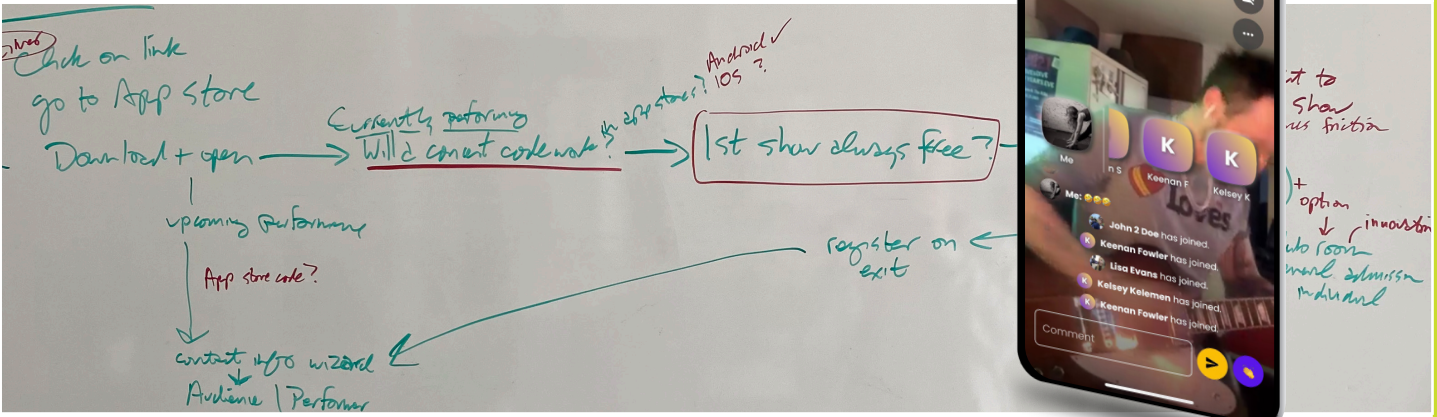# BLive Music

Hosted, social, live-streamed mobile show experiences

Arts & Entertainment

Value Proposition   Category Design   Product Design   Accessibility   Music   Livestreaming

Live music app connects musicians with their fans through hosted shows

Overview

BLive Music founder Ken Scheck had been kicking around an idea in his head for more than a decade: to create an app where music lovers and musicians at any stage of their career could connect through live music. What made this idea different than, say, every social media platform with a live-streaming component, was that a third party entered the equation: a host. The idea of the host was that this third person could provide stage direction, have conversations with the performer — a challenge for some musicians who only come out of their shells when they're playing — and promote the show.

The small but mighty team that built the product was able to hold live shows with artists across Alberta, in Ontario, and even in the U.S.

Process

Before beginning to build the product, Ken brought in Joel Magalnick, North Then West's principal, to conduct user testing to learn what BLive's users wanted in such an app, should such an application be built. They spoke with musicians, music lovers, and potential show hosts.

NORTH THEN WEST CASE STUDY

Once the team understood how the app would need to work, they began developing a user flow, interface, and initial visual designs. The user flow focused on making registration and joining a show as simple as possible, while making show scheduling as easy as possible for hosts and musicians. The design language drove not just the look and feel of the app, but the company's web presence and marketing materials as well.

At the same time, the in-house developer was engaging with live-streaming experts and platforms to better understand how the app could handle real-time shows. As a team, they needed to learn about load balancing, memory usage, and capacity, which brought up a lot of interesting questions:

- Could any given show handle hundreds, or even thousands, of viewers at once?

- Because the app would also have a social component, how would it manage conversations with hundreds of concurrent users while keeping the safety and security of the users in mind?

- Could multiple shows happen concurrently and allow BLive to achieve the goal of having shows going 24/7?

- Could audience members participate in a way that the performer and host would be able to see who's watching — in essence, emulating a live stage experience?

- Could musicians in different locations perform as a group on the app?

As the team learned, the answers to nearly all these questions fell within the realm of possibility and they were able to demonstrate fun, joyful experiences at a small scale. The one feature the team couldn't solve—and no team has of yet been able to solve—is to eliminate the latency inherent to the Internet for multiple musicians to be able to play in sync.

While building the app, the team also embarked upon building the actual business. Some of this work included establishing the value proposition of the company and the product:

Providing a venue for performers at any level of experience to give joy to music lovers anywhere in the world.

The executive team of Ken and Joel also embarked upon designing a category for BLive that would set the company and the app experience apart from other live-streaming platforms. BLive fit into:

The hosted, social, live-streamed mobile show experience category.

Establishing this category separated BLive from social media platforms with live capabilities as well as other audio-only platforms that sought to provide other similar features. Ken and Joel also attended multiple events in tech and music to spread the word about the app, to recruit performers and hosts, and to speak with potential investment partners to take the app to a higher level.

Upon release of the first version, the entire team demonstrated both through the app and by streaming at live venues how the app would give experienced and popular musicians a place to play whenever they wanted, and also offering the same level of accessibility to inexperienced and disconnected musicians and hosts, regardless of where they may be.

Result

BLive's small team was able to design, build, market, and execute on a well-built, highly engaging app that brought musicians and audiences—some fans, some discovering the artist for the first time—together through the connection of a host.

Over the course of a year, dozens of artists performed hosted shows and were able to see who was attending each of these shows. However, the team discovered that as the risk of the Covid-19 pandemic lessened and people were re-emerging into the world, audiences preferred to see live music in live venues. While the app is still available for use and hosts an occasional show, it is no longer in active development.
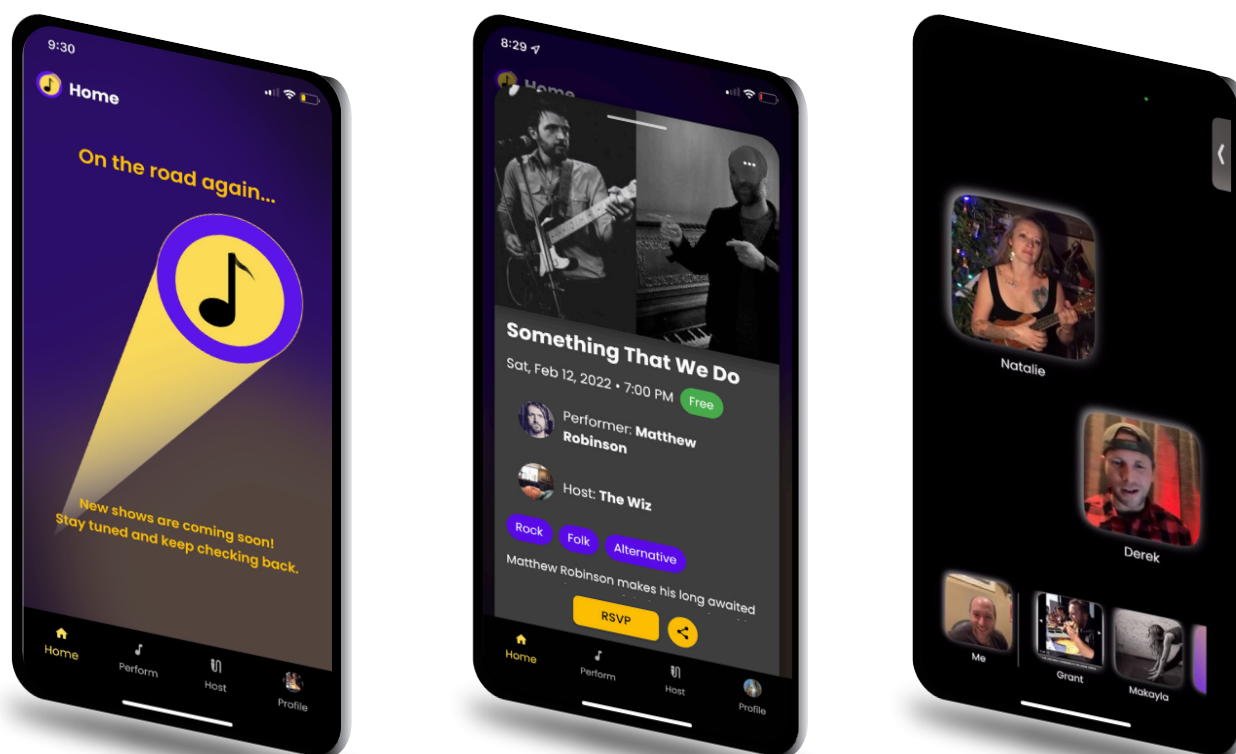
How can North Then West help your company refocus your value proposition to become customer centric? Reach out to us!
Contact joel@norththenwest.com or call 825-436-2035