



# Keeping pace with demand

Intense competition and rapidly advancing technology have seen the ticketing business become one of the most dynamic and sometimes controversial sectors of the live music industry, and without the services it provides, much of the live sector would grind to a halt. Christopher Barrett reports

Major companies such as Live Nation Entertainment-owned Ticketmaster and Germany pan-Europe operator CTS Eventim continue to dominate the international ticketing market and seem to be continually acquiring competitors.

But there remains an array of other players, driven by new ideas, technology and expertise in their local markets.

Last November Ticketmaster (TM) launched in Italy, a move into the company's 29<sup>th</sup> market and following on from its acquisition of Ticketpro in the Czech Republic, a partnership with Switzerland's Tixtec and launch of Ticketmaster Israel last year.

TM International president Mark Yovich says Italy is a key market

where sales of tickets are estimated to reach 19 million by 2020.

"Italy was an organic move for the business and it is undoubtedly one of the world's most vibrant destinations for live entertainment," he says.

TM has not just expanded its reach on the ground, it is also finding new ways to bring purchasing options to consumers in the ether.

Fans have been able to purchase TM tickets directly from Facebook and Spotify for some time, but following a

partnership with YouTube in the US, it recently began enabling them to buy tickets within music videos.

But it has not all been plain sailing, TM's dynamically-priced Platinum service ran into trouble recently in the UK with the



Mark Yovich

Advertising Standards Authority, while somewhat ironically, European budget airline Ryanair launched a concert tickets service.

Yovich says that the past year has seen a shift in how the additional revenue raised by Platinum ticket sales is being used.

"Several high-profile artistes and clients have decided to donate their profits to charity," he says.

Another key initiative for the company has been its Verified Fan programme, an anti-tout and anti-bot scheme that uses algorithms to establish if customers are real fans and then encourages them to spend in other areas to improve their chances of securing a ticket.

The technology has been rolled-out in the US and will launch in other territories this year.

"It does not guarantee that every fan will get a ticket but it does level the playing field so a fan is up against another fan, instead of a bot, who wants that same ticket," says Yovich.

A growing backlash against for-profit secondary ticketing has seen an increasing number of primary operators launch managed resale facilities. The most recent being CTS Eventim's FanSALE platform (see story in News), which the company says allows fans to sell tickets at a "fair" price.

CTS has also made major moves in the Italian market,

with the acquisition of promoter Vertigo and a 60 per cent stake in Ferdinando Salzano's Friends and Partners. The company already owned TicketOne - one of Italy's leading companies.

Now operational in 25 countries, and with bases in nine, CTS is headquartered in Germany, where it boasts a huge domestic market share. During nine months alone last year, the company sold

more than 30 million tickets online.

"There are still some regional differences," says CTS communications head Christian Steinhof.

"In some countries, for example Scandinavia and the Netherlands, tickets are almost exclusively sold online, whereas physical box offices still play a substantial role in other territories."

Despite the relentless march of digital, paper tickets remain an important part of CTS's business. In 2013 it launched FanTicket, an initiative offering collectable paper tickets with bespoke designs for individual tours.

"FanTickets account for more than half of all tickets sold online, and it is rising. We have now rolled-out the product in almost every country in which we operate," says Steinhof.

Based in Switzerland and also operational in Germany, Starticket sold approximately 5.5 million tickets to 10,000 events last year, with 75 per cent sold online and

the remainder happening at box offices.

Among shows Starticket is working on is the new Lakelive festival, which will take place at Expo Park in Biel over eight days in the summer. Among headliners announced are Bastille, Carlos Vives, John Newman and Fritz Kalkbrenner.

"Our goal is to sell 40,000 tickets," says Starticket sales director Marc Boehrer.

In an effort to prevent ticket fraud, the company offers a ticket personalisation service, with promoters able to select different levels of personalisation.

As in many other countries, secondary ticketing is a major issue in Switzerland, says Boehrer, and the company continuously works to fight it.

"We are lobbying politicians in order to, hopefully, push a passable legislative bill through parliament," he says. "In Switzerland this can take forever, but on a strategic level, we see dynamic pricing as a key factor in the fight against secondary."

## Mobile momentum

Ticketmaster UK MD Andrew Parsons says his company enjoyed a record year in 2017, bolstered by the huge success of Ed Sheeran's arena tour, which included three sell-out nights at London's The

O2 (21,000).

"Online and mobile sales continue to be the most popular way to purchase a ticket on our new, optimised and responsive Ticketmaster UK site, with our call

centre in Manchester making up the remainder of sales," he says. "Traditional paper tickets are the most common ticket type, closely followed by print-at-home."

Conversely, at Ticketmaster Sweden, paper is a redundant format. Among the big shows the company will handle this year include Ed Sheeran, Guns N'Roses and festivals including the three-day Way Out West (35,000) in Gothenburg and Sweden Rock Festival (35,000) in Norje.

MD Kristian Seljeset says, "Tickets are exclusively sold online and via mobile. All our tickets are e-tickets."

Just over the border in neighbouring Norway, paper tickets are still in play. Ticketmaster Norway

MD Kristian Seljeset says, "Around a third of tickets are sold via the box office, a small percentage by phone, and the rest online. The majority of concert tickets are print-at-home, and a small percentage are paper tickets."

There is a different picture at Ticketmaster Germany, where



Andrew Parsons



Kristian Seljeset



Klaus Zemke

# eBilet.pl

We are the largest and fastest growing ticketing company in Poland.

We cooperate with international and Polish promoters.  
Contact us at: [promoters@ebilet.pl](mailto:promoters@ebilet.pl)

## Ticketing in Poland





MD Klaus Zemke is overseeing the ticketing of shows by acts such as Metallica and U2.

"Overall approximately 32 per cent of tickets are sold through physical outlets and venue box offices, five per cent through our call centres and the remainder through the internet," he says.

### Awareness drive

With a market share of around 25 per cent, See Tickets is the second biggest agency in the UK behind TM.

A subsidiary of French conglomerate Vivendi, the company is also operational in the US, Germany, Spain, and in France where it is branded Digitick. The company sold approximately 11 million tickets last year.

A recent development at See was the launch of Fan-Share. Described by UK CEO Rob Wilmshurst as an "advocate marketing platform", Fan-Share encourages social media influencers to drive awareness about

an event online in exchange for rewards such as merchandise or VIP upgrades.

Another enhancement of the See offering was the launch last year of integrated re-sale/anti-touting platform Fan2Fan, which enables ticket buyers to safely and quickly re-sell unwanted See tickets to other fans.

"We allow customers to re-sell unwanted tickets back through our platform at the same price they paid," says Wilmshurst. "Our fees for this are lower than everybody else on the market."

Also based in the UK and ranked third to TM and See, Ticketline works with a host of tours, venues and festivals such as Victorious (65,000), Bestival (35,000), Kendal Calling (25,000) and Green Man (10,000).

In 2016 it launched white label self-service ticketing solution Ticketlight, which enables event owners to sell tickets directly from Facebook.



Rob Wilmshurst

"The system offers a real-time reporting suite and provides a clear and concise insight to manage, promote and deliver events, all in one place," says head of marketing James Lee.

More recent developments include the use of Apple Pay and the launch of The Ticket Network, which enables loyal fans to act as a sales channel for an event and receive rewards.

"It allows the creation of a bespoke reward programme to incentivise recruited representatives to sell tickets," says Lee.

### Meeting demands

One of the leading ticketing operators in Poland, eBilet sold more than three million tickets last year, with the majority of its business domestic sales. However, it also sells tickets for events in the Germany, Ireland and the UK.

eBilet CEO Marcin Matuszewski

says 90 per cent of its tickets are sold digitally, of which 30 per cent are sold via mobile devices.

Among client events are concerts by Depeche Mode, Bruno



James Lee



Marcin Matuszewski

Mars, Guns N'Roses, Iron Maiden, Sam Smith and Roger Waters.

He says the company recently launched a cutting-edge new ticketing system.

"It provides very high scalability, we are able to sell one million tickets in 15 minutes," Matuszewski explains. "It offers real-time seat map updates, very advanced user management and full responsiveness."

"For popular shows we use ticket personalisation — our access control system shows

if a code on a ticket belongs to a certain person and if it was copied from another ticket," he says. "We also work with payment companies to mitigate payment fraud."

# CREATE • MANAGE • SELL

## ANYWHERE - ANYTIME

112 UPCOMING EVENTS

35,025 TICKETS SOLD

17493 ORDERS

£687,855.05 INCOME

WWW.GIGANTIC.COM

Post BUSINESS AWARDS 2017

RETAIL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

0115 807 7907

SELLTICKETS@GIGANTIC.COM



At Kassir, one of the biggest ticketing companies in Russia, paper tickets continue to play a key role.

"Last year we sold 4.3 million tickets to more than 50,000 events in Russia," says CEO Ilia Altshuler. "Around 60 per cent of tickets sold were e-tickets, with the remainder being paper."

Among the artistes whose shows Kassir will ticket this year

are Guns N'Roses, Depeche Mode, Roger Waters, 30 Seconds To Mars, Ozzy Osbourne, Rainbow and Gorillaz.

Founded in 1999 and headquartered in St. Petersburg, Kassir.ru operates as a subsidiary of PMI Entertainment Group and has offices in 18 cities, and Altshuler says this year will see it extend its physical presence to a further five.

Another big move for the business will be the implementation of blockchain technology

in an effort to tackle fraud.

"We will start developing our own blockchain ticketing system for the secondary market for the end of the first quarter of 2018. It will help us make the Russian secondary resale market transparent and, with the help of our government, legal," says Altshuler.

### Close cooperation



Ilia Altshuler



Kermal Erdine

CTS Eventim-owned Italian operation TicketOne sold 11 million tickets for 14,000 events last year. Among the international acts it is working with this year are Pearl Jam, Roger Waters, Guns N'Roses and Foo Fighters, while local acts include Lorenzo Jovanotti and Cesare Cremonini.

Around 45 per cent of tickets it sells are via physical box offices.

TicketOne deputy MD Andrea Grancini says its e-commerce platform works closely with clients



to help promote their events with online marketing campaigns and the use of social media.

He says the company also works hard to combat the problem of ticket touting,

"The fight against scalpers is a daily battle," says Grancini. "We have a very secure platform that is able to prevent bots or multiple requests and our internal audit department constantly monitors

purchases and cancels any suspected of originating from the same person."

At TM-owned Biletix in Turkey, MD, Kermal Erdine says social media is key to driving tickets sales in the market and it has 1.1 million followers across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Google+.

"Social media helps us improve our brand awareness with fun and creative content," he says. ▶

# WE LOVE MANAGING TICKETS

- ♥ TOUR, EVENT & POP-UP BOX OFFICE
- ♥ TICKET FULFILMENT SERVICES
- ♥ UK WIDE AGENTS TICKET CONTROL
- ♥ SOCIAL MEDIA & CS SERVICES
- ♥ WEB & CONTACT CENTRE SALES

WEMBLEY PLAY-OFFS & FINALS, PINK FLOYD AT THE V&A, AMAZON TICKETS FELD DISNEY ON ICE, THE OLD VIC, MANCHESTER ARENA, SOUTHAMPTON FC PHIL MCINTYRE ENTS, LIVERPOOL FC, LEEDS ARENA, NEWCASTLE ARENA THE SCOTTISH FA, THE ROUNDHOUSE, YORK BARBICAN, LASTMINUTE.COM ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL, BURNLEY FC, Groupon, HAMMERSMITH APOLLO YEOVILTON INTERNATIONAL AIR DAYS, MONITISE, STAGE, ENCORE TICKETS EXETER CITY FC, ADVANCE TALENT TICKETING SYSTEM, AUDIENCEVIEW TESSITURA, EVENTIM, TICKETS.COM, TZ SYSTEM, SPEKTRIX, TICKETEK

DISCOVER WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT OUR SERVICES

WEB: [www.ticketzoneforbusiness.com/work](http://www.ticketzoneforbusiness.com/work)

TELEPHONE: 01271 335722 EMAIL: [sales@ticketzone.co.uk](mailto:sales@ticketzone.co.uk)







## Social mediums

Since its launch in August 2011, AEG-owned AXS has been adopted at venues worldwide including AEG's Staples Center (20,000) in Los Angeles and The O2 in London, as well as non-AEG venues across North America and Europe – among them Sweden's Ericsson Globe (16,000) in Stockholm.

Vice-president of marketing and digital service Daniel Brown says the company sold tickets for more than 2,500 events in the UK alone last year with 35 per cent of tickets sold via mobile devices.

In December, Facebook became the latest company to join the AXS Anywhere partner distribution network, enabling customers to purchase tickets directly on the social network.

Alongside Facebook, Spotify, deals website Groupon, event discovery service Goldstar and

last-minute mobile ticket seller Gametime are among those selling AXS tickets via their services.

"The partnership with Facebook is proving successful in the US, while in the UK we are in testing phase, but expect it to go live soon – we have high hopes," says Brown.



Maria O'Connor

In Lithuania, Tiketa commerce head Dovilė Poniškaitienė says the local market does not suffer greatly from ticket fraud or secondary ticketing, and last year the company sold more

than one million tickets for 10,811 events.

Among the shows Tiketa will work on in Lithuania this year are Depeche Mode and James Blunt at the Siemens Arena (12,500) in Vilnius, along with a tour by local electronica exponents Leon Somov.

With 61 per cent of Tiketa transactions happening online, a major focus for the company is improving its website and driving sales

via social media. Poniškaitienė says it primarily uses Facebook because it is the most popular channel in Lithuania but the company is also looking to use Instagram and Snapchat.

"We have our own Facebook channel, Mano Pramogos, which has more than 83,000 followers," says Poniškaitienė. "We create content and offer live streams of local, and some foreign, artistes whose events we are ticketing."

Among the landmark shows that Ticketmaster Australia and New Zealand is working on are Ed Sheehan's two nights in March at the new 60,000-capacity Optus Perth Stadium.

Other events include Download Festival (25,000) at the Flemington Racecourse in Melbourne and the C3 Presents and Live Nation Entertainment co-promoted multi-venue festival Sydney City Limits.

MD Maria O'Connor says 95 per cent of its tickets are sold online and via mobile devices, boosted by the launch of a mobile responsive website branded Fan Platform.

She says a "chatbot" on Facebook Messenger has also paid dividends. For the uninitiated, a chatbot is a computer programme designed to simulate conversation with human users over the internet. O'Connor says the chatbot has one billion monthly users worldwide.

Another key TM development with Facebook is the implementation of the social media platform into the website, enabling users to share their interest and/

or attendance of events with Facebook friends.

"When users respond to an event invitation the Friends on Ticketmaster module is updated on the home and category pages so that fans can quickly see which of their Facebook friends are attending," says O'Connor.

Social media is also a key focus for the team at Ticketmaster Ireland. Among its biggest shows this year are Taylor Swift and Michael Bublé at Croke Park (82,300), Billy Joel at Aviva Stadium (50,000) and Bruno Mars at Marlay Park (12,000).



Keith English

"Ed Sheeran has nine dates across the country in Belfast, Cork, Dublin and Galway in stadiums and outdoor venues," reports MD Keith English.

When raising the awareness of events Ticketmaster Ireland primarily uses Facebook,

Twitter, Instagram and its blog to share information.

"Social media has transformed the way we work, it has created a two-way dialogue for our customer services team," says English.

## Big ambition

Back in the UK, Gigantic is enjoying rapid growth with ticket sales up 38 per cent year-on-year in 2017.

Among events the company is working on are the 65,000-capacity Barclaycard presents British Summer Time concert series in London's Hyde Park and the Tramlines Festival (30,000) in Sheffield, while tours include Liam Gallagher, Taylor Swift and Ed Sheeran. ▶

★★★ eventim

# FanBonus

**WE'VE NOW LAUNCHED FANBONUS, OUR BRAND NEW CUSTOMER LOYALTY SCHEME!**

Available to new and existing customers, those who sign up to FanBonus will be rewarded for their ticket purchases with a cashback voucher at the end of the year – valid for 3% of their total annual order spend.

In addition, registered customers will have access to exclusive presales, competitions and offers!

**EVENTIM.CO.UK/FANBONUS**





## Your complete ticketing solutions partner

With over 30 years experience, we are the trusted ticketing partner of many of the UK's biggest festivals and events

- Secure Entry Solutions • White-label sites •
- Advanced Reporting Suites • Bespoke Ticket Production •
- Custom-made Payment Plans • Extensive Marketing Services •
- First-class Customer Support • Facebook Integration •
- On-site Box Office Management •



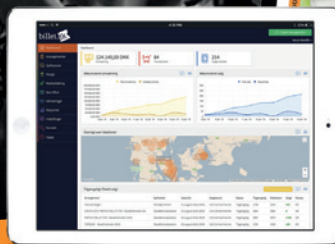
[www.ticketlinesolutions.com](http://www.ticketlinesolutions.com)

[sales@ticketline.co.uk](mailto:sales@ticketline.co.uk)



## Denmark's leading ticketing solutions provider

- Bespoke Ticketing Production
- Extensive Marketing Reach
- Versatile & Secure Entry Solutions
- On-site Box Office Management
- Detailed Web Based Reporting
- Social Media Integration
- White-Label Sites
- Unrivalled Customer Support



[www.billet.dk](http://www.billet.dk)

[sales@billet.dk](mailto:sales@billet.dk)



# **WE MAKE DREAMS REAL**

Punto Ticket, the official ticketing company for major concerts in Chile.

Lollapalooza Chile / David Gilmour /  
Radiohead / Creamfields / Disney On Ice /  
Iron Maiden / Cirque Du Soleil Kooza /  
Rolling Stones / Rihanna / Pearl Jam /  
Justin Bieber / The Cure / Marc Anthony /  
André Rieu and many more.

*punto*  *ticket.com*



All Gigantic's tickets are sold online, with 58 per cent purchased via mobile devices. "That has been achieved by making it as easy as possible to purchase tickets on our responsive website and through continuous online engagement," says founder Mark Gasson.

Gigantic also provides dynamic pricing, but Gasson says he has not seen clients clamour to offer it.

"Many high demand concert events that may warrant dynamic ticketing sell-out in a matter of days, which prevents dynamic pricing from having an impact in the same way as it does with airlines and hotels," he says.

Also in the UK, Ticket Zone is a systems and box office service provider with more than 35 years' experience. In 2017 it processed nearly two million tickets for more than 500 events, including concerts by Ed Sheeran and BST.

Chief operating officer Wayne Munday says his company keeps pace with the rapidly evolving

technology that continues to shape the ticketing industry, but he believes there remains a place for the paper ticket.

"We have seen an increase in companies who are pushing a paperless ticket agenda as a singular target view, when actually the current view of the ticketing industry for the foreseeable future is far more complex," he says. "We

believe both paperless and physical tickets will co-exist for the foreseeable future."

A leading independent in Denmark,

billet.dk sells tickets through its website, via physical outlets, a call centre and on Facebook.

"Social media has been integrated in to all our ticketing platforms to enhance promotions and allow customers to purchase tickets," says MD Jesper Kjærgaard.

In 2016 it launched Billetshop, a self-service ticketing system for

promoters, venues and festivals.

"We have included many features to support ticketing for all event types, with a three-step event creation tool, custom venue seat map tool, comprehensive reporting, and real-time scanning," he says.

Founded in San Francisco in 2006 and now operational in 180 countries, self-service ticketing platform

Eventbrite is working with numerous concerts and festivals this year including the UK's WOMAD (40,000) and Secret

Solstice (12,000), and America's Burning Man (40,000) festival and multi-venue event SXSW.

Last year the company furthered its reach with the acquisition of Ticketscript in Europe, and Ticketfly in North America.

Eventbrite UK & Ireland general manager Joel Crouch says all tickets are sold online.

"For certain events, particularly with a younger audience, we have noticed that mobile sales can account for well over two-thirds of online ticket sales," he says. "A recent survey revealed that demand for mobile tickets exceeds supply, in some cases by a ratio of four to one."

Crouch says a key recent development in ticketing technology

has been "truly distributed commerce".

"Rather than pulling potential ticket buyers to an event website, our open platform and distribution integrations with the likes of Spotify, Facebook or BandsinTown now make

it possible to bring Eventbrite tickets to consumers on these platforms," he says.

"It makes buying tickets as seamless as possible."

And that is clearly where the industry is heading, racing to keep up with technological advances and the ever-changing needs of the consumer. ■



Mark Gasson



Wayne Munday



Joel Crouch

# We play everywhere

## Any event. Any size.



White label  
box offices



RFID  
cashless



Access  
control



Event  
pre-sale



Payment  
plan



Rep sales  
& more

**eventgenius**  
a ticketarena company

eventgenius.io | ticketarena.co.uk

