



Music Stories / Good practices Events United Kingdom Greening

"How Massive Attack created the greenest concert ever"

"It is hoped that the event will be used as a case study and influence the way music concerts are organised."

98% reduction in power emissions, 89% reduction in food and catering emissions, 70% reduction in equipment transport emissions, 73% reduction in artist travel emissions, 32% reduction in audience travel emissions. Massive Attack's first Bristol homecoming show in five years was unique for many reasons. But it will remain historic because it broke the world record for producing the lowest carbon emissions ever, according to a new study by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

As Massive Attack's Robert Del Naja put it, it was "a blueprint for the way live music can be produced". All the power for the site came from batteries powered by renewable energy, all the food was plant-based and the toilets were compostable. There were also chartered trains after the show, a fleet of free electric buses to take attendees to the station and a VIP bar for those who arrived by public transport.

The report compared emissions from Massive Attack's show, known as Act 1.5, with emissions from a hypothetical standard outdoor live music event. Act 1.5 produced 98% less electricity emissions than comparable shows, the report concluded. Catering emissions were also reduced

by 89% and transport emissions by 70% thanks to vegan food and a fleet of electric vehicles. Mark Donne, lead producer of ACT 1.5, said to BBC that the show was the "cleanest, greenest festival event ever staged".

In the UK alone, the music industry generates around 540,000 tonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide or other gases with a global warming potential) a year, most of which comes from live shows. The members of Massive Attack have long been concerned about this.

Starting with a review of their own practices, the band commissioned the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of Manchester to explore ways to significantly reduce the emissions associated with live music touring. The Tyndall Centre researchers identified a wide range of opportunities, particularly in the areas of transport, energy, food and waste. To show the rest of the industry what is possible the Tyndall Centre published a Roadmap to Super Low Carbon Live Music.

Act 1.5 festival in Bristol in August 2024 was a showcase for this work as it took steps never before seen at such a large-scale event. It became the world's first-ever 100% battery-powered festival, it served entirely plant-based catering, and offered free electric shuttle buses to help fans travel home after the show.

Studies have shown that the majority of emissions during a tour come from the travel of the audience. The venue for Act 1.5 was chosen because of its limited car parking, making walking, cycling and public transport the only realistic options for most people. Priority was also given to local people, with sales for the first 48 hours open only to people with a Bristol postcode. The ACT 1.5 festival hosted over 32,000 fans. The name is a reference to the global warming threshold that countries have agreed to try to meet by 2015.

Although the concert was "carbon negative," the band followed traditional CO₂ offset strategies and planted 1,949 native oak trees in North Somerset.

Professor Carly McLachlan and Dr Chris Jones of the Tyndall Centre pointed out in the report that "Act 1.5 has demonstrated that it is possible to run a significant outdoor event entirely from batteries without any diesel generator back up".

You can read the report [here](#).

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Main Photo: Johanna Bocher

Photo source

Other photo: The Tyndall Centre