

NEWS RELEASE

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NOT LIKE A ROLLING STONE: MUSICIAN MIGRATION RATES MUTED DURING PANDEMIC, BUT INTERESTING REGIONAL TRENDS EMERGE

New York, Los Angeles Loses Musicians During COVID... London, Nashville Gains Them

November 18, 2021—RIVERSIDE, CA (www.ucr.edu)—More musicians migrated to Stockholm, Sweden during the pandemic than to any other location, according to a new analysis released today by the **UCR School of Business Center for Economic Forecasting and Development**. The analysis examined a very specific labor market – musicians on Soundcloud, a major online music sharing and distribution platform – and found that following Stockholm, musicians were most likely to have migrated to Berlin, San Paulo, Toronto, and Paris.

The top U.S. city, Philadelphia, appears 7th on the list of regions musicians moved to the most. Overall, American cities performed relatively poorly with the bottom 11 cities on the list, which either lost musicians or remained flat, all located in the United States. In addition to Philadelphia, U.S. cities that gained musicians were Washington DC, Nashville, and San Diego.

“Part of the reason for the weaker results in U.S. metros may be due to repatriation,” said **Patrick Adler**, Research Manager at the Center for Forecasting, and the report’s author. “If migrants had previously moved to the U.S. from areas like Stockholm, Berlin, and Toronto, the pandemic might have motivated them to return.” Prior to the pandemic, roughly 30% of Soundcloud musicians were from Los Angeles, New York, London, or Nashville – and this topline number remained the same as London and Nashville gained musicians during the crisis while the other two ‘superstar metros’ lost out.

Regional differences aside, in the aggregate, the study finds that the pandemic did not drive musician migration to any great extent. Of 11,503 Soundcloud artists who qualified for the study, only 308 indicated that they moved to a new region between August of 2019 and October of 2020. “This is fully consistent with the view that technological changes that have swept other areas of the economy have been less profound for musicians, who have been using remote-friendly technology for longer,” said Adler.

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Indeed, the study points out that not all knowledge-intensive work has changed due to the pandemic. “Musicians are an intriguing case because the production of music is highly susceptible to remote-compatible digital technologies,” said Adler. “But as early adopters of digital production techniques, they may be seeing muted effects.”

The analysis is part of the Center for Forecasting’s ongoing research about changing urban fortunes during the pandemic. Taner Osman’s recent analysis considered the fates of dense downtown areas across the nation and Adler is also leading a study about San Bernardino’s recovery strategy.

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The UC Riverside School of Business Center for Economic Forecasting and Development is the first major university forecasting center in Inland Southern California. The Center is dedicated to economic forecasting and policy research focused on the region, state, and nation. Learn more at <https://ucreeconomicforecast.org>.