Music Expo 25 Recap

Over 700 artists, producers, engineers, and innovators came together at The Midway SF for a record-breaking two-day celebration of music creation, technology, and culture. With 25+ sessions, 40+ speakers, and 30 brand showcases, Music Expo 25 marked its most ambitious and best-attended event in years, cementing its role as a vital hub for the Bay Area's creative music scene.

The Midway SF was transformed into a vibrant campus of artistry and learning. Programming spanned expert panels, hands-on labs, and inspiring conversations that showcased where music is heading. Highlights include:

- Oak Felder (Grammy-winning producer and songwriter) and Khris Riddick-Tynes, fresh off Khelani's chart-topping Folded, closed Day 1 with a powerful keynote on the realities of songwriting, production, and sustaining creative excellence.
- DECAP, creator of Drums That Knock, led a high-energy fireside chat about beat-making and business that merged music with mindset and movement: "I protect my state of mind above everything because it shapes the music, the business, and the life I'm building. When I'm clear, I can create with intention. When I'm scattered, nothing moves. Showing up every day starts with showing up for yourself first."
- Linney captivated a packed songwriting crowd with her signature session, bringing a powerful blend of artistry and industry insight in her talk, "Finding the 'Extra' in the 'Ordinary'," which guided attendees through hands-on creativity exercises using just a pen and paper.
- Chrissy Tignor led two of the weekend's most talked-about labs. Her Intuitive Creativity in Music Production encouraged risk-taking and workflow fluidity, while Sound Design on Synthesizers - powered by Sequential - offered hands-on experimentation with 10 brand-new Fourm synths. This gave attendees rare, direct access to one of the newest synths to learn modern sound design techniques and craft their own sounds.

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- JVNA broke down one of her cinematic tracks live, revealing how to blend emotion and technical precision for dramatic impact.
  The Recording Academy's P&E Wing panel - featuring Sarah Jones, Tony Brooke, Jessica Thompson, and Anna Frick - sparked meaningful dialogue around credit tracking, ethics, and mastering.
- "MPE and the Future of Keyboard Performance", hosted by Sam Gutman and ROLI, explored how MIDI Polyphonic Expression is redefining expressive live play and studio composition.
- Immersive Audio Workshop, powered by ADAM Audio and Focusrite, brought together Count, Michael Romanowski, Natalie Bibby, Marcela Rada, Matt Boudreau, and many other audio engineers for a deep dive into spatial audio, restoration, and cutting-edge mastering.
- AI in Music Creation dominated multiple sessions, with panelists and creators debating tools for assisted composition and mastering alongside the ethical edges of AI's rapid rise.

Over 30 music brands and Bay Area organizations anchored a buzzing exhibition hall filled with demos, product testing, and one-on-one creator-to-company connections. Focusrite Group - including Focusrite, Novation, ADAM Audio, Sequential, and Oberheim - returned as Title Sponsor with an immersive audio lab that became a magnet for attendees. "Focusrite Group was thrilled to be back as Music Expo's Title Sponsor," said Hannah Bliss, VP of Marketing for Focusrite Group Americas. "Across two action-packed days, we connected with passionate creators who were eager to explore our latest audio solutions. Our synthesis workshop with the new Sequential Fourm synth was a clear highlight, and we loved hearing how our products are showing up in people's real-world workflows. It was an inspiring, high-energy event from start to finish."

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The new venue drew universal praise for its great vibe, multi-room layout, and seamless navigation. The sleek, industrial-modern space gave attendees room to breathe, move, and network while feeling full of life. “It felt full, but not crowded - and there’s just enough room to grow,” shared one attendee. Gathering points around lounge spaces, cafe, and sponsor booths naturally fostered conversation and collaboration.

For many, this event felt like a reunion and a place to reconnect post-pandemic and celebrate what binds the music community together: passion, experimentation, and a love of the craft. Attendees spanned all backgrounds and experience levels, creating an inclusive, high-vibe environment for collaboration.

“Such a fantastic event! I was able to make so many new networking connections and reinforce many that I already had!” comments Case Newcomb, engineer/producer of Hyde Street Studios, Lucky Recording and Different Fur. The weekend closed with $10K in gear giveaways and a packed final celebration, underscoring Music Expo’s commitment to access and community impact.

“The energy was electric from the moment you walked in, through the halls, into all of the rooms big and small," said Elaine Huang Founder of Neon Owl and Open Door Sessions. "It was filled with passionate creatives ranging from DJs, producers to songwriters, ready to soak it all up and connect, create magic and be a part of an inclusive community. Everyone is excited to come back next year to say the least, and I know they’ll be spreading the word around!”

Music Expo 25 - By the Numbers:

- 700+ attendees across two days
- 54.4% Gen Z (18–34 years old)
- 65% spend $500+ annually on music gear, software, and education
- 40,000 sq ft of workshops, panels, exhibition, and networking
- 25+ sessions featuring 40+ award-winning artists and producers
- 30+ music brands and SF-based organizations

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