# Royal Albert Hall leads UK arenas with £1 levy to save grassroots music venues



The Royal Albert Hall has become the first major arena in the UK to commit to a £1 ticket levy supporting grassroots music venues, a scheme aiming to safeguard the future of small live music spaces across the country. From 1 October 2025, all commercial rock and pop concerts at the Hall will include an additional £1 contribution per ticket, expected to generate around £300,000 annually for the LIVE Trust. This fund will be distributed among grassroots venues, promoters, festivals, and artists, supporting a sector critically under threat from rising costs and closures.

The initiative responds to growing concerns over the sustainability of grassroots music venues, which serve as crucial platforms for emerging and local talent. Reports from the LIVE Trust highlight that 125 such venues closed in 2023, while 78 festivals were cancelled in the following year. The UK live music industry has seen a marked decline in the number of tour dates regionally, halving over the past three decades, reflecting the collapse of the grassroots system. Industry and government bodies, including the London Assembly's Economy, Culture and Skills Committee, have backed the levy as an essential step to preserve this ecosystem, emphasising its role in nurturing artists at the start of their careers.

Public support for a ticket levy is strong, with a Music Fans’ Voice survey revealing that 93% of fans favour the idea of a £1 contribution from arena and stadium tickets to protect smaller venues. Additionally, over half of those surveyed reported witnessing the closure of a local music venue or nightclub since 2020, underscoring the urgency of the situation. The leadership shown by the Royal Albert Hall in adopting the levy has been widely praised, seen as a landmark moment for the industry. The CEO of the Music Venue Trust, Mark Davyd, highlighted the broad consensus among industry stakeholders and insisted that the voluntary scheme represents the collective will of promoters, venues, ticketing companies, and artists to safeguard live music at all levels.

However, not all responses have been positive. John Giddings, a veteran promoter with decades of experience representing major artists such as The Police, Lady Gaga, and The Rolling Stones, sharply criticised the levy as “bloody ludicrous.” He argued that adding an extra fee to tickets ultimately burdens live music fans rather than directly benefiting smaller venues. Giddings suggested that artists should instead support grassroots venues by playing more shows there and allowing these venues to retain all of the income, rather than passing costs onto consumers through ticket levies. While several artists, including Coldplay, Enter Shikari, and Katy Perry, have pledged donations from their ticket sales to support grassroots venues, Giddings questioned the transparency and effectiveness of the fund distribution.

The debate highlights the complexities of funding grassroots music in an increasingly challenging economic environment. The LIVE Trust, established to collect and allocate these funds, has already raised over £500,000, thanks to contributions from high-profile UK tours by artists like Pulp, Mumford & Sons, and Diana Ross. The scheme aims to channel financial support directly into the grassroots sector, attempting to reverse the decline in live music infrastructure that threatens the future pipeline of talent.

As the Royal Albert Hall sets this precedent, the wider live music industry faces important choices about how best to protect the grassroots venues that underpin the UK’s vibrant musical landscape. The proposed £1 ticket levy, although divisive, represents a unified industry effort to find a sustainable solution amid ongoing challenges. Its success will depend on careful implementation, broad collaboration, and maintaining public trust in its benefits for the entire live music ecosystem.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/arts-entertainment/music/news/royal-albert-hall-levy-john-giddings-music-venue-trust-b2795978.html), [[2]](https://www.nme.com/news/music/londons-royal-albert-hall-becomes-first-arena-to-commit-to-1-live-ticket-levy-for-grassroots-3879671), [[4]](https://musically.com/2025/07/22/uks-royal-albert-hall-to-donate-1-per-ticket-to-grassroots-venues/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/arts-entertainment/music/news/royal-albert-hall-levy-john-giddings-music-venue-trust-b2795978.html), [[3]](https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-press-releases/support-grassroots-music-venues-levy-stadium-tickets), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/mar/26/concert-arenas-urged-to-add-1-ticket-levy-to-help-small-uk-venues)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/arts-entertainment/music/news/royal-albert-hall-levy-john-giddings-music-venue-trust-b2795978.html), [[5]](https://musictech.com/news/events/music-fans-support-one-pound-ticket-levy-fund-grassroots-venues/), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/mar/26/concert-arenas-urged-to-add-1-ticket-levy-to-help-small-uk-venues)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/arts-entertainment/music/news/royal-albert-hall-levy-john-giddings-music-venue-trust-b2795978.html), [[6]](https://www.nme.com/news/music/uk-tour-ticket-contributions-raise-500k-for-grassroots-venues-and-artists-thank-to-pulp-mumford-sons-and-more-3859405)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/arts-entertainment/music/news/royal-albert-hall-levy-john-giddings-music-venue-trust-b2795978.html), [[6]](https://www.nme.com/news/music/uk-tour-ticket-contributions-raise-500k-for-grassroots-venues-and-artists-thank-to-pulp-mumford-sons-and-more-3859405)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/arts-entertainment/music/news/royal-albert-hall-levy-john-giddings-music-venue-trust-b2795978.html), [[3]](https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-press-releases/support-grassroots-music-venues-levy-stadium-tickets), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/mar/26/concert-arenas-urged-to-add-1-ticket-levy-to-help-small-uk-venues)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.the-independent.com/arts-entertainment/music/news/royal-albert-hall-levy-john-giddings-music-venue-trust-b2795978.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.nme.com/news/music/londons-royal-albert-hall-becomes-first-arena-to-commit-to-1-live-ticket-levy-for-grassroots-3879671> - The Royal Albert Hall in London has become the first arena to commit to a £1 ticket levy to support grassroots music venues. Starting from October 1, 2025, a £1 contribution will be added to all commercial rock and pop concerts, aiming to raise an estimated £300,000 annually for the LIVE Trust. This initiative follows a recommendation from the UK government to introduce a voluntary levy on stadium and arena tickets to protect the grassroots music sector. The move has been welcomed by industry leaders and government officials, highlighting the importance of supporting smaller venues to ensure a thriving live music scene across the UK.
3. <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-press-releases/support-grassroots-music-venues-levy-stadium-tickets> - The London Assembly's Economy, Culture and Skills Committee has published a report supporting the introduction of a voluntary £1 levy on arena and stadium tickets to aid grassroots music venues in London. The report highlights the vital role of grassroots venues in nurturing new talent and the challenges they face due to rising costs and declining revenues. The committee recommends that the Mayor advocate for the live music industry to implement this levy, aiming to ensure the sustainability and future success of the grassroots music sector, including venues, festivals, artists, and promoters.
4. <https://musically.com/2025/07/22/uks-royal-albert-hall-to-donate-1-per-ticket-to-grassroots-venues/> - The Royal Albert Hall has committed to donating £1 from every ticket sold for rock and pop concerts to support grassroots music venues. This initiative, effective from October 1, 2025, is expected to raise approximately £300,000 annually for the LIVE Trust, which will distribute the funds to venues, promoters, festivals, and artists. The move follows discussions within the UK live music industry about how larger venues can support smaller ones, with the government urging the sector to introduce a voluntary ticket levy to protect grassroots venues.
5. <https://musictech.com/news/events/music-fans-support-one-pound-ticket-levy-fund-grassroots-venues/> - A survey conducted by Music Fans’ Voice revealed that 93% of UK music fans support a £1 ticket levy on large-scale events and arena shows to fund grassroots music venues. The survey, which included responses from 8,000 music fans, also found that 58% of participants have witnessed the closure of a locally important music venue or nightclub since 2020. The findings underscore the public's backing for initiatives aimed at sustaining smaller venues, which are crucial for the development of new talent and the UK's live music scene.
6. <https://www.nme.com/news/music/uk-tour-ticket-contributions-raise-500k-for-grassroots-venues-and-artists-thank-to-pulp-mumford-sons-and-more-3859405> - The LIVE Trust has raised over £500,000 for grassroots venues through £1 ticket contributions from UK tours by artists such as Pulp, Mumford & Sons, Diana Ross, and Hans Zimmer. This initiative, which began in 2023, involves artists donating £1 from every ticket sold on the UK leg of their tours to the Live Trust, a funding initiative established to support grassroots music venues, promoters, festivals, and artists. The scheme has been praised for its significant contribution to the grassroots live music sector.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/mar/26/concert-arenas-urged-to-add-1-ticket-levy-to-help-small-uk-venues> - Industry leaders have urged concert arenas to impose a £1 levy on gig tickets to create a fund supporting grassroots live music venues. The call comes amid rising costs and a 'crisis' for smaller venues, with 125 forced to shut during 2023. The proposed levy would be distributed to smaller venues, aiming to sustain the UK's live music scene. The initiative has received backing from MPs and industry figures, highlighting the need for urgent action to protect grassroots venues.