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## Impact of the corona pandemic on the music industry in Finland

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## Abstract

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The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted various sectors globally, with the music industry in Finland facing significant challenges and transformations. This thesis examines the effects of the pandemic on the Finnish music industry, focusing on the adaptations and innovations that emerged as a response to the crisis. Key areas of investigation include the financial hardships experienced by artists and event organizers, the surge in live streaming as a substitute for traditional live performances, and the role of social media in maintaining artist-fan engagement. Through interviews and data analysis, this study highlights the resilience and creativity of the Finnish music community, emphasizing how digital platforms and alternative revenue streams have reshaped the industry. The findings underscore the importance of embracing technological advancements, fostering diversity and inclusion, and supporting independent artists to ensure a sustainable future for the music industry. This research provides valuable insights and recommendations for industry stakeholders to navigate post-pandemic recovery and growth.

Keywords: COVID-19, Music industry, Finnish government, Live stream, social media

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## **Glossary**

COVID-19    Coronavirus disease 2019

NFT            non-fungible token

THL            The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare

# 1 Introduction

In the annals of history, the impact of pandemics on societies has been etched in the collective memory as pivotal moments that reshape the socio-economic landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic, which swept across the globe with unprecedented speed and ferocity, has been no exception. Among the myriad sectors profoundly affected, the music industry stands as a testament to resilience, adaptability, and profound transformation.

When the pandemic broke out, governments around the world took strong measures to contain its spread. In Finland, known for its robust public health infrastructure and proactive response to crises, these measures included strict social distances, travel restrictions and the closure of non-essential businesses. Edunation commented about Finnish healthcare system as follows: "According to many both Finnish and International studies, the Finnish Health Care system is **one of the best in the whole world**" (Edunation). As a result, the vibrant fabric of Finland's music scene found itself in uncharted territory, navigating a turbulent landscape of uncertainty and challenges.

The live music sector, which once thrived on the energy of fervent crowds and echoing with the melodies of diverse genres, bore the brunt of the pandemic's onslaught. Festivals, once emblematic of communal celebration and artistic expression, were postponed indefinitely or relegated to the virtual realm, devoid of the palpable camaraderie that defined them.

The repercussions extended far beyond the realm of live performances, casting a pall over the recording industry as well. Recording studios, where creativity flourished, faced unprecedented disruptions. With social distancing guidelines rendering traditional recording sessions untenable, musicians grappled with the logistical and technical challenges of remote collaboration, navigating the nuances of latency and audio fidelity in a virtual landscape.

Moreover, the economic fallout of the pandemic reverberated through the music industry, amplifying existing disparities and vulnerabilities. Independent artists, already accustomed to navigating a precarious ecosystem, found themselves grappling with decreasing revenue streams as live performances evaporated and traditional avenues for monetization faltered. The closure of music venues dealt a devastating blow to the livelihoods of countless gig workers, from stagehands to sound engineers, whose labour constituted the lifeblood of the industry.

But amidst the shadows of adversity, rays of hope and resilience pierced through the gloom, lighting the way forward for the Finnish music industry. Faced with the necessity of survival and reinvention, musicians and industry stakeholders embraced innovation with unwavering determination. Virtual concerts emerged as a new opportunity to create connections that transcend geographical boundaries and unite audiences and artists in shared moments of musical catharsis. Streaming platforms, once seen as disruptors of traditional revenue models, became essential lifelines for artists seeking to maintain their craft during chaos.

As the echoes of the pandemic continue, the resilience and adaptability of Finland's music industry stand as a testament to the indomitable spirit of human creativity. This thesis endeavours to unravel the multifaceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Finland's music industry, exploring the challenges faced, the innovative strategies deployed, and the enduring lessons gleaned from this epochal disruption. This study aims to outline how the pandemic shaped the music industry in Finland and what we have learned from it. What lessons we learned for the future, so that we can better deal with similar situations in the future.

## 2 COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on nations around the globe, and Finland is no exception. As one of the Nordic countries, Finland has navigated the challenges presented by the pandemic with a blend of scientific expertise, governmental policies, and societal cooperation. From the early stages of the outbreak to ongoing efforts to manage its effects, Finland's response to COVID-19 has been characterized by a combination of proactive measures, cautious optimism, and a commitment to protecting public health while mitigating socioeconomic consequences.

When the coronavirus first emerged in late 2019 and early 2020, Finland like many other countries, found itself grappling with the unknown of a rapidly evolving pandemic. The Finnish government swiftly implemented a range of measures aimed at containing the spread of the virus and safeguarding public health. The Finnish Government stated: "The Government, in cooperation with the President of the Republic, declared that Finland was in a state of emergency due to the interest rate crisis and decided to introduce the Emergency Preparedness Act" (Eduskunta) These measures included widespread testing and contact tracing, restrictions on public gatherings, border controls at Uusimaa (newfoundland) and Finnish borders, recommendations for social distancing and hygiene practices. As former Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin said at a press conference when they opened the borders of Uusimaa, that: "In Finnish, now it is not the time to go to the summer cottage". (Ilta-Sanomat, 15.4.2020) Additionally, the Finnish healthcare system is known for its efficiency and accessibility, played a crucial role in managing the influx of COVID-19 cases and ensuring adequate care for those in need.

One key aspect of Finland's response to COVID-19 has been its reliance on scientific expertise and evidence-based decision-making. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) has been at the forefront of providing up-to-date information, guidance, and recommendations to both the government and the public throughout the pandemic. Specialists have worked tirelessly to monitor the situation, analyse data, and advise policymakers on the most effective ways to control the spread of the virus.

As the pandemic progressed, Finland experienced fluctuations in the number of cases, with periods of relative stability followed by spikes in infections. The government responded to these fluctuations with targeted interventions, such as localized lockdowns and enhanced testing and tracing efforts in outbreak hotspots. At the same time, efforts were made to minimize disruptions to daily life and the economy, balancing the need for containment with the need to maintain essential services and support businesses and individuals affected by the pandemic.



Figure 1: Proven corona infections, koronatilastot.fi 2024 (updated 18.4.2024)

Finland's success in managing COVID-19 can also be attributed to the cooperation and resilience of its citizens. From following public health guidelines to volunteering in testing and vaccination efforts, Finns have demonstrated a strong sense of community and solidarity in the face of adversity. Also, on, the Finnish tradition of trust in government institutions has fostered compliance with



public health measures and contributed to a sense of collective responsibility for controlling the spread of the virus.

One significant aspect of Finland's response to COVID-19 has been its vaccination campaign. A Finnish evening newspaper writes: "THL is currently campaigning on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok and Tinder" (Iltalehti, 2021) Like many other countries, Finland embarked on an ambitious effort to vaccinate its population against the virus as vaccines became available. The government prioritized vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and healthcare workers, in the initial phases of the rollout before gradually expanding eligibility to the broader population. Public confidence in the safety and efficacy of vaccines has been high, contributing to high vaccination rates and helping to curb infections.

By drawing on lessons learned and remaining vigilant in the face of evolving threats, Finland is well placed to cope with new potential pandemics in a stronger and more resilient way.

### **3 Music sector in Finland**

As of today, the music sector in Finland continues to navigate a rapidly changing landscape shaped by ongoing technological advancements, evolving consumer preferences, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the industry remains resilient and adaptive, it faces both challenges and opportunities in the current environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the Finnish music sector, disrupting live performances, festivals, and other events. Strict lockdown measures and social distancing guidelines led to the cancellation or postponement of concerts and tours, resulting in significant revenue losses for artists, venues, and event organizers. Many musicians were forced to find alternative sources of income or rely on government support to weather the crisis.

As restrictions gradually ease and vaccination efforts progress, the music industry is cautiously returning to live events. However, the landscape has been forever altered, with lingering concerns about public health and safety shaping the way concerts and festivals are organized and experienced. Hybrid models combining in-person and virtual elements are becoming increasingly common, allowing artists to reach broader audiences while mitigating risks.

The digital transformation of the music industry continues to reshape how music is created, distributed, and consumed in Finland. Streaming platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube Music dominate the market, offering listeners access to vast catalogues of music on-demand. While these platforms provide unprecedented reach and convenience, they also present challenges in terms of fair compensation for artists and rights holders.

## Finns listen to music for nearly two hours a day, focused music listening is increasing

### Which devices have Finns used to listen to music in the past week?

	All	13-18	36-55	66-75
Car radio	77%	78%	78%	77%
Phone	68%	92%	71%	15%
Computer	41%	53%	43%	13%
Separate radio device	41%	24%	38%	65%
In-car streaming	30%	53%	29%	4%
Tablet	16%	20%	16%	15%
CD player at home	12%	8%	13%	12%
CD player in the car	10%	6%	12%	5%
Voice-controlled smart speaker	7%	15%	7%	0%
Record player	3%	2%	4%	0%

Figure 2 The most popular music listening devices among Finns in 2022, Teosto 2022

Finnish musicians and industry stakeholders are exploring innovative ways to harness digital platforms to their advantage. Virtual concerts, live streams, and online collaborations have emerged as viable alternatives to traditional performances, allowing artists to engage with fans and generate revenue in new ways. Social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram offer additional avenues for promotion and discovery, enabling artists to connect with audiences on a more personal level.

Recognizing the importance of the music sector to Finland's cultural and economic vitality, government agencies, and industry organizations continue to provide support and resources to musicians, venues, and music companies. Financial assistance programs, grants, and initiatives aimed at promoting Finnish music both domestically and internationally help sustain the industry during challenging times.

Moreover, efforts to enhance music education and training ensure that Finland remains a breeding ground for talent and creativity. Institutions like the Sibelius Academy and Helsinki Pop & Jazz Conservatory continue to nurture the next generation of musicians, composers, and industry professionals, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a competitive global market.

#### **4 COVID-19 impact on music sector.**

Musicians, composers, and music makers in the music sector receive income from a variety of sources, and the declining income streams in these sectors will eventually be reflected in their livelihoods. Gig royalties have stopped, monthly workers are facing collective bargaining and lay-offs, and declining royalties will continue to affect income levels for years to come. (Music Finland, 23.4.2020)

When the pandemic suddenly hit Finland, many in the industry were astonished. Many artists were about to start or had just started big tours and suddenly everything would have to stop, and all concert venues would close. As artist

Sanni commented in the “Musa vai bisnes”- podcast that: We had been working super hard for the first part of the year, training with the band and going into detail in a way I'd never been through before. The whole group was pumped to go on tour. (Muusikkojen liitto, 17.3.2020).

Even the organisers of events in the sector started to panic and wonder what would happen to the coming festival summer. Whether and for how long the restrictions would continue and what they would be. However, festival summers are planned for the very long term and that's what organising is all about. However, festivals are the highlight of the summer for many Finns. Tuomo Tähtinen of Fullsteam is uncertain about the festival summer: “However, the festival summer is super important for us and the whole summer season is very important financially. I dare say that it would be a disaster for the entire Finnish live music scene if the festival summer were to be cancelled altogether.” (Muusikkojen liitto, 17.3.2020)

#### 4.1 Financial support measures

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the music sector was the group that received the least financial support, for example from the state. The loss of revenue in the music sector for this year is estimated to rise to a total of €156 million, -23% of the value of the music sector, due to the interest rate, and in the field of live music alone, the loss of revenue will be around €115 million. (Sanoma, 11.6.2020) In the figure below, we can see that music was the smallest of the arts. The music sector accounted for 66% of all subsidies allocated to the cultural sector.

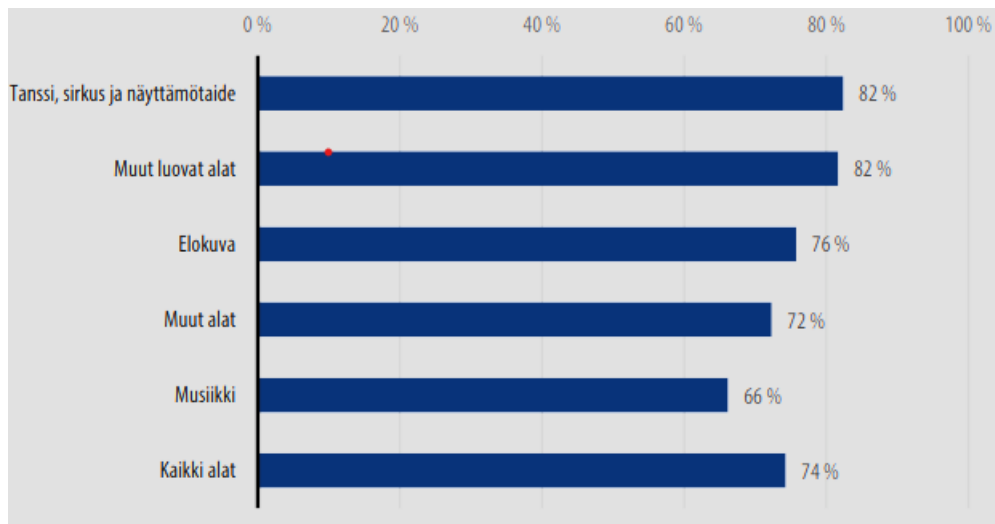


Figure 3: Enterprises receiving state or municipal interest rate subsidies, by field of art, % of respondents, Valtioneuvosto Helsinki 2021.

Sanoma media launched a campaign for summer 2020 to support the Finnish music industry. They launched a fundraising campaign with a starting pot of €350 000 donated by Sanoma Media, and a summer-long radio channel offering jobs to people working in the music industry. Kari Laakso, Business Director of Nelonen Media, commented: "Music has given us a lot and now it is our turn to help. We are opening the game by donating money to the fundraiser, providing jobs for music makers, and using our channels to give the cause the visibility it deserves. We invite all music lovers to get involved." (Sanoma, 11.6.2020)

## 5 The role of social media during a pandemic

Social media played a pivotal role during the pandemic, serving as both a lifeline for information and connection and a source of misinformation and anxiety. As lockdowns and restrictions swept across the globe, people turned to platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok to stay informed, share experiences, and maintain social connections in a time of physical isolation.

One of the most significant impacts of social media during the pandemic was its role in disseminating information. From updates on COVID-19 cases and government regulations to guidelines on staying safe and accessing resources, social media platforms became vital channels for distributing information rapidly to a broad audience. Public health authorities and experts utilized these platforms to communicate directly with the public, providing guidance on preventive measures, vaccination efforts, and the latest scientific developments.

Moreover, social media served as a platform for community support and solidarity. People shared their experiences of coping with the challenges of isolation, homeschooling, remote work, and economic uncertainty. Communities rallied together to support frontline workers, organize mutual aid initiatives, and raise awareness about vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

However, alongside its positive contributions, social media also amplified the spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories related to the pandemic. False claims about the origins of the virus, the effectiveness of treatments, and the safety of vaccines proliferated, leading to confusion and mistrust among the public. This infodemic posed a significant challenge to public health efforts, undermining trust in authoritative sources and hindering compliance with preventive measures.

In Finland, social media played a similar dual role during the pandemic. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook became essential channels for disseminating official information from the Finnish government and public health authorities. Citizens relied on these platforms to stay updated on regulations, travel restrictions, and guidelines for preventing the spread of the virus.

Additionally, social media facilitated community engagement and support initiatives in Finland. Local organizations and individuals used platforms like Instagram and TikTok to coordinate volunteer efforts, share resources, and provide emotional support to those struggling with the effects of the pandemic.

Virtual communities emerged to connect people isolated by lockdowns, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity despite physical distance.

However, Finland also faced challenges related to misinformation and conspiracy theories circulating on social media platforms. False claims about the safety and efficacy of vaccines, as well as rumours about government cover-ups and exaggerated COVID-19 statistics, spread online, contributing to vaccine hesitancy, and undermining public health messaging efforts.

In summary, social media played a multifaceted role during the pandemic, serving as a vital information source, a platform for community support, but also a vector for misinformation and anxiety. In Finland, like elsewhere, the impact of social media on public perceptions and behaviours during the pandemic reflects its complex and evolving influence on society.

## 5.1 Live streaming

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the live music industry to a standstill, with concerts, festivals, and tours cancelled or postponed indefinitely due to public health restrictions. In response to this unprecedented challenge, artists, promoters, and venues turned to live streaming to connect with fans and keep the music alive during a time of physical distancing.

Live streaming quickly emerged as a popular alternative to traditional live performances, offering a way for artists to reach their audience virtually while adhering to safety guidelines. Platforms like Instagram Live, Facebook Live, YouTube, Twitch, and dedicated streaming services provided artists with the tools to broadcast performances directly from their homes, studios, or empty venues. Allegra Frank said: “In isolation, music feels more necessary than usual. Fans know that, and musicians know that. Which is why many artists in quarantine are finding other ways to perform “live,” via platforms like Instagram and YouTube, and rallying around hashtags like #togetherathome.

One of the most significant impacts of increased live streaming in the music industry during COVID-19 was its role in maintaining a sense of community and connection among fans and artists. Live streams allowed musicians to interact with their audience in real-time, responding to comments, taking requests, and sharing personal anecdotes, creating an intimate and immersive experience despite the physical distance.

Moreover, live streaming provided opportunities for artists to experiment with new formats and creative approaches to performance. From stripped-down acoustic sets to elaborate multi-camera productions, artists embraced the flexibility and immediacy of live streaming to showcase their music in innovative ways. Virtual concerts, album release parties, and online music festivals became commonplace, attracting audiences from around the world and expanding the reach of artists beyond traditional geographic boundaries.

Additionally, live streaming offered a lifeline for industry professionals impacted by the shutdown of live events. From sound engineers and lighting technicians to venue staff and tour managers, many individuals found employment opportunities in the burgeoning market for virtual events and live streaming production services.

In Finland, the music industry also witnessed a surge in live streaming during the pandemic. Finnish artists embraced platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to connect with fans and showcase their talent in virtual concerts and performances. Finnish music festivals, such as Ruisrock and Flow Festival, adapted to the new reality by organizing online editions featuring live streams from local and international artists.

However, while live streaming provided a temporary solution for maintaining engagement and generating revenue during the pandemic, it also posed challenges for artists and industry professionals. The shift to virtual performances raised questions about monetization, copyright, and fair



compensation for artists, particularly in an era of declining record sales and streaming royalties.

In summary, increased live streaming in the music industry during COVID-19 offered a lifeline for artists and fans alike, providing a platform for connection, creativity, and community in a time of crisis. While the long-term implications of this shift remain to be seen, live streaming has undoubtedly reshaped the landscape of the music industry, opening new possibilities for engagement and expression in the digital age.

## 5.2 Music brought the authors together.

During the pandemic, music served as a powerful force that brought the authors together despite physical separation and social distancing measures. Although physically apart, they found common ground and solace in their shared love for music, leading to newfound connections and collaborations.

Virtual Jam Sessions: Unable to meet in person due to lockdowns and restrictions, the authors turned to virtual jam sessions to collaborate musically. Through video conferencing platforms like Zoom or Skype, they were able to play and sing together in real-time, transcending geographic barriers and creating music together from the comfort of their own homes. In Finland, the artists had organised a group called Toivon Kärki (The tip of hope), which is a charity organisation. Their motto is: "Toivon Kärki ry is a charity that wants to believe that music can change the world". (Toivon Kärki) They did a song during the corona about the pandemic outbreak and a song for the youth mental health partner afterwards.



Figure 4 Toivon Kärki group, Toivon Kärki Ry

**Collaborative Projects:** Inspired by their mutual passion for music, the authors embarked on collaborative projects that spanned genres, styles, and mediums. They wrote songs together, produced music videos remotely, and even composed soundtracks for virtual theatre productions or short films. Through these collaborative endeavours, they discovered new facets of their creativity and developed a strong sense of camaraderie and mutual respect.

**Virtual Concerts and Listening Parties:** In lieu of attending live concerts or music events, the authors organized virtual concerts and listening parties for themselves and their friends. They curated playlists, shared favourite tracks, and introduced each other to new music, fostering a sense of connection and shared experience despite being physically apart.

**Emotional Support Through Music:** Beyond the creative aspect, music also served as a source of emotional support and comfort during difficult times. The authors shared playlists of uplifting songs, exchanged music recommendations that spoke to their feelings and experiences, and used music as a means of

self-expression and catharsis, strengthening their bond and providing solace amidst uncertainty and isolation.

In summary, music played a central role in bringing the authors together during the pandemic, facilitating collaboration, creativity, and emotional connection despite physical distance. Through virtual jam sessions, songwriting workshops, collaborative projects, virtual concerts, and shared music experiences, they found common ground and solidarity in their shared love for music, forging meaningful relationships that transcended the challenges of the pandemic.

## **6 Recovery after the pandemic**

The music industry faced unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, with live events cancelled, venues shuttered, and revenue streams disrupted. However, as the world gradually emerges from the pandemic, the music industry is poised for a recovery marked by innovation, resilience, and adaptation.

**Resumption of Live Events:** With the rollout of vaccines and the easing of restrictions, live events are gradually returning, albeit with precautions and adaptations to ensure the safety of artists, staff, and attendees. Concerts, festivals, and tours are making a comeback, providing much-needed opportunities for artists to connect with their audience and generate revenue.

**Hybrid and Virtual Events:** While live events are resuming, the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of hybrid and virtual event formats. Many artists and organizers are embracing live streaming technology to complement in-person experiences, reaching a broader audience, and monetizing their performances through ticketed livestreams, pay-per-view events, and virtual merchandise sales.

**Diversification of Revenue Streams:** The pandemic highlighted the vulnerabilities of relying solely on live performances for revenue. In response,

artists and industry professionals are diversifying their income streams by exploring alternative revenue sources such as merchandise sales, brand partnerships, sync licensing, and digital content creation. Additionally, the rise of non-fungible tokens (NFTs) presents new opportunities for artists to monetize their music and creative assets.

**Continued Embrace of Digital Platforms:** The pandemic accelerated the shift towards digital consumption and distribution of music, with streaming platforms experiencing a surge in usage during lockdowns. As the world reopens, digital platforms remain central to the music industry's recovery, providing artists with global reach, data-driven insights, and opportunities for discovery and promotion.

**Investment in Technology and Innovation:** The pandemic underscored the importance of technology and innovation in navigating the challenges of the music industry. From virtual concert platforms to AI-driven music production tools, investment in technology and innovation is driving new opportunities for artists, labels, and music tech startups to reimagine the way music is created, distributed, and experienced. Helsingin Kaupunki also tried new technology to arrange virtual Vappu. In virtual Vappu there was a virtual gig of JVG rap duo and a virtual Vappu tradition where we put a graduation cap on the statue of Havis Amanda in the centre of Helsinki. This was a brand-new technology that was put to good use here.

**Support for Independent Artists and Venues:** Independent artists and small music venues were among the hardest hit by the pandemic. As the music industry recovers, there is a growing recognition of the need to support and sustain these vital components of the ecosystem. Initiatives such as crowdfunding campaigns, government grants, and nonprofit organizations are providing financial assistance and advocacy for independent artists and venues. Also, Finnish music venue Tavastia struggled during the pandemic. Saara Hirvonen writes about: "Last year, Tavastia Club's turnover fell by almost a

tenth. Turnover fell from €14 million in the previous year to €1.5 million." (Yle uutiset, 2021)

In summary, the music industry's recovery after the pandemic is characterized by a combination of resilience, adaptation, and innovation. As live events resume, digital platforms evolve, and new revenue streams emerge, the industry is poised to bounce back stronger than ever, guided by a spirit of creativity, collaboration, and community.

## 6.1 Festivals and gigs

The recovery of festivals and gigs after the pandemic has been a gradual process marked by cautious optimism, innovation, and adaptation to new health and safety protocols. Organizers have implemented phased reopening, prioritizing the health and safety of attendees, artists, and staff. Many events have embraced hybrid formats, combining in-person experiences with virtual components to cater to diverse audience preferences and safety concerns. Enhanced health and safety measures, such as temperature checks, mandatory mask-wearing, and improved ventilation systems, have been implemented to mitigate the risk of transmission.

Outdoor and open-air venues have become increasingly popular choices for festivals and gigs due to their lower risk of COVID-19 transmission compared to indoor spaces. Organizers have adapted their booking strategies to accommodate the changing availability and preferences of artists, while also prioritizing diversity and inclusion in their lineup selections.

Support for emerging and local talent has become a focus as the industry recovers, providing opportunities for up-and-coming artists to showcase their music and gain exposure. Overall, the recovery of festivals and gigs is characterized by a combination of cautious reopening, innovation, and adaptation to meet the changing needs and expectations of audiences while prioritizing health and safety.

Fortnite's foray into live gigs within its virtual game environment marked a groundbreaking evolution in the convergence of gaming and entertainment. These in-game concerts, such as the iconic event featuring Travis Scott in April 2020, transformed the gaming landscape by offering players immersive, interactive, and larger-than-life music experiences within the digital realm.



Figure 5 Fortnite live event Travis Scott in 2020, Gamereactor 2020

The Travis Scott concert showcased Fortnite's capacity to host live events that transcended traditional boundaries of space and time. Millions of players from around the world gathered in the game's virtual universe to witness a spectacle that seamlessly blended music, visual effects, and interactive gameplay. Through stunning visuals, psychedelic landscapes, and gravity-defying stunts, players were transported into an otherworldly audiovisual experience that defied the constraints of physical reality. Will Gendor commented: "His wildly successful three-day festival event "Astronomical" saw a god-like version of himself implanted into the game map to perform a 15-minute concert for 12.3 million concurrent viewers during its opening night." (Papermag. 2020)

What made these live gigs in Fortnite truly remarkable was their accessibility and inclusivity. Players of all ages and backgrounds could participate in these events without the barriers of geography, cost, or physical mobility. Whether they were seasoned gamers, music enthusiasts, or curious bystanders, everyone had the opportunity to be part of something extraordinary, sharing in a collective moment of awe and wonder.

Moreover, Fortnite's live gigs represented a pioneering fusion of entertainment mediums, blurring the lines between gaming, music, and virtual reality. By collaborating with renowned artists and leveraging cutting-edge technology, Fortnite transformed its platform into a dynamic and versatile stage for creative expression, cultural engagement, and artistic innovation.

These events also highlighted the immense potential of virtual spaces as venues for live entertainment and social interaction, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the cancellation of traditional concerts and festivals. In a time of physical distancing and isolation, Fortnite's live gigs offered a sense of connection, community, and shared experience, providing a much-needed escape from the challenges of the real world.

Looking ahead, Fortnite's foray into live gigs has paved the way for new possibilities in the intersection of gaming and entertainment. As technology continues to advance and virtual worlds become increasingly immersive and interactive, we can expect to see even more ambitious and innovative experiments in digital entertainment, pushing the boundaries of what is possible in the realms of gaming, music, and beyond.

## 6.2 Outlook for the future

The future of Finland's music industry appears promising, marked by resilience, innovation, and adaptability. As the world moves beyond the pandemic, the Finnish music scene is expected to rebound and evolve, leveraging its strengths and embracing new opportunities.

Digital platforms will continue to play a significant role, offering Finnish artists avenues for global reach, fan engagement, and revenue generation. Streaming services, social media platforms, and online merchandise sales will remain vital channels for connecting with audiences and monetizing music. With Finland's reputation for technological innovation and digital literacy, artists and industry professionals are well-positioned to capitalize on the growing digital music market.

Live events are poised for a comeback, albeit with adaptations to ensure the safety of attendees. Organizers will explore hybrid formats, outdoor venues, and enhanced health protocols to revitalize the live music experience in Finland. Festivals, concerts, and gigs will once again serve as hubs of creativity and community, providing opportunities for artists to connect with fans in shared spaces and create unforgettable live experiences.

Support for emerging talent will be a priority, with initiatives aimed at nurturing young musicians, fostering creativity, and providing opportunities for growth. Music education programs, talent competitions, and artist development initiatives will help cultivate the next generation of Finnish musicians and industry professionals. By investing in the future of Finnish music, the industry can ensure a steady pipeline of talent and innovation for years to come.

Investment in infrastructure and technology will further strengthen Finland's position in the global music landscape. World-class recording studios, venues, and production facilities will continue to attract international artists and collaborators, while innovation in music tech will drive new opportunities for creativity and entrepreneurship. By providing state-of-the-art resources and support, Finland can continue to be a hub of musical excellence and innovation on the global stage.

Collaboration and internationalization will be key strategies for growth, with Finnish artists and industry professionals forging partnerships, exploring new markets, and showcasing their talent on the global stage. Music export



programs, international showcases, and networking opportunities will help elevate Finland's profile as a leading music export country. By leveraging its reputation for creativity, quality, and innovation, Finland can continue to make a significant impact on the global music scene.

Overall, the future of Finland's music industry is bright, with a strong foundation of talent, infrastructure, and innovation poised to propel it forward in the post-pandemic era. By embracing digital platforms, revitalizing live events, supporting emerging talent, investing in infrastructure, and fostering international collaboration, Finland is well-positioned to thrive in the dynamic and ever-evolving music landscape.

## **7 Interview**

For my thesis, I wanted to interview someone who works or has worked in the field. This interview was made possible by my current colleague. The interview is a qualitative or qualitative study. Qualitative research seeks to understand the phenomenon being studied. This means finding out the meaning or purpose of a phenomenon and gaining a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of it. In practice, this often means giving space to the perspectives and experiences of the people being studied, as well as to the thoughts, feelings and motivations associated with the phenomenon under study. (Wikipedia, 18.6.2023)

### **7.1 Data collection method**

The research method chosen for this thesis was a thematic interview. A typical feature of thematic interviews is that their purpose is predefined, and they are designed to the data is genuinely based on the individual's personal experiences.

The interview questions were formulated to provide the most comprehensive answers possible, with the aim of answering the following questions:

- How the pandemic affected your work.
- In what ways did your occupational tasks change during the interest rate pandemic?
- Did you have access to any financial support from the government?
- Have you had to consider/get some extra work alongside your current job? If yes, what kind of additional work?
- What did you start doing after the pandemic? Do you still plan to return to the industry?

## 7.2 Review of the interviewee's answers

In this chapter, I present the result of the interview and analyse the response. The result of the interview is presented in the order given in the interview form.

In the first question, I want to know the extent to which the pandemic affected the interviewee's work. The interviewee explains how all work stopped almost as soon as the restrictions came into force. However, he had a back-up plan, a business that started making sales during the restrictions because everyone started working from home. This meant, for example, that not all artists had access to their studios to work with their team together.

TV productions, music festivals and concerts were cancelled. As a result, there was simply no work. However, the company also had a specialist audio equipment shop, which suddenly saw an increase in business. This was explained by the fact that everyone suddenly started working remotely, so the popularity of external mixers and recording equipment increased among consumers. (Interviewee)

My second specific question was how the job description changed when the restrictions started. According to the interviewee, the job description changed, so to speak, from more creative work to sales.

The job description shifted from recording and mixing more to sales, where there was more trade. (Interviewee)

Thirdly, I wanted to know what kind of support he received from the state when his own job changed completely. She says that the company received support and she herself, as a participant, received support from Kela. He did not receive any other benefits because he was still working.

The company received support from Business Finland. I received daily allowance from Kela because I was partially disabled most of the time. (Interviewee)

Fourth, I asked the interviewee if he did any work other than sales in the audio shop and, if so, what kind of work. He had tried another job, but it turned out to be challenging and heavy.

I also tried to do food delivery as a Wolt partner. This proved to be too challenging and didn't provide much extra time. (Interviewee)

Finally, I asked him if he was thinking of returning to the industry after the pandemic. He told me that the music industry never really recovered from the pandemic. Most of the long-time professionals have quit and moved on, and in the end, the low salaries are no longer an incentive to come back. He himself has changed the industry. He now sees his work in the music industry more as a hobby and a nice little source of income.

The media and cultural sector never fully recovered from the pandemic. There are now fewer TV productions and most long-time professionals have quit and moved on. I also ended up changing industries in the end because I could no longer afford to cover my expenses. I don't think I will ever fully return to the

industry because of the low wages and the limited amount of work. I have a small company through which I can charge for recording work or gigs if I need to, but with school and work there is less and less time for that. (Interviewee)

## 8 Recommendations

Looking to the future, the music industry can benefit from several key recommendations:

**Embrace Digital Innovation:** Continuously embrace and invest in digital technologies and platforms to adapt to changing consumer behaviours and preferences. Explore emerging trends such as virtual reality concerts, blockchain-based royalties, and interactive fan experiences to stay ahead of the curve.

**Foster Diversity and Inclusion:** Prioritize diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the industry, from artist representation to executive leadership. Create opportunities for underrepresented voices and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all musicians and industry professionals.

**Support Independent Artists and Venues:** Strengthen support networks and resources for independent artists and small music venues, which are vital to a thriving music ecosystem. Explore innovative funding models, community partnerships, and advocacy efforts to ensure their sustainability and resilience.

**Enhance Music Education:** Invest in music education programs that nurture creativity, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking skills among aspiring musicians and industry professionals. Provide access to mentorship, training, and networking opportunities to support their development and career advancement.

**Promote Sustainability:** Address environmental sustainability within the music industry by reducing carbon emissions, minimizing waste, and supporting eco-friendly practices in live events, touring, and production. Encourage responsible

consumption and production habits among artists, fans, and industry stakeholders.

**Strengthen Global Collaboration:** Foster collaboration and exchange between music communities worldwide to promote cultural exchange, cross-border partnerships, and international market access. Leverage platforms such as music export programs, festivals, and conferences to facilitate networking and collaboration on a global scale.

**Adapt to Changing Business Models:** Embrace flexible business models that reflect the evolving nature of music consumption and distribution. Explore alternative revenue streams such as merchandise sales, sync licensing, livestreaming, and patronage platforms to diversify income and mitigate reliance on traditional revenue sources.

**Advocate for Policy Change:** Advocate for policies that support the interests of artists, creators, and music industry professionals at local, national, and international levels. Champion fair compensation, copyright reform, and regulatory frameworks that foster innovation, creativity, and equitable access to opportunities within the music industry.

By implementing these recommendations, the music industry can navigate the challenges and opportunities of the future while fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable ecosystem for artists, fans, and industry stakeholders alike.

## **9 Conclusion**

In conclusion, COVID-19 had a profound impact on the music industry in Finland, disrupting traditional revenue streams, challenging established business models, and reshaping the way artists and industry professionals create, distribute, and monetize music. The pandemic led to the cancellation or postponement of live events, festivals, and gigs, resulting in significant financial losses for artists, venues, and event organizers. However, it also spurred

innovation and adaptation, with the rapid adoption of digital technologies, virtual events, and alternative revenue streams to connect with audiences and sustain the industry during a time of unprecedented uncertainty.

The pandemic highlighted the resilience and creativity of the Finnish music community, as artists, labels, and industry stakeholders rallied together to support one another and navigate the challenges of the crisis. It underscored the importance of collaboration, solidarity, and mutual support in overcoming adversity and building a more resilient and inclusive music ecosystem for the future.

As Finland gradually emerges from the pandemic, there is optimism for the industry's recovery, fuelled by the gradual resumption of live events, the embrace of digital innovation, and the ongoing support for emerging talent and independent artists. While the long-term impact of COVID-19 on the music industry remains to be seen, the lessons learned, and the innovations born out of the crisis will undoubtedly shape the future of the Finnish music industry for years to come.

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