

MAKE MUSIC

JUNE 21



Exuberant overkill... more than 1,000 concerts in a single eleven-hour day.

- **New York Magazine**

Make Music New York is **one of the best things** that have happened to New York musical life in the past decade.

- **Alex Ross (The New Yorker)**

The day literally **exploded** with live music, it could be heard emanating from each and every street corner.

- **Spin Magazine**

Hundreds of outdoor performances crisscrossing the five boroughs, putting on stage in one music-packed day the city's rich mixture of cultures and tastes.

- **New York Times**

A **sonic street party** thrown on a totally outsize scale.

- **National Public Radio**



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It all started 44 years ago in France.

In 1982, the French Ministry of Culture dreamed up an idea for a new kind of musical holiday. They imagined a day where free music would be everywhere, all around each city: street corners, parks, rooftops, gardens, and store fronts.

And, unlike a typical music festival, anyone and everyone would be invited to join and play music, or host performances. The event would take place on the summer solstice, June 21, and would be called Fête de la Musique. (In French, the name means both “festival of music” and “make music”.)

Amazingly enough, this dream has come true. The Fête has turned into a true national holiday: the country shuts down on the summer solstice and musicians take over. Almost 11% of French people (7 million people) have played an instrument or sung in public for the Fête de la Musique, and 64% of the country (43 million people) comes out each year to listen.

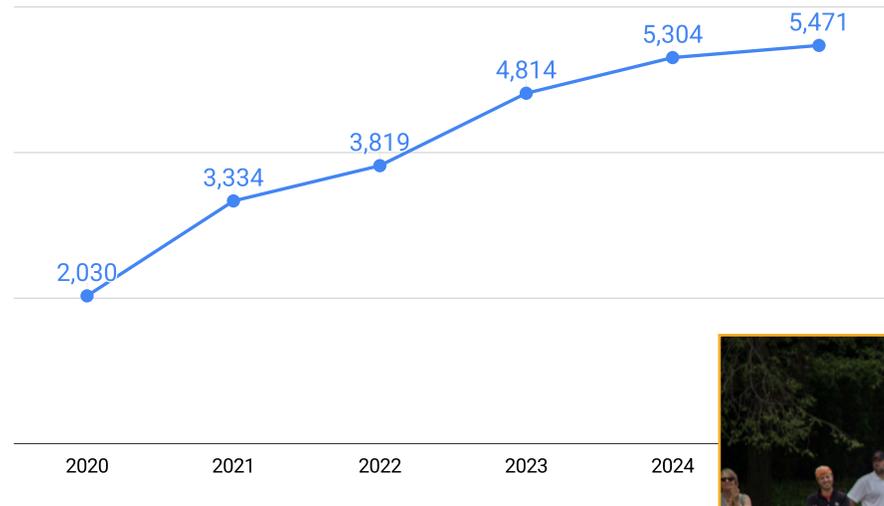
Four decades later, the holiday has spread throughout the world and is now celebrated in more than 2,000 global cities.



Fête de la
MUSIQUE
21 JUIN



of Make Music Day events in the US, 2020 - 2025



Make Music in the U.S.

Nineteen years ago, the *Fête de la Musique* crossed the Atlantic with the debut of Make Music New York.

Starting as a grassroots initiative by a team of volunteers, the event quickly became a critical and popular success. Today, thousands of New York musicians perform in hundreds of free, outdoor concerts each June 21, earning praise for their “inspiring” (*New York Times*) and “thrilling” (*New Yorker*) performances.

Over the last decade, cities across the country have launched their own Make Music celebrations on June 21, making this musical holiday a truly national phenomenon.

On June 21, 2025, **147 U.S. cities** organized **5,471 free concerts**, attended by **over 500,000 music fans**.

Concerts took place on street corners, parking lots, rooftops, and porches, performed by every imaginable kind of musician, from mariachi bands to jazz combos to chamber ensembles – the only requirement being that each event is free and open to the public.



Télérama

Fête de la musique : aux États-Unis, un succès fou qui séduit au-delà des grandes villes

© 3 minutes à lire Article réservé aux abonnés

Alexis Buisson
Publié le 21/06/22



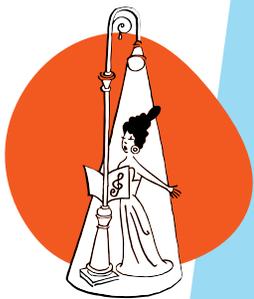
Le Point

Comment New York a importé notre Fête de la musique...

La Fête de la musique fête ses 40 ans. L'événement dépasse aujourd'hui les frontières de l'Hexagone, en partie grâce à Aaron Friedman avec le Make Music Day.

Par Anne-Sophie Jahn

Publié le 21/06/2022 à 13h00



Behind the Scenes: the Make Music Alliance



Each Make Music chapter is independently organized. Often it's a local community group, music institution, or civic leader who champions the musical holiday in their hometown.

What ties everything together is the nonprofit Make Music Alliance.

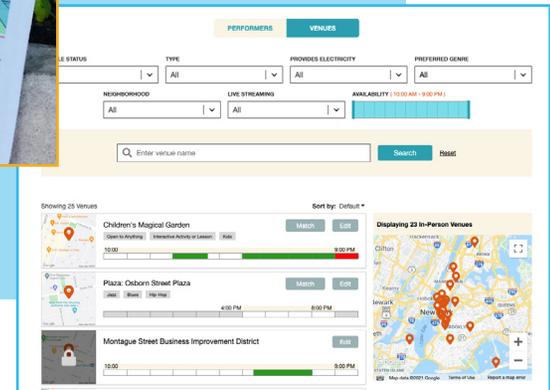
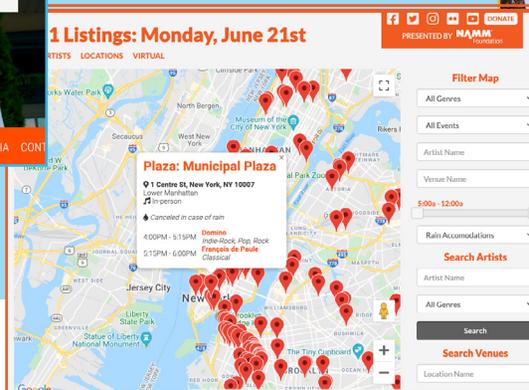
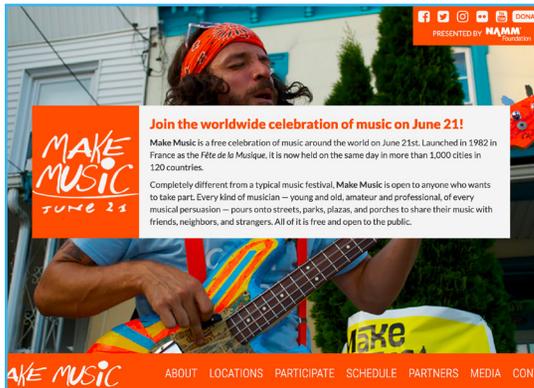
When musicians and locations join Make Music, they go to their local city's website and register using customized matchmaking software, provided by the Alliance to each member city.

Using these tools, any musician can sign up, describe their music, and request performance space; stores, buildings, gardens, and other locations register to host these musicians, providing electricity, equipment, and promotion. Like an internet dating site, musicians and venues search through the listings to find each other and make arrangements for June 21 concerts.

The software then creates an interactive map with searchable listings and dynamically generated digital marketing materials for each city, displayed on each local site.

The Alliance also brokers sponsorship arrangements with national partners – such as Alfred, Elixir Strings, Hohner, MPTF, RBI, and Vic Firth – to provide benefits for each city, and coordinates creative national programs like Mass Appeal and Sousapalooza.

Finally, the Alliance spearheads the overall PR effort for Make Music Day, and leads the charge in expanding Make Music to new markets.



International Expansion

The Make Music Alliance also partners with organizers in other countries to launch new celebrations around the world. Here are three examples.



Make Music China

Led by the China Musical Instruments Association, Make Music China has grown to 15,000 events in 200 cities each June 21. Highlights last year included a grand opening ceremony in Huangqiao with an ensemble of thousands of musicians, a “Lang Lang Music Bus” on Shenzhen’s main bus lines in honor of the famous pianist, and 27 provinces feature performances with hundreds playing the Electronic Wind Instrument.

Make Music Day UK

First launched by the nonprofit organizations Making Music and Music For All, Make Music Day UK has been active across the United Kingdom since 2017. On June 21, 2023, Make Music Day UK coordinated 36,743 performers at 450 events, ranging from large scale singing events for children to a 24 hour Bach-a-thon.

Make Music Lagos (Nigeria)

Music retailer Showgear organizes dozens of events around Lagos for Make Music Day each year, including a music business conference, pop-up worship music, “learn to DJ” classes, play-along drumming events, and a “Shutdown” concert finale with Nigerian superstars. Meanwhile, they have led the expansion of Make Music Day to five other cities around the country.



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Why Make Music



Economic Impact

Make Music Day brings economic activity to cities and towns. In 2014, New York's Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership surveyed local businesses and found an increase in sales of 10% on Make Music Day, due to the increased foot traffic to the Avenue that MMD programming brings.

Aware of this impact, business associations lead many Make Music Day chapters, including the Downtown Middleton Business Association (WI), Downtown Issaquah Association (WA), Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce (OR), and Monona East Side Business Alliance (WI).



Community Impact

For neighbors, Make Music Day is a chance to turn ordinary sidewalks and streets into impromptu stages, dance floors, and social meeting points, and bring their community together.

Those who are performing feel part of a larger musical family, with the freedom to wander around and jam with each other. Because Make Music Day is open to all genres and levels, everyone can experience the joy of performing, even those without the skills or connections to find gigs in regular venues.



Audience Impact

Listeners come out from under their headphones and experience live music up close. Audiences feel no pressure to stay if they don't like a particular band; they can wander around to discover unfamiliar music risk-free. And just hearing about the dozens (or hundreds) of Make Music Day events in their community raises awareness of the local musical scene.



How to Make Music

1. Identify a local champion for the event.

In Chicago it's a university music department; in Ann Arbor, it's the local library system; in San Jose, it's the city's Office of Cultural Affairs. In cities like New York, Fullerton, and Madison, individual civic leaders have formed new nonprofits to manage Make Music.

2. Raise funds for basic expenses, or round up volunteers.

Budgets for Make Music can be much smaller than for traditional festivals. Since musicians and locations collaborate on their own concerts, you don't need a production team to run around with extension cords and music stands – people will do it all themselves. That said, there must be either a budget for coordination and marketing, or significant in-kind and volunteer contributions, especially early on when the concept is still unfamiliar.



3. Make the permits as easy as possible.

This is the key to encourage spontaneous outdoor participation. Every city has a different permitting situation, but we've found a way to make this work everywhere. In no case should individual musicians or venues need to cover permit costs.

4. Promote the holiday.

Public awareness drives this event. Businesses, media partners, music schools, associations, respected local artists, and elected officials can all spread the word. City Halls have held press events; promoted Make Music on city-owned websites and bus shelters; and invited public schools, block associations, community boards, and senior center choirs to sign up.





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