



A Change in Concert Culture: How COVID-19, Social Media, and Inflation Have Changed the Way We Enjoy Concerts

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Photo Credit: Megan Connelly

A BEAT SO LOUD THAT it pumps through your veins, sweaty bodies surrounding you, and feeling of excitement in the air that cannot be beat. This is what the unique experience of a concert is like. But after the COVID-19 pandemic, concerts would be changed forever. In a lot of ways, concerts have taken a turn for the worse.

One way that this change in concerts can be seen is in the difference in audience behavior. With concerts disappearing for over a year during the start of the pandemic, many younger fans have not had the chance to attend their first concert until recently, resulting in ignorance of proper concert etiquette. Combining that with the way that social isolation from the pandemic has made everyone feel cooped up and has made them want to get that frustration out somehow, it becomes more obvious why concert audiences have become increasingly more disrespectful, aggressive, and less focused on the music.

The preoccupation with getting front row seats or getting barricades is an example of how this manifests. While people have certainly always lined up early for

concerts, I feel that it has now been brought to an extreme. When people are lining up multiple days in advance for Harry Styles concerts, as I have seen on TikTok and Twitter, I think that that shows how obsessed Generation Z concert-goers have become with having the perfect spot. It is no longer about enjoying the music, but instead about how close you can get to the artist and how much attention you can receive on social media for it. Think about how many concert videos people have recorded from the front row have gone viral. People now focus on achieving that at a concert.

I can also point to the lack of concert etiquette that concert attendees now have with a story of my own. This summer, I went to a Wallows concert at Palace Theater in Saint Paul. I got there early as I am only 5'4" and don't always have the best view if I'm further in the back, but I didn't get there ridiculously early. Suddenly, when we were ready to go inside, everyone behind me and my friends formed a new line and cut in front of everyone in the front of the line. Unfortunately, I didn't get as good of a spot as I had hoped because

of this. The rule for general admission concerts is first come, first served. The lack of proper concert etiquette that those people had was a glaring example of what is wrong with our current concert culture to me.

But it isn't just audiences that are changing the ways we experience concerts. With the surge in concert ticket prices, it has become much less exciting and much more inaccessible to go to concerts. According to Anne Steele from the Wall Street Journal, this is partially due to inflation but also due to increased demand, as "the concert industry is amid a years long effort to price tickets more aggressively, capitalizing on consumer demand and cutting down on money lost to the secondary market."

While addressing increased prices due to inflation is a much bigger issue to tackle, working to change our behavior at concerts is something simple that we can all do. It is time we start being more respectful to one another and go back to enjoying the concert for what it is: quality live music.