

How to host, stream, perform, and promote a “virtual” (online) concert: Why virtual concerts are the new concert experience

[December 2013 - article written by David Boone, founder of Gigeo, a new tool that empowers artists to perform and promote virtual concerts].

As a musician myself I know how hard it can be to get paid for your craft. Fortunately there are services out there that make it easier for us to keep doing more of what we love to do, make money, and even succeed while doing it. Of course, CD Baby is one of those.

In the realm of live music-making, online concerts are a great opportunity for musicians to perform for all of their supporters at once, connect in a unique and creative way with fans, and open up performances to ticket purchasers everywhere who otherwise may not be able to attend a concert.

Whether in combination with an event you’re already performing at a local venue, or as a special online-only concert, utilizing this exciting new medium can be a great way to expand your audience and earn more as a musician.

With virtual concerts, the ether’s the limit. When I founded Gigeo – The Biggest Stage on Earth!™, the concept was simple – an artist can only be so many places at once. Touring can be extremely expensive. And with conventional performance you can only reach so many fans at once.

Given the geographic constraints and high overhead of traditional touring, it can be hard on an artist to sustain consistent touring and regularly perform for all of their supporters around the country and the world. And given the unlimited access that the Internet provides, it’s only natural that virtual concerts would begin to become more of a reality.

Think about it. Where are your fans? Really, where are your fans, friends, and family for that matter? Everywhere! This is why we connect through Facebook, Twitter, email, and phone. We live in a digital and a global world. And for most people, our community is everywhere.

Just take a look at your email list or Facebook fans, or where you sent your last CD Baby order. When I look at my mailing list, or website traffic, I’m always amazed to see that, wow, we’ve got folks tuning in from where? Iceland, Germany, South Africa, Australia, Montana? This is always exciting when you consider the reach and impact of your music. It can also be a bit daunting to think about “how will I ever provide a real, live experience for all my fans?”

As a Montana boy, I tend to want to veer as close to the natural realm as possible – an acoustic guitar and campfire. But ultimately, the goal is to connect with each other. Online concerts are one of the important tools that can enable us to maintain that connection, and the need for us to still come together around the “virtual campfire” is as real and alive today as it has ever been.

Your fans are everywhere – so how do you reach them as often as you'd like? By performing an online ticketed event in real time!

There are so many reasons I could give you for why you should perform live online concerts: reaching your entire audience at once, being able to expand your ticket sale capacity as a performer, next to zero overhead involved, reaching fans wherever they are, etc.

But what about the “how’s”? How do I actually host a virtual show? How do I perform an online concert?

At first thought, it might seem complicated. Maybe too technical for some. In reality, it's very easy.

Setting up your first online concert can be as easy as having a solid internet connection, and with as simple of a setup as your webcam and mic, your personal computer becomes your global stage to the world.

It's now easier to earn money through your online performances and always play to a full house. And for your fans, every seat is a front row seat.

When creating Gigeo, the idea was to build a very easy-to-use, turn-key platform where artists can create their event, promote their event, and “Go Live” without a lot of hassle. We wanted it to be as accessible and “everybody-friendly” as using Skype.

It was also important for us to build the platform based around the model of a ticketed event. From our experience as artists, you can get really jaded by an industry that often requires artists to supply “endlessly” free content. So Gigeo was designed to allow artists to select their minimum ticket goal (the number of tickets they'd like to sell for the event to go on) and pick a ticket price that works for them. We also made it easy for artists to promote their events directly to their fans through Facebook and Twitter.

By doing this, we're creating a culture of respect for the artist. We're saying, “here's an online show, here's the cost of the show, spread the word and support this artist.”

With Gigeo, 80% of ticket sales go directly to the artist! We're happy to say that fans have responded in a very positive way. They are supporting artists. So far 100% of artists who have performed a Gigeo event have reached their ticket goal, and we've found that most artists using the service are charging ticket prices equal to that of their traditional live events. We've had some pretty remarkable case studies illustrating how supportive fans truly are, where artists have actually boosted their ticket sales revenue by over 400% in combination with a special live event they're doing.

So don't worry about whether or not your fans will be willing to pay a ticket price for your next online concert. They will! And happily!

Just make your event special, charge a ticket amount you feel comfortable with, and treat it like any other concert you would be doing.

The joy of doing a “virtual concert” is that promotion is fun and easy and the possibilities really are limitless.

Online events are an addition to – not a substitution for – touring. Although there will never be a substitute for the live, in-person concert experience, we are always looking for ways to expand opportunities for artists to connect with their fans, and for fans to have more access to their favorite artists. And online performance is a great way to do just that.

So whether you’re using Gigeo or any other online streaming service available to you as an artist... Make it whatever you want. Make it what you can. And most important, keep it real.

That’s my main advice. Like all aspects of the creative walk, it is your chance to express yourself, connect, and share your creativity with the folks that appreciate you and your craft the most.

So get creative, get personal, and expand your horizon by opening up your live performance to the web. Look at it as an opportunity to bring all those people together who appreciate your music to one place, all at the same time, all under the same virtual roof, all sharing the same experience.

That’s something that wouldn’t be possible without online concerts.

Creating and promoting your next online event is easy. Set up your event. It’s as easy as creating a free Gigeo account and then following the short steps to complete event set-up – setting up your profile, selecting your date, establishing a ticket price, and testing your broadcast.

Promote your event. Promotion is simple, too. Share your event through Facebook and Twitter – that part is even integrated within Gigeo to make it very easy. You can also share your event with your email list, your YouTube fans, text it out to your contacts, and however else you wish to communicate.

Offer your fans incentives. With Gigeo there are lots of built-in ‘incentives’ for artists to help promote their events. For example, musicians can offer a free download to the first ‘X number’ of folks who purchase a ticket. Or they have the ability to offer a free download to ALL ticket purchasers. You can also release a certain number of backstage passes and reserve guest pass tickets to your family and friends, if you wish. And of course, don’t forget the after-event Q & A where your fans can ask questions and interact with you live after the show.

Get creative, get personal, and expand your horizons! Try performing live, online in real-time. Play from spots meaningful to you – around a campfire, from the beach, from your backyard, from anywhere. Yet your reach can be infinite. Your fans will be happy to see more of you.

’Tis the season for an online concert. If you haven’t done so already, use this special holiday season as a chance to try out your first online concert, connect with fans from

near and far, and update them about the exciting year ahead! What better way to bring everyone together than around a concert?

You can find more tips for getting started with the exciting new world of online concerts at Gige.me.

Happy holidays to all, and hope to see you all soon, somewhere down the digital highway!

BIO: David Boone was born and raised in Montana. He currently resides in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. David has been writing songs and touring for over 15 years. His time as an active professional musician and family man has greatly influenced his view of the current state of the music industry and how artists are affected. David's mission is to empower artists with modern tools to connect with their fans around the world in new ways using the Gige.me online concert platform, tailored for artists, by artists.

As an artist, David has independently produced and released over 10 albums. His most recent project, DAWNS is currently in post-production and will be released in 2014, working alongside Producer Danton Supple (Coldplay, Morrissey, Starsailor) as well as string-arranger Audrey Riley, and members of the London Symphony / London Gospel Choir.

The debut DAWNS EP was released in 2013, through Cd Baby, and received critical praise in the US and abroad.

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