



Steady As She Goes: 2019 MID-YEAR BUSINESS ANALYSIS

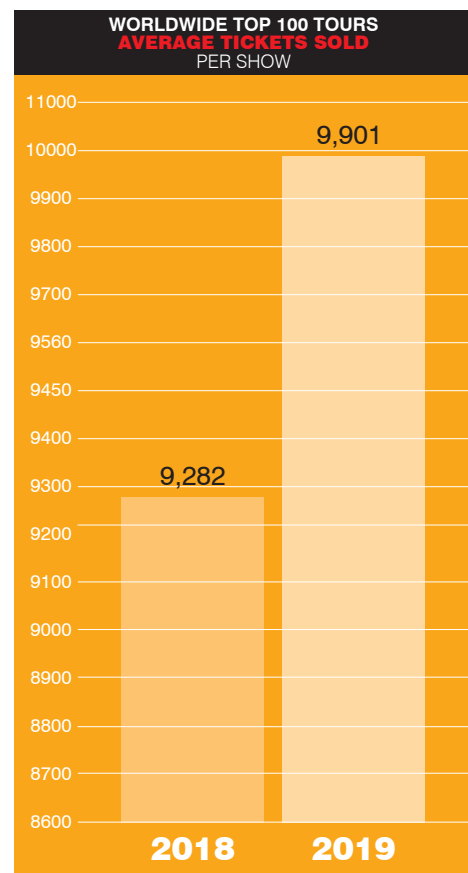
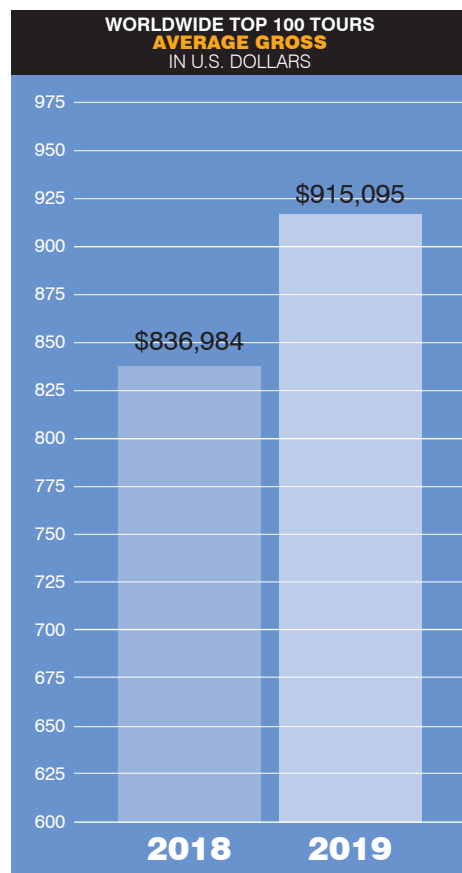
In analyzing the state of the concert industry at the mid-point of 2019, *Pollstar* delved into our industry-leading box-office data, comparing results between this year and 2018 using the same six-month time period for both. *Pollstar* revised its eligibility time period for the chart year in the second half of 2018 to be better timed with the New Year and Mid-Year. Therefore, to properly evaluate how the industry is doing year-over-year, it is necessary to compare this year's Mid-Year results (using the date range of Nov. 22, 2018, through May 22, 2019) to data compiled from Nov. 23, 2017, through May 23, 2018.

With these time parameters in place, the data shows that the concert industry is relatively stable. Though down single digits in overall gross and ticket sales, the concert business saw an impressive increase in average tour gross. While the Top 100 Worldwide tours declined 3.79% in total gross from \$2.14 billion in 2018 to \$2.06 billion in 2019 and total ticket sales dropped 6.14% from 22.27 million to 23.73 million, the Top 100 Worldwide Tours average gross per show increased significantly from \$836,984 in 2018 to \$915,095 – a 9.3% jump. That rise was in part fueled by more tickets per show: 9,901 in 2019 versus 9,282 in 2018 – up 6.67%.

For a closer analysis of the gross differences between both years – using the six-month span beginning on Nov. 23, 2017 – the No. 1 touring artist of 2018, Ed Sheeran registered \$131.4 million in sales to head up last year's ranking of the Top 100 Worldwide tours, while this year's top tour headliner Elton John, grossed \$82.6 million for the Mid-Year. Scanning further down the 2018 list, the revenue from the 10 highest grossers – figured in the new time frame – totals \$720.1 million,

8.25% higher than the Top 10 tours of 2019 at \$660.7 million; however, looking at the Top 20 tours in both years, the gross comparisons are much tighter with 2018 actually falling 1.74% short of the combined grosses of this year's top 20. As the list expands, though, 2018 does

figure higher in gross than the current year, but not substantially. Looking as deep as the Top 50 worldwide tours in both years, 2018 grosses were a mere 1.19% more with \$1.684 billion compared to 2019's \$1.664 billion. The analysis suggests that the money was heavier



at the top in 2018 compared to this year – not surprising considering Sheeran’s massive “Divide Tour” that dominated every touring analysis in 2018, along with Bruno Mars’ tour that also topped \$100 million in sales in the first half of 2018.

As for overall worldwide attendance tallies, there are also no dramatic spikes when counting butts in seats in both years. The sold tickets for 2019’s Mid-Year are less than in 2018 using the revised time frame, but – as mentioned earlier – by only 6.14%. Sold tickets for 2018’s Top 100 Worldwide tours top out at 23,734,559, while this year saw a total ticket count of 22,278,187. Looking closer, though, the sold ticket percentages are much closer toward the top of the lists. Among only the top 10 tours there was a smaller drop – only 3.9% less this year, and attendance was actually higher in 2019 – by 1.93% – when comparing the top 20 tours in each year. Generally speaking, however, substantial attendance variables were slight from 2018 to 2019 with only a minor drop in the overall counts.

The number of shows for the Top 100 Worldwide tours was less overall in 2019 compared to the previous year, dropping 12%. This year’s total was 2,250 – less than 2018’s 2,557 show total. Interestingly, the number of shows was exactly the same among the top 10 tours – 429 in both years, but the top 20 tours last year played 738 shows, while this year’s count was 81 performances less than that. Looking at only the top 50 tours on the worldwide list, there is a 13% difference with 190

less shows in 2019 than in the previous year.

The average gross and sold tickets in both years using the November-to-May time period showed substantial growth in 2019, as noted earlier, and in addition to those two categories, there is also a gain in the average ticket prices. The 2019 figures are on par with the prior year but show a slight increase among the Top 100 Worldwide Tours. The ticket price average in 2018 was \$90.17 yet jumped 3.67% this year to \$92.42. Incidentally, in both years there were a total of 27 touring artists in the Top 100 with a ticket price average over \$100. “Springsteen on Broadway” heads up this year’s group, as it did in 2018, with an average price of \$506.39. Lady Gaga and Aerosmith follow at Nos. 2 and 3 respectively with average ticket prices from their residencies at Park Theater at Park MGM in Las Vegas – Gaga with \$269.94 and the band with \$205.02.

North American numbers are strong for 2019 compared with the 2018 Mid-Year data showing a growth of 14% in the overall gross among the Top 100 North American tours. This year’s overall total is \$1.547 billion, which surpasses the 2018 gross of \$1.356 billion. Attendance also jumped in 2019 with 16.8 million tickets sold compared to 15.7 million in 2018 – a bump of 6.4%. The number of performances in North America dipped slightly this year, but less than 1%. The Top 100 touring artists played 2,248 shows, while the 2018 total was 2,265.

In North America, the average gross per

show last year was \$598,713 – 13% less than the 2019 gross average of \$688,535. Sold ticket averages also improved this year with an average attendance of 7,496. The 2018 average was 7% less at 6,941.

Finally, ticket price averages at North American events also show gains in 2019 compared with the previous year’s Mid-Year count. 2018’s average price was \$96.59, but the 2019 total averaged \$100.64.

NEW CHART METRICS

Although we introduced the new chart eligibility metrics with our 2018 Year-End report, 2019 will mark the beginning of a new era at *Pollstar* as our first full year with a chart year beginning in late-November – moving away from a calendar year time frame that necessitated the use of estimated totals. As mentioned earlier, for the 2019 Mid-Year we included boxoffice data that ranged from Nov. 22, 2018, through the six-month period that ended on May 22, 2019. Thus, unlike past years, we did not tabulate June results – real or estimated – as part of our Mid-Year tallies. That will be our regular course of action in the years ahead.

Note: Regarding estimated totals, we are avoiding the use of estimates as a matter of course but have made the decision to include them on rare situations where we are absolutely unable to obtain actual boxoffice data for a tour that is making a major impact on the road and must be included. ★

