

# MID-ATLANTIC

## MARKETS BIG TO SMALL REPORT A CONCERT YEAR TO REMEMBER

BY ROBERT GRAY

BIG NAMES packed houses both big and small across the Mid-Atlantic. Venue executives from Charm City up the coast to the Big Apple and west to the Steel City all reported big years thanks to a booming economy, continued interest in live events, and some marquee artists out on tour.

Bold-face names including Elton John and Taylor Swift sold out shows and boosted the bottom line while patrons paid up for curated food and beverage options.

All of the operators from the World's Most Famous Arena to one of the area's newest venues say the good times should keep rolling for the next year, lifting all boats in their markets from ballet to sports to arena concerts.

One trend to keep an eye on: Country is trending and just in time, as Garth Brooks is hitting the road in this area during May.

Northwell Health  
at Jones Beach  
Theater in Wantagh, N.Y.



**systems**

**go!**

**SPOTLIGHT**

# THE CIRCUIT



MSG's Darren Pfeffer said the New York City arena had its busiest concert year ever.

## BIG BUSINESS AND SOME BIG CHANGES ACROSS THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION

### MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK CITY

**Darren Pfeffer, executive vice president, MSG Live**

#### How did you do over the past year?

2018 was the busiest concert year to date at MSG with more than 98 concerts and entertainment events. We're confident that the demand for the one-of-a-kind events that only MSG can provide will continue to grow in 2019. Billy Joel currently holds the records for most consecutive shows by a single artist (63) and most lifetime shows (109).

#### Big shows

Four Elton John shows as part of his multiyear farewell tour,

with two more shows in March 2019; Paul Simon's farewell tour; Dave Matthews Band's return to The Garden for the first time since 2010; and Phish's annual New Year's Eve run, in addition to performances by Travis Scott, Childish Gambino, Logic, Drake and Migos, and Pink. Additionally, an overwhelming success has been Billy Joel's residency at MSG.

#### Changes

We've made some exciting changes to Madison Square Garden over the past year, including the opening of The Loft, a 48-person super-suite located on the eighth floor of The Garden with superior sightlines for both concerts and sporting events. With the addition of more arena entrances and exits, we continue to ensure smooth and timely ingress and egress experiences for our guests. On the technological front, we added 50 automat-

ed lights along the iconic ceiling of Madison Square Garden, to the 100 that had been previously installed. The lights have been incorporated into the lighting designs for shows such as Billy Joel and Phish.

#### What went right

We've also gotten really creative with our marketing and look at ourselves as an extension of the tour and full operation. One point of this is providing access to our esteemed venues to create

exclusive artist social content that speaks directly to their fan base as we did recently with Jennifer Lopez to promote her two upcoming sold-out shows as well as Anderson .Paak.

#### What went wrong

The inclement weather during New York winters can be tricky. One of the 2018 Justin Timberlake shows at MSG was postponed due to a snowstorm, but we were able to rebook for his birthday in January 2019, which made for an extra-special night for both the fans and the artist.

### HEINZ FIELD, PITTSBURGH

**Jimmie Sacco, vice president of stadium operations and management, PSSI/Pittsburgh Steelers**



#### How did you do over the past year?

2018 was a great year in Pittsburgh

and the tri-state area. We had three major shows, all filled to capacity, for three top artists. It was a really great year (for the entire market), a wide variety of all genres, well supported, and

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The Pittsburgh Steelers' Heinz Field played host to major concerts.





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# TOPSTOPS MID-ATLANTIC

Ranked by tickets sold. Based on data from concerts and events in Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania March 1, 2018-Feb. 28, 2019, as reported to Pollstar. Data updated as of April 1.

RANK	VENUE	TICKETS SOLD	CAPACITY	GROSS	SHOWS
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## MORE THAN 30,000 CAPACITY

1	MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford, N.J.	521,215	82,500	\$61,829,568	10
2	Lincoln Financial Field, Philadelphia	271,778	69,328	\$30,207,264	5
3	FedExField, Landover, Md.	177,636	85,000	\$22,833,581	4
4	Heinz Field, Pittsburgh	147,738	65,000	\$13,511,354	3
5	Citi Field, New York	122,285	42,500	\$9,346,687	4

## 15,001-30,000 CAPACITY

1	Madison Square Garden, New York	1,415,481	20,789	\$168,309,209	93
2	Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia	798,788	21,000	\$68,735,825	74
3	Capital One Arena, Washington, D.C.	753,724	20,500	\$57,280,839	73
4	Barclays Center, Brooklyn, N.Y.	688,039	19,000	\$56,389,664	70
5	Prudential Center, Newark, N.J.	579,986	17,500	\$55,466,877	63

## 10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

1	NYCB Live: Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, N.Y.	490,850	14,975	\$28,827,944	145
2	Northwell Health at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, N.Y.	259,897	13,855	\$12,762,234	27
3	Royal Farms Arena, Baltimore	149,108	14,400	\$11,417,730	19
4	Boardwalk Hall, Atlantic City, N.J.	96,860	14,770	\$7,467,504	19
5	Bryce Jordan Center, University Park, Pa.	65,818	15,000	\$4,817,180	8

## 5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

1	The Anthem, Washington, D.C.	377,337	6,000	\$21,921,395	89
2	Hulu Theater at Madison Square Garden, New York	239,424	5,600	\$17,945,685	65
3	Radio City Music Hall, New York	228,719	6,013	\$23,129,385	42
4	PPL Center, Allentown, Pa.	148,958	10,000	\$9,492,942	43
5	Festival Pier, Philadelphia	93,274	7,500	\$3,655,821	15

## 2,001-5,000 CAPACITY

1	Beacon Theatre, New York	314,224	2,829	\$23,073,921	126
2	Prudential Hall, Newark, N.J.	222,019	2,868	\$15,625,664	115
3	Theater at MGM National Harbor, Oxon Hill, Md.	211,685	3,994	\$19,879,832	90
4	Academy of Music, Philadelphia	206,637	2,650	\$17,257,884	107
5	Stage AE, Pittsburgh	142,159	2,300	\$4,756,659	81

## 2,000 OR LESS CAPACITY

1	9:30 Club, Washington, D.C.	239,130	1,200	\$6,796,581	267
2	Count Basie Center for the Arts, Red Bank, N.J.	202,943	1,568	\$10,281,172	188
3	Mayo Performing Arts Center, Morristown, N.J.	184,263	1,319	\$10,388,967	197
4	The Paramount, Huntington, N.Y.	180,520	1,573	\$7,521,191	171
5	Walter Kerr Theatre, New York	144,073	975	\$73,278,393	152

# THE CIRCUIT

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well attended. We're in our 19th year and we have resurrected the whole stadium show, the revitalization of NFL stadiums to accommodate these performances.

## Big shows

Luke Bryan, Kenny Chesney, Taylor Swift.

## Changes

Every year we add something to the building. We see what fans want, they want the entertainer on stage, but they also want to come here and have their favorite food and beverage. But we didn't have any major changes.

## What went right

We were on top of our game, we accommodated the three major performances and delivered a fan-friendly atmosphere for the summer leading up to football. (The Steelers' season) didn't finish the way we wanted, but we're looking forward to 2019.

## What went wrong

Ed Sheeran would've been our fourth big show, but because of scheduling conflicts it went to PNC Park instead of playing here. ... Hopefully we'll get him next time at Heinz Field.

**PPL CENTER, ALLENTOWN, PA.**  
**Gunnar Fox, vice president and general manager, PPL Center, for Spectra**



**How did you do over the past year?**

I think it's been great. The redevelopment in

downtown Allentown is astronomical. The entire landscape has changed. Over the past year it's been outstanding. 180 events with more than 550,000 people coming to downtown Allentown. It's high-profile

sporting events and the biggest names in entertainment. A (Philadelphia) Flyers preseason game, the second year of NCAA men's ice hockey regionals. The winner of that regional went to Frozen Four, the University of Minnesota-Duluth. I see us still on the upswing.

## Big shows

Elton John kicked off his farewell tour here. It was the quickest sellout and highest-grossing show that we've had. We had Bon Jovi, Rod Stewart, James Taylor (and) Kelly Clarkson, and Ozzy kicked off his tour here as well.

## Changes

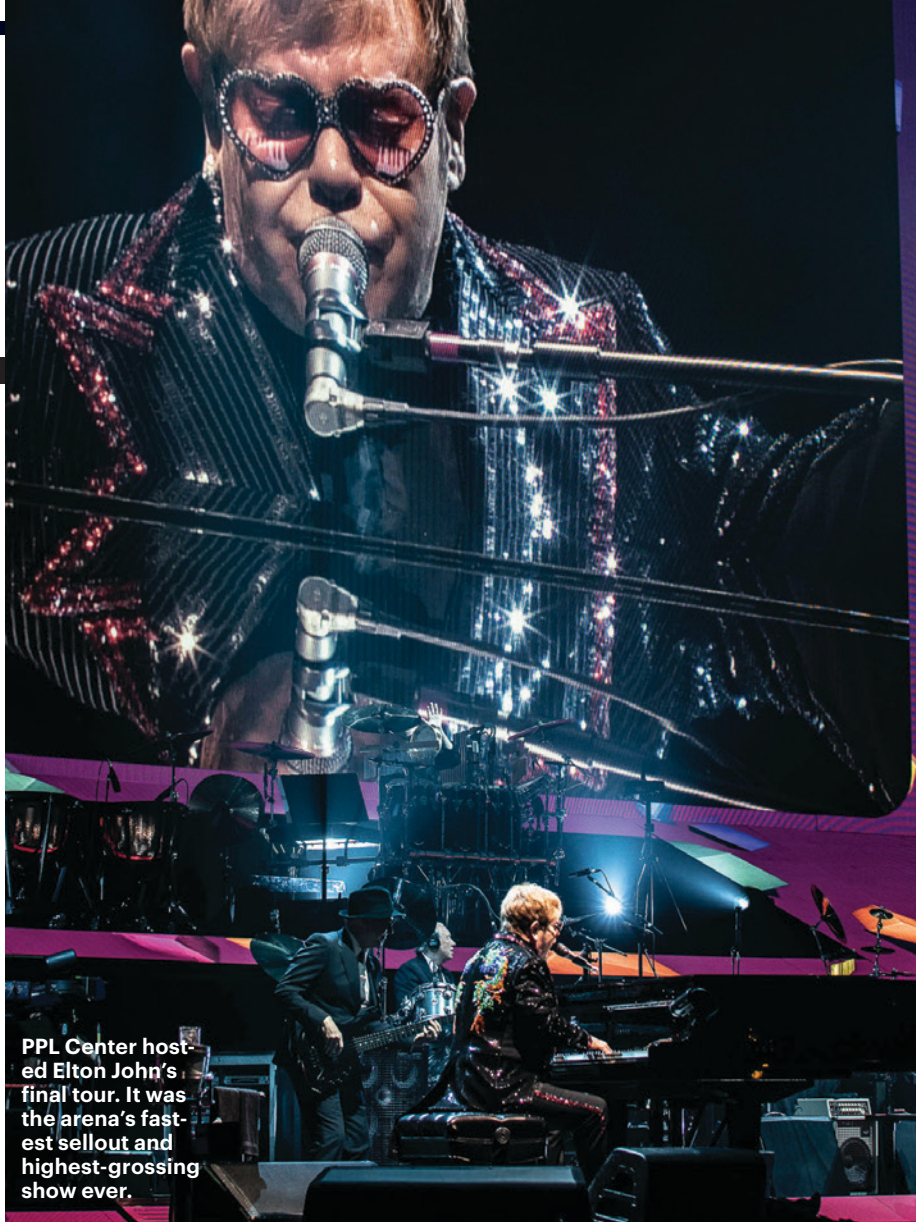
We're looking at ways to improve the building. We're constantly looking at tweaks to make things flow better. Our venue is unique in that we have a hotel attached and an office building attached on the other side with our partner, Lehigh Valley Medical Group, in it.

## What went right

Everything! It was a great year, it's a great time to be in this business. I see things getting better, I don't see them slowing down. There are more artists touring and we're continuing to see that. We have a ton of holds coming up.

## What went wrong

I wish I had four Elton John (shows) instead of one. Our hockey team (the Lehigh Valley Phantoms of the American Hockey League) didn't make the playoffs, so our season is over. We had a couple days of (bad) weather with hockey but didn't cancel any events.



PPL Center hosted Elton John's final tour. It was the arena's fastest sellout and highest-grossing show ever.

**NORTHWELL HEALTH AT JONES BEACH THEATER, WANTAGH, N.Y.**

**Adam Citron, general manager**



**How did you do over the past year?**

The 2018 season was very rewarding. At Jones

Beach, we were proud to host hundreds of thousands of guests who were able to experience world-class entertainment. We introduced enhanced food and beverage offerings, venue amenities and a new guest service culture.

## Big shows

Jimmy Buffett, Foo Fighters, Dave Matthews Band, Ozzy Osbourne, Lady Antebellum and Darius Rucker, Warped Tour.

## Changes

This year we spotlighted alternative ticket delivery options for guests. Like airlines offering mobile boarding passes, fans can opt for a digital ticket sent straight to their phones. This seems to have resonated with fans looking for an alternative to the conventional paper ticket.

## What went right

We experienced an increase in on-site spending. I am also proud of strides we've made in improving our venue sustainability. We earned the 2018 Food Recovery Challenge Award from the Environmental Protection Agency.

## What went wrong

Jones Beach is unique with the property residing right on the water, making ever-changing weather conditions even more challenging. ▣