New York Music Month returns to support the industry’s post-pandemic recovery

CAROLINE SPIVACK
After a two-year hiatus, when it was mostly virtual, New York Music Month will return in June with more than a dozen in-person concerts, panels and classes to support the city’s music community as it bounces back from the pandemic.

The fifth annual festival, which is funded by the mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, is offering a number of virtual events. The programming seeks to promote the city’s emerging and established artists and help them better connect to venues and economic opportunities.

“It’s important to get people together, especially in person right now, to rebuild those connections and enable new ones for people who are creators and music business people,” said Larry Miller, director of the music business program at New York University’s Steinhardt School. It is partnering with the city to kick things off June 1 with a free, all-day conference about the future of the city’s music community, with some 40 industry leaders on hand.

Miller said he’s excited for artists to have the opportunity to broaden their networks in person.

“Just to be in the same physical space and to be able to greet people and exchange ideas is such a powerful thing that I will never again take for granted,” her added.
For those working to gain a foothold in the city's live music scene, the festival's skill-based classes will be a draw.

Of those, Mehmet Dede, the director of programming and bookings at the performance venue Drom, will host two in-person workshops with tips on how independent performers can build a career in the live-music sector—namely, how to book gigs, promote them and
get paid for them. One session comes with the opportunity for artists’ to fine-tune their 30-second elevator pitch.

“As a talent buyer, I try to give performers an inside look at the perspective of a person receiving a talent inquiry,” Dede said. “I try to explain to them what kind of metrics I'm really prioritizing, and what important elements of the performance that I pay specific attention to.”

Musicians will also have access to more than 1,000 hours of free rehearsal space throughout the month through a city partnership with the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music.

The Park Slope school will offer up its 17 studios, which each boast a brand-new Steinway piano and plenty of natural light, as collaboration spaces for the city’s artists.

“If you're a composer or a musician, you can't necessarily just go to We Work or a coworking space, right?” said Chad Cooper, executive director of the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music.

“It’s one thing to be plugging away at home,” Cooper said, "and it’s an entirely different experience to be able to spread out and work collaboratively with other musicians.”

New York Music Month joins several summer festivals that are ramping up their in-person offerings to the city’s arts community and beyond, including the Festival of New York and Lincoln Center’s Summer of the City.

For a full calendar of New York Music Month's events visit the city's website here.
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