



PRESS RELEASE

Justice Department Sues Live Nation-Ticketmaster for Monopolizing Markets Across the Live Concert Industry

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For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

Live Nation-Ticketmaster's Exclusionary Conduct and Dominance Across the Live Concert Ecosystem Harms Fans, Innovation, Artists, and Venues

The Justice Department, along with 30 state and district attorneys general, filed a civil antitrust lawsuit against Live Nation Entertainment Inc. and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Ticketmaster LLC (Live Nation-Ticketmaster) for monopolization and other unlawful conduct that thwarts competition in markets across the live entertainment industry. The lawsuit, which includes a request for structural relief, seeks to restore competition in the live concert industry, provide better choices at lower prices for fans, and open venue doors for working musicians and other performance artists.

The complaint, filed today in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, alleges that Live Nation-Ticketmaster unlawfully exercises its monopoly power in violation of Section 2 of the Sherman Act. As a result of its conduct, music fans in the United States are deprived of ticketing innovation and forced to use outdated technology while paying more for tickets than fans in other countries. At the same time, Live Nation-Ticketmaster exercises its power over performers, venues, and independent promoters in ways that harm competition. Live Nation-Ticketmaster also imposes barriers to competition that limit the entry and expansion of its rivals.

"We allege that Live Nation relies on unlawful, anticompetitive conduct to exercise its monopolistic control over the live events industry in the United States at the cost of fans, artists, smaller promoters, and venue operators," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. "The result is that fans pay more in fees, artists have fewer opportunities to play concerts, smaller promoters get squeezed out, and venues have fewer real choices for ticketing services. It is time to break up Live Nation-Ticketmaster."

"Today's announcement reflects the latest efforts by the Justice Department to combat corporate misconduct," said Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco. "Our fight against corporate wrongdoing includes an intense focus on anticompetitive conduct — which disadvantages consumers, workers, and businesses of all kinds. Today's complaint alleges that Live Nation-Ticketmaster have engaged in anticompetitive conduct to cement their dominance of the live concert market and act as the gatekeeper for an entire industry. Today's action is a step forward in making this era of

live music more accessible for the fans, the artists, and the industry that supports them.”

“The Department is committed to competition throughout the economy, including in live music,” said Acting Associate Attorney General Benjamin C. Mizer. “As our complaint alleges, Live Nation-Ticketmaster monopolizes the markets for concerts and other live events at the expense of fans, venues, and artists across the country. The Department is proud to bring this case to restore competition to this industry.”

“The live music industry in America is broken because Live Nation-Ticketmaster has an illegal monopoly,” said Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter of the Justice Department’s Antitrust Division. “Our antitrust lawsuit seeks to break up Live Nation-Ticketmaster’s monopoly and restore competition for the benefit of fans and artists.”

According to the complaint, Live Nation-Ticketmaster has unlawfully maintained monopolies in several concert promotions and primary ticketing markets and engaged in other exclusionary conduct affecting live concert venues, including arenas and amphitheaters. The complaint further alleges that Live Nation-Ticketmaster’s exclusionary practices fortify and protect what it refers to as its “flywheel.” The flywheel is Live Nation-Ticketmaster’s self-reinforcing business model that captures fees and revenue from concert fans and sponsorship, uses that revenue to lock up artists to exclusive promotion deals, and then uses its powerful cache of live content to sign venues into long term exclusive ticketing deals, thereby starting the cycle all over again. Live Nation-Ticketmaster’s anticompetitive conduct creates even more barriers for rivals to compete on the merits. Specifically, Live Nation-Ticketmaster engaged in a variety of tactics to eliminate competition and monopolize markets:

- **Relationship with Oak View Group:** Live Nation-Ticketmaster exploits its longtime relationship with Oak View Group, a potential competitor-turned-partner that has described itself as a “hammer” and “protect[or]” for Live Nation. In recent years, Oak View Group has avoided bidding against Live Nation for artist talent and influenced venues to sign exclusive agreements with Ticketmaster. For example, Live Nation has scolded Oak View Group multiple times for trying to compete. In one instance, Live Nation asked, “who would be so stupid to . . . play into [an artist agent’s] arms,” and on another occasion, Live Nation stated, “let’s make sure we don’t let [the artist agency] now start playing us off.”
- **Retaliating Against Potential Entrants:** Live Nation-Ticketmaster successfully threatened financial retaliation against a firm unless it stopped one of its subsidiaries from competing to gain a foothold in the U.S. concert promotions market.
- **Threatening and Retaliating Against Venues that Work with Rivals:** Live Nation-Ticketmaster’s power in concert promotions means that every live concert venue knows choosing another promoter or ticketer comes with a risk of drawing an adverse reaction from Live Nation-Ticketmaster that would result in losing concerts, revenue, and fans.
- **Locking Out Competition with Exclusionary Contracts:** Live Nation-Ticketmaster locks concert venues into long-term exclusive contracts so that venues cannot consider or choose rival ticketers or switch to better or more cost-effective ticketing technology. These contracts allow Live Nation-Ticketmaster to reduce competitive pressure to improve its own ticketing technology and customer service.
- **Blocking Venues from Using Multiple Ticketers:** Live Nation-Ticketmaster’s conduct and exclusive contracts prevent new and different promotions and ticketing competitors and business models from emerging. They block venues from being able to use multiple ticketers, who would compete by offering the best mix of prices, fees, quality, and innovation to fans.
- **Restricting Artists’ Access to Venues:** Live Nation-Ticketmaster has increasingly gained control of key venues, including amphitheaters, through acquisitions, partnerships, and agreements. Live Nation-Ticketmaster restricts artists’ use of those venues unless those artists also agree to use their promotion services.
- **Acquiring Competitors and Competitive Threats:** Live Nation-Ticketmaster strategically acquired a number of smaller and regional promoters that it had internally identified as threats. This has undermined competition and impacted artist compensation.

Live Nation Entertainment Inc. is a Delaware corporation headquartered in Beverly Hills, California. It describes itself as the “largest live entertainment company in the world,” the “largest producer of live music concerts in the world,”

and “the world’s leading live entertainment ticketing sales and marketing company.” Live Nation also owns or controls more than 265 concert venues in North America, including more than 60 of the top 100 amphitheaters in the United States. It generates over \$22 billion globally in annual revenue from three business segments: concerts (e.g., promotions, venue management, and music festival production), ticketing (e.g., Ticketmaster business), and sponsorship and advertising.

Ticketmaster LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Live Nation. It is a Virginia limited liability company with headquarters in Beverly Hills. Ticketmaster sells concert tickets to fans when those tickets first go on sale and operates resale platforms that enable purchasers to resell those tickets at a later time. Ticketmaster is by far the largest concert ticketing company in the United States, multiple times the size of its closest competitor.

[View the complaint.](#)

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Thank you, Attorney General Garland and Deputy Attorney General Monaco.

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