

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

An Investigation Into The Factors That Contribute To Global Concert Revenue Growth

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Abstract

This paper compares two live music growth models: fixed domestic venues (MSG Entertainment) and global touring networks (Live Nation Entertainment). Using FY2021–FY2025 financial data and Spotify streaming metrics, the study evaluates how physical capacity limits and geographic scale impact revenue growth. Findings show that while Madison Square Garden achieves high revenue per show, its long-term growth is capped by physical seat and calendar limits. In contrast, Live Nation’s International segment grew at a 37.86% CAGR, outpacing U.S. Domestic operations (13.62% CAGR) by nearly three times. A regression of U.S. Domestic revenue at Madison Square Garden shows that cumulative streaming data from Spotify most accurately determines per-show revenue at a U.S. domestic venue such as Madison Square Garden. By analyzing artists such as Billy Joel, and Lady Gaga, this paper demonstrates how real-time streaming analytics de-risk international tour routing, making global networks the main engine of live music growth.

Keywords: Live Entertainment Industry; Revenue Growth; Concerts; Madison Square Garden; Market Growth

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, digital streaming transformed recorded music into a high-reach marketing tool, making live concerts the primary revenue engine for performing artists and entertainment corporations (Kowalski 2026). Today, major live music operators rely on two distinct business models: fixed domestic real estate, where companies like MSG Entertainment depend on iconic venues (~19,500 seats at Madison Square Garden) and long term artist residencies, repeated shows at a single venue to drive steady local revenue; and global touring networks, where companies like Live Nation operate worldwide by booking multi-city arena and stadium tours across multiple continents. This paper investigates how physical venue limits compare against globally scalable touring networks in driving revenue growth, and how digital streaming data influences tour routing. By analyzing financial growth rates (CAGRs) alongside Spotify streaming metrics across case studies ranging from Billy Joel to Lady Gaga, this study shows how streaming heatmaps de-risk international expansion and allow global touring networks to outpace fixed domestic venues. We hope to answer the following question: Do concert-focused entertainment

companies that serve internationally experience a larger percentage of revenue growth than companies that operate primarily domestically, and what variables best explain that domestic revenue revenue between 2021 and 2025? We hypothesize that concert companies operating internationally achieve a higher percentage revenue growth rate than companies operating primarily domestically, and that cumulative Spotify streams best explain per-show revenue at a domestic venue such as Madison Square Garden.

2. Methodology

A. *Data Selection & Sample Justification:* The data was carefully selected from companies that are either an international or domestic stakeholder in the live entertainment industry, owning several key venues in their respective region. The figures stem specifically from publicly accessible 10-Q and 10-K forms reported on the company's investor relations page and the Securities and Exchange Commission. Live Nation was selected as the variable company, given its ownership of over 460 venues, internationally and domestically (Live Nation Entertainment 2026a, 4). By contrast, Madison Square Garden (MSG) Entertainment was selected for its limited five venues (Madison Square Entertainment Corp. 2026, 7) in the portfolio. Collectively, through the financial statements of both enterprises, the financial information will be used to measure the revenue growth across several key metrics.

B. *Variable Operationalization:*

- a. This investigation uses market scope as the independent variable, classified as either primarily domestic (over 50 percent of revenue generated within the United States) or primarily internationally (over 50 percent of revenue generated outside the United States). A second quantitative measure, the Total Regional Venue Count (TRVC) of the enterprise as reported in their financial statements, will be used to measure market scope.
- b. The dependent variable used is the percentage revenue growth, which is defined mathematically as the four-year Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR), and can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\left(\frac{Revenue_{FY2025}}{Revenue_{FY2021}} \right)^{\frac{1}{4}} - 1 \quad (1)$$

$Revenue_{FY202X}$: Represent top-line revenue as reported in the SEC 10-K and 10-Q forms over four growth periods accordingly.

Two control variables are used to maintain the consistency of the investigation: the designated 2021–2025 timeframe and core industry focus on live entertainment.

C. *Data Standardization & Currency Alignment:* Live Nation Entertainment's fiscal year ends December 31st, while Madison Square Garden Entertainment's fiscal year ends June 30th. Therefore, the companies' reported annual revenues cover different reporting periods. Our investigation compares their reported fiscal-year revenues from 2021 through 2025, as we wanted to preserve the accuracy of the original reported revenue figures and avoid estimations through normalization. The difference in reporting periods is acknowledged as a limitation when interpreting and discussing the variations in revenue growth. All revenue figures are reported in USD, using figures from the companies' financial statements.

3. Results

This section presents the revenue data collected from Live Nation and MSG Entertainment for fiscal years 2021 through 2025 and the resulting four-year CAGR. The results are organized into three parts: the raw revenue figures by fiscal year, the primary CAGR calculation, and the market scope classification data.

Raw revenue figures by fiscal year: Live Nation's annual revenue rose from \$6,268.40 million in the 2021 fiscal year to \$25,201.40 million during the 2025 fiscal year, reported on the calendar basis ending in December 31st (Live Nation Entertainment 2026a, 31). MSG Entertainment's annual revenue rose

Table 1. Live Nation Revenue Growth

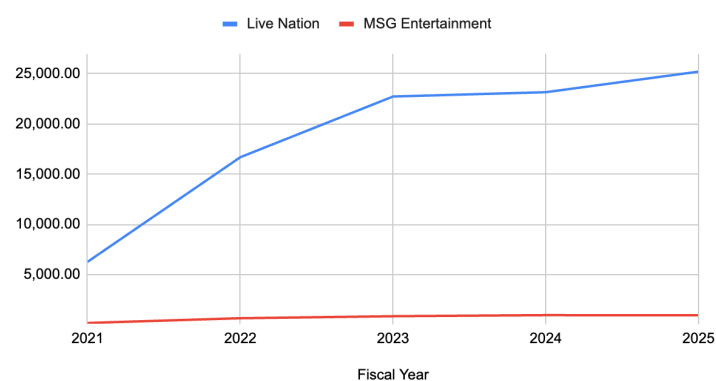
Fiscal Year	Period	Total Revenue	YOY Growth
2021	Dec 31st, 2021	6,268.40	–
2022	Dec 31st, 2022	16,681.40	166.12%
2023	Dec 31st, 2023	22,726.30	36.24%
2024	Dec 31st, 2024	23,155.60	1.89%
2025	Dec 31st, 2025	25,201.40	8.84%
4-Year Revenue Growth:			41.60%

Table 2. Madison Square Graden Entertainment Revenue Growth

Fiscal Year	Period	Total Revenue	YOY Growth
2021	June 30th, 2021	180.40	–
2022	June 30th, 2022	653.50	262.25%
2023	June 30th, 2023	851.50	30.30%
2024	June 30th, 2024	959.30	12.66%
2025	June 30th, 2025	942.70	–1.73%
4-Year Revenue Growth:			51.19%

\$180.40 million in the fiscal year 2021 to \$942.70 million in the fiscal year 2025, as reported on a fiscal year basis ending June 30th (Madison Square Garden Entertainment Corp. 2026, 2). Both companies saw a sizable increasing trend in their revenue growth between 2021 and 2022, with Live Nation’s revenue growing 166.12% and MSG Entertainment’s revenue growing 262.25%, reflecting a steep post-pandemic rebound across the industry. Growth rates were calculated by the authors from the revenue figures above. Growth slowed down across the following years, with MSG Entertainment seeing a minimal decline with a negative 1.73% drop in revenue growth between the fiscal years 2024 and 2025. Despite the slowing of revenue growth, both companies maintained revenue figures well above those of the pandemic period.

Live Nation and MSG Entertainment

**Figure 1.** Revenue Growth over Time

Sample Calculations:

$$\text{Live Nation: } \left[\left(\frac{25,201.40}{6,268.40} \right)^{\frac{1}{4}} - 1 \right] \times 100 = 41.60\%$$

$$\text{MSG: } \left[\left(\frac{942.70}{180.40} \right)^{\frac{1}{4}} - 1 \right] \times 100 = 51.19\%$$

For these sample calculations, each enterprise's current revenue up until June 30th or December 31st of the fiscal year is being placed above the previous year's revenue for that same period. Year-over-year growth is then calculated as $(\text{Revenue this year} \div \text{Revenue last year}) - 1$. For the full four-year revenue growth, the current year's revenue is placed over the original revenue at the start of the period and is raised to the power of one over four, or 0.25. The four value in exponent place represent the full period length of four years, following the end of the end of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Table 3. Comparative Revenue Trends

Fiscal Year	Live Nation Revenue	Live Nation YOY Growth	MSG Entertainment Revenue	MSG Entertainment YOY Growth
2021	6,268.40	–	180.40	–
2022	16,681.40	166.12%	653.50	262.25%
2023	22,726.30	36.24%	851.50	30.30%
2024	23,155.60	1.89%	959.30	12.66%
2025	25,201.40	8.84%	942.70	–1.73%
<i>Total 4-Year Revenue:</i>	<i>94,033.10</i>	<i>41.60%</i>	<i>3,587.40</i>	<i>51.19%</i>

As illustrated in the trajectory chart, both companies experienced an immediate revenue surge between the fiscal years of 2021 and 2022. This initial steep trajectory reflects the industry-wide opening as venues resume full capacity operations and events continue following Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

Market scope classification data: The comparative table places both companies together by fiscal year, and it shows Live Nation's revenue running about 35 times in 2021 and 27 times in 2025, the size of MSG Entertainments between the fiscal years 2021 and 2025. Across the four year window, Live Nation generated a cumulative total of \$94,033.10 million against MSG Entertainment's \$3,587.40 million. This finding aligns with the previous discussions in the Methodology section, where Live Nation's more than 460 venues internationally and domestically (Live Nation Entertainment 2026a, 2) contrast with MSG Entertainment's five venue portfolio. This supports our hypothesis that expanding into international markets allows music promoters to achieve a faster percentage growth rate, rather than relying solely on domestic venues. The chart makes the gap more visible, as Live Nation's line climbs steadily while MSG Entertainment's remains flat across the period.

4. Discussion

The results from the investigation regarding the revenue growth of international vs. domestic live entertainment companies are significant when understanding the role that Live Nation plays in the industry as a whole. Under Live Nation, Ticketmaster operates as the primary ticket distribution platform that owns over 460 venues globally. Since Madison Square Garden Entertainment only owns five venues all within the same geographical region, their revenue growth is more significant in understanding the popularity and financial stream behind New York City's live entertainment scene. After seeing the inconsistencies in revenue growth between a solely domestic and an international/domestic entertainment company, we wanted to better understand how revenue is produced within the concert sector of the live entertainment industry.

For instance, Billy Joel's Madison Square Garden residency (under MSG Entertainment) serves as the clearest domestic-only example of a U.S. arena residency in this case study. A residency is a series of the same show at the same venue across a long period of time, usually in areas where the artist has established a large fanbase. Across ten years and 104 shows at the venue, Billy Joel's residency sold 1.9 million tickets and grossed \$266.7 million, leaving the tour as the third-highest-grossing residency according to the Boxscore report (Frankenberg 2024). The per-show economics revealed limitations, however, as the economics suggest that the limited capacity and venue schedule restricted the revenue

growth potential. Given a raise in ticket prices between 2014 and 2024, the average revenue per-show rose from \$2 million to \$4.7 million (Frankenberg 2024). Since a residency is a good example of consolidated touring costs (no travel and transportation costs), and since the capacity of the venue remained constant throughout this period, we can attribute that the average growth in revenue per show stems from a rise in ticket prices set by the event organizer.

These findings suggest that the domestic-only live entertainment companies are more restricted in terms of their overall revenue, since the event organizers are responsible for setting ticket prices, which oftentimes corresponds to the demand for the artist. For example, if an artist was experiencing a surge in streams while planning an event, to keep tickets accessible for a longer period of time, the artist would have to either scale to a larger venue or raise ticket prices. Since a residency is limited in its production, as tour equipment is designed for only specific-sized venues, the primary method for expanding revenue is to increase the ticket prices, as is the case with Billy Joel. Beyond this point, we wanted to understand what other factors influence the revenue produced by artists performing at Madison Square Garden.

After assessing the revenue growth of a controlled domestic live entertainment company and additionally assessing the implications of revenue growth domestically through a variety of factors, it is found that within the concert industry, and in addition to the event organizer's pricing strategy, the largest driver of revenue is cumulative streams from Spotify. For example, Lady Gaga, who has over 175 billion cumulative streams, yielded the highest overall revenue at Madison Square Garden, at around \$4.5 million (Allen 2026). By contrast, Brandi Carlille, who yielded only \$700,000 from her show at Madison Square Garden, only had 3.7 billion cumulative streams. By keeping the venue conditions the same across all events, the data points specifically point towards the most well-known artists globally yielding the highest revenue.

Table 4. Live Entertainment Industry Trends from Madison Square Garden (MSG)

Year of Performance	Artist	Performance Date	Monthly Listeners (M)	Cumulative Streams (B)	Songs on the Billboard Top 100	Revenue at MSG	Key Popularity Index
2025	Kylie Minogue	April 5	20.8	4.29	0	1.709	8.598688141
2025	Rema	May 3	26.6	6.58	0	0.793	11.93928767
2025	Los Tigres del Norte	May 24	14.6	7.4	0	1.318	6.73867336
2025	Wizkid	June 7	16.9	11.42	0	1.003	9.021369862
2025	Tyler, the Creator	July 15	37.9	27.48	10	1.450	26.5581606
2025	Lady Gaga	Aug 27	98.26	175	1	4.500	96.655
2025	Tate McRae	Sep 4	42.06	19.16	1	1.750	23.14229486
2025	Dua Lipa	Sep 18	70.7	42.6	0	2.115	43.06774037
2025	Lorde	Oct 1	26.5	11.9	0	1.944	13.53157112
2025	Sabrina Carpenter	Oct 29	56.3	25.5	12	1.930	34.9199679
2025	Gunna	Nov 22	33.1	28.2	1	1.450	21.85358938
2025	Andrea Bocelli	Dec 18	8.8	3.3	0	2.300	2.84087775
2025	Brandi Carlille	Feb 14	3.7	1.6	0	0.749	0
2026	The Neighbourhood	April 14	47.2	19.8	0	1.030	25.37003571
2026	Demi Lovato	April 24	37.8	17.6	0	1.249	20.42122835
2026	Dilgit Dosanjh	May 25	17.7	6.1	0	2.550	7.74718075
2026	Madison Beer	Jul 13	15.6	6.17	0	1.051	6.814446775

5. Limitations

When building the model that predicted the average revenue that an artist would yield after performing at Madison Square Garden based on their cumulative streams, current monthly listener count, and the number of top 10 songs they had, it was found that the strongest correlation existed between the revenue and cumulative streams, since it serves as an indicator of their overall long-term popularity. However, since Spotify does not retain its long-term monthly-listener counts beyond each year, the data was not as precise and reliable as with other indicators from this study.

Additionally, the trends of each show vary significantly, as the range of revenue is between \$700,000 and \$4,500,000, establishing a low R constant value (0.7), which means that the model is not as precise as it could be. Since there are simply immeasurable factors that contribute towards how much fans are

willing to pay for tickets, such as their retention to the artist and the conditions of the concert (e.g. whether it's on a Saturday vs. Wednesday), this study is limited in achieving a perfect correlation constant which may increase the overall margin of error. As more data is collected from more shows, the regression will increase in its overall accuracy, as data from 200 shows would yield much better results than that of 30 shows; however, there is still a lack of adequate data that would decrease the accuracy of the regression through the addition of more shows.

The COVID-19 pandemic created major distortions in live entertainment financial data during 2020 and 2021. Venues like MSG were completely shut down in 2021, dropping MSG Entertainment's revenue to an unnaturally low level (\$180.4 million) (Madison Square Garden Entertainment Corp. 2026, 2). When venues reopened in 2022, the year-over-year revenue growth looked massive (over 100%). These high percentage jumps do not mean the business suddenly grew by 100% overnight; they just show the business recovering from zero back to normal. On top of that, international concert markets reopened at different times between 2021 and 2023 depending on local public health rules, creating uneven growth rates across foreign concert dates (Sharma 2021).

Finally, there is no direct international equivalent to Madison Square Garden. MSG is unique because it is a single indoor arena owned by a standalone, publicly traded company in the middle of New York City. Overseas arenas, like The O2 in London or the Accor Arena in Paris, are either owned by local governments, managed by private event companies, or lumped inside larger corporate balance sheets that do not report single-building finances. Because of this, we had to compare a single domestic venue company (MSG Entertainment) against a massive global promoter (Live Nation) rather than comparing MSG to a matching venue in Europe or Asia.

6. Conclusions

This paper set out to examine how live music companies grow their business by comparing two different models: owning fixed venue real estate (like MSG Entertainment) versus running a global concert touring network (like Live Nation). By analyzing financial revenues alongside Spotify streaming data, this research explored whether expanding overseas offers faster growth than relying on a single domestic building.

The financial data shows that while fixed venues like Madison Square Garden can generate high revenues through ticket price increases, suites, and concessions, they hit a hard physical ceiling. MSG is capped by its 19,500-seat capacity and the 365 days in a calendar year (Madison Square Garden Entertainment 2025). Once an arena is fully booked and sold out, it cannot sell more tickets. In contrast, Live Nation's International segment grew at a 37.86% CAGR, outpacing its U.S. Domestic growth rate (13.62%) by nearly three times. Going global allows a company to sell millions of additional tickets without being trapped by the physical limits of one building.

Ultimately, music streaming platforms like Spotify have transformed how tour promoter decisions get made. Real-time streaming data like Monthly Active Listeners and total stream counts gives promoters a clear picture of where an artist's fans actually live before spending millions of dollars on shipping equipment overseas. By using data to lower financial risks, live music operators can confidently book world tours, confirming that global demand networks are the biggest driver of growth in today's music industry.

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