

Hello again and welcome to As It Is. I'm June Simms in Washington.

Pop star Madonna received the Top Touring Artist Award from Billboard Magazine earlier this year. Those performances helped her make her one of the highest paid celebrities in the world. Today we will tell you who else made Forbes latest list of top earners.

Also, music lovers often like to share pictures and videos from the concerts they attend. You can find many of these images on YouTube. But, as Christopher Cruise reports, not everyone is happy about it.

## **Are Smartphones Ruining Concerts?**

Smartphones are ruining the concert-going experience. So says Andy Greene of Rolling Stone magazine. He says he realized what a problem smartphones were becoming during a concert by singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen.

"I'm in the first row of the balcony. And I look down at the orchestra and it was like looking at the stars; almost every seat was sort of lit up by a screen and people were staring at their screens. And I just wanted to scream 'Do you realize you're watching one of the greatest songwriters ever perform some of the greatest songs ever? And it's just such a rare, unique treat, it's a gift we're all here experiencing this, and you're not even watching it. You're all on your freaking cell phones!'"

Andy Greene is not the only critic of smartphones. Maura Johnston writes for a blog on the Village Voice website. She listed "Six Reasons Why Your Phone Is Probably Ruining Your Concert Experience (And Everyone Else's)." Among her reasons, she says people filming a performance are not really listening to the music. And, she says they are not taking part in the social experience of being at a show.

Many bands are also unhappy about the use of smartphones at concerts. But, they do not want to anger concert-goers by banning the activity.

Classical pianist Krystian Zimerman recently stopped a performance when he saw someone in the theater filming him on a smartphone.

However, plenty of musicians accept such filming as a way to market their shows. Mark Katz says this is especially true for new artists. He wrote a book called "Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music."

"Someone records what was a truly amazing performance and posts it on YouTube and it starts to get attention. That could help the performer who might not have any other way of reaching out to such a broad audience."

Even some well-established groups support smartphone use and the social media revolution as a way to earn more money. But Rolling Stone Magazine's Andy Greene sees no value in filming a concert.

“You take horrible pictures. You produce horrible films on your phone that you never even watch. You distract yourself. You distract those around you. They’re nothing but a liability.”

I’m Christopher Cruise.

And I’m June Simms. You are listening to As It Is, from VOA Learning English.

## **“Material Girl” Madonna is 2013’s Highest Paid Celebrity**

The “Queen of Pop” is at the top of Forbes magazine’s 2013 list of the highest-paid celebrities. Madonna earned more money in the past year than any other celebrity in the world. In all, 14 performers made the top 10 list. When added together, they earned more than \$1 billion. Today we have more on the business of show business.

The “Material Girl” has reason to smile.

Madonna earned \$125 million between June of last year and this past June. She is in first place on Forbes’ list of the highest-paid celebrities of 2013. The longtime pop-star made most of the money from her latest concert tour.

John Simson is head of the Business and Entertainment program at American University in Washington. He says concerts are big money makers.

“There’s far more money being made in touring because of those high-priced tickets, people are willing to spend \$200 to go to an event.”

Hollywood director Steven Spielberg is second on Forbes’ list. His \$100 million in earnings came mostly from hit films like E.T. and Jurassic Park.

Many of the top earners on the list are from, or based, in the United States. This does not surprise John Simson.

“The United States just has always had this incredible ability to create stuff that the rest of the world consumes. You go around the world, in most countries, conservatively, 30 to 50 percent of the music you’ll hear is made here in the United States. And the same thing is true with a lot of motion pictures.”

There was a three-way tie for third place. Media personalities Simon Cowell and Howard Stern each earned \$95 million. So did British writer E.L. James. Her bestselling book “Fifty Shades of Grey” also earned her a movie deal.

Writer James Patterson took the number four spot with \$91 million in earnings, followed by television and radio personality Glen Beck with \$90 million. Movie man Michael Bay made \$82 million. He checks in at number six.

Further down at number 9 on Forbes' list is Oprah Winfrey, who was the top earner last year. Her earnings fell from \$88 million in 2012 to \$77 million for the recent 12-month period.

Pop star Lady Gaga moved up to seventh place on the list. She shares that position with "Pirates of the Caribbean" producer Jerry Bruckheimer. Both earned \$80 million in the past year.

Coming in at number eight, golf champion Tiger Woods was the only sports star on Forbes' latest list of the highest paid celebrities. He shares that position with movie producer Tyler Perry.

And filling out the top 10 is Actor Robert Downey Jr. He sparked a cool \$75 million during the recent rating period.

John Simson believes the entertainment industry will continue doing well. He says our captivation, or interest in personalities, is likely to keep the money flowing.

And that is As It Is. Thanks for listening. Have a question or comment about our show? Email us at [learningenglish@voanews.com](mailto:learningenglish@voanews.com).

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