


# DRIVING BEAT

THE PACIFIC  
NORTHWEST'S  
UNIQUE SCENE  
CONTINUES TO  
EVOLVE







**T**HE PACIFIC NORTHWEST live event industry keeps growing in size and shape. It's a region where fans will drive hours to see their favorite artist, often through the kind of weather that would prompt live-event goers from other regions to stay home.

Pacific Northwest venues had many triumphs in 2018: Spokane (Wash.) Arena renovated its performing arts center and got funding for a new sports complex. Abbotsford Centre sold 20,000-plus more tickets. Tacoma Dome got its first makeover in 35 years. Portland's Roseland Theater and McMenamins Edgefield Amphitheater reported more tickets sold and more shows.

That said, the venue grosses on our Top Stops charts from the region were actually down 16 percent from the previous year, going from roughly \$197 million to about \$165 million. Part of the downturn can be explained by Rogers Arena in Vancouver, B.C., reporting 20 fewer bookings in 2018. Also, Seattle's KeyArena closed in October for a massive overhaul to accommodate an NHL expansion team. The arena will reopen in 2021.

Other challenges included a severe labor shortage, the region's notorious weather and, in one high-profile case, development. Reports in the summer indicated Seattle music club the Showbox would be replaced by an apartment tower, but the news was met with resistance and the issue is now in court.

The venue operators *VenuesNow* spoke with, however thought 2018 was a good year for live entertainment. They expressed high hopes for 2019, with big names headed out of the road like Ariana Grande, Ed Sheeran and Elton John; a good economy; and venue makeovers wowing the fans.

Tacoma Dome was closed for four months in 2018 for renovations but reported strong results.



# THE CIRCUIT

WE CHECKED IN WITH  
EXECUTIVES FROM SOME  
OF THE VENUES THAT  
APPEAR ON THE  
REGIONAL TOP STOPS  
CHART AND ASKED  
HOW THEIR YEAR HAD  
GONE. HERE'S WHAT  
THEY TOLD US.

## ROSE QUARTER (MODA CENTER, VETERANS MEMORIAL COLISEUM, THEATER OF THE CLOUDS), PORTLAND



**Amanda Mann,**  
vice  
president  
and  
general  
manager

### How did you do in 2018?

We had a phenomenal year and appreciate the recognition. That said between the two venues on the Rose Quarter campus, we had 50-plus shows in our last fiscal year, a record high.

### Big shows

Florence + the Machine, Logic, Luke Bryant.

### Changes

We built out a new Rip City Clothing Co. stand. We brought on a new local concession partner, Tamale Boy, as well as expanded the presence of Cha Cha Cha and Ruby Jewel. We created new concepts Bap and

Noodle, The Speck, Whole Sum and Low Bar. We activated seat service on the club level. We installed portable vehicle intrusion barriers and planters. We're currently working through bids on new access control software and camera systems and additional cameras.

Joining were Richard Fedesco assistant general manager; Aaron Shapiro, director of guest experience; Calvin Brennan, guest experience manager; Dan Nielsen, director of security; and Cody Tassin, security and safety manager. In addition to these new hires, we promoted Alli Stangel to senior manager of event services; Justin Pierson to event manager; and Tyrone Stillwell and Colin Chiles to ESS supervisors.

We established a part-time ambassador program and it's helped increase part-time retention by 10 percent.

## SPOKANE ARENA AND FIRST INTERSTATE CENTER FOR THE ARTS, SPOKANE, WASH. Stephanie Curran, CEO of Spokane Public Facilities District

### How did you do in 2018?

We're going to end up strong.

### Big shows

We just had Metallica in the arena, and we broke every record for attendance and per caps. Productions "Waitress" and "Finding Neverland" were big in the PAC.

### Changes

We renovated our First Interstate Center for the Arts performing arts center. We added new seating and made it more ADA-friendly. We added a quick-fire pizza concept, an Asian stand and a specialty grilled cheese stand. On the way is a new sport complex with a 200-meter, six-lane track.

### What went right

The new food concepts have worked great and people now come here to eat instead of eating

before they arrive. The renovations have brought a tremendous amount of economic impact to the community.

### What went wrong

The raise in the minimum wage in Washington has impacted us and there is a labor shortage. Construction costs are higher — for instance, Amazon just built a fulfillment center here and they bought up all the concrete in the area and the price of what concrete was left was higher.

## MCMENAMINS EDGEFIELD AMPHITHEATER, TROUTDALE, ORE.

Jimi Brion, director of



entertainment  
and  
venue  
program-  
ming

### How did you do in 2018?

We shot up the chart this year mainly because we put on a lot more shows in 2018 — 27 more. Bands playing two nights helped.

### Big shows

Avett Brothers; Ween; the Decemberists; Portugal. The Man.

### Changes

We spruced up our ADA area.

## ROSELAND THEATER, PORTLAND Dave Leiken, owner and president

### How did you do in 2018?

We have done better year-over-year for the past 10 years, and this year was no exception. We sold over 175,000 tickets and did 190 shows.

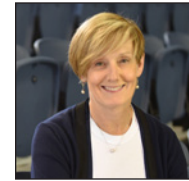
### Big shows:

Snarky Puppy, Miguel, Stone Temple Pilots, Flatbush Zombies, Social Distortion, Garbage.

### Changes

New sound system and upgraded lighting.

## TACOMA DOME, TACOMA, WASH.



**Kim Bedier,**  
director  
for  
Tacoma  
Venues &  
Events

### How did you do in 2018?

Considering we were closed almost four months this year for renovations, the venue is doing great. We're up in revenues about 8 percent. We were ranked No. 28 worldwide and No. 12 in the U.S. in the midyear *Pollstar* rankings.

### Big shows

Katy Perry, Miranda Lambert, Jeff Dunham, Bass Academy, Chris Young, Maroon 5 and Shania Twain. This year's Tacoma Guitar Festival, an annual self-promoted event in April, was the biggest ever. The 2019 version is selling out even faster. Post-reopening, Drake sold 20,000 tickets, Joe Walsh's VetAid raised more than \$1.2 million, and Eddie Vedder dropped by to record "Bathroom Jams" with Mike Campbell and Crowded House's Neil Finn in our new artist quarters.

### Changes

We spent \$31 million to renovate the seating, concessions, artist quarters, restrooms and loading docks.

Aramark took over this fall as concession operator and all the stands have been overhauled with a new look, branding, digital menu boards and point-of-sale system.

A new website was launched to coincide with the reopening.

### What went right

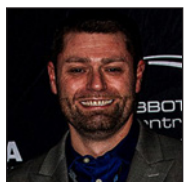
Renovations are ongoing and going great. The new seats have been well received, the new

restrooms are spacious, the artist quarters have been busy and per caps are up.

#### What went wrong

Justin Timberlake took ill and had to postpone his two November shows to February.

#### ABBOTSFORD CENTRE, ABBOTSFORD, BRITISH COLUMBIA



**Andrew Nash,**  
general  
manager

#### How did you do in 2018?

There was strength in our market. We were up in 2018 in gross, up 30,000 people — mostly because we did more shows.

#### Big shows

Joe Rogan sold the most tickets ever for a show here this year. Eight performances of Cirque Du Soleil broke their old record for

a multiday run. The Thank You Canada Tour featuring the Steve Miller Band and Peter Dinklage was huge. Shows by John Mellencamp, Santana, WWE and Jeff Dunham all outperformed.

#### Changes

We rebranded the concession areas and bought new seat covers. We also created two new positions, guest experiences coordinator and operations/F&B manager.

#### What went right

Our partnerships and relationships, and our diverse event calendar.

#### What went wrong

There was an extreme labor shortage this year in the area. When the Thank You Canada Tour came to rehearse, their load-in was the same day as Beyoncé and Journey at competing venues. We had to wait for a load-in crew to get cut from B.C. Place in Vancouver and come up here. We wound up six hours off schedule. ▣

Florence + the Machine was part of the lineup at Portland's Moda Center.



# Thank you!

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## Q&A

# JEFF TRISLER, PRESIDENT OF LIVE NATION NORTHWEST



**J**EFF TRISLER HAS been programming the Pacific Northwest for the last 30 years; he's been doing it for Live Nation shows for the last 11 years. *VenuesNow* spoke with the veteran promoter about what's driving the market.

### What makes the Pacific Northwest unique?

Venues aren't all that far apart, even from state to state. Seattle is in one direction, Bend (Oregon) in another, are both three-hour drives from Portland. Vancouver, Wash., and Vancouver, B.C., are one-hour drives from Seattle. Tacoma and Olympia are all a stone's throw from one another. That means bands can play one or the other and skip over a whole state if they only have room for one or two Pacific Northwest slots available. A lot of shows sell out here because fans will travel from one state to another to see the band if the band isn't coming to their city.

### The Pacific Northwest has a lot of festivals. Why is the ground so fertile there?

Our summer months are glorious, and after being trapped inside or on rainy, icy roads, the people want to get out. Amphitheaters, like our Gorge Amphitheatre, do extremely well here during the spring and summer months because of this phenomenon.

### Which genres work best in the Pacific Northwest?

Rock, country and hip-hop all do well here. We're developing a market for electronic dance music. And classical music always seems to find an audience here.

### What's unique about programming the region?

When you look on the map, I like to say, "We're on the road to nowhere." That means we must have a

strong market to attract acts to come here. Acts need to play the right room to make it work.

### Does the infamous Pacific Northwest weather play a part?

Absolutely. The weather plays a huge part when programming events. It often rains or snows for around 150 days a year. We really come alive in the spring and summer.


### Which factors affected the region this year?

Definitely KeyArena closing for 2½ years for renovations is already having a huge impact on the region. Things are getting shook up. Shows that would have played there are going to play in other venues, and you never know what will happen. And then when KeyArena does open back up, the landscape will shift again because they are adding in a lot more seats and competing with venues they didn't vie with before.

### Why is the region so great for live entertainment?

Seattle and Portland are two of the fast-growing markets in the country. There's a lot of corporate strength here, like Amazon and Microsoft, and the kind of person who works at a tech company is a prime live-event customer.

### Where do you see the region in five years?

The region just keeps spreading out and people are pouring in. It's not projected to slow down. We get a lot of people frustrated with bigger cities like Los Angeles or New York City moving here and they're bringing their love of live entertainment with them. Live Nation and other companies are investing here, and they would not be if they didn't think they'd do really well here. 

Shirley Manson of Garbage on stage at Portland's Roseland Theater.



# TOPSTOPS PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Ranked by tickets sold. Based on data from concerts and events in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Alberta, British Columbia Nov. 1, 2017-Oct. 31, 2018, as reported to Pollstar. Data updated as of Nov. 26.

RANK	VENUE	TICKETS SOLD	CAPACITY	GROSS	SHOWS
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## MORE THAN 15,000 CAPACITY

1	Moda Center, Portland	289,930	20,000	\$24,694,656	36
2	Rogers Arena, Vancouver, B.C.	280,282	20,763	\$22,752,760	23
3	Tacoma (Wash.) Dome	232,571	22,500	\$9,913,883	37
4	CenturyLink Field, Seattle	201,519	69,000	\$22,783,038	4
5	KeyArena, Seattle	199,040	15,500	\$14,543,924	21

## 10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

1	Spokane (Wash.) Arena	80,412	12,500	\$5,516,603	18
2	Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Portland	70,209	12,500	\$4,940,730	11
3	Matthew Knight Arena, Eugene, Ore.	57,002	12,500	\$4,224,008	9
4	Ford Idaho Center Arena, Nampa	41,487	12,500	\$3,368,017	5
5	Ford Idaho Center Amphitheater, Nampa	39,482	11,000	\$1,760,310	7

## 5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

1	Abbotsford (B.C.) Centre	110,655	7,888	\$5,472,989	29
2	Accesso ShoWare Center, Kent, Wash.	79,357	7,800	\$4,211,763	23
3	WaMu Theater, Seattle	77,544	10,000	\$3,279,937	12
4	Les Schwab Amphitheater, Bend, Ore.	57,807	8,000	\$3,782,305	16
5	Enmax Centre, Lethbridge, Alberta	28,437	6,525	\$1,425,319	12

## 2,001-5,000 CAPACITY

1	McMenamins Edgefield Amphitheater, Troutdale, Ore.	117,830	5,000	\$6,681,180	27
2	Paramount Theatre, Seattle	116,539	2,807	\$7,039,042	46
3	Velma V. Morrison Center for the Performing Arts, Boise, Idaho	105,183	2,037	\$5,611,157	79
4	Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium, Edmonton, Alberta	69,227	2,514	\$3,516,776	37
5	KettleHouse Amphitheater, Bonner, Mon.	58,535	4,500	\$2,516,570	19

## 2,000 OR LESS CAPACITY

1	Roseland Theater, Portland	148,266	1,410	\$4,368,324	154
2	Moore Theatre, Seattle	116,412	1,804	\$5,239,011	89
3	The Neptune, Seattle	92,105	1,000	\$2,460,889	123
4	McMenamins Crystal Ballroom, Portland	85,146	1,500	\$2,736,862	67
5	Wonder Ballroom, Portland	78,172	800	\$1,733,613	122

Note: Capacity shown is legal capacity listed in Pollstar database. Compiled by teamboxoffice@pollstar.com.



SPOTLIGHT

# Scene: Portland

## A LOCAL EXPERT TELLS US WHAT'S UP IN ROSE CITY

**P**ORTLAND'S KELLER AUDITORIUM got "Hamilton" this year, so it's no wonder Executive Director Robyn Williams had a great 2018. Williams has been active in the Portland live events space for over 18 years. She's also a former IAVM chairman and a Tony voter.

*VenuesNow* spoke with the queen of the Portland venue scene about the state of the live event space in one of the Pacific Northwest's shining-star cities.

### Tell us about the Portland venue scene.

From the entertainment side of things Portland is hopping. It's a solid arts town. It's a good sports town. It has a really good music scene from small indie clubs all the way up to the Moda Center.

### How are ticket sales?

What we're seeing is that people



**ROBYN WILLIAMS**  
Executive director,  
Portland's Centers  
for the Arts

Recent Keller Auditorium shows include Death Cab for Cutie (Ben Gibbard, top right) and David Byrne.

are buying tickets; shows are selling very well, and I've been

hearing about a lot of sellouts all over town. People want to get out, be entertained, and see a little bit of everything.

### Tell us about a typical Portland live eventgoer.


We're pretty open-minded, on the left-hand side of politics, and a town that likes a good protest. People here are pretty invested in what's going on locally. We are filled with both hipsters and

families.

### How competitive is the landscape from a venue perspective?

It's not that bad because we're not a city with three or four arenas and multiple midlevel venues. We've got a room for every act, from little clubs to our arena, but there's not that many venues like Seattle might have. Here, if you're an arena act, there's only one arena in town. If you want 3,000 seats, right now we're that venue. Because of the lack of real competition, the venues here all work together. We're a cozy bunch.

### What's on the horizon for Portland?

What's keeping me up at night is a new House of Blues that will open soon. Live Nation is building a House of Blues in a mall in a space that was a Nordstrom. I'm keeping my eye on it. I don't know if Live Nation intends to be the sole booker of the hall or if they are going to open it up. I'm anxious to know the configuration. The more it looks like us, the more nervous I will be. 

SPOTLIGHT

COURTESY PORTLAND'S CENTERS FOR THE ARTS; GETTY IMAGES (X2)

