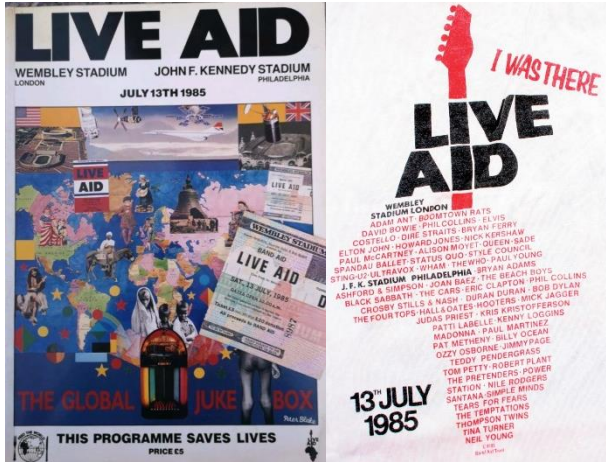


Live Aid



What was the background to Live Aid?

In October 1984, images of hundreds of thousands of people starving to death in Ethiopia were shown on TV in the UK in a BBC news report by Michael Buerk. The BBC News crew were the first to document the **famine**, describing it as “a **biblical** famine in the 20th century” and “the closest thing to hell on Earth.” Bob Geldof, the singer from Irish rock band The Boomtown Rats, also saw the report, and collaborated to write the song, "Do They Know It's Christmas?" in the hope of raising money for famine relief. Geldof then contacted colleagues in the music industry and persuaded them to record the single under the title 'Band Aid' for free. It stayed at No.1 for five weeks in the UK, was Christmas No.1. It became the fastest-selling single ever raising £8 million. Geldof then set his sights on staging a huge concert to raise further funds.



Was Live Aid a failure?

What was disappointing was the lack of donations from big companies – banks, oil companies and other major players. It was left to the general public to donate, which they did – music fans dug deep into their pockets, including one mystery woman from England who boosted the funds by personally **pledging** half a million pounds. The organisers of Live Aid tried, without much success, to run aid efforts directly, channelling millions of pounds to **NGOs** in Ethiopia. Much of this, however, went to the Ethiopian government of Mengistu Haile Mariam – an oppressive **regime** the UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wanted to "destabilise." Later investigative journalism discovered much of the money was spent on guns bought from the **Soviet Union**.

What was Live Aid?

On 13th July 1985 a ‘Super Concert’ took place at both Wembley Stadium in London, England and at JFK Stadium in Philadelphia, USA. Over 70 bands/acts in total performed at the concert including *Queen*, *U2*, *Status Quo*, *Sting*, *Phil Collins*, *Madonna*, *David Bowie* and *Mick Jagger*. The concert was broadcast around the world (a **technological** achievement in 1985) Over 1.9 billion people watched it – 40% of the **population** of the world! The intention of the concert was to raise awareness, and money to **alleviate** the **famine** in Ethiopia, Africa.

Was Live Aid a success?

The concert, organised in just 10 weeks, appeared to be a **phenomenal** success. *U2* gave a fantastic performance establishing themselves as one of the greatest live bands in the world. *Queen* stole the show with what is regarded as the greatest performance of Live Aid. The intention had been to raise £5 million – but it is believed to have raised almost £150 million. This money was to be spent in Africa working with **Aid Agencies** to support **famine** victims. Not only did the concert raise a lot of money, but it also made people, particularly in the UK and USA, aware of the implications of, and concerned at the extent of, African **poverty**. More than ever, people in rich Western Countries believed that their governments and international **NGOs** had the responsibility to act to address the causes and consequences of poverty in the developing world. One aid relief worker stated that following the publicity generated by the concert, “**humanitarian** concern is now at the centre of **foreign policy**.” for western governments. Geldof stated, “We took an issue that was nowhere on the political agenda and, through the **lingua franca** of the planet – which is not English but rock 'n' roll – we were able to address the intellectual **absurdity** and the **moral repulsion** of people dying of want in a world of **surplus**.”