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Soundscapes and the Live Music Culture of Madison, WI

Abstract

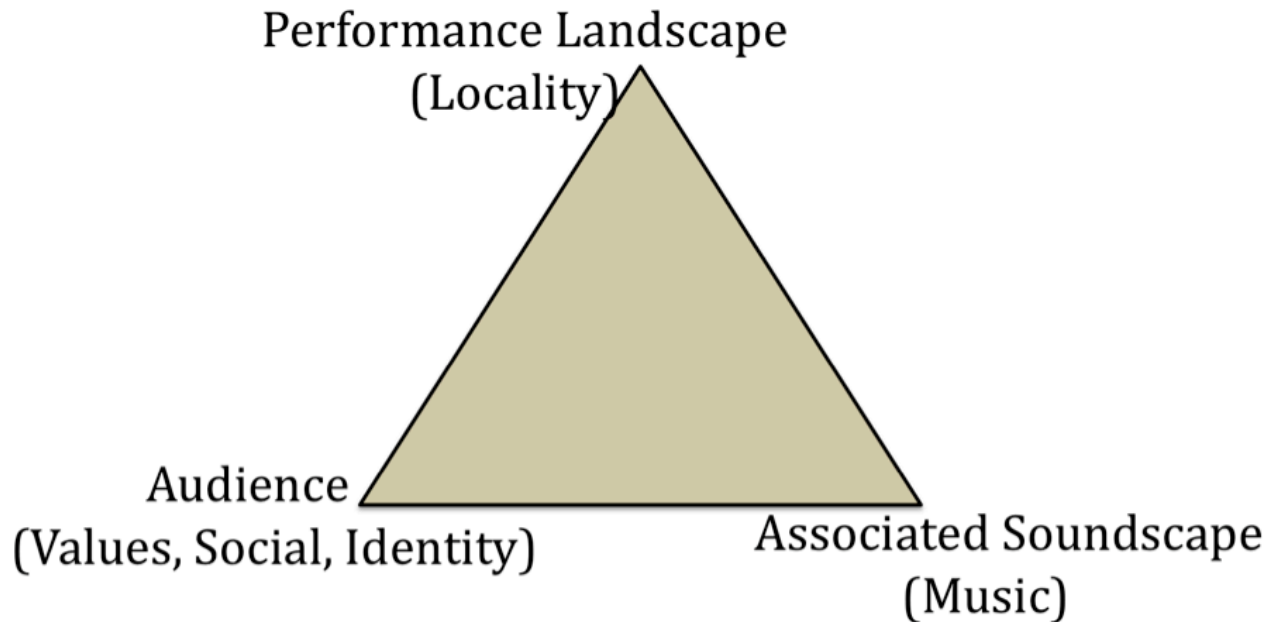
A city's "downtown" is often characterized by entertainment, and Madison is no different. It is a music hub of nightly live performances that brings together a broad demographic range of people and performers. Our research breaks down how the performance landscape, associated soundscape, and the audience interact and overlap to influence each other and create Madison's music scene. We interviewed owners and managers at The Rathskeller, the Frequency, and the High Noon Saloon, and attended multiple shows to take detailed participant observation notes. Over a span of 4 months we passed out surveys asking specific questions about audience preferences of each venue. Using these methods, we found that Madison's regional location between larger cities like Milwaukee, Chicago, and the Twin Cities attracts large national acts already touring, but leaves room for local talent to be showcased. The Internet plays a growing role in booking tactics, attendance rates, and marketing. Seasonal variation in listener rates directly affects quality and quantity of performances. We found that most venues do not have target demographics, but try to appeal to all Madisonians. The differences in design at each venue create a variety of social experiences that offer something for everyone.

Introduction

The concentrated live music activity of downtown Madison, WI, brings together broad demographic ranges of listeners and performers. Interests of patrons and venue owners have

changed live music offerings and the spatial arrangement of music in the city informs all of these changes. The performance landscape, associated soundscape, and audience identity and values all play important roles in influencing the overall live music soundscape (Gibson and Homan 2004, 69). Our definition of the performance landscape includes the physical venue landscape as well as the surrounding locality of Madison. The associated soundscape encompasses the actual music being played and offered in the city. The audience's identity and values involve things such as music preference, venue preference, audience demographics, and audience role. Our research breaks down how these factors overlap and influence each other to create a unique live music scene in Madison, WI. Taking a look at the physical layout of three local music venues (the High Noon Saloon, The Frequency, and Der Rathskeller), interviewing venue owners and programming directors, observing audience and performer behavior at concerts, sitting down with a local band, and administering surveys asking audiences about their preferences, all give us an overview of the music scene and provide ways to understand the interactions of these three aspects of live music performances.

Literature Review



The above triangle is a visual representation of our research question. Through our research we are attempting to understand how each of the three aspects are interacting to form the music landscape of Madison, Wisconsin.

Associated Soundscape - Music

Why look at live music? Well first off, music is unique in that all societies have music, and in that it pervades every facet of modern day life (Kong 1995, 184; Laughey 2006, 95).

Though it takes time to listen to a song, music takes the listener out of time (Tuan 2004, 36), while simultaneously creating a sense of place (Tuan 2004, 38) through memory association.

Music also withstands repetition in a way that other art forms do not (Tuan 2004, 37) as listeners return to songs over and over again. This is interesting because although music performance

occurs within a certain place and time, it informs your sense of now profoundly through the association of previous experiences.

More than any other music medium, live music creates identity and community around the performance and spectacle (Smith 1994, 235, 237), which recordings remove through the separation from social and cultural context (Dibben 2012, 350). Although technology has altered the way music can be consumed and how it gets to fans, these changes have not caused the live music to be diminished. Live music still works to form communities and identity, and in fact live music and festivals have increased with time (Kruse 2009, 216; Rondan-Cataluna 2012, 1411). The meaning that results from the process of music making, through relationships between and within performers and audience members, is deleted when simply assessing a music product such as a recording (Cook 2012, 186). Unlike text-based understanding of music, a performance-based understanding looks beyond the reproduction of music to the creation of new meaning with each event (Cook, 2012, 185). Therefore, live music exists within and questions geographic themes such as time, place, and human culture.

Overall, music must be seen as a compilation of its formal features, context, and culture (Cook 2012, 186). In this way, value in live music consists not only of the music itself (the use or intended value) but also the 'sign-value' described as the meaning of the cultural good (Laughey 2006, 104). Music is rooted in its social and political context and is "bound up in political relations between social groups" (Kong 1995, 187). For example, there are "strong statistical relations between 'song style' and social norms," such as the link between performance style and acceptance of sexual behavior (Carney 1978, 18). Therefore, live music requires an ethnographic approach, whereby, the performance includes the event as a whole such as the planning, stage, dress, spoken conversation (Cook 2006, 192). Ethnomusicology provides an

understanding of these cultural practices at musical events through fieldwork (in the case of this project participant observation): “Fundamental to performance theory that no item in the environment of performance can be discounted as irrelevant to its impact” (Cook 2006, 191-192). “Socio-historical and extra musical contexts” help narrow possible music meanings (Dibben 2012, 350) of both music production and live music consumption. Perception/cognition theory attempts to explain what listeners actually hear and why (Dibben 2012, 344)—influenced by the use of playback/recordings in the music experience (Krimms 2007, 144). Events will be looked at in all three of these areas of inquiry within our research question in an attempt to understand the whole picture of live music in Madison.

Performance Landscape – Locality

Music reflects social, economic, political, and material aspects of a particular place in which it is created. Changes in place thus influence changes in musical sounds and styles (Cohen 1995, 444), and therefore, the local organization of space is important to consider within the live music context. Government bodies through legislation and redevelopment plans affect where venues are located (Gibson and Homan, 2004 , 69), and then music centers are re-used instead of establishing new ones (Carney 1978, 15). Hence, historical research on the development of musical place offers a connection back to previous scenes of live music in Madison. But equally as important is the venue space’s implications on the music production and audience.

Space and music influence each other in many situations that range between street performers, coffee shop music, live bands, or individual music in the home. In these cases, music is defining the performance space. Examples of space defining music are found in acoustically

designed music halls or in the many rooms of a rave that are set up to enhance the experience of techno music and lights (Conell and Gibson 2004, 193). However, the use of technological assists in defining music by venue, such as speakers that allow for a different performance landscape than when you are forced to depend on the acoustic design of a venue. Though classical music questions the use of technological assists, popular music uses them all of the time. This means that acoustic “features traditionally provided by the listening venue” are open to the performer of popular music rather than being limited by physical venue acoustic design (Dodd 2001, 590). It also means that music venues do not have to have a specific acoustic design.

“A performance hall is nothing, it has no place, until a performance brings it alive” (Jones 2002, 179). Yet, a venue arguably has influence upon the people and the performance that gives it meaning. Environmental psychology as a discipline tries to explain the “relationship between people and their physical environments” (Sundstrom 1996, 486), environments that “range from *ambient conditions*—temperature, sound, lighting, and air quality—to architectural features of buildings” (Sundstrom 1996, 488). While accepting the idea that places influence people’s actions and comfort within a space, supportive designs are those that result in moderate arousal, due to the fact that humans can only process a finite amount of stimulus information (Sundstrom 1996, 489) and providing too much stimulation results in personal stress (Sundstrom 1996, 490). Additionally, physical environments must foster the “optimal social interaction” for each individual at a given time, while understanding that different settings require specific expectations (Sundstrom 1996, 490). “Post-occupancy evaluation” (Sundstrom 1996, 485) compares individual understanding, action, and feeling of a space before and after a physical change (mostly through re-design), but the field lacks specificity or generalizability in an attempt

to include all people, in multiple situations. Environmental psychology provides a lens to look at the performance venue and try to define why people like certain environments and how the built environment influences social interaction.

One way that space changes social interactions is through the location of the stage in relation to the audience and its visibility. Within the 'front region' of the performance space, there is generally polite social interaction. The 'back region' of the space tends towards unfocused interactions such as glances (Laughey 2006, 108). Additionally, shifts in hierarchical seating arrangements (theaters for example) to all tickets costing the same has, along with the proliferation of the television, lead to a decrease in the traditional audience-actor/performer separation and therefore an increase in interaction (Laughey 2006, 95-96). But this relationship between space and social interaction is not one-directional. The performance space is also heavily influenced by the social and political context in which it is formed. For some time, performers could not be raised higher than the audience due to religious and secular reasons. For example, placing a king lower than the common performers would be offensive (Knight 2006, 176). Eventually this faded, and the performers were raised up on stages, much like we see today. Some venues even have highly raised balconies for the audience to view the performance from (Knight 2006, 177).

To understand the complex relationship of locality on live music the influence of the greater place (in this case Madison, WI) on venues must be included. Characteristics of venue design affect the music produced there and the audience, especially through consumer-consumer and producer-consumer relationships. All of these things need to be taken into account to understand the performance landscape.

Audience – Values, Identity, Role

The audience is the lifeblood of live music, for without fans and the audience there would be no reason for musicians to create music, especially for artists trying to connect to an audience. Music can be used in certain contexts to create a sense of place to reaffirm various social identities or challenge or subvert power relationships. One of the most important things to understand when looking at an audience participating in a live music show is that sounds influence behaviors (Conell and Gibson 2004, 193).

With the rise of the popularity and ability to access the Internet nearly anywhere in the last decade most music exposure is not live and is increasingly experienced elsewhere. Musical discourse which used to primarily take place at live music venues is now taking place on internet forums from the home (Jones 2002, 222, 225, 228). The importance of venues and live music performance has been shown to be a strong indicator of the character or identity of a place (Kong 1995, 184). Even today with the ever increasing amount of online and virtual consumption of music individuals still put a higher value on the live music as the preferred way to be exposed to music. The appeal of live music lies partially in the two-way communication between the performer and the audience (Dodd, 2001, p .603). Every live performance provides a unique experience for an individual that creates memories that the person will hold and can relate back to in the future (Rondan-Cataluna 2012, 1418). The live music experience, “appears to function as a reinforcement of a culture's social structure” (Carney 1978, 18).

Listening to music can be seen as a social action. This social action takes many forms and Laughey perhaps puts it best by describing an audiences' role, “the audience in a live musical event are themselves part of the performance, playing the role (or range of roles) expected of audience participants in the appropriate music world-or perhaps disrupting the event by refusing to follow the convention” (Laughey 2006, 98). Perceptual sound alone is not

sufficient in understanding how an audience understands and experiences music at a live music venue. Information on the experience can be provided from social and cultural environments that the music is taking place in and how the audience is able to physically react to the sounds (Dibben 2012, 351). The physical reaction of the audience is dictated not only by the individual but by the physical landscape of the venue including things like the presence of a bar, lights, and sound equipment. The audience also determines what actions are appropriate for an individual at a public event (Rondan-Cataluna 2012, 1418). Listening practices determine what is heard. Talking at a bar, dancing in front near the band or just standing listening with eyes closed all influence the individual's sense of a music experience in addition to how the individual uniquely hears the music (Dibben 2012, 351). The relationship of performer-audience and audience-audience shapes listening experience, not just music aesthetics (Dibben 2012, 345). The aim of individuals in an audience is to see and be seen (Laughey 2006, 87). Group belonging restricts choices as it defines what is good/bad (Laughey 2006, 106). Individuals are in public spaces and thus act differently than they would when listening to music in a private setting. The audience members are putting on a performance by acting a certain way to meet expectations of the wider group. They want to be seen a certain way which influences how they dress and behave at live performances (Laughey 2005, 107). This results in individuals being both conscious and unconscious of individual actions and their belonging to a larger group mentality. (Laughey 2006, 108).

Music is a way that individuals can feel connected to a wider community and gain a unique sense of place in their locality through music's lyrics and sounds (Cohen, 1995 ,p. 434). Not only does music help to form this sense of community but it also is a way for individuals to gain a sense of identity through their own renderings and memories elicited from a listening

experience both at live venues in public settings and private domestic settings through recordings and radio (Cohen 1995, 446). Music is a way that individuals can communicate with each other and form a separate identity from that of public discourse (Cohen 1995, 434). The audience plays a critical part in understanding how the physical landscape and the music are all working together to produce unique spaces and sounds, because the music people listen to helps to form the people we become and the world we live in (Krimms 2007, 130).

Methods

We conducted research using surveys, interviews, participant observation, photographs, and sketches to address how the performance landscape, associated soundscape, and audience identity and values all play important roles in influencing the overall live music soundscape.

Our surveys (Appendix 3, Survey 1) were designed with the audience of a live music event in mind. The questions were aimed at understanding how the individual identifies as an audience member and how they value certain aspects of the soundscapes associated with the specific venues we were looking at. Surveys were handed out based on convenience sampling. We collected surveys at the three venue locations as well as in our classes, which means we cannot claim that our results reflect the Madison population as a whole like a random sample would (Secor 2010, 196). Our first three questions are focused on understanding the background information of individual respondents. We wanted to know how often individuals go to live performances, how much they spend, and how far they travel in order to understand distance and pricing barriers that influence where and how much live music is consumed. Question four was asked to understand audience interaction, and what social groupings are occurring at live performances. Question five looks at how the audience is related to the associated soundscape,

and what forms of infrastructure are influencing how individuals hear about and decide to attend live music performances. Question six looks into how members of the audience value live performances versus other music mediums by having participants rank their personal preferences. This question focuses on how internet and new modes of listening to music are valued against older mediums and live performances. We asked questions 7-9 to understand how individuals from varying demographics perceive the physical performance landscape of the specific venues we are looking at. Respondents checked all that applied to what they liked about the venues. We used this information to compare it to how interviewees described the performance landscape and how it compared to our participant observations.

We conducted interviews with the owner of The Frequency, the owner The High Noon Saloon, the Union South Program Director, and a local band. These interviews were conducted to get an in depth look at the soundscapes of Madison, and how the performance landscape is connected to the audience and associated landscape, and the role our participants played as an intermediary between the previous aspects of the soundscape. We presented questions to the interviewees and had at least two group members present at all interviews to record the answers of questions. We made sure all answers were approved by the interviewees and compared our notes immediately afterwards to ensure accuracy. These interviews reflect the particular aspects of the soundscape and can be used to generalize a wider view of Madison's music landscape (Secor 2010, 199). We asked questions in the interviews addressing specific aspects of the landscape. We asked questions to all respondents involving target audience and about what makes Madison unique in terms of its geographic location and infrastructure, ie college town, independent radio. We also asked questions related to the physical landscape of venues and how bands are booked by venues.

Participant observation was done to immerse ourselves at live music performances in a way similar to audience members and experience the soundscape in a way different than the research conducted by interviews or surveys. We minimally influenced what was occurring by being members of an audience and not just researchers in a live music context (Allsop 2010, 207). We observed the interactions between audience members, the band, and the physical venue by taking notes during the performance and after the performance by taking a detailed account of what occurred. The resulting accounts were then compared to the results of conducted interviews and completed surveys to identify overlap and disconnects.

The final method we employed to analyze the live music landscapes of madison was analysis of photographs and the production of sketches. These images were used to look at how different points of views, like the lense of a camera or a sketch of a bird eye's view of venue layout, can be used to see new perspectives of how physical landscape, audience, and sounds are interacting (Schein 2010, 224). By using these multiple lines of inquiry and evidence we were better able to draw conclusions about the music landscapes of Madison, Wisconsin.

Results

High Noon Saloon

High Noon Saloon Interview (11/7/12): Owner Cathy Dethmers

Can you give us some background information about you? How did you get here? Why did you choose to start the High Noon Saloon?

Cathy was a bartender at O'Cayz Corral through school until she graduated (with a cultural anthropology degree). The bar going out of business gave her the opportunity to reopen it as the owner. Approximately six months later it burned down, and after a three and a half year search to find a new location, she opened the High Noon. The space was empty, so she designed everything in it from the ground up except for the ceilings and the brick walls.

What are the main differences between it and your old venue, the O'Cayz Corral? When you

remodeled, what specific characteristics of the venue did you focus on? Were you focused mostly on increasing audience/performance interaction?

The High noon is 2 ½ to 3 times larger than O'Cayz Corral which allows the venue to host a wider array of acts. Because it is bigger Cathy can do more with the space like have weddings and children performances, and works as more of a listening space that can cater to singer songwriter sit down bands in addition to jam band stuff. The High Noon lost the “divey” feel of O'Cayz Corral but the design (especially the location of the bar in relation to the stage and the western theme) was heavily influenced by the old bar. When designing the space, Cathy focused on venue acoustics and sightlines to the stage. Other considerations include how to maximize capacity, and as a former bartender, the placement of the bars so that you do not have to leave the concert or the floor to get a drink. Building codes influenced some of the design, but overall she retained a lot of the control over decision making. However, no matter the design, the capacity of a show influences the scene in the High Noon on a given night. Cathy explains that you can have a large capacity that generally is conducive to loudness, but these two factors do not need to match. Both attendance and volume influence how the tables are set up which in turn influences audience behavior.

What unique structural characteristics of Madison (For example, it being a college town, state capital, WORT, The Isthmus, etc.), help or hinder your business?

Cathy starts by explaining that she is only familiar with Madison and does not really have anywhere else to compare it to. However, its geoGraphic location between Minneapolis and Chicago makes it a stop for national bands. Madison being a college town influences the seasonality of the music and the business, as a major source of audience members leave the city in the summer. She has noticed a change in the scene over time and believes that internet has had a large influence on this. Before the internet became so popular, fans had to go out to the live events to find bands and see if they are good. Now, they can just go onto the numerous websites and hear recordings/other performances. This has reduced the importance of the booker (in this case Cathy) in the operation, so that now decisions about what bands to book are based more on popularity and the crowd that previous experience playing Madison has drawn, than on the opinion and choice of the booker.

What considerations are most important in booking bands? (Good fit, Availability, Price? How do you attract bands to the venue?)

Now the focus is on the bands that have already had an impact because it is less of a financial risk to book these kinds of bands (there is a greater turn out ensured). At the High Noon, 99% of the bands come to Cathy which results in approximately 500 emails a week from performers looking to make a stop at the venue.

How do you attract your audience? Do you use price, venue layout/scene, marketing, or promotional events?

The High Noon (and even some residual following from O'Cayz Corral) has established a presence in Madison and is known to have music seven nights a week. Band popularity draws the audience in more than anything else, and the venue's reputation helps to establish what attendants should expect. Children's shows, weddings, and other benefits attract a wide range of people to the venue and often help to bring new people in the door

and hopefully coming back. The use of the venue for many different types of events draws people who may otherwise not have business at the High Noon. However, distance is an issue for this venue in attracting college students to shows. It is just on the edge of most audience members' range of acceptable travel distance to a show. However, many college students still make the trek.

Who is your ideal audience?

Cathy laughed and said "Anyone who likes to drink beer," which means just about anyone. She hopes that they offer a wide enough variety so that something will be attractive to all potential patrons.

What is your actual audience like, in terms of demographics, etc.?

Late afternoon and early evening events draw in an older crowd that used to go to shows before changes in lifestyle that no longer allow for late nights. Happy hour allows them to come out after work and head home in time to put the kids to bed. The type of audience also depends on the event or musical group that is performing each afternoon/night.

Can you talk about your connection to other venues that make up the Madison music scene?

She often recommends bands to the Frequency when they are not the right fit for the larger venue of the High Noon, or when it is already booked for the desired night. This venue is similar in size and style to O'Cayz Corral and she is fond of the opportunity that it represents to musicians hoping to play in Madison. In contrast, there is direct competition with the Majestic because they are trying to book similar bands and are a similar size.

The High Noon Saloon Participant Observation-11/17/12

I attended an event at the High Noon Saloon for the opening of a meadery in Madison. I arrived shortly after 2 pm and paid my cover charge for the band. The event was scheduled to end at 5pm. Around 2:30 pm the owner of the meadery gave a short speech to the crowd. The crowd was definitely older, and many seemed to know each other. The adults that attended mostly seemed to have a secure income to spend on mead at the High Noon, a delicious, but pricey drink by my college student standards. Thought the event was 21 plus, multiple children running around gave it the vibe of a family oriented event. Most people sat at the tables available on the floor and on the balcony. There was a dance floor area but the only person that danced was a small girl. The stage was set up high about 3-4 feet similar to that of the Frequency. The bands that played were both bluegrass; the first one had a hint of punk and the second band was all strings and more typical bluegrass.

Though the volume of the music moderately hindered conversation, many people continued to converse, drink mead, and become merry. The adults mostly swayed back and forth and a lot of people just sat and watched as the band played. All people seem to experience music the same way no matter the venue, whether they are sitting, or standing and gently swaying. The second band was not as loud and played well. There was really no band-crowd interaction at the event. You can buy a drink and still see the band from the main floor as well as the loft.

The Frequency

The Frequency Interview (11/28/12): Owner Darwin Sampson

Can you give us some background information about you? (How did you get here?/Why did you choose to get involved with The Frequency?)

The building was previously known as the Adair Lounge, offering mostly jazz and hip-hop. Darwin was contacted by the previous owners, and reopened it as the Frequency in 2008. He redesigned the space so that the stage was in the back of the room instead of along the right wall. This was mostly an acoustic design change to reduce the amount of sound bouncing around behind the stage and so that the PA wasn't pointed directly at the side wall. He removed the bar in the rear performance to reduce congestion and create space for a sound booth. The change was also motivated by a liquor stealing problem and fights from people that were too drunk. A separated bar makes it hard to get drinks, but he sees this as a good thing. He completely changed the decor in order to make it fit the type of venue he wanted to be, as well as to make people more comfortable while they were there. He wants to add more bass traps in the future, but they tend to be expensive.

What unique structural characteristics of Madison (it being a college town, state capital, WORT, The Isthmus, etc. for example), help or hinder your business?

Madison's main unique attribute in terms of music draw is its central location between other major cities. The Frequency does not yet rely on the student demographic for its audience base. This is because of the newness of the venue (meaning a lack of reputation), and distance from campus. The Majestic pulls the college crowd in better because of event choices, a larger capacity, seemingly closer location, and reputation.

What considerations are most important to you when booking bands/what do you look for (Size of your venue? Price? Availability? Good fit?)?

Booking bands is based on the best music available on a given date, and therefore, the genre is secondary (not that important). Additionally, Darwin admits to putting his personal favorite acts first on the calendar.

How do you attract bands to The Frequency?

He has a new partnership with Majestic Live that helps to book bigger acts and national bands. The Majestic has first access to the calendar on dates up to six weeks prior to a show. However, Darwin still does 90% of the booking because he has to stay open seven days a week for financial reasons, and therefore relies on local talent heavily.

Is the booking of local bands a conscious choice on your end?

Yes, it is by choice. It gives these bands a chance to learn and a place to practice (the Frequency stays professional for them, giving them a taste of a real show). This allows many local and regional bands have their first shows here.

How do you attract your audience?

The block draws people in who were visiting other businesses (have some walk-up curiosity). But on the flip side, after five years, the venue is starting to see a small number

of regulars. This is often dependent on who is bartending, which they try to rotate as much as possible. In the winter, the band's music must draw the crowd due to lack of motivation to walk far in the cold. Madison music is very seasonal, and in the summer even more preparation is required. Because so much is going on in this season, there is a little more selectivity on the acts that are booked.

Do you have an ideal audience?

No he doesn't, all are welcome.

Who is your actual audience (in terms of demographics, etc.)?

A cross section of people visit the Frequency. He says that especially diverse crowds are associated with hip-hop shows. The crowd is often dependent on the night or act, and can range from older, quieter, to general drinkers.

When we attended a concert a few weeks back, the opener and the main act were vastly different, is this a way to bring in different crowds in a single night? What is the reason?

Darwin likes to bring acts that wouldn't normally go together because he doesn't want to listen to the same music all night, and neither do the patrons. He also tries to get performers together because that is how music survives.

What are your connection with other Madison venues (specifically, can you talk about your recent partnership with Majestic Live)?

Refer to question about booking/attracting bands.

Additional fun facts about the Frequency:

Darwin, and other staff-members fully believe that it is haunted.

The Frequency Participant Observation (11/7/12)

It was Wednesday around 7 pm, and outside there were a few guys smoking cigarettes and an entrepreneur offering shoe shines to all walking into The Frequency. At this point in the evening only the bar area was open, and so while killing some time in the low lit room one can notice the stickers under the glass of the bar (mostly logos, and mostly unrecognizable to us). Across the room from the bar are mirrors and coat hooks. This front area is small but affords a space for groups of two or three to drink and talk, starting out fairly empty and filling up at time passes. Patrons were generally dressed casually (no suits/dresses), and seemed to range between 18 and 55 years old (the majority around 30). The gender ratio was approximately 2 males per every female. In the next room between the bar and the performance area is an open area home to one arcade game and large fireplace. A curtain wall separates these two spaces from the performance area, and once it is time, we pay our \$10 cover to the man in the doorway on a stool and enter the performance space.

The performance area was dark with some posters dotting the walls. The room was very small with an estimated maximum capacity of around 60 people. There is a small skylight on the ceiling, and the ceiling needed repainting. Overall, the space was much taller than it seemed wide and was quite narrow. The floors are also not in the best shape, which adds to the "divey" feeling

of the venue. The walls were painted black and there were “bass traps” (a kind of foam dampener) hanging on the top $\frac{1}{3}$. The stage, taking up about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ of the room was at the far end of the room and was raised about three feet from the ground with three stairs just to the right of center leading up the platform. Although the front of the stage is made to look like speakers, additional ones hung from the ceiling. The lights that hung from the ceiling pointed out at the audience (four on each side of the stage). At the back stage right there is a sound booth where the sound guy was camped out. In front of the booth and along the right wall there are merchandise tables set up, and about four tables (two on each side) with accompanying chairs making up the remaining furniture of the area--the rest was left open for audience standing.

Other features of the space including a door in the left corner opposite the stage that leads downstairs where bands emerged from and took their equipment when they were finished, and an emergency exit stairwell that was occasionally and randomly illuminated directly to the left of the stage. If you follow the stairwell in the back market bands/employees only you will find the green room, which a place for bands to be separated from the audience and prepare for their performance, that consists of a mirror and some old stuff scattered about trash cans, and two couches where the band members were hanging out talking, drinking, and smoking lots of cigarettes. Our group was at a table on stage left and everyone else was against the wall facing the middle with their backs to the unmanned merchandise tables. Around 8 o'clock there were about eight to ten other audience members outside of our research group in the dark basement like room. They stayed mostly in two groups clutching drinks and moving in and out of the room for the next hour before the opening band took the stage.

When the first band, the Poor Bastards, took the stage at 9 pm, the room filled to about 40 people. The opening band was indie rock duet and sang a lot about the devil, a theme that was enhanced by the only red lights they requested during their performance. Their music had a heavy religious slant and was slightly racist at times. The musicians appeared like they did not care very much, with their guitar taped in multiple places to keep it together, flipping off the audience, giving them the evil eye (a wide eyed glare looking down their noses at the audience), and at multiple times telling them to shut-up when they offered suggestions (in a manner which may have been interpreted as a joke). The audience only seemed to like it more, which is interesting as non-fans may find this performance frustrating (personally, I started glaring back at the singer in a feeble attempt to protest while unintentionally conforming).

The stage was close enough to standing area for easy audience-performer interaction. However, it was annoying when you had to walk through the choke point to get back to the bar. While the band played it was difficult to have any sort of conversation as the music was loud (we wonder is the sound level of the venue associated with the fact that the bar is located outside of the performance room). It appeared that many people were clearly big fans of the band (most dressing in a similar ‘uniform’ of bleach blond hair, piercings, and mostly black/neutral colors), but even those that appeared to be slightly out of place seemed to feel comfortable to bob their heads with the rest of the crowd as the space was quite filled. The groups of people that came together hardly conversed but kept their eyes on the front and offered a little movement encouragement and lots of clapping and hollering between songs (a meow was even heard at one point in the beginning). It was very weird in the sense that everyone seemed to be spaced out with very few people in line with each other presumably to get the best view of the stage? There was a group of three at the front of the room though that were interacting during songs which consisted of sing to each other and videotaping the experience—overall, the cell phones came out early and could be spotted by their flash. The front of the crowd was the most involved,

singing along to select songs, and with one very tall guy continually bopping about while playing an air guitar and the drums. However, the audience kept a large radius (between 3 and 5 feet) between the stage and where they were standing even when the lead singer came to the front to sing to them so that the boundary produced by the stage elevation was never crossed. When the band would offer a new song, which was one of the few comments the band made between songs (that is was new), the audience was especially quiet and even during breaks there were rumbles of 'shushhhhes'. It seemed that these fans were quite dedicated to the music and wanted to hear every note and every word. During this set most of the audience remained standing as the tables began to be used for empty glasses.

The main band played at 10, by this time the crowd had gotten older, perhaps because the band itself was older. People had cleared out by then as well which resulted in increased audience spacing, especially between those who did not know each other or come together. The band was a four person bluegrass band consisting of a drummer, guitarist, upright bass player, and a banjo/harmonica playing lead singer. They also utilized technology assists in the hookups and microphones specific to their instruments. The orientation of the audience remained the same as those in the front were most involved in the performance. Many knew the band and had traveled some distance from Minnesota and Black River Falls, WI to see the performance. This act resulted in more dancing, while the microphone was too quiet to really hear the words distinctly. However, there was also a greater range of audience participation than with the first act as quite a few audience members were not physically reacting to the music at all and some were having conversations during the songs (one witnessed was between two people who clearly knew each other prior to the show and another seemed to be some sort of bonding ritual culminating in a high five between possible strangers). The musicians gave some anecdotes to the songs that they sang to try and entertain the listeners, but the overall audience enthusiasm in the room seemed to dwindle as the night progressed except for an intoxicated guy in the corner double fisting and doing high kicks that is. These bands were very different musically, the second group even admitted this on stage which leads us to wonder if having two vastly different acts at one venue in one night draws a larger crowd or if it limits attendance to the group that is lesser known (in this case it seems like the second band). This night was diverse and interesting in the different scenes that the same venue produced based on different bands and their associated fans and how they related to the live music performances. The second set was shorter than the Poor Bastards, and it was all over before 11.

The first act was out in the audience by their merchandise stand during the second set and the four piece band was seen around the bar mingling after as well. We met up with the lead singer near the front door and talked about the shoe shine man from the beginning of the night and banjo playing technique.

Der Rathskeller

Rathskeller Interview (11/15/12): Union South Program Director Robin Schmoltdt

Can you give us some background information about you? How did you get here? Why did you choose WUD?

Robin volunteered for four years on the music committee as a student in an effort to try and book a specific band that she road-tripped to see a handful of times. She ended up bringing them to campus her senior year, but not before the lead singer passed away. Once she graduated there was an opening in WUD programming and using the skills that

she learned in a student capacity, she has been working with the department ever since (15 years). Specifically, her current position as Union South Program Director entails working to optimize student programming through venue assessment (at both Union South and the Memorial Union), event planning, and contract/budget management. There are separate directors for the two unions, but there is a lot of coordination and overlap between the two. Robin's undergraduate work has been based at the Memorial Union for the most part, although she moved over to Union South later in her volunteer days when she took on more of a student leadership role there.

Has Der Rathskeller always had live music events?

In the 1930/40s, the music program was under the Union Theater and so concerts were located either there or in the Great Hall. These locations were designed with big band/dance acoustics in mind. The Rathskeller became a music venue later (1970/80s), but was mostly used as a social hangout space as it is a drinking hall (the Catskeller was a comparable location for women until they were welcomed into the Rathskeller). This is important in that it was never really designed to house live music performances. Currently Der Rathskeller is a seasonal music venue for in the winter and in the summer when it rains (basically, whenever the event cannot be held outside on the terrace), and is also used for film programming. The terrace, which was renovated in the late 1980s to more easily allow live music, is the preferred location at Memorial Union.

Has WUD always been in charge of booking bands at the Union?

Since the 1930/40s, bands have always been student booked. Students find the bands, they learn how to contact them, and they work in artist relations. Sometimes the events are co-sponsored by other organizations and WUD, but most programming on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday is strictly WUD. When there are openings in the schedule there is a proposal process for outside programming.

What unique structural characteristics of Madison (it being a college town, etc.) or of being in a Union, help or hinder your success?

The nature of Madison demographically is vital. The community has interest in the programming, and music savvy UW students volunteer to put on the music events. Attendance at a show on the Terrace during the summer offers a 'snapshot' of Madison in which all community member groups are represented most nights. However, it is also in the city's nature that there is a seasonal shift from mostly students during the year towards more families and alumni over the summer when the programming is the busiest/most attended. This year round programming makes the Memorial Union unique from other campus unions. The Union's strong lakes and outdoors tradition and its notoriety as the place to be/see while on campus helps set it apart from other venues. These aspects allow almost anything to work at this venue whereas other spaces have to find more of a niche of what can work within the space. So not only is Madison unique, but the Union itself is key to the success of the WUD music committee.

What considerations are most important to you while booking bands to play at the Rathskeller?

Quality of the music is the biggest issue when considering booking bands, and Robin explains that they would rather not have any programming than to book something that was not good. Getting these quality acts in the door comes down to the energy and the

interest of the student organizers. This student directed organization allows many bands to appear on campus before they become well known and thus more costly to see. Students know good bands because they are looking all of the time, and WUD specifically sends group representatives to summer music festivals to see new bands and try and sell a gig at the UW Madison union. Some specific considerations for the Rathskeller, are size of performance to ensure safety (the space can only really accommodate less than 550 people and this is difficult to regulate with numerous entrances/exits as well as an accessible/low stage) and student interest while also considering the wider union membership community as well. Genre popularity changes often, but the programming tries to keep a genre balance. Jam bands were popular in the 80's, indie rock has always been well represented, and more recently, electronic based bands have often played. Band availability as well as cost are also taken into consideration when assessing the fit of a band to the Union. Routing of bands is important in keeping costs low, as 'one-offs' are more expensive than catching a band that is going between Minneapolis, Milwaukee, or Chicago on their tour. For example, bands that are already booked for Ames Iowa (Iowa State) are usually interested in playing in Madison. WUD music works with an annual budget that is allocated by the Union Council at the beginning of the year and comes mostly through segregated fees.

How do you attract bands to the Rathskeller?

Some bands, mostly smaller, actually send proposals through booking agents to try and book a show, while other bigger bands require student outreach programming. Some bands are attracted to the intimate setting of union venues (including the Rathskeller), that results in a better show than a "corporate" arena atmosphere. Additionally, the organization tries to attract a really big concert/popular band once per year (e.g. the Sett opening in Union South, Of Montreal played).

How do you attract an audience?

Most of the time attendees know of performances because of the Union's built up reputation for "consistent and systematic programming" every week. The student marketing team uses print (fliers and some in the onion/student papers) and social media to get the word out to new student or non-informed community members. Social media is important in this arrangement because it creates a two-way communication that not only allows the committee to tell the community what they are doing, but students/fans can suggest bands to check out and bring to campus. The venue itself offers a very close audience/performer interaction with cozy fireplaces which makes up for its bad acoustics and sightlines. The smaller venue space means that there is a more personal atmosphere, yet the Rathskeller allows audience to choose their distance from the band to create a personal place. Additionally, there is no cover of 21+ stipulation in the Rathskeller. Lastly, historic renovations may lead to increase attendance as the future steps hope to improve the Rathskeller as a venue (especially the sound system) without changing the character or ambiance.

Do you have an ideal audience?

WUD targets students, faculty, and Union members for their events. The community at large is the ideal for summer, including families.

Who is your actual audience, in terms of demographics, etc.?

The membership office (specifically Sara Artz) may know more about Union member records, etc. Interestingly, students come sometimes to work on schoolwork while listening to the band from a further distance (use it as background noise).

Do you have any connections with other venues?

Student volunteers communicate with other venues at times and may even have internships at places like the Majestic. Personally, Robin has been to O' Cayz and loves the High Noon as a venue for her own music consumption. Other Madison venues can be valuable in the benchmarking process to see what works and does not work in certain spaces to translate back to the Union.

The Rathskeller Participant Observation (11/10/12)

Before even seeing the stage, you can hear the chatter and commotion from the Rathskeller. The room is sparsely filled with groups gathered around tables. Most of the people who are already in the room are located around the outside of the venue, especially around the fireplaces immediately to the left and right of the middle entrance way (see Appendix 1, Photo 7), and very few behind the stage in the rounded area at the back of the Rathskeller lined with windows (denoted on Appendix 2, Graphic 3 as the area behind the stage without good sightlines or best sound locations). At some tables people had their laptops open and were working on homework and occasionally checking Facebook. At a table behind mine sat a father and son doing what appeared to be school work and paperwork. At other tables, patrons simply sat and conversed. Of course, there were multiple tables that watched the band more closely than these others. Most tables were full of people with pitchers of beer. The furniture was rearranged to fit the targeted social interaction. For example, there is a clump of tables off to the right where the largest group is mingling and eventually, this is where the band emerges from at approximately 9:00 pm.

Prior to the opening song and during the concert, people continuously entered, exited, and moved about the open space. This often seemed distracting as people who were waiting to pick up food, those playing board games and meeting in the area outside of Der Rathskeller itself, and others ordering beer from the adjacent room easily moved from one 'room' to another as well as the sound they produce. The audience was quite diverse ranging in age from children with their parent(s) to middle aged couples, but the vast majority were in their twenties or thirties from my guesstimates. Dress was also varied and ranged from sweat pants to dresses/slacks.

The first band to take the stage, The Burning Willows, was a trio of two guitarists and one violinist. A banner advertising music events at the Union Terrace hung overhead as they began to play. The members were Zach's personal friends who he has seen play multiple times before, but the Rathskeller has a unique layout. In this venue, the band is almost immersed in the crowd on a four inch stage. The sound, controlled from the back makeshift sound booth (consisting of two wooden tables and a couple students working the boards) and emitted from a pair of speakers on either side of the stage, wasn't too loud. This allowed people to converse during the performance. The lights were turned down the lowest in the middle of the room where the

listeners were the quietest and clapped the loudest, in contrast to the outer edges of the Rathskeller that were brighter and generally louder filled with outsider conversations and jokes. Conversation seemed to be the number one thing to do as there was no cleared dance area among the seated people. There was good crowd interaction as the performers asked for audience participation--to drum along, many joined in including an enthusiastic listener who continuously hit his empty bottle on the table. Many sang along to Wagon Wheel by Bob Dylan, of course I knew that a majority of those people were close friends of the band members, but it's not every show that they stomp along and sing as loudly as the Rathskeller enables. Even though the second band repeated Wagon Wheel and many people had left as the night wore on, they got great crowd participation again.

The bands that played had a bluegrass sound, but the crowd that filled the Rathskeller that night was a diverse group. It ranged from children with families to undergraduates, graduates, and older Union members. There was even a family of sisters from Chicago. This speaks not so much of the bands draw on people -- the sisters didn't know who would be playing -- but of the Rathskeller as a meeting place to drink beer, socialize, and enjoy whatever music may be playing.

Band Interview

The Burning Willows (11/18/12)

How did you get where you are today?

The band first met at a mutual friend's campfire party in which they "jammed" together. They found that their musical tastes and sound ran together very well, and entertained thoughts of making a band. They played together as a band for the first time at one of their birthday parties. After that it was just a matter of practicing and writing music before getting real shows together in downtown Madison.

How would you describe your sound?

The band describes their sound as something in between folk, bluegrass, and acoustic rock, and feel strongly inspired by singer songwriters like Bob Dylan.

Why do you create and play music for an audience?

One member simply feels a deep need to play at his core. Another loves it for the friendship and good times it provides. But they all agree that playing in front of an audience is the driver, and wouldn't just play in an empty garage very often. The audience gives them something to work for. The feeling of shared energy between the audience and the band is important. Audience interaction is important because even if you play technically perfectly, if the audience isn't excited, then performance is bad.

How do you advertise shows?

The easiest ways for them to advertise shows are through the internet on social media platforms and assembled email databases. However, word-of-mouth communication of fans is a substantial factor in show advertisement.

How do you get performances at venues?

They usually find gigs at venues by emailing multiple bookers at different venues until

they can get in somewhere. However, friends in other bands can mention them to venues and vice versa to get into venues as well. One of the things that they really love is the ease of band-band interaction that Madison offers through its dense music concentration downtown.

What do you like or dislike about venues?

The High Noon: The band loves the High Noon in general, but they mentioned really liking the great sound guy, that a lot of big name bands have played there, the stage set-up, and general atmosphere.

The Frequency: Interestingly, the band thought that the separation of the drinking room and performance space was a good thing. They thought that this allowed those that really liked the music to be within the curtain, but those that just came to drink to stay outside without paying a cover. This idea is consistent with out participant observation at the Frequency as the crowds in the back room changed drastically between acts, demonstrating that the performance space in a separate room acts as a barrier to those who don't really want to see the show. Overall, the band really love that the Frequency is very good at getting local acts in.

Der Rathskeller: The band found that the Rathskeller was hard to get a gig at. It was a tough performance for them because of how big the space was compared to how many people were attending. They didn't "fill" the space, whereas they would have in a smaller venue. Additionally, many people come to the Rathskeller to eat and drink, so those people were not interacting with the band, reducing that "shared energy".

Madison infrastructure

The band found that bigger cities are so spread out that you can't have the same concentrated music sphere that you find in Madison. The density of only a 5 mile block is very small compared to that of New York, or Chicago. Madison being a college town makes the live music scene, according to them. They mentioned a lot of groups that help to get local bands out there that they rarely saw in other cities. They characterize Madison as having a grassroots appreciation of music.

Analysis and discussion

Performance Landscape

The density of downtown Madison's music sphere creates better opportunities for local and small bands to play, and offers a wide array of options for live music consumers. The band Burning Willows characterizes this area as having a strong grassroots appreciation of music.

They also note that the downtown concentration can lead to referrals and booked gigs to help bring bands and venues together. For example, the High Noon Saloon, The Frequency, and The Rathskeller all have some kind of relationship with The Majestic. To the High Noon, The

Majestic is competition, but can drive the venue to offer different and possibly better performances. The Frequency has recently partnered with The Majestic in the booking process in hopes of getting more national acts on the calendar (refer to The Frequency Interview). And over the years, The Majestic has co-hosted events and taught the WUD music students about the music industry through internships. Additionally, each of the 3 venues we have studied have mentioned each other and past relationships. Robin from the Rathskeller had been to Cathy's old bar, and Cathy has referred many bands to the Frequency.

Regionally, Madison is an important hub city between Minneapolis and Chicago (according to Cathy from the High Noon and Darwin from the Frequency) that draws many big name bands during their tours. This idea is echoed by Robin Schmoldt who also notes the importance of Milwaukee, especially Summerfest, and Iowa State to having bands already in the area to perform at the Union. On a local level, the area about the University of Wisconsin campus draws heavily on the student demographic, staff, and alumni which can be noticeable at many weekend evening performances at Madison's downtown venues. However, this also leads to a seasonality in live music due to the summer break for these three demographics.

Additionally, the summer months generally have a larger amount of activities that can mean less interest in live music indoors. The High Noon tries to offset this through more varied event planning. Cathy uses variation of the timing of daily events to bring in different demographics, such as the working age population that cannot be away from the house for the entire night. They also hosts weddings and kids shows to bring in more visitors. Variety is made possible at the High Noon Saloon through the conscientious choice of management, size, and easily modified layout (refer to Appendix 2, Graphic 1). In contrast, the Wisconsin Union Directorate Music Committee takes advantage of the different summer crowd by moving music programming to the

Union Terrace, and works to attract all Madison subgroups – something that is not terribly difficult given the vistas and reputation. The Frequency is less well known to the college crowd according to the venue owner Darwin, which is supported by our survey results showing that 75 percent of student respondents had never been to the Frequency. Darwin also reiterated the necessity for advanced planning in the summer to compete with the variety of entertainment events offered outdoors. In addition, he mentions winter weather being a challenge in getting people to come to a show.

Venue design directs space, seating, and loudness, which in turn influences which type of music performances work best and the audience's behavior. For example, to maximize capacity Cathy Dethmers will remove tables and chairs on the main floor if there she expects a large crowd, which can paradoxically reduce social interaction. However, if she is expecting a large crowd but is booking a singer songwriter type show, she will leave the tables on the floor because it is a quieter show (compare the seated performance in Appendix 1, Photo 2 to a packed performance in Appendix 1, Photo 3). As we note in Photo 2 of the High Noon and Photo 7? of Der Rathskeller, seating, especially when the audience can move it, can increase conversation and social interactions. In comparing conversations levels at The Frequency (standing room and little person to person socialization) versus Der Rathskeller (moveable tables and chairs that were arranged to fit different size groups) we found that Der Rathskeller fostered smaller community conversations. Increasing choices for patrons within a space opens the door to a greater variety of social interactions. This helps explain why the Rathskeller got such a high ranking under the category of 'social opportunity' (see Appendix 3, table 6).

Other differences (shown in Appendix 1, graphics 1, 2, and 3), between venues include bar placement, acoustic design, sightlines to the stage, and stage placement/build. The High

Noon was designed by the owner from the ground up, whereas the Rathskeller was originally intended as a social hangout and drinking hall that was only used as a performance space during bad weather in lieu of the Terrace later on. This is why there is no stage present in the older photo of Der Rathskeller (see Appendix 2, Photo 6). Even today there is still no back room or bands at Der Rathskeller, the view of the stage is blocked by a number of arch pillars (see Appendix 1, Graphic 3), and the venue uses only a portable sound system. The High Noon Saloon is also different from the other two establishments that were studied in that it has two bars and they are on the performance floor so that audience members never have to leave the show when they want to purchase a drink. In contrast, as seen in Appendix 2, Photo 1 of The Frequency's bar, the performance room is not even visible in this two room layout (Appendix 1, Graphic 2). According to The Burning Willows, the division between the spaces enables only those who are actually interested in the music to pay the cover and go into the second room.

This may increase the performer-audience interaction because those that are less interested just simply stay in the bar area. Participant observation at The Frequency is consistent with this idea in that those who attended the performances tended to be fans (traveling far distances and knowing all the lyrics to songs). However, this set-up may also frustrate some in that you have to leave the performance space to get a drink. This may also increase the chance of social interaction due to the walk between locations. The Rathskeller's performance space is also somewhat separated from its bar area (Appendix 1, Graphic 3), but instead of keeping non-invested audience members out of the performance space the openness between the bar area and the main room allows the transfer of those union members interested in a drink into audience participants. Engagement of these people may be more difficult for the band, but it also exposes

them to new listeners (something that is only possible due to the open layout of the Union as a whole and no cover charge for WUD Music programs).

Aside from the influence of bar location, other aspects of a venue's performance landscape are also important in the level and quality of band-audience interaction. From talking to bands over the years, Robin from WUD explained to us how many bands prefer small venues over stadiums because of the level of intimacy these locations offer (and the lack of commercialization they see in 'club-like' performance spaces). This is supported by the Burning Willows when they revealed that a driver for playing live music is the feeling of shared energy between the audience and the band. They go on to say that even if you play technically perfectly, if the audience is not excited, the performance is bad. Some major factors that contribute to this are the size of the venue space, the investment of the listeners to the music that is being played (for example at The Frequency when we went, The Poor Bastards clearly had a very strong following and the audience was then extremely engaged in the performance), and the stage design. There is a difference in the relationship between the performers and the listeners when the stage is three to four feet tall like at the High Noon or The Frequency, versus the five inch tall riser at the Rathskeller. But it is important to note that there are different associated behavioral norms with different forms of live music performance and much seemed to be dictated by encouragement from the band itself. When the performers ask for beat-keeping or singing along, it brings the crowd into the music and breaks down the barriers between the performer and the live music consumer (as seen in participant observations at all of the venues).

Our survey results give us an idea about how the audience perceives the physical landscape of the three venues we looked at. Figure 6 (see Appendix 4) shows that the Rathskeller is not ranked well in terms of bands, acoustics, or venue layout, but is ranked high in terms of

social opportunity and food. The results indicate that though the majority of respondents that have been to the Rathskeller love the social experience offered by a live music performance, they care less about the actual music being played, a reflection of how the venue was originally not designed as a music venue. The High Noon is ranked much higher in terms of music and venue layout but not as high in atmosphere and social opportunity. This may be due to the fact that not as many students are going to these venues so there is less of a social opportunity, but they still enjoy the music. The Frequency is not ranked very high in anything besides atmosphere.

Associated Soundscape

The actual music that comes to Madison has changed over time. A main influence on this change is the internet and its new role in allowing the audience to determine who gets booked. Cathy Dethmers described the transition from the booker deciding who would come based on who they thought was good, to a need now to book those with a strong following and high audience popularity. Nowadays potential patrons can go online and listen to the music before they decide whether to come out to a show or not and therefore, the music itself is a main driver on attendance. Figure 4 (see Appendix 4) shows how people are hearing about performances. What is interesting is that word of mouth is the most common way respondents hear about a performance. Half as many respondents hear about performances through social media, and even lower percentages find out through email and websites. However, if you add together the three online marketing tools, we see that 43% of responses hear about performances via the internet while 37% that indicate word-of-mouth marketing. Word-of mouth marketing is probably still prevalent due to the social nature of live music experience.

The Rathskeller is unique because it offers many different activities aside from just the programmed event (study space, social space, food and drink, etc.). Listeners may still stumble upon performances and become a fan. For the most part even Der Rathskeller's live music attendance is based on consistent programming and prior performer knowledge (according to the interview with Robin). WUD's student volunteers use this new age of social media to try and get bands that are great, but have less popularity at the moment. The internet in this case allows the campus organization to bring artists in before they become too expensive for the budget. Additionally, the two way communication in social media allows other interest groups to voice their preferences to the student bookers in WUD music by recommending bands to check out.

Overall the three venues emphasized the importance of genre balance for reaching a wide range of demographics (see all interviews). However, the Rathskeller is obviously student driven and often showcases indie bands, the High Noon can accommodate lower key singer/songwriter types in addition to large popular national groups, and The Frequency often has local bands because of their smaller size (often those bands that do not fit the High Noon Saloon well are referred to this venue). This is also based on Darwin's drive to give younger bands a kind of practice or learning experience (see interview).

Audience

The biggest draw to live music performance according to our interviews and participant observation are due to the established reputations of consistent live music at places like the High Noon Saloon and Der Rathskeller. Another major factor as seen in the participant observation (specifically the audience members that were traveling from far distances to see a particular act)

is the actual band that is performing. Other special events or unique programming bring in different crowds and the High Noon takes advantage of different times of the day that attract different audience members (refer back to Cathy's interview).

Barriers to live music consumption determine audience as well. Figure 1 (see Appendix 4) depicts how far our respondents travel on average to a music performance. It shows nearly half of respondents traveling under two miles, and linearly decreasing with further distances. This reflects both the structure of Madison and the density of venues located in a small area, but also that our respondents mode of transportation is limited. About 10 percent of respondents travel out of town regularly for music, which is not surprising given that out-of-town performances require more effort, time, and money.

The High Noon, being 1.8 miles from campus, is on the end of this range. To compensate for distance, the High Noon Saloon tries to set itself apart from other venues in the variety of events it hosts. The Rathskeller is right on campus, giving it a huge advantage over the other venues. Lastly, The Frequency is small and not as well known to students but it is centrally located between students and the community at large (see locator map) . Some of its lack of attendance is due to the venues relatively new establishment, and the perceived further distance compared to other venues like The Majestic and the closeness/convenience of Der Rathskeller (Darwin interview).

The level of socialization and overall crowd behavior is influenced by lighting, seating arrangement, and reverence for the music. Figure 5 (see Appendix 3) shows that the vast majority of respondents attend live music performances with friends or significant others, supporting that live music events are largely a social event. The change in the light and the resulting level of conversations during performances is seen in the Rathskeller participant

observation when the lights were turned down in the center and left up high around the edge – resulting in a louder crowd at the exterior and quieter, focused crowd at the interior. Seating arrangement can be matched to the kind of behavior one wishes to illicit. During more mellow shows at the High Noon seating is provided to hang out and just take it all in; unlike during an upbeat performance that requires a dance floor. This space arrangement of the High Noon allows it to prosper as a singer/songwriter venue (interview with Cathy), which is somewhat unique from more club-like locations such as The Majestic and The Frequency. The amount of commitment the crowd has to a specific band determines what is socially acceptable in any given concert and is very nicely demonstrated in the participant observation of The Frequency. Socialization practices at a concert influence the crowd-performer interaction and the level of crowd oneness that is experienced (whereas small group conversations lead to fractures in the audience). The level of the fan’s dedication also seems to influence where they locate themselves within the performance space. As seen in the participant observation of The Frequency, those who were singing along, taking the photos, and requesting songs chose to stand in the front in close proximity to the band and the performance.

Our survey results indicate how live music preferences of the audience in Madison are both individual and social. Figure 2 (see Appendix 3) shows how often people are attending music performances. The breaks were chosen to best separate the data by natural breaks in respondents’ answers. We found a wide range of answers from 0 to 15-20 times per month, reflecting individual variety, but the majority attend on average 0-1 performances a month. Figure 3 (see Appendix 3) shows how listeners prefer to hear their music. The graph depicts clearly that music preference for listening are individually based. Every medium’s range was from 1-6, meaning that at least one person ranked each medium as the least way they preferred to

listen to music and at least one person ranked it the most preferred. But when we aggregate the data as it is in Figure 3 we can see larger trends begin to form. What is clear is that the number one way of preferred listening experience is live performance. However, the data is not evenly distributed and we see a large drop in it being ranked second and third and it peaks again at the 4th rank. Digital downloads and online streaming lose to live music at rank 1, but are obvious winners as the second most popular way to consume music. We can clearly see that the preferred way to listen to music is at a live performance or using electronic mediums via the internet. Records are ranked heavily towards 6 and CDs toward 5. These modes of listening are falling out of favor, especially with students and young people. The audience is made up of individuals with their own interests that are highly varied but live music performances are a way to bring all these individuals together.

Future Research

Due to time and resource restrictions, we need to conduct future research to get more significant results from the live performance landscape of Madison. We relied on convenience sampling for our surveys, which left us with a disproportionate amount of student respondents. In the future we would expand our sample size and conduct random sampling to better represent the whole Madison population. Our surveys could reflect more of the seasonality of music in Madison, which we found important for booking bands and getting people to attend performances. An increase in the sample size for interviews, especially with local and non-local bands would increase the amount of data we have on how these actors perceive the music landscape.

To better represent the actual music landscape, we would expand the number of venues studied, and look at other types of venues as well. We would expand our efforts to include both larger and smaller venues with range of ticket prices from over 40 dollars per show to no cover performances looking more in depth at these barriers and how they affect listening to live music. We would also look at venues that are not managed primarily for music like bars, coffee shops, and public places. These less traditional locations are important ways for people to engage in more local music performances. We would have liked to research The Majestic directly because of its relationship we found to the other venues we did study, and its historical role as a longstanding Madison venue. With more time we would have used the leverage from knowing Darwin and Cathy from interviews to possibly get an interview at the Majestic when we could not within this time constraint.

More research on the physical landscape and infrastructure of Madison could also be conducted. This research would look at Madison's location in relation to larger cities, and how routing is related to and influences what music comes to Madison from a wider geographic range. We would also complete interviews with people involved with public radio and newspapers to understand how this media specific to Madison influences the music culture here.

Conclusion

During our research we found relationships between performance landscape, associated soundscape, and the audience in Madison, but these relationships were often indirect and multidirectional. Some aspects of the Madison music scene include the indirect correlation between distance traveled and attendance rate. As distance increased, attendance decreased, especially noticeable in the college demographic who are generally not traveling farther than

what is walkable or bikeable for a performance. Additionally, the city's regional location is useful in bringing in national acts that are already playing at one of the handful of larger nearby cities, while the downtown venue concentration keeps local talent involved. With highly seasonal weather and activity variation, the high quality and large quantity of music performances is a way to keep attendance up. This also influences the fact that none of the venues studied have target audience demographics, but instead try to make shows appealing to every Madisonian.

Our survey data highlights how live music is a social experience. People attend live music performances to be with friends, be in a place to find identity, and to stay connected to a group. This is true even if it only means going to a performance once or twice a month.

Technological changes, specifically the advancement of internet and social media, affect these experiences. Internet has an increasing influence on booking tactics, marketing, and attendance rates by making performances more audience preference driven. Without a target audience, the design of the three venues focused on universal audience preferences, but always involved tradeoffs between ease of access to the bar, social interaction, and crowd-performer interaction.

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Appendix 1:

Photo 1



Photo from the left balcony looking down on an empty High Noon Saloon Venue.

Photo 2



Photo from the right balcony looking down on a seated show at the High Noon Saloon.

Photo 3



Photo from stage right towards the back of the venue showing a standing room performance. The crowd on the main floor at the High Noon Saloon.

Photo 4



Photo taken from the entranceway of The Frequency on the bar area.

Photo 5



Photo from stage left of the performance room at The Frequency.

Photo 6



Achieved photo of the Rathskeller.

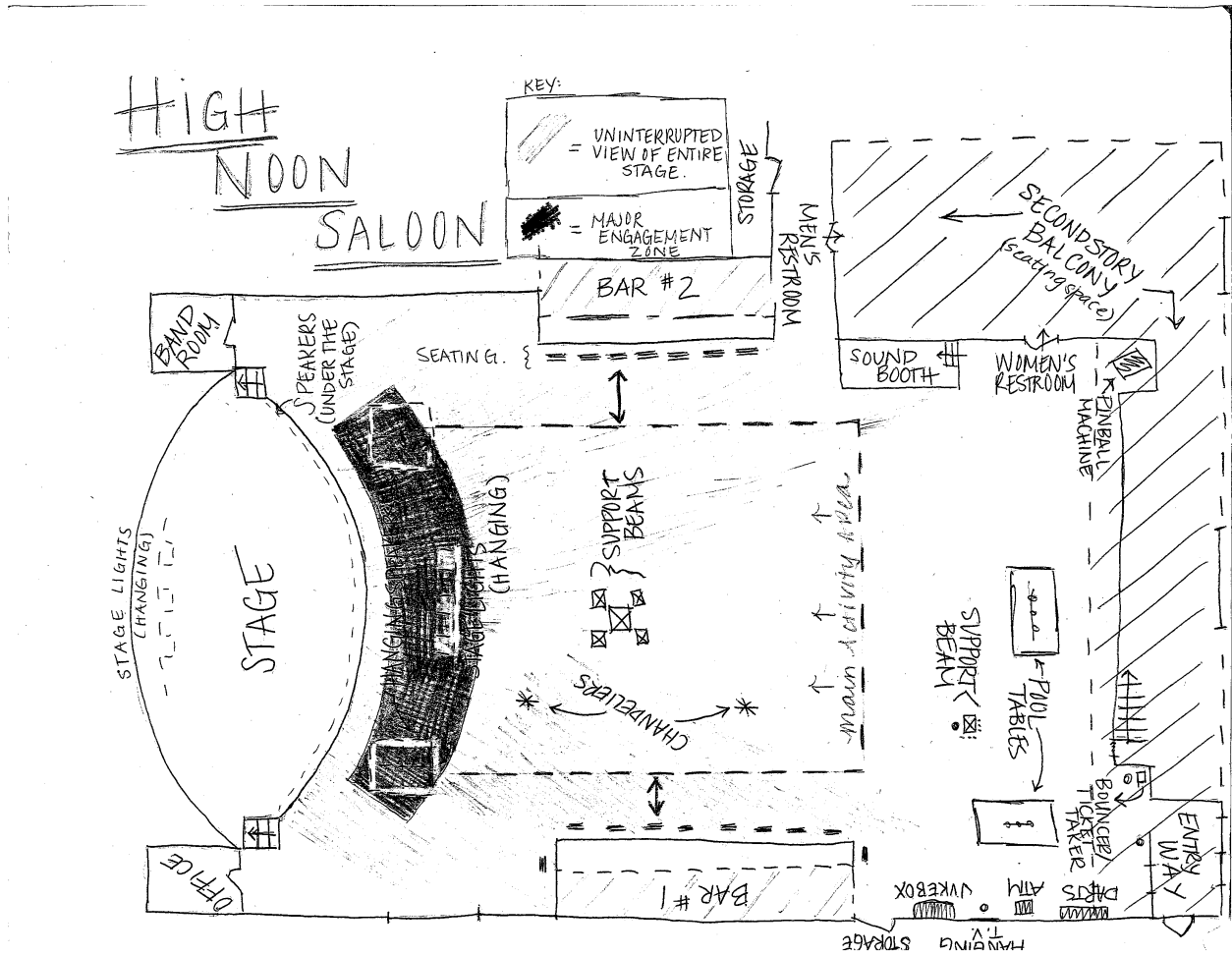
Photo 7



Re-photography of previous Rathskeller photo—current.

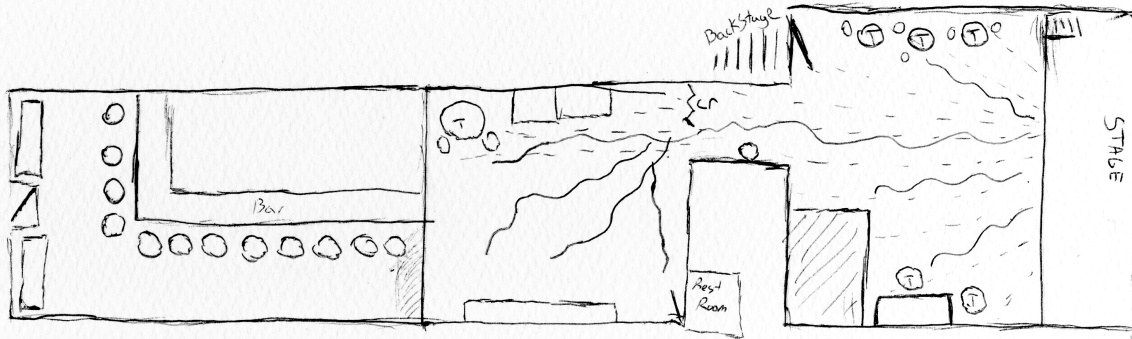
Appendix 2:

Graphic 1



Graphic 2

The Frequency Layout

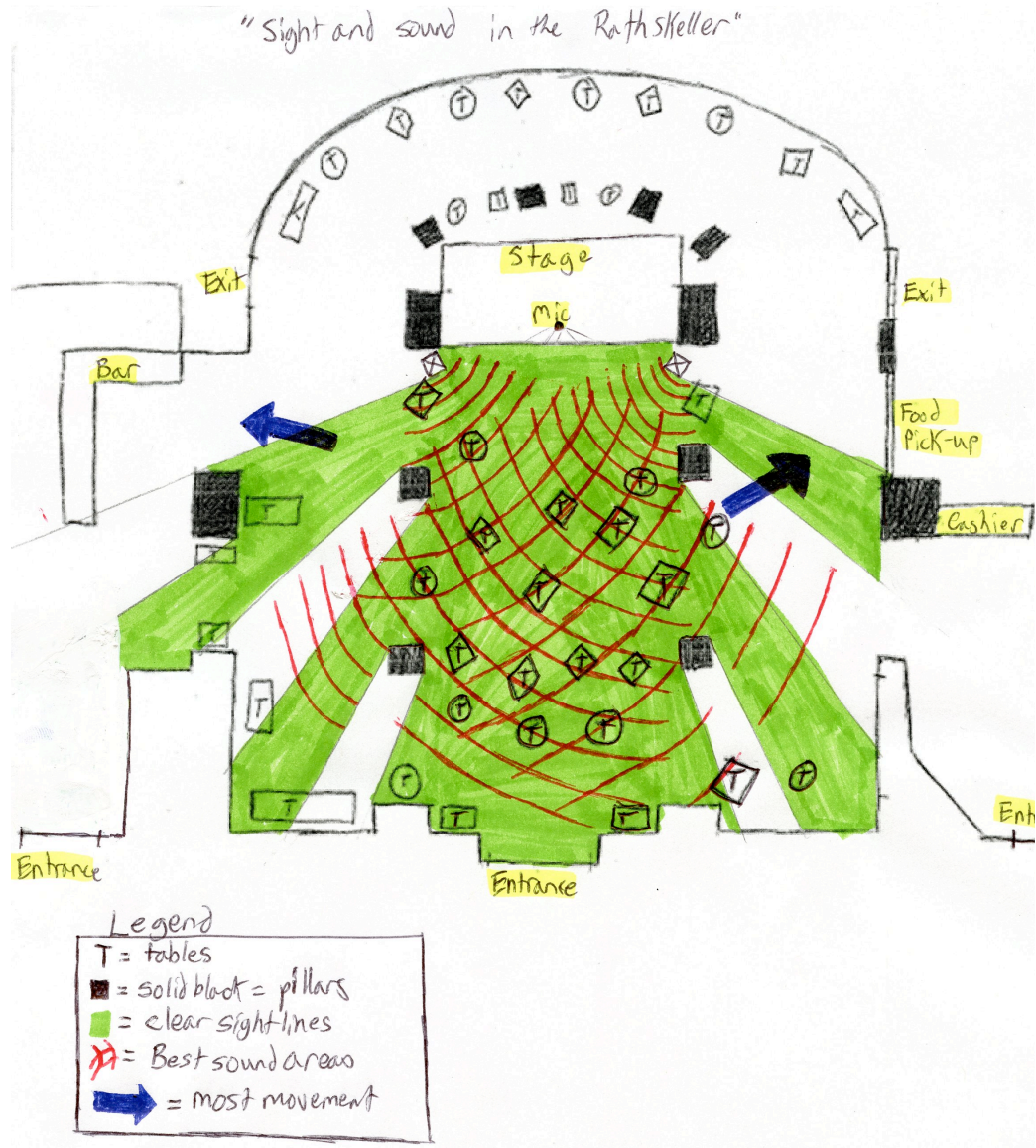


Key

- ⊕ = Table
- = chair
- ∩ = Curtain
- ▨ = Sound Board
- = Line of Sight
- ~ = Significant Sound Line

Br. Zador

Graphic 3



Graphic 4



Appendix 3:

Survey 1

We are UW Madison students studying the live music culture of Madison WI, and would like your input on the following questions--providing personal demographic information is optional.

Gender:

Male/Female/LGBT

Age:

a) 18-20 b) 21-30 c) 31-40 d) >40

Zipcode (current residence): _____

UW Student? (circle) Y N

1.] How often per *month* do you attend live music performances (on average throughout the year)?

2.] How much do you usually spend on fees (e.g. tickets or covers) for a single live music performance?

3.] On average how far do you travel to a single performance?

a.) 0 - 2 miles b.) 2 - 5 miles c.) 5 - 10 miles d.) out of town from _____

4.] Who do you attend live music performances with most often?

a.) family b.) friends c.) significant other(s) d.) I attend alone

e.) other: _____

5.] Which marketing tool is the most important in shaping your awareness of live music performances in Madison?

a.) word of mouth b.) social media c.) email d.) website
e.) posters f.) radio g.) newspaper h.) other: _____

6.] Rank the ways in which you prefer to listen to music (1 being the highest preference, 6 being least).

___ CDs ___ records ___ digital downloads
___ radio ___ live performances ___ online streaming (Youtube, Pandora, etc.)

7.] What aspects do you like about the Frequency (check all that apply)?

___ venue layout ___ bands/artists performing ___ genre of music offered
___ food and drink ___ atmosphere/scene ___ band/audience interaction
___ social opportunity ___ acoustics/sound ___ I don't like this venue
___ I have never attended a performance at this venue

8.] What venue aspects do you like about the High Noon Saloon (check all that apply)?

___ venue layout ___ bands/artists performing ___ genre of music offered
___ food and drink ___ atmosphere/scene ___ band/audience interaction
___ social opportunity ___ acoustics/sound ___ I don't like this venue
___ I have never attended a performance at this venue

9.] What venue aspects do you like about the Memorial Union Der Rathskeller (check all that apply)?

___ venue layout ___ bands/artists performing ___ genre of music offered
___ food and drink ___ atmosphere/scene ___ band/audience interaction
___ social opportunity ___ acoustics/sound ___ I don't like this venue
___ I have never attended a performance at this venue

Figure 1

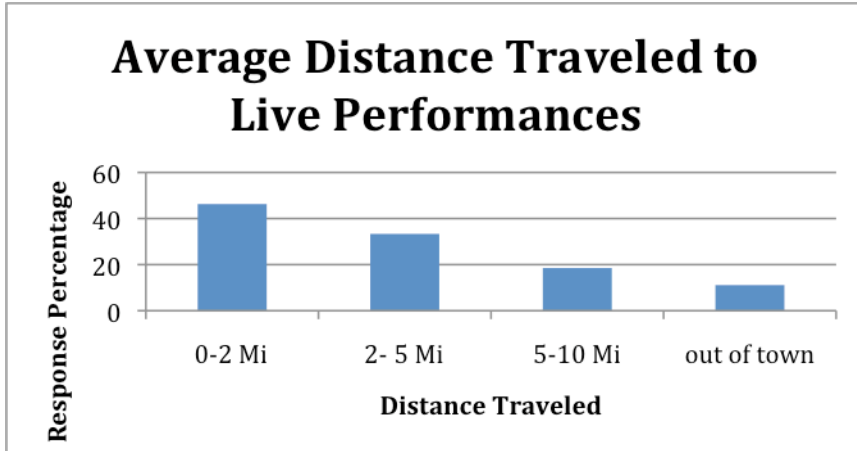


Figure 2

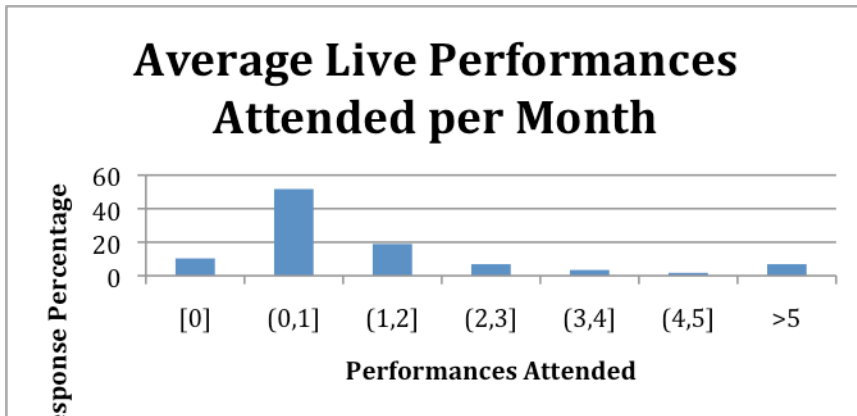


Figure 3

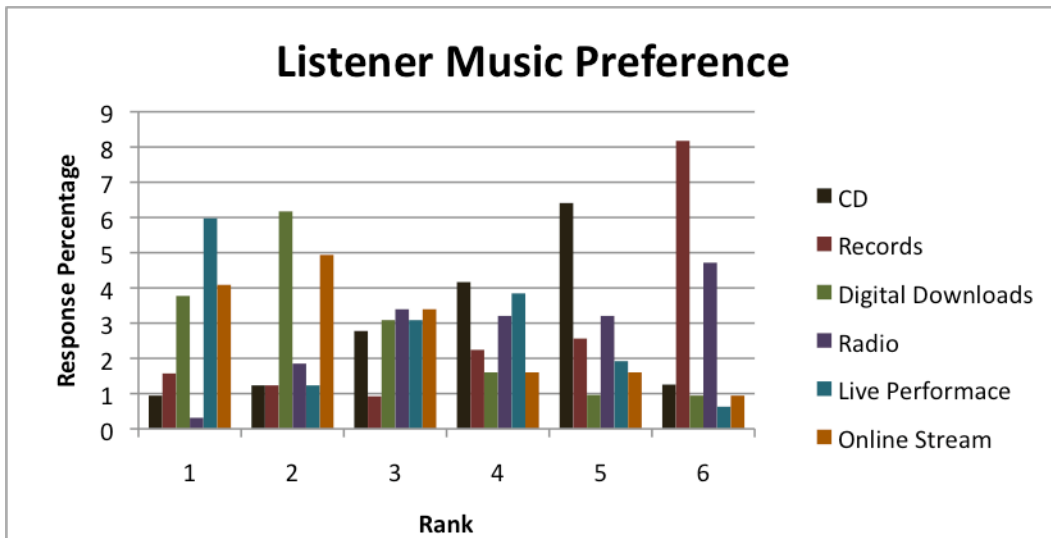


Figure 4

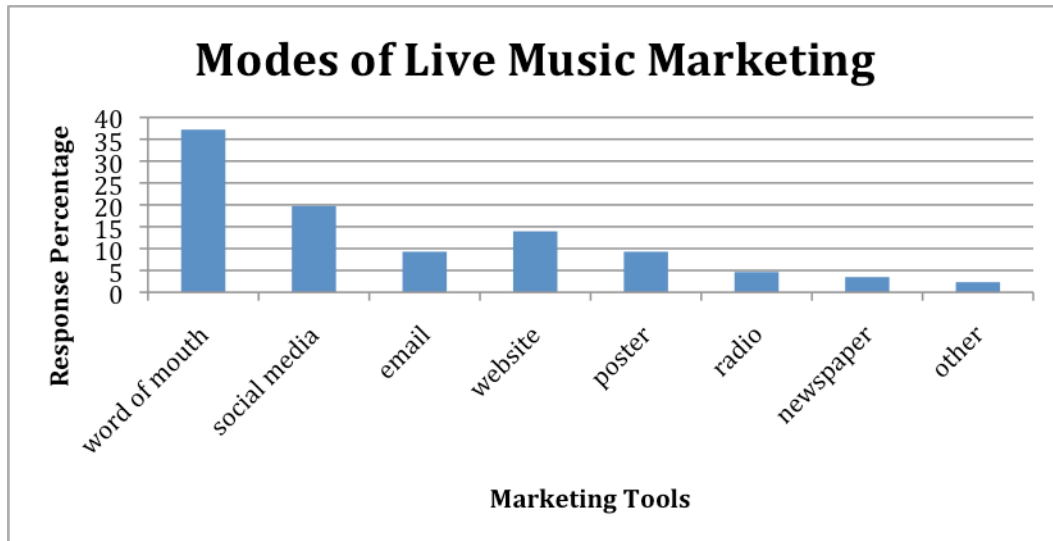


Figure 5

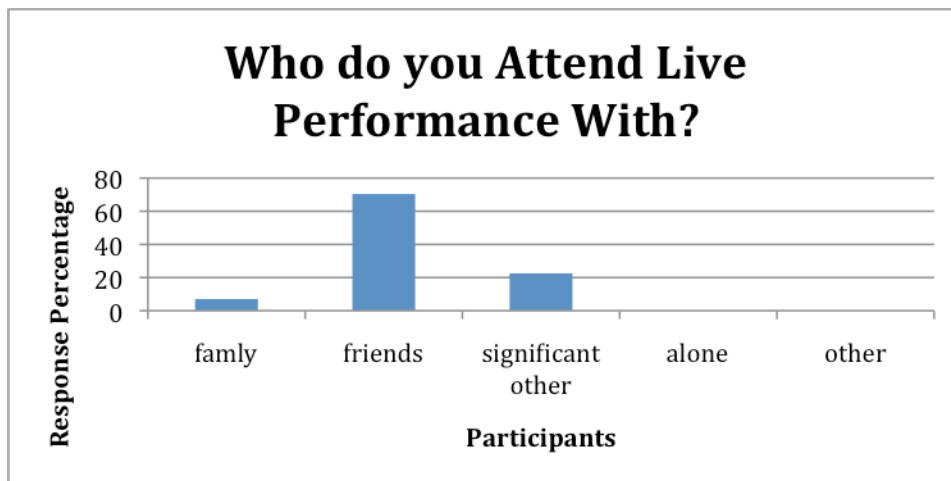


Figure 6

