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# The Impact of Late Night Television Musical Performances on the Sale of Recorded Music

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## Introduction

Musical performances<sup>1</sup> on night-time television programs have been a part of American culture since the debut of *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1948, continuing through the 1960s with *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* and progressing to the robust lineup of today's current late night television hosts. Such performances have transformed our perception of artists, assisting them to build national awareness and to enhance their position in the marketplace.

## Overview

The purpose of this research study is to quantify the impact on sales from appearances by musical guests on eight late night television programs during a nine-month period, September 2008 through May 2009. The study analyzes a number of metrics, including the relevance of a performance on late night television to an artist album campaign, the impact of the performance on artist album sales, the genre of artists booked for late night television performances, the level of each genre's success, the relationship between the date of the performance and the album release date, and the relationship between the day of the week of the performance and the impact on sales. Finally, this study evaluates the overall impact on sales by musical performances on each of the late night television programs.

The results of this research will appeal to both music industry professionals and academics. It will assist talent buyers from late night television programs in better understanding their booking patterns and sales trends to determine what acts to consider for booking. Similarly, the research will better inform record labels, artist managers, and artists as to the potential impact of their performances of each late night television program so that they can weigh the cost/benefit of performing on each program. Educators will also be able to use the study as a tool to understand quantitative research methodologies which may inspire much needed and continued research in the field of the music industry.

## Previous Research

Over the years, late night television programs have featured thousands of live musical performances broadcast to millions of viewers. To date, there is very little quantitative research surrounding the impact on sales from performances on live television programs. The existing research primarily consists of anecdotal evidence that correlates an increase in album sales to live television performances on one-time event broadcasts (e.g., *Grammy Awards*) and daytime television programs (e.g., *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *The Today Show*). For example, *Friday Morning Quarterback* (fmqb.com) reported a 234% increase in sales of Pink's recent release *Funhouse* following her performance on the *2010 Grammy Awards*, giving her the greatest percentage increase in sales of all performers at the *2010 Grammys*.<sup>2</sup> *Billboard* also reported that album sales overall rose by 3.3% (up 6.5 million units) compared with the number of records sold the week prior to the *Grammys* (*Billboard* February 10, 2010). Additionally, a *Billboard* poll of the music industry's top executives, entitled "Maximum Exposure" cited musical performances on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* as "a guaranteed home run" in increasing artists' record sales. Subsequently, the executives coined the term "the Oprah Effect" for her ability to influence sales as a result of a performance on her program (*Billboard* September 27, 2008).

## Methodology

Performance listings for this study were assembled from the *Late Night Guest Archive*.<sup>3</sup> Album sales data were computed using Nielsen SoundScan<sup>4</sup> and consisted of album sales during a four-week period—the week prior to the late night television performance, the week of the performance, and the two consecutive weeks following the performance. Nielsen Television Index (NTI)<sup>5</sup> was referenced to obtain the size of each television program's audience. The average television audience size was then computed by garnering the audience size throughout "sweeps week" for each program during the fall, winter, and spring ratings periods in 2008 and 2009.

Each artist, and his or her subsequent record release, were categorized into one of five musical genres: rock, pop, rhythm & blues (R&B), rap, and country. The genre of each act was determined by referencing allmusic.com<sup>6</sup>, a comprehensive reference source of all genres and styles of music. The data from each performance were sorted into various cat-

egories, such as the day of the week of the performance, date of the performance, the program’s broadcast network, and unit increase and sales percentage increase for each artist release.

## Research Results:

### Programs

The following late night television programs are included in the Study:

- *Late Show with David Letterman (Letterman)*
- *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno (Leno)*
- *Jimmy Kimmel Live! (Kimmel)*
- *Late Night with Conan O’Brien (O’Brien)*
- *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon (Fallon)*
- *The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson (Ferguson)*
- *Last Call with Carson Daly (Daly)*
- *Saturday Night Live (SNL)*

### Number of Performances

732 musical performances took place on the eight late night television programs during the period of September 2008 through May 2009. 202 were repeat performances, meaning they occurred on a rerun of the initial program. Therefore, this study examines a total net of 530 performances. 350 different acts performed during the sample period, and 114 artists performed on multiple programs (see Figure 1).

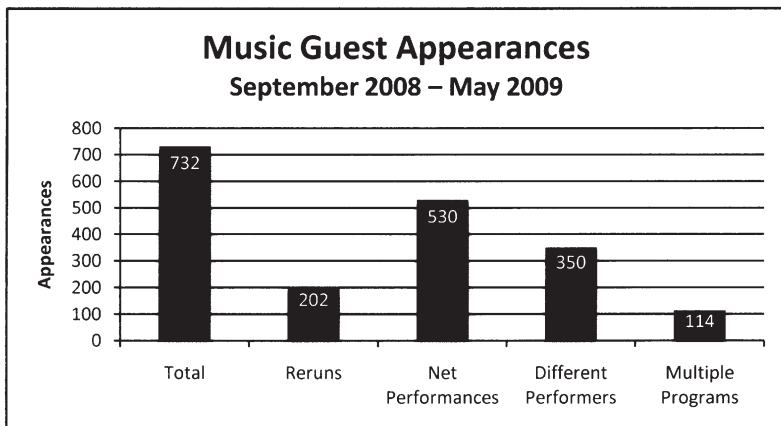


Figure 1. Late night music guest appearances.

## Share of Appearances by Network

All of the performances took place on one of three broadcast television networks—NBC, CBS, and ABC. 57% of the appearances took place on NBC (*Leno*, *O'Brien*, *Fallon*, *Daly*, and *SNL*), 26% on CBS (*Letterman* and *Ferguson*), and 17% on ABC (*Kimmel*).

## Share of Appearances by Program

*The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* aired 22% of all live music appearances during the study period and represented the largest market share of all of the late night programs. The *Late Show with David Letterman* was next with 18%, and in third place was *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* with 17% of all appearances. These three programs accounted for over 57% of the total live music appearances during the nine-month sample period. *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* maintained a 14% share of all appearances but was taken off the air on February 20, 2009. *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon* replaced *O'Brien* on March 2, 2009, and garnered a 7% share of the appearances in just three months. *Last Call with Carson Daly* and *The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson* had the smallest shares of appearances among the daily late night programs that remained on air during the sample period with a 12% and 11% market share, respectively. *Saturday Night Live* is the only weekly program included in the study, totaling 4% of all appearances (see Figure 2).

## Average Number of Appearances Per Week

The most precise indicator of a program's market share in terms of total live music appearances was the average number of appearances per week on each program.

*Leno* achieved the top spot with an average of 3.4 appearances per week. *Jimmy Fallon* was second with 3.0 musical appearances per week, and *Letterman* (2.7), *Kimmel* (2.6), and *O'Brien* (2.5) came in a close third, fourth, and fifth. *Last Call with Carson Daly* (1.7) and *Ferguson* (1.3) finished last with the least amount of musical appearances per week. *SNL*, a weekly program, averaged less than one appearance per week (0.5) (see Figure 3).

## Genre of Artist

As previously stated, artists were categorized into one of five musical genres: rock, pop, R&B, rap, or country.<sup>7</sup> Performances in these five

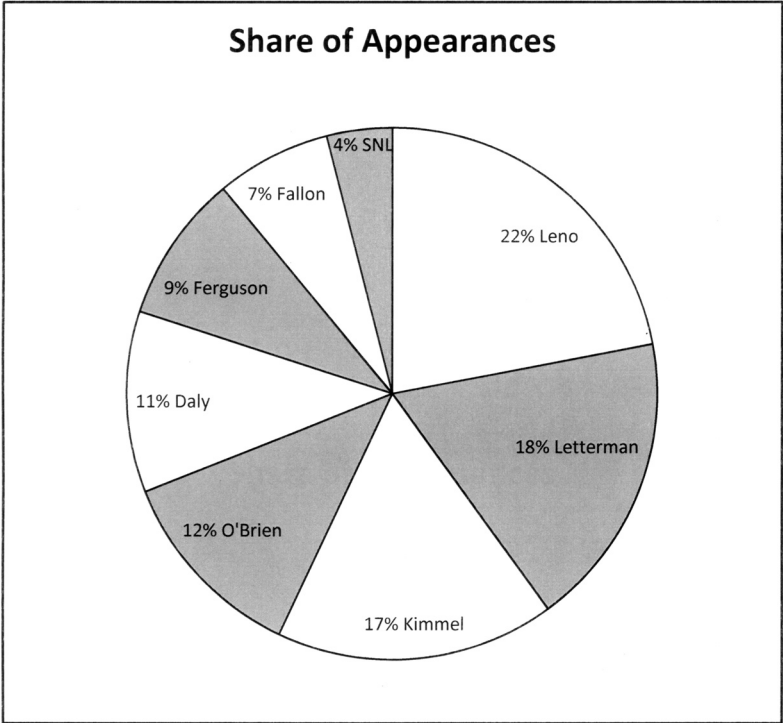


Figure 2. Share of appearances.

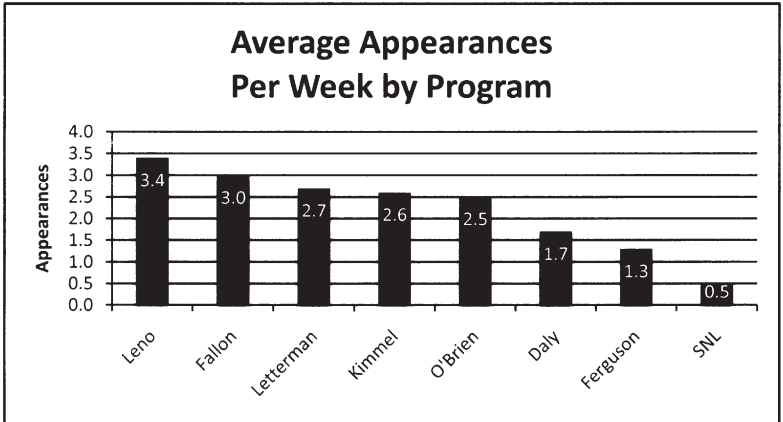


Figure 3. Average Appearances Per Week By Program.

genres comprised 96% of all appearances during the sample period. Rock acts comprised the largest percentage of late night program performances, with 67% (355 of 530 appearances). Examples of rock acts include All-American Rejects, Bang Camaro, Bon Iver, Scott Weiland, and Kings of Leon. Country artists, including Dierks Bentley, Lady Antebellum, Darius Rucker, Eli Young Band, Jason Aldean, and Kenny Chesney came in a distant second, representing only 10% of the performances. Urban acts, comprised of R&B (Anthony Hamilton, Heather Headley, Jazmine Sullivan, Jamie Foxx, and Keyshia Cole) and rap (Young Jeezy, The Game, and T.I.) achieved shares of 8% and 7% respectively. Pop acts (4%), such as New Kids on the Block, Lady Gaga, Leona Lewis, and Pussycat Dolls, had the smallest share of performances on late night programs (see Figure 4).

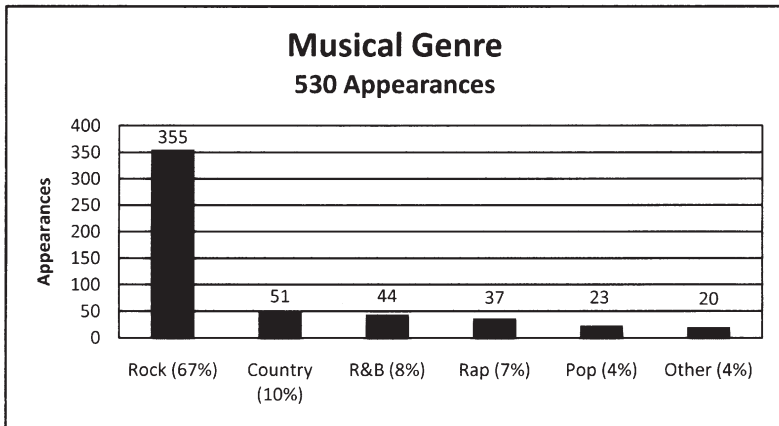


Figure 4. Musical genre of artists.

Among the eight programs, the two that averaged the highest percentage of rock artist appearances were *Daly* (87%) and *O'Brien* (82%), scoring well above the 67% rock bookings average share. *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* booked the lowest percentage of rock (52%) and country acts (6%) while presenting the highest percentage of urban (30%) and pop (9%) acts. *SNL* had the second highest percentage of guest appearances by urban acts (27%). Only 9% of the acts appearing on *O'Brien* were in the urban genre, the lowest percentage of all late night programs. *The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson* booked the highest percentage of country acts (15%), with *Fallon* and *Leno* (13%) coming in tied for second. *Letterman* and *Fallon*

booked the lowest percentage of pop acts on their programs with this genre representing an average of 3% of each of their bookings.

### Appearances and Sales Trends: Day of the Week of Musical Appearance

The weeknight artists appeared on the programs was evenly distributed among Monday through Friday for each of the seven daily programs. 20% of the musical appearances took place on each of Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, constituting 60% of the total performances. Monday and Friday accounted for 18% of the performances each, slightly under the 20% average bookings on the other weekdays. There were 22 artist appearances on Saturday, via *SNL*, which comprised 4% of the total performances; these were the only weekend appearances included in the study (see Figure 5).

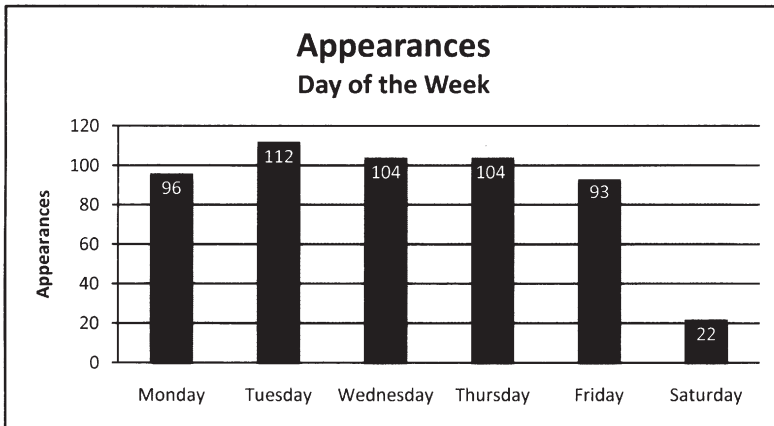


Figure 5. Appearances: day of the week.

Friday performances were the least likely to generate an increase in sales for an artist. Monday and Wednesday performances accounted for 23% in sales increase each, with Tuesday (22%) and Thursday (20%) coming in a close second and third. There was a substantial drop off in the increase of sales as a result of Friday appearances, as only 12% of the total album sales spikes took place after Friday performances.



## Appearances in Relation to Album Release Date (Street Date)

Each artist's late night television appearance is taken into account as it relates to his or her most recent album release date. The performances are categorized into several date ranges reflecting the time between the album release date and the broadcast date:

- prior to release date
- week of release date
- within 7, 14, 21, and 28 days from release date
- 2, 3 and 4 months after release date
- more than four months after the release date

Approximately one third of all performances took place four months or more after the artist's album release, one third took place within one month from the record's street date, and one third of the performances took place between one and four months from the street date. The largest percentage of artist appearances (182) took place four months after the release of the album. The second largest grouping, 145 performances, took place fourteen days from the album release date.

## Album Sales by Week

According to Nielsen SoundScan data, an aggregate of 32 million albums were sold in the four-weeks surrounding the 530 appearances during the study period, including the week prior to appearance, the week during appearance, the week after appearance, and two weeks after the appearance on each of the late night programs. The largest percentage of sales took place during the week of performances as 11.6 million albums or 36% of total sales occurred during this time. 27% of sales (8.9 million albums) took place one week after the performance date, and 19% (6.2 million albums) occurred two weeks after the performances. 17% of overall sales (5.4 million albums) transpired the week prior to the artist appearances (see Table 1).

## Album Sales Spike: All Programs

According to the Nielsen SoundScan data only 14% of the appearances were accompanied by a spike in album sales within three weeks of the performance. Therefore, 86% of the acts performing on late night shows from September 2008 to May 2009 did not experience an increase

in album sales during the four-week period surrounding their appearance, beginning the week prior to the performance date and continuing for the three subsequent weeks (see Figure 6).

Hundreds of thousands of viewers watch each late night program. The number of promotional announcements for those programs is substantial. Given consumers’ unfettered access to purchase music via digital service providers, including iTunes, Amazon, and others, the low percentage in sales spikes after an appearance seems remarkably low. Notably,

Album Sales by Week		
Date	Units Sold	Share
Week prior to performance	5,443,472	17%
Week of performance	11,694,108	37%
First week after	8,961,504	27%
Second week after	6,231,598	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,330,682</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1. Album sales by week.

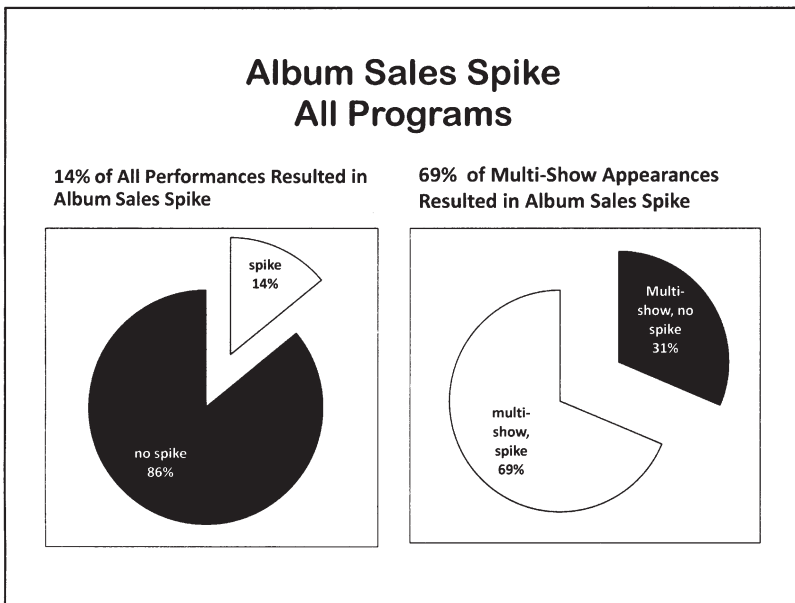


Figure 6. Album sales spike.

however, artists who appeared on more than one of the eight late night programs experienced an album sales spike 69% of the time. One could argue that this spike is because bigger acts already enjoy a larger demand for their services, but perhaps the performance on late night programs has created such opportunities. For example, Adele, a U.K.-based recording artist best exemplifies this theory. Adele appeared on seven of the eight late night television programs, and sales for her debut album *19* increased an aggregate of 79,000 units following those appearances.

### Results: By Program

In analyzing artists' appearances, the study evaluates five different criteria for each program. First, Nielsen Television Index (NTI) data is used to determine the size of the audience for each program. The *NTI Audience Reports* were averaged over three ratings periods, during "sweeps weeks" in fall 2008, winter 2009, and spring 2009. Second, the percentage of spiked album sales is calculated among all the acts performing on each program using Nielsen SoundScan data during a four-week period beginning with the week prior to the artist's appearance and continuing for the three subsequent weeks. The album closest to the artist's appearance date is the only release taken into account to calculate sales results. Next, the average increase in the percentage of sales, and in the number of units sold, is calculated for the group of acts on each program that experienced a spike in sales within three weeks of the appearance date based on the week with the largest sales spike. The last set of data examines the musical guest who experienced the largest percentage increase and the largest unit increase in recent album sales.

### *Last Call with Carson Daly*

*Last Call with Carson Daly* had the smallest audience of all the late night programs, averaging 815,000 viewers per night. Only 3 of the 52 artists appearing on *Daly* experienced a spike in sales during the three-week sample period after their appearances. Thus, just 5% of the acts increased album sales following their performances. *Daly*, who averaged just 1.7 musical performances per week, coupled with the lowest audience viewership, was 9% below the 14% average of spiked album sales among the eight programs. The three acts that increased album sales on *Last Call with Carson Daly* raised unit sales by an average of 42% and increased the number of records sold by an average of 420 units from the week prior to

their appearances. The artist experiencing the largest percentage increase and largest unit spike was Lykke Li, who increased sales of her 2008 Atlantic Records debut *Youth Novels* by 61%, for a total increase of 525 units over the week prior to her broadcast performance.

### ***Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson***

The *Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson* averaged 1.95 million viewers, which is the fifth highest of the eight programs. However, *Ferguson* averaged the lowest number of musical appearances per week, and just 3 of 44 (or 7%) of the appearances experienced a spike in album sales after an appearance on the program. The average sales percentage increase from the three acts experiencing a bump in sales was 33%, and the average unit increase was the same as artists who performed on *Daly*, 420 units. Of the musical acts booked on *Ferguson*, 15% were country artists, the highest percentage of any of the late night shows. Likewise, *Ferguson*'s most successful act appearing on the program was Heidi Newfield, a country music artist who increased album sales of her Curb Records debut *What Am I Waiting For* by 775 units, a 72% increase compared to the week prior to her performance.

### ***Jimmy Kimmel Live!***

*Jimmy Kimmel Live!* had the second smallest television audience, with 1.7 million viewers per night, from September 2008 through May 2009. Only 5 of the 78 acts (6%) appearing on *Kimmel* experienced an increase in album sales following their appearances, which is the second lowest among all eight late night programs. Album sales following appearances on *Kimmel* averaged a modest increase of 33%, but the average increase in unit sales was 1,615 units—the third best return among the programs. *Kimmel* booked the highest percentage of urban acts of all the programs, and Jazmine Sullivan, a burgeoning R&B act from Philadelphia, experienced the highest unit increase in sales of all the acts appearing on the show. Sullivan's sales of her album *Fearless*, released on J Records, spiked 2,535 units after her performance of February 8, 2009.

### ***Late Night with Jimmy Fallon***

Despite having the third lowest audience ratings, with a viewership of 1.47 million, *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon* had the third highest percentage sales spikes of the eight late night programs. 7 of 39 (or 18%) of

the appearances experienced a boost in album sales following a performance. However, *Fallon's* average percentage increase in sales (22%) and average unit increase (961 units) ranks near the bottom of the eight programs. Despite the fact that The Roots, a widely renowned urban act, performs nightly as the house band on *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, urban artist bookings on that show were only 3 points above the 15% average of urban appearances on all programs. Dr. Dog, Park the Van's independent rock recording artist, experienced the greatest percentage gain (377%) and unit gain (1,666) after its *Fallon* appearance on April 3, 2009.

### ***Late Night with Conan O'Brien***

*Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, averaging two million viewers per night, was fourth among all eight late night programs. 18% of acts appearing experienced a spike in sales within three weeks of their performances, which rivals *Fallon* for the highest increase in sales among the programs. Artists who appeared on *O'Brien*, and experienced a spike in sales during the four-week period surrounding their appearances, averaged a 40% increase in sales and averaged a 1,270 unit increase. Adele had the largest percentage increase (68%) and Zac Brown Band had the largest unit increase (4,195) among all acts appearing on the show.

### **Late Night War: *Letterman* vs. *Leno***

The late night war between *Letterman* and *Leno* has been heavily publicized. *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno's* average audience exceeded 5.25 million viewers compared to *Letterman's* 4.2 million viewers per episode. However, artists were more likely to encounter a spike in sales after appearing on *Letterman* (21%) rather than *Leno* (14%). The average percentage increase from each of the spiked performances on both programs was very close; *Leno's* acts increased sales by 25% and *Letterman's* acts saw a 26% rise. Acts appearing on *Leno* that saw a sales spike experienced an average unit increase of 2,565 units—more than 1,500 units above *Letterman's* average increase of 1,020 units. *Late Show with David Letterman's* top performers were independent rock band Ra Ra Riot (increased album sales of 46%) and popular music act The Fray whose album sales increased by 5,820 units. *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno's* top two performers were country music acts, Miley Cyrus (154% album sales increase) and Sugarland (11,685 units). *Leno* ranked near the top of country artist bookings of all the late night programs.

## *Saturday Night Live*

The only show in the study broadcast on weekends is *Saturday Night Live*. *SNL* also airs for ninety minutes—thirty minutes longer than any of the daily programs—and features two performances from each artist. It had the largest audience among all late night programs with seven million viewers per night. Artists performing on *SNL* had the greatest success, as 35% experienced an increase in sales following their performances. *SNL*'s acts also had the largest average percentage album sales increase (45%) and average unit sales increase (4,965 units). The breakout act appearing on *SNL* during the 2008-2009 broadcast season was U.K. debut artist Adele. Her record *19* experienced a 132% increase in sales after her performance, raising sales a whopping 14,140 units, the largest sales increase among all acts in the study.

## Case Study: Adele and The Heavy

From September 2008 to May 2009, Adele performed on seven of the eight late night talk show programs to support the release of her XL Recordings debut album *19*. Sales of *19* spiked after performances on six of the seven programs totaling an aggregate increase of 79,000 units. All of Adele's performances took place more than six months after the album's release. After selling modestly in the U.S., she was booked to perform "Chasing Pavements" and "Cold Shoulder" as *SNL*'s musical guest on October 18, 2008. The show's viewership was bolstered by guest host U.S. Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin, as 17 million viewers tuned into the program—the largest audience of that season. The following day, *19* topped the iTunes album charts and "Chasing Pavements"<sup>8</sup> moved into the top 25 chart on Amazon.com. *19* sold 24,926 units during the week following Adele's *SNL* performance, far eclipsing *19*'s previous top-selling week of 11,850 units. The album sales increase of more than 14,000 units was the largest of any of the 350 performers included in the study. It catapulted Adele's career in the United States nearly to the top of the charts. *SNL*'s sizable impact on sales can be partly attributed to the additional exposure each act receives due to the format and schedule of the program. As mentioned, *SNL* averaged the largest audience viewership (7 million) of any of the eight late night programs, and it features two performances for each musical guest (while the daily programs only feature one performance). *SNL* also has an extended promotional period (one week) in which to publicize each of the show's weekly episodes.

English rock band The Heavy appeared on the *Late Show with David Letterman* on January 18, 2010 as a relatively unknown act in the United States. Upon the band's performance of its song "How Do You Like Me Now?" David Letterman placed his arm around vocalist Kelvin Swaby and proclaimed, "now there's your American Idol." Letterman subsequently asked the band to "do it again," the first time any artist had been asked to perform an encore on the show.<sup>9</sup> The Heavy's album, *The House That Dirt Built*, experienced an incredible 537% increase in sales over the prior week. Consequently, the song was used in a national television campaign for the Kia Sorento automobile, premiering at the 2010 Super Bowl.

Both of these success stories demonstrate the potential impact of personal appearances on late night television programs in today's climate.

## Conclusion

The record industry is in a much different era than the early days of *The Ed Sullivan Show* and *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*. Technology offers more choices to the consumer which dilutes the impact of any single program or performance on network television. Cable television has exploded, offering hundreds of channels, while video games and home computers have even replaced the television in some households. The decline in compact disc sales over the past seven years has forever altered the shape of the music industry forcing record labels and artists to make tough financial decisions. Record labels might ask the question, does it make sense to spend \$5,000 to fly an act to New York City or Los Angeles to perform on a late night program if only 14% of appearances receive a bump in sales? Artists may wonder if they should consider re-routing a tour, risking guaranteed revenue, to make an appearance on these programs.

The elite nature of artists selected to perform on these programs, however, offers an interesting talk piece for the record label and artist management team. From the pool of more than 100,000 artist albums released annually, only 350 artists performed on late night television programs from September 2008 through May 2009. These artists comprise an exclusive group of performers who were afforded the opportunity to use late night television as a platform to elevate their status in the eyes of music industry professionals and consumers. While not all acts appearing on late night television experience an increase in sales in the three weeks following their appearances, this exclusive "late night club" status may assist

in securing tour dates, procuring local or national press, and enticing radio programmers to pay attention to a group's recent single. For example, The Redwalls, signed to Drexel University's student-run record label MAD Dragon Records, performed on the *Late Show with David Letterman* on January 23, 2008. Following the performance the band was featured by *Philadelphia Weekly* in an article covering a MAD Dragon Records concert.<sup>10</sup> An Associated Press (AP) journalist took notice of the article and wrote a feature story on The Redwalls and MAD Dragon Records/Drexel University that was syndicated to over 800 AP affiliated publications in the United States. Subsequently, the band was featured in *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *Forbes*,<sup>11</sup> *The New York Times*, and other top newsweeklies, as well as monthly and trade journals.

Artist exposure on late night television continues to live online in many formats long after the initial airing. Hulu, a web site offering streaming video from performances on programs affiliated with ABC and NBC, allows consumers to watch late night television programs from its online archive. Additionally, every day music web logs (blogs) post links to notable performances from many of the late night programs. In December 2009, Stereogum, a music blog posted, "The Top 12 Performances from Late Night Programs in 2009," which included musical performances from the Arctic Monkeys on *Letterman*, Dirty Projectors on *Fallon*, and Weezer on *O'Brien*.<sup>12</sup>

Traditionally, a very small percentage of releases achieve gold (500,000 units sold), platinum (one million units), or multi-platinum (multi-million) status in the United States. For every hundred records released each year, perhaps only one album will attain platinum certification. The cost of recording and promoting an artist signed to a major label can easily reach several hundred thousand dollars, and a positive return is far from guaranteed. Artists like Adele, and many others, have taken their careers to a new level as a result of late night television exposure. Despite the excessive cost and limited number of acts that break out and sell big, most labels will still accept the relatively low cost to fly an artist to New York or Los Angeles if there is a possibility the appearance could serve as the artist's "big break."

Various additional factors can impact the success of an artist's performance on late night programs. Hard work, timing, luck, and talent are determinative factors for any successful business venture, and the music industry is no exception. The Counting Crows exemplifies such a success



story. The band performed on *Saturday Night Live* on January 15, 1994 as a relatively unknown musical guest, supporting their debut release *August and Everything After* (Geffen Records). Interestingly, Counting Crows defied conventional wisdom and used their late night appearance on *SNL* to play “Round Here,” a new single, instead of “Mr. Jones,” the band’s current single. The reaction to their incredible performance secured the band a March 1994 booking on the *Late Show with David Letterman*. Madonna was the featured guest on *Letterman* the same evening. As luck would have it, as a result of Madonna’s coarse language during her interview, the episode was the most censored in television talk show history and garnered the highest ratings in the history of *Letterman*. Following these appearances, Counting Crows’ album sales soared as the band sold 18,000, 35,000, 55,000, 75,000, and 90,000 albums per week after the appearance, and continued to sell more than 80,000 units per week for over 25 consecutive weeks, ultimately totaling nearly 7 million copies of *August and Everything After* sold in the United States to date. Similarly, Adele’s previously-mentioned *SNL* appearance coinciding with Sarah Palin’s *SNL* debut achieved that show’s highest ratings in years. In both cases, the artist’s stellar performance was instrumental in converting viewers, while timing and luck helped procure the opportunity to take their careers to the next level.

The results of this study provide a framework to assist artists, managers, and record labels in evaluating how best to strategically target appearances on late night television programs. Acts appearing on multiple programs have a much better chance of gaining a return on investment. 69% of acts appearing on more than one late night television program experienced sales spikes after their appearances. Adele appeared on seven of eight late night programs with her appearance on *Saturday Night Live* serving as the platform to break her album in the United States. Additionally, rock music is the predominant genre of musical artist appearances on late night television, maintaining a 67% share of all performances. This result is not surprising, as touring has been essential for rock acts to build audiences for many years; the connection is further enhanced on a national level through these programs. On the other hand, urban and pop acts rely more on radio airplay and music videos to reach an audience. And country artists spend many days—and years—on the road connecting with audiences through live performances (but their audience is not typically aligned with late night television program audiences).

The study also indicates that musical appearances are evenly distributed across the days of the work week. Friday's television audience, traditionally smaller than other weekdays, is an indicator that performances on that night are less likely to boost sales.

Moreover, both developing and established artists recognize the potential impact of appearances on late night television programs. For example, developing acts are finding their way onto some of the less-established late night programs (*Daly, Ferguson*), performing approximately two to four months after the release of their albums. When the record builds momentum, these acts begin to graduate to *Letterman, Leno, and Kimmel*. Established acts also continue to set up their highly-anticipated releases through performances on several of the top-rated programs. U2, for example, performed on the *Late Show with David Letterman* for five consecutive nights in March 2009 to build awareness for its new release, *No Line on the Horizon*.

The programs with the highest percentage of sales spikes are *Saturday Night Live*, the *Late Show with David Letterman*, and *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. *SNL* maintains the largest television audiences while *Letterman, O'Brien, and Fallon*, avid music enthusiasts, offer a high level of involvement with musical acts. The largest average unit gain and percentage sales increase derive from *SNL, Letterman, Leno, and O'Brien*, which maintain the largest television audiences.

Finally, host endorsements and testimonials have also greatly impacted record sales after appearances on many of the late night programs. Letterman's support of The Heavy and Counting Crows, and Jimmy Fallon's active tweets on his Twitter account after he is impressed by a performance on his program, certainly contribute to an act's potential sales spike.

## Future Research

Similar research may be conducted to determine the impact on sales from appearances on daytime programs and events like the Grammy Awards to formalize anecdotal evidence into a comprehensive study. Perhaps an index can be created to draw a relationship between audience viewership and corresponding sales. The impact of single-song downloads may also be integrated into this future study.

## Endnotes

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1. Performances are referred to as “appearances” throughout this study to distinguish between programs that feature one, and more than one, performance by an artist on a show.
2. Other artists who experienced high-percentage increases in sales were Dave Matthews Band, whose *Big Whiskey and the GrooGrux King* experienced an increase of 114%, Beyonce whose *I Am... Sasha Fierce* experienced an 101% increase in sales, and Grammy Award winner Zac Brown Band, whose *The Foundation* experienced a sales increase of 82%, upon entering the *Billboard* Top 10 for the first time.
3. [http://www.petersreviews.com/late\\_night\\_guest\\_archive.html](http://www.petersreviews.com/late_night_guest_archive.html)
4. <http://en-us.nielsen.com/tab/industries/media/entertainment>
5. <http://mediaresearchhub.ssrc.org/nielsen-media-research-nielsen-television-index-nti>
6. [http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=32:amg/info\\_pages/a\\_about.html](http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=32:amg/info_pages/a_about.html)
7. For purposes of this study, performers in the genres of R&B and rap are often categorized together as “urban.”
8. “Adele enjoys an ‘SNL’ bump” *Newsday* 20 October 2008. [http://weblogs.newsday.com/entertainment/music/blog/2008/10/adele\\_enjoys\\_an\\_snl\\_bump.html](http://weblogs.newsday.com/entertainment/music/blog/2008/10/adele_enjoys_an_snl_bump.html).
9. <http://dappered.com/2010/02/the-heavy-on-letterman/>
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