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# LOBAL STADIUM REPORT

## 2025

LAUNCH EDITION

The first publication dedicated to global stadium touring

**NEW RULES**
How Dua Lipa made the leap to stadiums

**CRUNCHING NUMBERS**
Ed Sheeran's globetrotting tour

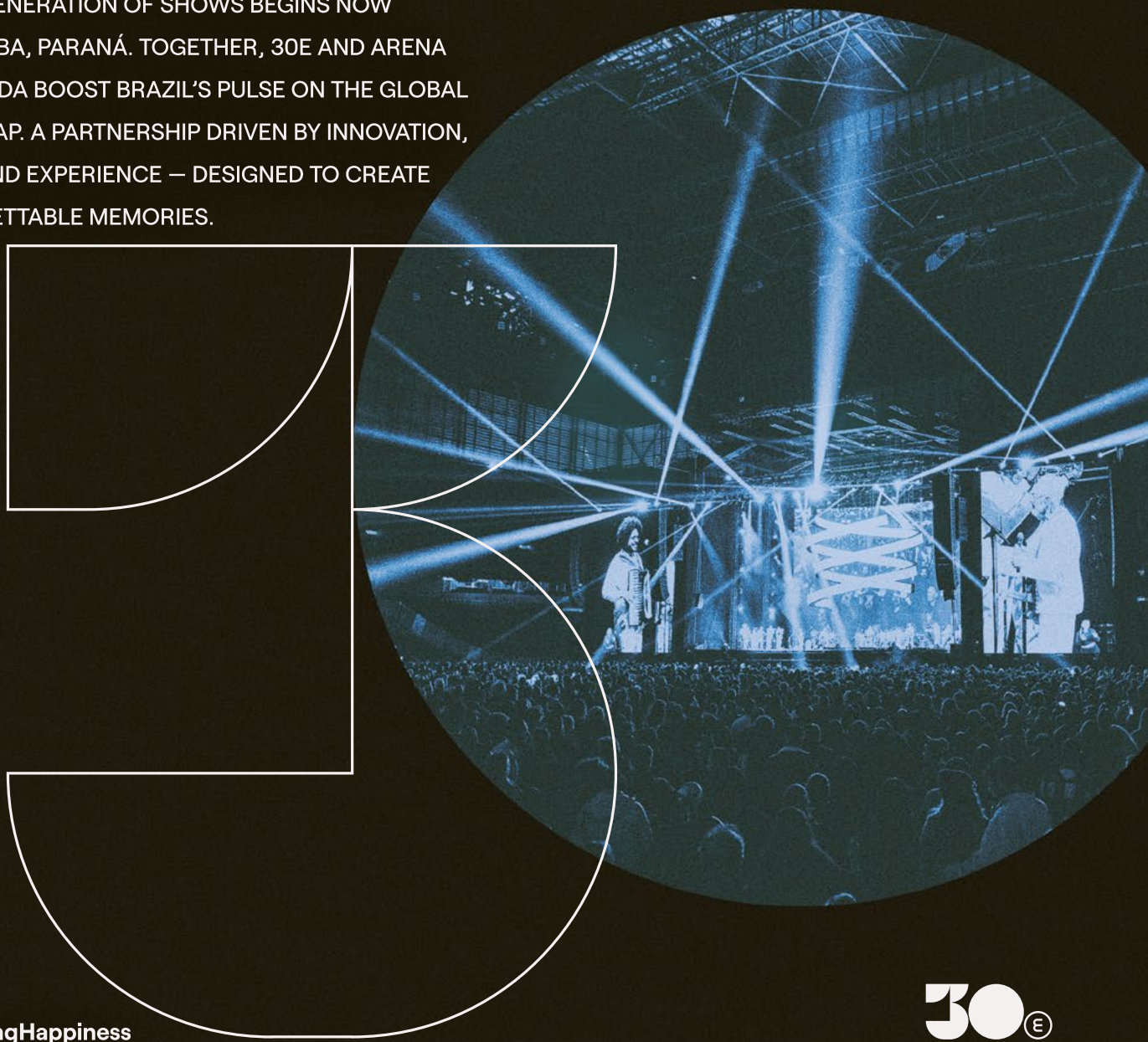
**STADIUM STATS**
The explosive growth of stadium concerts in numbers



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A NEW GENERATION OF SHOWS BEGINS NOW IN CURITIBA, PARANÁ. TOGETHER, 30E AND ARENA DA BAIXADA BOOST BRAZIL'S PULSE ON THE GLOBAL MUSIC MAP. A PARTNERSHIP DRIVEN BY INNOVATION, SCALE AND EXPERIENCE — DESIGNED TO CREATE UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES.



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# GLOBAL STADIUM REPORT 2025


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Beyoncé performs at London's Tottenham Hotspur Stadium
© Live Nation / Rachel Hemmings

# THE STADIUM ERA

Stadium shows have never been so popular, with record residencies and unprecedented global demand. So how much bigger will it get? **Eamonn Forde** reports.

Hello, Wembley!" will be roared by more singers to more audience members than ever before this summer as Wembley Stadium (capacity 90,000) welcomes over 2m people to concerts by Coldplay (ten nights), Oasis (seven nights), Dua Lipa (two nights), Lana Del Rey, Guns N' Roses, and Linkin Park. Most stadiums around the world are seeing a phenomenal boom in the number of shows they can put on due to the complex and serendipitous alignment of different factors: more artists touring, more new headliners coming through, improved audience experiences, social media-powered bragging rights exacerbating FOMO, and city-based mega-shows being seen by many as preferable to, and more affordable than, weekend festivals.

"[There is] potentially a post-Covid thirst for big experiences, [where] international acts can play fewer shows but to larger audiences while on global tours," says Jan Chadwick, head of event programming at the 62,500-cap London Stadium, which has shows this year from Sam Fender and Iron Maiden.

"The demand for dates in a stadium like ours is growing, so we expect to see an increase in stadium concerts in the next few years," adds Hidde Salverda, director of operations at the 68,000-cap Johan Cruijff ArenA. "Before Covid, there were some years where we had only one or two concerts. For us, the market is getting better."

Putting the boom here in context, Darren Burden, executive director of the just-opened Kai Tak Sports Park in Hong Kong, says the venue hosted 15 large-scale concerts between the start of March and the end of May and will have 50 music shows by the end of the year. "The globalisation of music trends allows artists to attract diverse audiences around the world, while the influence of social media increases intercultural exposure," he says. "These allow artists to cultivate fanbases that can fill stadiums."

This is resulting in something akin to a gold rush in the stadium sector. "The financial opportunities from ticket and merchandise sales make these events appealing for artists and promoters," Burden says. It is also proving to be a catalyst for what we might term "stadium tourists," where big shows

pull in audiences from multiple countries, seen most obviously in Taylor Swift's six-night residency at the National Stadium in Singapore last March, her only shows in Southeast Asia.

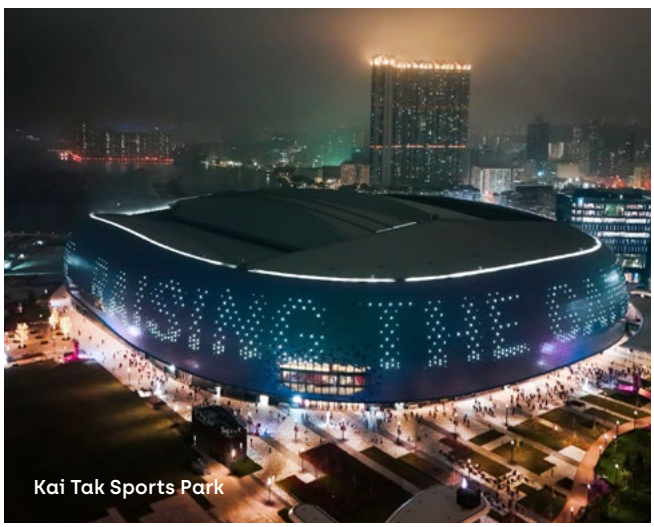
"One of the key demographic facts that we have seen at Kai Tak Sports Park is the increasing number of people travelling from mainland China, especially the Greater Bay Area, to Hong Kong to attend the shows, which not only enhances ticket sales but also contributes to a more vibrant cultural exchange and experience," notes Burden.

While there is clearly tremendous demand for concerts (and they are greatly desired by cities due to the boost they provide to local economies), scheduling remains a conundrum due to load-in/load-out times and working around sports fixtures, which provide, of course, the main business for stadiums.

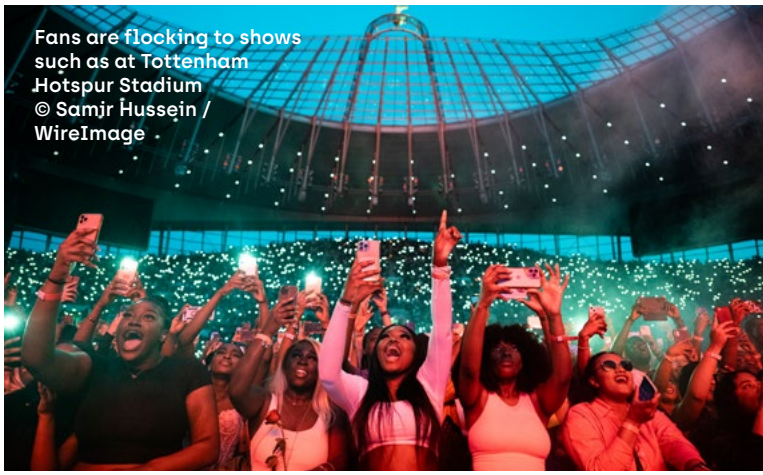
Anna Sjölund is programming director for Europe at ASM Global and looks after the 55,000-cap Strawberry Arena, which, despite its misleading name, is Sweden's national stadium, and the 40,000-cap 3Arena, both in Stockholm. "They are two football stadiums with retractable roofs," she says. "One big achievement for us is getting all these music shows in there, considering 3Arena has two home teams playing in the highest division of football in Sweden, and Strawberry has one home team – so all three Stockholm teams are playing in our venues as their home venues."

While most stadiums can juggle both music and sporting commitments, occasionally wider factors make this impossible. Canada is one of the host nations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and Chris May, general manager of the BC Place in Vancouver, says upgrading the venue ahead of the event means they can only host a handful of shows (notably AC/DC and The Weeknd) this year.

"This will be the biggest renovation we've done around hospitality and guest experience," he says. "We're a 55,000-seat stadium, and we literally have three elevators. That's it." As such, he says that 2025 needs to be treated as an anomaly. "Last year, we had a gangbusters year," he notes, including hosting the closing dates of Taylor Swift's *Eras Tour*. "Our holds for concerts for 2026 are huge. It's looking like, post-FIFA, when the touring starts, that it'll be pretty rammed through the end of the year. We're getting 2027 holds already. [2025] looks like a light year in the calendar but that was really of our own doing as we needed to get infrastructure [upgraded]."



Kai Tak Sports Park



Fans are flocking to shows such as at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium © Samir Hussein / WireImage

Even in normal years, working around sports fixtures is a logistical challenge for stadiums. The Johan Cruijff ArenA is home to Ajax, the biggest football team in the Netherlands, which takes priority. "The football calendar is leading in this stadium," says Salverda. "We have to deliver the best pitch possible. In that combination, it's quite difficult to find spots in the agenda [for concerts] during the football season. We [haven't found] the golden key to successfully do that often during the football season."

As such, newly designed or renovated stadiums have to prioritise multifunctionality to be able to juggle sporting events with the desire for acts (and their promoters and agents) to play more stadium shows.

Marcelo Frazão is EVP of WTorre Entretenimento, who look after the 55,000-cap Allianz Parque in São Paulo, Brazil. "Particularly in Latin America, one of the major challenges is that most football stadiums were not originally designed to accommodate large-scale concerts," he says. "Retrofitting them for live entertainment often presents significant operational and production hurdles. At Allianz Parque, we benefit from being a purpose-built, multi-use venue from day one. Still, we continuously invest in upgrades, not only to enhance the fan experience but also to improve production capabilities for promoters and artists. A key innovation has been the implementation of synthetic turf, which allows for greater operational flexibility."

It is a similar story for the Johan Cruijff ArenA. "From the beginning, we have been a multifunctional stadium," says Salverda. "When we designed this building, we took care of certain facilities that would make build-up and tear-down as easy as possible. We have a platform at the north end of our stadium, so that saves time for preparing the stage. We have entrances on four sides, which trucks can use to get on the pitch. That is a big improvement."

While the focus on stadiums has traditionally been o
increasing capacity so acts can play to the biggest a
possible (and make more in ticket sales), there is t
possibility of smaller stadiums in secondary or
stepping forward and offering a bridging sol
arenas and stadiums.

Michelle Rysdale, concert and large
Plymouth Argyle Football Club in Eng

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Act 1
© Sam Hussein / Getty

# NEW RULES

As one of today's biggest stars, Dua Lipa has been performing in indoor and outdoor venues on her latest tour, requiring a scalable production for arenas, stadiums, and greenfield settings. **Gordon Masson** talks to some of the team behind this feat of wizardry...



When Dua Lipa announced that she would be playing Wembley Stadium as part of the tour to support her third studio album, some sceptics in the business thought that the tour's name – *Radical Optimism* – could not have been more apt. But selling out the first date within minutes of the on-sale opening and a second date within hours, proved the move to be very shrewd indeed.

"The three standard bearers really were myself, Dugi, and [Live Nation's] Phil Bowdery – we believed in it from the off, but there were definitely some dissenting voices," says agent David Bradley at WME, who has represented Dua since her very first live performance.

"When you're in the trenches with an artist, you really witness the development, and you have all the facts at hand. So I saw the rate of sale on the last tour, and the latent demand that came off the back of *Future Nostalgia*, and the anticipation of this tour. Plus, having the Glastonbury [headline] moment meant we were feeling very bullish. And we were proven right."

Dua's first Wembley Stadium date sold out in the pre-sale, and according to her team, there was demand for at least a third, possibly even a fourth show at the venue. "It was immensely satisfying, but if anything, we undersold it," says Bradley.

## That Kind of Woman

While the stadium shows in the likes of London, Liverpool, Dublin, and Paris marked her first on the biggest stages in Europe, Dua Lipa's fanbase in Latin America thrust her into the stadium game as early as her second album, meaning her experience in playing to such huge audiences has been developing for a number of years.

"Stadium shows, I feel, are the perfect home for Dua," says her father and manager, Dugi Lipa. "She has this incredible presence that somehow makes these huge stadiums feel very

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Welcome to our inaugural Stadium Stars feature – a major new global live music industry list celebrating the 20 venues that represent the best concert experiences at this scale. From ensuring fans have unforgettable experiences to making it easier for production crews and artists to work at their best and most efficiently, we're delighted to recognise these exceptional venues.

Stadiums that made it onto this list of the best in the world were nominated by the live music business globally (*IQ* readers), and the final selection was made by a select panel of PMs and promoters working at the highest level of the live music industry.

Discover who made the cut, as Hanna Ellington profiles the venues that made our 2025 list.

# NORTH AMERICA

## Allegiant Stadium
Las Vegas, Nevada, US

**Concert capacity:** **65,000**
**Operator:** **AEG**

In the entertainment playground that is Las Vegas lies one of the newest stadiums in the country. Located in the adjacent town of Paradise, roughly ten minutes' drive from both the Strip and the international airport, the $1.9bn Allegiant Stadium opened its doors in late 2020 and is home to the NFL's Las Vegas Raiders. Built as a multipurpose destination from inception, it has already played host to some of the century's biggest artists in its short history. The venue features a hydraulic-operated retractable field, making the removal of the grass pitch efficient. A semi-transparent, domed roof allows for natural light while keeping temperatures regulated inside, a huge plus for a stadium situated in arid Nevada. Nominations for this stadium specifically mentioned ease of load-in and load out. It also boasts 75,000 sq ft of video boards, creating a unique view of any show. Plus, retractable curtain-like windows on the sides of the stadium can open to provide views of the Strip, meaning what happens in Allegiant doesn't stay in Allegiant.

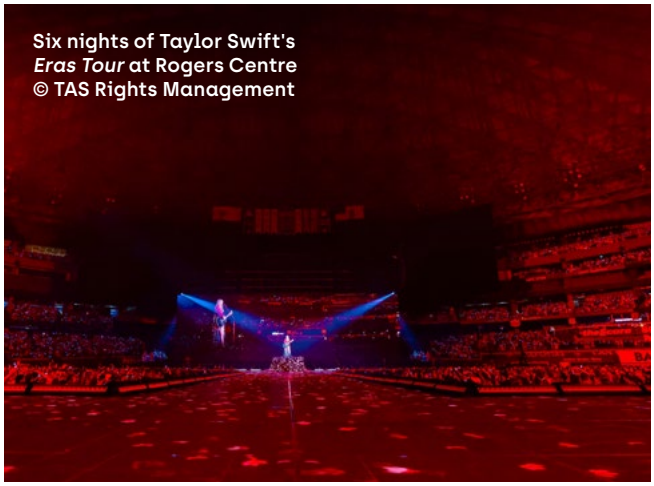
**Notable shows**

AC/DC – *Power Up Tour*; Morgan Wallen – *One Night At a Time World Tour*; Rolling Stones – *Hackney Diamonds Tour*; Blackpink – *Born Pink World Tour*

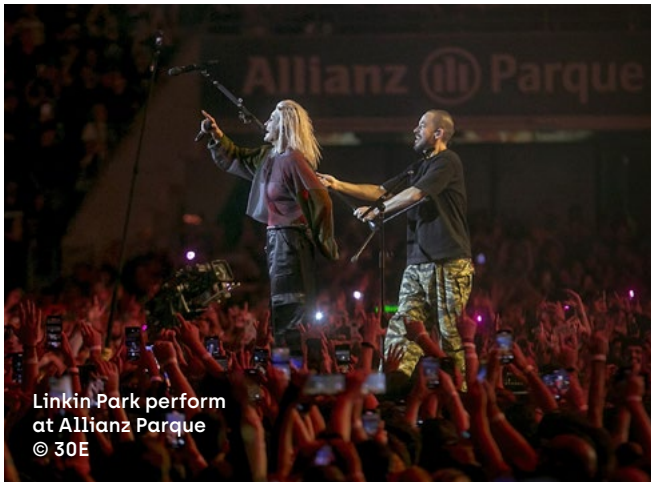
## SoFi Stadium
Inglewood, California, US

**Concert capacity:** **70,000**
**Operator:** **Hollywood Park**

Landing on the scene in September 2020, SoFi Stadium quickly became an integral part of LA's music ecosystem. Its signature feature, the Infinity Screen by Samsung – the largest dual-sided video screen ever created – delivers visual immersion for all attendees, including those in the highest seats, in this expandable space, though its vertically stacked seating bowl brings fans closer than ever. The venue is easily converted using the iTrax flooring system. A massive loading dock is also able to accommodate multiple equipment trucks, tour buses, and production needs, with its ramp nearly a quarter mile in length. As part of the Hollywood Park development, the indoor-outdoor architecture of SoFi brings fans into the greater 300-acre campus's high-end dining and entertainment amenities. Inside, a renewed focus on food & beverage by partner Legends Hospitality has seen innovative offerings like the Cowboy Cocktail Cup sell over 21,000 units during Beyoncé's five-night residency, while a newly launched digital dining guide and self-order kiosks elevate the fan experience. Also home to the Los Angeles Rams and Los Angeles Chargers, the venue has an in-house broadcast/



Six nights of Taylor Swift's *Eras Tour* at Rogers Centre
© TAS Rights Management




Linkin Park perform at Allianz Parque
© 30E

digital presentation team, making all of its technologies a breeze to integrate into any show. And as a bonus, it is expandable up to 100,000 people.

**Notable shows**

Beyoncé – *Cowboy Carter Tour*; Kendrick Lamar & SZA – *Grand National Tour*; George Strait & Chris Stapleton – *2025 Tour*; Chris Brown – *Breezy Bowl XX*

## Rogers Centre
Toronto, Canada

**Concert capacity: 50,000**

**Operator: Toronto Blue Jays**

At the base of Toronto's iconic CN Tower lies the Rogers Centre, the only covered venue in the metropolitan hub that can host more than 40,000 people. Located in the downtown core of one of North America's largest cities, and Canada's most populated, the venue is easy to reach via public transport, which includes streamlined access to the city's international airport. And in a country with cold winters, the stadium's retractable roof can extend the venue's ability to host shows year-round. The venue, which primarily serves as the home of Major League Baseball team the Toronto Blue Jays, recently underwent a CA$400 renovation that overhauled the fan experience and back-of-house operations, embedding music and touring into the foundation of the venue's future. The reno saw most dressing rooms remodelled, with seating, AV, and food & beverage offerings also seeing improvements.

**Notable shows**

Taylor Swift – *The Eras Tour*; Metallica – *M72 World Tour*; Post Malone – *The Big Ass Stadium Tour*; The Weeknd – *After Hours Til Dawn Tour*

## MetLife Stadium
East Rutherford, New Jersey, US

**Concert capacity: 82,500**

**Operator: Meadowlands Stadium Company**

A few miles west of New York City, MetLife Stadium ranks as one of the premier venues on the North American and world touring circuits. It is co-owned, co-operated, and co-home to the New York Jets and New York Giants NFL teams, a first-of-its-kind joint venture. The roofless, open-air venue is the largest by seated capacity in the NFL, and its bowl shape ensures clear sightlines, enhanced by four 40 x 130 ft high-definition LED video boards. It has a custom solar power generating system, the Solar Ring, that uses 1,350 solar panels to power the stadium's integrated LED lighting, display system, and electrical needs. Over 200 suites are available, with more than 10,000 club seats as an option for fans looking to elevate their experience. It is easily accessible by car or public transport for the 23.5m people who live in NYC's metropolitan area, in addition to having three major airports in the near vicinity.

**Notable shows**

Zach Bryan – *2025 Tour*; Beyoncé – *Cowboy Carter Tour*; P!nk – *Summer Carnival 2024*; Rolling Stones – *Hackney Diamonds Tour*

# SOUTH AMERICA

## Allianz Parque
São Paulo, Brazil

**Concert capacity: 50,000**

**Operator: WTorre Entretenimento**

In the heart of Brazil's most populous city sits Allianz Parque, accessible to the 22m-strong metropolitan population by public transit and on-site parking. Its plug-and-play set-up boasts power and connectivity points around the venue, with acoustics specifically designed for live music and compatible with major tours' technical requirements. Easily accessible docks and modular back-of-house and production areas ensure efficient load-ins/outs. Combining technical quality, safety, such as on-site facial recognition for entry and security, and world-class audience experience, the venue is a premier destination for organisers and audiences alike. Allianz commitment to sustainability and community engag highlighted by its zero-waste policy and good ne programme, further enhances its local reputa calendar managed by 30E puts it on the ma biggest tours. As one of the world's top-r of attendance, the proof is in the pud

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# STADIUM STATS

In our exclusive analysis of Billboard Boxscore data, we highlight the explosive growth of stadium concerts globally.

Stadium shows grossed $4.5bn in 2024 according to exclusive *IQ* analysis of figures reported to Billboard Boxscore and analysed in collaboration with economist Chris Carey. Figures show total ticket revenue from stadium shows rose from $1.2bn in 2016 to a peak of $4.6bn in 2023 (thanks in part to Taylor Swift's incredible global run – see boxout – and a post-Covid run of shows), before falling back slightly in 2024 to the final figure of $4.5bn. The figures show a 304% rise in income since pre-pandemic 2019.

The analysis of Billboard Boxscore data highlights what any observer of live music industry trends couldn't have failed to notice in recent years – that more and more artists are taking to the biggest stages in the world and that their fans are flocking to see them in ever-greater numbers.

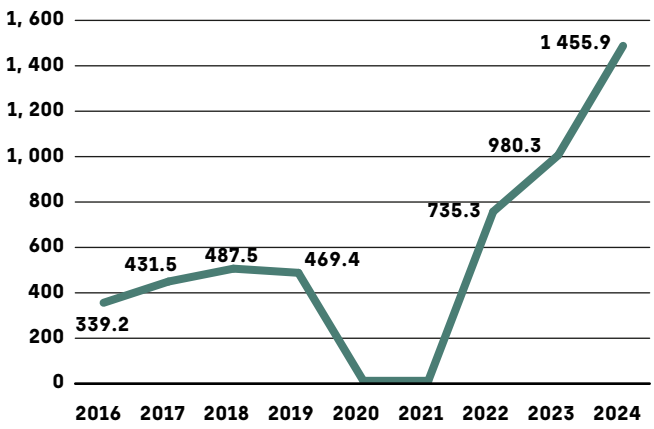
The number of stadium concerts more than doubled, from 247 in 2016 to 509 in 2024 – a rise of 106% in just eight years.

The sheer volume of stadium concerts is being powered by more artists than ever before reaching the highest of heights in their live careers. And it's not just rock acts, who have traditionally been the mainstay of such venues. K-pop artists, country stars, and even classical music legends – Andrea Bocelli's 25,000-ticket concert at Leiria Municipal Stadium in Portugal this year is regarded as the largest classical music show ever held in the country – have been wowing audiences.

Accompanying the explosive growth in the number of concerts is a rise in ticket prices. North America saw the largest increase in costs for fans buying passes for such events. Between 2016 and 2024, average ticket prices here increased 48%, from $101.80 to $150.9; while in Europe they rose 30%, from $93.30 to $121.10. In the rest of the world, they rose from $95.40 to $110.60 – a rise of 16% in eight years.

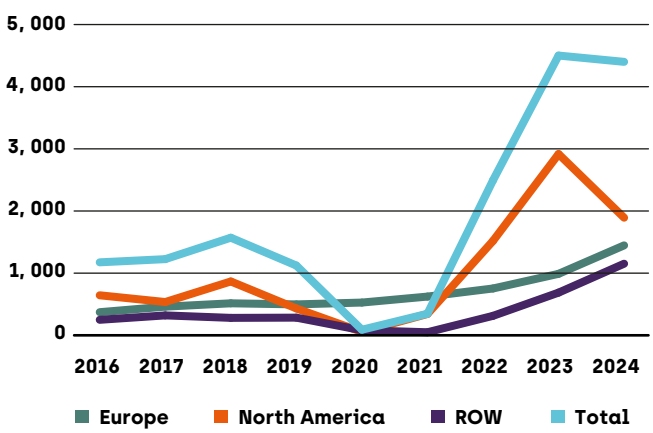
But the escalating prices don't seem to have put fans off. The incredible numbers demonstrate the remarkable boom in popularity of stadium concerts – particularly since the pandemic. Comparing 2019 to 2024, the number of stadium shows grew 146% to 509.

**02** European Gross Revenue ($m)



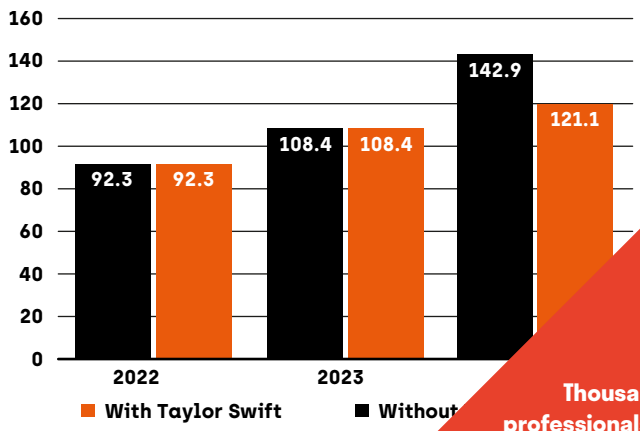

***Source: Billboard Boxscore***

**01** Total Stadium Income by Region ($m)




***Source: Billboard Boxscore***

**03** Europe: Average Ticket Price ($)




***Source: Billboard Boxscore***

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# Chris Kansy

The legendary PM and two-time winner of the Gaffer Award, highlights the changes observed during a 40-year career and what he loves (and doesn't) about stadium shows.

**From a production perspective, how have you seen stadium shows change over your career, and what demands/challenges does that put on PMs/production teams?**

Shows are getting bigger every year. Stages are getting wider and deeper, decreasing truck access to the pitch. Artists now prefer stages without roofs, making sun and rain exposure an element to your advance and daily routine. And along with the increased size of the production comes the need to make the entire pitch drivable, adding a day [to the] build and driving up costs of pitch replacement.

**What's your biggest bug-bear when it comes to stadium shows? Or what is the one thing you wish stadium architects of the future would take into account?**

Productions live and die due to truck access. Truck access means everything. Tunnels onto the pitch need to accommodate the size of truck trailers to enable them to get onto the pitch. Short of that, a proper marshalling area for trucks to manoeuvre into place is necessary.

I am seeing that newer stadiums are installing proper power that could elevate the need for fossil fuel burning generators and the kilometres of cable that need to be run in from the outside. It would be great if a stadium show could rely on the house to provide power, much like arena tours do. I'm also seeing newer stadiums that have a proper number of backstage rooms with no need to build festival-style compounds in the parking lot.

**What's your favourite thing about stadium shows?**

Probably the scheduling. Having a proper production day to load-in, build the show, and programme overnight in the evening darkness is wonderful.

This also allows everyone to get a good night's sleep. A typical schedule would have you starting at 8am on the production day and being done by 10pm when you hand the evening over to the creative. Then you don't need to come to work till 10am the next morning to ready for the show. Sleep means everything.

**What's the secret to building/managing an effective production team when it comes to shows of this size?**

It's all about communication.

On Coldplay, we have a department head meeting every day to discuss and share what happened that day and what needs to happen the next day. I find that when everyone knows what's going on, the energy of a tour remains strong. The stronger the communication when each department knows what the others are doing and what they need, the more productive we will all be.

**You once said, "I'm too old and too far along to trudge across the country on something I'm not interested in doing." What is it about a production that would make you want to be involved?**

For me, at this stage of my career, I look for high-tech shows that are interesting. I want theatre, drama, and mystery, where shadow is as important as light.

I am also of the mind that we should be embracing new technology. It's coming, so better to be out front with it than behind chasing after it.

**"I look for high-tech shows that are interesting. I want theatre, drama and mystery, where shadow is as important as light"**

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Ed Sheeran performs in Stuttgart © Mark Surridge

# CRUNCHING NUMBERS

After spending four years on the road with a mammoth production, the Ed Sheeran camp shares details of how they pulled it all together. **Hanna Ellington** reports.

Ed Sheeran's *Mathematics Tour* was the artist's biggest and most ambitious outing. Selling over 8m tickets across 140 headline shows in 42 countries, the multi-year stadium campaign was designed during the uncertainty of the pandemic and came with an equally unprecedented set of production demands.

For the first time, Sheeran performed in-the-round, playing from a bespoke 360-degree central stage with a 66m circumference. Towering above it were six 32m masts, anchoring a cable-net system that suspended nearly 60 tonnes of gear – LED screens, pyrotechnics, sound rigging – over the pitch. It was a logistical feat that meant venue selection was almost as critical as the show itself.

"We had to make sure the stage was going to fit in the stadiums," explains Ash Mowry, VP at Wasserman Music, Sheeran's agent for the US and Canada. "We worked very closely with the production team and our tour promoter partners, so we were able to get everything in, because we didn't want to have something go up and then the

production not be able to go ahead."

That wasn't just a theoretical concern. The show's weight and footprint were a challenge for many standard stadium set-ups, especially with the load concentrated at the centre of the pitch.

"It's not very often that these venues deal with that much weight in the middle," says creative director Mark Cunniffe. "Most of them are used to having weight at one end for shows, and they're well equipped to deal with it. Most of the concern was making sure that these places could take as much weight in the middle of the pitch – some have car parks underneath, for example, that need propping up when we come into town. With a very bespoke build like this, things like flooring become very critical, because we have to have the right floor so the show will stay in one place and not slide."




Height was another constraint. The structure itself reached 32m, and flame effects extended 15 metres beyond that – making the height of the show another major consideration when it came to venue choice.

Because of a firm four-day load-in and only one performance stage, the show could only travel to one city per week, while being mindful of sporting events. Baseball stadiums were not feasible for a show of this magnitude, and even some US football stadiums needed help navigating the requirements, says Marty Diamond, Wasserman EVP and managing executive, and one of Sheeran's longtime North American agents.

"A show in the round is a very intense build. It wasn't 'roll it in, pop it up, and let's go.' The nature of the production [meant] it was awe-inspiring but a very difficult, arduous build. It took time to get in, and it took time to get out, so that also was a big driver in how the tour was routed and how the tour played," Diamond says.

As the tour progressed and a variety of markets were added into the mix, the sheer size of the show started to have an impact, says his ROW agent Jon Ollier, founder and CEO of One Fiinix Live.

"We haven't been able to do the round show in some places. Whether it's [because] the stadium floors are not the right size, not the right shape, or they're too narrow, or you just can't fit the stage in. We need to be able to drive trucks on the pitch and things like that. And in some cases, the cost of getting things like floor and freight over to, say, parts of Latin America, just wasn't feasible in terms of cost," he says.

Sheeran also headlined at venues like the 10,000-capacity Al-Dana Amphitheatre in Bahrain, the 25,000-cap Changlimithang Stadium in Bhutan, and the 15,300-cap Lusail Sports Arena in Qatar – all spaces unable to support the massive production.

"There were places that Ed wanted to play that we just logistically could not get the show to. Be that [due to] the timescale; the physical availability of plant, the right



The size of the show's production was challenging for some stadiums © Mark Surridge

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Light-up wristbands from PixMob are recyclable

# GREENER GROUNDS

**From solar roofs to smart turf, venues worldwide are embracing greener practices. But with regulation lagging and coordination patchy, systemic change remains a work in progress.**

With huge productions, massive venues, and mega-crowds, stadium shows face a struggle when it comes to sustainability. But business at this scale also brings big opportunities for change, from eco-friendly energy use to efficient waste management and modular stages. And while innovation is thriving, gaps in regulation are a major stumbling block to progress.

At one of the UK's most high-profile multi-use venues, big steps are underway. Built for the 2012 Olympics and now home to West Ham United football team, London Stadium – which has hosted artists including Sam Fender, CMAT, and Olivia Dean this year – is installing a £4.35m solar membrane across its roof. Due for completion in summer, the system is expected to generate 850,000 kWh of electricity annually, saving more than 200 tonnes of carbon emissions each year.

"The solar energy will save around 10% on electricity costs," says Martin Gritton, London Stadium's senior marketing and communications manager. "That's equivalent to 100 flights from London to New York."

According to the venue team, the new solar capacity will be enough to power all football fixtures and major events annually. The installation has been carefully calibrated to maximise the number of panels the stadium roof can support. It's part of a wider ambition to reduce carbon impact while managing rising operational costs. The stadium's marketing and communications team also note the project contributes to local regeneration and builds on the venue's broader sustainability ambitions.

Other major venues have taken similar steps. Amsterdam's Johan Cruijff ArenA now boasts over 4,200 solar panels, a roof-mounted wind turbine, and an on-site battery system connected to the city grid. These systems provide backup power and allow the venue to contribute to Amsterdam's green energy goals.

And in Germany, multi-venue owner D.LIVE is remodelling its MERKUR SPIEL-ARENA in several key areas. Among the changes is a 7,000m² photovoltaic system being installed on the roof. "This will make it the third-largest PV system on a stadium in Germany," says Lilian Petersen, the

company's manager of business development and strategy. "Other measures include completely rebuilding the 2,200m² MERKUR Business Club, expanding the 360° LED perimeter board technology, and raising the visitor experience to a new level."

She adds: "D.LIVE has successfully implemented numerous measures to firmly embed sustainability and social responsibility into its daily operations. For example, D.LIVE has joined the Düsseldorf Climate Pact and consistently uses 100% green electricity.

"Another important step was introducing a mandatory combined ticket that allows event visitors to use public transportation, effectively promoting sustainable mobility. We've also installed an energy data management system to better monitor and analyse energy consumption.

"D.LIVE also sets standards in gastronomy. A comprehensive reusable system significantly reduces waste, while working with regional service providers and shortening delivery routes help to minimise $CO^2$ emissions.

"There are also partnerships with local breweries that use large tank systems to avoid packaging waste."

Further afield, Las Vegas's 65,000-capacity Allegiant Stadium runs entirely on renewable energy sourced from Nevada's solar and wind grid. Since 2023, it has implemented extensive recycling systems, diverting over five tonnes of food waste per event, and has achieved LEED Gold certification. Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta has gone even further, becoming the first major sports venue to earn LEED Platinum status. It uses LED lighting, low-flow plumbing that cuts water use by nearly 50%, and partners with local community gardens to improve its environmental footprint.

Back in Europe, a more down-to-earth challenge is being tackled in Stockholm. At the 65,000-capacity Strawberry Arena, managed by Legends/ASM Global, a new turf management strategy has been introduced to address a common dilemma: how to balance live music events with the maintenance of high-quality natural grass.

Historically, concerts meant damage to the pitch and multiple turf replacements each year. The environmental and financial costs were significant. But by introducing new turf systems, protective layers, and refined maintenance



PRG lights up DJ Snake's concert at Stade de France © Rafael Depost

protocols, the venue has significantly reduced how often the grass needs to be relaid.

"For promoters and organisers in the live music industry, this translates into greater venue availability (fewer blackout days), reduced risk of turf replacement fees, more competitive rental terms, a stronger environmental profile, and improved long-term planning conditions," says Kristofer Åkesson, marketing and communications director at Legends/ASM Global. The approach was recently presented at a conference in New York and has generated strong interest across the industry.

Innovation isn't limited to turf. One of the clearest examples of sustainable change in live events is the widespread adoption of LED lighting. "Ninety percent of the




MERKUR SPIEL-ARENA will have a 7,000m² solar panel roof

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# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**As stadiums around the world host a growing number of concerts, alongside traditional sports events, what does this increased exposure to different audiences mean for naming rights deals? Adam Woods finds out.**

In July, North London's Tottenham Hotspur F.C. (Spurs) announced the £55m signing of Ghanaian winger Mohammed Kudus from West Ham F.C., taking the club's spending to around £122m for the summer.

In light of such a spree, talk on the football grapevine turned to two topics: that Spurs might fare a bit better in the Premier League this year after a washout in 2024/25; and that maybe they have finally sold their stadium naming rights.

Blockbuster naming deals have for decades been a fixture of the US stadium market, where the biggest annual deal so far, inked in 2019, is financial services company SoFi's 20-year, $625m deal to name the Inglewood home of the Los Angeles Rams and the Los Angeles Chargers. Now, it appears such deals are steadily infiltrating Europe.

In a world of booming stadium tours, these venues represent an increasingly diverse and vibrant sponsorship opportunity for major brands, and the value of those rights is widely predicted to rise accordingly.

Clearly, many stadiums are seeing far more entertainment traffic than most would have predicted a decade or so ago when promoters regularly fretted about the advancing age of the biggest ticket-selling stars.

Now, with a roster of large-scale megastars stretching from Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Oasis, and Coldplay to Kendrick Lamar, Karol G, Bad Bunny, Blackpink, Luke Combs, Morgan Wallen, and far beyond, it is clear the death of mass live entertainment was comically exaggerated,

"Ten years ago, people were concerned the acts capable of playing stadiums were getting fewer – I think it's fair to say that has proven not to be an issue," says Anna Sjölund, ASM Global's programming director for Europe. "We see an increase in stadium shows and an increase in multiple shows per venue/city. The interest in big shows seems to be ever growing."

Should a Spurs deal be confirmed, we may know whether a new era of premium stadium naming has definitively reached Europe, but it is apparent that prices are already rising.

Manchester City F.C. last year inked a renewed stadium deal with Etihad worth a rumoured £15m a year. Spotify's right to add its name to Barcelona's Camp Nou cost the streaming giant €280m over four years – including the traditionally pricier shirt sponsorship rights for the men's and women's teams.

And most recently, in May, commercial law firm Hill Dickinson secured naming rights to Everton F.C.'s new £800m stadium in Liverpool, England, in a landmark sponsorship deal reportedly worth up to £10m a year

The rise of bigger stadium naming deals carries with it a sense of destiny. According to sponsorship deals tracked by Ampere Analysis, US teams made more than $700m from naming rights in 2024, while clubs in Europe's top five leagues – France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK – made just $131m combined.

While acknowledging such nuances, financial and risk advisory firm Kroll's *Stadium Naming Rights Study* last year argued that the majority of leading European football clubs are missing out on a significant source of revenue by not signing more stadium sponsorships. It found that only 12 of the 36 prominent teams profiled had a stadium naming rights sponsor and that major clubs across Europe's biggest leagues could realise, on average, €8.4m per season.

"Our view is that European stadium naming rights deals are massively undersold and much more valuable than is being priced and paid for them at the moment – particularly when you look at the US," says Mike Weaver, Kroll managing director and international financial advisory leader for EMEA, Latin America, and APAC.

The fact that many prominent stadiums now stage as many entertainment events as sporting ones is a trend that Weaver says can only enhance rights values, as well as broadening the appeal of stadiums to a wider range of sponsors. "More events, more eyeballs, more value," he suggests.

This fact, combined with the increasingly appealing nature of music-related sponsorship packages to brands, is a major action point for corporate venue groups.

Live Nation's approach to naming rights extends across its entire business, and there is no sector, market, or territory that is likely to go untouched.

"Markets around the world understand that [naming rights] are a key part of the revenue stream to make the venue happen," says Russell Wallach, Live Nation global president, media & sponsorship. "We've got big plans across Europe and Asia, South America, and everyone understands that this is a key element to building a new venue or even an existing venue."

A significant part of the appeal of venues for mass-market brands, says Wallach, is the range of audiences they span.

"There is a different audience for different shows – from the Beyoncé show to the Oasis show to the Lady Gaga sho
You've got big rock acts, you've got your big pop stars, a
combination of international touring artists and dom
touring artists. So it really does mean you've got a
calendar for these venues, which is very appeal

And while branding is clearly an importa
investment, the value of a naming-rights s
much about the diverse opportunities it

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