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# Pandemic Disruptions: Emerging Themes and Stories Among Music Ecosystems

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## Abstract

COVID-19 disrupted our lives, in-person events, creative networks, and the ability to fully thrive in music communities around the world. Researchers had already identified that local music ecosystems were under stress due to structural and economic challenges. This study analyzes beliefs and local transformations after the first year of the current pandemic based on the stories from 128 subjects—music community participants, change agents, and local leaders around the world—who participated in twenty-six focus group panel sessions during a three-day virtual conference in April 2021 and nine separate and specific geographic focus group sessions, recorded March through September 2021. Through these recorded conversations, we gathered insights into their differing challenges, transformations, and emerging music organizations. These documented discussions generated real-time rich qualitative research about changes around the world. Through qualitative analysis of the resulting data, we identified themes, differing regional models, and areas for future research. We also created a video archive to support comparative research for anyone looking to gain insights into our transforming current music environments.

Keywords: music cities, music geography, COVID-19, resilience, creative and cultural industries, live music, venues, cultural policy, narrative analysis, comparative policy analysis, music ecosystem

## Introduction

The first COVID-19 case was reported in China on December 30, 2019 and researchers reported the first U.S. case on January 21, 2020.<sup>1</sup> By March 2020, governments and industry leaders had canceled large live events and, in some regions, began a life-changing series of lockdowns barring gatherings, travel, border crossings, and in-person work in many sectors. A 2020 *MEIEA Journal* article captured both the initial music industry actions in winter and spring 2020 and impacts across the world, as well as the convening of the first Amplify Music Virtual Conference in April 2020, which brought together more than thirty music industry organizations around the world to discuss impacts.<sup>2</sup> At that time, community music ecosystem leaders looked forward optimistically, and live music stakeholders pushed out event calendars, speculating that concerts and in-person events would resume in late 2020 and into 2021.<sup>3</sup>

Impacts, however, continued. Despite vaccines becoming available in late 2020 and reaching 300 million doses a day administered by mid-2021, weekly death rates globally stayed above 50,000 until spring 2022.<sup>4</sup> New strains of COVID-19 supplanted prior strains, with expansions of Alpha, Delta, and Omicron in the second half of 2021 and into 2022, now including countries like Japan, Australia, and much of China, which had previously mitigated COVID-19 with restricted borders into re-closings and restrictions. As of this writing in May 2022, China continues its zero COVID strategy with new lockdowns in Shanghai and Beijing. Up to this point, more than 6 million people have died of COVID-19 globally with more than 525 million reported cases.<sup>5</sup> In the U.S., almost 83 million people have had COVID-19 and more than 1 million have died.<sup>6</sup> COVID-19 continues to spread, though now with less virulent strains, and concerts are still being canceled as artists and bands test positive.<sup>7</sup>

Our research captured stories from local music change agents one year into the current pandemic. We analyzed 128 subject stories from fifteen countries and twenty-four U.S. states during 2021. We identified common themes from conversations with key leaders and stakeholders within these music ecosystems and found five common themes as we explored differences and similarities in actions, outcomes, and new understandings.

## Pre-COVID-19 Music Ecosystem Research

Before the emergence of COVID-19, researchers had long studied community music ecosystems, geographies, and spaces by genre, history,

and social structures. For this research, we are framing music ecosystems as the complex systems layers of music geographies, including scenes, cities, regions, and countries. Research in music ecosystem studies as complex systems began its modern growth in the early 2000s (see Table 1).<sup>8</sup>

Study Type	Sample and Core Research
Creative Cities and “Music Cities” Meta Studies	Researchers have explored the relationships with local economics, growth (Florida 2012), and comparative ecosystem structures (Terrill et al. 2015).
Individual Music Cities Studies	Research organizations have created ecosystems to deliver “Music City” credentials and consulting, connecting cities in peer communities and setting expectations for systemic change (Sound Diplomacy 2019; Baker 2017, 2019; Creative Footprint 2019). Creative Footprint, based out of Vibe Lab, uniquely built a crowdsourced research model that reported on the venue economy with interwoven stakeholders.
Cultural Economy and Urban Geography Studies	These studies have looked at patterns of growth, erosion, economics, and systems behavior (Straw 1991; Nash and Carney 1996; Hall 2000; Hospers 2003; Scott 2006; Hudson 2006; Pratt 2008; Flew 2008; Falck et al. 2018; Seijas 2020).

Table 1. Pre-COVID-19 community music ecosystem research.

In preparation for a presentation at the 2020 South by Southwest Conference, we examined the themes and processes for the individual city studies. Researchers published more than 70 individual city and region studies from 2008 through 2021. Most of the studies detailed preexisting conditions and challenges of a region before COVID-19. We explored this regional research literature to identify previous themes and stated ecosystem challenges before the pandemic and to help us identify new themes of change and transformation. Many reports concluded that there were chinks in the regional ecosystems and recommended changes to them to build support and good health. Those issues surfaced and expanded in our 2021 focus groups after a year of pandemic impact.

## Research Design and Challenges

### Central Question for 2021

With a year passing from the start of the pandemic, we took the opportunity to gather music industry regional leaders and ask what challenges, revelations, and solutions were emerging locally around the world in the year since the start of the pandemic.

### Methodology

This qualitative mixed-methods study explored themes and narratives from music community change agents and leaders from fifteen countries. We had two sets of qualitative primary sources: 1) publicly available online documents and 2) focus groups we recorded at two conferences and in subsequent regional interviews. In April 2020 we convened and recorded panels from a broad international group of speakers and panelists representing more than thirty countries. We used the findings from the 2020 conference as data to design an April 2021 conference, and to develop initial themes for this analysis.

For this segment of research, we recorded 35 sessions featuring stories and interactions from 128 music community leaders in which they shared thoughts about their businesses, relationships, and communities. The main sessions were held in April 2021 and individual sessions were held from March through September 2021. These stories were limited by the semi-structured interview prompts from the moderators and/or interviewers, various time limits, the framings of the topic sessions in the conference, and the comments of the individual focus-group participants. We have built an archive of shared stories and various types of narratives, threads of newer stories, and patterns that emerged from that time in the pandemic, though we are certainly sometimes missing stories that no one mentions.

### Recruitment Process

For the 2021 focus groups and panel discussions, we invited 262 participants, reaching out to participants of the 2020 Amplify Music Conference and more than 45 organizations that the principal investigators already worked with. We started with this convenience sample and then invited those participants to invite other participants, as a limited snowball sample. We were limited to the number of participants (109) that we

could fit into thirty-minute sessions across the three days of the virtual conference as well as who we could bring together for the thirty-minute geographic sessions (22 subjects) we continued to convene from March through September of 2021.

This recruitment and recording strategy had benefits and flaws. We sought diverse perspectives and minority points of view, and instead were limited by scheduling and recruitment method challenges. We had a mostly white subject base, with strong concentrations in Southern California and Colorado, where both research leads reside. We reached 41% female and nonbinary participants by intentionally recruiting female participants and including at least one female subject in most sessions. We did encounter dominant voices from certain sectors and companies that potentially added bias to the samples. We also experienced a performance element: these sessions were in front of online audiences, recorded, and shared on the public internet. As a result, we had a fair number of individuals voicing what they thought they were supposed to say for their professional roles and communities. Participants often spoke on panels with others who shared similar worldviews and experiences. As a result, these themes are indicative and embedded in certain types of community stories as starting material for future researchers exploring this unique time in music history.

In April 2021, we ran and recorded 26 thirty-minute focus groups/discussions/videos with 109 speakers across three days. We followed from March through September 2021 with nine thirty-minute interviews with community leaders in music and governance (Table 2).

Date	Region
March 23, 2021	Colorado, U.S.A.
April 7, 2021	India
April 30, 2021	Japan
May 13, 2021	Australia
July 7 and 28, 2021	Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.
July 29, 2021	NOLA (New Orleans), Louisiana, U.S.A.
September 10, 2021	Northwest Arkansas, U.S.A.
September 16, 2021	Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.

Table 2. Geographic community focus group dates and regions (in order of recording).

## Timing and Challenges of Regional Interviews

We simplified the regional interview design and completed nine sessions in eight regions. We had planned to gather and record local leaders across twenty different geographies from March to September 2021. We designed this plan in early 2021 before the Alpha, Delta, and Omicron variants cases, illustrated in Figure 1, emerged around the world. To complicate scheduling and real-life matters for our subjects, regions we were analyzing were experiencing new waves of COVID-19. One such region, India, was experiencing a new outbreak of the Alpha variant even as we were interviewing subjects there in early April 2021.

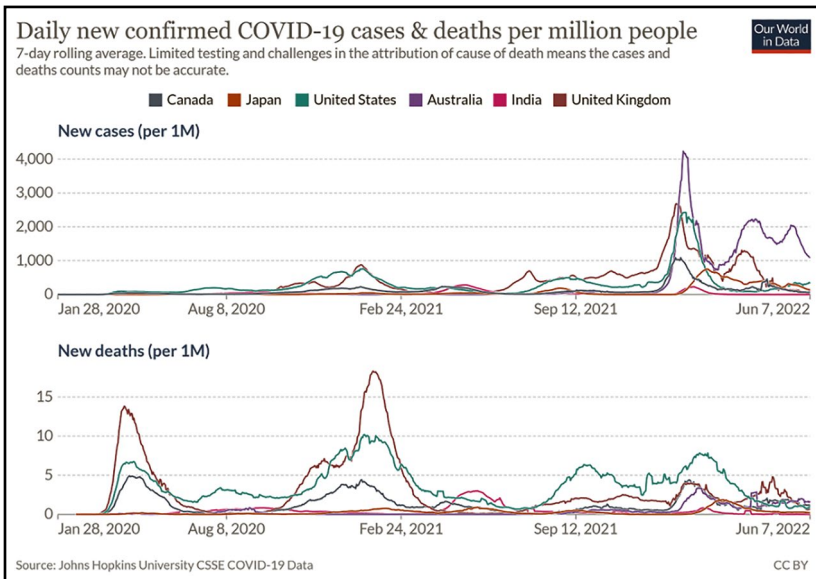


Figure 1. Daily New Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Deaths Per Million People. Source: Our World in Data, Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data. Creative Commons (CC BY 4.0) chart.

In addition, complex participant and interviewer schedules challenged our efforts to get all community parties on a single remote session. For example, we shifted in July and September to recording individual subjects separately for research on the Nashville and Los Angeles ecosystems. For other cities, we stopped scheduling sessions after attempts dragged out past our planned scheduling window.

As a result of these challenges, the results reflect the smaller samples taken, which don't include the full spectrum of stakeholders we wanted. We also had concentrations in our groups of one to three people who may have come from similar perspectives or areas. All three subjects in Northwest Arkansas, for example, worked with CACHE (Creative Arkansas Community Hub & Exchange), financed by the Walton Foundation, and had similar overall points of view. Similarly, the New Orleans panelists were recruited by one of the participants and were working together in the New Orleans Music Economy Initiative (NOME). These local change agents were on the ground level and shared strong examples and view-points. Future research can go beyond these design constraints and expand to additional and diverse voices within the different geographies.

### Breakdown of Event and Regional Session Subjects by Geographic Region

The subjects who spoke at the conference and/or regional sessions lived in 15 countries and represented strong concentrations. 94 of the 128 subjects (73.4%) lived in the United States. The next largest concentrations are 4 Indian and 4 U.K. subjects. Broader continent-level concentrations are shown in Table 3.

<b>Continent</b>	<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Percent</b>
North America (2)	101	79%
Europe (7)	14	11%
Africa and Middle East (2)	2	2%
Australia (1)	3	2%
Asia (3)	8	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3. Subject and speaker breakout by continent.

Though 24 U.S. states are represented in the sessions, we have high concentrations from Southern California (32% of U.S. subjects) and Colorado (15% of U.S. subjects), due in part to recruitment by our two principals. All of the California subjects were from the greater Los Angeles region. Further breakouts are detailed in the endnotes.<sup>9</sup>

### Concentrations and Multiple Job Roles

Most of our local music industry participants held multiple roles in the music industry and related fields. We identified the primary job roles that our participants stated in their correspondence with us and in public



documents. We had strong representation from academia and education (30), government and policy organizations (17), and trade associations (15), with lighter-than-target representation from venues, festivals, and artists as the primary role (7).<sup>10</sup> Many participants maintained three to five roles and represented sectors including government, artist, educator, trade association, marketing, managing, venue operation, radio, consultant, and service functions.

We had few speakers from large companies, despite their dominant footprints across the local music and digital music sectors across the world. This was both intentional and accidental—guests from large organizations who we did invite did not want to speak on the record.

## Research Design and Analysis Tools

Team members from the conference and podcasts recorded the sessions as both audio and video remotely with Zoom. We transcribed the audio recordings with Otter.ai, an AI-driven transcription and collaboration online service.<sup>11</sup> We reviewed the transcriptions for accuracy of both word choice and speaker identification, which was very strong with the exception of proper nouns. As a tool to assist us in analyzing these unstructured transcription texts, we used MAXQDA, a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) product.<sup>12</sup> We used MAXQDS to code word and pattern repetition, which helped us identify, track, code, and search stories, names, phrases, and themes. From repeated exposure to the actual recordings, playback as media, coding, reading, and tracking stories told by participants, we chunked the narratives into core themes and patterns, as well as pulled out central comments to illustrate these themes.

## Word and Concept Frequency

Word frequency analysis is a search and recall tool helpful for researchers to confirm and illustrate repeating patterns and social norms in subjects' stories. Certain phrases showed up much more frequently than others and tied in with the main themes that surfaced.<sup>13</sup> *Change, support, government,* and *creative/creativity* were top subjects throughout most of the sessions. *Hope, opportunity,* and related phrases were strongly represented. Of note, music creators were frequently spoken of as *musicians* (119 mentions) or *artists* (719 mentions). *Songwriters* (21 mentions), *performers* (9 mentions), *engineers* (12 mentions), and other roles were dis-

cussed with less frequency but in a context that they should be included in regional solutions as well. *Venues* (424) and *festivals* (127) were mentioned frequently in policy, anecdotes, and other examples. *Education* had been a topic in many of the pre-COVID-19 studies mentioned above and was mentioned in 24 of the 35 conversations. It may have been greater due to the strong representation of educators in our participants. *Streaming* was mentioned in 25 sessions and is a recurring element in themes below.

## Themes and Threads: Challenges and Solutions

Using the quantitative analysis tools to affirm frequency and patterns and then connecting those elements, we recognized broader insights. We found shared stories and types of narratives, threads of newer stories and patterns that were emerging at that time in the pandemic, and sometimes missing stories that no one mentioned.

Five core themes repeated in multiple sessions and were intertwined with most of the narratives:

- Local and Global Change and Disruption
- Government Response and Relations
- Emergent Organizing
- New Opportunities
- Digital Acceleration

We expand on these themes below in general order of frequency of comments, though not specifically in order of importance or impact. From the thirty-five sessions overall, we found many elements of similarities and differences intertwining with these five themes. We will highlight discoveries from the themes and detail differences and similarities between the geographic sessions.

### Theme: Local and Global Change and Disruption

It was no surprise that nearly all participants spoke of change, disruption, uncertainty, and local impacts on many facets of their music communities. We heard less about those financial elements and more about the systemic damage to each region's core business elements.

For most music community members, much of their income stems from live performance. Where lockdowns and forced closures led to venue closures and show postponements, this was particularly devastating. Colorado's state music ambassador Stephen Brackett talked about the al-

ternatives he and others were forced to explore when they “slow[ed] the machine down,” adding that “our industry is built on momentum.” Given the increased long-term planning for touring and festivals in recent years, the uncertainty of when borders would open or what densities would be allowed at what times also disrupted contracts and revenue shares. This was an issue for musicians as well. Australia, Canada, and Japan were impacted by border closings eliminating travel for touring as well as export markets for their artists that connect with touring.

The live music disruption wasn't merely an issue for musicians and promoters. Reid Wick, a New Orleans-based musician and Membership & Industry Relations representative for the Recording Academy, added a reminder in our conversation that, “It's an invisible industry in a lot of ways because everybody can identify with the person on the stage... what they don't realize is that for that one person on the stage, there may be one hundred people behind the scenes that are making that show happen.” Chris Cobb, president of Nashville's Music Venue Alliance, observed the longer-term effect of the sudden shifts, mentioning that “we saw a lot of folks move on, we've seen some folks who still live here, but just didn't want to come back. And we've seen some folks who came back and then decided that they didn't want to stay.” He saw the situation as confounding, adding that “we're paying more than we used to, than we did pre-pandemic, and we still got folks who just said, you know, this isn't for me anymore.”

Indeed, the change and disruption in live music had been felt throughout the various music ecosystems. For example, Amit Gurbaxani, a journalist who covers the Indian music industry, stated that “it's like the movie *Groundhog Day*... [doing] the same thing over and over again.” He also called it the “new abnormal.” Our Indian panelists anticipated continued waves of opening and closing and conflicting and/or shifting approaches. Festivals were not coming back quickly, yet raves requiring masks were happening, but they were serving drinks. No social distancing was really happening. They mentioned artists they work with doing events despite a call for no underground events until the pandemic had subsided.

In addition to the local consumer draw to music-related gatherings, communities like New Orleans and Nashville had been known for the tourism industry that intertwined deeply with their music businesses. In fact, one of our Nashville subjects noted that it was difficult to get the local government to pay attention to the arts as other than a resource for tourism.

They referred to the “Tennessee on Me” program, initiated by the governor in July 2021, which essentially paid for people to come to Tennessee as tourists.<sup>14</sup> The Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation had also established a local grant program and a local music streaming series that paid non-musicians who worked on it. In our New Orleans session Reid Wick mentioned, regarding tourism, that the pandemic had “really shined a spotlight on how important music is to that part of the economy.”

It is worth noting some panelists felt in many ways that pre-COVID-19 challenges in their ecosystem still existed or may have even been exacerbated. For example, Chris Zacher, at the time the Executive Director of Levitt Pavilion in Denver, Colorado, said that “There was a large set of challenges that existed for us pre-COVID[-19]. You know, the main ones are development, gentrification, rising rents, rising cost of living. These are major issues that were affecting us all, pre-COVID[-19]. Unfortunately, we saw an acceleration of many of those issues during COVID[-19], while the creative working-class communities were fighting to survive, those factors that were already negatively impacting our communities were able to thrive. And so that’s a major, major issue going forward.”

## Theme: Government Response and Relations

Most of the pre-COVID-19 regional research reports cited minimal or thin support or safety nets from local governments in the United States. The pandemic became a stress test of those structures and relationships. While in some cases prior structures and lobbying had existed, as they did in the U.K. and with many grant structures in Canada, other government parties became the subject during the crisis. Government response and support ranged from payments for venues, payments for jobs, and payments of insurance to almost no support at all. Several of our subjects offered particularly notable comments on their situation.

Some regions lacked government support overall. Subjects in our India research made no references to any type of support from national government or trade organizations. Ben Johnson, who then was Performing Arts Director for the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, shared comments on a lack of city government support, a continuing challenge of a city with “one mayor and fifteen mini-mayors.”

Other government entities stepped up in specific ways to support specific sectors and parties. Facing extensive lobbying efforts, in Decem-

ber of 2020 both houses of the United States Congress had passed the Save Our Stages Act to support venues as part of a \$900 billion relief package.<sup>15</sup> Tak Umezawa, chairperson of the innovation center CIC Japan, shared that there was a Tokyo government response to support music venues up to \$15,000 per month, which helped small restaurants and venues but initially was not enough to support large clubs, though the Tokyo Metropolitan Government amended the program. He said during our interview that the Industry Association of Music Clubs was lobbying for more support. Another panelist in our Japan session, however, was critical of the fact that there was support for certain genres of government-approved export music, like anime, but not for the rest of music.

In the U.K., policy relationships prior to the pandemic made an easier path to better government support in the crisis. Mark Davyd, CEO of Music Venue Trust, discussed how his organization “had already been working with (the) government in the U.K. for six years. So, when this came along, that was the basis of a conversation in place. It wasn’t quite as difficult for the government to understand what the challenges and what the problems might be. We did have a body of evidence about the economic impacts and the number of jobs, the likely outcome of...the closure of these venues not just for themselves, but on their local economies.”

### Theme: Emergent Organizing

In addition to government responses, national and local music leaders in many music communities stepped up during the pandemic. They utilized existing organizations and established new ones to build scale and voice to seek funding relief from national and regional governments. Additionally, these sector-leading organizations provided information and support for each other as stresses and uncertainties continued. In the United States, a new organization called NIVA (National Independent Venue Association) successfully brought together more than two thousand venues to conduct research, lobby Congress with musicians and community members, and secure the Save Our Stages Grant also known as the Shattered Venue Operators Grant (SVO).<sup>16</sup>

NIVA launched quickly from extended personal social networks. Chris Cobb from Nashville shared NIVA’s starting point: “So, you know, I got a text last March from Dayna Frank that said, ‘Hey, you need to jump on this town hall this Thursday that Marauder is hosting.’ Now, this was a week into the pandemic, right? And, and so I did...and NIVA was formed

very quickly out of those weekly town halls.” Participants in the sessions also led or were engaged with several of NIVA’s regional chapters, including the Colorado Independent Venue Association, Washington Nightlife Music Association, and Music Venue Alliance Nashville. These entities continue to provide regional leadership and collaboration.

Some activism stemmed from certain geographic communities, and groups benefited from preexisting organizations. The Music Venue Trust in the U.K. and Vibe Lab based out of Berlin would be two such examples. The Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation had already been speaking with GNO (Economic Development for Greater New Orleans) and all three of our participants from the NOLA session were actively involved in NOME (the New Orleans Music Economy Initiative), already working together in 2018, prior to the pandemic.<sup>17</sup> European communities had also previously created Music Moves Europe starting in 2015, as noted by Shain Shapiro from the Center for Music Ecosystems.<sup>18</sup>

### Theme: New Opportunities

New opportunities were mentioned in 33 of the 35 focus groups from the conference and regional sessions. Many of the regional music ecosystems were enhanced by a combination of virtual events and new streaming opportunities in production, education, distribution, social media, influencer work, and more. Innovative local performance popups, already popular pre-pandemic, have become like the ghost kitchens and food trucks, at times both connecting the community and creating new competition for existing venues and their fan bases. After lockdowns, live music producers shifted into outdoor venues for dining and community music. There had been a proliferation of livestreamed performances within online platforms built to support them as well as throughout social media networks. In our conversation with Chris Cobb, a venue owner in Nashville, he even referred to a streaming series that he and others developed in conjunction with the Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation. He recalled that they had streamed around fifty shows from fifteen venues, with two or three bands playing each show.

Sometimes our subjects mentioned observations that they didn’t necessarily consider a trend at the time but were worth noting as a possibility. Australian Leanne de Souza, co-owner of Nightlife Music and Chair at Electronic Music Conference said that, “Anecdotally, both as a consumer and talking to managers and promoters...punters are happily paying 20 or

30% more in the ticket price, and they weren't pre-COVID[-19]...if that becomes that we've added some value to that live experience, because it was taken away that'll be really interesting. And if managers and booking agents etc., can hold their own on their pricing, I think that will be a trend."

Another observed trend involved an increased focus and accelerated learning curve for lesser-known artists to distribute content online. Combined with shifts in consumer entertainment, this trend connected artists with democratization of access and selection for consumers. For example, Ritnika Nayan from CD Baby and Downtown Music India, shared that in her country, "Everybody started recording music, and everybody started releasing music. So that was great. The other side of it was that India is ruled by Bollywood, and the majority of our music comes from Bollywood, you know, like 90% comes from Bollywood and regional film music. Because of the lockdown, there were no films coming out. And because of that, independent artists who were releasing music got to, you know, kind of shine, they got to be placed on playlists, because they weren't competing with Bollywood anymore...it was a blessing in disguise."

### Theme: Digital Acceleration and Connectivity

The drastic increase in digital content availability to which Ms. Nayan referred relates to another observed theme. Production and distribution of music using at-home digital audio workstations, as well as time to create, caused a boom in sales of instruments and digital music. She confirmed that sales of digital tracks in India increased 600% during the first year of the pandemic.

In addition to the increased volume of new distributed digital content, the shift to virtual connectivity to replace in-person music activities impacted communities in different ways. Music education, as one example, shifted quickly to online tools and became a new source of revenue for now-home artists. Though some educators stated challenges, during one of our April 2021 sessions, California-based composer Richard Niles noted that online instruction "kind of concentrates your mind on the screen and you're now talking to somebody, and they feel it, especially with private teaching online. They feel very free to talk about their attitudes and their own personal view. So, I think this is all a very interesting area." Many creators took the time to learn new digital skills, spend time with new audiences in virtual and social media arenas, and build that influencer base into new fans in different geographies or with new brand partners.

## Conclusion

At the time of this writing, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact local music ecosystems with uncertainty, closed businesses, job changes, new competitors, and shifts in creator and fan behavior. While we of course know more now than we did in early 2020, new revelations certainly lie ahead. This research has resulted in an archiving and recognition of stories and emerging themes from one year into the pandemic. Recordings shared and contrasted how community leaders saw and coped with the new realities of their music ecosystems, built on top of regional pre-pandemic challenges. Geographical and cultural contrasts, by their nature, will continue to impact how each region's systems and policies respond to COVID-19 spikes, variants, etc., as we observed in our conversations. As the pandemic continues, research of this type surely must as well.

Regional leaders still need data and recognition of “silver linings” in the ongoing transformation and to look to each other for support and inspiration, as was noted in many of the NIVA-related conversations. Almost all of our participating regions, for example, seemed to look to other cities (e.g., Austin, Texas, which was repeatedly mentioned) as an aspiration and model for change and policy.

Though efforts grew to connect ideas, build new organizations, and patch some safety nets, lingering pre-pandemic problems continue and remain to be solved. Diversity, equity, and inclusion in music communities remain systemic challenges. Professional development for local musicians may now be more visible but remains a gap in many regions. Social safety nets—noted as missing or weak in pre-pandemic research reports—proved to be needed and fragile in both our sessions and in much of the other research and reports since. The challenges identified in pre-pandemic regional music ecosystems received a jolt—and in most cases funding—and remain to be built upon in continuing recovery around the world.

## Further Research

We shared 128 stories from front-line music change agents from a stress test to local music globally, one year into the pandemic in 2021. Now, in 2022, we encourage future researchers to connect these 2021 stories and themes with pre- and post-pandemic reports, events, and narratives, to explore the impacts on individual geographic areas and emerging trends. With more hindsight, future researchers can explore the effectiveness and longevity of these changes and shifts. They also can drill down



into other regions and compare results based on actions and activism in different communities. In addition, regional leaders can work with these narratives and shared stories from other cities to build new support systems and compare ideas between regions, continuing some of the work that stemmed from connections at both Amplify Music conferences in 2020 and 2021.

We have made the focus group recordings and other materials from 2020 and 2021 available for student and academic researchers through the program website, YouTube, and podcast releases. As part of the process of using these materials with music industry students for classes and independent studies, we worked with a graduate intern who built a “how to” guide for student researchers to explore their music ecosystem and reach out to experts and leaders. The authors can make this how-to guide, transcripts, and summaries of publicly available regional economic and COVID-19 data from seven countries available upon request.

## In Thanks

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## Endnotes

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3. Dave Brooks, “Everything You Need to Know About How—And When—Concerts Will Return,” *Billboard*, April 1, 2021, <https://www.billboard.com/pro/live-music-concerts-return-guide-faq/>. Also Callie Ahlgrim, “Every Tour, Concert, and Music Festival That’s Been Canceled or Postponed Due to the Coronavirus Outbreak,” *Insider*, April 1, 2020, <https://www.insider.com/music-events-festivals-tours-concerts-canceled-postponed-coronavirus-2020-3>.
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7. For example, in May 2022, concerts were canceled due to illness by Pearl Jam in Sacramento and Las Vegas (Glenn Rowley, “Pearl Jam Cancels Shows in Sacramento & Las Vegas due to COVID-19,” *Billboard*, May 18, 2022, <https://www.billboard.com/music/music-news/pearl-jam-cancels-sacramento-las-vegas-concerts-covid-1235073100/>).
8. We have assembled a more complete list of music ecosystem literature at <https://bit.ly/music-scenes-grid>.
9. State representation by study subjects:

U.S. State	Number of Subjects	Percentage of U.S. Subjects
California	30	32%
Colorado	14	15%
New York	8	9%
Louisiana	7	7%
Tennessee	5	5%
Washington, DC	4	4%
Arkansas	3	3%
Texas	3	3%
16 More States	20	
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	

10. Primary job roles of subjects in additional detail:

Primary Role	Number of Subjects
Academic	20
Government and Policy	17
Trade Association/Conference	15
Education	10
Consultancy	9
Technology Company	9
Venue/Festivals/Events	7
Health and Wellness	6
Nonprofit/NGO	6
Manager	5
Artist	4
Journalist	4
Radio	4
Marketing	3
Researcher	2
Service Provider	2
A&R	1
Label	1
Lawyer	1
Licensing	1
Performing Rights Organization	1

11. Otter.ai (<https://otter.ai>) is a speech-to-text transcription and translation application that uses artificial intelligence and machine learning. Otter.ai also captions for live speakers and generates written transcriptions of the speeches. We instead used its features to upload session recordings and separate speakers by voice identification, as well as import into MaxQDA's document workflow.
12. Researchers around the world use MAXQDA (<https://www.maxqda.com/>) from Verbi Software for qualitative and mixed methods research data management, excerpting/coding, and analysis. MAXQDA was created in the 1980s and is used by thousands of researchers in more than 150 countries.

13. Additional detail on frequency of phrases by mentions and by session:

Word(s)	Mentions	Sessions
Artist	719	34
City, Cities	471	30
Year	455	35
Venue	424	33
Community	416	35
COVID or Pandemic	284	35
Chang-	230	35
Support	227	32
Opportunit-	191	33
Govern-	199	26
Creativ-	175	32
Organization	170	28
Stream-	161	25
Open	159	29
Cultur-	146	27
Federal, National	136	29
Local	136	28
Festival	127	25
Hope	126	31
Musician	119	30
Last/Past Year	118	32
Educat-	114	24
History or Past	108	32

14. Tennessee on Me program, <https://www.visitmusiccity.com/tennesseonme>.
15. Save our Stages Act, <https://liveforlivemusic.com/news/save-our-stages-act-passed-congress/>.
16. Ibid. The SOS grant became the Shuttered Venue Operator Grant Program, administered by the U.S. Small Business Association.
17. NOME, <https://gnoinc.org/business-climate/initiatives/music/>.
18. Music Moves Europe, <https://www.emc-imc.org/cultural-policy/music-moves-europe/>.

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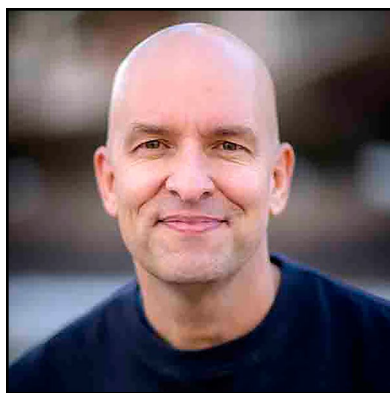
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