

Concert business on upswing after lackluster 2010

By Steve Jones, USA Today

In the first six months of 2011, total grosses for the top 100 North American tours was \$1.12 billion. That's up \$157 million or 16.2% over the same period last year, according to Pollstar, which tracks the live music industry. The total number of tickets sold was 16.7 million, a 5.3 percent increase, but surprisingly, the average ticket price was up 10.2 percent, or \$6.25, to a record \$67.02.

Through the end of June, U2's 360 tour was the runaway top moneymaker, raking in \$85.8 million and selling 979,000 tickets to 14 North American stadium shows with an average gross of \$7.8 million.

Pollstar editor Gary Bongiovanni says artists and promoters have helped the upturn by taking a more conservative approach in terms of venue size, frequency of return to certain markets and number of markets played. He says the higher prices weren't expected coming off a year with lower grosses and ticket sales. But many of this year's shows offer audiences good value for their dollars.

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