Sustaining Live Music:

Generating an Impactful Experience On and Off the Stage

By

Julia Ceccato

Submitted to the Department of Arts Management

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Purchase College

State University of New York

May 2023

Sponsor: Maria Guralnik

Second Reader: Dawn Gibson-Brehon

Contents

“So, make the friendship bracelets, take the moment and taste it”

‘You’re on Your Own Kid’, Taylor Swift (2022)

Although I’ve attended a fair share of concerts over the years, one concert that transported me was a Harry Styles concert in August 2022. The show was in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and was Styles first in North America since November 2021 and his first show in Canada in four years due to cancellations from the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, the pandemic changed the trajectory of everyone's lives. Businesses were shut down and people were forced into social isolation. Concurrently, controversy around significant political, economic, and social issues came to their peak. As a result of the pandemic, tours were canceled, and artists were not allowed to perform their music for an audience. Artists began exploring streamed concerts for fans to watch at home and focused more on technologies that could ensure their presence and value.

Needless to say, many fans missed what they remembered from attending live concerts in person. The opportunity of being together, singing the songs and being included in sharing a long-awaited experience was something very special. Once the show started the anticipation never stopped. The fans did not know what to expect; what the first song was, what he was going to wear, and how the show was going to go. There was constant surprise. At the Styles show in the summer of 2022, it was easy to see that the artists appealed to all people. Whether it was young people looking for a great time, families looking for a family night, or older people looking for a fun date night, Styles puts on a show for everyone. It made the show inclusive and felt like people of any age could attend. At each show he makes it a point to interact with his fans; whether it's a little wave, a smile or talking to them because they brought a sign, Styles gives everyone a special experience. He makes a point to give thanks to the audience multiple times and will comfort the audience, so they know they are in a safe space. “We're going to do our absolute very best to make sure we put on a good show for you tonight. I ask of you only one thing, you have one job, and that is to have as much fun as you possibly can. If you want to sing, if you want to dance, please feel free to be whoever it is you’ve always wanted to be in this room.” (Harry Styles, Love on Tour Toronto Night 1, 2022). The anticipation and excitement of being surrounded by friends and other people who enjoy the same music made the Styles show I experiences in August 2022 feel like it went by in the blink of an eye, but also like it took forever by the time it ended.

The music industry, when looking at it as a whole, has taken part in shaping us into who we are today. Defined as the “production, distribution, and sale of music in a variety of forms”. A major aspect of the economy of the music industry also involves “the promotion of live musical performance.” (“Music Industry”). Although there is a rise of digital media in music, new generations of artists are finding it more important than ever to present their work in live settings to make a living. Going on tour throughout an artist’s career is essential for growing an audience and capturing the attention of a future target audience. Touring has become the largest income generator for artists throughout the years and is extremely competitive. It is usually easily accessible for more established, well-known artists. It is more difficult to play publicly when an artist is not as well known or does not have the proper expenses to be able to tour. When looking at the U.S. live concert industry as a whole, there have been many factors that have played a role in the demand for artists touring. Most recently, one of those factors that have made an impact was the Covid-19 pandemic. “The global concert business, which was poised for a record year when 2020 began, lost $9.7 billion in ticket sales alone, according to Pollstar, with another $30 billion lost in sponsorships, concessions, merchandise, and other ancillary factors.” (Blistein and Mill). Another factor is the expenses it takes to go on tour. It is important for an artist to deliver on stage because that is what captures the attention of audiences and what keeps them coming back for more.

Understanding the importance and tactics of live concert presentation and performance is essential to building a foundation for the career success of today's musicians and musical artists. The research and analysis that follows is intended to support emerging artists gain appreciation and strategic knowledge facilitating impactful on and off-stage concert experience. The beginning of this paper will take a historical look at the changing role and economic impact of live music performances. Through the analysis of the success of three diverse touring musical artists (Harry Styles, Olivia Rodrigo, and The 1975) we will draw some recommendations about key components memorable live concerts bring of use to a wide variety of artists, including those who don’t have the budget or management to tour. It is important to bring this topic to the forefront because emerging artists need to be able to support themselves. “... in an economy where experiences rather than products or services are offered for sale, the standard for arts organizations is raised significantly.” (Taylor 6)

The Live Concert Industry in the United States

According to Berklee College of Music, a touring musician is defined as an artist who "travel to different cities, countries, and sometimes around the world, to play their music to a new audience each night." ("Touring Musician"). Touring involves a lot of hard work, time, and commitment, where planning could take up to several weeks or months in advance of announcing the tour. From the start, it was very important for artists to rely on traditional record labels and record sales to make money. Artists later became dependent on revenue from licensing and streaming as it became more popular. As times have changed and the way the music industry has evolved, artists, including independent artists, have become the most dependent on touring and ticket revenues to make a profit.

Promotion and Record Sales

In the early 20th century artists began making a profit through their record sales. "In the pre-internet music industry, recorded music was the biggest of the three and the one that generated the most revenues." (Wikström). As digital music became available, sales of physical CD's and records began to decrease. In the chart below, it is evident that portable music became more popular with the decrease of vinyl sales. It should be noted that vinyl has made a comeback but is still not as popular as it once was. (see Figure 1 below)

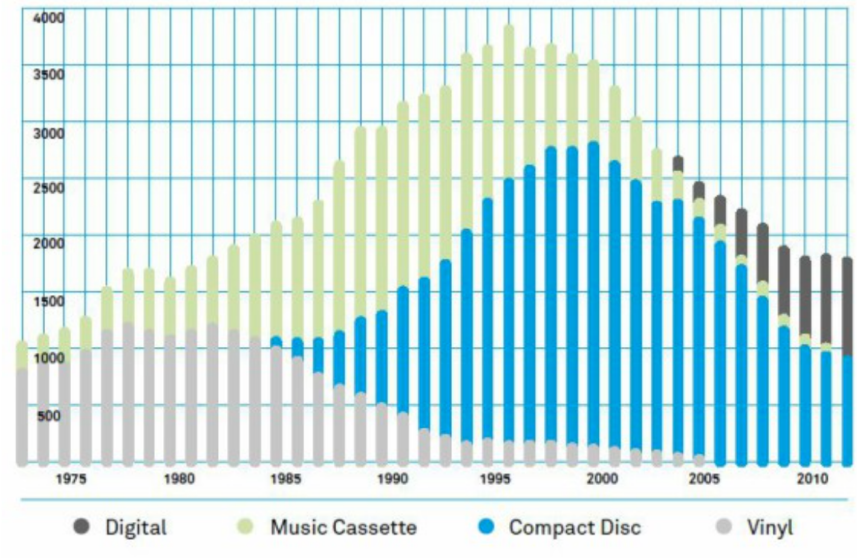

Fig. 1 *Recorded Music Volume*

Streaming Platforms and Music Licensing

Over the years as the internet has become more popular, streaming has become more popular, and therefore has become one of the leading ways artists have made money. The rise of digital recordings helped music to become more accessible and portable, allowing for digital download on MP3 players and other portable devices. This caused a direct decrease in physical record sales. According to RIAA, streaming has made up 83% of the total music industry revenue in 2020. Each stream pays very little, to the producing artist. However, when an artist is popular and at the top of their careers, it is easy for them to receive a lot of streams. ("New Report: How Music Powers the American Economy"). According to an article with Digital Music News "Approximately 7,500 artists - 0.09 percent of eight million on-platform creators - earn $100,000 per year or more on Spotify," says company higher-ups (Smith). The vast majority of content producers on this top platform do not make a livable wage through their recordings.

Economics of Live Concerts in the United States

In the 2018 article published by Business Insider, touring musician Zach Bellas says, "artists have always made the bulk of their money from live performances and touring". (Delfino). Revenues coming from touring can include merchandise sales, ticket sales, partnerships, etc. With the changing business model of recording in the digital age, artists have relied on the revenues from touring. As Michael Rapino, CEO of Live Nation Entertainment, stated in an article with Hollywood Reporter, "We need fresh acts to appeal to new generations." (Budnick). The emerging artists, or "fresh acts," need to be able to tour because they are the ones who will keep the touring industry going.

Although many Americans aren't aware, the commercial music industry factors into a major part of our lives, and therefore, our nation's economy. According to RIAA, "the music industry creates $170 billion in value annually to the U.S. GDP, supports 2.47 million jobs across a wide range of professions, and accounts for $9.08 billion in export sales." ("New Report: How Music Powers the American Economy"). Additionally, for every $1 the U.S. music industry generates in revenue, an additional $0.50 is made in the U.S. economy.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Live Concerts

Looking at data collected by Pollstar, Taylor Swift's *Reputation Stadium Tour* was the highest grossing tour in 2018, with a gross of $277.3 million (27 cities, 40 shows). However, looking at the data from 2019, The Rolling Stones grossed the largest amount with $177.8 million (14 cities, 16 shows) on their *No Filter* tour. In the comparison from 2018 and 2019, it is important to recognize that the Rolling Stones had a larger average ticket price, however, touring in 2019 was more in demand than ever, making ticket prices increase.

In 2019, other artists - who have released music and were planning to go on tour in the following months into 2020 - quickly realized that touring was not going to be possible when they wanted it to. This took a major hit on not only the artists, but on the music industry as a whole.

When it was announced that tours were being postponed and/or canceled at the beginning of the pandemic, the impact this would have on everyone in the industry was not taken into account. There was the halt of live performance, which is not only something artists relied on to make money, but also venues to keep afloat and for managers and crew members to make a living.

The majority of artists had taken breaks, but there were also artists who were looking into ways to perform despite the pandemic restrictions. There was an increase of streamed virtual concerts from some of the biggest names in music. "As the nation adjusts to the new reality of life under self-quarantine in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, a number of artists and musical institutions are taking the show online to share some musical joy during these trying times." ("Here Are All the Livestreams & Virtual Concerts to Watch during Coronavirus Crisis").

During the pandemic, venues took a huge hit from not having events to keep them afloat. While big venues like arenas and stadiums were not too badly affected, there were many independent venues across the U.S. that had to shut down permanently due to the pandemic. It was estimated that "90% of independent venue owners, promoters and bookers say that they will have to close permanently within the next few months, if they can't get an infusion of targeted government funding." (Tsioulcas).

Artist managers and crew members also took a financial hit when it came to the impact of the pandemic. As summarized in *COVID-19 Edition: The Brave New World of Artist Management*, "the artist managers' goal towards the artists remains the same, but now their approach is different,

and they need to be much more resourceful, informed, and have an understanding of this whole digital era." (Ideker). As for crew members, many ended up having to find second jobs outside the industry due to stoppage of touring work. As a result of this, Live Nation created a fund called The Crew Nation Fund with the aim to help touring crew members during the pandemic. Live Nation made the efforts in "reaching out to crew members from tours across the globe whose income has already been affected due to the cancellation or rescheduling of a Live Nation event…" (Kennelty).

Post-pandemic - Where are we now?

Going to a concert has become more popular than ever since shows have made a comeback after the pandemic. While it is great these shows are coming back and are in more demand than ever, it has been harder for artists to book venues to play at. Considering touring had to come to a complete stop in the beginning of 2020, it delayed artists touring their new music that was released throughout 2019. In 2021 artists started their tours up again with finally being able to perform their music and since artists are wanting to promote their music, it has become more competitive with scheduling. An article with Pitchfork lists the 43 most anticipated tours of Fall 2022. From The 1975 to Adele to Post Malone and Stevie Nicks, this article outlines all the artists of various popularity that are going on tour in the fall of 2022. (Arcand). Artists are booking these tours to make up for lost time, which has made it more competitive to those who don't have the advantage od an established reputation or other influence.

Looking at data from Pollstar in Figures 2 and 3 below, the jump in gross revenue from the number 1 spot in 2021 to the number 1 spot in 2022 shows a difference of $241 million.

2021 Year End POLLSTAR TOP 200 NORTH AMERICAN TOURS

	Gross/Millions	Artist	Average Ticket Price	Average Tickets	Total Tickets	Average Gross	Cities/Shows	Agency
1	$115.5	The Rolling Stones	$223.56	43,052	516,624	$9,624,849	11/12	Concerts West
2	$86.7	Harry Styles	$129.62	17,155	669,051	$2,223,692	30/39	Creative Artists Agency
3	$67.3	"The Hella Mega Tour"	$102.09	32,953	659,062	$3,364,342	20/20	Creative Artists Agency
4	$59.2	Eagles	$229.66	11,199	257,584	$2,572,053	12/23	Creative Artists Agency
5	$50.2	Dead & Company	$85.36	18,989	588,658	$1,620,862	25/31	WME
6	$49.7	Los Bukis	$138.99	39,705	357,343	$5,518,573	6/9	MNS2
7	$47.3	Guns N' Roses	$134.75	15,276	351,339	$2,058,329	21/23	United Talent Agency
8	$46.0	Dave Matthews Band	$78.78	14,229	583,399	$1,120,988	30/41	Wasserman Music
9	$44.4	Phish	$77.57	16,361	572,626	$1,269,127	18/35	Wasserman Music
10	$42.5	Jonas Brothers	$80.34	12,586	528,630	$1,011,193	40/42	United Talent Agency

Fig. 2 *2021 Year End Pollstar Top 200 North American Tours,* Pollstar


2022 YEAR END SPECIAL

Year-End POLLSTAR TOP200 NORTH AMERICAN TOURS

	Gross/Millions	Artist	Average Ticket Price	Average Tickets	Total Tickets	Average Gross	Cities/Shows	Agency
1	$356.5	Bad Bunny	$215.29	26,285	1,655,945	$5,658,872	43/63	United Talent Agency
2	$201.8	Elton John	$163.85	24,634	1,231,678	$4,036,102	38/50	The Howard Rose Agency
3	$177.4	Def Leppard / Mötley Crüe	$132.27	37,251	1,341,035	$4,927,218	35/36	Artist Group International
4	$160.4	Harry Styles	$196.24	17,392	817,435	$3,413,123	12/47	Creative Artists Agency
5	$135.3	Kenny Chesney	$104.36	31,612	1,296,079	$3,299,003	38/41	Wasserman Music
6	$124.5	The Weeknd	$145.88	47,404	853,272	$6,915,464	17/18	Creative Artists Agency
7	$121.5	Morgan Wallen	$129.80	14,855	935,845	$1,928,134	51/63	The Neal Agency
8	$112.8	Garth Brooks	$96.28	46,865	1,171,618	$4,511,904	17/25	WME
9	$110.6	Red Hot Chili Peppers	$145.97	42,101	757,821	$6,145,392	18/18	WME
10	$105.1	Paul McCartney	$248.02	26,479	423,659	$6,567,362	13/16	Marshall Arts

Fig. 3 *2022 Year End Pollstar Top 200 North American Tours,* Pollstar

Looking further into these statistics, we can see a large jump in gross revenue by artists on tour in 2022 compared to 2018 and 2019 data (see Figures 4 and 5). Revenue in 2021 was significantly lower compared to 2018 and 2019 data, however there are reasons to take into account for this difference. Those reasons include coming out of a pandemic and taking precautions when it comes to touring, the economics of touring, and getting an audience to come after a pandemic.


2018

POLLSTAR YEAR END TOP 200 NORTH AMERICAN TOURS

EXCLUSIVE 11/23/2017-11/21/2018

1-50

Rank	Gross Millions	Artist	Average Ticket Price	Average Tickets	Total Tickets	Average Gross	Cities Shows	Agency
1	277.3	Taylor Swift	124.99	80,322	2,168,706	10,271,531	27/40	Messina Touring Group
2	166.4	Jay-Z / Beyoncé	128.23	54,085	1,298,038	6,935,409	24/30	Live Nation
3	166.0	Eagles	172.13	21,428	964,245	3,688,308	45/53	Creative Artists Agency
4	114.4	Kenny Chesney	88.15	32,443	1,297,731	2,860,007	40/42	Dale Morris & Associates
5	110.0	Justin Timberlake	138.87	19,795	791,780	2,748,832	40/50	WME
6	105.0	Ed Sheeran	92.42	54,119	1,136,497	5,001,537	21/24	Paradigm Talent Agency
7	97.8	Journey / Def Leppard	97.79	17,246	1,000,272	1,686,460	58/60	CAA / Artist Group International
8	95.3	Pink	138.46	18,120	688,558	2,508,798	38/46	Marshall Arts
9	88.3	"Springsteen On Broadway"	508.93	4,231	173,461	2,153,146	41/183	Thrill Hill Productions
10	79.0	Drake	116.46	35,706	678,410	4,158,145	19/43	WME

Fig. 4 *2018 Year End Pollstar Top 200 North American Tours,* Pollstar

YEAR END 2019

1-50

POLLSTAR TOP 200 NORTH AMERICAN TOURS

	Gross/Millions	Artist	Average Ticket Price	Average Tickets	Total Tickets	Average Gross	Cities/Shows	Agency
1	177.8	The Rolling Stones	226.61	49,041	784,652	11,112,923	14/16	Concerts West
2	157.4	Elton John	136.25	14,266	1,155,510	1,943,702	57/81	The Howard Rose Agency
3	97.0	Bob Seger & The Silver Bullet Band	111.72	12,224	867,925	1,365,694	71/71	ICM Partners
4	87.8	Pink	140.76	14,867	624,419	2,092,626	37/42	Marshall Arts
5	82.6	Ariana Grande	117.96	13,727	700,053	1,619,209	46/51	Creative Artists Agency
6	81.7	Jonas Brothers	106.14	14,246	769,310	1,512,119	48/54	United Talent Agency
7	81.6	KISS	101.94	11,945	800,302	1,217,650	67/67	Creative Artists Agency
8	77.5	Fleetwood Mac	142.42	13,607	544,286	1,937,462	10/13	Creative Artists Agency
9	76.1	Garth Brooks	88.09	65,846	856,000	5,853,250	9/12	WME
10	75.6	Justin Timberlake	133.06	14,959	568,449	1,990,486	35/38	WME

Fig. 5 *2019 Year End Pollstar Top 200 North American Tours,* Pollstar

The demand for tours is higher now more than it has ever been. According to Axios, in the second quarter of 2022, Live Nation promoted and toured the highest percentage of shows with 12,500 shows. This is 2,500 more shows than in all of 2019, before the pandemic started. “Attendance was up 20%” and “Live Nation has sold more than 100 million tickets through July 2022 compared to 74 million in 2019.” (Scribner). It has been shown that “Live Nation Entertainment’s latest quarterly report showing that concert attendance, ticket sales, quarterly revenue and other core business metrics far exceed pre-pandemic metrics from the same period.” (Dalugdug).

Generating Audience Impact via Live Performance

Understanding and Maximizing the Concert Fan’s Journey

Capturing the attention of audiences to keep them coming back for more is extremely important to the success of a tour and the success of an artist's career overall. As ticket prices have become more expensive, and the market increasingly competitive, it has become a priority for artists to make audience members feel that they are getting their money's worth through

maximizing their enjoyment. Audience satisfaction must comprise aspects of a live show experience that go well beyond what takes place on stage. The fan's journey begins with hearing about the shows through a tour announcement on social media building for the first show. Anticipation and enjoyment are further enhanced through what fan's experience outside the venue the day of the show, meeting up with friends and taking pictures. The thrill of entering into the venue, walking to their seats and seeing the stage for the first time and the music that is playing further adds to the excitement. In the venue there are plenty of photo opportunities and merchandise stands to get a shirt to commemorate the tour. Fan impact also occurs when they fully experience the show and includes artist interaction, lighting and visuals, and depends on familiarity with the music - hearing favorite songs live, whether it's for the first time or the 10th. When leaving the show fans are feeling happy and sad at the same time, wondering when they will see their favorite artist next. They know everyone around them is feeling the same way and it's a collective feeling walking back to the parking lot or train station as they find their way home.

The Experience Economy and Audience Experience Design

The experience economy focuses on the generation of impactful experiences as it contributes to sales of products and services and customer satisfaction. According to B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, the experience economy "looks to sell memorable experiences" and they argue that the memorable event is the new 'product' for their customers. This concept is helpful in building interest and impact for diverse audiences for services as well as products because anyone can be affected by an experience. As Pine and Gilmore note, "Just as people have cut back on goods to spend more money on services, now they also scrutinize the time and money they spend on services to make way for more memorable - and more highly valued - experiences." (Pine & Gilmore). In their book, The Experience Economy (1999), Pine and Gilmore outline the example of restaurants such as Hard Rock Cafe, House of Blues and Planet Hollywood. The immersive experience and cohesive, distinctive themes that these restaurants offer provide an advantage in standing out from other restaurants because they each appeal to diverse audiences and create that essential impact that goes beyond food or customer service alone.

In related research, Kaospilot, a self-governing school for creative leadership based in Denmark, created the 5E Experience Design Model to expand on the Experience Economy theory.

The 5E Experience Design Model helps managers and producers of any type of experience to understand the importance of creating impactful experiences at several stages relevant to event enjoyment and impact. This model relates back to the Experience Economy because each step in the 5E design model can be checked to create the perfect experience for what is being sold. It "can add coherence, elegance, and excitement" and functions as "a framework for building holistic and meaningful experiences." (Sontag).

The 5E Experience Design model outlines the five stages of creating an impactful experience - Excitement, Entry, Engagement, Exit, and Extension (see Figure 5 below).

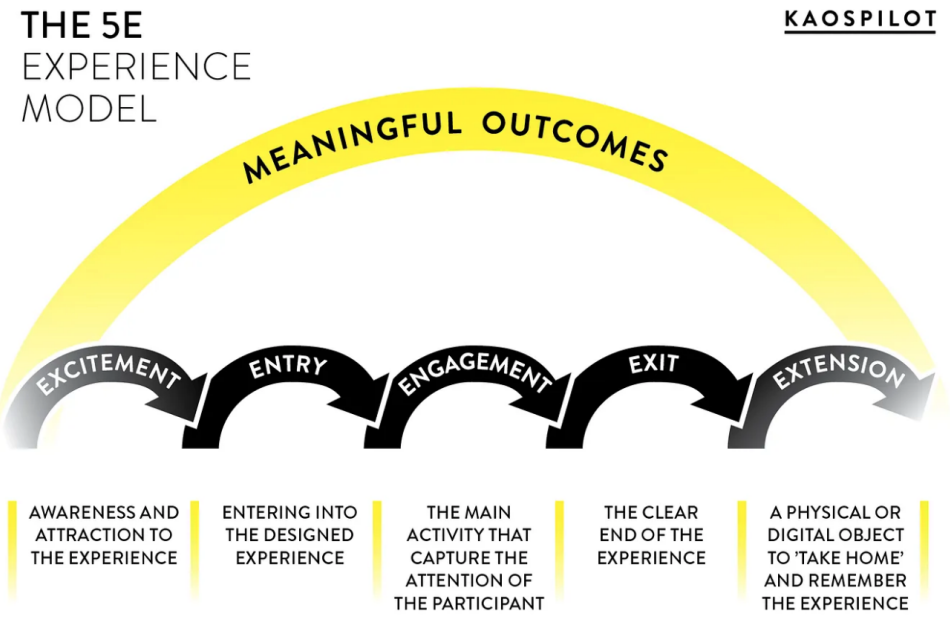

Fig. 5 *The 5E Experience Model,* Kaospilot

Live Concerts and Experience Design

Companies can apply the 5E Experience model to create that memorable experience for their customers. In the case of live concerts, artists are able to work with their management and tour promoters to see how they can maximize the 5E Experience model to bring the best show they can to their fans. While artists and managers often focus on some categories more than others - typically entry, engagement, and exit - artists will consider all five aspects when developing their

shows. The 5E Experience Design Model can be applied to any type of show or event an artist puts on because it is all about what will create the most memorable impact on the audience.

Application of the theory driving Pine and Gilmore's "experience economy" as well as Kaospilot's 5E Experience Design model to current field models can deepen our understanding of effective strategies and practices underlying successful live concert experience. Three touring artists - Harry Styles, Olivia Rodrigo, and The 1975 – serve as models in successful application of audience experience design.

The three artists that are the focus of the case studies will be introduced with a focus on their current success. Following the introduction of the 5E Experience Design model by Kaospilot, the elements of this model will be applied to identify how aspects of a recent touring show impacted fan experience. While not all five levels will not be used to evaluate each case study, an attempt will be made to understand the strategies and tactics as they relate across the examples all three artists provide. The experience enhancing elements that will be the focus of these case studies include: artist/fan relationship, staging, lighting and sound, and engagement beyond the artist.

Field Models: The Best Practices in Live Performance

Harry Styles - *Male, Pop*

Harry Styles is a singer-songwriter from Manchester, England. At the age of 16, Styles auditioned for 'The X Factor', a reality singing competition show, where after competing for a number of weeks, got grouped together with 4 other competitors to make the boyband we eventually knew as One Direction. One Direction went on to be known worldwide, going on four world tours (*Up All Night Tour* (2012)*; Take Me Home Tour* (2013)*; Where We Are Tour* (2014)*; and On the Road Again Tour* (2015) in their time as a band. In 2015, bandmate Zayn Malik left One Direction, and therefore resulted in the breakup of the band after finishing out their On The Road Again Tour that same year. A few years later, Styles released his first solo single, 'Sign of the Times', which charted on Billboard Hot 100 at number 4 (Trust). Styles has gone on to play theaters, arenas, and stadiums around the world during his *Live on Tour* (2017-2018) and *Love on Tour* (2021-2023) runs and became widely successful as a solo artist. Since the beginning of his solo career, Styles has released 3 studio albums, *Harry Styles (2017), Fine Line (2019),* and

Harry's House (2022). He is also a 9x Grammy nominated, 3x Grammy winning artist (Harry Styles", Recording Academy), something he had not yet accomplished in his time with One Direction.

In 2021, Styles went back on tour in North America, his first time performing since the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. According to Live Nation, "over 42 U.S. shows, some 720,000 tickets were sold" which grossed "just shy of $95 million." (Halperin). Since this first leg, Styles has played around Europe, grossing millions of dollars and bringing fans together from around the world. As of recently, Styles has finished up his second North American leg of Love on Tour in February 2023 and has continued to tour Australia and Asia, leading into Europe over the upcoming summer.

For the North American leg of Love on Tour in 2022, Styles had residency shows in 5 cities across Canada and the United States - Toronto (2), New York (15), Austin (6), Chicago (6), and Los Angeles (15). Each venue were arenas, consisting of capacities upwards of 20,000 each. The excitement of this tour was created because of various components. First, Styles' return to Canada was highly anticipated, not performing there since 2018 during his Live on Tour run. Second, Styles playing 15 shows in New York and Los Angeles, at Madison Square Garden and The Kia Forum respectively, is something no one expected him to do as an artist. The shows were a great achievement in his career and only added to the excitement for the run of shows after their announcement.

Focusing on the **artist/fan relationship**, Styles makes each show feel special. At Love on Tour, Styles focuses heavily on his relationship with the fans in the crowd. His eye contact, the random smiles if a fan does something funny, or even a simple wave, Styles makes it a priority to interact with his fans at every point in the show. His relationship with the fans is what makes the shows so different and unique. He makes it a point at each show to talk to fans in between songs, reading off fan-made signs, for 10 minutes each night. One of the most known fan experiences of Love on Tour in 2022 is when Styles sees a sign made to help fans come out (Wood). He personally will grab a flag and create that special moment for a fan, something that will change their lives. Another one Styles likes to do is sing 'Happy Birthday' if it is someone's birthday in the crowd, or even engage in taking a fan's BeReal, a photo app in which users get a notification at a random time of day to capture what they are doing at that moment (Schifino & Handy). Each of these

examples, among other unique signs read and the countless amounts of fan conversations, Styles' shows are special when he is on the stage.

The importance of well-designed and high impact **lighting, visuals, and sound** was very high for Love on Tour. While the show did not have a lot of production - just Styles and his band singing songs on stage - the tour visuals for each song added to the whole experience of immersing in the show. It made the crowd feel a part of a story Styles was trying to tell. Each visual, whether pre-made or showing the fans, helped fans to understand Styles' interpretation of each song and the way he envisioned the feel of the tour. Using Styles' song 'Little Freak' as an example, the visuals highlight the fans in the crowd. Cameras pan over across the whole arena, showing fans hugging and swaying to the ballad as Styles sings under pink and purple lighting.

Audience excitement and interaction beyond Styles himself starts a long way before and is maintained throughout each show. Plenty of promotional billboards and posters were put up around each city. Not only was this a great way of excitement, but also engagement for fans to take a picture. Each city also provided photo op's, giving fans the opportunity to take cute pictures to post on social media to share their experience.

Styles' **stage** was in the round, meaning he was in the middle of the arena all night. It consisted of a main stage and two catwalks coming off each side. The floor was general admission (GA), while all other seats were reserved. With this stage layout, Styles was able to see and interact with everyone in the crowd. From the fan perspective, it gave them the opportunity to dance in the back, with plenty of space for dancing along to their favorite songs. With the crew working, it adds to the excitement of the fan experience - before the opener comes on, watching the crew get prepared and after the opener leaves, all the crew members get up on stage to prepare for Styles' set. That is when fans know Styles is ready to take the stage.

While **merchandise** is typically sold at shows, Styles adds a fun spin on the merchandise designs. At each show, there are city-specific t-shirts sold as a commemorative item for fans to purchase. There are also other items a part of the collection such as crewnecks, hoodies, and t-shirts listing the dates of all shows. But the city-specific shirts are a hit and by far the most wanted by fans, considering the sentiment of the show the fans attended. It was an exciting thing for fans to look forward to getting at the show to remember their time at Love on Tour. The photo

opportunities reflecting the city the show is at inside the venue allow for a quick snap and a fun souvenir item at each venue is something fans look forward to taking home as well.

Throughout the shows, Styles' crew works constantly to make sure the show runs smoothly and effortlessly, ensuring instruments are tuned and put in their correct spots, making sure the stage is set, and getting ready for showtime. Not only are there crew members out in the crowd, but also behind the scenes for post-show takedown and loadout for when another show had come in the middle of the residency in a city.

Olivia Rodrigo - Female, Teen Indie Pop

Olivia Rodrigo is a singer, songwriter, and actress from Murrieta, California. At the beginning of Rodrigo's career, she had a supporting role in the American Girl movie, *Grace Stirs Up Success*, and a few years later got a starring role in the Disney television series, *Bizardvark*. In 2019 she landed her biggest role as the co-star in the television series, *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series*. Rodrigo released '*All I Want*' from the series soundtrack in 2020, which made fans want music from her even more. Early the next year, Rodrigo released the song that would launch her career entirely. *Drivers License* was released in January 2021, with other singles following the coming months, in anticipation of her first studio album, *Sour*, in May 2021. In November of 2021, Rodrigo was nominated for 7 Grammy awards, and won 3 of them at the 2022 Grammys: *Best New Artist, Best Pop Vocal Album,* and *Best Pop Solo Performance* ("Olivia Rodrigo, *Recording Academy*). Along with the Grammys, she has won other prestigious awards, making her mark on the music industry. As the *Sour* album quickly became a favorite for many, she needed to announce a tour. She announced the Sour Tour in December 2021, which hit the road in April 2022 and concluded in July of the same year. Her tour became a massive success and Rodrigo has since taken a well-deserved break coming off of tour and she is expected to release new music later this year.

Olivia Rodrigo's Sour Tour quickly sold out after fans were anticipating an announcement upon her debut album release, *Sour,* in May 2021 (Lemmen). Her 2-show run at New York City's Radio City Music Hall had a sold-out combined attendance of 11,885 people and a combined gross of $704,544. Her 2-show run at Eventim Apollo in London had a sold-out combined attendance of

10,327 people and a combined gross of $474,353. (“Sour Tour”). Based on this information, and knowing each stop on the Sour Tour was sold out, it can be determined that the tour was extremely successful in both North America and Europe. Olivia has not since returned to the stage but is expected to release new music later this year, with fans hoping for a tour to come in 2024.

The **excitement** around the Sour Tour was made in large part generated by Rodrigo. After her hit album, *Sour*, was released, fans expected her to announce a tour. Leading up to the first night, Rodrigo would share information about rehearsals, generating and fueling anticipation among her many fans. Posters and billboards lined the streets of the cities she played in, functioning as both show promotion, but also providing photo opportunities for fans to post to get ready for the show. Walking into the venue, fans were instantly met with music and dancing, and seeing the stage for the first time. The stage is set with a glitter streamer background coming from the ceiling down to the floor with screens on each side of the stage. When seeing this for the first time, fans are already excited for the opener to come on and sink in that they are seeing their favorite artist. This affirms the importance of ‘Entry’ as part of the shows impact.

Rodrigo has a great relationship with her fans. A key component at the shows on the Sour Tour was **fan interaction** when she could. While playing the show she did not address the crowd and speak to a select few because of signs like Styles did, but more giving context behind the songs as well as other little moments with fans. Rodrigo would make eye contact with people in the crowd, which will always make the fans feel special and important. Another fun element Rodrigo integrated into her shows was taking fans' phones on stage to record a video while she was singing a song. It was a unique way of giving a special moment to a fan, while not taking away from the show itself. Lastly, Rodrigo would often bring out a special guest to sing a song with her on a few nights of tour. One notable show she decided to have a special moment was in Toronto, when Rodrigo brought out Avril Lavigne to sing Lavigne’s song *Complicated*, a song Rodrigo loves and added to her setlist on the tour (“Avril Lavigne Joins Olivia Rodrigo on Stage for ‘Complicated’ Duet”). It put fans on the edge of their seat, creating more excitement to see if there will be a special guest at other shows, while keeping fans engaged, intrigued and waiting for more.

Elements of engagement beyond the artist and fan relationship was exemplified through **staging elements** such as lighting and sound and the overall atmosphere of the venues Rodrigo played in. There were no large screens besides the two small rectangular screens to the sides of the

stage for fans to look at. It made the show feel intimate and personal, similar to the feeling one would get if the show was a one night only special performance private show. Considering the venues were smaller in size, it felt old-school and had the essence of teenage fun. As the show ends, the tour crew would go on stage to load out to move onto the following city.

As an **extension of the experience** of the Sour tour, Rodrigo had merchandise sold before, during and after the show, where fans were able to purchase items to remember their time at the show. The merchandise was unique to the tour, reflecting the overall vibe the Sour era brought through the album, promotions, and tour. In this reflection, the merchandise has elements of butterflies, purple, and stickers, amongst other elements, that brought the tour and album to life through merchandise. Also, when looking at the signage around the venue, they also reflected the overall theme and vibe of the tour, allowing fans to snap pictures for their memories, adding to the extension of the experience.

The 1975 - Group, Alternative Indie

Formed in 2002 while still in high school, The 1975 are an alternative indie pop rock band coming from Wilmslow, Cheshire in England. The band consists of 4 members, Matty Healy (vocals and rhythm guitar), Adam Hann (lead guitar), Ross MacDonald (bass), and George Daniel (drums and producer). In their early days, the band would play covers in local clubs until they began to release their own music. The 1975 released multiple EPs through the years 2012-2014, but released their first studio album, self-titled *The 1975*, in September of 2013. In support of their debut album, the band went on tour in 2014. *I Like It When You Sleep, for You Are So Beautiful Yet So Unaware of It* was released in February 2016 and went on to tour the album in November 2015 and later ended in July 2017. Coming off their long tour and a deserved break, the band soon made a comeback with a new album in November 2018 titled *A Brief Inquiry into Online Relationships* and then launched another tour, the Music for Cars Tour, for November 2018 through March 2020. Because of Covid-19, the latter part of the tour got rescheduled to 2021, and officially ended in July. Also in 2020, the band released another album, *Notes on a Conditional Form*, but was unable to support that album on its own tour due to the pandemic. The most recent project that The 1975 has put out is *Being Funny in a Foreign Language* in October 2022 and has since been on tour, titled the At Their Very Best Tour, which started in November 2022 and will

continue into May 2023. Throughout their career The 1975 had been nominated for many awards, most notably 2x Grammy awards. They are also 7x Brit Award nominated, and 4x winners: *British Group (2017), British Group and British Album of the Year (2019),* and *British Rock/Alternative Act (2023)* ("List of Awards and Nominations Received by the 1975").

Since being unable to tour *Notes on a Conditional Form* after its release in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and after canceling all dates of their 2021 Music for Cars Tour, the At Their Very Best Tour quickly became highly anticipated, especially considering the amount of time passed since their previous tour in 2018. In North America, the shows began to sell out at some of the most popular venues in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. To give an idea to the impact this tour was going to make, The 1975 sold out one night at The Kia Forum in Los Angeles, California. A sold-out crowd of 13,955 with a gross revenue of $1,004,480 USD, the show was going to be a great time. After observing other show statistics, which also indicate numerous sold-out shows, their tour in North America was a wide success. The 1975 also completed the Europe and Latin America run of shows and are currently finishing up their Asia and Oceania run of the At Their Very Best Tour. The 1975 plan to continue their tour at the beginning of June this year in Europe, then continuing on to do a small number of shows in Latin America and North America later in the year ("At Their Very Best (Concert Tour)").

Upon entry to a venue The 1975 was playing in, fans made their way to their seats to see their view for the very first time. They are immediately hit with "a life-size house for a set" (Shanfeld), and a stage decorated to reflect what one would see inside a house. Fans can instantly feel that they've arrived at home and that they are about to have a 'personal' experience with the artist; the vibe of being at home and chilling out playing some music. The stage and room are set with low lighting, lamps and a home-like feel with yellow light that can be taken as soft daylight coming through the windows of the house. This is juxtaposed with the fact that The 1975 are playing in massive arenas to sold out crowds, where fans will be screaming the words to every song which makes for an interesting dynamic at each show.

After the show ends, the house lights come up and the post-show playlist starts playing as fans make their way to the exits. The feeling of togetherness, happiness and sadness all at once quickly floods the room. Crew members come on stage to begin the load out process to move onto

the next city and fans are gathered, taking their final pictures in the venue after the memorable time they had at the At Their Very Best Tour.

The Future of Live is Creating the Fan Experience

While the threat of digital distribution of streamed concerts as well as music streaming platforms lingers, live is not going away. The impact of live music is too great. The experience of going to a show as a whole - the thrill, the excitement, the fulfilling feeling of seeing an artist perform their songs - is something digital distribution cannot do.

The analysis of these three artists through the lens of the experience economy and the 5E experience model has allowed for more understanding in the way artists work to create the perfect experience for their fans. As the experience economy continues to be of use not only in the everyday world, but also in the world of bringing a great show to fans, the importance of a memorable experience is something that has been increasingly important to consumers and fans. Through the 5E experience model and the experience economy these memories are what will ultimately be most valued.

All fans really long for is a memorable experience when seeing their favorite artists live. For up-and-coming artists, it's not about the amount of fans one has, but the memories those fans take with them after leaving a show. The examples of photo opportunities, merchandising, stage layouts, and all the elements that can make a concert a memorable experience, up and coming artists can utilize these tactics to advance their career. This then reflects in a career growth by word of mouth and social media discovery. Through this, up and coming artists can use the experience economy, the 5E Experience Design Model and the analysis of the above artists to produce a memorable experience of their own for their fans.

In conclusion, understanding the importance of planning and implementing strategies that enhance performance is necessary for the long-term career success of today’s musicians and musical artists. While researching for this project, it has become evident that live shows will not be going away any time soon and have become more important now than ever. It is important for managers of artists who may not have a large budget for a show to understand that a large budget is not what is always needed - it's the memorable experience for the fans that count and what will

be remembered in the end. When it comes down to it, fans want to feel happy and share undeniable experiences with their favorite artists, their friends and the larger concert community. With this and the tactics addressed throughout this paper, artists *will* produce the memorable experience their fans are wanting to see. The music and live touring industry will continue to have high impact and involvement economically, but overall, what is remembered most is the impact of live music on our social and individual well-being that generate from the experiences we share in the moment.

Works Cited

Arcand, Rob, et al. “The 43 Most Anticipated Tours of Fall 2022: Adele, Kendrick Lamar, Paramore, the 1975, and More.” *Pitchfork*, 22 Sept. 2022, https://pitchfork.com/features/lists-and-guides/most-anticipated-tours/.

“At Their Very Best (Concert Tour).” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 29 Apr. 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/At_Their_Very_Best_(concert_tour).

“Avril Lavigne Joins Olivia Rodrigo on Stage for 'Complicated' Duet.” *EW.com*, https://ew.com/music/avril-lavigne-joins-olivia-rodrigo-complicated-duet/.

Blistein, Jon and Ethan Millman. “When Will Live Music Return? – Rolling Stone.” *Rolling Stone*, Rolling Stone, 22 December 2020, https://www.rollingstone.com/pro/features/when-live-music-return-2021-covid-1106719/. Accessed 1 February 2023.

Budnick, Dean. “Can the Concert Industry Survive After Mick Jagger and Madonna Retire?” *The Hollywood Reporter*, The Hollywood Reporter, 7 Feb. 2013, https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/mick-jagger-madonna-bruce-springsteen-418028/.

Dalugdug, Mandy. “Live Concert Interest in the US Nearing Pre-Covid Levels, New Study Shows.” *Music Business Worldwide*, 7 Sept. 2022, https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/live-concert-interest-in-the-us-nearing-pre-covid-levels-new-study-shows/.

Delfino, Devon. “How Musicians Really Make Their Money - and It Has Nothing to Do with How Many Times People Listen to Their Songs.” *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 19AD, https://www.businessinsider.com/how-do-musicians-make-money-2018-10.

Halperin, Shirley. “Harry Styles 'Love on Tour' Grosses $95 Million, Collects $1 Million

for Charity Partners after 42 Sold-out Shows." *Variety*, Variety, 9 Dec. 2021, https://variety.com/2021/music/news/harry-styles-love-on-tour-numbers-gross-charity-1235130137/.

"Harry Styles." *Recording Academy*, https://www.grammy.com/artists/harry-styles/287522.

"Here Are All the Livestreams & Virtual Concerts to Watch during Coronavirus Crisis ." *Billboard*, 23 Apr. 2021, https://www.billboard.com/music/pop/coronavirus-quarantine-music-events-online-streams-9335531/.

Ideker, Stefanie. "COVID-19 Edition: The Brave New World of Artist Management." *3300+ Climbing*, 19 Oct. 2020, https://3300climbing.wixsite.com/home/post/covid-19-edition-the-brave-new-world-of-artist-management.

Kennelty, Greg. "Live Nation Launches Fund for Touring Band Crew Members." *Metal Injection*, 2 Apr. 2020, https://metalinjection.net/news/live-nation-launches-fund-for-touring-band-crew-members.

Lemmen, Natalie. "Olivia Rodrigo Earns a Sold Out Tour." *The Tower Pulse*, https://thetowerpulse.net/37401/arts-and-entertainment/olivia-rodrigo-sold-out-tour/.

"List of Awards and Nominations Received by the 1975." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 19 Apr. 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_awards_and_nominations_received_by_The_1975.

"Music Industry." *Encyclopedia*, Encyclopedia.com, 15 Dec. 2022, https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/music-industry.

"New Report: How Music Powers the American Economy." *RIAA*, 9 Feb. 2021, https://www.riaa.com/new-report-how-music-powers-the-american-economy/.

"Olivia Rodrigo." *Recording Academy*, https://www.grammy.com/artists/Olivia-Rodrigo/38411.

Pine, II, B. Joseph, and James H. Gilmore. *The Experience Economy, With a New Preface by the Authors : Competing for Customer Time, Attention, and Money*, Harvard Business Review Press, 2019. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/purchase-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5846339.

Schifino, Eleanor and Lucy Handy. The Dartmouth. "Review: Harry Styles Makes Stage His Own at Madison Square Garden." *The Dartmouth*, 19 Sept. 2022, https://www.thedartmouth.com/article/2022/09/harry-styless-makes-stage-his-own-at-msg.

Scribner, Herb. "Live Events Take off like a Rocket, but Artists Struggle to Find the Gear They Need." *Axios*, 2 Sept. 2022, https://www.axios.com/2022/09/02/live-event-ticket-sales-concerts.

Shanfeld, Ethan. "The 1975's Matty Healy Lifts the Curtain on Band's Biggest Tour Yet (Exclusive)." *Variety*, Variety, 15 Dec. 2022, https://variety.com/2022/music/news/the-1975-tour-matty-healy-1235458736/.

Smith, Dylan. "Just 7,500 Artists on Spotify (out of 8 Million) Make $100,000 or More." *Digital Music News*, 26 Feb. 2021, https://www.digitalmusicnews.com/2021/02/24/spotify-artist-earnings/.

Sontag, Andy. "The 5E Experience Design Model." *Medium*, Theuxblog.com, 25 Mar. 2022, https://medium.theuxblog.com/the-5e-experience-design-model-7852324d46c.

"Sour Tour." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 8 Mar. 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sour_Tour.

Taylor, Andrew. "Experience Brokers: The New Role for Arts Administrators in the Administration Age ." 1999, pp. 6.

"Touring Musician." *Berklee*, https://www.berklee.edu/careers/roles/touring-musician.

Trust, Gary. “Ed Sheeran Tops Hot 100 for 12th Week, as Harry Styles Starts at No. 4.” *Billboard*, 17 Apr. 2017, https://www.billboard.com/pro/ed-sheeran-harry-styles-sign-times-hot-100/.

Tsioulcas, Anastasia. “America's Independent Music Venues Could Close Soon Due to Coronavirus.” *NPR*, NPR, 9 June 2020, https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/06/09/873196748/americas-independent-music-venues-could-close-soon-due-to-coronavirus.

Wikström, Patrik. “The Music Industry in an Age of Digital Distribution.” *OpenMind,* https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/the-music-industry-in-an-age-of-digital-distribution/.

Wood, Mikael. “A Coming-out Party for Harry Styles and Fans, at Opening Night at the Forum.” *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles Times, 24 Oct. 2022, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/music/story/2022-10-24/harry-styles-forum-opening-night-concert-review.