

Houghton College

**Music Industry in the Post-Pandemic World:
A Possible Path Forward**

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by

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Abstract

Around the world the COVID-19 pandemic has altered every sector of society, including the music industry. Prompt enforcement of compliance to safety measures and lockdown canceled live music events and recording sessions alike, immediately restricting even the slightest possibility of in-person interaction. As a consequence of that chaotic event, music-making and music consumption shifted overnight to the digital world, namely the virtual modality of interaction or remote interaction. Not only does this paper analyze the changes implemented as soon as chaos broke out, but it also investigates the abilities of humans adapting to an entirely unusual scenario. So far, it seems as though the current status quo will linger indefinitely, due to unexpected variants of the disease that will come up without warning. That implies continuing adaptation. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of the adaptation alluded to are investigated, which will include interviews with a number of music industry experts. Eventually, the sublimity of a new beginning is envisioned by means of a proposal that will allow for inclusion and accessibility in the midst of what seems to be a time of lingering instability. All in all, what I suggest is a model of coexistence of the actual and the virtual modalities of interaction. Whether going back to the old normal or not, such a model aspires to benefit the music industry professionals as well as audiences everywhere, hopefully preparing both for prospective changes in the days to come.

To Jesus Christ, my personal Lord and Savior, Cleberson and Elizeth, my beloved parents, and
Marcelo and Mauricio, my beloved brothers

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

–KJV Ecclesiastes 1:9

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Contents

Introduction.....	1
I. Times of Uncertainty in a Chaotic Scenario.....	6
II. The Beauty of Inclusion by Means of Accessibility.....	24
III. A Possible Path Forward: The Sublimity of New Beginnings.....	30
Conclusion.....	38
Bibliography.....	45
Appendix: Interview Transcripts.....	50

Introduction

This paper envisions a possible path forward as the music industry emerges from the chaotic changes forced on it by the coronavirus pandemic. As the world reopens, and live events become a possibility again, I offer an examination of the possible benefits of intentionally maintaining specific elements of the virtual modality of interaction. I believe the adjustments I propose will allow for a greater inclusion and accessibility as the industry expands in the years to come.

First, I will be approaching the current times of uncertainty, and how the industry has responded to them, looking at those through specific changes that emerged, and analyzing the advantages and disadvantages that each brought with it. Then, I will be looking at how these changes allow for greater inclusion by means of digital accessibility. Finally, based on this analysis, I will propose certain steps that aim to maximize the benefits while resolving some of the issues that arose out of the rapid response to the pandemic.

Literature review

Every now and then, catastrophic events take place in world history. Some of them bring consequences to towns, cities, and states, whereas others of huge proportions affect the globe. Whenever those huge events take place brutally striking society as a whole, and everyone is subsequently caught off guard, people are forced to deal with a new reality no matter how hard that might be. COVID-19 caught the world off guard, and introduced a number of changes to the way we conduct business, and interact with each other. While these were difficult at first, as restrictions eased and economies began to open up, we began to adapt these new ways of interacting to our own purposes. This is particularly important since the eradication of COVID-

19 remains elusive. Whenever the pandemic curve starts to flatten, a new variant arises, creating a cyclic feeling of instability. Francis Fukuyama describes in his article “The Pandemic and Political Order” that “there will be no moment when countries will be able to declare victory over the disease; rather, economies will open up slowly and tentatively, with progress slowed by subsequent waves of infections.”¹ Former New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo echoed these concerns in a written statement: “There will be another virus. There will be a next one. We don't have the luxury of saying, well COVID, we managed, will never happen again. It will happen again and we have to be prepared.”² Such subsequent waves of infections as the Delta variant, the Lambda variant, and the B.1.621 variant have, as predicted, slowed progress towards the reopening, as infection rates and death tolls increase.

In the face of such loss and uncertainty, it seems wise to take stock of our circumstances, and seek to move forward with hope and intentionality. It seems obvious that the virtual modalities of interaction we have adapted to will linger indefinitely. I believe this provides us with an opportunity to consider the advantages and disadvantages of such modalities, so we can seek an intentionally beneficial coexistence of virtual and actual interaction.

While little research exists on an intentional coexistence of virtual and actual modes of interaction, scholars have studied each independently. Taken together, these studies provide evidence that such a coexistence can be beneficial, and with them we can begin to build the

1. Francis Fukuyama, “The Pandemic and Political Order: It Takes a State,” *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 4 (July/August 2020): 26-32, accessed May 28, 2021, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2020-06-09/pandemic-and-political-order?utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=lo_flows&utm_campaign=registered_user_welcome&utm_term=email_1&utm_content=20211028.

2. Bobby Welber, “Cuomo Warns New York Residents ‘There Will Be Another Virus,’” *Hudson Valley Post*, June 25, 2021. https://hudsonvalleypost.com/cuomo-warns-new-york-residents-there-will-be-another-virus/?trackback=fbshare_mobile&fbclid=IwAR2xWSORLM6Cs0zucVb7XF5WEsDE0VtRBCgtL7y-n16A5ijRM7h8p2NbRZc

framework for what that might look like in the music industry. To that end, let us take a look at those studies.

As government efforts to control the pandemic forced many people into a period of isolation, some studies have demonstrated the benefits of virtual interaction for maintaining some sense of status quo. Similarly to the rise of Zoom in American life, Tsitsi Chirombe et al. (2020) describe how people's routine has been altered in the African country Zimbabwe.³ By means of a digital platform called WhatsApp people adapted all of their former in-person activities. From activities such as listening to music to professional meetings to religious meetings, all of them have gone digital. The benefits of such interactions are explored by H. Tsai et al. (2015), who argue that digital inclusion of the elderly contributes to fighting depression and loneliness.⁴ Due to their need to interact with other people, and their need to perform basic tasks they usually perform outdoors, they have been included, or have spontaneously included themselves in the digital world. Otherwise, they would be even more distant, both emotionally and psychologically, than what social distancing has imposed thus far, confined to a place of total isolation and loneliness. One such social activity, accessible via various virtual platforms, involves attending concerts.

When the disease first spiked all around the globe, live-streamed concerts were attended by millions of people. Although the numbers were inarguably favorable, it would not be long

3. Tsitsi Chirombe, Sharon Benza, Epiphania Munetsi, and Herbert Zirima. "Coping Mechanisms Adopted by People during the Covid-19 Lockdown in Zimbabwe." *Business Excellence and Management* 10, no. S.i. 1 (2020): 33-45. <https://doaj.org/article/72b9f68d4ec9413a944eb93b896859fa>.

4. Tsai, H. S., Shillair, R., Cotten, S. R., Winstead, V., & Yost, E. (2015). Getting Grandma Online: Are Tablets the Answer for Increasing Digital Inclusion for Older Adults in the U.S.? *Educational Gerontology*, 41(10),695-709. [https://www.unboundmedicine.com/medline/citation/26877583/Getting Grandma Online: Are Tablets the Answer for Increasing Digital Inclusion for Older Adults in the U S](https://www.unboundmedicine.com/medline/citation/26877583/Getting_Grandma_Online:_Are_Tablets_the_Answer_for_Increasing_Digital_Inclusion_for_Older_Adults_in_the_U_S_)

before virtual attendees felt the need to be outdoors again attending concerts in person. Enthusiasts such as Amy M. Belfi et al. (2021) believe that responses to attending concerts remotely are virtually the same as the ones experienced in person.⁵ Elizabeth Lyons (2020), in turn, is even more enthusiastic in her description of remotely attending a classical music concert, looking forward to others.⁶ It is worth mentioning, however, that those were the early days of the pandemic, when it seemed it would not last for long. As the outbreak lingered on, virtual attendees soon felt the need to be outdoors again attending concerts in person. The side effects of social distancing, alluded to above, began to show in many ways, starting with psychological issues. Suicidal tendencies, homicides, and family issues are among some of the drawbacks observed not long after the world went into lockdown. This raises the question, when it comes to music, as to the extent to which attending live concerts remotely fosters the same sense of communal inclusion live concerts do, or if it just provides limited benefits to the individual participants. This is the subject of a study by Tarja Rautiainen-Keskustalo and Sanna Raudaskoski (2019).⁷ In their study, prison inmates and seniors were observed while remotely attending a live-streamed concert. The authors highlight the fact that it does not necessarily facilitate inclusion in spite of a certain sense of well-being during the event, however, their investigation concentrated on populations that had already been affected by long-term limited mobility. If another layer were to be considered, although not prison inmates, the majority of

5. Amy M Belfi, David W Samson, Jonathan Crane, and Nicholas L Schmidt. "Aesthetic Judgments of Live and Recorded Music: Effects of Congruence between Musical Artist and Piece." *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021): 618025–25. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.618025.
<https://houghtoncollegelibrary.on.worldcat.org/oclc/8923273008>

6. Elizabeth Lyon. "Music Livestreaming in a Global Pandemic." *Hudson Review* 73, no. 1 (2020): 131–37.
<https://houghtoncollegelibrary.on.worldcat.org/oclc/8664113078>

7. Tarja Rautiainen-Keskustalo & Sanna Raudaskoski (2019). Inclusion by live streaming? Contested meanings of well-being: movement and non-movement of space, place and body, *Mobilities*, 14:4, 469-483, DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2019.1612611. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17450101.2019.1612611>

people in lockdown definitely feel imprisoned. If such “imprisonment” is prolonged, the consequences inevitably start to show. However, as lockdowns are lifted, and we enter a world with even limited in-person events, I believe the short-term health benefits their study found become more meaningfully useful.

As for the future of the music industry in the post-pandemic world, some people, like Philip C. Rothschild et al. (2020), paint a bleak picture of the “deteriorating state of the live music industry due to COVID-19,” partly due to their focus on issues related to refund policies of entrance tickets.⁸ At the same time, others, like the music industry experts I interviewed, believe in a coming boom of the live music industry, as they see the vast majority of people missing live music in-person attendance. Sound engineer and researcher Connor Lott, believes that while there will be an overriding comeback regarding in-person attendance of live concerts, live streaming of concerts will continue.⁹ It seems safe to assume that, at least for some time, both the actual and virtual modalities of musical interaction will coexist. If this is true, it seems the next steps are to look more in depth at the changes to the music industry itself.

8. Rothschild, Philip, Kendall Vowels, and Connor Rothschild. “Cancel, Postpone, or Reschedule: The Live Music Industry’s Response to Ticket Refunds during the Covid-19 Pandemic.” *Journal of the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association* 20, no. 1 (2020): 45–83. doi:10.25101/20.2. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346892925_Cancel_Postpone_or_Reschedule_The_Live_Music_Industry's_Response_to_Ticket_Refunds_During_the_COVID-19_Pandemic

9. Connor Lott, interview by Marcio Horsth, Simi Valley, April 14, 2021.

I. Times of Uncertainty in a Chaotic Scenario

No sooner had the coronavirus pandemic been officially announced than the world collapsed. As chaos broke out, the world economy was immediately shaken, death quickly started spreading everywhere, hospitals had no rooms for patients, people lost relatives, friends, and material possessions, and the feeling of uncertainty was permanently hovering over everyone. Suddenly, the world underwent abrupt changes imposing prompt adaptations. As happened to every single sector of society, so was the music industry affected. It was not long after the COVID-19 pandemic was officially announced by the World Health Organization that the world went into lockdown. As an immediate consequence of the sudden and severe safety protocols enforcement, no one could interact with each other outdoors or indoors without the imposed six-foot distance, nor without wearing a mask. From now on, this paper will take an in-depth look at three big areas of the music industry that shifted entirely to the virtual modality of interaction as soon as the world went into lockdown: live music attendance, music consumption, and music-making. In their process of migrating to the virtual mode of interaction, we will see what changes they went through, followed by the advantages and disadvantages that those changes brought to each one of them.

Live Music Attendance

When the coronavirus pandemic first hit, every single music venue around the globe was shut down overnight preventing artists, crew members, and audiences alike from gathering. Crisis had immediately broken out, and a solution had to be found rapidly. As no one was allowed to interact in the actual modality anymore, the solution found by the music industry was to provide audiences all over the world with live concert remote attendance and in real time. The

only way to synchronously broadcast live concerts with such a huge range is live streaming them via the internet.

In light of that sudden and radical change, live music attendance will be investigated under four subcategories, namely: live-streaming, drive-ins, ticket sales, and copyright. Such subcategories, though intertwined and directly linked to the virtual modality of interaction, can be dissociated, individually investigated.

Live-Streaming

Live-streaming allows for an unlimited amount of content to be shared online and in real time. Lots of events had been live-streamed often even before the pandemic. From lessons and lectures to interviews, trips, ceremonies, news, surgeries, and whatever one can think of, everything can now be streamed live. Tragic as it sounds, even criminal activities have unbelievably been streamed live.

It has been observed during the pandemic that attending live concerts remotely is perfectly possible. In view of that possibility, I believe the coexistence of both modalities will be extremely beneficial to everyone. Live-streaming via YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram gives people all over the world the opportunity to attend concerts they might not be able to attend in person. That possibility can make the music industry profit on significantly larger scales.

Up until the pandemic came about, live-streaming was an alternative way for artists to connect with their fan base, and such a valuable resource for new independent artists. Now, it also allows people to interact with each other in real time, and gives people in general, not only professional artists, the opportunity to express themselves solely for fun and pleasure. Shortly before the pandemic, a huge number of young people had been interacting with each other

through social media platforms, besides a large number of young adults, mature adults, and a small number of elderly people. It can be said that both modalities of interaction were somewhat coexisting already, although the virtual modality was just an alternative to the actual modality. That was not an intentionally established mode of interaction, let alone popular, especially among unusual age groups.

However, as soon as COVID-19 first hit and the safety measures were severely enforced, part of the actual modality of interaction, that is, the in-person live concert attendance, disappeared overnight. Major artists from everywhere all of a sudden were forced to interrupt and postpone their ongoing nationwide and world tours. That was indeed a major drawback that instantly affected every single professional involved in the music business.

At a very fast pace, the industry found a way to keep the live concert sector active. It was then that live-streaming became as strong as ever, given the fact there was no choice for the audiences but to attend concerts remotely. With such a massive concentration of attendees, it can be said that an alternative broadcast media worldwide had just been officially established. At that point, live streaming concerts was not a secondary option anymore but the only one available option. The first major artists to live stream their concerts, such as John Legend, and Keith Urban, paved the way for so many others, including independent artists, and those starting out their artistic career.¹⁰ Also, during the first peak of the pandemic, audiences from everywhere considerably engaged in donating not only to the artists (those donations would benefit the whole backstage personnel involved), but also donating to families and individuals around the world facing economic hardship. When it comes to helping people financially and remotely, I believe the virtual mode of interaction is extremely efficient. Under the scope of technology, it is worth

10. David Peisner, "Concerts Aren't Back. Livestreams Are Ubiquitous. Can They Do the Job?," New York Times, July 21, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/arts/music/concerts-livestreams.html>

mentioning that collecting those donations was possible, besides via telephone transactions, by utilizing advanced technology for remote payment, such as electronic transfer via PayPal, Zelle, Venmo, and QR codes.

Another very interesting aspect to live concert attendance in the virtual modality of interaction is the remote attendance of “first-generation fans,” or people who started appreciating their favorite artists back in the early days of their career. The older people get, the more comfortable they want to feel. For that reason, those who used to be among the first fans of a given artist will seldom, as the years go by, leave the comfort of their homes to attend concerts at crowded music venues. Additionally, those who appreciate refined sound and image quality, and spend good money on home entertainment would rather invite their friends over to attend remote concerts than to attend concerts in person.

Another huge advantage of live-streamed concerts heretofore is their happening synchronously with the in-person attendance, or the actual modality of interaction. Even within the United States, for instance, there are people who will not leave their hometowns to attend concerts in other cities or states. Distance-wise and comfort-wise, live-streaming will benefit, therefore, people who will not leave their hometowns to attend a concert even within their own country. The same applies to concert attendees from other countries, many of whom will not have time for a long-distance trip or money to afford international trips.

Such expansions of the audience are also good for business, as the music industry will make a fortune out of this duality. In this case, the coexistence of both modalities of interaction should never be disregarded at any point from now on. Conversely, if remote attendance exists as a lingering model along with the in-person attendance possibility, an immense number of people

will benefit from that. And from such a benefit, other immediate benefits will emerge, such as digital inclusion by means of accessibility.

Another aspect to be considered that validates and reinforces the coexistence of both modalities is the collective in-person experience. Young people naturally crave the in-person experience that can “foster standards of group morality, and lead to individual emotional energy or confidence” (Collins, 49).¹¹ Hence, there are people who will not replace the collective, in-person experience by remote attendance unless needed. Vandenberg et al. (2021) affirm that live concerts as well as live-streamed concerts represent a special occasion and an opportunity to connect with others.¹² I personally believe the common ground of connection and inclusion is interaction. In spite of remote interaction made possible by means of the virtual mode, certain people will not stand being kept from attending concerts at music venues for too long. A living proof of that is the recent concert of the band Foo Fighters held at Madison Square Garden in New York City. On the very first week, tickets were sold out. That happened in mid-July of 2021 when safety measures were partially relaxed. That was the first concert which people could attend without having to wear a mask. Such a fact was also highlighted in the concert advertisement.

In light of such evidence, I would argue that there is no danger of in-person attendance being left behind. Rather, both modalities of interaction could easily serve as alternatives for certain groups of people depending on their age, accessibility issues, or simply their discretion, own emotional decision. As we never know what lies ahead, should another pandemic break out,

11. Randall Collins. “Interaction Ritual Chains”. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2004

12. Femke Vandenberg, Michaël Berghman & Julian Schaap (2021) The ‘lonely raver’: music livestreams during COVID-19 as a hotline to collective consciousness?, *European Societies*, 23:sup1, S141-S152, DOI: 10.1080/14616696.2020.1818271. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14616696.2020.1818271>

or other variants of the disease come about making in-person attendance impossible again, remote attendance will immediately serve as the great escape for everyone.

Drive-ins

Whether set up at the very venue where the artists are performing or synchronously live-streamed to different physical locations, drive-ins are another possibility of remote attendance by means of the virtual modality of interaction. That will not prevent people from being outdoors, and from interacting with one another even when forced to remain inside their cars. Besides being forced to remain inside the car, a limited number of persons per vehicle is mandatory. That is also a wise way of including people as well as a remarkable way of providing them with accessibility.

While being another type of remote live-streaming, drive-ins will not disappoint people who enjoy outdoor activities, at all. On the contrary, that kind of attendance feels like revisiting a popular culture that faded during the 1980s, serving as a very fun experience for both the younger and the older generations.

When drive-ins made their comeback around June 2020, their new concept gravitated around safety measures. So, the early drive-in concerts from our present days were held at one single venue having artists perform on stage, and the audience attend from inside their cars. Eventually, in a matter of one year or less the music industry transformed that initial idea into something bigger: synchronous live-streaming at different drive-ins. In other words, concerts are held at a given central place where people physically go. From there, they will be streamed live online for everyone, everywhere. Synchronously, they will also be live streamed wherever there are drive-ins, solely on the big screen, however, not with artists physically present. That format

was quickly spread throughout the United States. On May 22, 2021, the band Bon Jovi put out a drive-in concert that was live-streamed simultaneously in more than ten cities nationwide, and there are others on the way. While some people enjoy going to drive-ins, there is also the possibility of remotely attending these concerts from home or from anywhere else online (whenever made available by event promoters).

Another aspect that adds to keeping drive-in concerts active for at least the coming months is the lingering instability the world is still being faced with. In June 2021, just when everyone highly expected to be totally free from wearing masks, other breaking news disappointed the world: the COVID-19 Delta variant. It was not long before that variant spiked everywhere, and the death toll once again started to rise. By August 2021, states like Florida saw a large number of people getting infected and dying, not to mention all the other countries around the globe.

Ticket Sales

As the virtual modality of interaction has become more accessible over the years, remote ticket sales for live events have increased enormously. Remote ticket sales are extremely beneficial and efficient in at least three ways: security, profit, and, especially now in a time of pandemic, preventive measures against the spike of COVID-19 and its lethal variants.

Regular physical sales never ceased until the coming of the pandemic. So, until shortly before the pandemic came about, physical ticket sales were at full throttle along with remote ticket sales whether via telemarketing or over the internet. The pandemic came up and quickly started to spread. Shortly thereafter, all physical sales were lifted in order to avoid even larger spikes everywhere. Consequently, remote concert ticket sales grew exponentially, selling out in a

matter of days or hours.¹³ As one thing leads to another, the profit made by the ones involved in the production of music concerts was bigger due to solid audience attendance.

As far as security is concerned, depending on the location where people have to stand in line to buy tickets they become vulnerable, as there are robbers everywhere, especially in areas where the police are not as well-equipped nor present as needed. In view of that, remote ticket sales have made ticket purchasing much more secure a practice. On the other hand, cyber-criminal activities are another setback, since cyber thieves are everywhere, hiding everywhere.

The third and most up-to-date advantage of remote ticket sales, especially these days, is the prevention against the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, after all the world has been faced with thus far, the Delta variant of the disease is causing more and more deaths. With the disease randomly spiking, wearing masks has resumed in specific parts of the world. Adding to these factors, physical contact is considered risky. Cash money circulating from hand to hand during in-person monetary transactions seems to be extremely dangerous to every person involved, be it a patron or any official representative. In recent years, the virtual modality of interaction has made ticket purchase a very convenient and efficient possibility. That hugely contributes to saving people a whole lot of time and stress. Also, it increases attendance, since not everyone is able to physically show up at locations where tickets are sold, and also contributes to safety in countries where criminality rates are high. That has been working really well. Digital tickets stored in digital wallets, i.e., tickets virtually purchased and saved in mobile phones, are also validated through scanning at the entrance to the venue. At the discretion of the venue staff some tickets do not even need to be scanned, only presented, granting access to the building.

13. Arnau Bages-Amat, Dennis Spillecke, Jennifer Stanley, and Liz Harrison. "These eight charts show how COVID-19 has changed B2B sales forever." McKinsey & Company, October 14, 2020, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/these-eight-charts-show-how-covid-19-has-changed-b2b-sales-forever>

Alongside this, the longevity of physical ticket sales proves how efficient the coexistence of both modalities is. In the case of events attended remotely, access may be granted differently. Instead of only one payment possibility, patrons are also able to purchase virtual tickets via QR codes, pay-per-view, and so forth.

Copyright

In regards to copyright in live-streaming, the issues are somewhat similar to the ones related to digital music platforms: the never-ending battle between artists and record companies, and the lack of control over artists' original material by the artists themselves. In this very case, the dispute is between artists and societies that regulate the play of songs on radio stations, TV channels, and, more recently, on digital platforms. Time and time again, YouTube, VEVO, and other streaming platforms come up with changes in their policy concerning material protected by copyright law. Hence, in the case of live-streamed concerts, even when original material is performed by their own songwriters, performances undergo regulations pertaining to copyright laws. Most of the time, artists are vulnerable to piracy, unable to keep track of their material. Such inability allows for bad-intentioned people to duplicate original material, making illegal profit out of illegal copies. Ever since music became available in digital format, illegal duplication and subsequent illegal profit has been a major setback affecting record companies and artists alike everywhere.

Music Consumption

On the internet, remote sales have become a reality that has been winning online stores even more profit when it comes to music consumption. It has been some time now since different

payment methods first became possible online, and ever since people started to purchase different media formats and whatever online stores make available. Some years after the digital format takeover, not only did monetary transactions become possible online, but the product itself, music in this case, also transitioned to the digital domain, becoming available online as a virtual, digital format. Although music consumption has drastically changed giving way to migration from the physical to the digital format, the comeback of vinyl albums has naturally established the coexistence of both modalities of interaction. With the change in format, commercialization is solely available via online transactions. Also, when it comes to artists' original material, control over duplication seems to have become much more difficult. Although intrinsically linked to music consumption, there are peculiarities that deserve special attention. They will be grouped in four subcategories: the digital music format, the comeback of vinyl albums, e-commerce, and copyright issues.

The Digital Music Format

Music commercialized in the physical format had already transitioned to the virtual, digital format before the pandemic. That might be the main reason why music consumption has not suffered much since the disease broke out. Long before the chaotic scenario took place, the vast majority of physical record stores had already been extinguished, as a consequence of the digital music format takeover. Because this music format is virtual, it has never been a threat to the safety measures imposed by the government since COVID-19 first hit. On the contrary, it is a safer way to consume music, since it no longer requires physically going to record stores. Curiously, nonetheless, vinyl album sales have recently been on the rise, and seem to be more solid now than around five years ago when they came back. By the time the first phonograph

records were released in the magnetic era, little did the world know that the physical format would be gradually transformed, eventually not being tangible anymore. That made copyright collection and distribution vulnerable. Cassette tapes were also extinguished around fifteen years after the CD format came about in the first half of the 1980s. CD albums were extremely popular during the 1990s, and in the first decade of the year 2000 CD sales started to decrease, until almost being extinguished when music finally became digital. When music transitioned to the digital domain, the possibility of downloading, uploading, and sharing music by means of virtual interaction became more and more accessible. Consequently, major artists copyright collection and distribution was in jeopardy. Since there is very little or virtually no legal control over file sharing on the internet, recording artists of the current generation make much less profit from music sales than any artist of the past ever did. Although music digital platforms pay artists their profit share, it just cannot be compared to the now old days of music business history.

After so many judicial disputes between artists and recording companies, which go on to this day, music digital platforms, such as Apple Music (formerly known as iTunes), Spotify, and Deezer eventually gained ground, providing their subscribers with a virtually unlimited variety of genres, artists, and albums, all at one's fingertips.

Interestingly, album sales are starting to grow more and more, becoming trendy among people from Generation Y. The same has been happening lately in regards to turntables and portable record players. This will be referred to in more detail in the next subcategory.

The Comeback of Vinyl Albums

Especially among young people from nowadays, music digital platforms have grown exponentially, not to mention podcasts, movies, and TV series, all of which can be downloaded

to smartphones, and accessed anytime, anywhere. Digital music consumption had already been in full swing for some years before the pandemic came about. Shortly before the disease, record stores were also on the rise, bringing back the in-person experience of buying physical records. In 2019 and 2020, the profit made from vinyl record sales had surpassed that of CDs.¹⁴ Also, a considerably growing number of people are buying vinyl albums, turntables, and record players.¹⁵ Curiously, Millennials are the main generation that contributes to that growing number. Many record players are portable, and manufactured in a trendy design, so that young people connect with them. They are becoming "today's gadgets," so to speak.

Throughout the history of mankind, the desire for that which is new seems to be recurring, considering Heraclitus's affirmation: "No one steps twice on the same river."¹⁶ Generation X in their heyday seemed to long for a more efficient and technological future. It took a long while, but now we all have been experiencing what past generations from about thirty or forty years ago or even prior to those had always dreamed of. It seems like Generation Y (Millennials) feels the need for something new, and such novelty happens to be, in turn, the now old-fashioned heyday of Generation X. The twist is the blending of old and new, and vice-versa. Recycling by means of technology is such a wonderful trait of our current days.

Tower Records, the very popular American record store, has also made a comeback, except that it now sells its products, whether virtual or physical, online. With the comeback of vinyls, the famous retailer has been selling that format as well. By the recreation and adaptation

14. Noah Yoo, "Vinyl Record Sales Increased Almost 30% in 2020, RIAA Says," Pitchfork, February 26, 2021, <https://pitchfork.com/news/vinyl-record-sales-increased-almost-30-in-2020-riaa-says/>

15. Published by Statista Research Department. "Unit sales of turntables in the U.S. 2005-2020" May 12, 2021 [statista.com. https://www.statista.com/statistics/448555/number-of-turntables-sold-in-the-us/](https://www.statista.com/statistics/448555/number-of-turntables-sold-in-the-us/)

16. Laertius, Diogenes. Lives of Eminent Philosophers. D.L. 9:1 <http://data.perseus.org/texts/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0004.tlg001.perseus-eng1>

of Tower Records, for example, one realizes the clear dialogue between both modalities of interaction. Originally physical, the store is now virtual, also selling physical album copies remotely.

Still in regards to the dialogue between the virtual and the actual modalities of interaction, it is absolutely worth mentioning the fact that Spotify has just engaged in vinyl album sales as well, very likely as a means of expanding even more this billionaire venture. If we apply inclusion as another way of looking at such an initiative, that which is new is not getting rid of that which is old. On the contrary, it recycles the old, incorporating it in our present days.

E-Commerce

Another aspect worth mentioning of the virtual modality of interaction related to music consumption is e-commerce. Whether purchasing physical formats like vinyl albums and CDs, or digital music format, the whole monetary transaction steps can be taken remotely. With the advent of artificial intelligence, not even human sales representatives are essential. They are important, but not essential anymore. By inserting card numbers over the phone or via websites one can simply go through all stages, including tracking mail order via the internet once purchase is completed. Such an alternative has largely increased sales not only regarding the music industry but all the other sectors of society. At the same time, there are those who would rather experience leaving home, and go to a physical record store to purchase music. The same appears to be true when it comes to live-streamed concerts. Remote ticket sales have saved people a lot of stress and a lot of time. Besides, as previously mentioned, digital wallets have saved people even more time. All they have to do is present the digital version of the tickets they save to their smartphones, so they are granted access to the music venue after scanning in. Once again, the

virtual modality of interaction has become more and more efficient, judging by its incredible usefulness, efficiency, and accessibility to everyone.

Looking forward to the future, it seems that not only will music be consumed digitally, it will also be consumed physically. With the comeback of vinyl albums, a growing number of young people have started to acquire the taste for consuming music in vinyl printing. The older generations, in turn, now have the opportunity to revisit that culture.

Even before the pandemic came about, music had already been widely consumed digitally for some time. Also, before the pandemic vinyl album sales had been on the rise, and people had been enjoying the physical experience of handling and owning albums as well as physically going to record stores to purchase them. Should the “good old times” make a comeback, it is likely that people will also enjoy the in-person experience at record stores that provide room for human interaction, such as coffeehouses, and other spaces. Jaeung Sim et al. (2020) argue that the pandemic slowed down digital music consumption, since it is associated with commuting, outdoor activities, and others, all of which were lifted by safety measure restrictions.¹⁷ Sean Gammon and Gregory Ramshaw (2021) support the argument that restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have established a “strong sense of nostalgia.”¹⁸ According to the authors, the social bonds and sense of community created by the pandemic, a way to endure the imposed isolation, might be considered the future nostalgia people will feel. As a consequence, that might make people long for the actual modality of

17. Jaeung Sim, Daegon cho, Youngdeok Hwang, and Rahul Telang, "Virus Shook the Streaming Star: Estimating the COVID-19 Impact on Music Consumption," *Marketing Science*, Forthcoming (July 11, 2020): <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3649085>

18. Sean Gammon and Gregory Ramshaw (2021) *Distancing from the Present: Nostalgia and Leisure in Lockdown*, *Leisure Sciences*, 43:1-2, 131-137, DOI: 10.1080/01490400.2020.1773993. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01490400.2020.1773993?tab=permissions&scroll=top>

interaction. Also, it will possibly enhance the in-person music consumption experience, that is, going to a record store to purchase records, and to experience the physical world as well. Taking these factors into account stresses the fact that in the post-pandemic world music consumption by means of digital and physical media formats, along with remote and in-person economic transactions, will grow even stronger. Additionally, as previously mentioned, digital music platform Spotify is now engaging in e-commerce not only providing digital music streaming, but also selling vinyl records, such as Stan Getz's compilation soon to be released as well as merchandise products, and souvenirs of a wide variety of artists.

Copyright Issues

After some decades when vinyl albums were still the main format of music consumption, an isolated number of artists would complain about the lack of transparency of major labels concerning the profit they made from sales. Since the albums did not have an identification number, having control over the amount of copies sold was just impossible. The very same happened when the CD format came about. When music became available in the virtual format during the first decade of the year 2000, some major artists felt threatened by how obscure things were starting to become. When Napster came about in 1999, ordinary people not only would download whole music catalogs to their computers for free, but they would also send music to each other freely and quickly. As a consequence, that would put the career of many artists in jeopardy, especially copyright holders who solely profited from songwriting. What took them years to build with so much effort would tumble down in a matter of years. Artists like Metallica's drummer Lars Ulrich and front man James Hetfield, among others, became public enemies of digital music, anticipating the proportion that would potentially take place; and it did.

With piracy “in full swing,” not only did vinyl album and CD sales decrease but also home video sales in DVD format.

Up until now, digitization has been gaining more and more ground, permeating all the sectors of society. In a matter of years, computer science would not concentrate on the military, nor would it concentrate on assisting huge companies with their complex administrative tasks anymore. It seemed that the brains behind technology were envisioning the birth of a new world. Subsequently, digitization would be thoroughly incorporated by society as a whole as well as by the coming generations. Plus, the very same would happen to music consumption. The majority of young people from Generation Z have never been familiar with the CD format, let alone cassette tapes. It might be that the time has arrived when artists and even record companies do not have control over their catalogs anymore. As a consequence, they have had to adapt to a new status quo. Entrepreneurs, such as recording artist Jay-Z, created digital music platforms that encompass the vast majority of music genres in the world, if not all. In his very case, he is one of the founders and owners of Spotify. With millions of users around the world, he has managed to consolidate his business. Spotify has become to record companies and their major artists one of the main sources of copyright profit, especially for newcomers. On the other hand, a growing number of major artists are contentious in regards to digital music platforms copyright policy. Recently, Paul McCartney declared his being supportive of measures that will possibly regulate music in the digital domain, securing artists their copyright shares. As a multitude of other artists, he also believes songwriters have not been receiving their fair profit share. Songs performed on radio stations, TV channels, and public places, such as discos and the likes, were once monitored by professionals dedicated to such an activity. Nevertheless, ever since music was incorporated into the digital domain there does not seem to be apparent control over the way

it is used for diverse ends. Fortunately, it seems that copyright law is beginning to bridge the gaps that have kept songwriters from receiving their due profit for some time now. One adjustment I would like to propose is the development of an advanced monitoring system that immediately blocks unauthorized access to artistic content - in this case, music.

All in all, it seems like history is repeating itself. Nonetheless, what we see as a resurgence -, the case of vinyl records - is a better version of the original. As much as vinyl records are on the rise, our current times will not allow for the comeback of the huge and heavy turntables and record players from the past. In other words, it is impossible to go back to the place of thirty or forty years ago just the way things were. As part of the actual modality has been replaced by the virtual modality, whenever there is a resurgence of the former, it is usually adapted to the current standards of a given period in time. On the other hand, solely selling music digitally does not seem to be enough anymore, given the fact that millennials are at the top of the list of buyers, expanding physical format sales, thus, broadening the market, increasing general profit.

Music-Making

What this paper specifically focuses on within the universe of music-making is music recording. When lockdown was enforced partially interrupting the ongoing activities of the actual modality of interaction, in-person recording sessions were immediately canceled. Since wearing masks in public places and keeping six-feet apart from each other became mandatory, gathering in the studio for recording sessions became impossible.

Shortly before the pandemic hit, more and more recording artists had already adhered to remote and consecutive recording sessions, that is, recording sessions that have musicians

perform physically apart from one another, and on which tracks are put together as overdubs. In other words, tracks recorded one after another, not simultaneously.¹⁹ However, such a methodology had already become widely spread wherever there was technology available, since not always were musicians able to meet for recording simultaneously.

In the big picture, safety protocols culminating with the impossibility of in-person recording sessions ended up as a catalyst. All of a sudden, the world was found under chaotic circumstances. People were encouraged to make official a practice that prior to the pandemic was seen as a hobby for the most part.

Moreover, the vast majority of working musicians, especially the ones starting out, focus on having their home studio, or home music workstation, considering the so expensive rates charged by the big professional studios. Also, digitization of professional recording gear and musical instruments, that is, their transition to the digital domain, has incredibly allowed for people at their home studios to achieve the same sonic results they would if they rented any of the big studios.

Next, I will propose a closer look at the digitization process of music-making and how it has allowed for inclusion by means of accessibility.

19. As of now, technology has not enabled simultaneous track recordings yet.

II. The Beauty of Inclusion by Means of Accessibility

Needless to say, inclusion and accessibility are two different concepts. However, the distinction ought to be presented for clarification purposes, so as to avoid misinterpretation, and so that both are contextualized accordingly.

Inclusion embraces a wide array of ideas. By definition alone, to include something or someone is its most rudimentary, literal idea. Albeit, particularly in our current days, inclusion has a great deal to do with societal patterns, such as including and accommodating people who have been historically rejected.²⁰ According to the United Nations, one of the key messages of social inclusion is the following: “Social inclusion is defined as the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.”²¹

In essence, inclusion is definitely a broad conception. Notwithstanding, this paper aims to investigate inclusion of the elderly in the digital world by means of accessibility, and accessibility made possible via technology.

In turn, accessibility, also a broad term, must be contextualized to the investigation of this paper. As said, such context deals with making technology available to the elderly. In the last twenty years, the concept of accessibility has a whole lot to do with the integration of disabled people. Also, according to an official document issued by the United Nations, the definition of accessibility on which I intend to concentrate is: “Accessibility is not only an inherent right of

20. *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “inclusion,” accessed November 7, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/inclusion>

21. “Identifying social inclusion and exclusion - the United Nations,” <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/chapter1.pdf>

persons with disabilities, but a means of ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to exercise all rights and fundamental freedoms and are empowered to participate fully in society on equal terms with all others.”²²

The real intention to bring up the above-mentioned concept of accessibility is to focus on its latter half, making the following distinction: the elderly are not disabled people. The conflict between generations is just natural and inherent. For that reason, elderly people seldom deal with computers, the internet, let alone interact with people remotely, since most of the digital domain content and activities seem to focus on young people, which is untrue.

Among the brutal consequences of the pandemic are the approximately 5,570,000 lives claimed so far. Also, the chaotic scenario that seems to have put the world under siege has momentarily broken in-person interaction culminating with loneliness and anxiety, eventually triggering suicidal thoughts. With that said, no one would ever imagine beauty as a possibility amidst it all. The twist, however, is the fact that people who would never venture interacting with each other remotely, let alone in the digital domain, were forced either to adapt to a new interaction mode, or drown in loneliness and isolation. In virtue of the status quo established overnight, the elderly had no other choice but to go digital. They had to go digital in order to not only keep in touch with family and friends, but even to perform their day-to-day basic tasks that no longer could get done outdoors. One could argue that the elderly are not able to learn by themselves or by other means. Beauty can also be noticed in that the ones physically closer to them, generally relatives, are certainly the ones who taught them how to deal with a computer, a tablet, a mobile phone or any other devices, or all of them during the pandemic. They enabled their elderly to interact remotely with other people. Amidst such a tragedy, barriers have

22. “Accessibility and Development: Mainstreaming disability in the post-2015 development agenda,” February, 2015, page 3. https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/accessibility_and_development.pdf

certainly been broken down.

This paper also investigates another facet of inclusion, namely inclusion in the music industry. That refers to those who cannot afford to pay for studio recording sessions, let alone afford to buy the so expensive gear only big studios usually own. From the moment musical instruments and a wide variety of studio gear were digitized and introduced to the world as virtual softwares, technology finally opened the doors of studio music-making to an unprecedented number of people around the globe. With that said, inclusion will be investigated in this section considering two particular areas: digitization of studio music-making, and the transition of physical recording gear to the virtual modality of interaction.

Digitization of Studio Music-Making

Another concept that needs to be introduced and contextualized to the music industry before going any further in this section is digitization. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the definition of the term digitization is “the process of converting something to digital form.”²³ According to the same dictionary, digital is “something (such as a device) characterized or operated by digital technology.”²⁴

By applying this definition to the music industry context, we can notice a big part of the recording process that in past times relied on machines, physical, magnetic, and electric/electronic processes - the analog recording process - has migrated to the digital domain.

23. *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “digitization,” accessed November 7, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/digitization>. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/digitization>

24. *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “digital,” accessed November 7, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/digital>. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/digital>

Defining analog recording process is crucial in order to comprehend the transition to music-making in the virtual mode. According to a definition posted on the Sweetwater music store website, analog recording process refers to “recording analog signals without converting those signals to digital audio first. Analog recording requires an analog recording medium, such as magnetic tape or wax or vinyl cylinders. Until the advent of digital audio, all recordings were analog recordings. When the compact disc was introduced, the digital recording era officially began.”²⁵

When digital recording came about thirty years ago, the once impossible dream of every musician finally came true: making music in the recording studio. For other musicians, the other part of the dream consisted of using the dream gear available in the marketplace. In the past, that was impossible, since studio rates were extremely expensive; and they are to this day.

Apparently the possibility that the recording process was becoming accessible to a more general public never crossed the moguls’ minds. Although those drastic changes started to take place in the latter half of the 2000s first decade, it all amounts to the early 1990s, when digital recording was in its very early stages.

In view of that revolution in music technology, it is necessary to understand another concept that definitely propelled the development of a certain kind of equipment. That equipment, of digital and virtual generation, thankfully opened the doors of accessibility to people who in past time would never have access to the absolutely expensive physical gear.

With the progress of digital recording and its impressive leap, more and more musicians, arrangers, music producers, and sound engineers have migrated to recording in their home studios. What takes everyone in the music industry aback is the fact that, via technology, people

25. “Analog Recording,” Sweetwater, March 14, 2017, <https://www.sweetwater.com/insync/analog-recording/>

are able to achieve the same sonic results as those achieved in state-of-the-art recording studios. In recent years, that has been one of the main reasons, if not the only reason why major labels have been closing the doors of their own studios. In other words, accessibility and inclusion seem to be the main reason. As talented as they are, aspiring music professionals had never ever been given a chance to record their original material. Technology has inarguably made that possible. That was indeed a major breakthrough that resulted in the expansion of another sector of the music industry, namely gear sales. That, which also means a significant transition to the virtual modality of interaction, will be addressed in the next sections of this paper.

The Transition of Physical Recording Gear to the Virtual Modality of Interaction

Under at least two main aspects, budget, and logistics, technology has enormously benefited musicians around the globe. It is also worth mentioning that by means of the virtual modality of interaction and the digitization of music instruments and equipment, software sales have grown immensely. Nowadays, recording softwares and all accessories thereof are virtual, and sold digitally. As they are downloadable, shipping is instantaneous, which makes things incomparably faster than traditional trading practices.

Considering another layer, accessibility also has to do with space, and logistics. In the past, though unquestionably delivering high-end products, audio equipment factories would come up with heavy-duty gear that took at least two people to carry around, besides occupying such an enormous space. Around the mid-1990s, audio manufacturers started to develop gear that was efficient, sizable, handy, and cheaper, all at the same time. That is a huge progress, benefiting music makers everywhere. Technology has definitely been opening doors to hundreds of thousands of creative, skilled people, who would never have the necessary financial resources

to afford recording sessions, let alone purchasing or handling heavy-duty recording gear. Incorporating music instruments and recording gear into the digital domain, and allowing for their remote manipulation by means of the virtual modality of interaction has provided music makers with myriads of options that in the actual modality of interaction are simply inconceivable.

III. A Possible Path Forward: The Sublimity of New Beginnings

Taking into account all the adaptations and changes made so far, I think we can somehow anticipate the near future. That refers especially to the implementation, strengthening, and widening of technology applicability in various areas. This section concentrates on the following proposal: moving forward by means of the coexistence of two modes of interaction, considering the above-mentioned changes and adaptations the world has undergone thus far. In order to try and make such a proposal come to fruition, music-making in the recording studio, and some of its subcategories will be investigated. Also, this section focuses on proposals that aim to maximize the benefits of intentionally keeping some of the characteristics of the virtual modality that will likely linger indefinitely. Hence, betterment will be suggested in the following areas: live-streaming, digital music platforms, vinyl albums sales, copyright, and inclusion by means of accessibility.

Music-Making in the Recording Studio

Just as attending live concerts in person became impossible after the severe enforcement of safety measures, so it happened to studio recording sessions. At the peaks of the pandemic, with the death toll on the rise, social distancing and protective masks will not allow for people's gathering under any circumstances. Some of the major studios had already been in the process of closing their doors even before the pandemic broke out, due to the financial crisis they were facing. And when the disease first spiked, some of those gigantic, pristine studios sadly had to file for bankruptcy. Once again, while the central piece of the puzzle is digitization, technology is the bottom line, permeating all aspects involved. Needless to say, in and of itself the virtual

modality of interaction is digital. As it unfolds, this category can coincidentally be approached in a tentative chronological order. At the same time, not only do its subcategories relate to the virtual modality of interaction, but they also closely relate to each other, spirally evolving.

As seen, digital format is what lies beneath every recording process nowadays. Thanks to that, musical instruments, and physical recording gear, such as mixing consoles, compressors, equalizers, microphones, and amplifiers have made their transition to the digital world. Not only has physical recording gear been digitized, but the whole recording process has been, too. Little by little, access to musical instruments has become easier, as purchasing virtual instruments is sometimes much more affordable than purchasing physical ones. Also, accessibility to audio recording gear, once impossible, which only multimillionaire studios from the past could afford to buy, is unquestionably a possibility nowadays through virtual technology. With the passing of time and the advent of the internet, as musical instruments and audio recording gear became digital, they set the stage for the next step: remote recording. In turn, remote recording has paved the way for remote recording collaboration, also known as “collab”. We will investigate how the virtual modality of interaction is a powerful mediator shortening distances, providing the world with efficiency. The subcategories approached are the following: remote recording sessions, and collaboration via remote recording or collab.

Remote Recording Sessions

In the last decades, technology has allowed aspiring music professionals to put their original material together. Especially in the current days, it has made remote recording accessible for both aspiring and professional musicians alike. A recording session that requires people physically present and gathered together in a recording studio is no longer needed. By

means of high-end technology enhancing virtual interaction, a recording session now can take place remotely, that is, people do not need to be gathered together in the studio for the session to take place. Each one involved in the recording process - musicians, arrangers, music producers, and sound engineers - can do their job at different locations. In this sense, the virtual modality of interaction plays a major role in the transition into a groundbreaking possibility.

Also, budget-wise, hiring a recording musician is sometimes extremely expensive, especially in the case of non-local performers, or even international musicians. Besides their regular price charged per track, there are room and board expenses, besides transportation, which make the whole process very pricey. Expensive as it is to hire a musician for a recording session, remote recording sessions will indeed save one a lot of time and money. Since the hired musician will not need to leave home to record, the expenses mentioned will not be a concern. Such aspects truly weigh in when it comes to budget. Those are, for instance, some of the major advantages of remote recording sessions.

Moreover, depending on what is agreed between the parties the hired musician will have time flexibility to record at his or her convenience. That is possible, since the vast majority of remote recordings usually take place at home studios. If a given recording session requires a big section, such as strings or an orchestral setting with multiple sections, physical space might be an issue. Sometimes, a larger studio is needed when recording drum set, and other instruments that will require more acoustic isolation, more physical space, and a larger number of input tracks to capture the sound of the instruments.

One aspect about remote recording sessions on which I suggest improvement is internet signal. Unfortunately, the current signal available to the world so far will not allow for synchronous recording. Due to the need for more strength, there is latency that prevents everyone involved from hearing, communicating, and interacting synchronously. For the time

being, it has been a big obstacle.

Collaboration Via Remote Recording or Collab

In spite of the severe safety restrictions imposed, the need for making music remained strong, and, perhaps, got even stronger during the pandemic. Artists from all over the planet, whether professional or amateur, had to find alternative ways to move forward with their music. Teaming up remotely with instrumentalists and singers through online collaboration has become common practice. Howard et al. (2021) suggest through several of the interviewees that online collaborations, or “collabs”, will continue even in a post-pandemic world.²⁶ Some of the music industry experts I interviewed mentioned that the follow-up to online collaborations will be the use of digital platforms to keep in touch with their fan base, and to promote their projects. What once used to happen sporadically in the major label universe - recording remotely - has now become the common practice of a physically-distanced world. Furthermore, video recordings play a big role in the recording process, allowing for more possibilities. Therefore, in view of the longevity of socially-distanced collaborations, I suggest the coexistence of the virtual recording process, per se, as well as traditional in-person recording sessions. The latter makes things easier when it comes to recording ensembles.

One aspect of remote recording sessions that needs attention, however, is the lack of synchronicity, due to network delay. As mentioned, in technical terminology recording softwares, such as Pro Tools, refer to that delay as latency. Unfortunately, as much as technology has made much progress so far, the internet signal strength, or lack thereof is still an issue, which ranges from the type of computer used for the signal reception as well as other

26. Francis Howard. "It's Turned Me from a Professional to a 'Bedroom DJ' Once Again': COVID-19 and New Forms of Inequality for Young Music-Makers". April 1, 2021 Volume: 29 issue: 4, page(s): 417-432. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1103308821998542>

factors involved, such as low-quality hardware components, malfunctioning, or lack of compliance to advanced technology, among others. Hopefully, digital recording software companies will soon make a way for remote synchronous recording sessions. We might not be there yet, but we are not necessarily far. It is a matter of time. As soon as it becomes real, it will be another big revolution allowing for creative freedom. Once musicians are able to record with one another remotely and in real time, the world will be flooded with creative results. Lots of talented people will have the opportunity to express themselves, and to connect with people from their potential fan base. Also, the more synchronous recording sessions grow to become a possibility, and the more software and hardware companies meet the demanded requirements to be in compliance with high-end technology, the more a huge number of people will adhere to this recording method.

With such a huge leap in synchronous remote activities made possible by technology, there might be a significant decrease in the number of studios used for in-person gatherings, i.e., either for recording sessions or rehearsals. Nonetheless, it does not necessarily mean studios will be extinguished, especially in cases where acoustic instruments are required. One aspect to be observed as well is the case of loud musical instruments such as drum set, electric guitar, saxophone, and the likes, which need to be recorded in studios designed with adequate sound proofing, not always a possibility in urban areas. Another aspect worthy of observation which will keep studios operating is the need musicians feel to play along with each other in person as opposed to remotely. In other words, band practice, which will result in better performance of the group and of individual musicians alike. Also, emergency situations may arise, albeit much more sparsely, such as touring bands in need of brushing upon their performance prior to their concert. Plus, when it comes to old-school recording session lovers, experimenting with recording simultaneously either one single-take or multiple ones, for example, will need a

recording studio that allows for that type of method. That cannot be simply done at home unless the home studio is an acoustically-designed space, that is, a room projected for that specific purpose. That demands a considerable amount of money often times not available.

In light of the scenarios mentioned, technology has been working wonders, and will broaden possibilities even more as soon as it allows for synchronous remote recording. Furthermore, as much as professional studios might disappear due to the decrease in recording sessions and rehearsals, emergency situations or personal reasons are factors that will keep small studios operating, and will probably make them more sought-after. Therefore, in-person recording sessions and in-person rehearsals in studios will easily coexist with the ones held remotely through the virtual modality of interaction. That is what seems to be ahead.

Proposals for Betterment

The rapid response to the pandemic has brought about some technical issues that deserve more attention in order to try and make the virtual modality of interaction more efficient and more reliable. For this reason, I propose what I believe to be relevant for the betterment of the following subcategories: live-streaming, digital music platforms, vinyl album sales, and copyright.

Live-Streaming

By and large, live sound mixing is a very challenging and complex task, let alone when it happens in real time and is supposed to be broadcast. The pandemic demanded that emergency actions be taken in all sectors of society, which obviously included the music industry. As the music industry professionals were highly affected, desperately needing to be back at work, it seemed there was no time available to achieve better sonic results in a live situation than the ones

I recently observed. What I propose is subgroup mixing, besides shaping the sound individually per track. Although subgroup mixing is common practice, it seems the demanding emergency resulting from the pandemic worst-case scenario became an obstacle to that mixing method.

Digital Music Platforms

Those who are more demanding when it comes to sound quality have come across songs uploaded in lower resolutions, and alternative remastered versions that will not sound as the originals. With that said, if not in the highest resolution other than mp3, at least a minimum mp3 resolution of 296 kbps I suggest be uploaded as minimum standard. That will avoid the poor quality sound people often come across on digital platforms.

Another proposal is the correction of data provided by digital music platforms. Generally, platforms provide wrong information on albums release date and personnel. Besides confusing those interested in learning more about music albums, wrong information can potentially interfere with copyright collection and distribution in case it is also used as a database for copyright societies.

Vinyl Album Sales

In order to avoid an old issue between major artists and record companies that might arise again, I propose that each vinyl album be numbered. According to data previously presented in this paper, vinyl album sales now seem to be growing stronger and stronger, especially when a silver lining is apparent every time the COVID-19 curve flattens. Millennials are now at the top of the list of vinyl albums buyers. In addition, with the growth of virtual and physical record stores around the United States and around the world, it seems that vinyl album

sales are solidifying quickly.

Copyright

I propose a revision for the solidification of copyright law in the digital domain. Unfortunately, there seems to be little monitoring of illegal activities occurring online. Besides encompassing various aspects, it fails to secure songwriters control over their original material. Hackers and cyber thieves are everywhere breaking codes, causing damage to people who spend a lifetime dedicated to creative work. Too many people are unaware of how much effort is put into the universe of intellectual property. With that said, I propose monitoring systems directly linked to the highest competent security authorities of each and every country by means of codes that immediately identify musical works and their composers. I introduce such a proposal in efforts to inhibit illegal cyber activities.

Inclusion by Means of Accessibility

In order to increase digital inclusion especially of the elderly, I also propose that specific in-person and remote educational programs are developed. Besides offering lots of job opportunities, that will certainly help the elderly to develop the skills demanded by the virtual modality of interaction. Besides, I propose the production of simplified, easy-to-deal-with computer accessories. That will hopefully avoid and free the elderly from the fear and shyness of learning how to deal with the complex technological world.

Conclusion

Even though previously alluded to, I would like to address more specifically that which I believe to be extremely relevant: how intertwined, or closely-related, to say the least, both modes of interaction are. Not only do they coexist, but they also interfere with one another, which shows evidence of relatability. Although the actual mode has been the only means of interaction throughout the millennia, it was not long before the need for more efficiency increased. During its early stages, and for a very long time, technology would not allow for an interaction mode other than the actual modality. Only around the second decade of the 2000s did technology experience an impressive quantum leap, building up very fast to what it is nowadays. In addition to having influence over the actual modality of interaction, it seems that bringing benefits to it along the last decades was just about how far technology could go. Suffice to say, technology has always been the catalyst of remote interaction. For example, the first telephone devices ever to exist were very rudimentary. Perhaps, they represented even less than the tip of the iceberg. At the same time, nonetheless, the first successful phone call, although just a small glimpse of what lay ahead, was the sparkle in the brilliant minds of those who envisioned telecommunications as we currently know them. As much as it was difficult to make relevant progress for years and years since the telephone was invented in 1876, creativity has always made people aspire to more elevated things. To say at this point that both modalities of interaction would exist per se, that is, apart from each other, I see as a huge mistake. Not only do they influence one another but they also depend on each other.

With that being said, I strongly believe no two modes are independent. Just as at some point humanity temporarily relied solely on the virtual modality of interaction, which brought

side effects due to confinement, giving up on the virtual modality would be absolutely nonsensical for the same reason. That I believe would bring other side effects such as impatience, and anxiety, to name a few. Especially nowadays and heretofore, the coexistence of both modalities is what I believe to be the ideal balance. During the pandemic, the virtual modality of interaction has become a necessity. It has allowed for remote interaction in the workplace, elevating efficiency to standards never seen before.²⁷ While efficiency completely overcomes the typical slow pace of the actual modality of interaction, I believe there is little likelihood the post-pandemic world will ever move forward without incorporating into it the virtual modality.

Progress is the mark of our ever-changing world. As such, never in the history of mankind have people experienced so much improvement in science and technology as in the last thirty years. Telecommunications have grown exponentially, propelling international affairs, international trade, and interpersonal relationships, not to mention their playing a major role in the development and consolidation of globalization. Companies plan on making essential services and others more efficient each time through the implementation of artificial intelligence. That also makes us wonder if the world is headed to the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).²⁸ Besides benefiting human interaction tremendously and proving to be extremely efficient when it comes to day-to-day activities, the virtual modality of interaction during the pandemic has definitively contributed to society as far as improving accessibility, allowing for digital inclusion. In fact, inclusion and accessibility soared during the pandemic by means of the virtual

27. Sergei Vardomatski, "Augmented and Virtual Reality After COVID-19," Forbes, September 14, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/09/14/augmented-and-virtual-reality-after-covid-19/?sh=7429cbc02d97>

28. "The Essential Eight technologies Board byte: artificial intelligence," PWC Governance Insights Center, December 2017. <https://www.coursehero.com/file/65687903/essential-8-emerging-technologies-artificial-intelligencepdf/>

modality of interaction. Needless to say, that was made possible by means of technology.

In face of such instability and a completely obscure, uncertain future, the virtual modality of interaction has been gaining more and more ground, due to its unquestionable usefulness and efficiency. In a time of pandemic, therefore, the virtual modality of interaction has become essential. The number of internet users has been growing considerably, which shows evidence that the idea of digital inclusion is gradually coming to fruition.²⁹ As one thing leads to another, accessibility naturally allows for digital inclusion. It is worth reminding that digital inclusion and accessibility are among the main characteristics of globalization. Hence, I do believe the more humankind is exposed to a new normal being shaped, the closer we will be to the establishment of a new world.

Given the unfolding of the COVID-19 pandemic up until now and all the uncertainty that surrounds us, it seems that the virtual modality of interaction will linger on indefinitely. Due to that uncertainty, holding on to that type of interaction mode is a must, since things may still change without warning. Whether the reason for intentionally keeping the virtual modality of interaction in the post-pandemic world is the current instability or solely the expansion of telecommunications, the fact of the matter is that people everywhere have been experiencing a new way of interacting with each other and with the world. Digitization provides everyone with a wide array of benefits. Besides, the fast-paced nature of the virtual modality of interaction makes it unquestionably superior when it comes to efficiency. Unfortunately, the actual mode to this day is still subject to drawbacks that are tremendously time-consuming. Those drawbacks usually result from human failures, power outages, delays, bad weather, and other factors that affect everyone. Such poor conditions can incomparably be avoided when things function

29. Jason Cohen, "Data Usage Has Increased 47 Percent During COVID-19 Quarantine," PC, June 05, 2020, <https://www.pcmag.com/news/data-usage-has-increased-47-percent-during-covid-19-quarantine>

remotely and are automated, or preprogrammed, not relying on human operations. Besides not always being efficient, common practices pertaining to the actual mode are typically slowed down by the obvious physical distance, time limitation, and bureaucracy. By bureaucracy I mean the lengthy and limiting procedures of the actual mode of interaction that are typically time-consuming. That demands extensive waiting time. One very solid example of efficiency found in the virtual mode of interaction, as seen, is the possibility of remote, on-line monetary transactions that can happen at any time, anywhere. Conversely, under “normal” circumstances, that is, in the actual modality of interaction standards, they can only happen during regular working hours. Such limitations are indeed a huge setback, especially under unforeseen circumstances. In a negative connotation, thus, I refer to them as bureaucratic as they typically delay any process, interrupting the natural flow of things.

However, things are different when it comes to music. The aesthetic nature of arts and humanities is human interaction, in spite of the subjectivity that there is to some aspects of both. Under the scope of the music industry, if on the one hand music consumption is related to subjectivity, on the other hand, multiple individuals attending a concert at the same place wins the industry much profit. Also, it promotes human interaction. Taking this relevant aspect into account, there seems to be little or no likelihood that the in-person live concert experience will ever be extinguished.

In light of the consequences the pandemic has imposed on humankind thus far, it seems there is no turning back. That means to say old normalcy standards will play no main role anymore. At this point in history, I argue that moving forward relies on solidifying remote interaction by means of technology, while nonetheless never giving up on the actual modality of interaction. It looks like some of the new normalcy standards have already been partially introduced, and are on their way to an intentional consolidation and indefinite lingering. They

encompass the building blocks of the past, adapting them to new normalcy standards via technology. In other words, technology speeds up the lengthy processes of the past, contributing to efficiency never experienced before, and consequent faster progress. The transition from the past to the future is the COVID-19 pandemic. I would also reinforce that statement by acknowledging the disease as the adaptation process. Therefore, I would say that technology is ultimately the bridge between the essence of the past and the efficiency of the present, breaking down barriers imposed by bureaucracy, eventually welcoming the near future.

All in all, the objective is to tentatively propose the coexistence of two modalities of interaction that will hopefully not only benefit the music industry but the world in its entirety. One of the reasons why I approach the coexistence of both modes of interaction as opposed to the replacement of the actual modality relies on not getting lost when it comes to interpersonal relationships. Relatable as humans naturally are, people will always need each other. Considering balance as a key element of interpersonal relationships, being aware and cautious of the dangers of isolation is worth the thought. Moments of solitude are necessary, but loneliness has never been. Unfortunately, when not wisely applied, technology can promote isolation, and an absolute deceitful, delusional sense of self-sufficiency. Especially young people very often fall into the trap of self-sufficiency. Sometimes, some of them become so overwhelmed by the content with which they deal in the virtual modality of interaction that they end up allowing their minds to be controlled. Eventually, some of them get to the absurd extent of committing suicide.

As of now, nearly two years have gone by since the tragic coronavirus pandemic broke out, and for so many people it feels like forever. Particularly during the first peak of the disease, such chaotic imagery is clearly visible on a global scale: hospitals receiving patients beyond their full capacity, uncontrollable death toll rising, people prevented from gathering even at funerals, losses, bankruptcy. All in all, a global crisis.

While tragedies seem to give birth to new beginnings, the same seems to be true concerning the pandemic. Such is the case of the mighty nation of Israel as of its rebirth in 1948 AD, Japan after Hiroshima and Nagasaki were attacked in 1945, and New York City after the 09/11 attacks at the beginning of our current millennium. It seems to be a pattern: there is a tragedy at every turn of decade, at every turn of century, and at every turn of millennium. Despite the uncertainty the world has still been experiencing ever since the beginning of the disease, humankind is longing to see a silver lining. Everyone is sick and tired of this miserable scenario, craving for being back to life. The twist of this comeback, however, is technology as the bottom line, as the determining factor behind the scenes of interaction at various levels from now on. The way technology permeates all walks of life, all fields of knowledge, every sector of society is amazing and unprecedented. Notwithstanding, replacing in-person interaction is impossible, due to relatability being intrinsically linked to human nature. Under the scope of creationism, given the fact that human beings were created after the image and likeness of their Creator, and given the fact their Creator is a personal, relatable God, so are the roots of relationship and resemblance.³⁰ So long as there are human beings on earth, relatability will always exist. There is beauty and there is sublimity in our needing each other, in our depending on one another.

Hopefully, this current tragedy we all have been faced with will bring changes for the better. COVID-19 has come as the big catalyst opening the doors of a new age, paving the way for a new world. It feels like the older generations are sadly, forcefully, and swiftly departing from earth. Their sudden departure seems to be giving way to a generation whose set of values will definitely not bear much resemblance to those that have ruled society in the last centuries.

30. Genesis 2:3 (King James Version)

While a new world seems to unfold, the music industry has also been adapting to the challenging circumstances the global pandemic has imposed. Such an adaptation seems to rely entirely on the coexistence of both modalities of interaction. Due to people's necessity of in-person interaction, I thoroughly believe the music industry is one of the sectors of society that will rely for a long time on that coexistence. Additionally, in the event of any other catastrophe, and provided it will not interfere with global internet connectivity, I emphatically infer the virtual modality of interaction will be the only escape for humankind.

In conclusion, the relevance of the coexistence of both modalities of interaction to the world whether the pandemic gets entirely under control or not is out of the question. Going back to the actual modality as the only way to interact with the world and with one another at this point in history does not seem to make sense whatsoever. Especially now, remote interaction is gaining more and more ground, reaching the status of worldwide common practice, which invalidates considering a comeback to the old normal. This also possibly means to say, for instance, that the more major companies around the world go digital, the more minor ones will go, too, consolidating this growth. Moving forward now very likely incurs intentionally regarding technology as the mediator of the near future, consequently allowing for progress in all areas. I strongly believe that technology must be reputed as the building block of the new normal, which, in turn, seems to rely on an indefinite lingering coexistence of the two modalities of interaction investigated.

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Appendix: Interview Transcripts

Interview with Cleberson Horsth Translated by Marcio Horsth

Q: In the big picture, how has the music industry been affected ever since COVID-19 came about?

A: I think the pandemic has affected the whole music industry, since nobody has been able to work on a regular basis. It seems to me that people are dedicating themselves to working from their home offices, and to learning new things.

Q: As far as music consumption, what has changed since the pandemic?

A: In my opinion, the impossibility of in-person attendance has forced musicians to create alternative ways to perform, such as live streaming concerts on YouTube, and drive-ins.

Q: Have major labels been affected as well?

A: Absolutely. Major labels have had to conform to the digital system of phonogram distribution.

Q: How have digital platforms been affected?

A: Digital platforms have not been affected. On the contrary, they are the ones that have established the new way of music consumption.

Q: Vinyl records have come back, and, especially in 2020, appeared to be on the rise. Have sales decreased due to social distancing?

A: I believe that although vinyl records have come back, they will never be as strong as in their heydays, even because they are too expensive now. To me, trying to overcome pen-drive sales will be very difficult, as pen-drives are able to contain hundreds of songs, and videos, besides their small size.

Q: How deep has live music been affected?

A: Live music is the escape for every musician. I think that an instrumentalist, or singer will never be replaced by machines, as those will never have human sensitivity. The only threat I see to live music is the pandemic.

Q: Some articles like the one in the January 2021 edition of Forbes magazine state that live music might experience a boom in a few months. Do you think it is possible in any way?

A: I do believe in the music market boom, because audiences seem to be craving for live performance in-person attendance, besides other kinds of in-person gatherings.

Q: A few weeks after the pandemic broke out, live-streamed events became a way of making music all over the world, including events featuring major artists. If things get back to normal, do you think live streaming will still exist? If so, will it be as strong?

A: Shortly after COVID-19 came up, there was the need to provide a way for artists, backup musicians, and everyone else involved with the music business to keep working. When things go back to normal, or "quasi" normal, I don't believe that the format that was created due to the pandemic will last.

Q: What do you think the future of the music industry will look like in terms of both music consumption of recorded material and music-making in the studio?

A: As a matter of fact, the way music is consumed had already changed prior to the pandemic, being totally different. The disease has only solidified the current kind of music consumption that started some years earlier. I believe in all the existing forms, as on-line consumption, for instance, but also physically at the stores, as pen-drives, and vinyl albums. I consider CDs, and DVDs extinct already.

Q: What do you think live music will look like in the near future and in the years to come?

A: Music will always be irreplaceable. I believe it will always be assisted by technology, but it won't replace human beings.

Q: Several major artists live streamed their concerts during the pandemic. If in-person concerts resume, what do you think the future of live-streamed concerts will look like?

A: Live-streaming is the new reality. I believe it will be improved each and every time.

Q: Even if things go back to normal, would the coexistence of two modalities of interaction work in terms of live music events?

A: I believe so. To me, both the in-person live concert attendance, and the virtual attendance will peacefully coexist. Technology, which has improved, and is still improving at an unbelievably fast pace, is the one that makes such a coexistence possible.

Q: In case the audience chose either the virtual modality of interaction, or the actual modality of interaction to attend a concert, would that determine whether one of them would prevail?

A: I think the actual reality of interaction will always be the dominant one. In turn, the virtual modality of interaction will be a way to add more information to live performances.

Q: What level of social responsibility do you see the music industry engaging in?

A: The music industry has always played a very significant role concerning social responsibility. I believe it will remain the same, only complying with new formats, and ways of music consumption.

Q: What role should the music industry play in efforts to alleviate poverty around the globe?

A: Besides helping to decrease poverty around the world by organizing huge events, such as Live Aid, I think writing lyrics that awaken the audiences' awareness to global issues is another important role.

Q: Would dedicating a percentage of the money made from each and every live event to helping people in need work?

A: Certainly. A portion of the profits made from live concerts should indeed be distributed among people in need. The issue I see, however, is dishonesty when it comes to distributing those residuals.

Q: How about engaging music digital platforms in such a way that there would be a percentage of the gross profit dedicated to helping the ones in need?

A: I believe each of those digital platforms has their own way of doing that. The main thing to me is being willing to help people.

Q: Besides making an effort to try and decrease poverty around the world, would the music industry also engage in social responsibility when it comes to music-making, and even music consumption for those who cannot afford it?

A: Not only is the music industry able to cooperate with decreasing poverty around the world, every business is. It's all about being willing to help.

Q: Would the engagement in social responsibility make music more relevant to society than "mere" entertainment?

A: Yes, it would. Music is real medicine to one's soul and spirit. At the same time, it could and should perfectly engage in social causes in order to help people. However, that should be done without instilling political beliefs, taking advantage of those in need who seem to have little or no political knowledge.

A three-time Latin Grammy award recipient, Cleberson Horsth is a music producer, arranger, soundtrack composer, songwriter, and pianist. He is also one of the six founding members of the forty-year career span, Latin Grammy-winning Brazilian band Roupá Nova.

Interview with Connor Lott

Q: In the big picture, how has the music industry been affected ever since COVID-19 came about?

A: Generally speaking, the whole industry has been uprooted and turned on its side. Most of the revenue is from touring, because streaming in music sales creates very little revenue. So, artists had to pivot dramatically making other online content, trying to make even a fraction of the money. And even recording studios I had to be careful with sizes of groups. No home studio stuff continues to thrive, and some writing and producing was able to thrive. However, especially in the music school setting, lots of students are able to grow into the music industry properly in the programs. Also, because the general public doesn't understand the music industry, it's a lot harder for the technical crews and behind-the-scenes jobs that were shut down to have empathy from the world for the music industry to come back.

Q: As far as music consumption, what has changed since the pandemic?

A: Since COVID-19, live music consumption obviously plummeted dramatically. However, though I don't know the analytics, I would be sure to think that streaming has increased drastically. Along with streamed live music became a massive market, so it didn't exist before that.

Q: Have major labels been affected as well?

A: Major labels have been affected because of the loss of money flow. Especially within reimbursing tickets for tours and other future costs that had to be undone. The investment in their artists in many ways halted, and they probably lost a lot of money.

Q: How have digital platforms been affected?

A: Digital platforms increased dramatically. Things like Clubhouse, and other apps that arrived with collaboration and creativity have continually increased what's the digital platform's growth. Hopefully as well, more people started paying for their streaming because they were using it more often, which in turn gives more revenue to the artists, and songwriters.

Q: Vinyl records have come back, and, especially in 2020, appeared to be on the rise. Have sales decreased due to social distancing?

A: I wouldn't think so, other than live with the small choice of record stores not being open. However, there's still plenty of exchange online, and since people were locked down, I'm sure they wanted more records.

Q: How deep has live music been affected?

A: What music is will be different forever, even in its most basic form of people being there for once it opens back. It will never be taken for granted again hopefully. Live music also filled space lots of people didn't necessarily think about, so even a better understanding and appreciation for the live music industry is good. Large theaters and clubs have had to close down, and historical things were halted. Whether it was a final tour of a band, or something else, we will still never fully know how deep it actually has been impacted.

Q: Some articles like the one in the January 2021 edition of Forbes magazine state that live music might experience a boom in a few months. Do you think it is possible in any way?

A: I think it is. The demand is large; it's just a matter of how the supply handles the influx. As far as distance, sanitizing, and security.

Q: A few weeks after the pandemic broke out, live-streamed events became a way of making music all over the world, including events featuring major artists. If things get back to normal, do you think live streaming will still exist? If so, will it be as strong?

A: Live streaming shows won't have the same strength, but I think it still will be utilized. I think what will change is possibly hybrid versions of augmented reality, virtual reality, streaming, and live. Depending on the artist, some may be able to get more fans and money through streaming and things like Patreon, instead of paying tons of money to travel to small groups of people. Definitely streaming will stay as a part, though, I think.

Q: What do you think the future of the music industry will look like in terms of both music consumption of recorded material, and music-making in the studio?

A: Overall, people are moving from professional studios to home studios. Convenience and expense. Quality also has decreased, and there's less barriers for people to get the music public. What the public hears is very different in quality than 20 years ago due to access of equipment.

Q: What do you think live music will look like in the near future and in the years to come?

A: Live music will continue to be creative with drive-in shows or very distanced shows. However, live music will boom once the health barriers diminish. People are pre selling tickets for two years from now. It's very hopeful, and the demand will be massive. The underground scene, though in basements, and stuff, is probably still going strong.

Q: Several major artists live streamed their concerts during the pandemic. If in-person concerts resume, what do you think the future of live-streamed concerts will look like?

A: The future may be a hybrid. You can stream it or buy tickets in person. Audiences increase dramatically with worldwide possibilities.

Q: Even if things go back to normal, would the coexistence of two modalities of interaction work in terms of live music events?

A: Already there have been some events with them integrated. Augmented reality, and virtual reality will only increase. When I worked at the theater, they had a scrim and a super high definition laser projector, but they had shows of Buddy Holly, Aretha Franklin, Elvis Presley, and others backed by a real band. It was pretty incredible. I definitely think we will see more and more of integration of innovative technologies.

Q: In case the audience chose either the virtual modality of interaction, or the actual modality of interaction to attend a concert, would that determine whether one of them would prevail?

A: There is a big enough audience for both. Some people might like one over the other, but there's always going to be demand for a good artist.

Q: What level of social responsibility do you see the music industry engaging in?

A: Already some companies are embracing wellness care, or partnering with nonprofits. They may increase the amount as it opens back up, but it's hard to say.

Q: What role should the music industry play in efforts to alleviate poverty around the globe?

A: The music in the street can help, because a lot of money is created. However, it is also very complex, because of how money is distributed to all the people involved. And because the general public doesn't value recording music as much as used to, it's a lot more difficult for up-and-coming artists to make good money. The better model right now I see is things like Patreon for small local artists to get enough money to survive.

Q: Would dedicating a percentage of the money made from each and every live event to helping people in need work?

A: Not really, and that's because the payment pool is already very split. Songwriters, producers, executives, managers, crews, etc.

Q: How about engaging music digital platforms in such a way that there would be a percentage of the gross profit dedicated to helping the ones in need?

A: If music digital platforms already paid people fairly, then it could be considered. However, right now songwriters, and producers are getting paid, and nearly what they should be as it is. So, that would be a much longer conversation. I did a twenty-page research project on the ethics and music consumption, exploring some of this space.³¹

Q: Besides making an effort to try and decrease poverty around the world, would the music industry also engage in social responsibility when it comes to music making, and even music consumption for those who cannot afford it?

A: That's a complicated question. Things like YouTube, Spotify, Pandora, and others are pretty much free use. And even then, people rip off, and download illegal versions of those files. So, people that can't afford it just find music illegally for the most part. Depending on who's making the music, with good contracts and other legalities, normally they're pretty ethical. However, if people sign a bad contract, then, it's a little more problematic. But that's a whole different issue.

Q: Would the engagement in social responsibility make music more relevant to society than "mere" entertainment?

31. <https://www.connorlott.com/artist>

A: Some groups I know raise awareness for suicide, mental health, voting, violence, etc. Overall, it really depends on the artist. Obviously, big pop stars have different motivations than local artists that care in certain ways. Depends on the artist's motive of wanting to make an impact or wanting to make money. Some music also is for the purpose of entertainment. Some music is created to be more thoughtful or thought-provoking.

Connor Lott is a sound engineer, musician, and lecturer who has worked with major artists in the likes of Alan Parsons and the Urban Gospel Industry Awards recipient, Contemporary Christian Music artist Christafari.

Interview with Daniel Figueiredo Translated by Marcio Horsth

Q: In the big picture, how has the music industry been affected ever since COVID-19 came about?

A: Artists started having problems with live concerts, but there was a bigger consumption of audio-visual material—I don't know as far as music, but surely as far as Netflix and such, there was an increase in their consumption. So, as a matter of fact, recording session musicians and live backup musicians had a lot of problems, but in my case, as I work in the studio writing soundtracks, the soap opera was delayed, but I kept working in studio even producing a lot of people that I don't know personally, whose project was on hold, so that didn't affect me so much. Those who make a living out of live shows, though, maybe the majority of artists, were heavily weighed down.

Q: As far as music consumption, what has changed since the pandemic?

A: My first answer fits here as well.

Q: Have major labels been affected as well?

A: I don't have much knowledge to answer how major labels have been affected. I believe that, perhaps, they haven't been that much affected. Due to an increase in music consumption, they're likely to have made more profit than to have experienced loss. That's what I suppose.

Q: How have digital platforms been affected?

A: I think that, in spite of some people canceling their digital platform subscriptions due to lack of money, what happens is that the majority of people can't even remember they have subscriptions. The current syndrome that oppresses the world (laughs...) is subscriptions, as people subscribe to a lot of things, and end up forgetting that they are paying for so many things that add up to 200 dollars a month, so to speak, like five here, ten there, and so on.

Q: Vinyl records have come back, and, especially in 2020, appeared to be on the rise. Have sales decreased due to social distancing?

A: I don't have the slightest idea as to this vinyl "thing", as I'm very far from that. During the vinyl heydays, I already didn't like the format, let alone now (laughs). I always thought of vinyl albums as mere make-dos, something that would soon fade away, something like "as we don't have anything better, vinyls will do." Then, when digital recording came about, I finally relaxed, and thought: there you go! So, maybe vinyl sales have decreased due to the crisis, which I believe to be its direct consequence. That's my conclusion drawn out of what is obvious, though I have no data to answer this question.

Q: How deep has live music been affected?

A: I think it has been almost one hundred percent affected. Lots of people lost almost all of their possessions, sold everything they had, that was a major problem for those who depend on... agents, artists, roadies, everybody, as if life froze for one year or more, you know. Indeed, I think there has never been something like that in history, so to speak, ever since we got started in this live-concert culture. I think there's never been something so severe across the whole world. So, that was something really severe, and I hope there's no other again, hoping it will come to an end soon.

Q: Some articles like the one in the January 2021 edition of Forbes magazine state that live music might experience a boom in a few months. Do you think it is possible in any way?

A: As far as that comeback, and the boom within some months, I believe both will happen, because there are a lot of people craving for going back to normal life, attending concerts, movie theaters, bars—there is a desire that has been cut short, interrupted, and I really think that boom will take place, coming to normalcy afterwards, but I believe that will take place, so I also assume that boom will happen as soon as there is the comeback.

Q: A few weeks after the pandemic broke out, live-streamed events became a way of making music all over the world, including events featuring major artists. If things get back to normal, do you think live streaming will still exist? If so, will it be as strong?

A: I think live streaming was already happening often before the pandemic; it already was a cool thing—by the way, I haven't seen so much increase. It did have an increase, but I think it's a characteristic, it's a product that already belongs in our very reality. Live streaming is official, because people can choose what to watch within a wide variety, and prefer live streaming, because it happens in real time. Sometimes, you can catch the audience's attention, because they have in their minds: "Aw! I'm gonna watch it, 'cause it's alive!" But as happens to everything that happens alive, there's the "afterwards" (post-production). The approach to music is different from the approach to sports, for example. In sports, when you win, you win. It's that crucial moment that makes sports broadcasting more intense than music broadcasting. I believe, though, that making music on-line, remotely, it's such a progress for everybody--it avoids a lot of the tiredness like trips, things that hitting the road brings, and I think that in that regard (towards the virtual modality of interaction) people were walking very slowly in order to embrace a constant

practice within the virtual modality, touching base via a screen, which has been accelerated by the pandemic. Before the disease, I had already been moving towards that modality of interaction, trying to accomplish things virtually—'cause I don't miss in-person interaction. So, I believe that driving so many miles to arrive at a place full of people—I've always found that the best option was live streaming. So, to me, it all has been great, it's been an adaptation process. So, for me, I think that's it—There are a lot of people who wanna do that, but that wasn't possible until the pandemic, that wasn't accepted, and there are people who feel the need to be there in-person. Perhaps, at this point things will be balanced, like when artists put on a show, some of the people will go to the venues whereas others will watch it from home, and everybody will be happy.

Q: What do you think the future of the music industry will look like in terms of both music consumption of recorded material and music-making in the studio?

A: A lot of requests is what I see. Artists dropping new releases time and time again, so the five-minute fame has been cut short to five seconds. There's not enough room for everybody, feedback is small, there are no concerts nowadays—So, making the decision of embracing a musical career grows even more risky, income sources reduced. Out of live concerts people used to make much more money than selling albums or through digital music sales. So, it's been very difficult, but when the person is born with a passion, a desire, with this specific talent, you can't sacrifice that, you know. There can be the fact that one can accept that solely having a musical career won't be enough to make ends meet. Perhaps, not the majority of people would go for: "I will have a regular job at the bank during the week, and will record on weekends." I know a lot of people who chose that way, and feel very glad, managing to live their dreams, releasing songs with music videos, everything paid for ('cause they have money to afford their videos)—and accept the fact that not everyone can have a slice of that cake. Maybe, it will be necessary to have a side job, doing something he or she enjoys, seeing music almost as a hobby, in order to avoid frustration when the money invested didn't make the project achieve the success desired. As far as investing money, profit is needed, so it makes sense to invest. I usually say that one only has a music career from the moment that career is sponsored by itself. To me, while the person invests money and makes no profit, that person has no career yet, but a project or something like that. I see it as a hobby, as the person is spending money on something. So, while there's no profit, I don't think one can call that a career indeed. And a lot of people don't get that, pitching in, pitching in, and pitching in, eventually arriving at a place of frustration, not acknowledging that what they're doing is not a career. In the end, they realize their expectations are too high.

Q: What do you think live music will look like in the near future and in the years to come?

A: I'm gonna answer that in terms of music evolution. Since the 90s, I can't identify a music genre. From the 2000s on, differently from the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, you can't define music genre. You can clearly identify the decades I mentioned, what they sounded like. After those decades were gone, things started to repeat themselves and mix themselves. As a matter of fact, the 90s already were a bit like that, as there isn't a very strong characteristic that defines that decade. So, I think we'll move forward, but at a slower pace each time as far as novelty in terms of music genre is concerned. I think we'll keep adapting what came up in the past,

identifying novelty that eventually pops up here and there (really not as often), like Billie Eilish, who I like, but if you listen to her songs accurately, you won't find that much innovation—as opposed to the 80s, when people used to search for the artist they heard on the radio. The 80s were full of bands that proposed sonic innovation, new concepts. Nowadays, very seldom do we see that happen.

Q: Several major artists live streamed their concerts during the pandemic. If in-person concerts resume, what do you think the future of live-streamed concerts will look like?

A: I think the natural tendency is finding balance with time, like trying to estimate the profit made out of remote attendance concerts and in-person attendance concerts. Obviously, the one to prevail is the one that is economically accessible on both ends, audience, and live music promoters. So, there will be that research, that adaptation, that culture of adjusting to what fits best at any given time. I think it's too early to define that, but I think having something else is great, like if live concerts resume and live streaming keeps going. Until very recently there were only live concerts, though a few live streaming concerts here and there. Now, there's that consolidated thing of live streaming concerts. Now, there are probably people making good money out of that, and seeing live streaming as a strong add-on, instead of just in-person live concerts.

Q: Even if things go back to normal, would the coexistence of two modalities of interaction work in terms of live music events?

A: I think both can work simultaneously. We won't be able to determine the amount, though, like whether it'll be 1% for one and 99% for the other, or 30% and 70%—Obviously, I think live concerts will experience the boom we talked about, and will eventually normalize, whereas live streaming will always be there as an alternative.

Q: In case the audience chose either the virtual modality of interaction, or the actual modality of interaction to attend a concert, would that determine whether one of them would prevail?

A: I believe that one of them will prevail, as I find it difficult to see 50:50. Perhaps, 60:40... Foreseeing that is difficult. For sure, after we go back to normal there will be a lot of people attending in-person live concerts. Maybe there will be those who'll say: "Aw! Watching concerts from home was so much better!", as for them that was more comfortable. So, that can lead people to reflection, and, perhaps, some of them will prefer live streaming to in-person attendance.

Q: What level of social responsibility do you see the music industry engaging in?

A: I think that our social responsibility as artists, musicians and actors, for example, is to entertain people; it's inspiring, and entertaining them. Most of the time, it's pure entertainment, helping people to disconnect a little bit or blowing off steam—music is such a medication, right? A lot of people, me included, used to take music too seriously, annoyed by seeing music being applied solely as entertainment, but now I see such an application as quite a medication. It's something that helps a lot of people, like a person listening to music at a barbecue, sometimes a

very simple two-chord song that will last four minutes (laughs...), and whose lyrics make no sense; it's really useful for society. And that's the reason why one will get to work on Monday renewed, just as well as that serves as soundtrack for stuff like Netflix, movies, and so on and so forth. So, that is the biggest social responsibility that I see in regards to artists: our share, is helping life get lighter, lots of them inspiring people through their lyrics, others even through instrumental music, lifting you up, even helps you to exercise physically, but for the most part, helping to make life lighter, helping feel emotions, live other lives through a screen, through other stories. That for me is the biggest responsibility. There can even be other ways for the artist to help people, but donations, money, and everything else is too little when compared to what the artist accomplishes by helping others through entertaining them.

Q: What role should the music industry play in efforts to alleviate poverty around the globe?

A: It's something that has already happened before, like those big music festivals, but I haven't seen them lately—and due to this pandemic everybody got desperate, the world has been re-evaluated—I remember now “Live Aid”, “We are the World” (“USA for Africa”) ... What else? There have been some very profitable events in the sense of gathering money to alleviate poverty, and such. Nowadays, I haven't seen those. In a general way, artists can't save money even for themselves (laughs)—but whenever invited, most of the artists I know are always willing to help, and get involved in some kind of social mobilization or something like that. They only don't know how to do that directly. Many of them even donate money directly, but when it comes to putting an event together, that's not their thing. They wanna get involved, they take the invite whenever they're invited, but effectively promoting an event is, to me, much too demanding for them; it's like expecting from them what they can't deliver. That, I believe, is supposed to come from other thinking minds, whose expertise is events. Perhaps, it hasn't dawned on the music industry people that there are a lot of artists willing to help, and all they need is a means to make that happen. Hopefully, more means will be made available. Everybody's willing to help whether with money—I myself have helped as well—copyright societies such as ABRAMUS and UBC have helped—I've helped friends, mainly by offering them job opportunities, which I think is the most important thing, even offering positions that didn't even exist, so that people feel worthy. Man, I can't remember any artist who said no when it came to helping or something like that. I think that artists are naturally more sensitive to that—I don't know. I don't like to think of artists as better nor worse than anyone else; I think we're just part of this big society web, in society's realm.

Q: Would dedicating a percentage of the money made from each and every live event to helping people in need work?

A: I think the best way to help people is to offer a job position. That's what I try to do: hiring people, finding ways to make them feel useful to society—that's much better than—well, that's how the saying goes: give people the fishing stick, and teach them how to fish as opposed to giving them the fish. So, that's the way I see it. Obviously, I've already helped friends, generally trading money for jobs.

Q: How about engaging music digital platforms in such a way that there would be a percentage of the gross profit dedicated to helping the ones in need?

A: There's already a big complaint for more fair payment, like musicians finding unfair the majority of music streaming residual payments—I think if there was sort of an automatic thing there, perhaps, if everybody agreed on that, if Spotify, for instance, proposed: Do you agree on donating, say, five percent of your profit to such and such organization? I don't know whether people will trust Spotify or think Spotify already makes too much money—maybe both sides would have an issue. So, there's sort of a conflicting situation between streaming (music platforms) and artists that would be complicated. I don't envision that; that would lead to a long process. Perhaps, trying to work something out from now on. I think it takes the right means, the right way, and the trustworthy people to make it happen.

Q: Besides making an effort to try and decrease poverty around the world, would the music industry also engage in social responsibility when it comes to music making, and even music consumption for those who cannot afford it?

A: I think this music-consumption-for-those-who-cannot-afford-it thing doesn't exist, because all the music you make available on music platforms are on YouTube for free. As far as I'm concerned, you can watch things on YouTube in spite of some limitations like ads, but everything's there. So, I don't think the poor won't have access to music for lack of money. And, as a matter of fact, there's a huge, insane amount of piracy, especially in third world countries and downwards where artists are "stolen" with excuses like: "Aw! I can't pay for that. That's why I download songs from the internet..."—that happens very, very often. It's a world plague too that makes everything difficult. And there are a lot of people whose mindset is this: "Madonna already has a lot of money, so she doesn't need my cents"—the same old story. If everyone starts to think like that, Madonna won't be able to release her next album. For me, the music industry aims at making profit, and I don't see any problem with that. The music industry was designed for that, they have business partners, they are supposed to make profit. When it comes to dealing with music making and music consumption, one side is the artist, and the other one is the music industry. I just wanted to make that clear, as I might have answered the question thinking more of the artist rather than the music industry.

Q: Would the engagement in social responsibility make music more relevant to society than "mere" entertainment?

A: In the 60s and 70s, music in and of itself was more engaged, you know, though not after those days were gone. Maybe because back in the day there was the hippie movement, and the Vietnam War, which might have boosted the hippie movement even more. So, nowadays I see very little concern over engagement in social responsibility. Sometimes, I even see the contrary, like people not worrying about the terrible message the big hits are conveying to the young. I don't know if there's a way to fix that, but it's exactly the opposite of social responsibility, which makes me somewhat displeased. The majority of hit songs these days have explicit lyrics, encouraging attitudes which are not good for society—so, people need to, at least, go back to being "solely entertainment" (laughs), and not being a bad influence. If it's only entertainment, if we went back to that, we'd already see an advantage—and if it can also be inspirational and linked to social responsibility, that would be great, but at the moment, the thing is rather blurry.

Daniel Figueiredo is an accomplished musician, music producer, soundtrack composer, songwriter, and sound engineer actively involved with the music industry for more than 30 years.

Interview with Frank Cólón

Q: In the big picture, how has the music industry been affected ever since COVID-19 came about?

A: In my opinion, it's an entire new game now! As all music touring was cancelled worldwide, ways of performing online improved tremendously. The technology involved surged ahead exponentially, as most of humanity was forced to self-quarantine at home. With billions of people staying home, their consumption of broadcast mass media greatly increased. Satellite radio platforms, geared towards more specific listeners have become more popular, during this pandemic year - as have online music providers, such as Spotify, Deezer, Apple Music, and others. The online streaming of pay-per-view "live" performances has also become an accepted practice by many artists who have not been able to tour. Just as a quick example, singer/songwriter Melissa Etheridge has been live streaming, one hour per day, five days per week since mid-March 2020 and is now averaging 50K/month, based on subscriptions and daily ticket purchases. When one does the math, Melissa is expected to earn six million dollars from online streaming this year.³²

Q: As far as music consumption, what has changed since the pandemic?

A: My answer is quite similar to what I've just stated in question no. 1. However, while artists have been the people most adversely affected by the present pandemic, the music delivery platforms have profited enormously from the massive increase in people using their services online. The pandemic also hurried along the inevitable demise of those stores that still sold music packaged in some kind of physical form, such as CDs.

Q: Have major labels been affected as well?

A: I can't really say... I don't have enough facts and figures to know about this with any detail. I can only guess that, while most new artists are now able to spearhead their own entry into the music market, the established record companies still own and control the vast majority of their catalog. This, for them, presents the tasks of managing its digital distribution and accounting for all of their reproductions and broadcasts worldwide.

Q: How have digital platforms been affected?

32. Abigail Freeman, "Melissa Etheridge's Live Streams Are Pulling In \$50,000 Per Month: The Artist On Doing It Her Way," Forbes, August 3, 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cathyolson/2020/08/03/melissa-etheridges-live-streams-are-pulling-in-50000-per-month-the-artist-on-healing-connecting-and-paying-the-bills/?sh=1f7a8ce92f1d>

A: Digital platforms such as Spotify, Amazon Music and others have become major wealthy players in the delivery and profiting from the streaming and downloading of music. They've become so powerful that they now dictate how much they themselves pay for the products (music) that artists freely supply to their platforms.

Q: Vinyl records have come back, and, especially in 2020, appeared to be on the rise. Have sales decreased due to social distancing?

A: Well... I've no facts or figures for the rise or fall of vinyl popularity. But, from what I can witness around me, both from observing my colleagues and music-loving supporters, is that the "vinyl comeback" is restricted to a small number of dedicated audiophiles who've got the extra cash to spend on high-priced audio equipment for their own listening pleasure. And, to tell you the truth, I don't know one musician among the hundreds that I consider friends, who have a modern turntable music system for listening to vinyl records at home.

Q: How deep has live music been affected?

A: Extremely deep! Every single show in the USA, Brazil, Europe and Japan was canceled since March and April of 2020. And, while there have actually been some sporadic shows on all continents, most night clubs and theaters continue closed, without a notion of when their activities will ever normalize. Many of the local Manhattan jazz clubs that I used to work in have closed their doors forever!

Q: Some articles like the one in the January 2021 edition of Forbes magazine state that live music might experience a boom in a few months. Do you think it is possible in any way?

A: Well... I haven't read the article (...and, it's not listed here for me to research), so I can't analyze the factors which led that writer to predict that live performances "might experience a boom in a few months." I believe that, being that the options for enjoying the work of our favorite artists has grown so much that the public will never be restricted to the traditional forms of simply buying the latest release and waiting for a chance to see a performance near their homes. Now, one can literally bring an artist's performance into our living rooms and interact with them, in real time, via the internet. I don't believe that this option is going to go away or fizzle out - if anything, we're seeing the technology for these inter-active artistic experiences improve constantly, so I'm ready for when I can have an artist such as Yo-Yo Ma or Peter Gabriel perform in a life-size holographic projection in my room.

Q: A few weeks after the pandemic broke out, live-streamed events became a way of making music all over the world, including events featuring major artists. If things get back to normal, do you think live streaming will still exist? If so, will it be as strong?

A: As I've already stated, I don't believe that things will revert back to how it was before. But I believe that when venues for presenting "live" music become active once again, these new means of disseminating art will continue to improve and strengthen. Live streaming has already evolved from being just a passive way of self-broadcasting to a community-based, interactive economic engine which is getting better at providing not merely a viewing opportunity, but

rather a relationship experience between the artist and their fans/supporters/patrons. Do you think that, for example, after the pandemic, we're all going to go back to MySpace.com? No, I don't think so. It's more likely that, after the pandemic, Facebook will become more powerful.

Q: What do you think the future of the music industry will look like in terms of both music consumption of recorded material and music-making in the studio?

A: Music will continue to be recorded and sold, shared, distributed, sampled, etc. Now, the concept of having to record one's songs in a traditional recording studio is practically dead! Did you notice how Billie Eilish's album, "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?", won 4 Grammys in 2019? That was her first "studio album" - but, she had won major attention already in 2015 by uploading a single ("Ocean Eyes") to the Soundcloud online music platform! So, I'm citing Billie as an example of how a successful contemporary artist must be open and active and savvy in all types of recording and technology. I, myself, am recording from home, satisfying both corporate clients in NYC, Rio, and Los Angeles, as well as inter-acting musically with colleagues. My latest album release ("Latin Lounge", nominated for a Latin Grammy!), was written, arranged, and half-recorded at home. It was then mixed and mastered in a professional studio, where my participation, as well as that of some other select musicians was recorded.

Q: What do you think live music will look like in the near future and in the years to come?

A: I believe that there will be everything for all tastes! I think that major artists will be able to present interactive concert experiences, simultaneously while performing in a theater. I can also see the increase in what are known as "house concerts", where artists perform intimately in someone's home, in front of a small number of paying guests.

Q: Several major artists live streamed their concerts during the pandemic. If in-person concerts resume, what do you think the future of live-streamed concerts will look like?

A: Please refer to my answer in question no. 9.

Q: Even if things go back to normal, would the coexistence of two modalities of interaction work in terms of live music events?

A: As previously stated, I don't believe we're ever going back to how it was before the pandemic. We can only go forward, into a three-and-four-dimensional virtual reality performance world. I soon expect to be performing holographically in real-time for the people that Elon Musk is getting ready to send over to colonize the planet Mars!

Q: In case the audience chose either the virtual modality of interaction, or the actual modality of interaction to attend a concert, would that determine whether one of them would prevail?

A: I think that a clear broadcasting/streaming/performing strategy will avoid offering confusing multiple simultaneous entertainment options. This has already been done, for years, with pay-per-view events such as championship boxing and UFC stellar bouts.

Q: What level of social responsibility do you see the music industry engaging in?

A: None. Are you kidding?! They never have... So why should they now? Why not convince Big Pharma to kick in some of their billions in yearly profits towards some manner of societal improvement? And, what does the music industry have to do with the ancient problems that have plagued the world forever?

Q: What role should the music industry play in efforts to alleviate poverty around the globe?

A: Why should the music industry feel any responsibility about this reality? Poverty is something that has always existed and always will. I fail to see why the music industry should be singled out as having any responsibility for alleviating this situation. For example: What role should the airline industry play in the efforts to alleviate poverty? How about the Caribbean Cruise Ship industry? How about the Bollywood film industry?

Q: Would dedicating a percentage of the money made from each and every live event to helping people in need work?

A: No, I don't think so. I think these global issues are better attended to by governments and other multinational entities.

Q: How about engaging music digital platforms in such a way that there would be a percentage of the gross profit dedicated to helping the ones in need?

A: Why? Why not try that with multinational corporations such as Procter & Gamble or Pepsico or Ambev or Mercedes-Benz?

Q: Besides making an effort to try and decrease poverty around the world, would the music industry also engage in social responsibility when it comes to music making, and even music consumption for those who cannot afford it?

A: Actually, I don't believe that the music industry is responsible for attempting to improve societal conditions around the world. I know that digital music is packaged and sold at various price points around the globe. Now, if you are asking me if I believe that the industry has a responsibility to find ways to make its product catalog "available to those who can't afford to buy it" ... my answer is, no. The music industry, to my knowledge, is structured as a profit-seeking enterprise and has no social "responsibilities" as it exercises its capitalist mission statement in free democratic societies.

Q: Would the engagement in social responsibility make music more relevant to society than "mere" entertainment?

A: Music already is totally relevant to all facets of society. Music is usually present at landmark social events such as weddings, birthdays, funerals. It serves as therapy in hospitals, stimulates physical exercise in gyms and stadiums, and helps us relax while we're sitting in our dentist's chair. This question makes me ask myself which other art is more than just mere entertainment

for its patrons and fans? Do art museums have a responsibility to be more relevant to society or does this “responsibility” fall upon Andy Warhol or Pablo Picasso, because of the fact that they produced works of art which were highly valued and which, therefore, left them very wealthy? Does Sony Pictures need to engage in “social responsibility”? What for? Does photographer Annie Liebowitz “need” to do volunteer community work on account of being successful and having accumulated wealth because of her prized photographic work? I don’t think so.

Frank C3lon is a Latin Grammy award-nominee percussionist born in the NYC area. As a recording artist and backup musician, he has worked with some of the major artists including Airt0 Moreira and Flora Purim, and jazz fusion living legend Dave Weckl.

Interview with Justin Nalimu

Q: In the big picture, how has the music industry been affected ever since COVID-19 came about?

A: The music industry has been affected through no more live concerts. Bands have been forced to stop touring across their home country or internationally. But at the same time, have been forced to come up with other creative ways to let their message invoice as we heard.

Q: As far as music consumption, what has changed since the pandemic?

A: Even before COVID-19, I believe music consumption has been leaning towards streaming platforms, such as Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal, and YouTube.

Q: Have major labels been affected as well?

A: I believe major labels have also been affected, because they had to change their formula for marketing their artists, and promoting music and merchandise.

Q: How have digital platforms been affected?

A: Digital platforms may have not been negatively affected but positively affected, as social media awareness of bands or artists is pointing to their digital platform.

Q: Vinyl records have come back, and, especially in 2020, appeared to be on the rise. Have sales decreased due to social distancing?

A: I do believe physical sales have received a big negative hit, especially due to social distancing and lack of in-person events.

Q: How deep has live music been affected?

A: The status of live music may have been forever changed. One year after the pandemic, I started to see things may be opening up but will be far from normal.

Q: Some articles like the one in the January 2021 edition of Forbes magazine state that live music might experience a boom in a few months. Do you think it is possible in any way?

A: The status of live music may change. It just depends on local government restrictions.

Q: A few weeks after the pandemic broke out, live-streamed events became a way of making music all over the world, including events featuring major artists. If things get back to normal, do you think live streaming will still exist? If so, will it be as strong?

A: I believe live streaming will always exist. If there was a full back to normal resurgence of live music, streaming may not be as affected as in the beginning of the pandemic.

Q: What do you think the future of the music industry will look like in terms of both music consumption of recorded material and music-making in the studio?

A: I believe the future of music is through digital platforms, and streaming services.

Q: What do you think live music will look like in the near future and in the years to come?

A: The future of live music will vary from state to state or country to country. For example, there are full capacity events in Florida and Texas, but things are very much still locked down in California.

Q: Several major artists live streamed their concerts during the pandemic. If in-person concerts resume, what do you think the future of live-streamed concerts will look like?

A: Live streaming concerts may still have a good effect for individuals who choose to not go out due to health, and safety reasons.

Q: Even if things go back to normal, would the coexistence of two modalities of interaction work in terms of live music events?

A: It is honestly unknown, as things tend to change within the minute regarding politics over top of a pandemic which, in turn, affects the status of the music industry.

Q: In case the audience chose either the virtual modality of interaction, or the actual modality of interaction to attend a concert, would that determine whether one of them would prevail?

A: In the long run, people will make their choice, but my hope is that people choose the actual reality of enjoying live music.

Q: What level of social responsibility do you see the music industry engaging in?

A: Artists using their message throughout music will promote awareness in this cause.

Q: What role should the music industry play in efforts to alleviate poverty around the globe?

A: It will take a lot of work in finances, but this would be a great start.

Q: Would dedicating a percentage of the money made from each and every live event to helping people in need work?

A: It would be a good start to help.

Q: How about engaging music digital platforms in such a way that there would be a percentage of the gross profit dedicated to helping the ones in need?

A: Using digital platforms, and streaming would be a huge benefit to this cause also.

Q: Besides making an effort to try and decrease poverty around the world, would the music industry also engage in social responsibility when it comes to music making, and even music consumption for those who cannot afford it?

A: It would just depend on the specific artist, and the specific message they would want to promote through their platform.

Q: Would the engagement in social responsibility make music more relevant to society than "mere" entertainment?

A: I would say that the artist would need to make the choice if they want to receive it as a social responsibility or just entertainment.

Justin Nalimu is a Hawaiian music producer, arranger, multi-instrumentalist, and keyboardist of the acclaimed CCM band Christafari, currently touring all over the world.

Interview with Mafê Drummond

Q: In the big picture, how has the music industry been affected ever since COVID-19 came about?

A: Unfortunately, our sector was the first to stop, and will be the last to return. As a result, several artists and teams have been out of work for over a year. There were some live-streaming events, but they did not replace the traditional in-person live shows.

Q: As far as music consumption, what has changed since the pandemic?

A: After COVID-19, it was necessary to reinvent the world of music: the format of live streaming events - shows broadcast on TV, and also on the channels of each artist appeared on YouTube. The world of music on digital platforms has also increased. Music consumption did suffer a fast transformation that otherwise would take at least five years to happen. With the pandemic, it was made possible in ten months through outlets changing to alternative platforms like Zoom, social media and all other virtual mediums.

Q: Have major labels been affected as well?

A: I cannot see a direct impact on the record companies, since the digital world was already gaining ground. Suddenly, with the pandemic this trend just became more evident.

Q: How have digital platforms been affected?

A: I think that digital platforms, on the contrary, have gained more strength with the pandemic. People lacking in entertainment sought music, and consequently sought refuge in the digital world.

Q: Vinyl records have come back, and, especially in 2020, appeared to be on the rise. Have sales decreased due to social distancing?

A: I think so. With social distancing, consumption by means of digital platforms has become easier.

Q: How deep has live music been affected?

A: Live music was totally affected. That field is one of the most affected by the pandemic.

Q: Some articles like the one in the January 2021 edition of Forbes magazine state that live music might experience a boom in a few months. Do you think it is possible in any way?

A: For now, I find it very difficult. First, because people are still very afraid of getting infected, and second, because many concert promoters, and concert attendees are experiencing economic hardship. I think the return of live concerts will happen, but very slowly.

Q: A few weeks after the pandemic broke out, live-streamed events became a way of making music all over the world, including events featuring major artists. If things get back to normal, do you think live streaming will still exist? If so, will it be as strong?

A: No. Live streaming events appeared in a punctual moment, but they have already lost their strength. Audiences miss live concerts.

Q: What do you think the future of the music industry will look like in terms of both music consumption of recorded material and music-making in the studio?

A: I think the trend is to decrease more and more with the growth of music consumption through digital platforms.

Q: What do you think live music will look like in the near future and in the years to come?

A: I think live music will continue to grow.

Q: Several major artists live streamed their concerts during the pandemic. If in-person concerts resume, what do you think the future of live-streamed concerts will look like?

A: Live-streamed concerts no longer have the same weight, and with the return of in-person live concerts they will decrease more and more.

Q: Even if things go back to normal, would the coexistence of two modalities of interaction work in terms of live music events?

A: I do not think so. I think that with the comeback of real live performances virtual performances will lose strength.

Q: In case the audience chose either the virtual modality of interaction, or the actual modality of interaction to attend a concert, would that determine whether one of them would prevail?

A: Undoubtedly, the audiences will determine the trend that should remain.

Q: What level of social responsibility do you see the music industry engaging in?

A: Only a few events have social engagement. That is unfortunate, because with the visibility of this area the results would be very positive.

Q: What role should the music industry play in efforts to alleviate poverty around the globe?

A: The music industry should do more events encompassing art and social campaigns.

Q: Would dedicating a percentage of the money made from each and every live event to helping people in need work?

A: Certainly! And I think that this initiative should be a habit to be adopted.

Q: How about engaging music digital platforms in such a way that there would be a percentage of the gross profit dedicated to helping the ones in need?

A: That would be an excellent idea. Even more so that digital platforms are growing more and more.

Q: Besides making an effort to try and decrease poverty around the world, would the music industry also engage in social responsibility when it comes to music making, and even music consumption for those who cannot afford it?

A: In a way, yes. But I think it could have much more engagement.

Q: Would the engagement in social responsibility make music more relevant to society than "mere" entertainment?

A: Certainly! The music area would come to be seen with more respect and value than just an entertainment area.

Maria Fernanda Drummond is an accomplished stage manager actively involved in the music industry for more than 15 years, touring the world with major artists of the Brazilian music industry.

Interview with Zé Luis

Q: In the big picture, how has the music industry been affected ever since COVID-19 came about?

A: In the big picture, the impact of COVID-19 in the music industry was devastating. By nature, music is about gathering socially on the live music scene as well as on the recording sessions, therefore, it all came to a standstill.

Q: As far as music consumption, what has changed since the pandemic?

A: Music consumption did suffer a fast transformation that otherwise would take at least five years to happen. With the pandemic, it was made possible in ten months with the outlets changing to alternative platforms like Zoom, social media and all other virtual mediums.

Q: Have major labels been affected as well?

A: Major labels have been hit hard by the pandemic. On the other hand, they were able to still generate over a million dollars per hour from streaming, not counting synchronizations and radio play.

Q: How have digital platforms been affected?

A: Digital platforms soared with the pandemic in such a way that the projections show a growth close to \$7.5 billion amid the new normal. They actually were the ones cashing in with the current situation.

Q: Vinyl records have come back, and, especially in 2020, appeared to be on the rise. Have sales decreased due to social distancing?

A: Vinyls really made a comeback, and became a fad in the last fifteen years, culminating in 2020 when LPs accounted for 27% of the album sales in the United States. Enthusiasts of the format keep buying in spite of COVID-19.

Q: How deep has live music been affected?

A: Live music is the part of the music industry that has been affected the most. With the guidelines of social distancing and quarantine all the music venues were closed, including Broadway here in NYC, and theaters all over the world. It has caused a beyond negative impact on live performers, managers, technicians, support crews, venue owners, and so forth.

Q: Some articles like the one in the January 2021 edition of Forbes magazine state that live music might experience a boom in a few months. Do you think it is possible in any way?

A: I had the opportunity to read the mentioned article in the Forbes magazine, which I agree upon, because I believe the live music scene will experience a renaissance when the majority of the population becomes immunized. Some venues are already reopened in a smaller capacity as well as drive-in format, and Broadway is set to kickstart soon. So from my perspective, it will be possible, and maybe sooner than we can anticipate.

Q: A few weeks after the pandemic broke out, live-streamed events became a way of making music all over the world, including events featuring major artists. If things get back to normal, do you think live streaming will still exist? If so, will it be as strong?

A: Of course due to the guidelines, live streaming became a choice in the way of making music, and as I stated previously, it developed at a warp speed. Once this is in place, and technology becomes widely available, I don't think it will go anywhere. Even when things settle to a new normal, live streaming will continue to be an attractive format for album releases, collaborations and, who knows, it can become a video release format defined as a new standard of the industry.

Q: What do you think the future of the music industry will look like in terms of both music consumption of recorded material and music-making in the studio?

A: With the development and access to the new digital technology for recording music, there was already a big change about how music is recorded. There are project studios and home studios all over, even though some big studios remain. Music consumption has been, since 2007, migrating to synchronization with image. Nowadays, the majority of music is heard in films, TV, and commercials. Nevertheless, independent and major artists alike will keep on putting music out, but to have a level of quality, all the music I mentioned above is likely to be made in a studio.

Q: What do you think live music will look like in the near future and in the years to come?

A: Live music will become more produced than ever in the near future and in the years to come. Due to live streaming, artists, bands, and musicians will be video recording their performances constantly, and streaming or broadcasting it as an extra source of income as well as to hype their performances and tours through social media platforms. Consequently, they will be able to reach a broader audience.

Q: Several major artists live streamed their concerts during the pandemic. If in-person concerts resume, what do you think the future of live-streamed concerts will look like?

A: As I wrote in the previous answer, as in-person concerts resume, live streaming will continue to happen as a tool to generate extra income and reach out to a broader fan base.

Q: Even if things go back to normal, would the coexistence of two modalities of interaction work in terms of live music events?

A: I completely believe and hope that when we go back to normal, the two different worlds in terms of live events, virtual reality and actual reality will coexist simultaneously and in a pretty good level of harmony.

Q: In case the audience chose either the virtual modality of interaction, or the actual modality of interaction to attend a concert, would that determine whether one of them would prevail?

A: If a local audience chose either virtual or actual reality to attend a concert it would definitely determine which one would generate more income. But we have to take in consideration the fact that a local concert will be able to through virtual reality be attended by fans far away from the actual reality. As a consequence, both of them will have their own commercial value.

Q: What level of social responsibility do you see the music industry engaging in?

A: Artists have always been carrying a social responsibility to society throughout the times. The industry itself is not always taking the same level of responsibility due to the financial obligations, and ties to other industries.

Q: What role should the music industry play in efforts to alleviate poverty around the globe?

A: That's a very sensitive subject. The industry carries a certain level of greed, vide Spotify and other streaming outlets, which are using loopholes in the old laws of copyright and publishing to take advantage of the creators and artists. This should be the first step to be addressed by the industry in order to help struggling creators, and artists. Once the laws are updated and those outlets comply, we can start to think about other ways to help poverty around the world.

Q: Would dedicating a percentage of the money made from each and every live event to helping people in need work?

A: That idea of dedicating a percentage of the money made from the concerts could work if the income is plenty to fairly pay the artist, and a percentage of it to be dedicated to helping people.

Of course, rules should be set and administrative parameters should be put in place in order to make this idea work properly. The industry itself, and the venues should take an initiative, because usually they have more means than the artists.

Q: How about engaging music digital platforms in such a way that there would be a percentage of the gross profit dedicated to helping the ones in need?

A: That would be ideal. After the laws are sorted out, and the creators, and artists get their fair share, the digital platforms should engage in dedicating a percentage of their huge profits to help the ones in need.

Q: Besides making an effort to try and decrease poverty around the world, would the music industry also engage in social responsibility when it comes to music making, and even music consumption for those who cannot afford it?

A: As I stated in my answer on question #14, artists have always been engaged in social responsibilities. I believe this issue is a government responsibility more than the people's responsibility, but the industry and the digital platforms should take responsibility as well, as they have more power and financial means to help those who cannot afford it.

Q: Would the engagement in social responsibility make music more relevant to society than "mere" entertainment?

A: Of course the engagement in social responsibility makes music more relevant to society, but there will always be the more commercial side of music, which will relate to "mere" entertainment. Both have their own value. After all, entertainment helps to alleviate peoples' worries and lift their spirits in the worst of times.

Zé Luis is a seven-time Grammy award nominee, composer, arranger, producer, and multi-instrumentalist with a career span of over 40 years in Brazil and in the United States. He became famous in the 1980s performing and recording with Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa, Tania Maria, Luiz Melodia, and Cazuza, among others.

