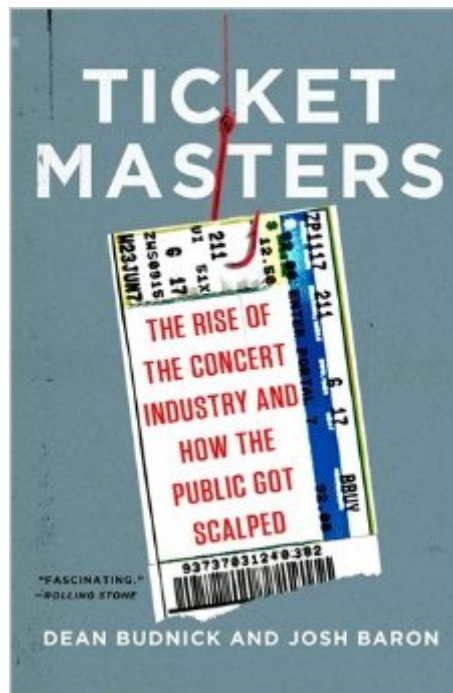


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Ticket Masters: The Rise Of The Concert Industry And How The Public Got Scalped



Synopsis

“A clear, comprehensive look at a murky business.” —The Wall Street Journal
Your favorite band has just announced their nationwide tour. Should you pay to join their fan club and get in on the pre-sale? No, you decide to wait. But the on-sale date arrives, and the site is jammed. You can’t get on—and the concert is sold out in six minutes. What happened? What now? Music journalists Dean Budnick and Josh Baron chronicle the behind-the-scenes history of the modern concert industry. Filled with entertaining rock-and-roll anecdotes about The Rolling Stones, The Grateful Dead, Pearl Jam, and more—and charting the emergence of players like Ticketmaster, StubHub, Live Nation, and Outbox—Ticket Masters will transfix every concertgoer who wonders just where the price of admission really goes. This edition has an updated epilogue that covers recent industry developments. —

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Customer Reviews

This is the first truly comprehensive look at the history of the billion dollar concert ticketing industry, and should deservedly be the first go-to book for anybody ever doing work on the subject. I worked in the ticket industry for about 13 years, so I’ve seen most of the changes the author describes. Stub Hub, the now-ubiquitous ticket marketplace, used to call our office years ago and explain what a great idea they had about a national format - and we laughed, and laughed. Most importantly, though, the stories Budnick and Baron tell happened the way they tell it. I can speak to their credibility, at least as far as their stories on Stub Hub, Tickets Now, and other ticket brokers. No

question they put in every bit of detail they could get their hands on. That is one of the flaws of the book, that they put in so much that it's sometimes difficult to tell what facts are most important, and where the reader's focus should really be. This book takes some work - it's not a beach read. You have to be prepared to pay attention, read things again, and then re-read. There is a lot of business discussion, and dollar figures, and other small details that require a lot of the reader's attention. A big flaw is the lack of specific ticket prices. Only a few times do the authors actually say what a concert costs, and since the entire book is on the notion that the public is getting 'scalped,' it's hard to see exactly HOW, without seeing the increase in price. I know that the Rolling Stones, for example, charged \$60 for their best field seats for their 1997 tour - and \$450 in 2005. Awful, right? But even though the Rolling Stones are a major part of the book, the authors never use any specific ticket prices - they talk about fan club prices, but not tickets. I wish the authors had used more specific price examples to both horrify and educate the reader about the much higher prices they are now paying. And, the impact of the Internet - where ticket broker prices suddenly became public knowledge - isn't highlighted quite well enough. But as far as what the author's include, it really shows how distant the idea of concerts has gotten from the "old days" when it was about the music. Now, concerts are just one more product that companies provide as a way to get a captive audience that they can then sell other products too. It will make a reader very cynical. The stories about the Grateful Dead's mail-order ticket system, and Pearl Jam's lawsuit (although they aren't the heroes they presented themselves to be) against Ticketmaster are among the most interesting, well-detailed sections. So, the book is very detailed and informative, but often hard to follow and requires very close attention. But I can speak to the credibility of at least some of it, so I think the rest of it is equally accurate.

This book is a must read for anybody that is an avid concertgoer that has always wondered why a show sells out in less than 5 minutes and if they get tickets, they're always the worst seats in the building. This book is written in a very "60 Minutes" type investigation manner about Ticketmaster. It breaks down the origins of computerized ticketing from its very beginnings to where it's at today. The book examines the greed, corruption and blatant arrogance that takes place in the concert industry. From agents, promoters and even the artists themselves, this book leaves no stone unturned. Definitely worth the read.

I've seen 1000 concerts and I'm only exaggerating a little. My first was AC/DC (sixth grade). This book is for everyone who wants to know why all the good seats are gone even if you're first in line,

about how much artists are making when they play a big show, and how to fail in business by not recognizing who your customers really are. And Irv Azoff... easy to know but hard to define. A+ [...]

Authors Dean Budnick and Josh Baron have written an in depth history of computerized ticket sales from the simple beginnings in the mid-1960s to the behemoth that 800 lb gorilla of the industry Ticketmaster (Live Nation) is today. As the subtitle implies, their story is much more interesting and nuanced because it is not just about ticket sales per se, but how promoters, concert venues, entourages and more are mixed up into the witches brew of the concert industry. Although, it has never been easier to purchase a ticket online (although being on the queue in the first 15 nanoseconds before top names sell out), it has also never been so expensive to see your favorite performing artist. Budnick and Baron also explain the economics of the modern concert industry as well, which is at times mind boggling. This book is extremely thoroughly researched, with a 9 page glossary to help you keep track of the 300 hundred or so cast of characters. The authors were able to interview many of the key players in the development of the various legacy companies that merged into what is Ticketmaster today. The quotes from them provide key insight into both what they were thinking at the time of key developments but how accurate they were from the view of hindsight today. They patiently explain the technologies that underlie various changes, the competing companies at each point in time, the bands that try to buck trends, or create their own ones, and more. Also documented are the congressional investigations into the monopolistic practices which seem to have not been able to stick to this teflon industry. This meticulous book helps explain how the ticket and promotion industry got to where it is today, with a few large players, and high prices. It is a fascinating ride. Although the details can get heady at times, if you soldier through, an unparalleled view is your reward.

This book does an excellent job of showing the foundation of the ticketing industry as it grew throughout the 20th century. The book also details the mergers, acquisitions, and key players that were eventually gobbled up by Clear Channel, Live Nation, and TicketMaster. Beyond just ticketing, this book really shows you how and why the concert industry has developed in the way that it has. I would recommend this for anyone who is interested in concert promotion, the concert industry, management and venue operations, artist relations, and additional revenue streams in the industry.

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