

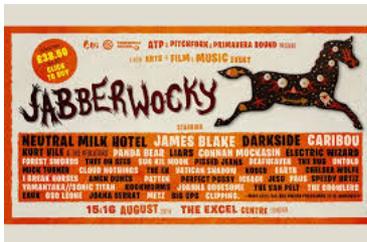
# **‘A thankless task’? – independent festival promotion in the UK**

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**John Williamson**

KISMIF, 19 July 2016

# All Tomorrow's Parties (ATP) – a short history



- **1999:** Bowie Weekender at Camber Sands.
- **2000:** Mogwai curate first ATP.
- **2002:** first American event curated by Sonic Youth
- **2007:** UK events move to Butlin's in Minehead; ATP begins collaborations with Primavera & Pitchfork Music Festivals.
- **2009:** expansion in USA and Australia.
- **2011:** I'll Be Your Mirror series (curated festivals, not in holiday camps) begins in Japan, USA, UK.
- **2012:** ATP Concerts Ltd goes into administration/ liquidation. New company formed and name bought back.
- **2013:** 'End of an Era' events at Camber Sands.
- **2014:** Cancellation of Jabberwocky festival.
- **2015:** More holiday camp events at Prestatyn, Wales.
- **2016:** Drive Like Jehu event cancelled; ATP closes.

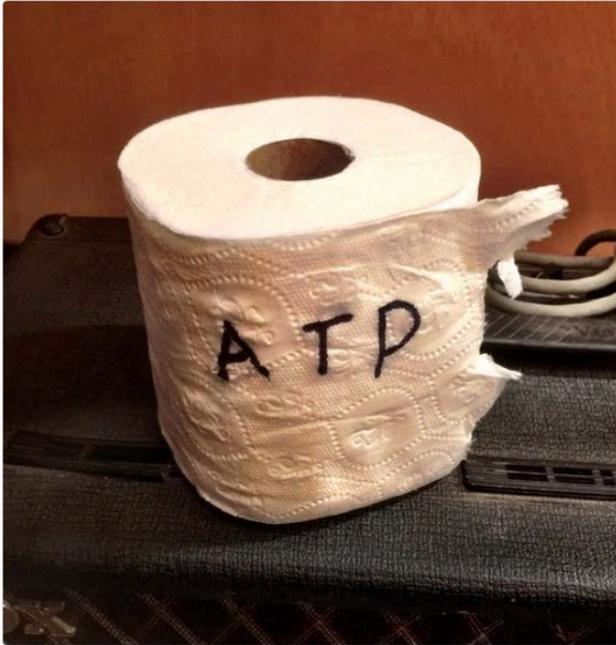
# All Tomorrow's Parties (ATP) – the end



Drive Like Jehu  
@DLJband

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.@ATPfestival CANCELS ATP curated by Drive Like Jehu in Manchester. Full story here: [tinyurl.com/djlatpfestival](https://tinyurl.com/djlatpfestival)



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ATP Festival @atpfestival · Apr 18

ATP Curated by Drive Like Jehu will no longer be going ahead. Refunds will be issued to all customers. More info: [atpfestival.com/newsview/16041...](https://atpfestival.com/newsview/16041...)

← ↻ 39 ❤️ 9 ⋮



ATP Festival

June 16 at 2:52pm · 🌐

ATP - R.I.P

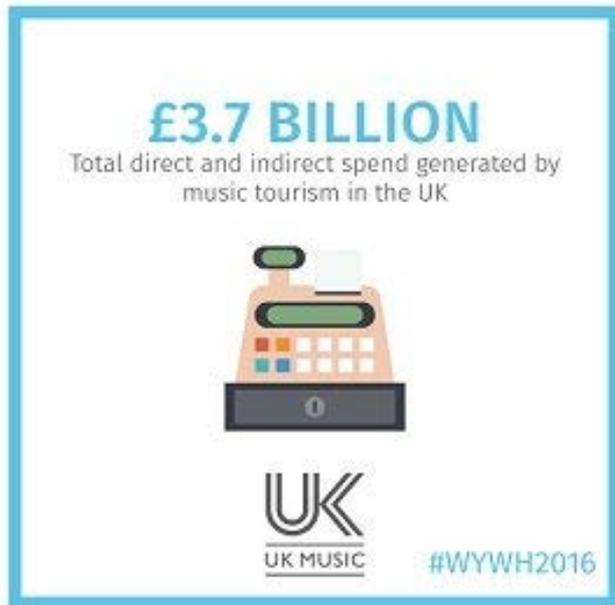
It is with deep sadness we are announcing that ATP Festivals and live promotions are closing down. After months of speculation, our funding for Iceland has been pulled and we are no longer able to continue so will be closing down the entire live side of ATP festivals and live promotions with immediate effect and going into administration.

ATP Iceland festival is no longer happening, but all our other UK shows will have new promoters appointed and tickets transferred (all purchased tickets remain valid with the new promoter). We will post details of the administrators and what to do for festival ticket refunds over the next week.

We are very sorry we could not make this work and have tried to survive throughout all our recent losses but we are no longer able to trade and have to accept we cannot go on.

Thank you to all our loyal customers who have supported us and incredible artists who have performed or curated for us over the years and made ATP so special while it lasted.

# Growth of the Live Music Industry



- **Frith (2007):** ‘for much of the last fifty years. . .a sector in decline’.
- **Page and Carey (2009):** value of live music in the UK overtakes that of recorded music.
- **Laing (2010):** calculates value of global live music industry as circa \$25billion.
- **UK Music (2015):** Gross Value Added of live music in the UK - **£924million**.
- **UK Music (2016):** total ‘direct and indirect spend generated by music tourism in the UK’ = **£3.7billion**.
- **Live Nation:** global turnover increased from \$2.9billion (2005) to **\$7.2billion** (2015).

# Six (interrelated) reasons. . .

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## PARTY WAILS

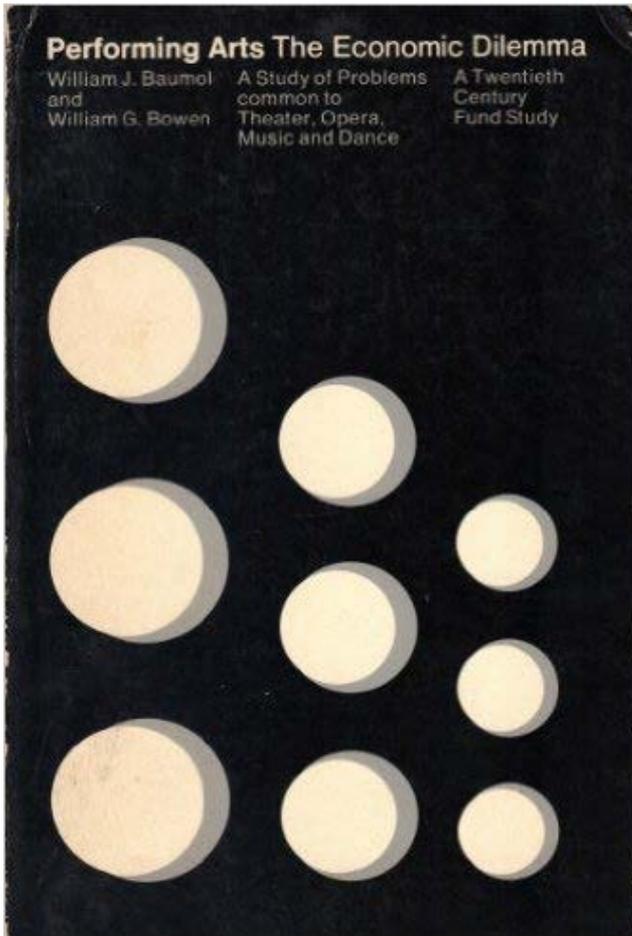
**FESTIVAL** and concert promoter All Tomorrow's Parties (ATP) keeps getting away with leaving music fans disappointed and suppliers out of pocket.

In 2012, ATP Concerts Ltd was voluntarily liquidated with debts of more than £2.6m after a string of poorly selling festivals. Running music festivals "is like going to the races", ATP director Barry Hogan told the music press at the time. Hogan announced that he was remodelling his companies, focusing on London shows and saying he hoped to pay back as many creditors as possible. In August 2014, however, he cancelled an event called Jabberwocky at London's ExCeL with just three days' notice, leaving many more people out of pocket. Some gig-goers had to wait eight months for refunds because they hadn't bought their tickets through established agencies, with guarantees to consumers, but from ATP's own website.

ATP kept staging gigs and planning festivals, though. Then, just before Christmas 2015, Companies House forcibly dissolved Hogan's ATP Presents Ltd for not filing accounts. Its debts are unknown due to that lack of filing, but last year it was taken to court for £132,000 by one creditor and for smaller sums by two others,

- **No economies of scale:** ATP had no significant interest beyond revenue from ticket sales.
- **Lack of additional income sources:** it was unable to attract investment/ largely rejected sponsorship.
- **Rising cost of 'talent':** pressure on artist fees due to lack of complimentary revenue from recorded music.
- **Competition for audiences and artists:** more festivals competing for the same artists → highest bidder wins.
- **Ticket prices:** placed in inelastic part of demand curve – i.e. raising prices more would reduce demand disproportionately.
- **A tarnished brand:** ATP seen as betraying audiences with poor customer relations and communication. (Some customers left out of pocket)

# Conclusions



- **Barry Hogan:**
  - Concert promotion = a ‘thankless task’.
  - ‘like going to the races . . . some win and some don’t’.
  - ‘saying a promoter losing money is like saying a butcher serves pork’ (all quotes from Jones 2013)
- **Cost disease** – not fatal for the live music industry, but for smaller, independent festivals.

 **John Cale**   
@therealjohncale

 Follow

regrettably, @therealjohncale's ATP shows now canceled. "we did our best to believe in the organizers, in the end, they let us all down" - jc

RETWEETS  
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- But also audience and artist expectations?