

Paul Kane / Getty Images



Shape Of The Mid-Year: Ed Sheeran fans at Perth's Optus Stadium in March.

2018 Mid Year Business Analysis

Record-Setting Worldwide Grosses

There is perhaps no better indicator of a robust 2018

live market than *Pollstar's* Mid-Year Top 50 Worldwide Tours chart. This year's survey saw a 12% jump in total gross from last year's \$1.97 billion to a

record-setting \$2.21 billion – a \$240 million increase. It's the chart's biggest rise since 2015-16 and a change from 2017's mid-year total gross which actually *decreased* by \$10 million.

Credit, in part, Ed Sheeran, whose juggernaut of a tour grossed a massive \$213.9 million dollars – a whopping 41.2% increase over last year's No. 1 Guns N' Roses, which tallied \$151.5 million.

Ticket Prices Soar

Soaring average ticket prices contributed significantly to worldwide touring's ascendant gross with a record high of

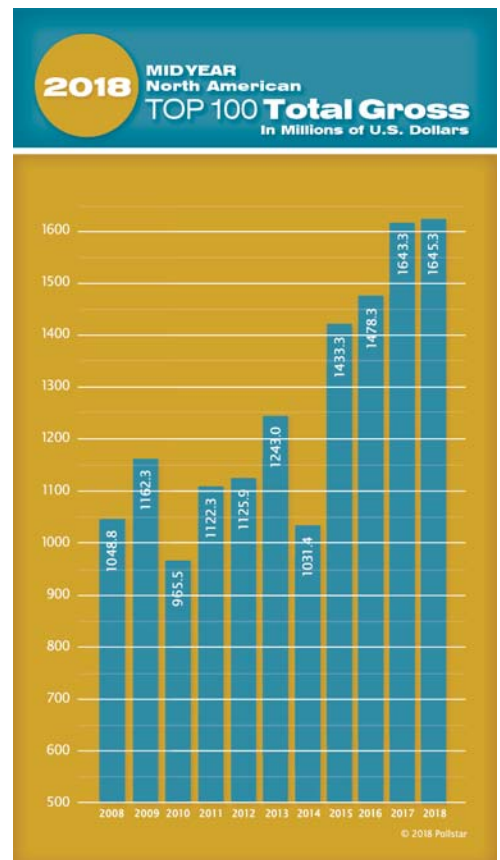
\$96.31 – a 14.1% increase and nearly \$12 (\$11.91) jump over 2017's \$84.40. The precipitous rise speaks to the industry's aggressive pricing strategy to better meet demand and exclude the secondary market. This, while total tickets sold remained relatively constant from last year with a small 2.1% drop to 22.9 million from last year's 23.4 million.

The tally's ticket price high was set by "Springsteen On Broadway" which on average cost \$509 – more than 12 times as much as the survey's lowest tout of \$40 for *Marvel Universe Live!* (apples and oranges).

North America: Remarkably Constant

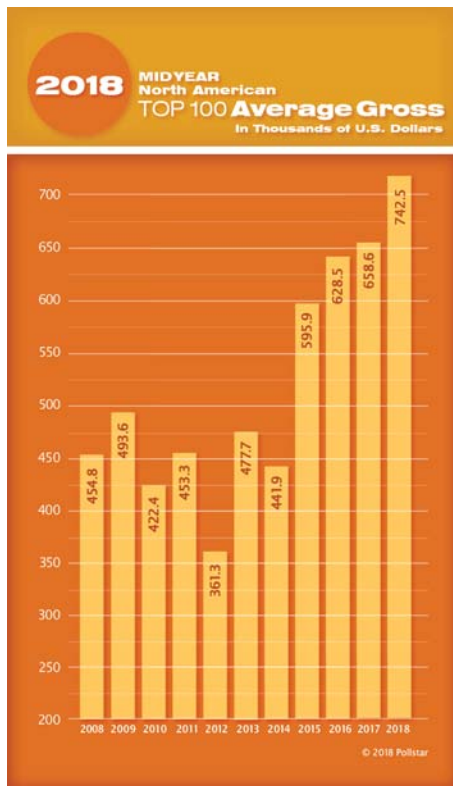
Unlike the explosive international market, North America's Top 100 total gross for the 2018 mid-year stayed

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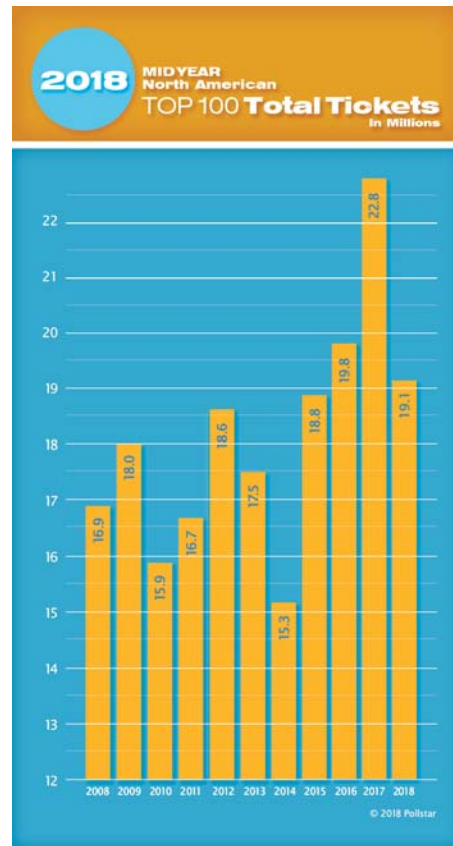


No. 2 Metallica (\$68.7 million).

Above Average Show Grosses

Average show gross for the mid-year North America Top 100 chart hit a record-setting \$742,500, an \$84,000 or 12.7% increase over last year's \$658,600.

Total tickets actually dropped from 22.8 million in 2017 to near 2016's 19.1 million, which similarly accompanied a decline in the average number of tickets sold per show from 9,129 in 2017 to 8,637 in 2018.



The tours were erroneously decried as "disasters" based on those factors. However, when contacted, tour promoters pointed to record revenues from those same tours, begging the question: How could this be?

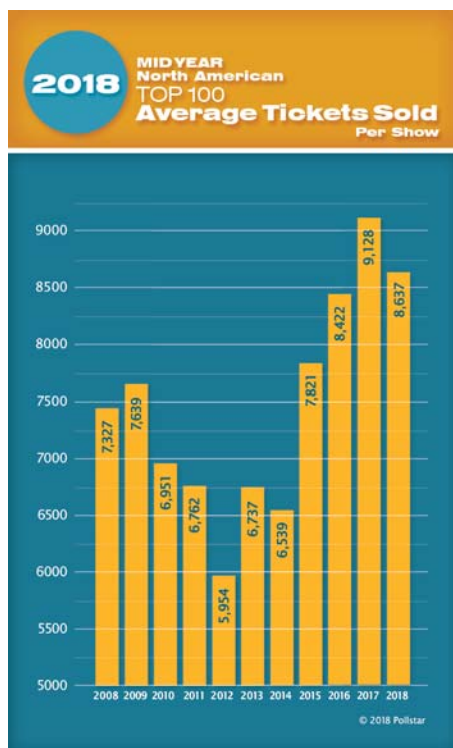
Strategic ticket pricing in 2018, which often meant a greater range and more tiers often resulted in greater revenue generated often from the more in-demand lower bowls while some of the more inexpensively priced upper seats, for which there can be less demand, were left in the hands of the secondary market or unsold. ✦

remarkably constant at \$1.645 billion versus 2017's \$1.643 billion, which saw a more dramatic 11% rise over the year previous. Thus far, 2018 has seen North America catch up to the growth. Traditionally with the first half of the year slower than the second, expect that number to increase by year-end.

Pink's chart-topping, \$95.6 million total gross was short by a hefty \$23 million from last year's leader, U2, which grossed \$118.1 million. This year's two through four spots – Eagles (\$84 million) Justin Timberlake (\$83.8 million) and Taylor Swift (\$73.5 million), however, significantly out-grossed last year's

More Soaring Tickets

Much like internationally, however, the North



American market's average ticket prices for the Top 100 spiked and set a record high at \$85.97, with an even steeper 19.1% leap over last year's \$72.16, which again speaks to the industry strategy of better selling into demand.

The Record Grosses/ Empty Seat Conundrum

At the beginning of 2018 there was a great deal of consternation in the industry over empty seats at major tours with tickets – often nosebleeds – going unsold on the secondary market at rock bottom prices.

