

Teaching the Live Music Industry: A Hands-On Approach

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View the Summit presentation at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbkeznGndz4>

Abstract

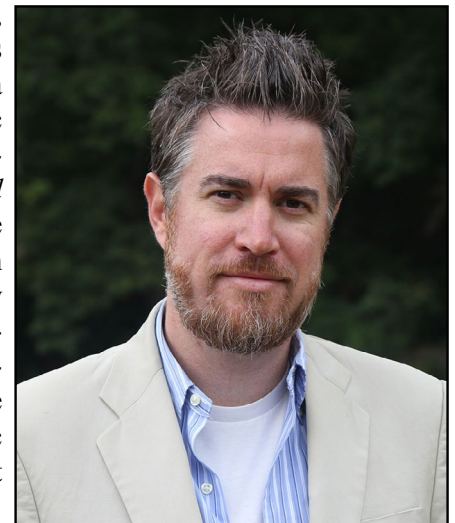
Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the live concert industry had been growing exponentially for many years generating five times as much revenue in 2018 as it did in 1998. U.S. live concert revenue topped \$10 billion in 2018, more than half the revenue generated by the recorded music industry. While the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

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

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

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

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





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