

Press Release

Strictly embargoed, 9am, Tuesday 26th January 2021

Test Concerts will Frame Industry Discussion Around the Safe Return of Live Music and Sport

Top names from the worlds of live music and sport will come together with key EU decision-makers next month to discuss the safe return of live events.

The Arena Resilience Alliance (ARA) will host its second virtual conference, #AGameofTwoHalves: The Return Leg on Thursday 18 February, following an ambitious live music experiment in Luxembourg.

A series of five intimate test concerts will be hosted by the Rockhal arena in their club venue in Luxembourg over five nights between 10-14 February. It is hoped the series of 'Because Music Matters' concerts, hosted in conjunction with the *national health inspection authority*, will act as important test case for the live events industry. The events will be limited to 100 people per night, with strict physical distancing enforced. Masks will be compulsory, and attendees will be tested for Covid-19 prior to the event and again seven days later to allow close monitoring by local health bodies.

Following the shows, the ARA, an advocacy initiative established by the European Arenas Association (EAA), will host a virtual conference, exploring how arenas and large capacity venues across Europe are preparing for a safe and sustainable reopening. The event will also explore what support the live events sector needs from policymakers on both a national and EU level to enable long-term resilience and future growth. The discussion will bring together high-level speakers representing EU institutions, national governments as well as the sports and live music sectors.

The free online event, which will take place on Thursday 18 February, will build on the success of the ARA's first virtual conference in December 2020, which is available to watch online [here](#). Behind the scenes content and insights from The Rockhal test concerts will be screened as part of the conference, offering an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned and next steps and helping to frame the discussion around what still needs to be done.

Olivier Toth, CEO, Rockhal in Luxembourg and co-founder of the ARA said: *"Building on the success of our first #AGameofTwoHalves webinar in December, we are proud to return with a second event that will explore how we are working towards the safe return of live music and sport. Our Because Music Matters showcase at Rockhal is an important step forward in testing the safety measures we can employ to support our back to business strategies. I look forward to sharing our experience and insights from these events."*

Robert Fitzpatrick, CEO, The Odyssey Trust, owners of The SSE Arena, Belfast and co-founder of the ARA added: *"As the advocacy platform for European arenas, the ARA is proud to provide an opportunity for the industry to come together with key EU decision-makers to prepare for a return to live events, whilst working to protect the health and wellbeing of our communities and the sustainability of our industry, which will be central to the economic and societal recovery of countries across Europe. Together, we can build regional and national frameworks, with international collaboration that will help us get back to business."*

The ARA's #AGameofTwoHalves: The Return Leg virtual conference will be delivered in partnership with the European Arenas Association and IQ Magazine. The event will be streamed live via the EAA [You Tube Channel](#) and [Facebook page](#).

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Notes to editors:

#AGameofTwoHalves conference (Part II)

- The event is being organised by the **Arena Resilience Alliance (ARA)**, a special purpose initiative, created by the European Arenas Association (EAA) to demonstrate solidarity and the need for concerted action.
- The ARA is fully supported by Euroleague Basketball, the European Hockey Clubs Alliance, the members of the European Arenas Association and other European large capacity multi-event venues.

About the ARA:

- The ARA was established by Olivier Toth, CEO, Rockhal, Luxembourg, and Robert Fitzpatrick, CEO, The Odyssey Trust in Northern Ireland (owners of The SSE Arena, Belfast), who both recognised the urgent need for arenas to unite and to raise awareness on the current difficulties of these venues and what impact their definitive closure would have on communities.
- The ARA is actively lobbying the EU to advance awareness of the importance of the physical infrastructure of arenas and their contribution to the wellness of every European citizen.

About the EAA:

- The EAA represents 33 arenas in 20 European countries that operate some of the world's most cutting-edge venues, hosting unrivalled programs with outstanding artists, productions, sports and corporate events. The association's member arenas host over 2,900 annual events attracting a total audience of 19 million people.
- Over the last years, the EAA has strengthened relationships with the EU governing bodies to ensure the inclusion of arenas as part of the policy-making decisions. EAA has been involved in a number of activities and projects in three key areas: live music, sports and education, training & research.