Challenges for the future of live music

A review of contemporary developments in the live music sector

Arno van der Hoeven & Erik Hitters (Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture, Erasmus University Rotterdam)

Introduction

It has become a commonplace to observe that the economic and cultural significance of live music has increased, while the sales of recorded music have declined. With a sense of relief people observe that the physical experience of live music attendance remains vital under conditions of rapid digitalization. This observation runs the risk of neglecting the actual challenges faced by the live music sector. In fact, live music organizations are also competing for the attention of the consumer in the dynamic entertainment landscape of a digital society. Meanwhile, many small music venues and musicians operate under precarious conditions (Webster et al. 2018). It has been argued that the live music industry is a superstar market where a small number of big players take most of the revenues, echoing income inequalities that can be observed in society at large (Krueger 2019).

This chapter provides an overview of contemporary challenges in the live music sector and discusses potential solutions. It helps the live music sector to anticipate on future developments,

identify impending risks, and consider possible interventions to address those challenges. A review of the current state of live music's production and consumption is relevant to develop adequate strategies and policies that support the interests of the various stakeholders in this field. We distinguish four sets of challenges, focusing on the planning and policy context, economic challenges, audience trends that have an adverse impact on the live music industry and negative developments for musicians. These four categories follow on from a qualitative content analysis of music reports and strategies from Australia, the United States, South Africa, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. These reports are generally commissioned by the music industry to assess the impact and state of live music in particular cities, regions or countries. Furthermore, such reports are often used to influence policy agendas, in order to strengthen the long-term viability of the sector. These reports have been analysed as part of the project 'Staging Popular Music: Researching Sustainable Live Music Ecologies for Artists, Music Venues and Cities' (Van der Hoeven and Hitters 2019), which takes place in the Netherlands.

Our project, including this chapter, draws upon the ecological approach to live music that was developed by a group of British researchers (Behr et al. 2016). A report about strategies for supporting live music in Adelaide defines live music ecologies as follows: 'Live music does not exist in a vacuum but is part of a complex ecosystem consisting of many interdependent elements in the local, national and international contexts. The elements of the ecology include physical spaces in which to produce and record music, networks of people, social groups and the physical, social, cultural, political, educational, industrial and economic environment' (Elbourne 2013: 16). This approach thus recognizes that live music is always shaped by the materiality of a musical place (e.g. size and physical accessibility). Furthermore, it raises awareness of how live

music ecologies ideally consist of diverse places for performing, ranging from small to big venues (Behr et al. 2016). As the ecological approach is concerned with the conditions that enable or constrain live music performances, we discuss the various challenges within and outside this sector. Furthermore, we propose interventions that can be used to support the future sustainability of this sector.

This chapter is divided in four sections, focusing on challenges in terms of the planning and policy context, the economics of the live music industry, audience trends and the position of musicians. For each challenge we discuss potential solutions, recognizing that their success depends on local circumstances and policy conditions. In the concluding section, we reflect on what the challenges imply for the future of live music.

Planning and policy context

Increasing attention is being paid in policy circles and academic research to the ways in which urban planning can support live music ecologies (Van der Hoeven and Hitters 2019). This contributes to our knowledge about the right conditions for making, performing and consuming popular music in urban environments. The ecological approach to live music raises awareness of the power relations between live music organizations and actors outside the music sector such as regulators and policy makers (Behr et al. 2016). As the following quote demonstrates, government policies can both support and constrain live music ecologies:

> Government policies have a direct impact on the ability of music businesses such as live performance venues, recording studios and rehearsal spaces to operate sustainably. Business licensing, liquor licensing, transportation planning and parking, as well as land-use planning all have an impact on the health of the music economy. Compliance

requirements should be appropriate without becoming a barrier to doing business. (Terrill

et al. 2015: 13–14)

This section will focus on how regulation and the spatial embedding of live music affects the

future of this cultural form.

Regulation

Live music is closely connected to the nightlife economy of cities. Alcohol consumption is

generally central to the business models of venues and festivals as well as the experience of live

music (Ansell and Barnard 2013; Homan, 2017; Terrill et al. 2015: 13–14). This affects the ways

in which spaces for musical performances are regulated and policed. Liquor licensing conditions

have an impact on opening hours, the minimum age of patrons, the times at which alcohol can be

sold and whether sponsorship by companies from the alcohol industry is allowed. In addition,

music organizations have to comply with other forms of regulation on, for example, safety,

smoking, sound levels and, in some cases, which instruments are allowed in venues (Terrill et al.

2015). Perhaps unsurprisingly, it becomes clear from the reports we analysed that many venues

experience existing regulations as too restrictive (Government of South Australia 2016; Davyd et

al. 2015; Parkinson et al. 2015). An example of this are the lock-out laws in Sydney, which aim

to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence with strict rules on when the doors close for new visitors. This

type of regulation might result in less foot traffic and lower audience numbers (Muller and Carter

2016). In order to reduce the regulatory burden, one report calls for 'an enabling culture for

licensing of events and venues all year round' (Music Venue Trust 2015: 4). A red-tape

reduction review can help to achieve such an enabling culture (Government of South Australia

2016).

Another often mentioned solution for such regulatory issues is the establishment of music advisory boards or task forces. Such bodies can represent the interests of music organizations and lobby for favourable conditions: 'Music advisory boards present an effective means to avoid potentially negative impacts of government legislation on the music community' (Terrill et al. 2015: 59). Many cites also work with night mayors or night czars that mediate between night-time economy businesses, residents and local authorities (Music Venue Trust 2015). For example, in Amsterdam the night mayor has supported the implementation of 24-hour licences for nightclubs (O'Sullivan 2016). Furthermore, a single point of contact in city halls ensures that licensing procedures become less time-consuming for event organizers (Government of South Australia 2016). As one report sums up the challenge: 'Reduce the regulatory burden on hosting live music for both licensed and unlicensed premises while meeting common neighbour and community concerns about noise and safety' (Government of South Australia 2016: 12).

Spatial embedding

A second set of challenges concerns the spatial embedding of live music. Most of the spaces where live music is performed are embedded in the urban landscape. The experience of live music is always shaped by the environment in which it takes place (Kronenburg 2019). Of course, this is often a positive factor, as the location of a concert adds to the general atmosphere. Nevertheless, a lack of parking spaces, public transport and loading/unloading facilities can negatively affect the accessibility of performance spaces for audiences and musicians. Furthermore, gentrification is a challenge to music organizations as rising rents and urban infill threaten the viability of music venues (Cohen 2013).

Conversely, live music itself might also have adverse effects on its environment. Travelling

audiences and musicians generally leave a big carbon footprint, while outdoor festivals might harm flora and fauna (Webster and McKay 2016). Moreover, concerts in parks imply that this public space is not available to residents for a period of time. Such issues could undermine the support for live music events taking place in dense urban spaces. A solution in this case is agreements between event organizers to reduce the negative impact on the environment (Terrill et al. 2015). Furthermore, permanent facilities for outdoor concerts, including power connection points, could reduce the time and money needed for setting-up concerts (Live Music Taskforce 2017). Of course, the locations for these facilities should be well chosen, in order to minimize the negative impact on the environment, while still being accessible to audiences.

One of the most dominant issues in the various reports is the impact of noise. Live music often takes place in buildings that were originally not intended for musical performances (Kronenburg 2019), increasing the risk of sound leakage. As cities become denser, the likelihood of complaints from neighbours grows. Sometimes there are relatively simple solutions such as paying for the double glazing of neighbours, self-regulating noise issues through acoustic mapping or mediation between venues and complainers (Government of South Australia 2016; Music Venue Trust 2015; Parkinson et al. 2015). However, the rescue plan for London's grassroots music venues demonstrates that in some cities more comprehensive urban planning interventions are required:

> Planning officers and committee members urgently need guidance on music venues. In particular how to manage housing developments in close proximity to music venues. If this issue isn't considered at the planning application stage it often results in the slow death of that venue from a spiral of building site disruption, noise complaints from the new residents and costly additional licensing conditions imposed by the local authority.

(Davyd et al. 2015: 17)

One way of dealing with encroaching residential buildings is the agent of change principle, which came into force in the UK in 2018. In this case, the onus for addressing existing noise issues falls on the newcomer in the area (i.e. the agent of change), not on the venue. This prevents a situation in which venues with a long history are suddenly threatened with closure because of noise complaints from people in adjacent new buildings (Ross 2017). Another possible urban planning intervention is to designate music or entertainment zones with an increased noise tolerance in a geographically defined area (London's Music Industry Development Task Force 2014; Live Music Taskforce 2017). Furthermore, cities could provide subsidies for noise attenuation and building compliance (Government of South Australia 2016). Finally, there are communication strategies to deal with this issue, such as informing prospective neighbours about the presence of a venue (Terrill et al. 2015), increasing the public awareness of the negative consequences of noise complaints and replacing 'noise' with the more positive word 'sound' in debates about this issue (Live Music Taskforce 2017).

The challenges discussed above particularly affect small independent venues because they often struggle to bear the costs associated with increased regulation, policing and gentrification (London's Music Industry Development Task Force 2014). Paul McCartney used the following words to express his support in a campaign of the Music Venue Trust (2016) to protect the declining number of grassroots music venues in the UK. 'If we don't support live music at this level then the future of music in general is in danger.' As we will further discuss in the section about musicians, these small venues are important in terms of talent development and artistic experimentation. Yet, Holt and Wergin (2013) observe a trend towards larger and more commercial venues in cities, which is catering for a market of headliner artists. They raise

awareness of the consequences of this development for urban live music ecologies: 'The implication is a separation of DIY and commercial cultural production between neighbourhoods and therefore a weakening of the ecology that constitutes a scene and ultimately a vibrant neighbourhood' (Holt and Wergin 2013: 19). To ensure a diverse music ecology for future generations, it is thus vital to acknowledge the value of grassroots venues and low-budget cultural production in urban policy and planning.

Economic challenges

Live music is a thriving business sector and a vibrant part of the creative industries. According to industry consultant PricewaterhouseCoopers, global live music revenues, including ticket sales and sponsorship, will reach 31 billion dollar in 2022, growing at a rate of 3.3 per cent annually (Sanchez 2018). The live music industry is comprised of a number of very large companies that operate globally (e.g. Live Nation) as well as thousands of smaller firms, promotors, venues and festivals, which are embedded in local live music ecologies. When wanting to understand the economic challenges that are faced on the local level, one needs to take into account that live music ecologies are interdependent of the global economic environment. In this section, we will therefore discuss the competitive international environment in which music organizations work and the challenges of business operations in live music.

The competitive environment

The market for live music is rife with uncertainty and competition, which poses a threat to the future sustainability of this sector. Some even refer to it as a situation of market failure (Davyd et al. 2015) since it does not lead to optimal outcomes and there are considerable welfare losses

(Homan 2015). This mainly has to do with the imbalance between the recorded music industry, large festivals and promotor-owned arena venues on the one hand and small scale and grassroots venues and festivals on the other. The live music report of the UK's House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2019) discusses concerns that some dominant companies might drive out independent organizations through, for example, exclusivity deals with artists. The competitive environment of live music venues and festivals is generally perceived as a major challenge in the reports under study. On the macro-level, the combination of many years of economic downturn with a situation of market saturation has led to difficulties for venues, major cutbacks or closures and bankruptcies. Parkinson et al. (2015) relate this to the recession, a general trend of diminishing audiences due to a lack of disposable income and increasing competition from non-music sectors for audience spending. In addition, many non-music venues are putting up live shows, which causes issues of identity and branding for the 'real' music venues: 'Perhaps the most difficult aspect of venue identity therefore relates to how venues can differentiate themselves from other places that programme live music' (Parkinson et al. 2015: 40).

Such issues of competition often play out within the direct environment in which venues operate, for example, the city in which they are located. However, there is also strong inter-urban or international competition in this respect, fuelled by government interventions in order to draw large audiences for economic benefits. The Hamilton Music Strategy report discusses the problem of being located so close to Toronto, fearing that 'Hamilton's music scene could get lost beside the magnitude of Toronto and its initiatives' (Priel 2014: 18). Another report points at the competition London is facing from emerging music cities internationally such as Austin, Nashville and Berlin (Davyd et al. 2015: 19–20): 'London is losing acts to parts of Europe where

venues are of higher quality and customers have a better experience. […]. The average government support for music venues across Europe is 42% of venues' income, with the highest being France at 60%.' Brexit might have further negative effects on the international position of the British music industry (House of Commons' Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee 2019; Rozbicka and Conroy 2017).

These developments illustrate that competition is stark within the live music ecology – between venues, between venues and festivals and between venue programmers and promotors. Large venues, major festivals and international promotors generally have more bargaining power and are often able to attract the most profitable acts worldwide and domestically. This requires measures that support the continued diversity in live music ecologies, enhancing the viability of all segments of the live music industry. Music taskforces and researchers can play an important role in gathering data and conducting market studies in order to develop informed policies.

Business operations

A general observation in most reports is that the operating costs for venues and festivals have risen quite drastically over the last decades, while revenues and profits are under increasing pressure. As far as the costs are concerned, these usually consist of personnel costs, rents and equipment costs, and fees for bands. Especially the latter two surface in our analysis. The Austin Music Census shows that some 70 per cent of the venues consider the cost of rent, of maintaining and upgrading equipment and paying bands as the most impactful to business sustainability (Rowling 2015: 69). Many venues struggle with short-term lease contracts and run the risk that possible improvements might not be recouped financially if their lease is not renewed. The latter is a common concern, as buildings may be located in places which have gentrified and could be

sold to property developers or leased to more upmarket renters. An example from London shows this quite clearly: 'As a result of increased demand for accommodation, rents are increasing and some landlords are choosing to sell their properties to developers. Venues like the Flowerpot in Camden have been demolished and turned into flats, whilst others have had to close due to escalating rents' (Davyd et al. 2015: 15). Another concern on the cost side are increasing business rates, especially in the British context, where this type of property tax for commercial users has risen steeply over the last years (House of Commons' Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee 2019).

The cost of paying bands is a major expense for venues, and one that has been growing drastically over the last years as a result of the waning profitability of recorded music. The UK Live Music Census cites a venue operator/booker who explains how record companies no longer invest in tours, which results in higher fees, higher costs for artists and higher ticket prices (Webster et al. 2018: 64). A direct consequence is that overall profit margins have become very small and that revenues are dependent on many other factors. Audiences are less willing to pay cover charges for smaller venues like clubs and pubs, rising VAT in many countries has a further negative impact and the sale of alcohol and beverages is taking up an increasingly larger part of the total revenue. Austin's Music Census concludes that venues operate on narrow margins which are progressively narrowing over time, particularly for small- and medium-sized venues (Rowling 2015).

By way of solution to these seemingly persistent operational issues of the live music sector, most reports advocate for dedicated live music policies and funding opportunities or structural local government support, especially aimed at the small- and medium-sized venues. A precondition is that there is more awareness on the level of local government and policymakers of the added

value of live music to the local economy and socio-cultural fabric (see Van der Hoeven and Hitters 2019). Furthermore, it is argued that popular music should be eligible to the same public funds as other forms of culture like opera and classical music (House of Commons' Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee 2019). Specific measures that are proposed include, for example, establishing music funds, the provision of micro-loans for building improvements (Terrill et al. 2015), tax breaks (Parkinson et al. 2015) and a levy on tickets to support small venues (Webster et al. 2018). Furthermore, the reports suggest that venues can professionalize their practices though collaborative improvement of marketing and communication (London's Music Industry Development Task Force 2014), staff training, diversifying revenue sources (House of Commons' Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee 2019) and supporting cultural entrepreneurship (Van Dalen, Van der Hoek and Vreeke 2009). Finally, innovation in music businesses is necessary to stay relevant to audiences, as we will further discuss in the next section.

Audiences

In this section we will focus on challenges related to the audiences of live music. Ultimately, live music ecologies depend on the attention of audiences for their continuity and viability. At the same time, audiences are created in these ecologies, as music organizations bring people together in specific local settings (Behr et al., 2016). A first set of challenges that we will discuss concerns issues of inclusions and accessibility. Next, we discuss audience trends that affect whether and how people attend concerts.

Inclusion and accessibility

Live music fosters feelings of belonging and social cohesion. Concerts are often moments where collective identities are celebrated such as those associated with subcultures, specific places or nations (Connell and Gibson 2003; Van der Hoeven and Hitters 2019). However, Carter and Muller (2015) argue that music scenes can also involve aspects of 'tribalism', leading to 'systems of exclusions' that hinder participation by outsiders. Indeed, several reports observe issues of inclusivity in the live music sector (London's Music Industry Development Task Force 2014; Parkinson et al. 2015; Rowling 2015; Webster et al. 2018).

Unfortunately, for women the experience of going to concerts can be remarkably different than for men. As argued in the UK Live Music Census, issues such as sexual harassment and assault show that venues often fail to offer a safe space for women (Webster et al. 2018). In the survey of this report, it is found that a majority of the venues and promoters does not have a sexual harassment policy. Furthermore, women are generally underrepresented on stage, leaving a large segment of the audience without role models. Consequently, various initiatives have emerged that seek to make live music ecologies more inclusive. Examples are the Keychange initiative, aiming to achieve a 50:50 gender balance of the performers at festivals (Keychange 2018), and the Dutch NO THANKS! organization that creates awareness of sexual harassment at concerts (Klomp 2017).

People with disabilities encounter specific issues at live music concerts. Many venues and festivals do not have dedicated policies and facilities for disabled people such as, for example, someone overseeing access, an assistance dog policy, clear information on the website, step-free access and a functioning accessible toilet (Parkinson et al. 2015; Webster et al. 2018; Attitude is Everything, 2018). A disability awareness training for staff at venues and festivals could help to

make concerts more inclusive for people with disabilities.

Another issue that affects who can enjoy live music concerts is the issue of ticket pricing and reselling (Behr and Cloonan 2018). According to the UK live music census, 'as revenue from live music has grown, so too have the ways in which to make money out of it, particularly around ticket (re)selling' (Webster et al. 2018: 57). In this case, large numbers of tickets are bought and then resold at higher prices. The practice of ticket reselling has led to calls for government intervention in various countries. It is a complex problem for which a range of potential solutions has been proposed such as new and stricter enforcement of ticketing regulation, digital ticketing and technological measures against automated tools (i.e. 'bots') that purchase multiple tickets (House of Commons' Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee 2019). The issue of ticket reselling connects to wider concerns about increasing ticket prices and the extent to which concerts are still affordable for music lovers in lower economic strata (Holt 2010). Addressing this issue, a Dutch organization that represents performing arts festivals started an initiative that gives festival attendees the option to buy an extra ticket for people with less financial means (De Verenigde Podiumkunstenfestivals 2018).

Finally, a group that faces issues of accessibility is the young who have not yet reached the age at which they are allowed to drink alcohol (Muller and Carter 2016; Parkinson et al. 2015). As discussed earlier, the business models of many live music organizations rely on alcohol sales. This means that there is generally no financial incentive to organize events for young people or families. In fact, some venues are not open to under-18s due to licensing restrictions (Webster et al. 2018). Since particularly small venues face several economic challenges, it is problematic when they fail to build connections with younger generations. As one report argues about the relevance of all-age events that are drug, alcohol and smoke-free: 'All-ages events can help

engage younger audiences, thereby encouraging youth to develop a lifelong relationship with music' (Terrill et al. 2015: 15). It is important to work with and understand young audiences, as their music tastes and the ways in which they consume culture are ever-changing. Audience development is necessary to enhance the future prospects of the live music sector.

Audience trends

Overall, the demand for popular music has grown over the last decades. This cultural form is no longer exclusively associated with youth but is now widely accepted among all generations (Van Dalen, Van der Hoek and Vreeke 2009). However, this does not necessarily mean that all segments of the live music sector benefit from the ubiquitousness of music. Audience tastes and consumption patterns are changing, challenging the live music sector to adapt to these dynamic market conditions. Various live music reports observe diminishing audiences for local and emerging talent playing original music in small venues (Muller and Carter 2016; Parkinson et al. 2015; Priel 2014). Some argue that audiences seem to prefer the familiar sounds of cover bands instead (Parkinson et al. 2015). Meanwhile, other popular genres such as electronic dance music draw audiences away from local bands. In the current competitive entertainment landscape, it has become more difficult to capture the attention of consumers (Deloitte Access Economics 2011; Webster et al. 2018). As one report sums up this challenge (Terrill et al. 2015: 79): 'It can be hard for lesser-known, homegrown talent to get attention in an interconnected, media-saturated world where global superstars dominate the airwaves.' Finally, audience demographics are changing, particularly in what can be described as 'super-diverse cities' (Vertovec 2007). This challenges music organizations to cater for a wider range of communities and to diversify their programming.

These developments imply that marketing will become more important for music organizations (Van Dalen, Van der Hoek and Vreeke 2009). Effective promotion and audience targeting are necessary to stand out among the many entertainment options that people can choose from. This requires research to understand the contemporary consumption patterns of audiences, so that new live music concepts can be developed. For example, live music shows could be booked at different times of the day, in unexpected locations, or in combination with other forms of leisure (e.g. comedy). Furthermore, some music organizations offer a range of additional options to audiences such as VIP packages and meet-and-greets. New live music concepts could even involve variations on the conventional gig ritual of one hour and an encore. Furthermore, the Dutch music venue Effenaar is experimenting with new technologies such as virtual and augmented reality in their Smart Venue project (Vermeeren 2019). Similarly, the tech startup Peex seeks to improve the audience experience by using augmented audio, offering earbuds and an app that allow people to create their own five-channel mix of the concert sound (Hussain 2019). Finally, innovations in catering might be necessary because the trend towards healthy lifestyles is a risk for a sector that relies heavily on alcohol sales (Webster et al. 2018).

Musicians

In this last section, we focus on the challenges that musicians face in terms of income position and talent development. We discuss these at the very end, because many of the earlier discussed challenges have an impact on the work of artists. Indeed, the ecological approach to live music is concerned with the various conditions that enable concerts. Of course, what matters most in the end are the actual performances by musicians. As Behr et al. (2016) argue, a concert is the live music ecology 'in action'. Therefore, it is vital to consider the perspective of musicians in live

music ecologies.

Income position

A large number of musicians are struggling with a lack of income. According to the UK music census report: '68% of respondents to the musician survey said that stagnating pay for musicians makes it difficult to bring in a viable income while this figure rises to 80% for those respondents identifying as professional musicians' (Webster et al. 2018: 4). Similar issues have been observed in other countries (Von der Fuhr 2015). Musicians often work unpaid or for less money in order to get exposure, even if this implies that they undercut each other (London's Music Industry Development Task Force 2014). In addition, this precarious nature of the job may affect the mental health of musicians (Gross and Musgrave 2017).

The weak income position of many musicians is the consequence of various developments. First of all, it is the result of changes in audience tastes and the ways in which people consume music. As discussed earlier, audiences seem less willing to pay a small entrance fee to see local emerging talent playing original music. As the Austin Music Census finds: 'A recurring theme from respondents is that a "cover charge" for local Austin musicians has all but evaporated for many venues, despite the high number of quality local artists' (Rowling 2015: 22). Secondly, musicians see their income stagnate or decline, while rents are rising in many cities (Rowling 2015). Thirdly, this challenge could be understood as a matter of demand and supply, where some markets seem to be saturated with musicians of particular genres (Deloitte Access Economics 2011). Finally, record labels are less inclined to make long-term investments in the development of artists (House of Commons' Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee 2019).

The reports that were analysed suggest a range of financial measures to improve the income position at the low end of the market. A price floor or fair pay scheme could prevent the practice in which musicians are undercutting each other by lowering their fee (Deloitte Access Economics 2011). Furthermore, grants, scholarships and subsidies can support musicians to build their career and get international touring experience. Finally, dedicated housing and insurances for musicians can help them to reduce their costs (Ansell and Barnard 2013). These different measures could be partly financed by, for example, using the revenues from music tourism (Rowling 2015).

Talent development

A healthy live music ecology has performance spaces of different sizes, allowing musicians to gradually build up their career by performing for growing audiences (Terrill et al. 2015; Behr et al. 2016). Furthermore, it should support different genres performed by and catering for diverse socio-economic communities. This prevents a situation in which performers of particular musical styles face prejudices, as happened to grime artists according to the report by the UK's House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2019). The mastering of a Music City report describes the importance of representing different genres as follows:

> A Music City is invariably built on a thriving live music scene. This means more than just having a large number of live performances. It means having a diversity of music offerings, as well as support for local and indigenous cultural expression, in addition to support for larger touring acts. Ideally, there is a balance between local artistic expression and international content. (Terrill et al. 2015: 18)

However, the diversity in live music ecologies is under pressure: the number of performance

spaces for upcoming artists are declining because of the struggles that small venues are facing (Muller and Carter 2016; Webster et al. 2018). Meanwhile, many bigger venues also offer less opportunities for young musicians to hone their skills. The professionalization of music venues implies that their operating costs rise, making it more difficult to take risks on emerging musicians (Van Vugt 2018). Of course, a professional crew and equipment improves the quality of venues, but also makes it more expensive to put on a show or to hire a performance space. This lack of venues for upcoming artists hinders talent development, which could eventually affect the future availability of high-quality performers (Deloitte Access Economics 2011; Terrill et al. 2015). In other words, big venues and festivals ultimately also benefit from a strong live music ecology that supports young artists.

A first set of solutions proposed in the report focuses on the training of musicians. Of course, next to performance spaces formal and informal music education is also of vital importance. Career guidance, consultation hours in a music office, mentoring and clinics can help to nurture talent. Such activities not only should focus on artistic growth but also involve negotiation skills, the financial side of the music industry and digital skills (Deloitte Access Economics 2011). A second set of solutions aims to create a supportive environment for beginning musicians so that they can develop and showcase their talent. It is important to have places where musicians can meet colleagues and other music professionals, such as networking events or co-working buildings (Terrill et al. 2015). Furthermore, it is helpful if local media pay sufficient attention to emerging talent (Deloitte Access Economics 2011; London's Music Industry Development Task Force 2014). Finally, the performance opportunities for musicians can be increased by involving them in activities of the city council or by organizing showcases and award shows (Van Vugt 2018; London's Music Industry Development Task Force 2014).

Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of challenges in the live music sector by taking an ecological approach. This approach understands live music events as constituted by networks of actors both inside (e.g. bookers) and outside (e.g. regulators) the music industry (Behr et al. 2016). Such live music ecologies are influenced by complex global and local dynamics that have an impact on their future development. As table 1 shows, this chapter has distinguished four sets of interrelated challenges, focusing on the planning and policy context, economic challenges, audience trends and musicians. Furthermore, it has discussed potential interventions to address these issues. An understanding of those challenges and solutions allows the sector to prepare for future developments.

In this chapter, we have discussed a range of macro-economic developments that have an impact on the business operations of live music organizations. These developments affect the future sustainability of the sector. Years of recession, budget cuts in the cultural sector and increasing competition between different organizations booking music (e.g. festivals and venues) have had a negative impact on the business operations of small venues in particular. In terms of the policy and regulation context, there are additional challenges such as regulatory pressure on live music organizations and issues connected to their spatial embedding. Gentrification and urban infill imply that many music stages are struggling with rising rents and maintaining their position in city centres. In this chapter, we have also stressed the necessity of engaging in new ways with audiences. We have discussed issues of inclusion and accessibility in the live music sector, affecting who can attend live music concerts. Furthermore, changing audience demographics and tastes require music organizations to adapt to the dynamic market conditions of a competitive

entertainment landscape. These various issues are ultimately felt by many musicians, who face declining opportunities to perform in small venues and are often insufficiently paid by music organizations.

These challenges suggest that the diversity in live music ecologies is at risk. The live music sector is highly unequal, with a small group of superstars and transnational corporations responsible for a large share of the revenues (Krueger 2019). This chapter echoes the concerns in other publications about the many issues at the grassroots level of the live music industry (Webster et al. 2018). The challenges for small venues and emerging musicians can hamper talent development and musical experimentation. The reports that were analysed for this chapter demonstrate, on the one hand, a growing awareness in policy circles of the different values of live music and, on the other hand, a recognition that these values cannot be taken for granted. Music boards and local music strategies are increasingly used to ensure that adequate local music policies are developed. In so doing, it is vital that the social and cultural value of live music are treated as important as its economic value (Van der Hoeven and Hitters 2019). A narrow orientation on profit maximization in the present negatively affects the opportunities for a new generation of musicians to emerge in the years to come. Talent development, audience development and urban planning for live music are essential strategies to invest in the future of this cultural form.

Live music ecologies are complex networks of actors in which developments at different levels affect how, where and what kind of concerts can be performed (Behr et al. 2016; Webster et al. 2018). These live music ecologies are dynamic, implying that continued innovation and research is required. Particular areas of interest that deserve more attention are changing consumption patterns of audiences, the talent pipeline and the ways in which the place of small venues can be

strengthened – both their place in the live music ecology and the physical place in rapidly changing cities. In the long-term, strong live music ecologies are essential to keep offering musicians and audiences rich opportunities to perform and enjoy music.

Acknowledgements

References

1. Ansell, Gwen and Helena Barnard (2013). *Song Lines: Mapping the South African Live Performance Landscape*, Johannesburg: Concerts SA.
2. Attitude Is Everything (2018). State of Access Report *2018. Ticketing without Barriers*, London: Attitude Is Everything.
3. Behr, Adam and Martin Cloonan (2018). 'Going Spare? Concert Tickets, Touting and Cultural Value', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 1–15. DOI: 10.1080/10286632.2018.1431224
4. Behr, Adam, Matt Brennan, Martin Cloonan, Simon Frith and Emma Webster (2016). 'Live Concert Performance: An Ecological Approach', *Rock Music Studies*, 1: 5–23.
5. Carter, Dave and Paul Muller (2015). *The Economic and Cultural Value of Live Music in Australia 2014*, University of Tasmania, Australian Live Music Office, South Australian government, City of Sydney: City of Melbourne and Live Music Office.
6. Cohen, Sara (2013). '"From the Big Dig to the Big Gig": Live Music, Urban Regeneration and Social Change in the European Capital of Culture 2008', in Carsten Wergin and Fabian Holt (eds), *Musical Performance and the Changing City: Post-industrial Contexts in Europe and the United States*, New York: Routledge, pp. 27–51.
7. Connell, John and Chris Gibson (2003). *Soundtracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place*, London and New York: Routledge.
8. Davyd, Mark, Andrew Russell, Auro Foxcroft, Dave Webster, Jeff Horton, Paul Broadhurst and Tom Kiehl (2015). *London's Grassroots Music Venues – Rescue Plan*, London: Greater London Authority.

9. De Verenigde Podiumkunstenfestivals (2018). 'De Verenigde Podiumkunstenfestivals starten met "Geef een Toegift"', https://podiumkunstenfestivals.com/2018/02/07/de-verenigde-podiumkunstenfestivals-starten-met-geef-een-toegift/, accessed 28 June 2018.

10. Deloitte Access Economics (2011). *The Economic, Social and Cultural Contribution of Venue-based Live Music in Victoria*, Melbourne, Australia: Arts Victoria.

11. Elbourne, Martin (2013). *Reverb: Adelaide's Live Music Movement, the Future of Live Music in South Australia*, Adelaide: The Don Dunstan Foundation.

12. Government of South Australia (2016). *Streamlining Live Music Regulation*, https://publicsector.sa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Streamlining-Live-Music-Regulation-Report.pdf, accessed 9 June 2019.

13. Gross, Sally Anne and George Musgrave (2017). *Can Music Make You Sick (part 2)? Qualitative Study and Recommendations*, London: MusicTank.

14. Holt, Fabian (2010). 'The Economy of Live Music in the Digital Age', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2: 243–61.

15. Holt, Fabian and Carsten Wergin (2013). 'Introduction: Musical Performance and the Changing City', in Fabian Holt and Carsten Wergin (eds), *Musical Performance and the Changing City: Post-industrial Contexts in Europe and the United States*, New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 1–24.

16. Homan, Shane (2015). 'The Popular Music Industries', in Kate Oakley and Justin O'Connor (eds), *The Routledge Companion to the Cultural Industries*, London: Routledge, pp. 157–67.

17. Homan, Shane (2017). '"Lockout" Laws or "Rock Out" Laws? Governing Sydney's Night-Time Economy and Implications for the "Music City"', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 4: 500–5014.

18. House of Commons' Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2019). *Live Music. Ninth Report of Session 2017–19*, *https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcumeds/733/733.pdf*, accessed 9 June 2019.

19. Hussain, Jordan (2019). 'Music Tech Startup, PEEX, Set to Launch an Interesting New Audio Device at Elton John's Concert on June 12–13', *Irish Tech News*, 12 June 2019, https://irishtechnews.ie/peex-launch-interesting-new-audio-device, accessed 12 September 2019.

20. Keychange (2018). *Keychange Manifesto: Recommendations for a Gender Balanced Music Industry*, London: PRS Foundation.

21. Klomp, Chris (2017). 'Nederlandse vrouwen gaan strijd aan met handtastelijke concertgangers', *Algemeen Dagblad*, 17 November 2017, https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/nederlandse-vrouwen-gaan-strijd-aan-met-handtastelijke-concertgangers~a224bac4/, accessed 12 September 2019.

22. Kronenburg, Robert (2019). *This Must Be the Place: An Architectural History of Popular Music Performance Venues*, New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.

23. Krueger, Alan B. (2019). *Rockonomics: A Backstage Tour of What the Music Industry Can Teach Us about Economics and Life*, New York: Currency.

24. Live Music Taskforce (2017). *Report and Recommendations to Help Drive the Gold Coast's Reputation as a Live Music-Friendly City*, http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/documents/bf/live-music-taskforce-report.pdf, accessed 9 June 2019.

25. London's Music Industry Development Task Force (2014). *London Music Strategy*, London, Ontario, Canada: London's Music Industry Development Task Force.

26. Muller, Paul and Dave Carter (2016). *The Economic and Cultural Contributions of Live Music Venues in the City of Sydney, 2016*, Tasmania: University of Tasmania.

27. Music Venue Trust (2015). *Report for City of Edinburgh Council: The Challenges for Live Music in the City*, http://musicvenuetrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Music-Venue-Trust-Edinburgh-Report.pdf, accessed 12 September 2019.

28. Music Venue Trust (2016). 'Music Venue Trust Receives the Endorsement of Sir Paul McCartney', http://musicvenuetrust.com/2016/10/music-venue-trust-receives-endorsement-sir-paul-mccartney/, accessed 14 August 2019.

29. O'Sullivan, Feargus (2016). 'A "Night Mayor" Is Transforming Amsterdam after Dark', *Citylab*, 29 January 2016, https://www.citylab.com/solutions/2016/01/night-mayor-amsterdam-mirik-milan/433893/, accessed 14 August 19.

30. Parkinson, Tom, Mark Hunter, Kimberly Campanello, Mike Dines and Gareth Dylan Smith (2015). *Understanding Small Music Venues: A Report by the Music Venues Trust*, London: Music Venues Trust.

31. Priel, Joe-Anne (2014). *Hamilton Music Strategy Report: Background Document*, Hamilton: Tourism and Culture Division of the City of Hamilton.

32. Ross, Sara (2017). 'Protecting Urban Spaces of Intangible Cultural Heritage and NightlifeCommunity Subcultural Wealth: International and National Strategies, the Agent of Change Principle, and Creative Placekeeping', *Western Journal of Legal Studies*, 1: 1–20.

33. Rowling, Nikki (2015). *The Austin Music Census, a Data Driven Assessment of Austin's Commercial Music Economy*, Austin: Titan Music Group, the City of Austin's Economic Development Departments' Music and Entertainment Division.

34. Rozbicka, Patrycja and Michael D. Conroy (2017). 'Live Music and Brexit's Cliffhanger', *Music Business Journal*, 1: 8–11.

35. Sanchez, Daniel (2018). 'The Live Music Industry Will Be Worth $31 Billion Worldwide by 2022', *Digital Music News*, October 26, https://www.digitalmusicnews.com/2018/10/26/latest-live-music-revenue-31billion-2022/, accessed 2 July 2019.

36. Terrill, Amy, Don Hogarth, Alex Clement and Roxanne Francis (2015). *The Mastering of a Music City*, http://www.ifpi.org/downloads/The-Mastering-of-a-Music-City.pdf, accessed 9 June 2019.

37. Van Dalen, Thomas, Harmen Van der Hoek and Frans Vreeke (2009). *Het Grote Poppodium Onderzoek 2008. Analyse van de Ontwikkelingen in de Bedrijfsvoering van de Nederlandse Poppodia*, Bussum and Amsterdam: Vreeke & Van Dalen.

38. Van der Hoeven, Arno and Erik Hitters (2019). 'The Social and Cultural Values of Live Music: Sustaining Urban Live Music Ecologies', *Cities*, 90: 263–71.

39. Van Vugt, Jasper (2018). *De waarde van pop 2.0. De Maatschappelijke Betekenis van Popmuziek*, Amsterdam: POPnl en Vereniging Nederlandse Poppodia en -Festivals.

40. Vermeeren, Hans (2019). 'De Effenaar Eindhoven wordt een "smart venue"', *Eindhovens Dagblad*, 11 June 2019, https://www.ed.nl/eindhoven/de-effenaar-eindhoven-wordt-een-smart-venue~a2151552/, accessed 12 September 2019.

41. Vertovec, S. (2007). 'Super-Diversity and Its Implications', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 6: 1024–54.

42. Von der Fuhr, Saskia (2015). *Pop, wat levert het op? Onderzoek naar inkomsten van popmusici in Nederland*, Tilburg: Cubiss.

43. Webster, Emma and George McKay (2016). *From Glyndebourne to Glastonbury: The Impact of British Music Festivals*, Norwich: University of East Anglia.

44. Webster, Emma, Matt Brennan, Aadam Behr, Martin Cloonan and Jake Ansel (2018). *Valuing Live Music: The UK Live Music Census 2017 Report*, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh/Live Music Exchange.

Table 1. Overview of challenges and potential solutions.

		Challenges	Solutions
Planning and policy context	Regulation	Restrictive licensing; regulatory pressure.	Red tape reduction; night mayors; music advisory boards and taskforces.
	Spatial embedding	Gentrification; unavailability of parks during festivals; impact on flora and fauna; noise issues; transportation issues.	Agent of Change principle; mediation between venues and neighbourhood; music zones; informing (prospective) neighbours; subsidies for noise attenuation and building compliance; permanent facilities for outdoor concerts.
Economic challenges	The competitive environment	The competitive entertainment landscape; competition between organizations booking music; market saturation; economic downturn; inter-urban and international competition.	Research on live music ecologies; collecting and sharing data; market studies; policies and funding schemes that support diversity within the live music ecology.

		Challenges	Solutions
	Business operations	Rising operating costs, rents and business rates; declining revenues; short-term lease contracts.	Music taskforces; music funds; micro-loans; tax breaks; a levy on tickets to support small venues; collaborative improvement of marketing and communication; staff training; diversifying revenue sources; supporting cultural entrepreneurship and innovation.
Audiences	Inclusion and accessibility	Sexual harassment and assault; lack of inclusivity; lack of events for under-18s; accessibility for disabled people; ticket reselling; rising ticket prices.	Sexual harassment policy; policies and facilities for disabled people; all-age events; ticketing policy and regulation; innovations in ticketing.
	Audience trends	Diminishing audiences for local and emerging talent; changing audience demographics and tastes; the competitive	Promoting local talent; innovation in live music concepts; marketing and audience targeting; research on changing audience trends.

		Challenges	Solutions
		entertainment landscape; declining alcohol sales.	
Musicians	Income position	Lack of income; mental health issues due to precarious labour; rising rents.	A price floor; fair pay scheme; grants, scholarships and subsidies; housing and insurance for musicians.
	Talent development	Lack of performing spaces for emerging talent; venues avoiding financial risks of booking emerging talent.	Formal and informal music education; career guidance; mentoring; networking events; co-working buildings; local media promoting shows of emerging talent.