Can Online Concerts Be Socially Engaging and Satisfying?

Results and Implications from Two Global Virtual Music Events

Chuiyuan Meng
Senior Lecturer at IUPUI, PhD Student in Music Technology
Co-Founder of Deck 10 Media

IUPUI
Online Concerts?

• Benefits
  • Increased audience reach
  • Reduced operating cost
  • Archive and on-demand re-watch

• Challenges
  • A/V quality
  • Technical barriers for organizers AND end users

• THEY’RE JUST NOT THAT SATISFYING!
One Common Issue:

Online concerts aren’t satisfying due to poor social experience
Online social presence is a predictor of user satisfaction in a computer-mediated platform. (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997)
Online social presence is a predictor of user satisfaction in an online concert platform.
Online Social Presence

- Intimacy
  - Physical distance
  - Eye contact & facial expression
- Immediacy
  - Psychological distance
  "the sense of being with others"
Elements that Enhance Online Social Presence

• Reduced barrier for direct/indirect social signals
• Nonverbal interactions
• Real-time video communication
• Social profiles
• Async video communication
• Increased visibility of known peers
Case Studies
What we did, and what we found.
Two Online Global Music Events

• The Summer Institute of Contemporary Performance and Practice (SICPP) 2021 by the New England Conservatory

• The International Computer Music Conference (ICMC) 2021 by the University of Chile

• 50 concerts: including live, fixed media and on-demand listening rooms

• 512 users from 38 countries

• Hosted on an early prototype of Deck 10 Intermedia

• 49 (9.6%) users participated in a post-event questionnaire
About Deck 10 Intermedia

• An online platform designed for (better) concerts, concert series, and larger-scale music conferences

• Unique features over common WCS systems:
  • Integrated private and public messaging
  • Integrated realtime video communication (Deck 10 Studio)
  • Social profile
  • On-stage interactions
The Virtual Stage
The Virtual Stage

Main Stage

Karlheinz Stockhausen: Natural Duration No.24
This event has concluded
The archive may become available later

Hold on, John Luther Adams: Dark Waves starts in 00:14:04.

Return to Main Menu
**Video Calls & Virtual Music Studios**

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**Tech Support**

**Instructional Support**
Between-Session Interactions
What We Learned

👍 Overall: People Loved It!

👍 On-Stage: People were very social during and between performances

👍 Listening Rooms: Very successful

👍 Virtual music studios and walk-in office: Very successful

👍 Being with known peers, and seeing their activities improve the social experience

👎 Hallway conversations: Didn’t really take place

👎 Realtime video call: It works, but requires coordination
Perceived Social Connectedness

- No: 22.4%
- Somewhat: 16.4%
- Yes: 61.2%

\( \chi^2 = 8.7085, \ p\text{-value} = 0.013 < 0.05 \)

N=49
Awareness of Others

No
24.5%

Maybe
2.0%

Yes
73.5%

$\chi^2 = 17.68$, $p$-value = .000026 < 0.01

N=49
Connecting with Known and New Peers

Known Contacts
- Easy: 65.3%
- Neutral: 18.4%
- Hard: 16.3%

New Contacts
- Easy: 63.3%
- Neutral: 14.3%
- Hard: 22.4%

χ² test: p-value = 0.0069 < 0.01
χ² test: p-value = 0.0071 < 0.01

N = 49
Perception of On-Stage Interactions

• 87.8% were aware of other audiences during concerts
• 95.9% remembered seeing others applaud and thumb-up
• 95.9% applauded or used nonverbal reactions
• 77.6% used the on-stage chat during concerts
• Mostly positive toward the on-stage chat & confetti effects
Perception of On-Stage Comm

• “It gave a sense that people were actually listening.”

• “It was great: noticeable but not disturbing.”

• “Felt very connected to others.”

• “[T]hat was awesome, like in a real concert, it was like a real connection and applause.”

• “It was distracting, but the comments were interesting enough that I didn't mind.”
Interesting Comments

• “I was surprised at how well connected I felt to other conference attendees - I was not expecting that level of interaction in the context of a virtual conference.”

• “Perhaps the conference presenters could have added some online social events.”

• “[We need an] integration with some platform that is not disposable like the temporary event site. On the other hand I appreciate not forcing participants to use a particular commercial social network to participate.”
Takeaways & Future Plans

• Awareness of known peers contributes to social experience: Focus on raising the visibility of known peers

• Online events *live longer*: Easier social “off-boarding” after events

• Recreate “hallway conversations” through coordination

• Async self-introduction video

• Increased performer-audience interaction

• More research on measuring the social experience and enjoyment of online concerts