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Live aid concert list

George Michael, Bob Geldof, Bono, Paul McCartney, Freddie Mercury, David Bowie, and Howard Jones gather together for the Live Aid finale at London's Wembley Stadium. / Dave Hogan/Hulton Archive/Getty ImagesPop music didn’t suddenly discover altruism in the 1980s. The idea of the star-studded charity concert dates at least as far back as 1971, which is when former Beatle George Harrison organized The Concert for Bangladesh, a benefit for refugees in the former East Pakistan.



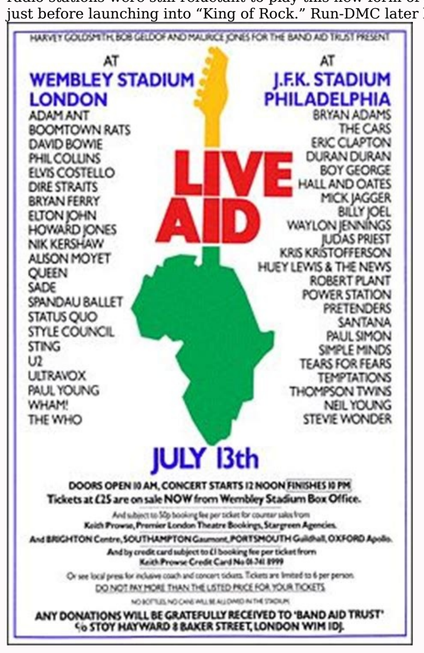
But do-gooder musicians took it to the next level in the '80s—the decade of “We Are the World,” Farm Aid, Band Aid, and of course, Live Aid.Bono performing with U2 at the Live Aid charity concert in London in 1985. / Dave Hogan/Hulton Archives/Getty ImagesLive Aid, which took place on July 13, 1985 for a global audience of 1.9 billion people, was a massive, bicontinental pop concert created to raise money for Ethiopian famine relief. It was the brainchild of Bob Geldof, leader of the Irish new wave band The Boomtown Rats.



Geldof was spurred to philanthropic action after seeing a BBC report in October 1984 that featured footage of starving children. His first thought was to make a charity single.Geldof enlisted his buddy Midge Ure, the frontman of the band Ultravox, to help him write and record “Do They Know It’s Christmas” just a few weeks later. The single, which was released on December 3, 1984, was credited to Band Aid—an amalgamation of the day’s biggest pop stars, including George Michael, Boy George, and Bono. It reached No. 1 on the UK charts and raised more than $28 million for the cause. But that wasn’t enough for Geldof. At least not if the Band Aid organization was going to buy a fleet of trucks to move food and supplies to Ethiopians in need, as Geldof hoped. So he took the next logical step and planned a concert.Much has been said and written about Live Aid over the last 35 years. To some, it was a beautiful moment of idealism and compassion. Others question the motives and effectiveness of a bunch of wealthy celebrities—most of them white—trying to swoop in and save Africa.David Bowie performing at the Live Aid concert in London on July 13, 1985. / Georges De Keerle/Hulton Archive/Getty ImagesTo measure the success of Live Aid, one needs to consider three different things: numerical data, entertainment value, and overall impact. By the first of these metrics, sheer numbers, Live Aid was an overwhelming triumph.



Geldof and company secured both Wembley Stadium in London and John F. Kennedy Stadium in Philadelphia to host the concert on two continents. Using industry connections, persuasion, and a little bit of trickery, Geldof was able to book more than 50 of the music industry's biggest names, including Queen, David Bowie, Elton John, Paul McCartney, The Who, Bob Dylan, U2, and Madonna.“He had to call Elton and say 'Queen are in and Bowie's in,' and of course they weren't,” production manager Andy Zweck told The Guardian of Geldof’s tactics. “Then he’d call Bowie and say 'Elton and Queen are in.' It was a game of bluff.”With the help of producer Michael C. Mitchell, Live Aid sold broadcast rights to 150 countries, at least 22 of which aired telethons. Both MTV and ABC carried the feed in the United States, the latter in the form of a primetime special hosted by Dick Clark. All told, Live Aid raised approximately $140 million.Of course, Live Aid wasn’t just about fundraising. It also had to be a great show—or else why would people bother to watch it in the first place? As it happened, the day was filled with memorable performances on both sides of the Atlantic. The consensus pick for Live Aid MVP is Queen, whose 21-minute Wembley set included “Bohemian Rhapsody,” “We Will Rock You,” and “We are the Champions.” Mercury "strutted and preened, carrying his microphone on a metal pole that he treated as a vaudevillian’s cane, an air guitar, and, of course, a phallus," The New York Times wrote of Mercury's performance. "He was a rock star playing a rock star, leather-lunged and imperious but also grinning to let everyone share the joke ... For 21 minutes, Freddie Mercury undeniably made the world his stadium." In 2005, Queen’s Live Aid set was voted the greatest rock gig in history by a panel of music industry experts.Less than two hours before Queen hit the stage, U2 wowed Wembley with a performance that cemented their status as future stadium kings. During their 11-minute rendition of “Bad,” Bono plucked a 15-year-old fan named Kal Khalique from the crowd and slow-danced with her as if no one else was watching. Of course, U2 knew everyone was watching, and while Khalique has claimed that Bono saved her from being crushed, the mulletted rocker may have engineered the moment for TV cameras. Either way, it worked.Live Aid was also a big day for Run-DMC, and hip-hop in general. In 1985, pop radio stations were still reluctant to play this new form of music, and the Queens rappers undoubtedly raised some eyebrows as they took the stage in Philly with no band—just DJ Jam Master Jay behind two turntables. “We got a whole lot of rock groups backstage tonight, but D wants y’all to know one thing," Joseph “Run” Simmons told the crowd, just before launching into “King of Rock.” Run-DMC later boasted about their Live Aid win on 1986’s “My Adidas,” rapping, “Stepped on stage, at Live Aid, all the people gave, and the poor got paid!”One man who literally went the distance for the cause was Phil Collins.



The Genesis frontman and chart-dominating solo artist performed with Sting at 3:15 p.m. in London, then jumped on the Concorde and flew to Philly to play his own set and serve as drummer for Eric Clapton and a reunited Led Zeppelin. Most people agree that the Zeppelin set was a total disaster—the band was under-rehearsed and out of tune. But decades later, Collins’s ocean-hopping stunt is what people remember. “I was in England this afternoon,” Collins told the Philly crowd. “Funny old world, innit?”Other highlights included Madonna getting into the groove, Mick Jagger turning up the heat with Tina Turner, and Elton John and George Michael dueting on “Don’t Let the Sun Go Down On Me.” Bob Dylan planted the seeds for another charity concert, Farm Aid, when he took a moment during his performance with Keith Richards and Ron Wood of The Rolling Stones to suggest that some of the money be used to help struggling American farmers.In all, the shows offered a good mix of Baby Boomer favorites (Dylan, Neil Young, Paul McCartney) and hip younger acts (Elvis Costello, The Style Council, Adam Ant, Thompson Twins). But Live Aid did have a diversity problem.Run-DMC performing at Live Aid in 1985. / Frank Micelotta Archive/Hulton Archive/Getty ImagesAbout a month before the show, legendary concert promoter Bill Graham said that “every major Black artist on the Billboard 200 chart and R&B chart” had been approached. Many artists, including Michael Jackson, Diana Ross, and Prince, had simply declined to perform. But others, including Dionne Warwick, said they’d never been invited. As the concert date grew closer, Live Aid organizers scrambled to add more Black artists, including The Four Tops, Tina Turner, and Patti LaBelle.“After the concert, we were lambasted for not having enough Black artists on the bill. It became this anti-colonial diatribe, ‘You whites, telling us poor Black guys what to do,’” Midge Ure told the Independent. “It was unfair but it happened.”The lasting impact of Live Aid remains a far greater source of controversy. In 1986, SPIN ran a story titled “Live Aid: The Terrible Truth” which claimed that food and aid money were bolstering the government of dictator Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, the man most responsible for Ethiopia’s suffering. According to SPIN, Mengistu used food to lure people into camps that allowed his regime to forcefully relocate hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians. Mengistu reportedly also used Western aid to purchase arms from the Soviets to use in his fight against rebels.In a 2005 piece for The Guardian, David Rieff paraphrased Ethiopia expert Alex de Waal and wrote that Live Aid cut the famine death toll by “between a quarter and a half.” “The problem is that it may have contributed to as many deaths,” Rieff added.Geldof has always defended Live Aid’s use of funds. “I said as early as January 1985, I will shake hands with the devil on my left and on my right to get to the people we are meant to help,” he said in response to the SPIN exposé. Geldof later said that Live Aid was “almost perfect in what it achieved.” He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1986 in recognition of his work in helping Africa's starving population.One thing Live Aid definitely did was put Ethiopia on Americans' and Europeans' radars. It also created a new template for high-profile musical benefits. Farm Aid launched in 1985; three years later, in 1988, Bruce Springsteen, Sting, Peter Gabriel, and others crossed the globe as part of the Human Rights Now! tour on behalf of Amnesty International.



There was The Concert for New York City after 9/11 and The SARS Benefit Concert in 2003.
In 2005, Geldof revisited the Live Aid model with Live 8, a series of concerts aimed at convincing the G8 leaders to forgive debt for African nations and enact fairer trade laws.In 2007, Al Gore helped to organize Live Earth, which was essentially Live Aid for climate change. Geldof was critical of the event, which he said lacked “a final goal.” “I would only organize this if I could go on stage and announce concrete environmental measures from the American presidential candidates, Congress, or major corporations,” Geldof said.Geldof made headlines again in March 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, when he helped pop singer Rita Ora design an emblem to promote the WHO and UN’s COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund.
In an interview with the Toronto Sun, Geldof gave Ora most of the credit for the logo. The man who mobilized the world for a single cause 35 years earlier also seemed less convinced that human beings—musicians or otherwise—were any match for humanity itself.“The Achilles heel of humanity is its hubris,” Geldof said. “We think that we can dominate everything but nature just comes along and wipes us out.“What’s positive is that people understand how fragile we are and they also understand the bravery of all the people who are working to help ... But that will fade over a very short period when we go back to the same old, same old. It’s simply a function of globalization and that’s not going anywhere.” Introduction [01:01] Do They Know It's Christmas ? (intro) [00:53] Come Back And Stay [07:10] PAUL YOUNG + ALISON MOYET That's The Way Love Is [04:51] PAUL YOUNG Every Time You Go Away [06:52]