

Growing up, I was the oldest child to rock and roll obsessed parents. I would wake up to guitar riffs, drum solos, and enchanting vocals that can only be found in the music of the past. Instead of nursery rhymes, I heard rock ballads that shook stadiums, and I would dream of being in the front row. And while my friends hardly ever knew the songs I listened to, that didn't stop me from singing them at every possible opportunity. It wasn't long until my father decided I could finally attend a concert, and if I wasn't hooked before, now I was addicted.

The roar of approval from the crowd only amplified the quality of the music, which was so loud that I could hear the performance for the days that followed in the blissful ringing in my ears. As I said, at this point I was addicted to live music, and I quickly ran through every venue and artist that would visit my city, but it was never enough. At this point I could drive, so I took every opportunity to see shows out of state, even getting lucky enough to see some legends of the music industry, such as: Tom Petty and his hypnotizing melodies, Van Halen and his electric fingers, Pearl Jam and Foo Fighters who actually made the stadium shake, and U2 where I was one of 65,000 people who witnessed why they were once the biggest name in music. I could not have been happier, and life stayed like this for a long time. For three glorious years, life went on like this for me; attending concerts while finishing high school and getting into college. Like most young adults, I thought nothing could stop me, I was doing exactly what I wanted to, and there wasn't a single thing could get in my way. And as if the world had heard me, the calendar changed to the year 2020, and not only was I stopped, but the world itself.

As anyone who is reading this already knows, with the year 2020 came the deadly corona virus, dubbed Covid-19. This virus caused the entirety of the world to close its doors and rightfully so, as the death total has now reached two million. But this cease of everyday life, while it certainly saved many lives, also put many lives at risk due to financial burden. And this was no different for the music industry. With no more live shows, the artists were left with royalties from their music sales and streaming services. Now this is a big deal, as the music industry has shifted in recent years. Artists were once dependent on the sales of their records and only toured the world playing concerts as a form of promotion and entertainment. However, this is no longer the case. With streaming services dominating the industry, the artists were the ones who suffered, as their albums and singles were not worth the same as they once were. This essentially flipped the music industry upside down, as now the artists used their music for promotion, and count on the sales of tickets at concerts for any real means of income. With some of the most notable names in the industry claiming 95% of their income is based from touring.

Now those at the top, had and have nothing to worry about. But I am speaking for all of the up-and-coming performers, the ones who scraped by and were making a name for themselves, the people, like you and me, have been struggling for the past year during a pandemic where they could not work. That being said, those at the top are still missing the income they would be receiving due to ticket sales, which is why many insiders to the music industry suspect artists have begun selling their music catalogs for large sums of money. One such artist is Bob Dylan, who recently sold his entire catalog of over 600 songs for a reported 350 million dollars. Other legends were quick in pursuit, such as Stevie Nicks, and Neil Young who sold only portions of their catalogs.

This pandemic has left us all in a state of despair, and many of us turn to music as an escape from the lives we now live behind closed doors. And while we can't change the music industry to protect the rights of the musicians, we can be responsible about the virus, and stop the spread. I plead to all who read this, wear your masks, wash your hands, and keep your distance. For all of those that have lost loved ones this year. For all of those that are struggling to pay their bills. For all of those that need music in their lives once again. Please, be responsible, and the year of division can be conquered, and I can see all of your faces, without masks, screaming in unison to the concert we can actually attend once again.