

MUSIC, MARKETS AND CONSUMPTION



Part IV
Live Music

10 Live Music and Festivals

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the importance of live music, music venues, music festivals and live music promotion in the production and consumption of music. As shown in Chapter 3, music is a complex product which can be enjoyed in a wide range of social situations, from listening to music in one's own home or car, through enjoying a concert in a large music venue like an opera house or stadium, to spending several days at a music festival attended by over a million people. This chapter therefore begins with an attempt to provide an understanding of some of the historical developments of live music, its main characteristics, and the reasons behind its growing popularity. Music festivals are an important variant of live music, and the chapter also includes a discussion of the nature, form and function of music festivals, their multiple impacts and the marketing issues which they present.

Live music

Live music was the only form of music consumption up until the invention of the gramophone by Thomas Edison in 1877. The invention marked a new era in the consumption and production of music, allowing audiences to enjoy the beauty of sounds from the privacy of their own homes, and separating the process of production from consumption. From the middle of the 20th century recorded music was becoming easily available, and radio stations and bars were replacing live music with recordings and jukeboxes (Thornton, 1995). While, through-

out the 20th century, the increasing importance of recorded music and the domestication of musical activities were negatively affecting live music and opportunities for musicians to perform live (Frith, 2007), the most recent years have bucked the trend. During the last decade it has become common for music journalists and researchers to comment on the increasing importance of live music at the expense of the record industry (Frith, 2007). There are more live music events now than ever before, and more and more bands come back from retirement to capitalize on the prosperity of the live music industry. Although it seems as though live music has acquired a cultural value and importance that is unprecedented since the beginning of the music industry, there is still surprisingly little research into the market for live music (Holt, 2010; Oakes, 2003).

The history of live music venues and public concerts began hundreds of years ago. The first opera house open to the public was Teatro San Cassino in Venice, which opened in 1637 and fully relied on the box office; it also sparked an emergence of travelling opera companies and other opera houses all over Italy (King, 2001). The first public concert in London was given by violinist John Bannister in 1672, and this was followed by regular public concerts in Paris from 1683, in Germany from 1743 and in Vienna from 1772 (Tschmuck, 2012). From the perspective of music production and consumption, live music is an interesting element of any music scene. It brings together musicians and music consumers, and often all of the relevant stakeholders, into a physically and socially defined space such as a concert hall or stadium. Most cities and towns around the world offer some form of live music to their residents and visitors, and often become famous for the quality of their live music provision, as in the case of New Orleans, London and Vienna. Vibrant music scenes are a hugely important part of the cultural life of these places, attracting large numbers of tourists, and offering employment as well as entertainment opportunities to local residents. Young and up-and-coming musicians perform in pubs, restaurants and nightclubs to reach their audiences, while more established acts perform in traditional venues designed for live performances, like concert halls and theatres, and global music stars attract thousands to large music arenas and stadiums. It is also necessary to recognize that in some