

capabilities. Smart contracts are limited in their application to broader music assets and transactions beyond tangible goods, such as merchandise, copies of records, or ticket sales. The problem with smart contracts is that they are controlled by computer coding (“if-then”) language. Smart contracts are not able to consider varying factors accompanying negotiations for music synchronization such as the substantive narrative in a film scene for which music is being licensed. They are also unable to address the most common issue for copyright owners—dispute resolution and potential copyright infringement—without deploying additional integration of a content identification system within the blockchain structure. There is no automated mechanism for disputes as to actual uses of music, and the cost-prohibitive nature of litigation often diminishes the strength of music rights owners.

Another limitation of smart contracts is legal enforceability since contract enforceability is governed by state law in the United States, and treated differently in various territories worldwide. Not all territories have adopted legislation or legal precedent as to the enforceability of smart contracts—potentially leaving open additional vulnerability as to disputed transactions trading in NFTs.

Regardless of its limitations, the increasing utilization of NFTs in the music business is positioning the industry for fundamental change in the nature of independent music merchant transactions, restoring control and transparency to music creators and consumers alike.

Keywords: NFT, non-fungible token, music business, blockchain, smart contracts



Imraan Farukhi is an entertainment attorney for transactional matters in the motion picture, music, and new media industries. He has drafted and negotiated agreements for independent film productions as well music production and distribution for major artists and music entities. He routinely advises on intellectual property and clearance matters.

Before joining the Newhouse School faculty at Syracuse University, Farukhi was an associate attorney in the entertainment practice of a national law firm and also held positions at prominent boutique entertainment law firms in the New York City area. He also previously taught communications and media law at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey. Farukhi has been featured as a panel speaker at industry events, including the 2015 and 2017 Garden State Film Festival and 2017 New York City Drone Film Festival.



As a faculty member within the Bandier Program at Syracuse University, **Ulf Oesterle** has been teaching about the music business for the last sixteen years with courses touching on recorded music, live music, social media strategy, and data within the music business. He completed his doctorate in Mass Communications from the Newhouse School at Syracuse University in 2007 and spent several years as the Music and Entertainment Industries Department Chair, Interim Director of The Bandier Program and Interim Chair of Audio Arts (M.A.). Oesterle is an educator and practitioner, having operated a small record label, an artist management company, and has history with radio programming and hosting a commercial specialty show for a few years.

Outside of campus, Dr. Oesterle currently sits on the board of the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association (MEIEA), contributes to educational endeavors for Show Makers, speaks at conferences regularly, and consults about TikTok strategy while managing his own creator presence on the platform.

Design Thinking in Music Related Instruction

Todd D. Gardner
Berklee College of Music

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to make educators aware of design thinking and its potential use in music business related classrooms. Design thinking is usually defined as having five components: Empathy, Defining, Ideating, Prototyping, and Testing. Although design thinking is being used in academic institutions such as Stanford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard, and Yale it still needs to be further adapted and applied in music and arts institutions. The foundation of design thinking is that it is a human-centered design process that enables students to better understand the emotional needs of the people whose issues or opportunities they are attempting to help or solve. This could be in the form of a musical composition, a music therapy app, a concert tour, a music-related device, or any related music or arts-related business or venture. Much of the design thinking process is conducted through interviews and interaction with potential communities and audiences. It also involves creating prototypes and testing your ideas with your community until you get a better iteration. Design thinking can be used with music students to show them how to innovate and collaborate. By identifying and discussing these five stages of design thinking, music business educators will be able to produce valuable student-driven results that carry through not only the educational stages of a musician's life but well beyond into careers and businesses that they will own and manage.

Keywords: design thinking, music business pedagogy, music business education, arts education



Todd D. Gardner, Associate Professor of Music Business/Management at the Berklee College of Music, teaches classes on tax, accounting, business startups, and start-up labs where design thinking is incorporated. He lectures regularly to the broader Berklee community on issues within the music industry including the Film Composition Senior Symposium, the Stan Getz Library Lecture Series, and other groups. His lectures cover business formation, tax, and the ability to critically and creatively think, problem-solve, communicate, and collaborate. He strives to have his students have the best possible experience at Berklee so they are prepared not only for business but for life. Todd is also the Faculty Advisor and Director of the print and online edition of *The Music Business Journal* and the podcast *Cut-Time*. He wrote an article for the December 2018 edition entitled "Tom Petty – Standing Ground." He serves as Co-Chair of the Berklee Case Study Center which was founded in 2016 to provide support for writing, finding, and using case studies in the classroom so that students learn more about real-life situations regarding businesses, artists, managers, and more.

Virtual Insanity: Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Jason Lee Guthrie, Clayton State University
Steven Potaczek, Samford University

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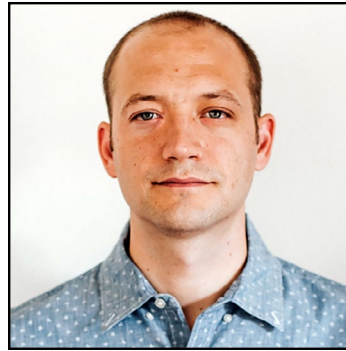
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt88eX0TpMA>

Abstract

The impact that COVID-19 has had on pedagogical instruction of recording technologies, the music business, podcasting, and other aspects of audio production cannot be overstated. Many of us scrambled in the early shift towards online instruction and have continued to innovate ways to make virtual and face-to-face instruction work during a global pandemic. This presentation will share strategies for maintaining a rigorous curriculum while meeting the educational and emotional needs of students during this unprecedented time.

In the virtual teaching space, the pandemic accelerated technologies that were already in place such as Zoom and Canvas, but also exposed the weaknesses of these platforms for the higher fidelity needs of professional audio production. Browser-based audio recording platforms such as Riverside, Squadcast, Zencastr, and Bandlab have attempted to fill these higher-level needs with varying levels of success. A platform that receives specific attention in this presentation is Soundtrap. Owned by Spotify, Soundtrap is a browser-based digital audio workstation (DAW) that can be used for music and podcast recording, post-production, and publishing. Emphasis is also placed upon safety innovations for face-to-face learning including caring for students well-being alongside their educational goals.

Keywords: music business pedagogy, music production pedagogy, COVID-19, podcasting, Soundtrap



Jason Lee Guthrie is an Assistant Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Clayton State University in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Guthrie is a media historian interested in the intersections of creativity and economics, with specific interests in the creative industries and intellectual property law.

Steven A. Potaczek is focused on helping musical artists and students discover and express their potential as creative careerists. As a music producer, he has worked with some of the top names in the industry (The Band Perry, The Barenaked Ladies, and Skillet to name a few), and has successfully



partnered with organizations such as MTV, *National Geographic*, and the Heartland Film Festival. He has received numerous industry accolades (including the Gospel Music Academy's Song of the Year award and the John Lennon Songwriting Award), toured nationally as a major label artist with a Billboard Top 40 hit, and landed musical placements on several prominent television shows such as Parks and Rec, New Girl, and CBS Evening News. As an educator, Potaczek has taught at the collegiate level for over a decade and been a guest speaker at various music and film conferences. He holds a Master of Science Degree in Music Technology from Indiana University and is currently developing a program in Commercial Music for Samford University that will have concentrations in Songwriting, Music Production, Performance, and Music Business. Perhaps most importantly, he absolutely loves inspiring and educating the next generation of music artists and industry leaders.

Life Goes On: How BTS Has Turned Virtual Live Concert Satisfaction During COVID-19 Into Show-Biz Dynamite

Yongjin Hwang
University of South Carolina

Armen Shaomian
University of South Carolina

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the live entertainment industry to a near halt. Restrictions such as limits on social gatherings and the number of people who can occupy spaces like concert venues have led many performance artists to rethink the way they connect with their audiences. Artists are using methods such as increased social engagement and informal livestreams to maintain and grow their fanbase. One outcome of this effort to continue performing in spite of pandemic-related strictures has been the endeavor to bring the live concert experience directly to fans by shifting to a virtual format. However, little is known about the determinants of virtual live concert (VLC) satisfaction. Given an artist's lack of control over the environment in which an audience engages with their content, each member of the audience may have a very different experience when attending a VLC, leading to various and disparate overall satisfaction.

This study aims to identify which factors affect audience satisfaction with VLCs and to measure and rank the importance of each element. A total of 533 participants who attended BTS's Map of the Soul ON:E concert in 2020 were recruited to examine their VLC satisfaction. The results of confirmatory factor analysis show that three dimensions—artist, audio quality, and virtual stage appearance—constituted the concept of VLC satisfaction. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) also revealed that screen size and previous live concert experiences were significant factors for VLC satisfaction, but not audio device type. In addition,

celebrity identity and celebrity attitude were significantly and positively related to audiences' satisfaction with VLC. The outcome of this study demonstrates the value of live concerts in general as well as the opportunities of VLC specifically, especially as an alternative and expanded mode of audience engagement.

Keywords: BTS, COVID-19, live concert, fans, audience, engagement VLC, pop music, streaming



Yongjin Hwang received his bachelor's degree in business administration from Sungkyunkwan University, after which he moved to the United States to become an audio engineer. While working at Flux Studios, in New York City, Hwang completed a master's degree in music technology at New York University. As a result of his educational experience, Hwang decided to combine the two degree subjects together as a doctoral student at the University of South Carolina in the department of Sport and Entertainment, where he now serves as an assistant professor.



Armen Shaomian, DMA, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sport and Entertainment at the University of South Carolina and is currently serving as the President of the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association (MEIEA). A native of Stockholm, Sweden, Armen Shaomian has extensive background in performing arts, education, and project management consulting. Shaomian is the founder and CEO of Armenize, Inc., an arts consulting agency specializing in non-profit arts management and foundational strategies. Prior work includes programs manager/associate producer for the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) and its signature YoungArts program. In his role as their associate producer, Shaomian oversaw live performance logistics as well as strategic relations with the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York City, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., as well as the United States Department of Education and the United States Presidential Scholars program. Shaomian's work with the NFAA included cost analysis and contract negotiations, allowing the foundation to save fiscally while raising the quality of its programming.

Prior to his work with NFAA, Shaomian was the managing director of Cat 5 Music Publishing and assessment manager at the Office of Accreditation and Assessment at the University of Miami. He has also held the position of musical director of the critically acclaimed touring company of The Second City Theatre. Other entertainment work includes several voice-overs for Disney and Warner Bros. feature animations. Shaomian served as the president of the Miami Civic Music Association in 2012-2016 as well as co-chair on the board of the Green Room Society at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County. Shaomian holds master's and doctor of musical arts degrees in accompanying and chamber music with cognates in music business and entertainment industries from the University of Miami. He also holds a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from Wayne State University.

He is an active concert pianist and has performed numer-

ous concerts at venues in Europe and the United States. He has authored a book on Swedish National Romantic Music and his piano recordings of composer Hugo Alfvén are featured on Vax Records' Vaxholm-Ett Dubbelnöje. Shaomian has also served as adjunct faculty at the Frost School of Music's Arts Presenting Program at the University of Miami.

His language skills include English, Swedish, and Armenian. An active concert pianist specializing in contemporary classical music, Shaomian regularly presents performances and master classes. Most recently, he was invited to perform a lecture-recital at the 2015 College Music Society's International Conference in Stockholm and Helsinki. He has brought guest artists to visit his courses, including multi-Grammy and Academy Award winner Burt Bacharach and Pulitzer Prize recipient William Bolcom. Shaomian frequently collaborates with the South Carolina Philharmonic and the Trustus Theater in Columbia to bring together arts leaders from the live entertainment industry and students from the sport and entertainment management program.

During his tenure at the University of South Carolina, Shaomian has received grants from the South Carolina Arts Commission to host a biannual statewide seminar for arts organizations titled Making Money. Shaomian recently gave guest performances and master classes at Ithaca College School of Music and University of Alabama, Birmingham. An SEC grant enabled him to present guest lectures relating to the business of live entertainment management at the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business as well as the University of Kentucky's College of Fine Arts.

Fan Engagement During a Pandemic: An Analysis of Artist Metrics, Creative Behaviors, and Fan Engagement Between March 2020 and August 2020 Across the Minnesota Music Community

Scott LeGere
Minnesota State University Mankato

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Abstract

COVID-19 had an undeniable impact on the music and entertainment industry throughout much of 2020 and beyond. With venues closed and festivals canceled, many artists lost critical revenue streams and other associated opportunities. However, as the pandemic continued into the Summer of 2020, some artists began to leverage live streaming opportunities and other initiatives to help make up for lost revenue and maintain their relationships with fans. Using [Chartmetric](#), this study compared 284 Minnesota-based artists over the six-month period between March 1, 2020 and August 31, 2020. Any group or individual exhibiting surprisingly high increases or decreases across their relative engagement data, including follows, streams, likes, and video views, were then studied to determine what artist behaviors had positively or negatively impacted fan engagement. Overall, this study found a surprisingly broad mix of content sharing and engagement strategies that can be used to maintain and build fan connections, even during periods of tremendous uncertainty.

Keywords: COVID-19, music industry, fan engagement, Chartmetric, Minnesota music



Over the past twenty years, **Scott LeGere** has played key roles in the ownership and operation of audio recording facilities, independent record labels, media schools, and commercial music production companies. During this time, he has engineered Grammy-nominated albums, produced critically acclaimed independent projects, lectured nationally at conferences and events, and foolishly hauled both Yamaha CP-70s and Hammond B3s (concurrently) to gigs. In 2010, he co-founded NoWare Media, a composition-focused sound agency, and has helped produce Clio, Emmy, and Cannes Lion award-winning commercial spots for clients such as Target, Walmart, The Minnesota Wild, PepsiCo, Bauer Hockey, BluDot, and others. More recently, LeGere has concentrated much of his efforts into higher education, teaching at a variety of Minnesota colleges and universities. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Music Industry at Minnesota State University Mankato.

Improving Student Success Capacity and Readiness: A Dialogue on Assessment Design

Joseph Miglio
Berklee College of Music

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yev3c7TMweA>

Abstract

College student success is a major issue today in higher education, employment, government, and policy circles. There is an enhanced and critically urgent call to action, with a renewed emphasis on student success. It is compounded by the “degree and dollars” disparity—as the number of students with a college education is not as high as it should be, and college student retention rates are not as high as any educator would want them to be. This gap is even more pronounced in college student success among various racial and ethnic groups resulting in unacceptably large dropout rates, reduced capacity for career sustainability and the destructive debt associated with this unattained goal. As a result, student success may be the most critical issue facing higher education today.

The focus of this presentation is to provide a forum to dialogue and determine how to provide access to instruction and services that will enable many more students to fulfill their postsecondary aspirations. A review of the current literature findings, as well as spotlighting program initiatives from several higher educational institutions will be offered as a framework to assess capacity and readiness. A design strategy by Starfish/Hobsons, Inc. will be offered as a cornerstone on assessing and building a rubric around core readiness principles (as adapted from *Deliverology in Practice*, Barber, Rodriquez, and Artis, Corwin Press, 2016).

Ideally, the conversation can provide access to better understand what constitutes, supports, and carries forward (undergraduate) student success; to help identify strengths, weaknesses, and priorities for our programs and institutions.

Keywords: student success, higher education, music business education, student retention, college debt



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Reasons to Enroll: Music Business Students' Motivations and Requirements

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Abstract

German, British, and North American tertiary music business courses tend to be very different from each other. These programs have different roots, aims, and approaches towards the music business labor market. Still, one characteristic is common: they all build on the desire of aspirants who want to work in the music industry. This study looks into the motivations of students in three countries: Germany, the United Kingdom, and Hungary. Requirements, goals, desired skills and competences are among the topics respondents were asked about.

Keywords: music business education, tertiary music business education

Tertiary Music Business Education, Its Roots and the Different Types of Courses

Music business modules were started in the United States in the 1940s and by the 1970s the education system of these programs was established,¹ followed by the United Kingdom in 1999.² Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, and other countries with more advanced music industries also joined this list later.

North American courses have evolved from several models. These three models are the management model tied to management departments, the model related to communication studies, and the model classified as music-oriented training.³ Therefore courses with titles such as “music business management,” “music management studies,” or “music industry” can belong to management, communications, or music departments.

North American courses consider employability of music business graduates a very important, almost primary focus.⁴ According to a study with 242 educators working for North American tertiary (higher education) music management programs, the success of graduating students can be determined by the following three outcomes:

1. graduates think critically,
2. graduates are employed in their chosen field of the music business,
3. students have excellent communication skills.⁵

In his study,⁶ Strasser differentiates between four different orientations a music business course (or “program” in the United States) can have:

1. the professional concentration, for practicing professionals,
2. the entrepreneurial concentration for the creation and commercialization of actual products and/or services,
3. the research concentration for students who would like to build an academic career, and
4. the practice concentration for experiencing music organization operation first hand. This approach also

focuses on career aspects and the employability of the students.

In contrast, in the case of the United Kingdom, Cloonan and Hulstedt⁷ distinguish three different types of popular music training. The first group includes “musical” courses, the second category is “vocational,” and the third type is “theoretical” training. Music management courses in Cloonan and Hulstedt’s typology can thus be classified in the second category.

The popularity of British tertiary music business management courses is frequently justified by the steep increase in the number of applications⁸ and the huge number of applicants.⁹ In 2015, a study, titled *Learning the music business*,¹⁰ commissioned by the British music industry organization, UK Music, presented the deficiencies of these courses. The main conclusion of the research is that many of these programs neither provide the knowledge necessary for students’ success in the labor market, nor the satisfaction of music industry employers.¹¹ As a result, graduating students do not enjoy positive discrimination within the labor market compared to aspirants without a music management qualification, therefore these courses fail to provide the benefits that they claim to offer.¹² For all these reasons, the value and professional prestige of these training programs in the United Kingdom is still questioned.¹³ In the case of British tertiary music business courses, the relationship between the music business market and employability of graduates is still the subject of serious ongoing professional debates. Some educators and researchers working in this field consider a stronger focus on employability a threat to critical thinking.¹⁴

The reason for the differences between the ideological background and practical implementation of North American and British music management education may be found in the theoretical roots and effects of British music industry courses and also in the decades long experience of North American training in this field.¹⁵ These differences can also be seen in teaching methods used and in the training goals and directions set by these programs.¹⁶ North American tertiary music management courses are characterized by a high proportion of music business professionals working part time at the university and part-time in business, most of whom do not have a doctorate.¹⁷ In the United Kingdom, many of the MA course leaders do have academic rank and publish in academic journals.

Moreover, British tertiary popular music courses can be linked to the Frankfurt School’s critique of mass culture,¹⁸ especially to judgments of Theodore Adorno about the violent standardization of cultural experience. These provided the bases for the development of Popular Music Studies in the United Kingdom. Beginnings of the discipline can

be traced back to the time of the Beatles¹⁹ and was created with the intention of studying (and somewhat legitimizing) popular music.²⁰ Popular Music Studies presumably had a strong influence on music industry management research and the development of music business education in the United Kingdom. The predominance of a theoretical approach within the British tertiary music management programs²¹ and their resistance to vocationalization²² may be linked to this aspect but further research is still needed.

In the United Kingdom, all higher education creative industries courses were launched after 1992 at former polytechnics²³ and are constructed on the desire of individuals entering this special world²⁴ just like in the case of the music²⁵ and music business management programs.²⁶ This was an area of the creative industries education boom,²⁷ while the United States did not experience the influence of this discipline.

The different roots of North American and British university music industry management courses thus seemingly resulted in different academic approaches, goal systems, and self-determination. This, as we could see above, is also expected to have an impact on the knowledge and employability of students.

German and Hungarian Music Business Courses

The first German speaking music management course was established at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna in 1976 in Austria. In Germany it was the Hochschule für Music und Theater Hamburg in 1989²⁸ which established the first music business related program. In German speaking countries, “today’s music management degree programs are rooted in the establishment of cultural management (*Kulturmanagement*) as an academic discipline in the late 1980s”²⁹ and these courses have a maximum of thirty years of history, “none of the music business BA courses are older than 15 years.”³⁰

There is only a strikingly small number of studies on the German tertiary music business courses, including a study by Wickström, Lücke, and Jóri published in the *International Journal of Music Business Research* in 2015 and one by Frei University Berlin professor Klaus Sieberhaar and his colleague Achim Müller, ordered by the music industry body, Berlin Commission in 2018. These studies make clear that German higher education music business courses are strongly influenced by the national concepts of education.

In the German system, there are two different higher education approaches, called *Bildung* and *Ausbildung*. The former is the so-called Humboldt-concept of higher education, where universities focus on teaching and research, the latter (the *Ausbildung*) stands for applied sciences and its focus is on tools for a future career of students as well as practical skills.³¹ Both approaches have been criticized. In

the case of the Building concept, students are said to have no practical skills, while the *Ausbildung* is characterized as an education where curriculum is dictated by the labor market.

These two approaches can also be identified in the differences between state funded and private universities with the latter taking the practice-based approach.³² In Germany, private universities are more open to popular music courses as state funded institutions prefer high culture oriented bachelor and master programs.³³ Some of these private institutions have gained reputations not only because of the highly educated teaching staff³⁴ and the quality of these courses, but because of the factors they take into account. The dichotomy can be seen in higher education creative industries courses as well. For example, University of Paderborn refers to its music business program as an opportunity for an “academic career or a privileged position within the music- or creative industry or within the artistic realm.”³⁵

Music business programs in Germany aim to combine a broader academic, theoretical knowledge with elements from practice in order “to meet the challenges of current market conditions”³⁶ and tend to follow the needs of the music business. The curriculum “is regularly changed and adapted to the actual conditions”³⁷ which is regarded as a security for a students’ “successful long term career.”³⁸

It is striking how much the German music business education focuses on students’ needs, their requirements regarding practical education, their future labor market success, and also on preparation for their future career.³⁹ Skills and theoretical knowledge go hand in hand in this educational system⁴⁰ and labor market needs are always taken into consideration even at the time of course accreditation.⁴¹ The cooperation between industry and higher education institutions is regarded as a key to program and student success⁴² and “the exchange between the industry, associations, and the university is systematically promoted.”⁴³ Music business course developers are aware that “a good half of the music industry companies have problems finding suitable employees for vacancies,”⁴⁴ therefore graduates who are trained in accordance with labor market needs are respected by employers. Cooperating⁴⁵ and networking with industry and teacher-practitioners are essential elements of the German tertiary music business education.⁴⁶

We can see that the German model is very different from the British music business educational system regarding aims, approaches, curriculum and program design, and accreditation process. This might be interpreted by the different national approaches⁴⁷ including the VET and the dual education system as well as the *Bildung* and *Ausbildung* concept—and also the distinctive roots of music business education in the German speaking countries, especially in Germany.

British, North American, and German music business education are based on very different educational systems and approaches, therefore these three countries cannot be ignored in a research on tertiary music business management courses.

In Hungary, the large number of potential employees, as well as the dynamically developing local and international market, can validate the intention to start a tertiary music industry management program. Currently there are no official vocational education (called OKJ), nor higher education music industry management courses in Hungary. There have already been attempts to kick-start tertiary music industry management training in Hungary. From 2011 to 2014, the Department of Consumer Behavior of Budapest Corvinus University hosted the subject Music Management and Marketing. This fourteen-week course was initiated with the intention of becoming a laboratory for a future music industry management course. However, due to the knowledge management needs discovered, the training was not started at Budapest Corvinus University but within a private school called Zeneipari Hivatal. Future employees are trained by non-profit semi- and non-formal courses⁴⁸ such as the private school mentioned above.

The domestic Hungarian music market has undergone spectacular development over the past ten years. According to the latest report of ProArt, published in November 2020, the revenue of the Hungarian music industry increased by 1 billion HUF from 2017 to 2018,⁴⁹ its estimated total revenue was HUF 73.5 billion in 2019⁵⁰ (approximately USD 250 million or EUR 210 million).

Methodology

The aim of the current research was to look into the reasons for enrollment, requirements, and motivations of students who have been accepted into programs taking place in three different countries: Hungary, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Unfortunately U.S. students were unapproachable for the researcher at the time of the research.

The Hungarian sample was taken from graduates of -Zeneipari Hivatal. In the case of Germany and the United Kingdom, third year bachelor students were invited to fill out the questionnaire. The German sample was taken from a university course based in Cologne and the U.K. respondents attended courses based in London or Leeds. The research started in March 2020 and was finished in August 2020. Students were contacted via their course mates and course leaders.

The questionnaire had four different sections. The first part was to gain some information on the respondents such as nationality, country of origin, and the current country of studies. The second section referred to the financial circumstances respondents had such as the source of the tuition fee

and extra activities undertaken to earn money for tuition. The third part was about decisions made by the respondents such as reasons to enroll, previous possibilities, and moving to another country.

Finally, questions were asked about the characteristics and requirements regarding music business courses: how vocational they thought a music business course should be, what sort of skills or knowledge it should provide, what kind of course content it should have, and what kind of teachers should teach there.

The questionnaire was filled out by thirty-three people and resulted in thirty-two valid responses. Although the respondents attended courses in the three focus countries, eight different countries were represented including Spain, Sweden, Serbia, Turkey and Italy in addition to the Hungarian, German, and British participants. Six students studied in the United Kingdom, fourteen in Germany, and twelve in Hungary. Ages ranged from nineteen up to thirty-nine. In the case of the Hungarian sample, students were participants of an adult learning course instead of a university program.

Results

Out of the thirty-two respondents, thirteen students claimed their course to be expensive. Six students had to save money and four others had to borrow money to participate. It is also important to emphasize here that the tuition fee of the Hungarian training was one tenth of the British course. Out of thirty-two, seventeen students received family support during their studies, and in the case of eleven students, their families paid for the course. Six students could not ask for such help, six students asked for a loan, seven had an extra job, and six other students worked part time to gain the money for the course. Twenty-four students out of thirty-two worked to cover their expenses. Four students described their family as wealthy, and nine as above average, one student defined themselves as poor.

Participants were asked about other subjects and options as well that they had considered prior to applying to their music business course. Here students could choose more than one option. Music course was selected eleven times as well as management, followed by arts (9), marketing (8), and other options such as culture (5), economics (5), law (4) and sociology (4), philosophy (2), journalism (1), and politics (1) were also considered. Many of these students already had a bachelor or a masters degree in subjects such as arts (3), communications (3), management (2), business (1), economics (1), literature (1), sociology (1), and pedagogy (1).

Twenty-four students tried to get into the music business prior to the course by undertaking volunteering work (10), internships (9), or in the form of applying for a job (9),

managing a band (8), starting their own projects (13), or asking their networks (1). Twenty-two students out of the thirty-two respondents had no plan B as a career option, meaning they want to succeed in the music business.

Students were also asked about their motivations regarding application. Most of them wanted to obtain “knowledge on the music business” (28), build up a network in the music business (23), get into the music business (20), and were interested but did not know which field (17), or wanted to start their own business companies (15). Out of the thirty-two respondents, ten chose the option that they were a musician/singer and wanted to self-manage and four students were musicians/singers and wanted to be a more cooperative partner of industry representatives. As a motivation behind the applications, three of the respondents have worked in the music business and wanted to go into academia.

With resources provided, students would have studied music business in countries such as the United Kingdom (20), United States (18), Sweden (11), Germany (9), Netherlands (9), Norway (7), and Hungary (5). Additional options added by students were Iceland (1), Spain (1), and France (1).

Respondents also had the option to vote for the aim of a music business course. Twenty-seven students out of thirty-two respondents chose the option, “develop skills and competences that help with employability,” followed by “help to develop industry networks” (24), and “educate on the global music industry” (24). Nineteen students also considered local affairs important and only one student emphasized entrepreneurial skills as their additional answer.

Requirements towards a music business course are an important part of an application. In the questionnaire, students could vote for the content and aspects a music business course could provide. Here they had to put options in order. Skills were number one followed by 2) knowledge on current music business affairs, 3) getting in touch with music business professionals, 4) music business network, 5) job opportunities, 6) visiting venues and companies, and 7) visiting conferences and events.

The students were also asked about the vocational content of the ideal music business course. Ten students highlighted practical aspects such as, “They should teach highly practical and current knowledge” (Respondent Number 1), “hands-on and practical knowledge” (Respondent Number 2), and according to Respondent Number 7, the “main value of a [music business] course is the information not in the books.”

Teachers of a music business course are also important ingredients of a successful program. Students thought practicing music business professionals (30) should teach, followed by former music business professionals who had turned to academia and teaching (26), music business teachers who earned a PhD in economics, law, or any related field

who are currently practicing music business professionals as well (11), music business teachers who were educated as professional teachers (11), and finally music business teachers who earned a PhD in economics, law, or any related field (7).

Current music industry affairs were also reported as crucial to music business training. Twenty-six respondents think that they have to be informed on the current music industry issues and affairs by their course to be able to join in, twenty students agreed with the statement that graduates have to be educated and skillful employees by the end of a music business course, and thirteen students chose the option, “A music business course has to give us a more theoretical knowledge that we can apply to current music business scenarios.”

Students were also asked what sort of knowledge they think is important to have by the end of the course. They had to put these options in order:

1. Being capable of managing a musician, an orchestra, or a band
2. Being capable of organizing a concert
3. Being capable of setting up a music marketing campaign
4. Being aware of compulsory parts of different music business contracts
5. Being capable of successfully networking at a music business conference
6. Knowledge of current music business companies in the country of the music business course
7. Practice-oriented knowledge of music law including authorship and publishing
8. Being capable of organizing and managing an online music streaming campaign
9. Knowledge of the leading international music business companies
10. Being capable of organizing a small music festival
11. Being capable of organizing a national tour
12. Knowledge of various music business markets around the world
13. Being capable of organizing a small international tour
14. Basic knowledge of the venues of the country of the music business course
15. Being capable of managing a recording session of a band I work for
16. Basic knowledge of technical riders for bands and orchestras
17. Being capable of deciding on different sections of a music website.

Teaching tools and practices were also among the questions. According to the respondents, tasks should be related

to the current music business and include marketing plans, management, organizing concerts, etc. (30), seeing music business companies in operation (25), and practicing real life scenarios such as meetings and pitches (25) as well as attending music venues (24), and music business conferences (22). Music business literature on real life scenarios were chosen by thirteen students.

Discussion

In the United Kingdom, creative industries courses tend to be more affordable for upper-middle class students, and this sector is also dominated by this part of the society.⁵¹

We could see that the majority of students in this study had to plan their participation due to the high tuition fees these courses cost. Participants, underpinning literature sources,⁵² saw this course as a channel and path to their dreams and this may have been a major factor when they decided to enroll. These are all important pieces of information when it comes to course and curriculum design. The cost of these courses can be a rather important aspect as creative industries courses tend to be labeled as the “cash cows” of higher education⁵³ and in many cases, “vocationalism” is also underlined by the growing pressure of training needs within higher education due to societal changes.⁵⁴ Students in this research were highly aware of industry needs.

There has also been an ongoing debate in the United Kingdom about the roles of industry-related knowledge and vocational training within business courses⁵⁵. The supporters of the vocational turn emphasize that the dichotomy of vocational training and university education is reflected in the educational needs and circumstances of a particular society as times have changed and as an institution, mass education should incorporate training needs as well.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the role of higher education institutions is also being reinterpreted thanks to the digital revolution. In the age of Google, Wikipedia, and vastly accessible knowledge, higher education institutions have to question what they can provide their students with, as a plus.⁵⁷ According to neoliberal education policy, the task of modern universities is not merely to educate the workforce but to train knowledge workers.⁵⁸ From this approach, the new role of higher education includes preparing those for the world of work.⁵⁹ Due to this process, the importance of communities of practice, collaboration with industry, and practice-based research is emphasized. In the United Kingdom, some creative industries researchers and educators started to emphasize the changing role of universities and the codification of practical knowledge.⁶⁰ Other scholars within the field of creative industries (and music business), due to the needs of students and the pressure of high tuition fees, reevaluated the aim and role of these courses and started to refer to their students as “creative (media) workers.”⁶¹

Participants of this study required knowledge that is linked to industry and that can help with their employability as well as gaining skills and knowledge. Out of the thirty-two respondents, only three were considering academia as a career option. All the other respondents (29) were interested in the labor market, and twenty-two respondents had no plan B. According to these numbers, the pressure on, and the responsibility of, music business course designers and educators is huge.

As mentioned above, German and British educational systems have been different. In Britain, some courses do not have any labor market relevance, while German higher education is typically practice-oriented, linked to skills development and occupations.⁶² As Graf and colleagues claimed, “Unlike in Germany (or Austria and Switzerland), in many other countries practice-oriented training programs do not yet enjoy the same level of recognition as academic, classroom-based training programs.”⁶³ In the case of Germany, Siebenhaar and Müller define five aspects that make these courses successful and respected. Music business education at private universities is based on the market, on professional practice, on the needs of the job market, on the needs of students, and their goal of advancing their careers.⁶⁴ German students were aware of that.

Representatives made it clear that the vocational aspect, including skills, competencies, and industry relevant knowledge is important for them and prefer that over theoretical knowledge. The “knowledge not found in books” aspect seemed to be a very important aspect as well as networking and music business contacts.

We could see that most students—regardless of the country where they study—value practical knowledge, competencies, and skills.

Conclusion

The participants, all music business students in Germany, Hungary, or the United Kingdom seem to value the vocational, practical aspect of a music business course. Most of the respondents considered networks, industry knowledge, and music business teacher-practitioners essential.

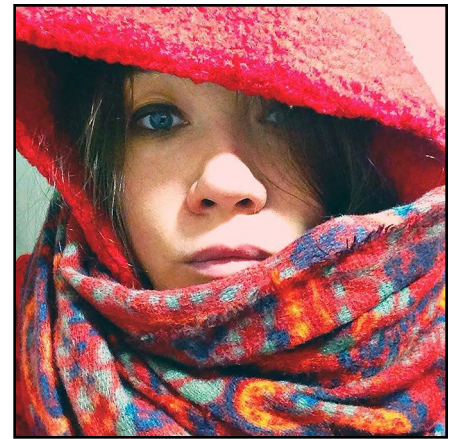
Although the researcher tried their best, due to COVID-19 fatigue and the issues around the research itself, the findings cannot serve as firm grounding for generalization. Limitations include the number of participants and the number of courses involved. This study can serve as a tiny postcard from one country; long, long letters can be written about the same topic, but the length should match the significance of the topic.

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A Day in the Life: Team Merch at Red Rocks!

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This paper was presented at the [2021 International Summit](#) of the
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View the Summit presentation at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sl8RerCw-Zw>

Abstract

From concert seasons 2016 through 2019, Professor Benom Plumb conducted field research in concert merchandise sales at Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Morrison, Colorado. During that time, Plumb was Assistant Professor – Clinical Track in The University of Colorado Denver’s music business program. As a member of the merchandise venue staff contracted by Aramark Corp., Professor Plumb worked in the trenches handling concert merchandise for artists including Billie Eilish, Halsey, Twenty One Pilots, Nine Inch Nails, Queens of the Stone Age, Florence and The Machine, Kacey Musgraves, Tom Petty, Chance The Rapper, Widespread Panic, Diana Ross, Tenacious D, Illenium, Ben Harper, Modest Mouse, One Republic, Jason Isbell, Greta Van Fleet, Imagine Dragons, The 1975, Joe Bonamassa, Avett Bros, LCD Soundsystem, Eric Church, Old Crow Medicine Show, Paramore, 311, Atmosphere, Prophets of Rage, Tom Morello, and many others.

Providing a glimpse into the pre-pandemic concert merch business, “A Day In The Life: Team Merch At Red Rocks!” is a fun, humorous and educational field guide for students wanting to enter the touring and concert merchandise areas of the music business. The paper is presented as taught to Music Industry Studies majors at The University of the Pacific in Plumb’s course “Follow The Money,” a revenue streams and quantitative analysis of the music business. The presentation covers areas including show merchandise advancing, concert and merch terminology, merch inventory items, proper concert merchandise buying etiquette for fans, financial merch sales forecasting, standard merch vending protocols, and completing concert merchandise settlements separate from concert promoter ticket sale settlements.

Keywords: music merchandising, concert merchandise, merch, Red Rocks, music business education

Preamble

This research is a glimpse into the pre-pandemic concert merchandise business at Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Morrison, Colorado, U.S.A. It serves not only as a historical record of a vital revenue stream of the music industry—but also as a Red Rocks field guide for students wanting to enter the touring and live concert sector of the music business, as well as touring teams and patrons visiting Red Rocks.

The Red Rocks merchandise field guide is based on the author’s own “10 Rules of Merch” which covers essential venue knowledge and preparation, merchandise sales arrangements, commissions, financial sales forecasting, concert and merchandise terminology, merchandise product analysis, buying etiquette for concert goers, vending protocols and procedures, and concert merchandise financial settlements.

Explicit Content Warning

Some concert merchandise examples provided in the research may be considered offensive to certain audiences.

Research Limitations

The research is limited in scope to retail “venue-sales” of artist concert merchandise sold at Red Rocks Amphitheatre. The research presented herein does not include income/expense analysis from the artist and touring team perspective. All of the research and information is based on years of direct clinical field research at Red Rocks by the author, which primarily served to inform the author’s teaching.

Introduction

Through the entire 2016–2019 concert seasons at Red Rocks Amphitheatre, the author was a full-time Clinical Track professor also known as a “Professor of Practice.” This research project was a rewarding way to become immersed in the live concert and touring industry, as well as the Denver music scene and music industry community. Music Business majors benefited first and foremost from this research, especially when the data was fresh after a concert. In fact, students and alumni became part of the research as ticketed concert fans, production managers, artist managers, and even performers! Some students were also hired on the Red Rocks merchandise team after graduating.

Recognition and Thanks

The research presented in this paper would not be possible without the assistance and guidance of Kevin Sarg, Red Rocks Merchandise Manager from 2015 through 2019. The information herein is true and factual derived from the author's direct fieldwork. This information is further verified, complete, and accurate from in-person, unpublished interviews with Kevin Sarg from concert seasons 2016 through 2019 at Red Rocks Amphitheatre. The author recognizes and gives a special thanks to Kevin Sarg for his gracious time and expertise to ensure this research is complete, accurate, and furthermore, discreet in regards to protecting any artist's confidential and sensitive information.¹

Notable Former Student Mentions

The author would also like to recognize and thank former students for their contributions to the research. The first notable student mention is Maddie Casey, who referred the author for this research opportunity at Red Rocks in 2016. Maddie's work with the author in the concert merchandise business and her referral for this research opportunity made all of this possible.

Finally, the author would like to recognize the achievements of former student, Donnie Miller, aka Decadon. Decadon performed at Red Rocks on October 4, 2019 as an opening act for an EDM concert. The author was fortunate enough to work for Decadon at this show, selling his merchandise to concert goers.² It's not every day a professor gets to work merchandise sales for a former student performing at a world-class Amphitheatre. This was indeed, one of the highlights of the fieldwork.

Back in Time: Merch Highlights of Notable Red Rocks Concerts

Though the author did not work every concert at Red Rocks during the years 2016–2019, there were many concerts that were excellent for sampling merchandise data, trends, and patterns. Among the many concerts where the research data was collected and analyzed (though not an exhaustive list) are:

Nine Inch Nails, Queens of the Stone Age, Florence and The Machine, Kacey Musgraves, Miranda Lambert, Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, Weezer, Yo-Yo Ma, Diana Ross, Tenacious D, Illenium, Big Gigantic, Ben Harper, Leon Bridges, OneRepublic, Jason Isbell, Lyle Lovett, Gov't Mule, Flight of the Concorde, Steve Miller Band, Greta Van Fleet, Widespread Panic, Brit Floyd, Imagine Dragons, Joe Bonamassa, Avett Brothers, NeedtoBreathe, LCD Soundsystem, Old Crow Medicine Show, Parmore, 311, Atmosphere, Tech-9, and many others.

Beginning in 2019 and going back in time to the 2016 season, the following are some highlights of notable concert merchandise examples within the sample set:

Billie Eilish³ – June 5, 2019

Hottest selling merchandise items:

- \$75 Hoodies
- \$60 Long Sleeve Tees
- \$40 Tour Tees
- \$30 "Money" bucket hat

Halsey⁴ – July 30, 2018

Hottest selling merchandise item:

- \$35 Tour Tees

Notable low selling/unpopular merchandise item:

- \$100 Yellow Jean Jackets

Chance The Rapper⁵ – May 2 & 3, 2017

Hottest selling merchandise item:

- \$40 Tour Tees

Prophets of Rage⁶ – September 7, 2016

Hottest selling merchandise item:

- \$30 Tour Tees

Notable low selling/unpopular merchandise item:

- \$25 "Make America Rage Again" Red Trump Parody Hat

Eric Church⁷ – August 9 & 10, 2016

Hottest selling merchandise items:

- \$35 Tour Tees
- \$5 Foam Middle Fingers that read, "Eric F***** Church"

Notable merchandise items unavailable:

- No Eric Church "Boot Store" due to selling space limitations.

Twenty One Pilots⁸ – July 12 & 13, 2016

Hottest selling merchandise items:

- \$30 Tie-Dye Tees
- \$100 Ukulele

Modest Mouse⁹ – June 29, 2016

Hottest selling merchandise items:

- \$30 "Bison" Tee
- Multiple Vinyl Records at \$25 and \$30 (The Modest Mouse "Record Store")

The 10 Rules of Merch: #1 – Know Your Venue

It is critical that every artist, touring team, and merch-buying fan understand the layout of the venue and that venue's special characteristics and history. This is especially true for a famous outdoor mountain amphitheatre such as Red Rocks.

Capacity and History

Red Rocks has an official capacity of approximately 9,500 (9,545 to be exact).¹⁰ However, a typical “sell-out” crowd might be approximately 9,000 (depending on the specifics of ticketing set by the concert promoter).¹¹ For example, sometimes concert promoters will not count every available seat toward the sell-out number, due to things like production requirements and/or “kills” (seats that are unavailable for ticketed seating).¹²

The venue is owned, operated, and managed by the City of Denver Arts & Venues¹³ and is open year-round as a park to the public with various trails surrounding the venue grounds across over 730 acres.¹⁴ Though officially dedicated in 1941, the site where Red Rocks Amphitheatre resides has been sacred to Native Americans for ages—in particular the Ute tribe, and others.¹⁵ In fact, some artists would begin the concert evening with a ceremonial blessing by local tribes as a sign of respect and reverence for the ancient and holy Native American site.¹⁶

The venue has virtual acoustic perfection between the three main rocks that border the seating and stage: “Stage Rock” (directly behind the stage), “Creation Rock” (stage right) and “Ship Rock” (stage left).¹⁷ See Figure 1.

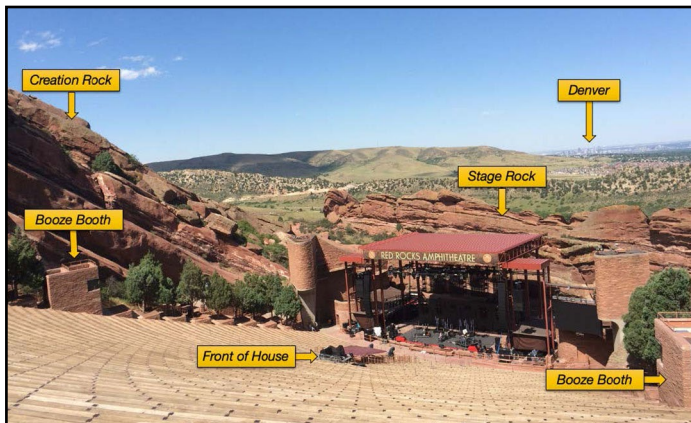


Figure 1. “Sound Check at Red Rocks” Photo Credit: Author, 2016. Note “Booze Booths” do not sell concert merchandise.

As of the writing of this paper (June 2021), COVID restrictions have been lifted and Red Rocks reopened at full capacity on June 21, 2021.¹⁸

Venue Location, Management, and Staffing

Red Rocks is located within the City of Morrison¹⁹ (Jefferson County, Colorado) and The City of Morrison does benefit from the sales tax generated at Red Rocks (4.5% in the 2019 concert season).²⁰ However, Jefferson County has authority over curfew and noise levels.²¹ For example, artists may be fined in the thousands or tens of thousands of dollars for performing past curfew and exceeding noise limitations (curfew is typically around midnight).²² One

example is the EDM artist Bassnectar who was effectively banned from the venue after a show in 2014 for causing excessive noise and later in 2016, causing some Denver-area residents to mistake the EDM concert for an earthquake.²³

A “Neutral” Venue: Concerts, Concessions, and Merch Sales Outsourced

Because the City of Denver maintains the venue and surrounding area as a park, the city must rent out the venue to the primary concert promoters AEG Live and Live Nation.²⁴ This arrangement makes Red Rocks a “neutral venue”. Neutral venue is important concert business terminology because it denotes separate ownership from both major concert promoters. This requires both major promoters to share the concert calendar and holding dates for future artist shows (known as “holds”). The food, beverage, and merchandise vending has been contracted and outsourced by the City of Denver to Aramark Corporation.²⁵ Aramark then staffs the merchandise and concession operations for all shows while under contract with the city.

Fly Dates

AEG and Live Nation have holds on the concert calendar for years in advance.²⁶ Instead of the concert date being directly on an artist’s tour route, sometimes artists must fly into Denver from across the country to perform at Red Rocks in between concert dates elsewhere in the United States. This is referred to as a “fly date”²⁷ and it makes booking a Red Rocks date for the artist’s booking agent a jigsaw puzzle inside of a Rubik’s Cube. The fly date typically requires the artist have a small “skeleton touring team” (usually consisting of just the artist and their tour management). This means shipping in all of the concert merchandise to the venue via FedEx or UPS.

The touring team and management may coordinate remotely with the Red Rocks merch staff for inventory counts and the final settlement. Sometimes when working an artist’s fly date our team rarely interacted with the artist’s touring team except by email and phone. Otherwise, if the concert is not a fly date the tour caravan parks the semi-trucks at the trucking docks near the bottom of the mountain just outside the venue, and the merchandise is shuttled backstage for load-in and setup.

Banned Concert Merchandise

No Glass, No Stickers, No Face Masks

A few things that make Red Rocks unique in regards to this area of research is the fact that artists performing at Red Rocks are not permitted to sell certain merchandise items. In particular, the merchandise manager will notify all touring teams that Red Rocks is a “No Glass” and “No Stickers” venue.²⁸

The reason these items are not permitted is quite simple. For “No Glass,” inebriated concert goers in the past have

thrown glass bottles at the artist on stage or broken glass endangering the other patrons around them.²⁹ In regards to “No Stickers,” this is also because inebriated concert goers have in the past, stuck the stickers onto the rocks that are a protected geologic site of interest.³⁰ The layers of red sandstone at Red Rocks are ancient ocean floors, beaches, and other sediments from millions of years ago which have remained a major site of geologic interest to scientists and tourists alike.³¹

Finally, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is notable to mention that before 2020, all face masks were banned from the venue due to “security” reasons surrounding face identification.³² As of this writing in June 2021, the face mask requirements have been lifted but the venue now recommends face masks be worn for safety in crowded areas.³³ An example of this banned item pre-2020 was the Alison Wonderland EDM show on August 10, 2019.³⁴ The author worked this concert and for unknown reasons, the venue relaxed the face mask restriction and allowed the artist to sell a black face mask that had the phrase “F*** ME UP” on the front (Figure 2).



Figure 2. An omen of things to come from an EDM concert in 2019. Photo credit: Kenny McClean, “EDM, Don’t Ever Change”.

Surprisingly, many fans purchased this five-dollar item even though the world had not yet heard of the COVID-19 virus.

Weather and Altitude

As some may be aware, the weather in Colorado can be unpredictable and this is especially true in the mountain environment of Red Rocks. It’s important for anyone visiting and working at the venue to pack rain gear, water, and layers to be ready for any change in the weather. It often rains at

the venue due to powerful storms (sometimes not predicted in the local forecast) that roll in over the foothills and Mount Morrison to the immediate west of the venue.³⁵ The bottom areas of the venue have experienced flash flooding in the past, so beware during heavy rainstorms. Red Rocks also sits approximately 6,400 feet above sea level³⁶ and it is a hike virtually anywhere in the venue. Some people visiting the venue get altitude sickness and require constant hydration, oxygen, and a slower adjustment to the altitude.

However, due to this unpredictable weather at Red Rocks, there is such a thing as good merch in bad weather. Hoodies, windbreakers, rain jackets and long-sleeved shirts can sell like gangbusters with an ill-prepared audience. Many touring teams that know the venue well, gamble on these merchandise items hoping for some inclement weather (but not a concert cancellation). The tour will order the Red Rocks concert inventory weeks or months in advance anticipating it may rain or get cold the night of their concert.³⁷

Location of Merchandise Booths:

Clam Shell and Plaza Merch

As previously mentioned in the Figure 1 caption, there is a difference between the booths that sell alcohol, food, and the artist’s concert merchandise. At Red Rocks there are two primary locations to purchase concert merchandise—the South Gate “Clam Shell” and the Top/North Gate “Plaza Merch”³⁸ (Figure 3). What’s important to mention about these locations is the distance and elevation change between them, in addition to the percentage of sales occurring at both locations. The Clam Shell at the South Gate is located at the bottom southernmost point of the venue, nearest the majority of parking lots. This south location accounts for about 2/3^{rds} to 3/4^{ths} of the general admission tickets that enter and exit the venue, and therefore generally accounts for about the same 2/3^{rds} to 3/4^{ths} of all the concert merchandise sales.³⁹

The Plaza Merch booth near the North or Top Gate is located at the very top plaza of the venue and requires many stairs to reach from inside the Amphitheatre. Only about a quarter to a third of the patrons who enter and exit Red Rocks come through the North or Top Gate, and therefore, this booth may handle less in merchandise sales.⁴⁰ During most shows, the Plaza Merch booth will close down when the headlining act goes on in order to consolidate the unsold merch with the merchandise at the Clam Shell. This allows for more inventory during the final walkout at the end of the night, as well as a faster count out of the remaining unsold inventory.

It is important to note that separate counts were not made between Clam Shell and Plaza Merch. All inventory counted in was completed at one time, in one location—then split 25% up to 50% of different merch items (depending on the

show) to be sold at the Plaza Merch booth. This split of inventory is then added back into the Clam Shell inventory for final count out at the end of the night.⁴¹

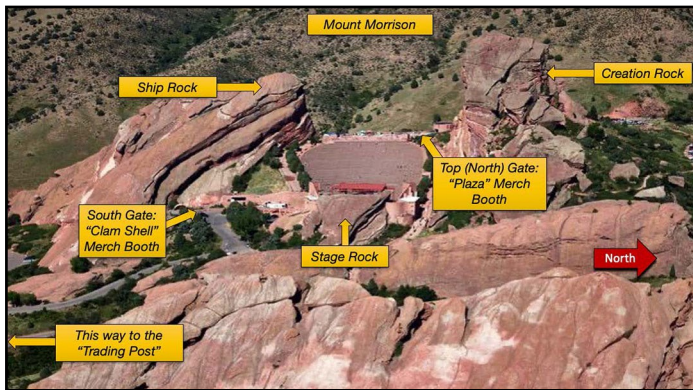


Figure 3. Aerial view of the Red Rocks Amphitheatre. Photo credit: Carol M. Highsmith. U.S. Library of Congress. Edited by the author. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017885537/>.

The 10 Rules of Merch: #2 – Know Your Deal A Venue Sales Merch Arrangement⁴²

Red Rocks is a venue-based or “venue sales” team. This means the merchandise staff does not tour with the artist but works “for the house” (the venue) on behalf of the artist. The artist team does not staff merchandise operations or handle the financial transactions the night of the concert. These rights are “surrendered” with the merch by the artist while on the venue premises. In exchange for servicing the merchandise operations for the artist, the venue takes a commission of the night’s sales.

Advancing the Show⁴³

The venue merchandise manager overseeing all operations, staffing, and settlement usually receives information regarding each concert from the artist’s representative weeks, days, or sometimes hours in advance—sometimes not at all. It all depends on the artist and how lazy or diligent their team is. This vital information provides the venue with day-of-show contacts, artist representatives, the artist’s “per head” dollar figure in projected sales (past sales analytics comparable to the venue capacity), inventory items and amounts of each, pricing, how many boxes are being trucked or flown in, shipping information via UPS or FedEx, and anything else necessary day-of-show to run merch operations smoothly. All of this is known as “advancing the show” to the merchandise venue staff.⁴⁴

The show advancing usually consists of emails back and forth or a few phone calls between the venue merchandise manager and the artist representatives. The artist representatives could be the tour manager, the tour merchandise manager, a merchandising company representative, the personal manager, a friend of the artist, or in some instances—the

artist themselves. If it is the artist, this is for opening acts, never the main headliner.

The Per Head Merch Figure⁴⁸

In the most professional and helpful advance information, the artist representative will provide the venue with a “per head” dollar amount they anticipate for sales. This per head number is the average dollar amount each ticket holder is expected to spend on merchandise at the concert. For this number to be accurate, it requires the artist team to conduct a detailed financial analysis of past merch sales at comparable-sized venues. This figure will typically also reveal crowd buying habits. It is stated as a basic division and averaging mathematical equation:

$$\text{Gross Merch Sales} \div \text{Attendance} = \text{Merch Per Head } \$ \text{ Figure}$$

This can also be stated as a simple multiplication equation:

$$\text{Merch Per Head } \$ \text{ Figure} \times \text{Attendance} = \text{Gross Merch Sales}$$

This per head number is necessary for the venue’s management to plan staffing and sales forecasting so the venue-based team can adequately handle the workload for the concert. Before 2020, most one-night sellout shows would average eight to twelve dollars per head, while others broke records of up to twenty-five dollars!

A per head comparison of a typical Red Rocks show versus a record-breaking Red Rocks show during the 2016-2019 seasons would look something like this:

Typical Red Rocks Show

$$\begin{aligned} & \$9 \text{ per head} \times 9,000 \text{ attendance} \\ & = \$81,000 \text{ in Gross Merch Sales} \end{aligned}$$

Record-Breaking Red Rocks Show

$$\begin{aligned} & \$25 \text{ per head} \times 9,000 \text{ attendance} \\ & = \$225,000 \text{ in Gross Merch Sales} \end{aligned}$$

To staff a show, the venue-based merchandise team could typically handle approximately ten to twenty thousand dollars in transactions per staff member, depending on experience level. In the record-breaking example above, our team staffed that show with fourteen vendors and four merch booths instead of the usual two. Two extra merch booths were added, one near the stage and one in the parking lot before the venue opened.

The 10 Rules of Merch: #3 – Don’t Inflate the Per Head⁴⁵

It is important to note however that many artist representatives inaccurately estimate the per head number or just calculate it incorrectly. The most common reasons for an inaccurate per head figure might be one or a combination of the following reasons:

1. The artist’s team is inexperienced and on an emotional high due to being booked at Red Rocks,

- so they “shoot for the moon”.
2. The artist team has a big ego and quotes the per head based on pride and “buzz”—not factual financial data.
 3. The artist representative used the sellout capacity of previous venues—not the attendance number of the artist’s shows.
 4. The artist representative calculated the per head figure from old tour data, not current tour data.
 5. The artist representative calculated the per head figure from incomparable venue sizes or has never played Red Rocks before.

In these situations, the artist representative will typically require the venue staff to count in more inventory than is needed for the evening. This is proven when the unsold inventory numbers at the end of the night are fairly close to the same inventory numbers counted in before the show began.

There have been concerts where our team boxed and shipped out about as many boxes as were shipped in. This requires laborious extra work on the part of the venue staff to box and ship the unsold merch for very low commissions.

The 10 Rules of Merch: #4 – Know Your Commission

Revenue Splits: Soft Merch vs. Hard Merch⁴⁶

The general merchandise revenue split as of the 2019 concert season, was 75/25 in the artist’s favor for “soft” merchandise, and 90/10 in the artist’s favor for “hard” merchandise. Soft merch is understood to be clothing and apparel, along with other accessories, concert posters, and trinkets. Hard merch is understood to be any media, vinyl records, CDs, and tapes (yes, we sold CDs, tapes, and DVDs at some shows). Some artists receive more favorable terms depending on their leverage in negotiations with the concert promoters, but in general, commissions were never higher than twenty-five percent for soft merchandise and ten percent for hard merchandise.

The 10 Rules of Merch: #5 – Know Your Product, Know Your Audience

Red Rocks fans have come to expect special and scarce merchandise items—the Colorado live concert equivalent to the current NFT (non-fungible token) frenzy. In particular, fans want Red Rocks event posters and Red Rocks event T-shirts for that particular evening virtually more than anything else. For example, Widespread Panic is considered the “poster crowd” and fans will ask for the poster by graphic artist name.

When the author was selling event posters at Widespread Panic shows, the fans might ask for the “Lucchesi” to indi-

cate the poster designed by J.T. Lucchesi, or for the “Sperry” to indicate the event poster designed by Chuck Sperry. It is interesting to note that some fans would become irritated and upset if the merchandise vendor didn’t understand what was meant by the barking out of a one-word order of just “Lucchesi!” or “Sperry!”.

Also, it’s important to realize that some fans are very astute to concert merchandise product lines and manufacturers. It was not uncommon to receive questions from savvy merch fans like, “Is that concert T-shirt a Bella Canvas or Gilden?” “Is it 100% cotton?” or “Is it poly-blend?”. In addition to this, Red Rocks fans appreciated vinyl records and certain crowds were excited to purchase vinyl at the show. Generally, CDs and tapes did not sell well, even with a Baby Boomer crowd. It is wise for merchandise vendors working on behalf of a new touring artist every night to be a quick study on the product line before selling. It also makes the job easier once you understand the culture, behavior, and buying habits of each artist’s crowd.

Each crowd is unique and has its own culture. For example, most metal shows had very kind and merch-buying savvy crowds. The metal fans were particularly polite, waiting patiently in line and were very decisive about their orders, allowing for more pleasant interactions and higher volumes of sales than when working with an unruly and indecisive crowd. On the contrary, EDM and country crowds were among the most rude and chaotic of fans to sell merch to. It wasn’t uncommon at some EDM or country shows for a fight to break out somewhere in the venue, either near or within earshot of a merch booth. During one Global Dance Festival concert at Red Rocks, a fight broke out at the merch booth and the police had to use pepper spray to disrupt the melee, causing the merchandise vendors to abandon their post in the process!⁴⁷ The EDM shows in Colorado also made it very easy to sell hoodies and long-sleeved shirts when the weather got cold. Many of the young EDM fans were hardly clothed and were happy to spend sixty dollars or more on a hoodie to keep warm.

The 10 Rules of Merch: #6 – Know Merch Buying Etiquette

Important Tips for Concert Goers

It is clear from this field research that some concert goers are more experienced and well-versed in buying merchandise than others. Here are some helpful tips for future concert goers, wherever they may be attending a show:

- The venue-based staff cannot make more merch, that is not within their power or resources. All merch is provided by the artist on the day of the show. Please do not ask the vendors to “just make more” or to “check the back”. If they had more of a sold-out

item, they would sell it!

- The venue-based staff cannot hold the purchased merch for patrons. It is the buyer's responsibility to keep up with their own purchases.
- Waiting one's turn and not cutting in line still applies in adulthood at concerts.
- Vendors can, and do, refuse service if deemed necessary. Especially in instances of threatening or extremely rude behavior.
- All sales are final. Swapping or trading merch items for something of equal or higher value and paying the difference is always allowed, but refunds are rare (if allowed by the artist team at all).⁴⁸
- Depending on experience level, merchandise vendors cannot compute more than one or two orders at once. Please be patient and allow the vendor to accurately complete and calculate each order.
- Having some self-awareness is important in the merch buying process. How fans buy concert merchandise often reflects on their character, personality, and relationship dynamics.
- Saying "please" and "thank you," waiting patiently, paying in cash, and tipping always gives concert fans the "Gold Star" in merch buying etiquette. Take a cue from those Metalheads!

Do Not Ask These Frequently Asked Questions

For the less-experienced concert goer, it's important to mention questions not to ask when buying concert merchandise. The following is a list of frequently-asked, inexperienced questions from fans and the likely answer from a tired and overworked merchandise vendor:

Q: Will it shrink?

A: That depends on how you do your laundry.

Q: What size am I?

A: I don't know, what size do you normally wear?

Q: Can I get that one?

A: Which one? The shirts on the board are numbered, please give me a number.

Q: Can you give me a discount?

A: No, the artist sets the price. If I give you a discount it comes out of my pay.

Q: Why don't you sell food and booze at the merch booth!?

A: Because that is a recipe for chaos and disaster.

The 10 Rules of Merch: #7 – Know Your Vendor's Work Day

The venue-based merch crew is typically one of the first to arrive before the show and one of the last to leave the venue after the show is over. A typical clock-in time is between 12:30pm and 2:30pm, with clocking out between

1:00am and 2:00am. The job is for night owls only. If someone has worked long shifts in bartending or in high-paced sales, they will fit right in with the Red Rocks merch staff. The worker must be prepared for heavy lifting and good old fashioned grunt work, as there are numerous boxes of merchandise.

At Red Rocks, it's also a good idea to pretend one is camping out—pack plenty of water, food, layers, and rain gear. The merchandise vendor will be on their feet all day and night, so be prepared for long hours (and some muscle aches and pains). Finally, to bring goodwill and camaraderie to the Red Rocks team, it is always a good idea to bring snacks for the entire merch crew and to swap shows when a co-worker needs a night off.

The 10 Rules of Merch: #8 – Know Your Math and Dozens⁴⁹

As mentioned in Merch Rule #7, the job is fast-paced, high-volume sales. It requires quick and accurate money math. Every vendor should keep a calculator at hand to double check every sale so that the settlement amount doesn't come up short at the end of the night (more on shortages later). Prices are in increments of five dollars and it's very possible to sell an item for the wrong price when there is a hectic crowd. Slowing down and counting accurately is the key to success.

During the count in before the show and the count out after the show, one should know how to count by dozens quickly up to at least 120. For inventory counts, the merch team organizes the counts by style and size in stacks of dozens up to ten dozen high.

After the inventory numbers are confirmed, the shirts are then organized into plastic bins by style and size. The merchandise staff will then organize and pin one of each item to Styrofoam boards and display for fans to see. Each board will contain a number for each item and its price on yellow laminated cards. The headlining artist receives priority for space, sometimes referred to as "real estate", on the merch board. See the Weezer example in Figure 4.

Most merchandise from the U.S. will arrive in dozens but

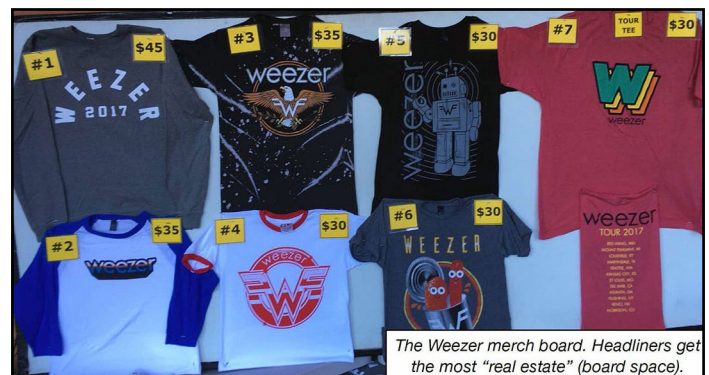


Figure 4. Merch board.

nized and counted the same way as counted in. One team member who writes legibly will take down the remaining numbers for input onto the settlement's Excel spreadsheet and relay these numbers to the merchandise manager. The venue's merchandise manager then compares the amount on the spreadsheet to the total amount collected in cash and credit card receipts. If there is a shortage, as mentioned in Merch Rule #8, that shortage is deducted from the venue's commissioned share—not from the artist share of merchandise revenue.

Once the final numbers are conferred with the artist representative and any partial cash payouts are paid, two merch team members will load the boxed unsold merchandise onto the artist's tour buses or trucks, or prepare those boxes

for shipping with UPS or FedEx. The venue merchandise manager then completes payroll for the staff from a small portion of the venue's overall commission, which is prorated across all workers into an hourly dollar figure. The venue's merch staff is typically paid one to two weeks after the show is worked.

When all of this is completed, the merch staff can clock out and go home, again, typically in the early morning hours after midnight. The Excel document shown in Figure 5 is a sample of a soft merchandise settlement spreadsheet based on the 75/25 revenue split for a hypothetical artist we'll call "Alpha Artist". Figure 6 provides an example of an Excel sheet showing concert merchandise sales with a per-head calculation.

Calculating Red Rocks Concert Merchandise Sales via Excel (with Per-Head Example)

Consigned Inventory Control Sheet		Date: _____		Pre-2020 Alpha Artist	
Sample "Alpha Artist" Soft Merch Settlement Spreadsheet		Artist Merchandising Inc. _____		Artist Rep _____	
		Venue Merch Manager _____			
ITEM	QTY REC'D	END COUNT	QTY. SOLD	SELLING PRICE	RETAIL SALES
Tee#1 - SM	233	95	138	\$35	\$4,830
MED	335	168	167	\$35	\$5,845
LG	195	86	109	\$35	\$3,815
XL	67	24	43	\$35	\$1,505
2XL	72	58	14	\$35	\$490
Longsleeve #1 - SM	72	0	72	\$50	\$3,600
MED	60	0	60	\$50	\$3,000
LG	60	0	60	\$50	\$3,000
XL	27	0	27	\$50	\$1,350
2XL	22	6	16	\$50	\$800
Longsleeve #2 - SM	212	135	77	\$50	\$3,850
MED	306	121	185	\$50	\$9,250
LG	110	69	41	\$50	\$2,050
XL	96	41	55	\$50	\$2,750
2XL	51	26	25	\$50	\$1,250
Cool Hoodie 1 - SM	144	1	143	\$65	\$9,295
MED	216	0	216	\$65	\$14,040
LG	144	0	144	\$65	\$9,360
XL	96	0	96	\$65	\$6,240
2XL	0	0	0	\$65	\$0
Tour Tee #1 - SM	312	93	219	\$35	\$7,665
MED	288	38	250	\$35	\$8,750
LG	216	52	164	\$35	\$5,740
XL	121	55	66	\$35	\$2,310
2XL	0	0	0	\$35	\$0
					SUM

Bottom of Spreadsheet

MAIL CHECK TO:			
Artist Merchandising Inc.		GROSS SALES: \$204,400.00	
PO Box 00000		LESS SALES TAX: \$8,801.91	
Los Angeles, CA 00000		NET SALES: \$195,598.09	
		LESS: Security \$1,380.00	
		LESS: Credit Card Fees \$7,711.15	
		LESS: Tent Expense	
		SUBTOTAL: \$186,506.94	
SPLIT %		VENUE SHARE: \$46,626.73	
25		CONSIGNOR SHARE: \$139,880.20	
75		LESS: Cash pay out	
		\$139,880.20	

\$204,400 / 9,000 attendance = \$22.71 "per head". Close to the record breaker, but not quite.

Figure 6. Merchandise sales with per head calculation.

The 10 Rules of Merch: #10 – Have Fun! You Work in Live Music!

Conclusion

Working within the live concert business is always full of adventure, excitement, and hands-on education. This author's primary expertise is in music publishing, music licensing, royalties, and copyright. Having the opportunity to study a new area of the music business through direct field research has been a very productive and fruitful endeavor professionally, as well as supporting and enhancing the education and professional opportunities for students.

The concluding evidence from this research is that concert merchandise is essential to the live music economy and furthermore plays an even larger role at a world-famous outdoor amphitheatre. Red Rocks is unlike any other outdoor music venue in the world and touring artists will undoubtedly earn lucrative revenue from concert merchandise there, if the right planning and merchandise products are available to the Red Rocks fans. A touring artist most certainly can't go wrong with selling limited inventory of their own special Red Rocks event shirts and event posters.

Though there can be frustrations and complications in any business, the hard work of providing fans with that meaningful memento of their concert experiences can be incredibly satisfying. Especially after experiencing the isolation and sadness of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is this author's belief that live concert merchandise will continue to be a major source of income for artists, as well as local venue economies. As we come out of the COVID pandemic restrictions, it is clear that fans want to attend concerts again. Concert merchandise is forever and indelibly tied to a fan's magical musical memory.

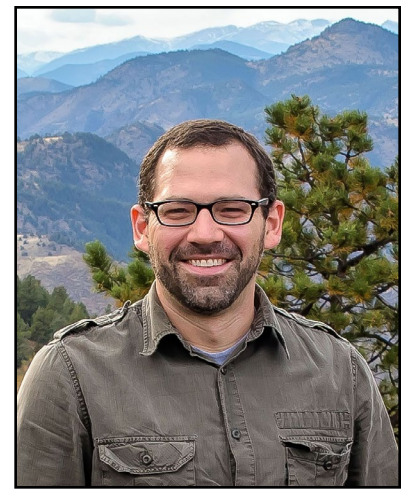
Finally, it is this author's ambition and hope to continue this merchandise research into the post-pandemic music industry economy and to one day use this paper as a basis for a book about concert merchandise that will incorporate research from the perspectives of sociology and perhaps even the psychology of concert fans.

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Benom Plumb has music and the music business in his genes as a great-nephew to the acclaimed A&R man, composer, arranger, and conductor, Neely Plumb ("Purple People Eater," "The Sound of Music," Jefferson Airplane, Etta James). Educator, songwriter, producer, and artist, Benom Plumb has been a professional in the music industry since 2006.

Plumb earned his BM at the University of Texas, Arlington, and his MM in Music Business at the Frost School of Music, University of Miami. Before joining University of the Pacific, Professor Plumb was Assistant Professor of Music Industry Studies at The University of Colorado, Denver. He has published articles about current music industry news for Denver-based music royalty marketplace, "Royalty Exchange," some of which have been cited in peer reviewed journals such as Yeshiva University's *Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal*. Plumb's article, *An Insider Weighs in on Bluewater's Spotify Lawsuit* received national attention when it was cited and shared to national audiences by David Israelite, President of the National Music Publishers Association.

From 2007 to 2012, Plumb was Vice President of Licensing at Bluewater Music in Nashville. Before that, he worked as an independent licensing consultant and working drummer. During his time at Bluewater Music, Plumb coordinated all television/film licensing efforts, signing new talent, pitching songs, finding publishing royalties, negotiating various business deals, and representing the company throughout the world at industry events.

His rock band "Professor Plumb" (formed in 2017) released two studio albums, *The Majic Twelve* (2018) and *20/20* (2020). Both albums contained original rock compositions written and produced by Plumb, who is a multi-instrumentalist on nearly every track. In April of 2020, Plumb debuted his solo electronic music project *The Jolly Backbeat* which combines various electronic and live instrumentalizations with pop/electronica influences.

Music-Centric Entertainment Zones in American Cities: An Evaluation and Geospatial Perspective

Stan Renard
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Storm Gloor
University of Colorado Denver

This paper was presented at the [2021 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association
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View the Summit presentation at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdKqwtD7SL8>

Abstract

This study aims to inventory, map, and better understand the informal and usually small-scale music-centric districts or entertainment zones which have developed in or near the downtowns of American cities. The current academic literature approaches entertainment zones as encompassing any forms of entertainment and has been the exclusive domain of the urban development or tourism fields of study. However, we were not able to identify any study that focuses on music-specific entertainment zones and its necessary association to the independent music venue ecosystem. Our dataset includes an inventory of 110 music-centric entertainment zones pulled from the web and the academic literature across twenty-seven states and fifty-four cities that accounts for 1,437 venues. Leveraging this dataset, we created a geographical distribution of the music-centric entertainment zones across the United States using Geographic Information System (GIS). Our main goal has been to identify the attributes of music-centric entertainment zones and assess their impact on residents and tourists. This study is interdisciplinary in nature and crosses over several branches of knowledge including cultural geography, music industry, urban development, and music tourism.

Keywords: music, entertainment zones, GIS, accessibility, music tourism, urban development, American cities



Stan Renard is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Music Marketing Program in the Department of Music at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is Director of the Arts Incubation Research Lab (AIR Lab), a National Endowment for the Arts Research Lab. The lab's research team studies the intersection of the arts, entrepreneurship, and innovation at its incubation stage with a research agenda that intends to understand the economic potential of artists as non-conventional entrepreneurs and the impact of the digital divide upon arts-based entrepreneurs. Dr. Renard is also Assistant Director of the start-up incubator CITE (Center of Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship). In addition, he is a touring and recording artist, and the founder and arranger of the Grammy-nominated Bohemian Quartet and Viatorium Music. Dr. Renard holds a Doctorate in Musical Arts (DMA) from the University of Connecticut as well as a Doctorate in International Business (DBA) from Southern New Hampshire University. Previously held collegiate appointments include Colby College, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the University of Connecticut Storrs, Providence College, Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern New Hampshire University, and the University of California at San Diego. Dr. Renard is a member

of the Yamaha Master Educator Collective, Music Business & Entrepreneurship Group.



Storm Gloor is an Associate Professor in the Music and Entertainment Industry Studies department of the College of Arts and Media at the University of Colorado Denver. He recently received the college's Excellence in Leadership and Service award. In 2018, he was the recipient of the university's Excellence In Teaching award. In 2014, professor Gloor developed and instructed what is thought to be the first Music Cities higher education course. Along with that course, Professor Gloor teaches Music Marketing and oversees the internships for the College of Arts & Media. As part of the First Year Experience program at CU Denver, he teaches a course on the Beatles. Professor Gloor is also a Faculty Fellow in the Center for Faculty Development, a past president of the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association, and serves as a city councilman for Glendale, Colorado. He has presented at numerous events and programs, including SXSW.edu, South By Southwest Music, the Music Cities Convention, the MEIEA Music Educators Summit, the Future of Music Summit, the Underground Music Showcase, the Denver Music Summit, and the EdMedia world conference. Gloor is a co-producer of the Amplify Music Conference and the Amplify Music Communities program series.

From Quality to Quantity: How Education, Creative, and Business Trends Influence a Lack of Black Bands Signed to Major Record Labels

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View the Summit presentation at:

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Abstract

The R&B landscape of the 1970s and 1980s prominently featured bands alongside solo artists and vocal groups. Parliament Funkadelic, Earth, Wind & Fire, The Gap Band, The Dazz Band, Kool & the Gang, Atlantic Starr, Sly and the Family Stone, Midnight Star, DeBarge, The Time, The Isley Brothers, Cameo, War, The Deele, Prince and the Revolution, and The Ohio Players were all constituted as bands that featured Black members or leads and performed traditionally Black music. It wasn't uncommon to find that some successful solo R&B artists originally started in bands, such as the cases when Lionel Richie emerged from The Commodores, and Philip Bailey recorded separately from the aforementioned Earth, Wind & Fire.

All of these bands recorded on major record labels at some point during their careers, with some even releasing records across multiple labels. Their collective radio and live performances imbued America, and the world, with the brilliance of musical collaboration and the genius of collective improvisation through jazz-infused funk and gospel-inspired R&B, the sounds of Blackness. A review of today's major record label rosters reveals that there are few Black bands currently being developed or promoted.

I will review and describe political, technology, and business trends and occurrences that have gradually steered recording artists, and labels alike, away from the band as artist concept. The reduction of arts education funding has resulted in fewer Black students having the opportunity to study traditional musical instruments that typically require lessons and ensemble practice. The proliferation and cost-effectiveness of music production technology has given rise to producer and DJ-oriented genres that don't en-

courage traditional collaborative performance. The lower costs of developing and promoting solo artists and vocal groups have prompted some labels to keep their rosters lean of bands in certain genres of music. The standard record contract provisions of artist and mechanical royalties provide little incentive to join or remain in a band once a singer attains modest levels of notoriety.

For the purposes of my research, I've defined a Black band as one that is comprised primarily of members who identify as Black or features a lead or leads who identify as Black. I defined a major label as one that receives top-line distribution of its releases through Warner Music Group, Sony Music, or Universal Music Group. The scope and findings of the presentation are not limited in terms of musical genre, but I pay particular attention to those genres which are currently most associated with Black artists, such as R&B and hip-hop.

Keywords: Black bands, Black music, major record labels, music promotion, artist development

Marcus Thomas is an educator and entertainment attorney who is also trained as a screenwriter and publicist. During his twenty-five-year career, he has maintained a boutique entertainment law practice and held several in-house positions with entertainment companies including a major record label, major-affiliated music publisher, and the nation's largest education music print publisher.

Thomas co-authored "The Commercial Music Industry in Atlanta and the State of Georgia – An Economic Impact



Study.” His study served as support for passing the Georgia Entertainment Industry Act of 2005. Thomas holds a Juris Doctor from Georgia State University, a Master of Fine Arts from Full Sail University, and a Master of Mass Communication from the University of Georgia.

Thomas serves as Associate Professor, Chair of Music Industry at the Hartt School, University of Hartford. He previously served as Associate Director of The Los Angeles Film School’s Entertainment Business program, where he was an instructor and faculty training developer for five and a half years. Thomas also served five years as Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Georgia State University’s Music Management program.

Designing Entertaining and Memorable Instructional Videos

Robert Willey
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWxZICg5QnU>

Abstract

The COVID pandemic was a catalyst to accelerate the shift to an increasingly online world, and the move to distance education provided an opportunity to develop video production and remote teaching skills. A paradigm shift is underway in the entertainment and education industries and we will probably continue to interact more over the network even after restrictions are lifted.

This presentation reports on a project to prepare videos for a music industry survey class in which tools from the entertainment industry were combined with self-regulated learning techniques. The goal was to get and maintain students' attention and to increase their understanding and retention of the information presented. This was done by making the videos more engaging sonically and visually, and by introducing and practicing study skills to help them become more aware of the learning process. Since this is a general education course and the majority of students are not music industry majors, it was felt that helping students becoming effective learners would be worthwhile and help develop a transferable skill for the future success of all students in a world of accelerating change.

A workflow for the video production process is presented, including the preparation of lectures, suggested equipment, configuration and setup of OBS Studio, transitions, variety of shots, sound effects, post-production editing, and file compression. It is important that this process be streamlined, since the longer it takes, the less likely professors are to have the time to do it in addition to everything else that they have to accomplish.

Our students are bombarded with an endless stream of short videos with a wide range of styles and content, and it may be fair to assume that they are not always eager to sit

through our presentations. In order to get and maintain their attention we must try extra hard to make them irresistible. Applying techniques from the entertainment industry can help make content more engaging, but it is not enough just to get students to watch if we want to achieve our course objectives. To have any lasting impact we want students to process key pieces of information and store it in memory in a way that will allow it to be recalled and applied in the future. Examples of videos made for this project are demonstrated in which a variety of learning techniques are applied, such as mind maps, knowledge surveys, confidence estimates, time projections, and memory recall. Going through the process will help students remember the information presented on copyright and publishing, but more importantly, learning about how to learn and retain information while studying these topics is likely to be of more value in the long run.

Keywords: distance education, learning, video production, attention, memory, Linda Nilson

Introduction

The move to distance education during the pandemic has provided an opportunity to develop video production and remote teaching skills. COVID has been a catalyst to accelerate the shift to an increasingly online world. A paradigm shift is underway in the entertainment and education industries and we will probably continue to interact more over the network even after restrictions are lifted. I decided to spend part of the year developing video production skills to use in online teaching and conferencing.

We have always wanted to engage students and help them to achieve course outcomes. We are now operating in an attention economy. In a world of continually shortening attention spans, our student customers are awash in a sea of content and messaging, and we may assume that many do not want to watch our video lectures. We must try as

hard as possible to make our content enjoyable and irresistible. They probably will never be as entertaining and fun to watch as social media, but on the other hand it can be more substantial and satisfying in the long term. Students will watch them if they are interesting and help them learn and achieve their goals.

There is little point in putting more effort into making better videos if students don't retain the information after watching them. The other side of this project was to incorporate pedagogical techniques to get students' attention, and to introduce learning techniques that students can use on their own in the future. Developing transferable skills and character strengths is something of value for the ninety-five percent of the students in the class who are not majors and are taking the class for general elective credit. The videos make the addressing of meta learning explicit, especially when we arrive at points in the course where information is presented that has been observed previously in lecture to be hard to grasp and retain, such as the bundle of rights covered by copyright, and publishing income streams.

Pedagogical Techniques

I applied many pedagogical suggestions gleaned from books by Linda Nilson. Before starting a new chapter, I conduct a "knowledge survey" and ask students what they already know about the content. This helps alert them to what is going to be important and get their subconscious preparing for it. Along the way we stop and they answer questions to apply new information or make lists of new facts. Nilson suggests asking students to make a "confidence estimate" where they rate how sure they are of their answers on a ten-point skill. We are all at risk of imagining that we know more about a subject than we really do, which reduces our disposition towards considering new information. As we discover during the presentation that follows what the real answers are to questions, and then review how sure we were of our previous answers, we may become humbled and more willing to consider what the presenter has to say. Blocks and entire lessons conclude with a "memory recall" where students answer more specific versions of the knowledge survey questions and summarize what they have learned. Nilson says that pulling information out of memory is a more efficient way to study than to review one's notes.

Outlines are provided in the form of mind maps, which Nilson says are more digestible since they are presented in graphical form.

Along the way, students are instructed to pause the presentation and apply what they have learned by making a start on homework assignments. Reference is made to material on Canvas where steps for assignments are broken down and models are presented of what finished assignments might look like (Figure 1).

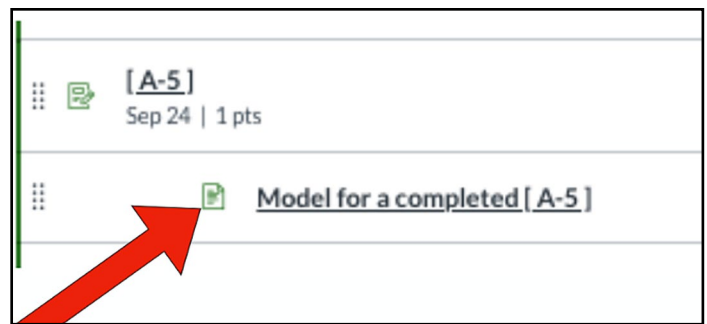


Figure 1. Linking to Canvas documents helps get students to take advantage of what's there.

The disadvantage for the teacher is that the appearance of the site may change between semesters and make it confusing for the student if you don't isolate these pointers from lecture content on topics that won't change as quickly, and that you don't want to have to redo each semester.

Students are incentivized to watch and pay attention to the videos if they see that it saves them time doing their assignments, which increases the value of the time and energy invested by the teacher in producing them.

Getting and Holding Attention

Conventional lengthy PowerPoint presentations no longer dazzle audiences and are not going to hold students' attention or inspire them to make the effort to absorb, remember, and apply information. Most recently the same dip in effectiveness of technology can be noticed in online meetings. While Zoom meetings were initially novel, the excitement quickly wore off, and engaging students in online lectures is a challenge, especially when they have an option of opening another window on their system and checking their email or social media. We need to be brief if we want to compete with TikTok and Instagram. Instead of complaining about students losing the power of concentration we can capitalize on their innate desire to get new information that could improve their lives or help them better understand the world. One advantage we have is that by making some effort to produce content, we can make our presentations more visually and sonically interesting than what students see when watching videos made by someone talking to their phone.

There are many techniques that we can apply from the entertainment industry, beginning with acting more like a performer: modulating our voices, gesticulating, incorporating humor and "bits". Music is a natural element to add in music business courses, and sound effects can be obtained from [freesound.org](https://www.freesound.org). Feedback was solicited from students, leading to a number of improvements, such as playing recorded audio at a lower volume level so it wasn't so startling compared with the speaker's voice. They also reported enjoying the changing backgrounds and visual variety.

I settled on a color palette and used yellow backgrounds

for knowledge surveys, salmon for memory recall, and blue for answers and review. I made a collection of small images that I used to indicate that students should stop to perform a knowledge survey (a diagram of an activated brain), answer questions (a highway worker with a “Stop!” sign), pull things from memory (Dumbledore pulling a thread out of his brain with his wand). Each of these elements had a corresponding sound effect (a “boing” to stop, a mysterious sound to retrieve a memory).

I used three types of shots: a close-up of just me talking, a midrange one with me overlapping the Keynote presentation (which I use on my Apple computer instead of PowerPoint), and a wide shot of just the presentation with no speaker. Shots were alternated every few minutes with crossfades between them.

Knowing that students are going to watch lectures on their phones makes it even more vital to be engaging, since we exist side-by-side all their favorite distractions. Delivery was designed for cell phones, and close-ups were favored in order to reveal facial expressions. Large fonts and few words were put on the presentation slides to improve readability on small screens.

Many students are getting used to fifteen-second chunks of TikTok videos. While we may resist reducing our teaching to sound bites, we can still divide them into segments, with each followed by questions to answer in a form or an activity to perform. I teach my students to include a call to action in their social media. I have taken to following my

own advice and giving viewers instructions of what they should do, while maintaining an intimate, conversational style.

Nilson asks students to make “time estimates” of how long they think it will take to complete an assignment and then to check how long it ends up taking. This encourages clearing the desk (or better, the room) of distractions to help become more efficient and accurate in planning and managing time.

I asked students to fill out a Google form about what they thought of the videos. Responses are automatically added to a spreadsheet (Figure 2). Their comments increased my confidence that I was taking the right approach.

Viewing stats can be checked to see what percentage of the students are watching the lecture videos (about 20%). I ask students whether videos are too long or not (no one said they are too short. In the self-reflection assignment at the end of the semester I asked which learning techniques they found most helpful. Responses include:

This class made me do and learn in ways that other classes have not ever before. A lot of the assignments in this class were connected, by using our memory or referring back to other chapters, and this made information stick in your mind more. The learning techniques were very thorough.

Timestamp	Which video are you	What did you find most interesting? What techniques are helping your learning process the most?	How do you feel about the length?	Any other comments or suggestions?
2/12/2021 12:2	Week 4 - branding	Walking through the steps of how to do the assignments	too long	The background noises to me were a little to loud.
2/16/2021 23:2	Week 4 - branding	I like that the PowerPoint was engaging with the different colors and picture examples.	about right	N/A
3/2/2021 23:45	Week 6 - copyright	I find that the length and sound effects make it easy to pay attention. The graphics are also useful.	about right	N/A
3/9/2021 15:02	Week 7 - publishing	Knowing more about publishing and how it really works	about right	None
3/9/2021 15:48	Week 2 - overview	I found it interesting that you added some humor to keep me engaged. Some techniques that are helping me is that you explain things every well.	about right	I think the videos are great!
3/16/2021 14:1	Week 8 - sampling	the interesting part was how common sampling was and how free you were to do it in comparison to today.	too long	
3/16/2021 17:3	Week 8 - sampling	the different samples	too long	more clarification I got lost because it was too long
4/6/2021 22:45	Week 7 - publishing	Online learning has been hard this year, but being able to watch lectures is very helpful in understanding the topics	about right	I like the green screen

Figure 2. Students are surveyed via a Google form to learn their reactions to the videos.

I have noticed I started doing some of the techniques now. The main one is seeing how long it will take you to complete. It hit me last week that I was doing it without even knowing. I started timing myself at work with some of the duties I do on a consistent basis to see if I could do them faster and better.

Setup

One of my goals this year was to create a small production studio for conferencing and recording lectures. I put up a green screen behind me and set up a couple of LED panels to provide even lighting. I got a ring light to put around my webcam, which was mounted on a tripod to make it easier to adjust the height. I used a lavalier microphone to get a clearer sound, which became the hardest thing to get used to. I invariably forgot it was clipped on my shirt and would walk away while still connected. Once it rubbed against my beard creating many weird sounds throughout the lecture. Another time my camera rotated slightly and picked up some of the background beyond the edge of my green screen, which then was projected over the Keynote slides. I was tempted to accept poor results due to technical problems, but in the end I accepted that I would have to redo them in order to follow the precept, “Do the right thing” since I knew I could do better and that it would improve the students’ experience.

The importance of doing sound and video checks and playing back the recordings was gradually learned after many failures of recording an entire lecture only to discover that the microphone input was not mixed properly with playback from the computer. It was also important to be periodically checking what my software, [OBS Studio](#), was recording as I lectured. I made checklists of how everything was configured since I only worked on video production once a week and would forget all the steps (and got tired of having to figure it out anew each time). It got easier and I became more efficient over time.

The hub of the system is the free software OBS Studio, which can be used to record and to stream. So far I have only used it to record, but in the future I plan on applying what I’ve learned to presenting live. One of OBS’s most powerful features is its ability to set up a variety of scenes with different combinations of windows and framings (Figure 3).

Once scenes have been created, hotkeys can be assigned to switch between them using keys on the computer rather than clicking with a mouse (Figure 4). I keep one hand on the number pad and the other on my mouse as I lecture so that I can switch between close-ups of me talking, to shots of me off to the side while overlapping the presentation, to the presentation occupying the entire screen. The software offers a choice of effects as the system transitions from one

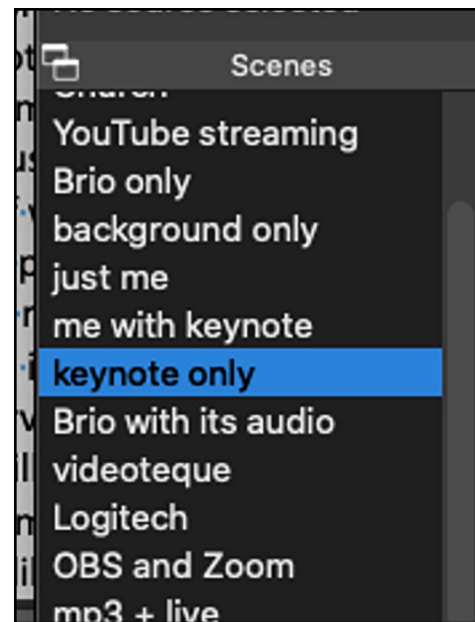


Figure 3. The scenes I have created for a variety of purposes. They are easy to setup and edit when your needs change.

scene to another (swipe, slide, stinger, fade to color, and luma wipe); the time it takes to make the effect change is also adjustable. The other hand operates the changing of slides in Keynote. If your computer is powerful enough (mine is not) you can use two monitors without encountering lagging—one for the presentation and the other for OBS. Use the lowest resolution that you actually need in order to reduce processor load. One reason that I went to a lavalier microphone was that my computer fan would kick on when the computer worked too hard. Since I couldn’t use two monitors, I made a small window for the presentation and another for OBS so that I could make sure I was staying in the frame (Figure 5).

I needed an audio interface for the lavalier microphone. To input from both it and computer audio on an Apple computer, I created a multi-output device in Audio MIDI setup and chose multi-output device as the output sound source in the sound preferences panel after downloading a free plugin called iShowU (Figure 6).

OBS’s advanced audio properties lets you have a single microphone come out of both speakers (Figure 7).

Workflow

Time is of the essence and we already have many demands on it. Part of the project was to develop a workflow that I could use to produce videos efficiently—otherwise I knew that I wouldn’t continue to consistently create them. Taking heed of Parkinson’s Law (that work expands to fill allotted time) I decided to allow a maximum time limit of two hours per week to script, record, upload, and integrate the content, and as I became more experienced gradually reduced that towards one hour.

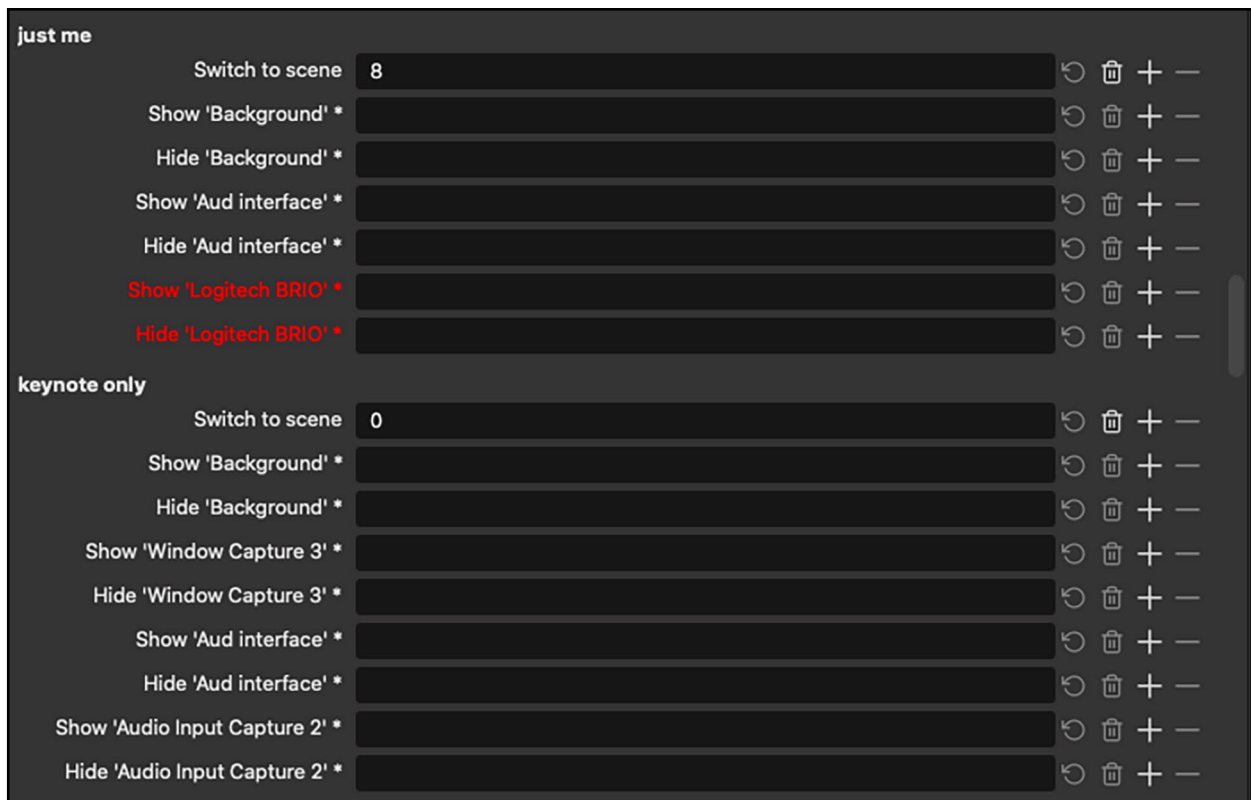


Figure 4. Setting up hotkeys. If I type on the “8” key it switches to a full screen of me talking; if I type a “0” the scene will switch to the presentation alone.

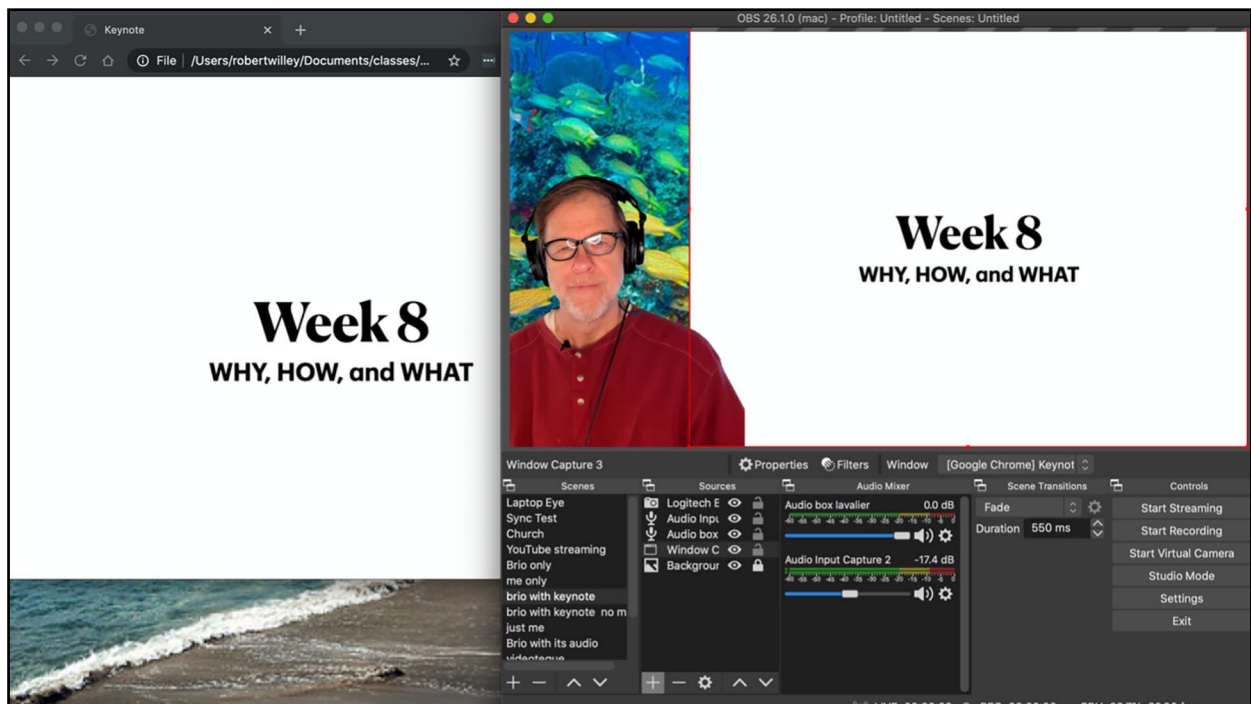


Figure 5. Keynote open in a browser window on the left, OBS on the right. I forgot to take my headphones off when recording this.

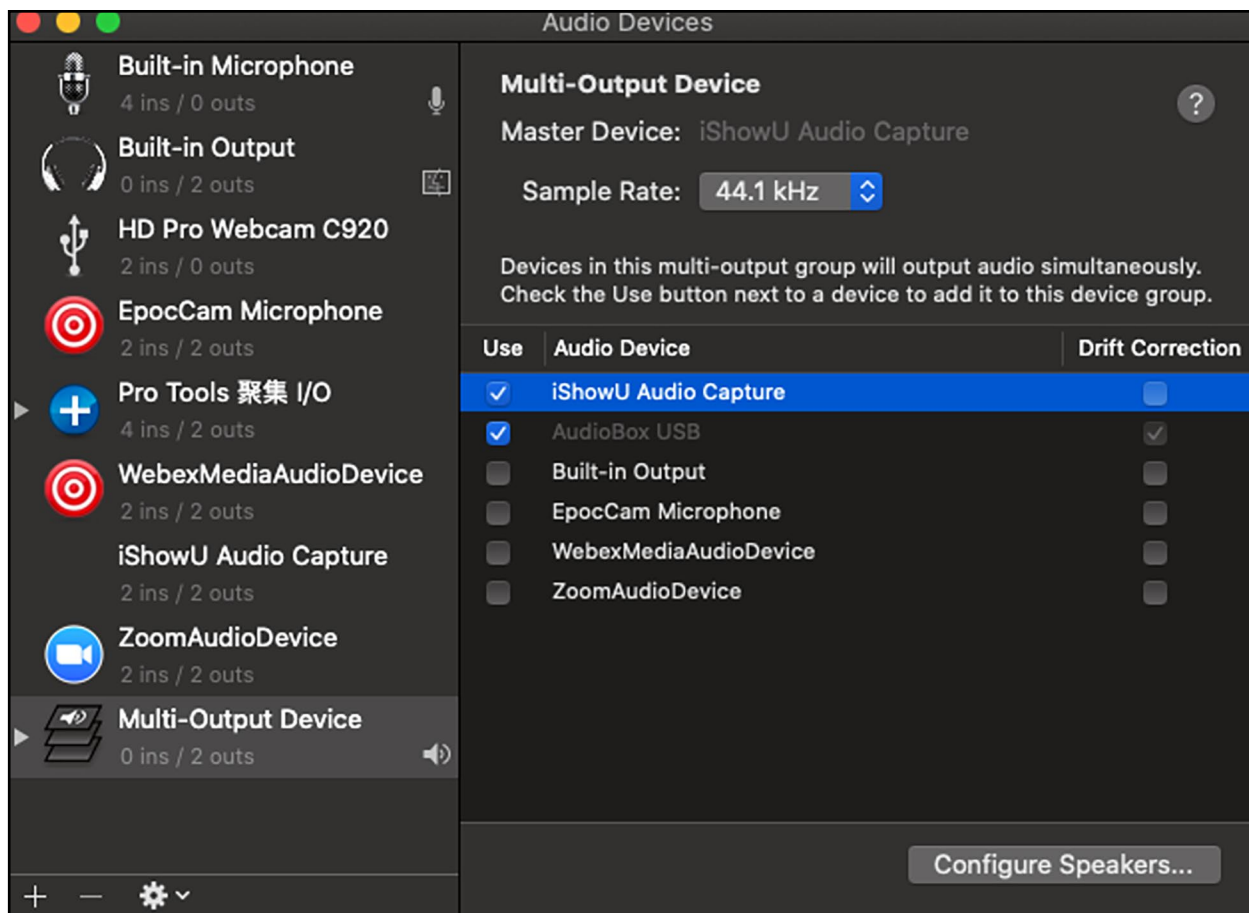


Figure 6. Audio MIDI setup.

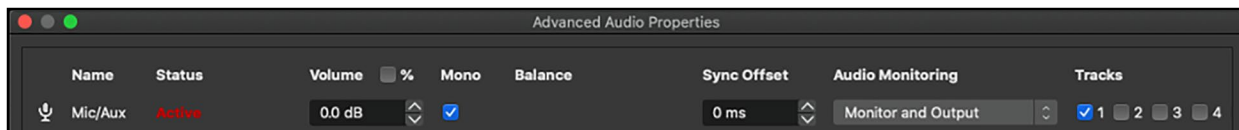


Figure 7. The mic has been set to mono. I can monitor it in my headphones while it is also being output to the recording.

The first thing I did was divide each week's content into a series of short videos rather than make one long one. Students prefer this since they can jump to the part they are most interested in and are less likely to get bored and quit watching. I made a short, casual video of what we were doing each week and why, and then made one or more intensely-produced ten- to fifteen-minute videos of the core content that I wanted them to focus on. I embedded signs of what we were going to cover, how it was going to help achieve course outcomes, and periodically where we were along the way. I hope that I will be able to reuse the content-heavy material in the future by keeping it independent of the semester's schedule and current assignments.

The next thing I did was to write concise presenter notes into the Keynote presentation to remind myself what I wanted to say for each slide. Unfortunately, the program does not let you display these while sharing the screen with OBS, but

it was still helpful to quickly review these prompts before recording in order to load them into short term memory. I found that by spending time organizing the presentation before starting the recording, there were fewer times I had to stop and repeat sections or edit them afterwards.

The main thing was to capture the presentation in as finished a form as possible in OBS so that once I was finished recording it wouldn't take a long time to post the material for students. I used the program [Camtasia](#) to edit the videos when necessary, and took the opportunity to adjust the volume level there if necessary so that it didn't play softer or louder than other videos students may be watching. Camtasia also has tools to create crossfades, wipes, zooms, and captions in case I wanted to tighten up the videos or if I thought of something vital that I hadn't said during the recording.

Once the videos were exported from Camtasia as local

.mp4 files, I compressed them with [HandBrake](#) (Figure 8) in order to reduce the size of the files, using a preset for videos optimized for YouTube with a resolution of 720p rather than 1020p, since my content isn't designed for 4K displays nor requires smooth motion. This reduces the time required to upload unnecessarily large video files to Mediasite (my institution's Canvas video host).

The final steps are to make sure that the uploaded videos are published and available for students to watch, and then to integrate the material into Canvas. It's important to frame it to be appealing, to make it clear what the video covers, why it is there, and what the benefits will be from watching it. If this is not done, the time and effort of making the videos are wasted, and students miss the opportunity to benefit from them. On a few occasions I didn't publish something or didn't make the link on Canvas viewable to students, and was dismayed to discover that students rarely let me know there was a problem, even though I referred to new videos in the weekly announcements.

Future Directions

I expect that with practice I will become better at streamlining the content in order to hold students' attention, leading them to develop a habit of watching it each week.

I will become more efficient the more I do it, making it easier to use the system whenever it seems like it would

benefit the course.

I have a teleprompter attachment for my tripod that projects the reflection of an iPad screen on a piece of glass that the camera shoots through. I may experiment in the future with writing out scripts for some pieces (like the teaser overview video for the class) that will then be auto-scrolled as I read in order to make the narration flow as smoothly as possible.

I want to intersperse active learning segments in my online teaching the same way I break up lectures in the classroom. The focus for the next round of development for this project will be to figure out a way to solicit answers from students during pauses in the video rather than trusting that they will stop and write things down in their notebooks.

Finally, I am also planning to create a video performance space at home, the way that I now have a setup for narration. Many of the same techniques and workflows discussed in this report will be useful in that environment.

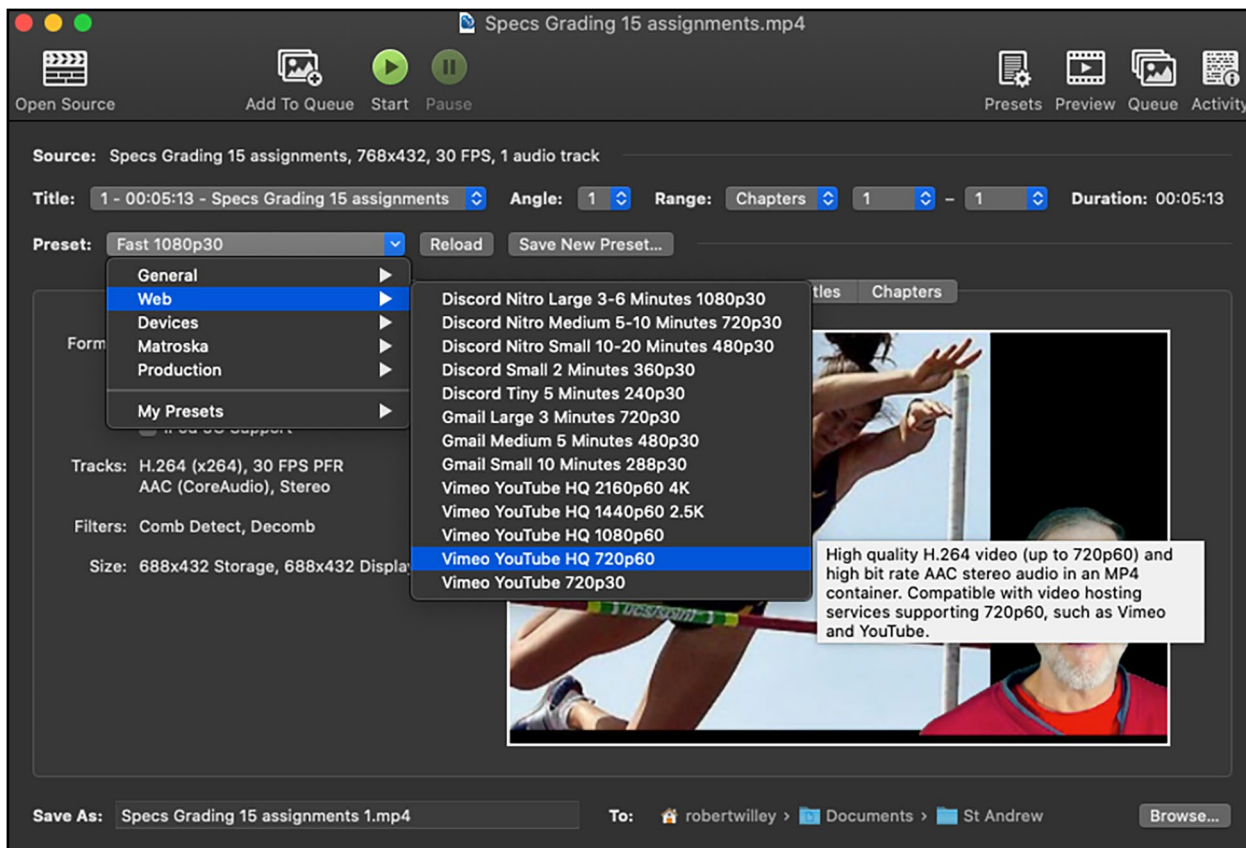


Figure 8. HandBrake is a free program used to compress files.

Resources

Video of 2021 MEIEA Summit presentation: <https://youtu.be/GWxZICg5QnU>.

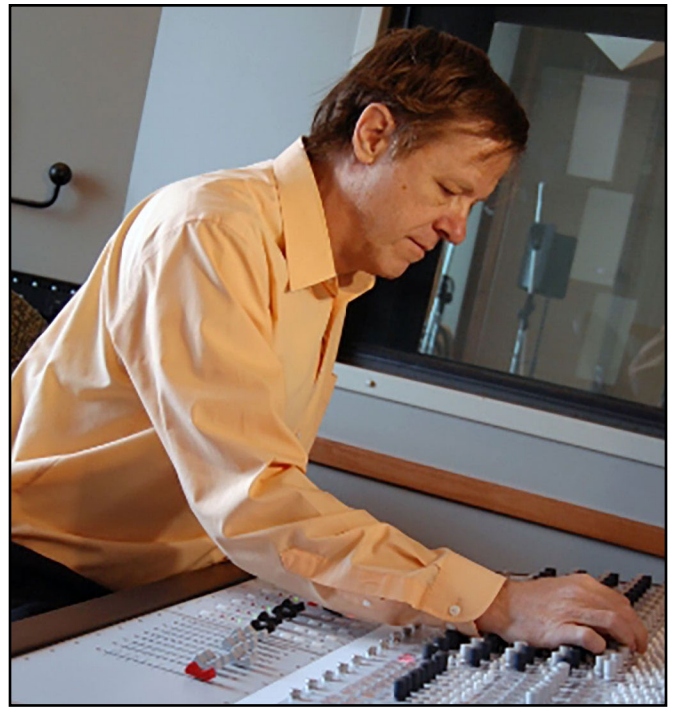
Panel discussion during the 2021 MEIEA Summit: https://youtu.be/OqoMyGB_bbs?t=1818.

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