

Connecting Artists to Fans: Concert Ticketing in the Digital Age

by

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Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	2
<i>I. The Ticket Company</i>	3
<i>A. The Ticket Company and The Consumer</i>	5
<i>B. The Ticket Company and The Artist</i>	7
<i>C. The Ticket Company and The Venue</i>	8
<i>II. Current Ticketing Scheme Analysis</i>	10
<i>III. Barriers To Access</i>	13
<i>A. Fees</i>	13
<i>B. Ticket Bots and Scalpers</i>	14
<i>IV. Solutions</i>	17
<i>A. Legal Route</i>	17
<i>B. New Business Models</i>	20
<i>V. Conclusion</i>	22

Introduction

Everyone wants to be a part of something. Whether that something is a concert, a musical, a movie, sporting event, there are fans out there who want to be a part of that experience. For many of these experiences, one must pay money to buy a ticket, and with that ticket, various doors are unlocked to the beholder. Fans all over the world go crazy just to obtain a ticket to attend an event that they desire. The goal of a concert is to connect the fans with the artist and the artist with the fans, face to face. However, there is more than what meets the eye when buying a ticket. In the past 60 years alone, the process of buying and exchanging tickets has drastically changed, in ways that serve as both an advantage and a disadvantage to the consumer.

This paper argues that when the artists, the venues, and the fans come together, concert tickets to become more accessible, thus making attending concerts more accessible for every fan and in turn, creates a greater connection with the artist and the venue as well. In order to do this, the four stakeholders, the fans, artist, venue, and the ticket company, must bridge the gap created by the ticket company's presence. Ticketing became much more complex once ticket companies came into the mix and started distributing tickets for the artists and venues. They serve as the middleman in a transaction between the venue and the artist and their fans. For this essay, a fan is anyone who buys a concert ticket with the intention of attending the concert to create a connection with the artist through music. Anyone who purchases a concert ticket with the intent of reselling it to make money is known as a ticket scalper. These tickets scalpers aid in creating one of the biggest disconnects between the fans, artists, venues and ticket companies. The ticket

companies have made multiple attempts over the years to prevent ticket scalpers and ticket bots from getting in the way of fans purchasing tickets, however they've have been more successful at preventing this recently. Finally, this paper will explore existing and potential solutions to these challenges, investigating various legal and business approaches to the problem.

I. The Ticket Company

Ticketing became much more complex once ticket companies came into the mix and started distributing tickets for the artist and venues. Ticket companies make the process of buying a ticket so much easier and simultaneously so much more complex. There are a plethora of ticket companies to analyze. To name a few, there is TicketFly, AEG, StubHub, SeatGeek, and most notably, Ticketmaster. In recent years, Ticketmaster, whose parent company is Live Nation, garnered a great deal of attention for not only being the most popular ticket company, but it is also believed by many artist, professionals, and even consumers that Ticketmaster is a monopoly. Monopoly is more than just a never ending board game that turns best friends into arch enemies. According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), they recognize the definition of Monopoly as “The antitrust laws prohibit conduct by a single firm that unreasonably restrains competition by creating or maintaining monopoly power.” The ticket company has gone to court on multiple occasions and has been investigated by the United States Supreme Court on the subject of being a monopoly, also known as an antitrust organization. In 1890, The United States Congress passed The Sherman Antitrust Act, which has served as the main basis for antitrust ever since. In this paper, we will discuss venues and artist who have spoken out against

Ticketmaster and Live Nation in what they claim as a disservice to the fans as well as their business rivals.

To understand the relationships ticket companies have with venues, artists, and the fans, it is important to understand the goals of each stakeholder and how each one functions with the other ones. Ticketing companies function as digital box offices. While most venues have physical box offices, where consumers may buy tickets, it is rare that the consumer does so. Selling tickets online and over the phone through ticket companies has eliminated traveling to the venue's box office for their consumers. These ticket companies make purchasing tickets simple. A consumer may access the website on their phone, let alone their computers, no matter where they may be in the world and purchase tickets to a concert. These ticket companies serve a middleman between the artist and the venue, who are teaming up to host the show. The fans purchase these tickets to attend the show and have a good night. As the middleman, the ticket company adds a service fee or a service charge to the tickets that they sell. Each ticket company splits the fees up differently, but the service fees cover a convenience fee, which the ticket company earns their profits from and a facility charge, which the consumers pay to the venue. The service fee frequently varies depending on the price of each show but many fans dislike this for a few reasons. For many years, service charges were hidden, and their value still remains somewhat unpredictable when consumers buy tickets today. There is no set value of a service charge, it depends on the price of the ticket and the show you are attending. When consumers purchase tickets, the price they first view normally does not include the service fee. The service fee does not appear until the consumer is purchasing the tickets in the check out menu of the website. This creates a misdirection in the actual price of the ticket, which is why many fans

dislike service charges. Venues like The Capitol Theatre promote the fact that if you buy the ticket at the box office, you can avoid paying the service fee. They can do that because when the consumers go to the box office to buy a ticket, they aren't using the online services of the ticket company.

An important question to ask here is "who exactly are selling these tickets?" Some of the most popular companies include Ticketmaster, Live Nation, AEG, TicketFly, and AXS, just to name a few. It is also important to realize Live Nation, while being its own ticket selling service, also owns Ticketmaster, and therefore the two together have a wide reach in control over venues and artist ticket sales throughout the world. It is for this reason, that there have been so many claims to the United States Supreme Court that Ticketmaster and Live Nation have a monopoly over the live concert ticket industry.

A. The Ticket Company and The Consumer

A ticket company's purpose is to sell tickets. The fan or consumers purpose is to obtain tickets. They strive to give consumers the best, easiest, and most authentic ticket buying experience. For example, Ticketmaster and Live Nation, both owned under Live Nation Entertainment, allow the consumer to view a map of the venue as well as a chart to give the consumer a visual of where the seats they are buying for an event are located. This creates a trust between the two parties. Depending on the venue, Ticketmaster even provides a digital rendering of what your view from the seat looks like facing towards the stage. Ticketmaster has also worked on various programs to further the relationship with the fans to make buying tickets easier for them and more trustworthy.

In 2017, Ticketmaster began a program called Verified Fan. The consumer signs up through Ticketmaster as a verified fan through the company's website. Once a member, they are entered in a lottery to receive a presale code for a ticket sale. This is typically done for shows that they know will be in high demand and are most likely sell out immediately. What this does is give their consumers a better chance at buying tickets because Ticketmaster is limiting their sales to only the people who are consumers. There are many programs out there that allows people to use a computer generated robot, or for short, a bot, to buy the tickets the second they go on sale so they can then scalp the tickets and resell them for more money than what they are worth. Verified fan helps eliminate this by sending a special code to the email address of the consumer where they then follow a link and type in that code on the website and they have access to buy the tickets. Other websites like TicketFly and AXS that are not as big as Ticketmaster will ask consumers to answer Google generated questions to prove that you are not a bot. These questions include "which images show a road sign" and it will have nine images on your screen and you have to click and submit the ones that have road signs in them. Another form that is often used is when the website asks a consumer to type in a group of letters that are all discolored and dischaped and are not always legible, however, this form of authentication is becoming more and more obsolete.

In 2003, a class action lawsuit known as *Schlesinger v. Ticketmaster* was filed. The lawsuit claimed that Ticketmaster failed to fully disclose information to their consumers regarding all aspects of their UPS fees and order processing fees. The lawsuit with Ticketmaster lasted for 10 years. The final verdict was Ticketmaster agreed to settle with Schlesinger, with the court granting final approval in February of 2015. In the settlement, all consumers who

purchased tickets between October 21, 1999 and February 27, 2013 would receive one discount voucher for every ticket that the consumer bought. The consumers were allowed to receive up to 17 vouchers. These vouchers granted them \$2.25 off of any future purchase until June 18, 2020. This case was one of the first to bring Ticketmaster to light in terms of hiding their service fees in the eyes of the consumers. This was a wake up call for Ticketmaster in the sense that they lost the trust of their consumers. Ever since they have been working hard to regain the trust of the ticket buyers. This forced them properly display the service fees to regain the consumers trust. (Victor, 2016).

B. The Ticket Company and The Artist

The relationship between ticket companies and artists has not always been positive, but it also has not been all negative. The artist goals are not as monetarily aligned as the ticket company. The artist strives to make a living playing music and creating a connection to their fans and playing the music they love. The ticket company just wants to make a profit off of those aspirations. This difference in goals can often create a rift between the two.

The journey of the artist on tour is a busy one. It is filled with constant traveling, soundchecking, preparing, and most importantly, performing the show. The ticket company allows the artist to focus on everything happening around them on show day, while ensuring the artist that their future shows are being promoted. The venue also helps in promoting future show.

Ticketmaster's relationship with artist isn't all bad. More recently, Ticketmaster has created a program called Artist Services. The services that Ticketmaster offer to artist include data on music and merchandise sales as well as other marketing services. What is nice about the

service is that Ticketmaster is known for working closely with venues to organize and promote shows, and since they are also involved with the artist through this program, it gives the artist an edge. Ticketmaster is also creating programs that grant fans access to a wide variety of shows and festivals. These two programs are called the Seasonal Lawn Pass and the Festival Passport. The programs are building upon the relationship of artists and fans, whether it's introducing the fans to new artist or allowing a fan access to an artist's concert that they wouldn't normally be able to have access for.

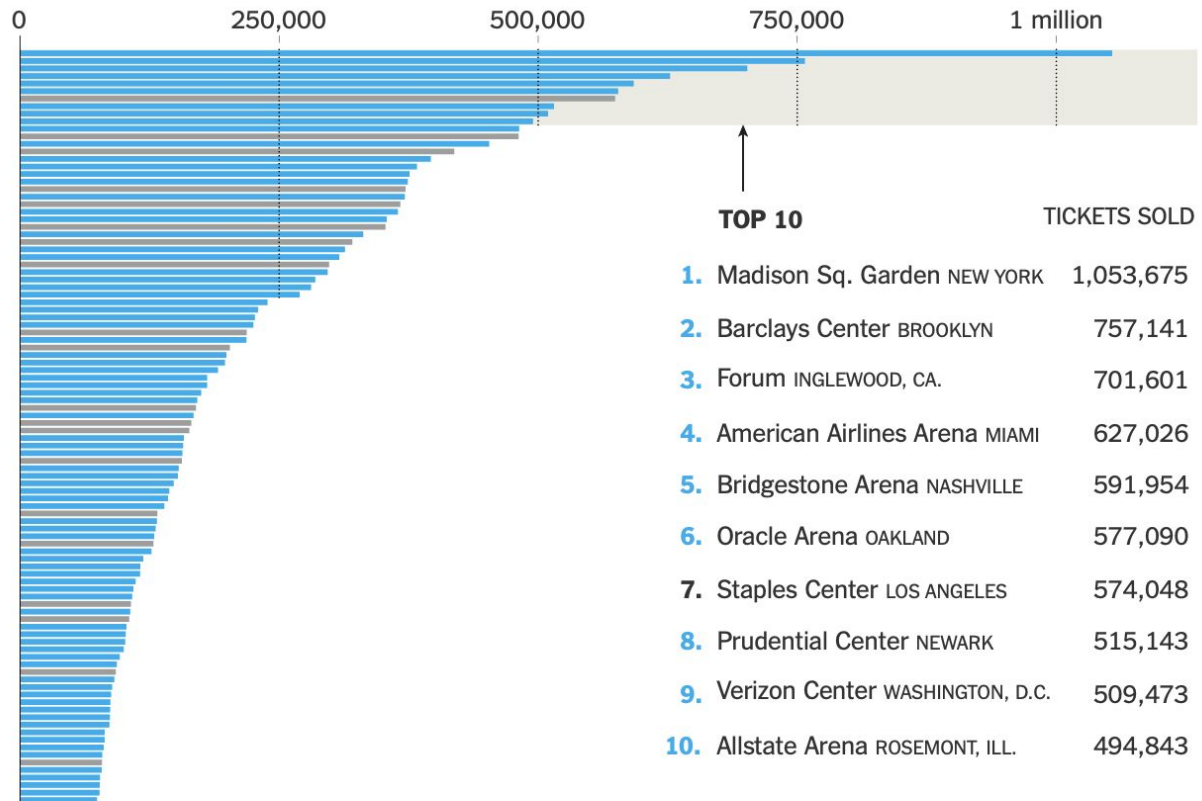
C. The Ticket Company and The Venue

An important part of a ticket companies business is through its relationship with the venues. These days, most venues will work jointly with one ticket company to sell tickets for all of the shows at the location. The venue and the ticket company agree on a contract to work together in order to promote the artist event to the fans at the venues specific location. While the ticket company focuses on promoting an artist entire tour on a national, sometimes global scale, the venue focuses on show promotion more locally. The venue is only interested in promoting the artists show at their venue because that's the show where they would make a profit.

According to the graph from *The New York Times* Article, "Live Nation Rules Music Ticketing, Some Say With Threats," only 20 of the top 100 concert arenas in the United States work with a ticket company that is not Ticketmaster, as of ticket sales in 2016. The Staples Center in Los Angeles, California is the only concert arena in the top 10 that does not work alongside Ticketmaster.

Top 100 U.S. Concert Arenas

By 2016 total tickets sold



By The New York Times | Sources: Pollstar; N.Y. Times reporting

As shown in the graph, Ticketmaster has a lot of control over large concert arenas. Ticketmaster's parent company, Live Nation, are being investigated by officials from the Department of Justice due to having serious accusations against them in the ticketing marketplace. According to the *The New York Times*, "They have been reviewing complaints that Live Nation, which manages 500 artists, including U2 and Miley Cyrus, has used its control over

Browning 10

concert tours to pressure venues into contracting with its subsidiary, Ticketmaster.”

Ticketmaster’s main competitor, AEG has told officials that many of the venues that they managed were poached by Ticketmaster and forced into contracts to ensure that they would book valuable and profitable shows at their venues.

In 2013, a venue in Gwinnett, Georgia called the Gwinnett Center, submitted a complaint to Ticketmaster. Around this time, the Gwinnett Center recently switch from using Ticketmaster as their main ticketing service to AEG. The rock band, Matchbox Twenty was using Ticketmaster to promote their tour. The tour was scheduled to take place at venues around Gwinnett Center. It was possible to have the tour make a stop at Gwinnett Center. Gwinnett Center’s talent buyer Dan Markham was concerned that Ticketmaster was punishing the venue for changing over to AEG, so he reached out to Live Nation to settle any issues. Live Nation’s response was that the issue was Gwinnett Center’s switch to AEG’s services and proved that they were being punished for the change in service. The following year, Ticketmaster cut the tours they would book through Gwinnett Center in half, bring it from four down to two. According to the New York Times, “Live Nation described the drop as a routine fluctuation. But Mr. Markham later said in an email that he had expected the drop-off because Live Nation ‘warned us that they would put us in a literal boycott.’”

II. Current Ticketing Scheme Analysis

Currently in the ticket industry, Ticketmaster is the most popular company based on the wide variety of concerts they promote. Even though Live Nation and Ticketmaster are viewed as a monopoly among its competitors, they have put in a lot of hard work to make the concert experience better for its fans. In the past couple of years, Ticketmaster's Verified Fan service has been a huge game changer in the sense that it gives fans a better chance of beating out bots and ticket scalpers to purchasing tickets before it is too late.

Even more recently, Live Nation's new Seasonal Lawn Pass is becoming very popular, due to it granting access to a wide variety of shows at venues that offer lawn access. Typically, amphitheaters, have lawn seating. Most amphitheaters are either outside venues or partially outside. They typically have a lawn section where fans can bring towels and lawn chairs to sit on the lawn overlooking the show. This pass would grant fans access to the General Admission (GA) lawn section of amphitheatres across the U.S. such as Connecticut's Xfinity Center, New Jersey's BB&T Pavilion, and the Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory in Irving, Texas. These theatres have lawn sections where fans can bring lawn chairs and sit towards the back and still be able to see the stage. This serves as a beneficial way for fans, artists, and venues to close the gap between each other, however, there are still some issues with this from the ticket company's perspective. Live Nation has permission to sell these passes for 29 venues throughout the United

Browning 12

States. That is 29 venues where most of the concerts (exceptions being third party events such as music festivals) are promoted and ticketed by Live Nation or Ticketmaster. A sale as such only feeds into the argument that Live Nation is a monopoly. In order for this pass to be worth the

\$249 that it costs, Live Nation has to guarantee at least five or six concerts (considering GA lawn tickets cost anywhere from \$30-\$50) and these lawns can fit extra fans into the venue therefore creating more revenue. The capacity at Xfinity Center in Hartford, Connecticut is 30,000 people. 7,500 of those people are attending the concert in the lawn section. With Live Nation doing most of the ticketing for 29 of the biggest outdoor venues as well as promoting these seasonal lawn passes, it is easy to see how they can be viewed as a monopoly. This program has the potential to encourage more venues to sign up with Ticketmaster and Live Nation, which would take away business from their competition. Maybe even too much business. These passes put them in a position where the venues want to sign up and do business with Live Nation because it will gain them a better reputation and garner more business between the fan and the venue once they are at the show.

In addition to Seasonal Lawn Passes, Live Nation also announced their plan to create a Festival Passport program. In this program, festival-goers will receive access to all the festivals that Live Nation sells tickets for. Music Festivals are events that host multiple artists in a span that last anywhere from a single day to a couple of weekends. They often host a large collection of artists to give them exposure to larger audiences. This program is useful because it will help fans who attend multiple music festivals save money and grant them access to a wider array of music festivals.

What makes the Seasonal Lawn Passes and the Festival Passport program so important that they benefit everyone in the long run. For fans, they gain access to a collection of shows, more than they probably would have planned to attend. On the artist side of things, these programs promote the discovery of new music. Chances are, if a fan buys a Seasonal Lawn Pass,

they won't know every artist whose playing the venue, however it gives them the opportunity to listen to the artist that they have never listened to before. Already having access to attend an artists show will encourage the fan to listen to their music, whether it means searching them on Spotify, Apple Music, Youtube, or even buying their CD's, and vinyl albums if they are available. It allows for the Season Lawn Pass and Festival Passport holders to become fans of more artists and to discover new music. As for the venues, these programs encourage more fans to attend these concerts.

III. Barriers To Access

A. Fees

Fees are one of the many issues that have created a distrust between the consumer and ticket companies. Many times, when the consumer is looking at a ticket company's website, the price shown is the face value of the ticket. This is the price of the ticket before the service charge and taxes are added on to it. Once the consumer adds the ticket to their cart and proceeds through checkout, the website will then show the consumer what charges are being added and how much extra it will cost them. The service fees often vary in price. This is due to the many specifications of each venues. Sometimes the ticket company will charge a cheaper service fee for a smaller venue because they do not have to invest as much money as they would for a larger venue. Typically, a service fee can go up to \$15 and even \$20.

The reason why many consumers dislike the service fee is that they see it as a sneaky, hidden fee that added on at the end of the consumers checkout. If it were shown when the

consumer was first looking for tickets, it would not be as much of a problem. The conflict occurs when the consumer reads that a ticket is \$30, and once they proceed to checkout, the price jumped from \$30 to \$45. If the ticket company's website were to advertise the tickets with the service fee already included, consumers would know the price right up front and it would create a stronger trust between them and the ticket companies. However, the ticket companies will likely never conform to that idea. One reason for this is that the service fees fluctuate, like tax fees. The other reason is that they ticket companies can advertise the tickets at a lower price, and the lower price will appeal to the consumers more so than the higher price.

B. Ticket Bots and Scalpers

One of the big issues with buying concert tickets online are the use of ticket bots and scalpers. Ticket bots are computer programs that buy large amounts of tickets for concerts and events at a rapid pace. The goal of the people using ticket bots is to buy large amounts of tickets and then resell them for a lot more money through secondary market sites like SeatGeek and StubHub. These people are known as ticket scalpers. Many states in the United States have made the use of ticket bots illegal, including New York, however that does not slow down ticket scalpers, who will skyrocket the the prices of tickets on the secondary market just to make a quick buck. In an episode of the podcast *All Things Considered* on NPR in 2016, reporter Jim Zarroli talked about how bot's function as well as how future laws will enforce a tighter restriction on ticket bots in the future. In regard to what bots can do, Zarroli stated, "These bots can bypass security systems that ticket sellers use - those little boxes that ask you to retype wavy letters or numbers. And when a concert venue limits the number of tickets you can buy, bots can

get around that as well. As a result, Schneiderman says they can buy up tickets before most fans even know they're on sale.” Zarroli utilized audio clips of quotes that New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman stated in a press conference where he informed his audience on how ticket bots work. Schneiderman said, “Some use rooms full of employees logging on to multiple computers using multiple credit cards to buy up tickets. But the more sophisticated ones are now using illegal software known as ticket bots.” In regard to the damage they do to actual people who want to buy tickets for the shows they want to attend, Schneiderman stated “It took a single bot just one minute to buy more than 1,000 tickets to a U2 concert last summer at Madison Square Garden. And there's just no way ordinary fans can compete with that.” Zarroli closes out his segment by saying “This business is enormously lucrative. One unlicensed vendor sold \$31 million worth of tickets on StubHub alone in 2013, netting a profit of \$16 million. Bots are illegal in New York State, and officials want ticket platforms to force vendors to comply with the law.” Zarroli also briefly talks about a great solution that could help aid in fairness of ticket resales as well as prevent ticket buyers from being ripped off by second hand sellers. “They also want them to take other steps like showing the face value of tickets being sold so customers get a better sense of how much they're being taken for.”

Despite doing everything they can to help the fans, Ticketmaster occasionally works against them. Recently, in an effort to combat ticket bots, Ticketmaster began analyzing their sales more closely and looking into accounts who bought large amounts of tickets for single shows. However, fans of Hootie and The Blowfish had some trouble accessing tickets for the band’s upcoming tour. Shortly after buying their tickets, Ticketmaster had sent some fans emails saying that their ticket purchases were cancelled and that their accounts was banned and their

tickets were voided. According to WHEC, they reported that plenty of fans of Hootie and The Blowfish received emails after buying tickets off of Ticketmaster that stated these users violated their terms of use. Ticketmaster stated that they saw large quantities of tickets being bought from the same IP Address. As the WHEC news team continued to do research, they learned Ticketmaster had thought these users had purchased up to 65 tickets. WHEC continued to work with Ticketmaster to get those fans their tickets back. After talking to Ticketmaster, WHEC reported, “At a recent ticket sale for a world famous singer, Ticketmaster said for every one real buyer there were 100 bots. Ticketmaster did not say the name of the artist.” Ticketmaster went on to say “it blocks billions of bot attempts per month.” (Brean, 2019).

Another issue with Ticketmaster that needs to be brought up is their Fan-To-Fan ticket resale program. While it is great to have a program where fans can sell official tickets bought through Ticketmaster in case something came up and they are not able to attend a concert, it also leads to many problems. This program enables scalpers to buy tickets and sell them for drastically high prices through Ticketmaster’s official website. What does not seem fair about this is how the reseller can choose the prices of the ticket. If Ticketmaster was really dedicated to halting the progress of scalpers, they would limit the prices that fans can resell their tickets for to face value, maybe slightly more depending on shipping or service fees. The point of Ticketmaster’s Fan-To-Fan ticket resale program is to eliminate ticket scalpers as well as create a safe trustworthy space for fans to buy verified tickets as opposed to sites like StubHub which is known for being consumed by ticket scalpers. StubHub is a website where you could sell fake tickets or even sell the same ticket multiple times and whoever uses it first gets access to the show. Like Ticketmaster, StubHub resellers can price the ticket for however much they want,

which is why it is popular among scalpers because they can resell tickets for high prices. If Ticketmaster is trying to compete with StubHub and scalpers, why are they allowing resale prices to continue at insane prices when they could easily start a cultural revolution throughout the entire ticket industry by limiting ticket resale prices?

Various artist and bands have voiced their dislike towards ticket bots and working with fans to get around ticket bots, such as Taylor Swift and Nine Inch Nails. For Swift's show in Ontario, Canada on her *Reputation* world tour, she and her team sought out to fight against ticket scalpers and to get ahead of them. They have begun conducting an experiment through Ticketmaster where they list their prices at higher prices. These higher prices are in the same ballpark as the prices ticket scalpers are selling their tickets for. Tickets for Swift's show on this tour ranged from around \$60 for nosebleed seats (seats very far away from the stage), all the way up to \$1,300 just to be next to the stage. By putting her tickets up to that price, her shows aren't selling out as fast, however, she still has fans purchasing tickets from a reliable source for the same amount of money as the scalpers. Even without selling out her shows, it has been reported by Pollstar that she has already doubled what she made from her *1989* tour in 2015. (Friend, 2018). 90's alternative rock band Nine Inch Nails have taken a different approach to fighting ticket bots by eliminating them out of the situation. For their 2018 tour, the band opted not to sell tickets online. This meant that fans had to wait outside the venue to buy tickets at the box office. By not selling tickets to the show online, this eliminated the opportunity for bots and scalpers to snag tickets to their show.

IV. Solutions

A. Legal Route

It's not always made public however, few bands have stood up to the ticket company reign on ticket prices. One of those is the 90's grunge rock band, Pearl Jam, who are known for hit songs like "Alive," "Even Flow," "Better Man" as well as their high energy and spontaneous live concerts.

Pearl Jam released their third album, *Vitalogy*, in 1994. The album was a huge success and many of their fans wanted to see them perform those songs live. The band was originally planning on touring around the United States until they realized Ticketmaster (who sold the tickets for most of the venues they were playing) were inflating the prices with the service fee. Pearl Jam cancelled their plans because they did not like that their fans would have to pay an \$18 concert ticket and then a service fee that sometimes reached another \$18 on top of the concert ticket price. Pearl Jam was approached by the Justice Department officials to testify against Ticketmaster. Pearl Jam filed an antitrust complaint against Ticketmaster which led to the Justice Department being able to launch a federal investigation. Pearl Jam went to the Supreme Court and claimed that Ticketmaster was abusing their marketplace dominance by charging and collecting on a expensive service fee and signing contracts with major concert venues, which left consumers and artists with no other option.

These contracts that Ticketmaster had been signing with major concert venues had left about half a dozen small regional companies to fight over 30 percent of the ticket sales marketplace while Ticketmaster owned 70. These exclusive contracts that Ticketmaster was signing with these concert venues were not publicly known until Pearl Jam took them to court.

The contract stated that if a venue signed exclusively with Ticketmaster, that they could receive 20% of what Ticketmaster makes off of that venue for the entire year, which could amount to \$500,000, but that is only if the venue chooses to use Ticketmaster exclusively. This contract would also affect the artists. If a band wanted to play a venue that was in an exclusive contract with Ticketmaster, the band would only be able to perform there if they agreed to let Ticketmaster sell the tickets for the show. Many venues even began to close their box offices because they were making more money on the services that Ticketmaster was charging the consumer. In turn, many box office employees lost their jobs just because they were liquidated by Ticketmaster. (Boehlert, 1995).

In June of 1994, Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard of Pearl Jam appeared before a Congressional subcommittee to talk about the concert ticketing industry. In the eyes of the media, the court case was reported as a novelty story. One of the most popular rock bands at the time was taking a stand against Ticketmaster in Washington D.C. The media did not do a good job portraying the claim that the band was trying to help consumers and informed them that they were being scammed. After the case was closed, Ticketmaster continued their reign over the marketplace while Pearl Jam did their best to continue touring while boycotting Ticketmaster venues. In the summer of 1995, Pearl Jam shows were often held in fairgrounds, soccer fields, and state parks. Many of the shows were cancelled due to downpouring and a show in San Diego was cancelled because a sheriff felt they did not have enough security for the concert. Another issue concertgoers faced when seeing a Pearl Jam show on this tour was that many people started selling counterfeit tickets, and many people who were expecting to see the show were not able attend. Pearl Jam's boycott on Ticketmaster lasted until 1998 when the band went on tour in

support of their album Yield. Since then, the band has performed in a number of Ticketmaster venues. In 2018, Pearl Jam worked together with Ticketmaster where they sold tickets to their seven show U.S. tour through Ticketmaster's Verified Fan service.

B. New Business Models

Some shows have become heavily in demand over the years. That is why artists such as Pearl Jam, Dave Matthews Band, Weezer, and Neil Young, to name a few, all have official fan clubs. These fan clubs are meant to give a better and a higher priority to large fans of the band who are willing to join one of the memberships, and through their subscription, they are greatly rewarded with plenty of perks. With a subscription to an artist fan club, one may receive plenty of special perks including special merchandise, special events, as well as special offers on tickets for the artists concert.

Over the course of his 55 plus year career, Neil Young has released over 40 albums, created a tech company called PonoMusic, and has performed with plenty of influential rock bands, such as Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young (CSNY), Buffalo Springfield, Crazy Horse, Pearl Jam, and Promise of The Real as well as perform hundreds, even thousands of concerts. In recent years, Young launched a website that serves as a home to his fan club entitled the Neil Young Archives (NYA). Through the website, subscribers can pay \$1.99 a month or \$19.99 a year to gain access Young's entire collection of music that he has released to the public as well as priority access to tickets sales before they are released to the public. NYA takes the old school dedication and puts it together with the modern trends of technology and subscription based services to give his fans a useful and interactive experience.

Neil Young, along with his current backing band, Promise of The Real, recently performed a pair of concerts at The Capitol Theatre on September 26 and 27, 2018. The shows were announced less than two weeks prior to the performance dates and the tickets were only for sale to members of the NYA. The shows were only announced to the NYA subscribers, The Capitol Theatre or TicketFly did not promote selling tickets to these shows through their website or by any other means of promotion. Everyone in the audience at these two sold out shows were all subscribers to the NYA and loyal fans of Neil Young.

What makes the artist fan club so instrumental to these artists, is that it allows them to connect to their fans without the ticket company getting in the way. They grant them access to special services, special sales on merchandise, and so much more. However, there isn't any venue working to close this gap. Venues utilize social media and interact with fans and create a presence that help promote their show and create a connection with an audience however, not much more than that. Although, what if a venue experimented in having a fan club? With all these artists creating fan clubs to connect with their fans, why can't the venues use the same method to create a connection with their fans?

For example, a venue like The Capitol Theatre wanted to start a fan club for their fans. They can email their fans who have subscribed to their email list and post about their new fan club option through social media. A few things that The Capitol Theatre could offer through their fan club is a free t-shirt for joining, first access to pre sales for upcoming shows, they could

allow their fans to skip to the front of the line and be the first ones to enter the venue once the doors open for shows, and they could give each member one free drink ticket per show. To join the fan club could be about \$15 or \$20 a year and the perks granted by this membership would be eligible for any show at The Capitol Theatre, unless stated otherwise. These ticket holders would still have to buy tickets, however they would receive ID Passes that they could show at the door to skip the line as well as use them at the box office to collect their drink tickets. A experimental move like this could help create a stronger bond with The Capitol Theatre's fanbase as well as aid in increasing the size of their audience for shows. Fans who join The Capitol Theatre's fan club would be more influenced to attend a show at The Capitol Theatre rather than one of their competitors like The Beacon Theatre in New York City because The Capitol Theatre is offering them more as a part of this fan club package. This would be a great way to create a connection and build upon a venues fan base without any issues from the ticket company. It also encourages the fan to not only be a fan of an artist but to take in the history and create a connection with the venue they are constantly attending shows at.

V. Conclusion

This paper presents an analysis of the current ticketing framework for live music events, highlighting the ways in which ticketing companies affect the experiences of not only the fans, but also the artists, and their interactions with the venue. While ticket companies are often vilified for rising hidden service fees, they provide a service to fans, artists, and venues that is often overlooked. Without ticket companies, the burden to promote a show would fall more heavily on the artist and the venue, and the convenience of a centralized ticketing mechanism

would make tickets less accessible to fans. However, as this paper has uncovered, the current ticketing framework is problematic. It poses barriers to access, particularly through the challenges presented by ticket bots and scalpers. Artists, venues, and ticket companies have sought to address these challenges through legal recourse, as well as innovative business models that seek to engage fans and connect them more closely to the artist. In addition, it may be possible to create programs that build loyalty between the venue and the fan, providing incentives for fans to attend multiple concerts in the same venue.

Ultimately, ticket companies must work to build trust with the consumer and show the value that they are providing. There has been various bumps in the road between the ticket companies and the consumer however, it is possible to build a stronger trust between the two of them, and this progress is already evident. Progress has been shown through the growing opportunities that the Seasonal Lawn Pass, the Festival Passport programs and further that Ticketmaster is providing. The big issue of trust that needs to be rectified is that ticket companies must eliminate the hiding of any service fee. By not adding it on at the end of checkout, the consumers can get a better sense of what the ticket they are buying cost. This would prevent the main distrust with the ticket companies. Once these gaps are bridged, the ticket companies will gain the trust of their consumers, and with that trust, more and more fans will attend the shows of their favorite artists at their favorite venues all of over the world.

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