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A New Field In Music Production: Metaverse Concerts

Müzik Üretiminde Yeni Bir Alan: Metaverse Konserleri

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ABSTRACT

Music is an important communicative power for humanity and the power of music is advancing and getting stronger together with the mass media that develops in parallel with the technological developments. The physical concert structure of music, which only the immediate environment can access, first turned into an imaginary music field with the radios. Later, these imaginary musical areas became shows where auditory activities were visualized with the spread of television. Visual shows, on the other hand, have been moved to higher levels in digital media, and finally, they are transformed into virtual reality by passing to virtual environments that are included with avatars. This whole process transforms the one-way communication style of music into two-way communication. Music performances, which turned into shows held in virtual spaces, completed the biggest step towards reaching millions with metaverse concerts, and succeeded in reviving the music market, which had necessarily stagnated during the pandemic period. Metaverse concerts, which became widespread in this period, transform the audience, who attend the concerts with their avatars, from the position of passive concert listeners to an audience profile that begins to take an active role in concerts and shows. Audiences, who become active through their avatars, begin to have a direct presence in virtual environments, with their new position flying, floating, changing costumes and shape-shifting, directing their song selections, accompanying and dancing songs by interacting directly with singer avatars. In this study, the freedom environment and comfort of movement provided by metaverse environments will be emphasized. Examples of metaverse concerts that took place in recent years and the artist-audience interaction that took place in these concerts will be given.

ÖZ

Müzik insanlık için önemli bir iletişimsel güçtür ve teknolojik gelişmelere paralel olarak gelişen kitle iletişim araçları ile birlikte, müziğin gücü ilerlemekte ve güçlenmektedir. Müziğin, sadece yakın çevrenin erişebildiği fiziksel dinleti yapısı önce radyolarla birlikte hayali bir müzik alanına dönüşmüş; daha sonra bu hayali müzik alanları televizyonların yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte işitsel etkinliklerin görselleştiği şovlar haline almıştır. Görsel şovlar ise dijital medyada üst düzeylere taşınmakta ve son olarak da avatarlarla dahil olunan sanal ortamlara geçerek sanal bir gerçeklik haline dönüşmektedir. Tüm bu süreç müziğin tek yönlü iletişim şeklini geliştirerek çift yönlü iletişim şekline dönüştürmektedir. Sanal alanlarda gerçekleşen şovlara dönüşen müzik performansları, metaverse konserleriyle birlikte milyonlara ulaşma yolundaki en büyük adımını tamamlamış ve özellikle pandemi döneminde zorunlu olarak durağanlaşan müzik piyasasını tekrar canlandırmayı başarmıştır. Bu dönemde yaygınlaşan metaverse konserleri, konserlere avaturlarıyla katılan izleyicileri pasif konser dinleyicisi konumundan çıkararak aktif bir izleyici profili haline dönüştürmektedir. Aktif bir hale gelen izleyiciler avaturları aracılığıyla, uçan, yüzen, kostüm ve şekil değiştiren, şarkı seçimlerini yönlendiren, şarkıcı avaturlarıyla doğrudan etkileşime geçerek şarkılara eşlik ederek dans eden yeni konumuyla sanal ortamlarda doğrudan varlık göstermeye başlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmada metaverse ortamlarının sağladığı özgürlük ortamı ve hareket rahatlığı üzerinde durulacak; son yıllarda gerçekleşen metaverse konserleri ve bu konserlerde gerçekleşen sanatçı izleyici etkileşimine örnekler verilecektir.

INTRODUCTION

Music is communicational in nature. Throughout human history, sound, as an artistic performance, has had great importance and vital effects on people as a communicative force, regardless of what purpose, in which culture or in which place it is performed. The communicative value of music, especially in terms of its representation potential, has benefited greatly from the development of mass media. From radio as an imaginary field of music; and then to television and cinema as ideal places to visualize musical representation; most recently, it continues to progress on a path towards new digital media environments where this communicative potential is expanded. These new digital media environments enable a union between different approaches and the expression possibilities of music, transforming all forms of audio representation and marking the beginning of a new era.

Prior to the development of the media, spaces devoted to musical performances had to be places that were easily accessible and known by audience. These physical imperatives began to gradually disappear with the advent of radio. Music performed in public and traditional places (theatres, assembly halls, opera houses, etc.) then spread to the modern world from a single audible source: the radio receiver. The beginning of listening to music from radio stations with the help of radio receivers allowed the spread and creation of new music genres. However, the radio provided a one-sided communication and the listener had to be content with just listening. According to Bruckman (1997:73), radio did not provide a democratic environment, but music should have two-way communication and the listener should not be content with just listening. The fact that radio has a one-way communication due to its nature has led to new searches in the representation of music.

In addition to the auditory power of music, its structure that can be strengthened by visual performances has made the use of screens an effective area for musical representation. The musical representations that splashed onto the television screen enabled auditory shows and visual shows to be intertwined and made accessible from all over the world thanks to the screens. Television has become the perfect broadcast companion for the musical field as an extension of what is already happening in radio: a multi-media stage that can reach millions of seats that would never fit in a theatre, movie theater or stadium. Thus television became a fundamental representative of music in all its forms, technological changes and representations.

Despite all this, television found itself in the same position as the radio. Its one-sided nature made real interaction impossible. In Negroponte's words (cited by Gertrudix §

Getrudix, 2012:112), television was no longer sufficient, especially in these areas where interaction is very important. New searches continued to save the audience from the passive position. Music, which has become a growing force throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, has started to consolidate the liberation in the field of activity with digital media. Music, which found different areas and various places in the digital environment, had the opportunity to rapidly diversify, develop and progress with visual shows. Digital media, like an ecosystem, has come to be home to the integrated nature of each media genre that enables multimedia presentation and music streaming worldwide. With the spread of shows in which the audience takes an active part in various ways, passive positions began to give way to active positions. Thus, digital media began to expand the potential of musical representation and become a spider web that connects users regardless of the media used. Relatedly, in this study, it will be suggested that the communicative power of music has increased with the development of mass media and its transformation into a two-way communication form thanks to the freedom provided by virtual environments. The recent metaverse concerts will be evaluated and the future of metaverse concerts will be mentioned.

VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS: AN EFFECTIVE AREA FOR MUSIC REPRESENTATION

People, who have been a very important part of the story to date, are often lacking due to the one-way nature of technological innovations such as radio and television. In the virtual worlds, which are the latest technology, there were activities that audiences were not actually there and watched only virtually. This absence created major barriers that severely limited interaction and creativity. However, in general, interactive media offer varying degrees of digital interaction and experience. It engages users both with their environment and with other users; they surround the user with different experiences. At the same time, interactive media is based on strategies that combine transnational, symbolic and sensory factors. Due to its timeless and placeless nature, it is minimally affected by physical and biological limitations, that is, digital environments leave behind the limitations imposed by the physical world. The passive viewer becomes an active user/experiencer. Users' experiences in virtual immersive worlds help them transform into performing actors, and the lived experience becomes much more permanent. In such environments, imagination replaces physical reality and the use of imagination increases. They help the relationship between reality and fantasy by creating a new environment in which problems can be resolved; they can become an environment that

also develops their thinking and creation skills, which are very important for the acquisition of musical skills (Gertrudix § Getrudix, 2012:181).

Virtual world have an environment simulated by a computer, where users represented by avatars live (Yengin and Bayrak, 2017:32). Avatars (digital representations) are considered representations of the user on the computer, are usually three-dimensional and used as an icon in any public Internet space. Some virtual environments have their own ecosystems; they have existing or subsequently created rules. These environments can be a model of a real environment or a completely imaginary world. A common area created for all users and a graphical interface for each user are among the common features for these environments. Everything happens in real time, so there is a sense of intimacy between users. It is possible to interact with users in different places and time zones simultaneously. User-generated personalized content can be continually edited, enhanced, recreated or modified. These arrangements also proceed simultaneously with a high degree of interaction. Digital representations of all users are permanent. Even if the user is not connected to the virtual environment, the included world continues to exist. In addition to all these, the relations and sociability established within the created community continue to develop and grow in line with the area of interest organized around it.

The media used can be different types of media and users may be using these media in different situations from different environments.. The important thing is that the environment used has a functional expression. The media used should establish a connection, create viable communication, protect the sound and the quality of the sound recording and transfer it to the audience (Gertrudix § Getrudix, 2012:156). If the media environment adapts to each change and the whole, it creates a versatile diversity and increases the potential power of each element that adapts to the whole.

Virtual concerts can reach a much wider audience than physical concerts. A single venue and usually a single atmosphere are used in physical concert the place where the concert will be held should be suitable for transportation and other technical infrastructures. This severely limits the possibilities of venues for concerts. At the same time, the realization of physical concerts depends on various factors, with limitations such as distance, time zones, travel difficulties, physical and biological disabilities of individuals, and financial difficulties. In addition to all these, the times when social bans are applied also constitute an important obstacle to the performance of concerts. Virtual concerts held in such limited times can reach audiences from all over the world at the same time.

Virtual concerts are live performances that can be watched online. Playing a previously recorded video is not considered a virtual performance. They are published with special systems on various platforms. These concerts may be completely free or require special conditions, such as being an actor of a play. There are also metaverse concerts that can be watched by purchasing tickets. Viewers who purchase tickets are given access to watch the virtual concerts live. Audiences can enjoy concerts in their living room thanks to live streaming services. Virtual performances also provide comfort for artists. Repeated long shows or near-impossible shows are easily performed. One of the most important features of performances is to establish a relationship with the audience. The performing artist watches and observes the audience. The audience is included in the performance and moves according to the tempo of the audience. Since the artist performs simultaneously, the emotions experienced also develop simultaneously with the performance.

There are several different ways to create virtual concerts. These concerts are performed with different software and game infrastructures. Virtual performance is planned by choosing the most suitable server according to the needs or target audience. A virtual concert is more flexible than a physical concert. Imagination and creation are endless; the realization of all the desired opportunities can be achieved with the relevant technological competence. A performing artist can easily change clothes during the concert or transform the stage from a space world to an underwater world. The audience can continue a concert they attended as an astronaut, as an underwater diver. Many shows that cannot be performed at physical concerts are possible for virtual concerts. Virtual concerts also have a great potential to be used as an opportunity to market brands or products, and these concerts can help reach potential audiences that would normally be difficult to reach (Chen, 2022). With the virtual data obtained, the potential to reach the target audience directly increases. A suitable environment is provided for the marketing of any product or service. At the same time, since participant information and data are stored online, post-event reports are easily created.

THE MAGIC OF VIRTUALITY AGAINST REALITY

Metaverse is a huge virtual environment parallel to the physical world, where users interact with other users or environments through avatars. Users can exist in these virtual environments simultaneously with the physical world through a representation. While existing in worlds planned as a navigable universe and designed accordingly, real representations are replaced by representations formed by the imagination of the users (Çelik, 2022:59). Thus, the representations in this world are not expected to be exactly the same as the physical world.

Because these environments themselves are planned as digital-virtual; they can be unique environments created entirely by imaginary representations, or they can be half physical, half imaginary, blended environments. In these environments, which are far from the structure of the physical world limited by physical rules, the creativity of the users is at a high level and this creativity is directly reflected in their digital representations (Çelik, 2022:61). Users have direct interactions with each other and with their environment. With these interactions, the world in which we live can evolve and evolve towards different options. With the interaction, the user actively influences the content (Lee et al., 2021:57) and the user moves from a passive to an active position. Thus, the users are positioned in the center of the virtual world with their active role (Molo, 2021). With this interaction, user participation increases and options increase; the user can easily take part in this environment with an avatar that adapts to his physical reality or is completely imaginative and can turn many activities that are considered impossible into active. This new positioning strengthens their presence in the virtual world and makes their position desirable.

Presence in the virtual world consists of online representations. In virtuality, which is a metaphor for real worlds, users have various avatars that represent their physical selves to experience an alternative life, environment and relationships. Thanks to these beings represented in various ways, these new worlds created offer freedom of movement to the users. Users are in a much more free environment than in their real life. At the same time, they have the right to remain confidential and to be away from the familiar environment offered by digital life. The physical and mental freedom that this will provide is as limitless as the limitlessness of virtual environments. Online life is about being creative and doing things you cannot do in the physical world (Ludlow & Wallace, 2007:83). Users continue to exist in both environments. In other words, users simultaneously have a physical existence, that is, a physical body; they also have a digital virtual existence, namely avatars with body technology (Moretti & Schlemmer, 2012:155). They have both physical and digital identities.

Virtual environments can change, develop and evolve into different environments over time. Due to this feature, it becomes especially preferred for entertainment and music presentations. Atmosphere changes specific to songs or events and the speed of these changes make the show much more impressive. These environments offer new living possibilities full of unmatched imagination and limitless possibilities. What is perceived by the mind can be directly experienced by the user through avatars. There are real experiences in what is called virtual, and the lived experience situation is real.

In virtual environments, users can maintain their existence both with their own selves and with their representative selves. Thus, a single user can exhibit different forms of presence in different domains (Lee et al., 2021:43). With these new possibilities, the official and hierarchical structure of the real world disappears, an unrestricted freedom of expression is offered, and it becomes easier for people to establish personal bonds with each other (Yengin & Bayrak, 2017:76). The social status, gender, education, language, religion, place, time and other similar distinctions drawn between users in real life disappear. With the forms of communication where these distinctions and boundaries disappear, virtual interactions turn into real experiences.

Nitsche (2012:184) speaks of the existence of a parallel world represented by images, myths and symbols. Subjects represented by various avatars interact with each other, embodying these parallel worlds. Together with real interactions such as meetings, entertainment, concerts in virtual environments, these parallel worlds become a part of real experiences.

Humanity, which aims to reach more, get more pleasure, achieve more and exceed its limits, is in a constant and cumulative search. This search continues with the creation of three-dimensional virtual spaces and the adventure of living their own selves in these spaces. Barlow (1996:65) defines these three-dimensional worlds as a world that is both everywhere and nowhere, not just a place where bodies live. It is a world that anyone can enter without the privileges or prejudices of race, economic proficiency, military strength, and place of birth. Identities held in the real world are not valid in this world. No innate or acquired trait will return as privilege or prejudice in this world. In other words, these areas have become places used to leave real spaces surrounded by social, biological, economic and political defects beyond physical lives. Individuals have the opportunity to exist independently of any deficiencies that can be considered as a defect or deficiency in these areas. These areas continue to provide opportunities for users, who are techno-social beings, to socialize without including problems such as body, gender, race and identity.

In metaverse environments, the time zone different from today's time zone may apply; the flow of the day can be much faster or slower.. Environment and atmosphere changes can be made quite quickly, that is, the communication flow is carried out digitally in a timeless time. In events such as concerts and entertainment, temporal and spatial limitations are removed, and users have the opportunity to express themselves in a much more free environment than in real life. In addition to this, there is an opportunity for users to establish

personal relationships with people they may never meet. They can interact directly with their favorite artists, singers or groups, and directly share a simultaneous environment with them. At the same time, they can establish social relations with users from all over the world who have common tastes, without being stuck with space and time limitations. Experiences such as entertainment and listening to music are directly experienced by users. The purpose of these concerts is to transcend current reality. Metaverse concerts are more a product on their own than a compensation for real concerts.

METAVVERSE CONCERTS

Music experience is rapidly increasing in immersive virtual worlds. One of the first metaverse environments, Second Life is a platform that hosts multiple virtual worlds (more than 5,500) where the main content is music, especially live concerts by amateur and professional musicians who perform their songs on their own computers and even earn money (Gertrudix & Gertrudix, 2012). The live performance performed by the artist Suzanne Vega in August 2006 is accepted as the first simultaneous concert given in these virtual worlds. An audience of 80-90 people watched Suzanne Vega, who sang Tom's Dinner and The Queen and The Soldier and played the guitar, and the audience in front of their computers participated in a simultaneous virtual concert through their avatars. This performance is characterized as the beginning of the simultaneous virtual concerts to be held in the future.



Picture 1: Concert by Suzanne Vega singing Tom's Dinner and The Queen and The Soldier in Second Life.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCLSkTEBj2k>

Simultaneous virtual concerts, which increased rapidly after the Suzanne Vega concert, started to turn into multimedia-related live festivals and reach thousands of users. Mirror worlds, which are exact replicas of real cities such as Berlin, Singapore, London, Miami, and New York, were created in 2008 to create these giant organizations (Chen, 2022).

The metaverse environment, whose prevalence and awareness increased especially with the worldwide pandemic in 2019, became a new exit door for the music world where bans and strict measures were in place. The fact that the artists were not subject to any

restrictions while performing their concerts undoubtedly provided them with wide movement opportunities. The fact that they can suddenly change clothes or recreate their avatars according to the songs while performing their concerts, give concerts easily in environments where it is impossible to give a concert, and interact with millions of viewers at the same time has had positive effects. These positive effects, which also developed the loyalty between the artist and the fan base, allowed the metaverse concerts to become more and more widespread.

In February 2019, a virtual concert with electronic dance music producer Marshmello in the game Fortnite made by Epic Game attracted a lot of attention. Actors and viewers attended the virtual concert with various avatars. 10.7 million people watched the concert simultaneously. The singer performed each performance in a different environment and performed impressive visual shows as well as his music.

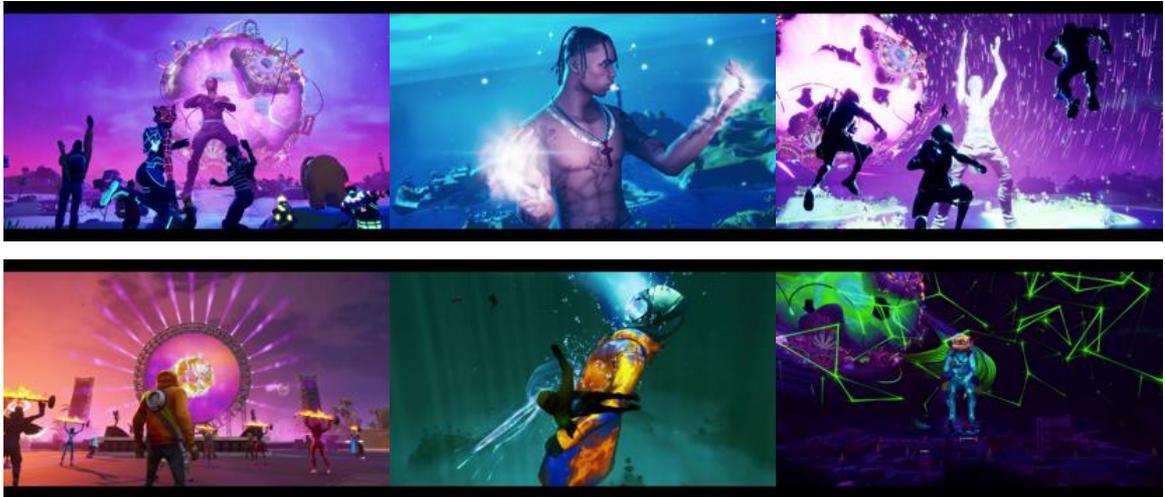


Picture 2: Marshmello Epic Game Fortnite Concert, February 2, 2019.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBsCzN-jfvA>

In April 2020, in the game called Fortnite made by Epic Game, a concert called Astro Nomical was performed by singer Travis Scott with his avatar the size of a skyscraper. At the beginning of the concert, an asteroid crashed from the sky to the ground and the giant Scott avatar appeared in an explosion singing his popular song Sicko Mode. This event, which consisted of 5 concerts in total, was followed by more than twelve million live participants in a single day, and a total of more than 45 million. Throughout the concert, Scott's avatar and the audience's avatars were able to interact directly. During part of the concert, two stars descended from the sky towards Scott and brought the ability to fly to both Scott's avatar and the surrounding avatars, and the avatars began to fly. During the concert, there were various

visual shows as well as underwater and space sections. Scott chose to announce his new album with a metaverse concert by singing songs from his new album.



Picture 3: Travis Scott Epic Game Fortnite Concert, April 24-26, 2020.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYeFAIVC8qU>

Moreover, TikTok was one of the first apps to step into the metaverse during the pandemic period. At the concert held by The Weeknd on August 7, 2020, the artist's avatar took the stage with the song *Blinded By The Lights* and performed a dance. In the concert, where glowing neon signs covered the entire concert venue, specially dressed dancers performed a virtual performance exclusive to TikTok with glowing sunglasses.



Picture 4: The Weeknd Tiktok Metaverse Concert, August 7, 2020.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uViueiV8fME>

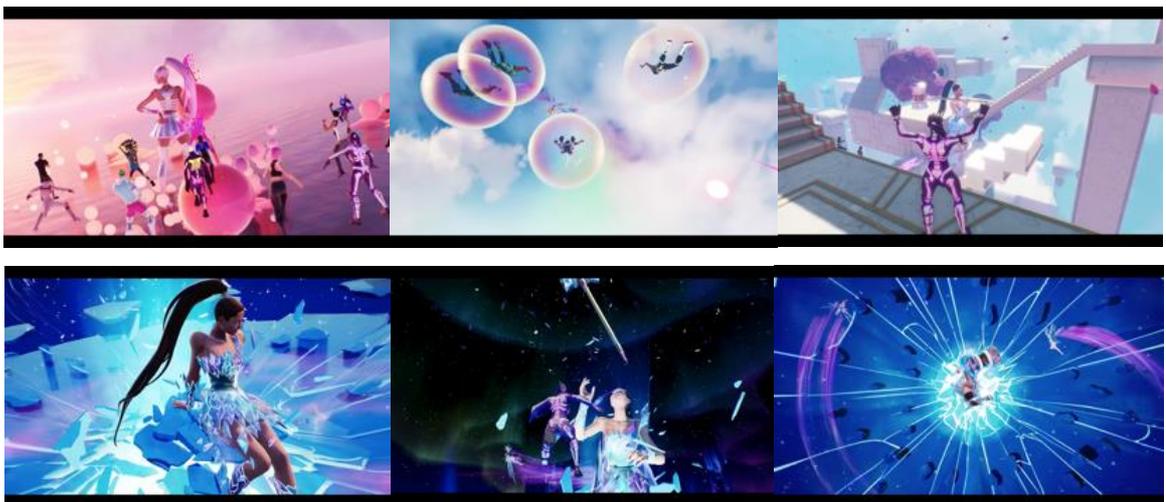
As a result of the partnership between Roblox, another game platform, and Sony, singer Lil Nas X gave a concert on Roblox in the last months of 2020. More than 36 million viewers watched the concert, and the actors danced in their Lego-style avatars. Throughout the concert, Lil Nas X sang, danced and interacted with the audience in a variety of costumes and settings.



Picture 5: Lil Nas X, Roblox Metaverse Concert, November 14-15, 2020.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f12ukZuUwWI>

In the Ariana Grande concert, which was performed similarly to the concert performed by Travis Scott, the giant avatar of the artist took the stage. Epic Game performed the Ariana concert as the first concerts in the Rift Tour concert series on a larger Fortnite journey and used this performance as an opportunity to build a bigger world. The avatars of all players and viewers with animations integrated into the game participated in the concert, which included the message of "The Moment of Togetherness". In the statement made by Epic Game (2021) after the concert, it was stated that the players aimed to support each other in difficult times.

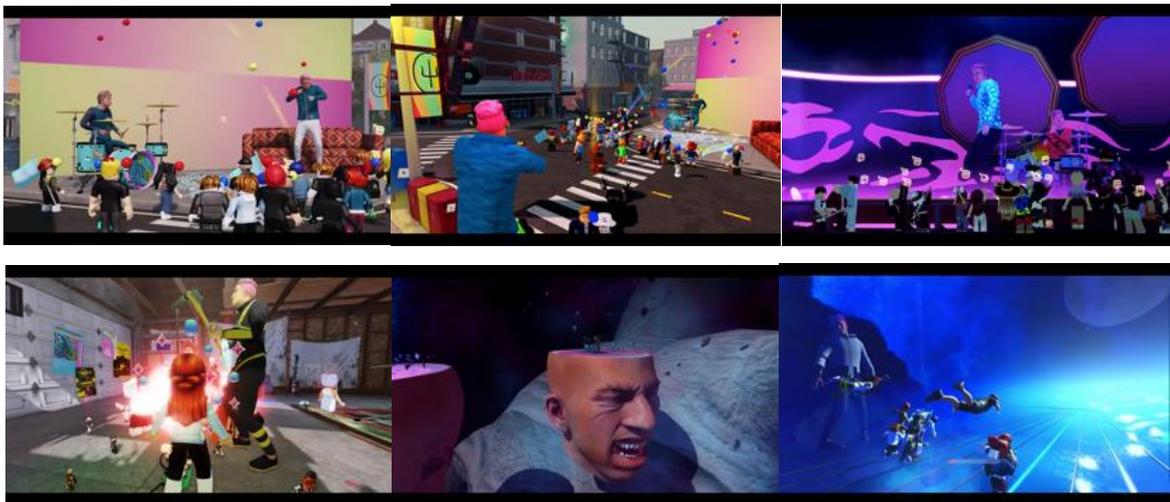


Picture 6: Ariana Grande Epic Game Fortnite Metaverse Concert, August 6, 2021.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGYEIBtjtU>

Furthermore, in September 2021, Twenty One Pilots held a concert in Roblox. In the show specially prepared for the game, the fans of the group were also made a part of the event and the songs to be played were decided simultaneously. Missions to be performed within the

Metaverse, items specifically designed for use in the show, and more in-game add-ons were made for the concert, and the concert was described as a high-quality experience (Rees, 2021). The group's creative director, Mark Eshleman (2021), stated that the group aims to reach more people and thanks to the concert that took place in the metaverse, they interacted with fans they had not interacted with before. It was emphasized that in the event that took place, everything that people would expect from a show was available and the concept of concert was carried much further with these virtual concerts. Thus, it was aimed to turn the concerts into creative environments where the audience is included and they are transformed into participants rather than audiences. Together with other viewers, fans decided on the order of the songs, became part of the show, and were able to engage in live chat with the band members.



Picture 7: Twenty One Pilots, Roblox Metaverse Concert, September 17, 2021.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fAhhoXK12o>

Festivals could not be held during the pandemic period due to various global health restrictions. For this reason, the first metaverse festival was held in October 2021 and lasted for 4 days with the participation of more than 80 artists in Decentraland as an alternative to physical festivals. During the festival, which was held between October 21 and 24, 2021, restaurants, bars, food stalls, wearable accessories for avatars, psychedelic experience venues and portable toilets that dance and jump according to the music played were installed. Various singers and groups took the stage simultaneously on 7 different stages during the festival. The scenes, which constantly change the concept, turned into a forest concept, Aztec temple, space theme, luminous dance floor, volcanic planet and many more different themes according to the singers or the music. In this festival area where shopping with virtual money was made, it was possible to interact, dance and exchange with other avatars simultaneously.

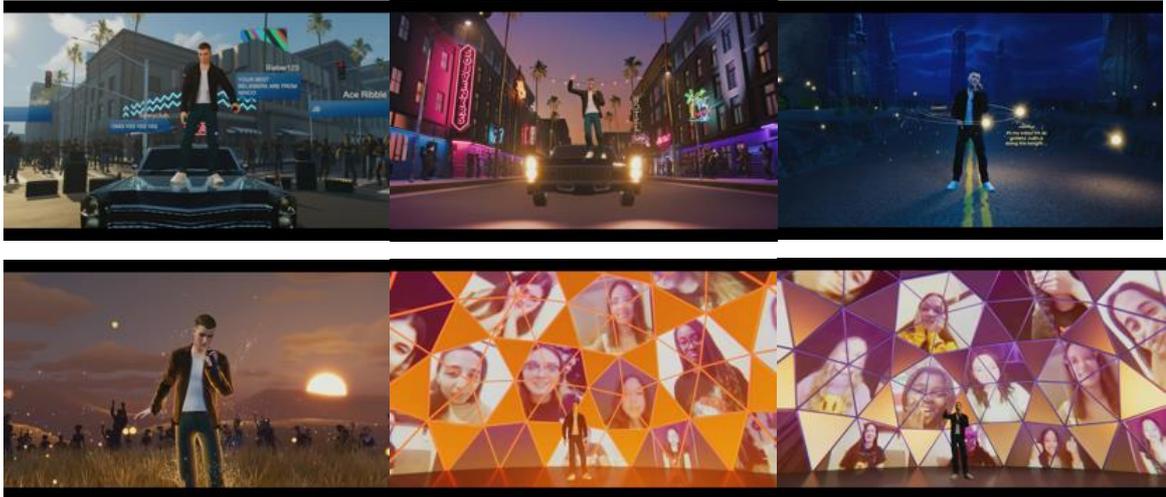
In this festival, where special events and competitions were held, people were also able to dress their avatars in harmony with the festival decorations. In order to avoid Internet connection and infrastructure problems, all festival events and shows of some artists were prepared in advance. In addition, some artists performed simultaneously with the simultaneous movement feature. The first metaverse festival ended after successfully completing 4 days and the festival was repeated in 2022.



Picture 8: Decentraland, the first metaverse festival, October 21-24, 2021.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzR5gPPfK-E>

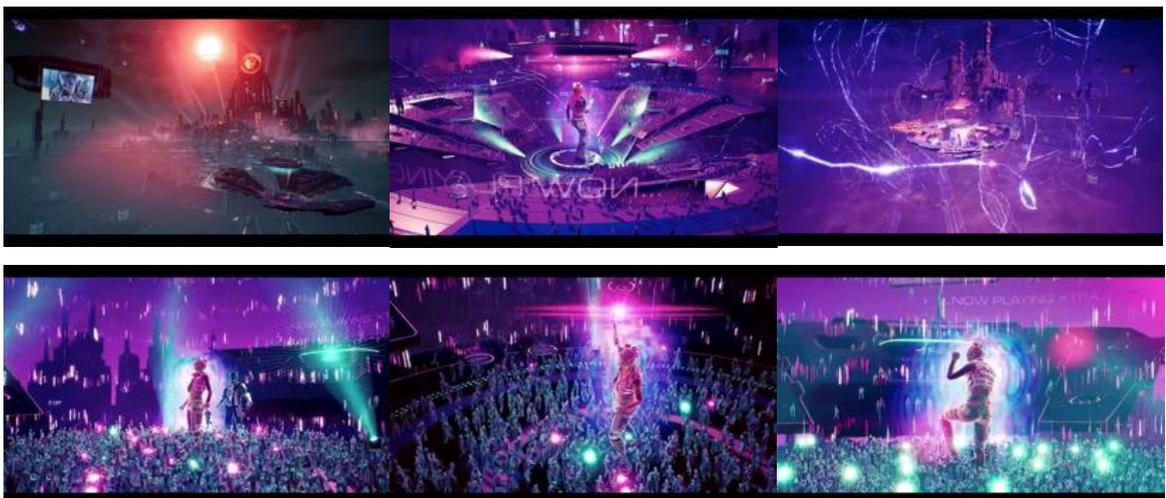
Moreover, the famous singer Justin Bieber had a concert in November 2021 in the virtual universe created by Wave, a virtual entertainment platform of which he is also an investor. Bieber, who started his concert on the streets prepared in parallel with reality, sang each of his songs in a different environment. Throughout the concert, the singer's fans used virtual expressions that the singer could see and interacted directly with the singer. Wave senior official Jarred Kennedy (2021) said that it is now possible for fans to interact with their favorite artists in real time, wherever they are in the world. He emphasized that bringing people together and interacting with participants from all over the world is also very satisfying for artists.



Picture 9: Justin Bieber Wave Metaverse Concert, December 18, 2021.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAhGvhvcoyY&t=1711s>

As Another Example, Korean Pop singer Alexa threw a party that took place in space in November 2021. Thousands of people from all over the world attended this “Global Fan Party” held with the game company Improbable. Viewers danced and interacted simultaneously with Alexa's avatar through their digital avatars. Alexa (2021) stated that she enjoys making unique and intimate connections with fans from around the world. The avatars, who danced throughout the concert and shook the lights specially produced for the concert, were able to interact with each other as well as the singer.



Picture 10: AleXa, Improbable: Global Fan Party, December 20-21, 2021.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3NKDWuw5qc>

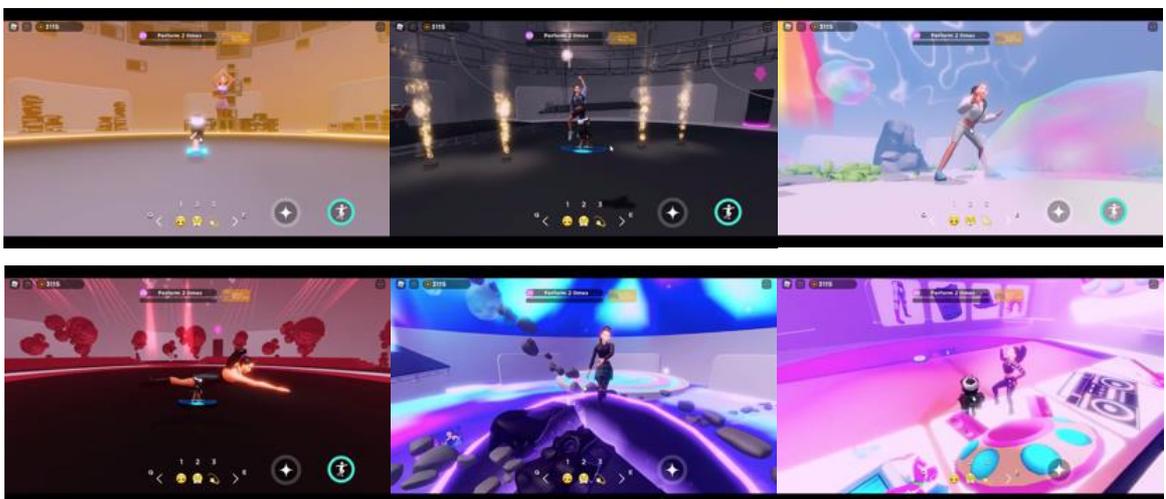
Korean Pop group BTS gave an impromptu concert called Butter § Permission to Dance with their avatars in the form of Minecraft game characters in Youtube's ESCAPE2021 concert series. Singing and dancing Minecraft avatars also interacted with other player avatars

in the virtual concert. The band members, who took the stage with their pixel avatars under the sky full of heart-shaped hot air balloons, held the first Minecraft virtual concert and more than 750 thousand spectators followed the concert.



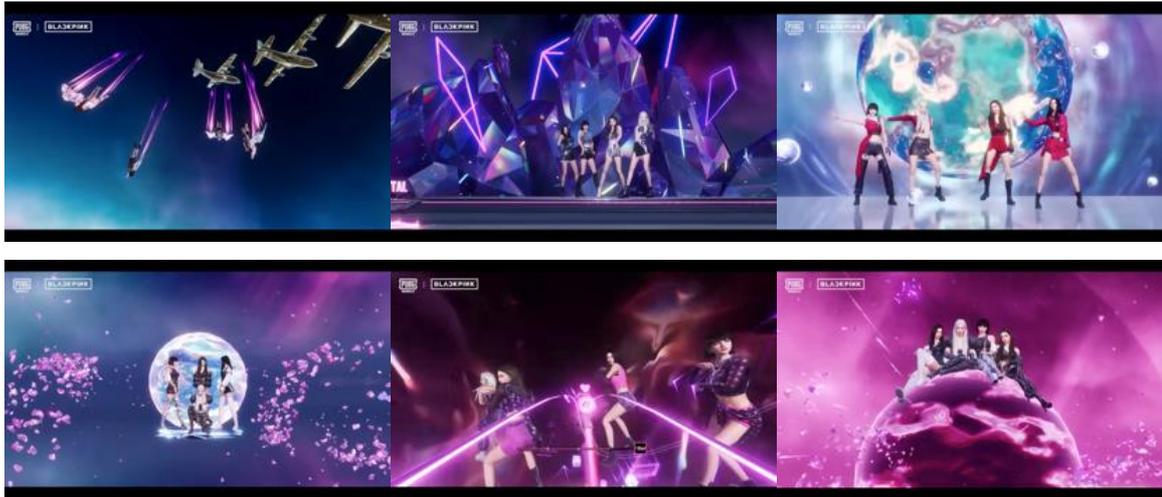
Picture 11: BTS Minecraft: Butter & Permission to Dance Metaverse Concert, December 16, 2021.
Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv-0KMXKFp4>

Furthermore, The Roblox gaming platform invited the winning players to the Charli XCX concert as a result of a five-week gaming tournament consisting of mini-games and different digital challenges. The actors, who participated in the Superstar Galaxy, where the Charli XCX concert took place with their avatars, had the chance to interact with the singer directly on the stage, dance and sing along to the singer's popular songs. In the event, which was held in partnership with Samsung, players toured a virtual planet, participated in various activities and were able to interact with other gamer avatars.



Picture 12: Charli XCX, Roblox Metaverse Concert: Super Star Galaxy, June 17, 2022.
Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qn2xatf0bRQ>

PubG Mobile game held its first virtual concert with K-POP Group Blackpink. In the concert held in July 2022, the ever-evolving virtual world of the PubG game was emphasized. The event was watched more than 15 million times worldwide. The singers' avatars performed throughout the concert on the tropical island, rainforest, desert, glacier and sea of flowers. Helmets, airplanes, bullets and aircraft in the PubG game were also used in the concert.



Picture 13: Blackpink PubG: The Virtual Metaverse Concert, July 23, 2022.

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WEf-KDts8w>

Finally, in 2022, MTV added the best metaverse performance as a new category in its video music awards to support virtual concerts held on video game platforms in recent years as a result of in-person concerts being postponed or completely canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the awards held since 1984, for the first time, 6 different metaverse performances were evaluated in the metaverse category due to the increase in the number of artists interacting with their fans through the game. In this category, where BTS, Blackpink, Ariana Grande, Twenty One Pilots, Charli XCX and Justin Bieber competed, Blackpink won the Best Metaverse Performance award with more than 320 million virtual votes.

CONCLUSION

Music was spread widely through the use of radios; expanded by interacting with different genres of music. Later, it was possible to visualize the audible with televisions; music began to advance with his imagination. Finally, musical performances have become increasingly dynamic, thanks to the wide availability of digital media. Thus, immersive digital worlds have become a unique opportunity for musical performances. Impossible or semi-possible to perform music such as a sunken submarine surrounded by the unique creatures of

the oceans, exotic temples in different parts of the world, high mountain peaks, unexplored planets of space, streets of a real or imaginary city, desolate arid deserts, historical ruins, futuristic cities places began to transform into concert venues offering unique experiences. Thus, immersive digital environments have become an integral part of musical experiences. These mediums began to take their place in the music world by relying on the most extreme limits of imagination and making the impossible possible. At the same time, these environments are mostly designed to serve users' wishes, turned users into actors who create, modify or interact with content directly. These virtual worlds, where real people live, have begun to offer opportunities to construct real life itself (Molo, 2021).

Immersive digital environments are the perfect showcase for musical performances. Concerts held simultaneously with technological developments and direct interactions with artists allow experiences to be even more inclusive. Technological developments are making it more and more possible to share memories, experiences and emotions with other avatars in virtual worlds by fostering new and constantly changing strategic developments. Experiences are becoming more and more inclusive with the development of devices that affect all the senses (including touch and almost smell). Sharing memories, experiences and emotions with other avatars in these virtual worlds is almost as possible as in real life. The body's own movements, the use of voice to send messages, and even eye movements began to be transferred to the avatar in the metaverse as action, sound and movement. Thus, the gestures and movements of real life have become the best and natural extensions used when interacting in the virtual world. With these inclusive interactions, the user experience has reached a much more seductive and highly accessible point.

The user, who easily experiences in a virtual world, can interact in environments that are perhaps impossible to find in his real life, can get rid of his real identity and responsibilities, establish completely different relationships and live a different life. They can easily participate in a concert that they cannot attend due to physical limitations, and they can act freely in that concert, away from prejudices and reservations, because users are much more free and more centralized in virtual spaces (Çelik, 2022:52). It is easier and possible to face the challenges or concerns of the physical world in virtual spaces.

It is a fact that users are potential producers and consumers. Therefore, the user can be both a producer (dancing, singing or playing a musical instrument) and a spectator in the musical environment. Fans began to be able to enjoy the environment freely and as they wished, in exactly the same environment as the artists they admire, without gravity or other

physical rules. This experience is the new reality. Thus, metaverse concerts have already started to take place as a new era in their own right, rather than a compensation for real concerts.

It is a fact that online platforms will not replace concerts held in the open air. Having fun together with your loved ones has a special place, but access to these entertainments is not easy and not everyone can go to concerts. Concerts cannot exceed certain limits due to distance, spatial differences, physical and biological barriers. However, the frequencies of the concerts are increased and diversified through these concerts performed over the metaverse. Thus, these concerts become accessible to anyone with an Internet connection.

With these concerts, audience numbers that are impossible to reach in the physical environment began to be reached. 27.7 million people watched the Ariana Grande concert. The daily audience of Travis Scott's concert exceeded 12 million. The audience of Korean music group Blackpink's concert exceeded 15.7 million. MTV has added a new awards section for metaverse concerts to its music competition.

In the post-pandemic world order, real-world concerts have started to become normal again, and whether metaverse concerts are no longer needed or not has begun to be questioned again. It would not be a very accurate assessment to evaluate virtual concerts as a substitute for real-world concerts. While our current experiences come from real concerts and festivals, the opportunity offered in metaverse environments provides a deeper and different interaction where as a participant we can do something with other fans and artists from all over the world. Even if there is no pandemic or global epidemic, there are still difficult aspects of bringing people together at the same time and in the same place. In addition to logistical barriers such as finance and accessibility, individuals' physical and biological barriers also pose many barriers. The magic of the technology behind virtual interactions is seen as allowing artists to connect with audiences in a way that transcends time and space, providing opportunities for people from around the world to come together. The magic of more interactive, more immersive and all-digital spaces continues to increase. As more people enter the metaverse and more artists take part in the metaverse, the lines between physical and virtual reality will continue to blur more and more each day.

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PICTURES

Picture 1: Suzanne Vega, Second Life Metaverse Concert, August 4, 2006

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCLSkTEBj2k>

Picture 2: Marshmello, Epic Game Fortnite Metaverse Concert, February 2, 2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBsCzN-jfvA>

Picture 3: Travis Scott, Epic Game Fortnite Metaverse Concert, April 24-26, 2020

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYeFAIVC8qU>

Picture 4: The Weeknd, Tiktok Konseri, August 7, 2020

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uViueiV8fME>

Picture 5: Lil Nas X, Roblox Metaverse Concert, November 14-15, 2020

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f12ukZuUwWI>

Picture 6: Ariana Grande, Epic Game Fortnite Metaverse Concert, August 6, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGYEIBtjytU>

Picture 7: Twenty One Pilots, Roblox Metaverse Concert, September 17, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fAhhoXK12o>

Picture 8: Decentraland, The First Metaverse Festival, October 21-24, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzR5gPPfK-E>

Picture 9: Justin Bieber, Wave Metaverse Concert, November 18, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAhGvhvcoyY&t=1711s>

Picture 10: AleXa, Improbable: Metaverse Global Fan Party, November 20-21, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3NKDWuw5qc>

Picture 11: BTS, Minecraft: Butter § Permission to Dance Metaverse Concert, December 16, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv-0KMXXKf4>

Picture 12: Charli XCX, Roblox: Superstar Galaxy Metaverse Concert, June 17, 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qn2xatf0bRQ>

Picture 13: Blackpink, PubG Metaverse Concert, July 23, 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WEf-KDts8w>