

2009 Year End

## BUSINESS Analysis

### 2009 top 100 tours average ticket price



### Counter Intuitive

The year was dismal for the U.S. economy with unemployment rising rapidly and a generally depressed mood settling in among the populace. Very few business sectors had anything positive to crow about amid what seemed like a never-ending parade of negative business news.

The concert business is dependent on fans having the

discretionary funds to indulge themselves in a night out to see their favorite performing artist. With all the home foreclosures, layoffs and bankruptcies, one would think that fewer fans would be attending shows, and promoters would be spilling red ink at every settlement.

But that was clearly not the case.

Pollstar estimates total North American concert ticket sale revenues jumped by nearly 10 percent to a record \$4.6 billion in 2009. More than \$4 billion of that amount is contained in the more than 35,000 detailed box office reports in our database, leaving a relatively small amount of missing data that needed to be estimated to compile our charts.

Apparently many people still wanted to be entertained and, for one night at least, put the economic chaos out of their minds. Expensive tickets to the hottest shows still got snapped up and fans may well have reallocated dollars that otherwise would have gone to more expensive big-item purchases or vacation outings.

### More Butts In Seats

Over the past decade, the industry's *modus oper-*

*andi* has been to set annual gross revenue records and to do so by selling fewer but ever more expensive tickets.

This year proved to be a major exception due at least in part to the fact that, although industry decision-making is highly isolated and fragmented, everyone realized the climate they would be touring in. The right adjustments in pricing and packaging apparently got made in advance. There will always be stiff dates on nearly every tour, but no high-profile treks in 2009 could be labeled complete bombs.

The Top 100 Tours in North America sold a modern record of nearly 40.5 million tickets. That was not only more than 12 percent higher than 2008's 36 million, but it was substantially higher than any year this decade. The previous high-water mark was the 38.7 million tickets sold in 2003.

The total combined gross of the Top 100 Tours was also a record at \$2.53 billion, up more than 4 percent over the \$2.43 billion in 2008.

The average number of tickets sold by the Top 100 Tours was 10,018, which was up 787 seats or more than 8 percent over the previous year's 9,231.

The average gross per show among the Top 100 Tours de-

## POLLSTAR #1 TOURS for the last 22 Years

YEAR	ARTIST	GROSS
2009	U2	123.0
2008	Madonna	105.3
2007	The Police	133.2
2006	The Rolling Stones	138.5
2005	The Rolling Stones	162.0
2004	Prince	87.4
2003	Bruce Springsteen	115.9
2002	Paul McCartney	103.3
2001	U2	109.7
2000	Tina Turner	80.2
1999	The Rolling Stones	64.7
1998	Elton John	46.2
1997	The Rolling Stones	89.3
1996	KISS	43.6
1995	Eagles	63.3
1994	The Rolling Stones	121.2
1993	Grateful Dead	45.6
1992	U2	67.0
1991	Grateful Dead	34.7
1990	New Kids On The Block	74.1
1989	The Rolling Stones	98.0
1988	Pink Floyd	27.6

In Millions Of U.S. Dollars

clined by nearly \$29,000 to \$626,813, but artists made up for it by working more markets than in years past.

### Price Matters

The average ticket price for the Top 100 Tours declined for the first time since we began compiling such data in 1996 when the average ticket cost only \$25.81. This year's average price of \$62.57 represented a drop of \$4.76 or seven percent from 2008's record high of \$67.33.

Generating record sales revenues along with record unit sales is a very healthy sign for the concert industry.

### Big Shows

The Top 200 Concert Grosses in North America were dominated by the big ticket combination of Elton John & Billy Joel, who occupied 25 slots, and the

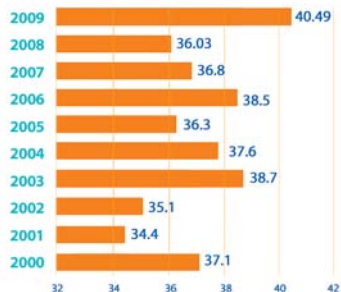
## CONCERT Industry Ticket Sales



All figures are POLLSTAR's estimate for major concert tickets sold in North America.

### 2009 top 100 tours total tickets sold

In millions



U2 stadium trek that filled 16 positions. Britney Spears did 13, Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band and Kenny Chesney each had 10 while AC/DC added nine shows.

Dave Matthews Band, the top-selling act of the decade despite never having the No. 1 tour in any given year, added eight shows to the Top 200, as did Celine Dion.

Madison Square Garden was the most active venue, with eight box office bonanzas. That was followed by Mexico's Foro Sol and Montreal's Bell Centre with six. Things were good up in the Great White North with the Air Canada Centre accounting for five big shows while the Rogers Centre in Toronto added four more. BankAtlantic Center, Giants Stadium and the swan song for the Wachovia Spectrum also generated four big grosses.

### 2009 top 100 tours total ticket grosses

In billions of U.S. dollars



The year's biggest gross was the five-show finale by Bruce Springsteen at Giants Stadium that grossed \$22.5 million from more than 260,000 fans.

The world's largest gross was generated by the three shows U2 did at Croke Park in Dublin that grossed \$28.5 million from more than 243,000 fans.

### Worldwide Business

**P**ollstar produced its first Top 50 Worldwide Tours chart this year as we continued the expansion of our international box office data collection. The Top 50 grossed a combined \$3.34 billion and sold 45.3 million tickets.

U2 was clearly the most successful act on the road no matter what the territory. Of the Top 50 acts, only 14 made the chart purely on North American business. Some acts, like Madonna and Tina Turner, made it solely on their overseas business.

In the future we expect to provide year-over-year comparisons but, judging by what we have seen, the international concert business was even stronger than in North America this past year.

Pink had a hugely successful year that was capped by a run of 40 sold-out arena shows in Australia, something no other international act has ever come close to doing.

The Top 100 International concert grosses may have been dominated by U2 but there were plenty of other gigantic shows around the world. It took a gross of more than \$4 million to even make the list as compared with the \$2.7 million needed for the same position in North America.

### Deal Or No Deal

**T**he pending merger of Live Nation and Ticketmaster is a deal changer no matter what government regulators decide.

If the merger is completed without forcing significant structural changes on the players, the way everyone else functions in the concert business will be affected. Every other promoter will still have

to use the same venues, many of them contractually tied to Ticketmaster, as in the past. The difference will be that the entity selling their tickets could now be a competitor rather than a theoretically neutral vendor.

One alternative would be to allow multiple ticketing companies to service a venue. In an age where all sales are essentially digital transactions, that kind of change would be far less difficult to contemplate than it would have been just a few years ago. Of course, that only complicates the highly controversial issue of who "owns" the customer sales data.

If the merger doesn't go through and Live Nation and Ticketmaster are forced to continue operating independently, the game will still materially change. Can either public company be profitable enough on its own to survive the ravages of Wall Street's expectations? Can their outstanding debt needs continue to be financed in this economic climate?

And then there is the matter of who would sell Live Nation's tickets? Do they revive their CTS Eventim platform and compete head-on with Ticketmaster or do they make a deal with TM or another ticketing company? Does Ticketmaster go into the concert promotion business as it had been threatening prior to the merger? Does Irving Azoff grow weary of running a cumbersome conglomerate and revert to his primary passion of being an artist manager and finding another major game-changing move for his Front Line stable of "rights holders"?

Lurking outside all of this is AEG, which has been relatively quiet about what its response will be to the merger. You can bet there's a Plan B being formulated at the house of Anschutz for whatever the future holds.

Buckle up, because there's no doubt that interesting times lie ahead.

## TOP 50

### Grossing Tours Of All Time In North America

1	162.0	The Rolling Stones	2005
2	138.9	U2	2005
3	138.5	The Rolling Stones	2006
4	133.2	The Police	2007
5	123.0	U2	2009
6	121.2	The Rolling Stones	1994
7	115.9	Bruce Springsteen & E St. Band	2003
8	109.7	U2	2001
9	105.3	Madonna	2008
10	103.5	Pink Floyd	1994
11	103.3	Paul McCartney	2002
12	98.0	The Rolling Stones	1989
13	94.5	Bruce Springsteen & E St. Band	2009
14	94.0	Celine Dion	2008
15	92.5	Barbra Streisand	2006
16	89.3	The Rolling Stones	1997
17	88.8	Tim McGraw / Faith Hill	2006
18	88.0	Elton John / Billy Joel	2009
19	87.9	The Rolling Stones	2002
20	87.4	Prince	2004
21	86.8	*Nsync	2001
22	85.9	Madonna	2006
23	82.5	Britney Spears	2009
24	82.1	Backstreet Boys	2001
25	80.2	Tina Turner	2000
26	79.9	U2	1997
27	79.5	Madonna	2004
28	79.4	Eagles	1994
29	78.4	Eagles	2005
30	77.9	AC/DC	2009
31	77.3	Paul McCartney	2005
32	76.4	*Nsync	2000
33	74.1	New Kids On The Block	1990
34	73.6	Cher	2002
35	73.4	Eagles	2008
36	72.2	Kenny Chesney	2008
37	71.1	Kenny Chesney	2009
38	71.1	Kenny Chesney	2007
39	70.6	Justin Timberlake	2007
40	70.4	Bon Jovi	2008
41	69.8	Jonas Brothers	2009
42	69.3	Bruce Springsteen & E St. Band	2008
43	69.3	Eagles	2003
44	69.0	Fleetwood Mac	2003
45	68.2	Cher	2003
46	68.2	Dave Matthews Band	2002
47	67.0	U2	1992
48	66.0	Kenny Chesney	2006
49	65.8	Elton John	2005
50	65.5	Elton John / Billy Joel	2002