

# The Aura of Live Music



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# Part 1

INTRODUCTION



# Abstract



## The Aura of Live Music by: Eric Ahrens

My project illustrates how music venues can use design to enhance peoples experiences. I intend to elaborate on how concert halls, nightclubs and other music venues can offer entertainment along with the musical act. This idea stems from Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". He criticizes how mechanical reproduction of art devalues the aura of art. I feel that the reproduction of music is in line with this thought. Music venues are the conduits that bring this aura to the forefront to a live audience.

I am exploring how design can offer aid to the live music industry. I feel that "place" is just as important as the circumstance. I will delve into the sense of "place" and research different businesses and find answers to what drives an act or attendee to one place over another. To see what things have impressed people about certain venues and take that knowledge to other local venues.

Environments offer more of an experience or has more of a community of like minded individuals. I will interview owners or managers to find some pain points regarding getting people in the door. I will also find local venues that are out of the box and how they succeeded in making a unique experience for concert attendees. I will only focus on medium to small or DIY venues for this project. This is where design can help in creating an immersive experience at the local music venue.

# Part 2

NARRATIVE



2017-2018 Collection of Music & Culture

Wednesday, April 24 8:30 PM

FRIDAY, JUNE 19  
WESTERN  
COMMUNITIES



DOORS: 6:00 PM / SHOW: 8:00 PM



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18

WITH  
B. CARLSON

DOORS: 6:00 PM / SHOW: 8:30 PM

10 PM 21+

BARRENCE WHITFIELD  
AND THE SAVAGES



WITH DUST THAT  
SATURDAY, MAY 4 8PM  
CAFENE.COM  
100 STATE ST NEWROCK, CT

TE



MONDAY  
WITH DAN

Doors: 7:00



CAFÉ  
250 State

AMERICAN  
MUSIC TOUR



SUNDAY W/2  
THE SUNDAYS



HABIB

TERMINO CRISTO



# Narrative

## Introduction

Philosopher Walter Benjamin, has written about how mechanically reproduced art devalues the Aura of the original. Benjamin also states that “separating the work of art from it’s parasitical dependence on ritual” the art from it’s space devalues the art. In other words, reproduced art doesn’t have the “Aura” that surrounds the original. (*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, Benjamin, 2010*) This could also be said about music. When listening to music through a listeners preferred medium, their is no “Aura”. The sensation of Aura comes when seeing and experiencing the music in person. The Aura of seeing music, art, or theatre is an experience that cannot be replicated.

But, on the other hand, there is a need for reproduced music in today’s culture. Buying music in the non-digital medium, is also an experience. I and many other people value how design has played an important part in shaping the music industry whether they know it or not. Carefully opening the packaging, playing the music, reading through the liner notes, and examining the cover art, can create an environment for the live music experience.

Music is a common thread that all people can relate too. Music comes in all varieties and creates cultures within all ethnicities. People have been creating music, understanding, interpreting it, and

capturing the attention of groups of people for centuries. Music is the center of many religious ceremonies, and other types of events varying from small to large groups of people.

Music venues are the conduit that brings this Aura to the live audience forefront. More and more smaller venues are finding it increasingly harder to stay afloat amongst the larger venues in America’s major cities. Concert hall’s that have less than 1000 seat capacity are constantly renewing themselves in order to stay viable and these ideas are always being taken by the larger and more corporate venues. These larger corporations are also buying up smaller venues in order to expand their business portfolio.

I have found videos, research papers, articles, and have included my own experiences within this thesis, along with a survey of a small group of concert attendees regarding concert venues. I have documented my journey with a series of posters, photography and a short film that captures the value of these small venues.

Small venues deliver musical experiences that will never die. They just keep evolving with our ever changing culture. Surprises and little nuances at small venues, will always be at the center of it all.

# Redefining the Value of Live Music

## Why Do We Go To Concerts?

With live concerts becoming increasingly popular, the creation of experiences during the concert will make a more enjoyable adventure for each attendee. Venues have gone so long with providing a minimal amount of effort during a concert. It is time for venues to look at different possibilities such as more visuals to keep the viewers attention. (*"Why Is the Live Music Business Living in the Last Century?" Medium - Cuepoint, Cortney, 2015, <https://medium.com/cuepoint/why-is-the-live-music-business-living-in-the-last-century-d3b23669080>) Not only during the show but throughout the entire venue.*

So why do we go to concerts? The easiest answer is for the music. For the truest and most enjoyable concert experience, smaller venues and the sense of connection, is why we go to concerts and here are four reasons why. For starters, you're closer to the band. It's always nice to literally be standing closer to the band playing. It's cool to see musicians you love in person, but it's way more enjoyable to be able to observe the lines on their face. See their instruments, see

the beads of sweat dripping down their face, and the glistening of guitar strings in the light. Secondly, the sound. Technology does not maximize sound quality, the room does. While the equipment is obviously important, the room itself is what brings the sound to the audience's ear. Smaller venues have less open space for the music to travel, leading to a more full, more powerful sound. Third, the energy. Small venues also pack in way more energy than large venues. The air seems heavier. Think of it this way, the more bodies there are, the more energy they absorb. Meaning, the closer you are to the band, the more energy you'll feel from the music. In a large venue, those in the back of the crowd get almost all sound with no energy. In a small venue, everyone hears and feels the music at almost the same rate. That energy gets recycled back into the air, creating a more lively crowd that is in tune with the band, and in tune with one another. It's a shared, connected, and more enjoyable experience. Fourth, the intimacy. The sights, sounds, and energy create a more intimate experience. Which leads us to the overall goal of any concert, a connection between the musicians and the audience.

Music, like anything, is about connection. People are always seeking connection, and bands or crowds are always made of people. These like minded connections are easier made with less clutter—less space, and smaller crowd. Connection is easier made in small venues. In order for music and art scenes to thrive, it is imperative for venues of all sizes, shapes, philosophies and varying levels of legitimacy to exist, very much including non-traditional, often stage-free DIY venues. While the audience needs a connection, the artists need feedback from the audience. This feedback gives the artist the drive and energy to keep playing at a high level.

## Death by Audio

One of the best documentaries I have seen describing how small venues are an asset to the community is called "Goodnight Brooklyn: A Story About Death by Audio." (*Goodnight Brooklyn - The Story of Death by Audio, Conboy, 2016, [www.amazon.com/Goodnight-Brooklyn-Edan-Wilber/dp/B06VSY2Y8C](http://www.amazon.com/Goodnight-Brooklyn-Edan-Wilber/dp/B06VSY2Y8C)) It is about a group of people that move into a warehouse in the north end of Brooklyn in which to start a hangout for friends. They*

wanted a place that they could live and play without disturbing anyone surrounding them. Many of them were in bands, so once they moved in they began sectioning off areas. Bedrooms, kitchen, band space, work areas, and gathering spaces. One of the residents Oliver Ackermann built custom effects pedals that he would sell in order to make ends meet. After months of renovations and no real income, a space opened up next door. They realized the lucrative value in obtaining this space so they could open a small music venue which they called Death by Audio. Death by Audio was a DIY venue that had a slow start but eventually elevated to one of New York's top music night clubs. Death by Audio wasn't a venue with a lot of great attributes. It was about a community that was surrounded by music. It was a place that inspired kids and was an ecosystem that supported expression and community. Many bands were fostered and gained more popularity after playing this venue.

A company called VICE, which is an underground music news outlet moved in above them and ultimately was the cause to the closing of Death by Audio. This story is rich with irony.

Vice being a supporter of the small DIY and local music scene, still closed down what they promote. (*Goodnight Brooklyn - The Story of Death by Audio, Conboy, 2016, www.amazon.com/Goodnight-Brooklyn-Edan-Wilber/dp/B06VSY2Y8C*)

## Sustainable Activism

An article by Event Trends ("*4 Live Music Trends Changing the Industry in 2017*", *Event Trends, 2017, https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/4-live-music-trends-changing-industry-2017-ds00/*) writes that activism will revive the live music community. They go on to say and quote others "Music, in the past has been more about escapism than activism," says Jay Sweet, festival director and talent buyer for the Newport Festivals Foundation. But with major political changes coming in 2017, fans may be looking to their favorite artists to take a stance. "I'm excited because I think this could be the year where musicians could... try to affect positive change through music," Sweet says. ("*4 Live Music Trends Changing the Industry in 2017*", *Event Trends, 2017, https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/4-live-music-trends-changing-industry-2017-ds00/*)

Matthew Morgan, the co-founder of Afropunk, believes "fans will look to live music as an opportunity to make sense of the world around them. We're in line for some really great art over the next four years, [and] what we're doing is going to be even more important," Morgan says. "So many people are looking for things that are positive, that give them something meaningful

in their lives. In this quest for self-expression, fans and artists will use live performances as an opportunity to build community around shared causes. Festivals are a place for people to congregate safely – a place to share a common, collective experience," Sweet says. "It will be up to independent promoters and producers to create these safe spaces for activism." ("*4 Live Music Trends Changing the Industry in 2017*", *Event Trends, 2017, https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/4-live-music-trends-changing-industry-2017-ds00/*) More recently, many musical artist have been supporting Bernie Sanders for the upcoming 2020 election. Scouring neighborhoods, playing free concerts, and donating their time for this important cause.

## Viable Venues

Event Trends ("*4 Live Music Trends Changing the Industry in 2017*", *Event Trends, 2017, https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/4-live-music-trends-changing-industry-2017-ds00/*) also says "Venues will band together to establish more sustainable economics. With rising rent prices in cities across the country, venues are facing a serious financial challenge in 2017 - a trend most definitely shared by urban venues in the UK."

"Venues will either buy the land they sit on, or they'll move," says Brendon Anthony, the director of the Texas Music Office. "We're not going to see our favorite venues in the same place unless they own the land. The venues that are iconic and last

[will] need to control their rent. But venues may not be able to crack the code to sustainability on their own. Venues will have the most success if they band together to protect their businesses." ("*Investing In the Music Business, Where 'You Can't Make Money'*" *Fortune, 2011, https://fortune.com/2011/04/22/investing-in-the-music-business-where-you-cant-make-money/*)

"There are real ways venues can work together to make their margins a bit easier to handle," ("*Investing In the Music Business, Where 'You Can't Make Money'*" *Fortune, 2011, https://fortune.com/2011/04/22/investing-in-the-music-business-where-you-cant-make-money/*) Anthony says. In Texas and other states, for instance, venues, bars, and restaurants are all taxed in the same way, even though venues have to put more of their money back into infrastructure. Their could be a way for venues to reduce their tax rate, but for that to happen, venues would have to define what being a venue means, and then go to work and lobby as a group for the change." ("*Investing In the Music Business, Where 'You Can't Make Money'*" *Fortune, 2011, https://fortune.com/2011/04/22/investing-in-the-music-business-where-you-cant-make-money/*)

Anthony goes on to say "Fighting for this recognition won't be easy, but it's the best way for rooms to protect their business. Venues in the UK have already seen success with this strategy, led by the Music Venue Trust and their annual Venues Day, aimed at raising

awareness and advocating for venue rights. Venues in the States will need to follow suit, banding together to protect the future of live music in their respective cities." ("*Investing In the Music Business, Where 'You Can't Make Money'*" *Fortune, 2011, https://fortune.com/2011/04/22/investing-in-the-music-business-where-you-cant-make-money/*)

Jesse Kirshbaum a writer for AdAge says "After a 20-year decline, we are seeing growth—in fact, double-digit growth. Music is being created and consumed at a higher rate than ever before. More artists are on the road touring, which means fans are buying tickets and merchandise. Live music ticket sales revenue will grow from \$7.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2015 to \$9.1 billion in 2021." ("*It's 2018 and the Music Business is Better Than Ever*", *Kirshbaum, 2018, https://adage.com/article/agencies/2018-music-business/311771*)

## Out of the Box

In 2009 Rafe Offer started Sofar Sounds, which is a live music experience with a twist. Concert goers purchase tickets without knowing who will be performing. These events are very small, intimate, unexpected and in unlikely places with a lot of mystery. These secret gatherings could be a dinner series, or at a covert speakeasy, or at a pop-up concert. These distinctive events are meant to make attendees feel exclusive. It works because interested individuals pay fifteen dollars through an online lottery. They are sent a time and



location a day or two before the event. In 2019 this is still current but it hasn't taken a real grasp on the music scene. It is still to much of an early-adopter concept. I feel if the Sofar Sounds and other companies like this could guarantee a known name, this would be more successful. Secret shows are very exciting, very hard to find, and have been successful, but that is what makes them special.

## Off the Wall

"The culture of bands playing live is relieving to an audience that is inundated with recorded music and when seeing a band live it could be different than the normal track. extended version, sung or played differently" says Nic Adler owner of the Roxy (*Sunset Strip, Fjellestad, 2012, www.amazon.com/Sunset-Strip-Slash/dp/B00G3OJOQ8*). "Because they are often unlicensed and essentially under-the-radar, there is a certain creative freedom that comes along with a warehouse show. Things get broken, climbed on and lit on fire; miniature parades and puppet shows might go down the same night that a grindcore band plays. There are generally no rules -- other than "don't be a dick" -- at these kinds of spaces, lending to the notion that artists can take their art to a level a traditional venue wouldn't allow." (*Sunset Strip, Fjellestad, 2012, www.amazon.com/Sunset-Strip-Slash/dp/B00G3OJOQ8*) I really agree with what Nic Adler says here about music today within our culture.

"These spaces help the entire music scene." (*If You Care About the Future*

*of Live Music Venues...*," MIA, 2018, <https://www.mia.org.uk/2018/10/if-you-care-about-the-future-of-live-music-venues/>) Bands get a chance to build an audience in their city or on the road through their own relationships with the people and other bands who help them book at a DIY venues. Then, promoters at larger venues use this complimenting relationship as a feeder to find new bands or promoters will figure out what size venue is best to book a band that may be new to them.

## Sustainable Venues

Today, a business that can reduce the depletion of natural resources and keep costs low, is taking a front seat amongst concert attendees, organizers, and artists. Music festivals are one of the highest producers of waste in the music business. With thousands of people in attendance, and buying food, beverages, and other merchandise, comes an incredible amount of waste.

Musical Artists with a large fan base have a remarkable influence on who they want to work with. Jack Johnson is an example of sustainable change. He has made a stand against playing at venues that don't have sustainable values like he does. (<https://jackjohnsonmusic.com/greening/2017>)

Venues like the Les Schwab Amphitheater in Bend, Oregon have taken on the "Take Note Initiative" where the venue has reduced its waste by 50%. The "Take Note Initiative" requires venues and vendors to use 100% compostible dishware and

utensils. "I'm grateful to these venues, festivals, and promoters for showing real leadership in the movement to green the music industry. You are thinking outside the box to make concerts more sustainable, which offers a better experience to the fans ... I am proud of the "All At Once Sustainable Award" winners for your commitment to reduce single-use plastic and for leading by example." says Johnson at the All At Once awards. (<https://www.bendconcerts.com/TNI.html>)

## Enhancing Technology

Live music and technology are climbing at a fast rate. This is also extending the concert experience and upgrading audience amenities. (*"The Biggest Music Tech Innovations & Trends of 2017 - So Far"*, Haack, 2017, <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/news/biggest-music-tech-innovations-trends-2017---so-far>) Chuck Crisafulli writes for Recording Academy Grammy Awards and says, "From fan-friendly apps and RFID bracelets to virtual reality, augmented reality and holograms, technology is changing how we experience live concerts." he goes on to say "VR is just one example of the wide range of technologies -- from apps and RFID bracelets to augmented reality and holographic projection -- that is having a profound impact on the way audiences experience live music. To forward-thinking artists like Rob Thomas from the band Matchbox 20, the future for concerts and technology is now." Rob Thomas goes on to say "I think we're at the moment where this stuff is really

here. There's skepticism, but I also remember when people were skeptical about whether the internet would take off. When Matchbox Twenty started, we connected with fans through bumper stickers and cassette tapes. Twenty years later, we're in virtual reality, which is pretty amazing. But with every jump forward in technology, it's still about connecting with fans." (*"Concerts & Technology: The Future Is Now"* Recording Academy Grammy Awards Oct 26, 2017 <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/news/concerts-technology-future-now>)

"My father was a futurist and a visualist who wanted to do this kind of thing in his lifetime," says son Ahmet Zappa, a co-trustee of the Zappa estate and an executive with Eyellusion. "Holograms describe the way in which Frank can come back, but that's a limited way of thinking. Really, what we're doing is using technology to unleash a whole new way of witnessing the bizarre world of Frank Zappa. It won't be just watching a hologram play guitar. If the band's performing Frank's song "Stink-Foot," maybe it's sung by an 800-pound snakeskin platform boot. That's a different approach than what you'd expect for Dio, but it fits Frank." (*"Concerts & Technology: The Future Is Now"* Recording Academy Grammy Awards Oct 26, 2017 <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/news/concerts-technology-future-now>)

# Interaction Between Music and Design

## Elegant Entanglement

I remember the feeling when getting a new record, cassette, or CD and rushing home to aurally and visually devour the entire album. The music, the design, the sleeve notes, the band's visual identity/logo, the photography, and the typography were analyzed and talked about with friends over and over. Surely, my group of friends and I were not the only one to do this sacred ritual. Overall, design in all its forms are crucial to music and how we consume it. Both have the power to make cultural shifts, big and small, and ultimately enhance the experience of being alive.

Music and design have always been elegantly tangled and interwoven with each other. It is design's job to connect music with the audience. Within the music industry, design always is needed and vice versa. The experience of one, influences the other. Designers create a visual representation of your music, not all of the music, just a snapshot in time, and additionally a snapshot that lasts a lifetime. Listeners are led by the artwork. Some of the albums I've seen don't even feature the artist name on the front cover, but the

cover art stimulates interest, curiosity and is the first encounter with the album. This proves the power of the identity that is created by the album art work. In short, the designer creates something that transcends mere traditional packaging.

## Zine's

Not only did graphic designers help propel music to a new level but novice musicians and other people within that community began doing their own work for up and coming bands and their local scene of music. The "zine" which gained a lot of popularity in the 1990's started within communities in the late 1980's.

The "zine" was crudely produced in order to help get information out about bands, venues, subgenres, and political awareness. The way these zines were made, which varied in length from 1 to 10 pages, were often hand written and drawn. Images were sometimes used which were taped to the master copy. Mass production was achieved by xeroxing the master copy. These zine's achieved high status amongst underground circles for their current information and low cost

production. Graphic Designers often reproduced this low production value style for album covers, posters, and other merchandise.

## Beyond Packaging

Designers today are escalating not only package design but design of the record itself. Designers and other creative thinkers at Third Man Records built an interesting concept for a classic medium. Jack White's *Lazaretto* is called an ultra LP because of all the secrets it contains. The reason Jack calls this an ultra LP is because it contains holograms that were hand etched by Tristan Duke, reverse play on side one, hidden tracks under the center label, a dual groove for an intro of a song, three different playing speeds, and an outside locked groove. All of these assets are a one of a kind in vinyl pressing. This is very cool for a vinyl pressing with so many obscure and innovative features. (*"The Lazaretto ULTRA LP"*, OfficialTMR, 2016, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=549&v=i-8B-\\_Jq2ro&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=549&v=i-8B-_Jq2ro&feature=emb_title))

A cultural shift that was made across all genres and the recorded music

industry was an influential store called Tower Records. This was a music lovers adventure, to go there and explore for hours looking through records and listening to the new releases. I watched a documentary on the Tower Records art department in the 1970's called 'Art Gods' (*Art Gods*, Taylor, 2013, <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B078WL18DY>). A film on Tower Records display artists. This shows how not only did the musical acts get free promotion at the

**Music and design have always been elegantly tangled within each other.**

store, but this was a great way to get customers in the door. As a consumer, these visually stunning pieces made of foam core, promoted bands and gave the store and it's customers an experience that could not be matched.

Design and creativity are contributing factors for today's record stores. Those that are still in existence. They offer more than just selling records. Not only do bands perform at the store, like in the past, but these stores offer novelty items such as jukeboxes, 3-D printers, and have film projectors playing live concerts and other videos that are strictly music related. These aspects are becoming more and more prevalent within the record store experience. Which makes a time like this a very exciting time for graphic designers in the music industry. The ability to create worlds for sonic artists in order to coordinate campaigns through social and media outlets in order to get the music out to fans. This is one of the many ways a designer can help artists have an impact in the digital and analog realm today.

## Design + Music

Designer Eric Heiman of Volume Inc. sees live music as the "counter balance" to his more "uptight" side. He describes music as "My id to designs more staid ego... That music can put us so viscerally in the moment and then also enable pauses for contemplation is its formidable kick-ass power. Aren't these the two mental states we, as designers, need to inhabit as much as possible?" ("The Design + Music Industries are BFFs-They Just Don't

Know it Yet" AIGA Eye on Design Nov 3, 2016 <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/the-vital-links-between-the-design-music-industries-how-can-they-enhance-one-another/>) This is why design-led modernizations have made music more alive and relatable through visual elements and interactivity in today's music scene.

Steve Duncan from iMusician writes "The connection between a designer and the music they are designing for, used to be relatively simple. A designer for a record company would put together an interesting front cover and back for the album, maybe an insert, the musical act would approve it and repeat. Afterward, the design would transition to some billboard and print ads, and that would be the conclusion of the project." Steve Duncan goes on to say "Today, I have found that the connection between design and music have really transitioned over the years. At times, design goes beyond the practical, helping in the understanding and interpretation of deeper lying messages (like personality, values or emotion). Well-considered album art, websites, posters, and even software are just a few examples of practical design pieces that people make deeper connections with." ("Design in Music" iMusician Dec 3, 2019 <https://imusiciandigital.com/en/blog/design-in-music>)

## Digitizing Art

Since music has become more of a digital experience, album artwork has become smaller and more icon and thumbnail driven. This is

seen in streaming apps like Spotify and Pandora. But, musical artist have expanded into the immersive experience with their music. Using agencies such as the UK visualization studio Universal Everything. They have designed an augmented reality application that lets users navigate and manipulate digital environments that accompany the musical act Radiohead. (*Universal Everything, 2019, https://universaleverything.com/?s=radiohead*)

The most influential way to describe what a designer creates for the musician is a branding for their music. Not branding necessarily in a corporate sense, but in terms of storytelling, spiritual, and defining a visual identity. Genre and a variety of sounds, and vision the musical artists' community of followers dictates how the group should present itself or live. The "brand" defines that album and marks it in time. Further, it can be adapted for any related collateral from merchandise to marketing, tied directly to that album and its associated tour.

Adam Farrell, says that the role of design today is "probably more important than at any time in the business of music." He goes on to say "today design is your opening statement, as most fans enter the world of an artist via some kind of image or video they almost scroll past on a phone or a tablet. So the visuals that go along with the music have to give some sense of story and idea. They need to grab." (*The Design + Music Industries are BFFs-They Just Don't Know it Yet', Gosling, 2016, https://*

[eyeondesign.aiga.org/the-vital-links-between-the-design-music-industries-how-can-they-enhance-one-another/](https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/the-vital-links-between-the-design-music-industries-how-can-they-enhance-one-another/))

## Designing Culture

Mark Monahan, the festival director of Ottawa Bluesfest, has seen another cultural shift firsthand. "In the last few years, most sponsors want to activate around artists," Monahan says. "Five years ago in the festivals space, that was a nonstarter. Artists are recognizing the role sponsors play in helping to fund festivals, and are more willing to participate in auxiliary activities." ("*4 Live Music Trends Changing the Industry in 2017*", *Event Trends, 2017, https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/4-live-music-trends-changing-industry-2017-ds00/*)

Event Trends writes about how "Corporate brands will become even more intertwined with artists. Sponsors spend \$1.4 billion on the music industry in the United States each year, and that number is only going up. Instead of investing in large activations or stages at festivals, our experts predict that brands will focus more on building relationships with specific artists in the next year." ("*4 Live Music Trends Changing the Industry in 2017*", *Event Trends, 2017, https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/4-live-music-trends-changing-industry-2017-ds00/*)

In the last five years, sponsors are building a connection with audiences that are similar to autographs, or small, private shows with known headliners. But these connections will need to be more authentic, trustworthy and more

natural in order to succeed. Virtual interactions were gaining strength around 2010 but has not fully taken off. Streaming with live interaction like "facebook live", seems to be in a middle ground. ("It's 2018 and the Music Business is Better Than Ever", Kirshbaum, 2018, <https://adage.com/article/agencies/2018-music-business/311771>)

"Though it is great to promote an event, in the traditional sense, people on a social level seem to abuse it and don't promote at all. The traditional sense of promotion, is hundreds of 8½ x 11 pieces of paper which ends up as waste. It can be a great tool when used in the right context. A short run of printing of flyers would be good for venues, showcasing a month's worth of upcoming events. It is discouraging that more people don't use social media more to promote smaller and DIY events." ("Designing the Future of Music & New Technologies" *The Medium*, Loureiro, 2018, <https://uxdesign.cc/designing-the-future-of-music-and-data-4998dffd5d61>)

"It is likely we'll see more connections or activations, like 2016's Lady Gaga's Dive Bar Tour. Audience connections will be more immersive by engaging the crowd in an installation. Technology will definitely make a lasting impression with an audience." These series of connections are focused on one of the most important roles a brand can play for an artist, delighting fans by bringing them in more direct contact with their idols." ("The Boom of the Live Music Industry" *Promogogo Blog*, Svala, 2017, <https://>

[gogo.promogogo.com/announcement/The-Boom-of-the-Live-Music-Industry/94e5bedfaa7e6691](https://gogo.promogogo.com/announcement/The-Boom-of-the-Live-Music-Industry/94e5bedfaa7e6691))

But this integrated relationship between artists and brands could be in conflict with another trend. Artists are more openly expressing their political beliefs. "I'm hesitant about what the branded content space is going to look like in the next year," says Event Trends. They go on to say "If artists get more politically involved, will that impact how brands interact with artists? It's going to be really tricky if that spending shifts, especially since brand dollars have become more important to the bottom line for both artists and labels." ("4 Live Music Trends Changing the Industry in 2017", *Event Trends*, 2017, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/4-live-music-trends-changing-industry-2017-ds00/>)

As a designer, I feel if I lead and uncover the value of enhancing the interaction of design and the live music experience, more corporate sponsors will fund these experiences. Innovating a new value in music will culturally shift society like the past inventions of different mediums or streaming music.

### (Inter)Facing Tomorrow

"Being in this transitional period of experimentation, user experience and music have combined into a technological burst. Creating user interfaces that are seamless and easy to use for musicians and users, is the end goal for any interactive designer." ("What's Next For the Music Industry?" *Crack Magazine*, Needham, 2018, <https://crackmagazine.net/article/lists/>

[whats-next-for-the-music-industry/](https://crackmagazine.net/article/lists/whats-next-for-the-music-industry/)) For instance, Scott Rubin's "in tensions," an integration of motion sensitive electronics with and interpretive dance. ("The Hidden Links Between UX Design and Music-Dance Performance" *The Medium*, Rubin, 2018, <https://uxdesign.cc/the-links-between-ux-design-and-music-dance-performance-c413d69c69ea>) Another example by Billy Bennet has created a wand that is also motion sensitive and will play different notes from a music interface. ("Music Interaction Design: Wand Prototype" Mar 8, 2019 <https://billybennett.tv/music-interaction-design>) Ge Wang an associate professor at Stanford has created multiple designs at the junction of design and music. ("Artful Design with Ge Wang" Online video clip. YouTube. YouTube, November 22, 2019. Web. November 30, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKic56HCRKc>) He is most proud of the app he created called Ocarina. It is the soothing sounds of the Ocarina played on your iPhone. When playing it, the interface is similar to the game Rock Band. By touching the screen and blowing into the microphone, creates magical sounds.

New technologies like deep data analysis, ("Designing the Future of Music & New Technologies" *The Medium* Sept 14, 2018 <https://uxdesign.cc/designing-the-future-of-music-and-data-4998dffd5d61>) virtual/augmented reality, artificial intelligence, holograms, visual mapping, streaming, electric paint and touch boards are creating new and

immersive experiences with the public. ("What's Next For the Music Industry?" *Crack Magazine* Sep 21, 2018 <https://crackmagazine.net/article/lists/whats-next-for-the-music-industry/>) With these new technologies, I like when the inner most workings are exposed letting me understand how technology and design are working together to create really cool results.

With so many different design aspects that can be incorporated within the branding of musical acts, package design that exceeds traditional standards, and improving the culture and experience of the music industry. We as designers only have an easy uphill, creative, and critical journey ahead that is exciting and well worth any creative freedoms.

# Digital music has become smaller, like the size of a nanobyte.

# Environment of Authentic Sound

## The Theater

Venues are the bridge for musical artists to bring their craft to an audience. Like Walter Benjamin said for museums and viewing art and feeling the Aura of a painting. Venues are the environments for listening to authentic sounds made by musicians. This quote by Benjamin, I feel holds true with music as well. "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: Its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be"; and that the "sphere of authenticity is outside the technical [sphere]" of the reproduction of artworks. Therefore, the original work of art is an objet d'art independent of the copy; yet, by changing the cultural context of where the art happens to be, the mechanical copy diminishes the aesthetic value of the original work of art. In that way, the aura – the unique aesthetic authority of a work of art – is absent from the mechanically produced copy." (Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* 2010 CreateSpace Publishing) Reproduced music lacks the authenticity of the art of music.

## World Famous

The Apollo Theater was a music venue that was also a church, a sanctuary, and a place of worship, a place to escape the hardships of life. This is a place where many black artists got their start. When the Apollo opened the doors in 1934. The daily viewings were cartoons or movies, dancing, comedians and the headlining act. It was one of the few places in Harlem that allowed African Americans into a theater. In the Apollo's beginning, it was the only place black musicians could perform and start a career. Greats like Cab Callaway, Duke Ellington, Pearl Bailey, and Billie Holiday. In the 1950's and 60's, all of Motown's artists on the label had to perform at the Apollo. (*The Apollo, Williams, 2019, play.hbonow.com/feature/urn:hbo:feature:GXYYVC4An4x8PCwgEAAAlg?icid=hbo\_signin\_now*)

The Apollo was the first large venue to start an amateur night. These aspiring artists would go in front of a vocally charged audience and be celebrated or booed off the stage. During amateur night booing was a right given to the audience. Great performers like Dave

Chappell and Lauren Hill began with amateur night at the Apollo and were booed off the stage and they said that "This experience empowered them and became fearless for future performances." This theater is the genesis of inventive and powerful artistry that has influenced the music industry for decades.

Farah Jasmine Griffin is a cultural historian at the Apollo asks the question "Will the Apollo simply be a shrine to past achievements, or will it be a site of continued black expression?" Owner's and members of the board lean towards the latter. Richard Parsons, an Apollo board member says "The Apollo can be the place that creates new works that can't be seen anywhere else. The Apollo theater is the African American contribution to culture, music, dance, and performance." (*The Apollo, Williams, 2019, play.hbonow.com/feature/urn:hbo:feature:GXYYVC4An4x8PCwgEAAAlg?icid=hbo\_signin\_now*)

Artist's talk about how close they were with other performers while being at the Apollo. Each act would watch each other in order to see if anything

new was tried and how the audience reacted to it.

April 1977, the Apollo closed. Percy Sutton, a local businessman purchased the theater after many years of sitting dormant. In July of 1985, was the grand reopening. Moving into the future, the Apollo started to televise the shows. Now, more people could see acts that would otherwise never be on other television programs.

## Six Walls

There are many experiences that are gone through in life but none of them are more memorable than your first concert. Once you arrive at the venue and walk through the doors to a bustling entry way of people selling merchandise, people getting their drinks, and conversations of the upcoming events. Exciting doesn't even describe the feelings or the energy in the room. As you look for your seat, or somewhere to stand, the lights in the room start to dim, the crowd gets louder with yells and applaud to signal to the musicians that they are ready for the show to begin. The sounds of instruments as the plug in to the amplifiers, buzzing and rumbling

through the speakers that pound on your chest which heightens the excitement.

Herbie Woodruff, crew chief and sound engineer at the Target Center says “In the arena, the main goal is to make everybody understand and hear everything perfectly. From arenas to small nightclubs, each has its own obstacles a sound engineer must overcome to achieve these results. Larger spaces need sound delivered at loud volumes in order for sound to reach the back of the room.” Sound engineers study the room for how the sound will reflect or absorb, minimizing reverberation and echoing. Smaller spaces don’t need as loud of sound delivery but sound engineers still need to be conscious of how the sound travels within the space. (*Masters of Arena Rock: Why Sound Engineers are to Thank for the Ultimate Concert Experience* The Growler, Cowie, 2018, <https://growlermag.com/masters-arena-rock-sound-engineers/>)

Many places around the world offer small concerts in unique places. From renovated mansions to graveyards, promoters that think out of the box are always looking out for a unique opportunity.

Venues that offer more than what is expected, which is music, will always have a community of people that will contribute to something special. If venues offer a place for artists to display paintings, photography, and even micro-screenings of video installations. This will add to and enhance an attendees

experience ten fold at a venue.

One such place in Connecticut is the Fairfield Theater Company. The Fairfield Theater Company is a nonprofit center for the arts and culture. They bring together a community of musicians, actors, artists, writers, fans, and supporters who are dedicated to live entertainment. The Fairfield Theater Company was founded in 2000 and would present off Broadway productions at Fairfield University. Once they moved into their current location, they opened StageOne. StageOne is a 225 seat venue with great acoustics, close proximity to the stage and high quality performers. The Fairfield Theater Company houses an art gallery that has a rotating exhibition, a theater workshop for children and teens, a kids music education program, and multiple film series that happen all throughout the year. Fairfield Theater Company opened a second venue in 2015 on the Fairfield campus called The Warehouse. This is a 640 seat configurable performance space. In 2019, Fairfield Theater Company opened The Loft, this is mainly for staff, but this space is also used for music education programs. Fairfield Theater Company has 300 events annually, serves 200 students, has been honored within it’s community, and has been recognized as a revitalizing asset to the city of Fairfield. (*The Fairfield Theater Company*, <https://growlermag.com/masters-arena-rock-sound-engineers/>)

## Aural Communities

Sound and how it travels within the space is crucial for a venue. In order for

an establishment to have a sustainable business offering musical concerts, sound is a big factor. A lack in sound quality will push people away from the establishment. There is a fine line between under or overdriven but when the sound is perfectly equalized to the room, attendees will enjoy their experience and will come back for other shows in the future.

In a smaller venue, the more bodies there are, the more energy they absorb. Meaning, the closer you are to the band, the more energy you’ll feel from the music. Everyone hears and feels the music at almost the same rate. That energy gets recycled back into the air, creating a more lively crowd that is in tune with the band, and in tune with one another. It’s a more shared, connected, and more enjoyable experience. In a large venue, those in the back of the crowd get almost all sound with no energy.

When we go to concerts, we want to have fun alongside an amazing crowd, while listening to a band we love, playing great songs, that sound even more amazing in person. Some might look to large venues for that perfect solution. The best technology, the most devout fans, legendary bands playing the hits. What small venues lack in space, they gain in concert value. It’s always nice to literally be standing closer to the band playing. It’s cool to see musicians you love in person, but it’s way cooler to be able to observe the lines on their face. See their instruments, see the beads of sweat dripping down their face, and the

glistening of guitar strings in the light.

## End of the World?

A documentary by Aidan Prewett describes sound as being one of the most important factors of gaining the audience’s attention. A person able to use their words and voice to create tension and excitement in the room. Aidan Prewett investigates the similarities between audience manipulation and leader worship. Aidan Prewett presents how Nazi stage techniques by members of Adolf Hitler’s regime and modern day showmanship of musicians at concerts are alike. Aidan travels around the world visiting venues and musical groups and asks the question “When someone is on stage, is there a brainwashing that happens?” Chip Monck, head of production for the Rolling Stones (1968-1973), says “That is what good design does. When you walked into a theater and the curtain opens it takes everything away.”

Aidan Prewett interviews performers and announcers that were at Woodstock. Woodstock was a music festival and a peaceful protest against the Vietnam war that was three and a half days long. The announcers between bands quote that “A crowd of that size could have uprisen and caused a lot of damage if the wrong message was said.” This was not the case. Another music festival was the Altamont concert in Seattle. This festival was supposed to be similar to Woodstock but as described by performers, it was not. “A cloud of negativity seemed to be shrouded

over the venue.” as said by Michael Shrive the drummer for Santana 1969-1975. A fatality happened in front the audience. This incident halted the show while the Rolling Stones were on stage. Michael Shrive describes when he played at Woodstock “Notes played by the band, orchestra, or another musical ensemble, creates an architecture or space to be in.” This is what Aiden was looking for while shooting his documentary, “All great speakers create an architecture or ambiance in combination with energy and emotion. This commands a room that the masses cannot turn away from.” (*A Venue for the End of the World*, Prewett, 2013, [tubitv.com/movies/398883/a\\_venue\\_for\\_the\\_end\\_of\\_the\\_world?utm\\_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed](http://tubitv.com/movies/398883/a_venue_for_the_end_of_the_world?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed))

## Bill Graham's Empire

Bill Graham was one of the most successful music promoters in the music business. He started out waiting tables and driving a cab in New York City. He says that these jobs were a continuing factor to his work philosophy as a music promoter. He was also a big advocator of free speech and helping people that were in need. He would organize concerts that would encapsulate these two humanitarian efforts into all of his benefit concerts in order to raise money for a cause. Live Aid would be his biggest example of this. (“*Bill Graham - Interview - 3/6/1990 - Masada - Corte Madera, CA*”, *Music Vault*, 2016, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0\\_ZSUBnUzQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0_ZSUBnUzQ))

Along with the benefit concerts, he was mostly known for the work he did at the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco. Bill had moved out to San Francisco to start a new path in his life to become an actor. He started in the theater but that was as far as it went. His love for acting and theater would remain during his days of promoting. He infused a theatrical element into the Fillmore West and the Fillmore East in New York City. According to Carlo Gennarelli in his series “The Temples of Rock: Fillmore East” (*The Temples of Rock: Fillmore East.*, Gennarelli, 2003, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBEiwABOBp0>). This theatrical element is what people loved while attending concerts at these venues. There were accompanying visuals during musical acts and in between acts. The use of props and grand entrances of Bill, flying over head of everyone during his New Years Eve concerts. He was also known for arranging concerts that didn't always match genres. Bill was very interested in educating the audience with different kinds of music. Such as Miles Davis opening for the Grateful Dead. (*Bill Graham StoryProject, “Bill Graham - 25th Anniversary of BGP” 2012*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thscvZq58QE>)

Bill Graham describes the aura that happens at a live concert in a few of his interviews and also explains how concert promotion is a powerful tool involving public assemblage. (“*Bill Graham - Interview - 8/4/1974 - KQED (Official)*” Online video clip. YouTube.

YouTube, September 25, 2014. Web. November 30, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVeuDS0n3XI>)

## Contrasting Country

Mick Michael interview's, Hilly Kristal, who was another influential music promoter. He owned CBGB, which gave a place for emerging punk rock artists to play and work on their craft. Hilly Kristal started the club to promote country, blue grass, and blues bands, at that time. He thought country, was up and coming. He quickly realized that those acts didn't provide enough of a following during the mid 1970's. He was approached by a member of the group Television and was asked if they could come and play on a Sunday afternoon. Hilly accepted the offer and that evolved into more alternative music genres playing at CBGB's.

Younger kids that had a band, but nowhere else to play, were given chances to play in front of a crowd. Hilly Kristal thoroughly enjoyed this. Hilly only wanted bands that played original songs that were different, creative, and authentic. This new venue and type of music, was widely excepted in the Lower East Side. A large community of musicians, artists, poets, and theatrical performers began to become regulars at the club. CBGB wasn't flashy as a venue but the culture was portrayed on the walls of the venue.

Hilly opened a pizzeria next door so the customers could get something to eat and rest after the show. He gave local artists an area, that was

in the pizzeria, to showcase there work. The customers could also buy merchandise that was sold in CBGB's annex. (“*Hilly Kristal CBGB OMFUG Interview. 1990 Pt. 1/3 - 3/3*” Online video clip. YouTube. YouTube, June 22, 2016. Web. November 30, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xKSKtctuGc&t=214s> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5xIG7mfHTc&t=53s> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DngYrePZnwg>)

**“Bill wanted to educate the audience with different kinds of music. Such as Miles Davis opening for the Grateful Dead.”**

# Existence of Space

## Location, Location, Location

In a musical setting or the existence of musical space, is much more than four walls, ceiling, floor, and a stage. It could be a neighborhood or community of people. A space of co-existence with like minded people share common thread. Getting more granular, "A concert venue itself is an entity that contributes to the overall space itself." (*"From Museums to Cemeteries, In Praise of Non-Traditional Music Venues"* UPROXX, Cosores, 2018, <https://uproxx.com/music/non-traditional-music-venue-experience/>) Concert venues range in size, shape and location. From an outdoor bandshell, amphitheaters, sports stadiums to indoor concert halls, nightclubs, public houses. All of these environments offer unique experiences that will create lasting memories for attendees. But, a question arises when thinking about all of these places. Each establishment offers a musical adventure, but why is one better than the other? And, what are some common design features that help in creating the optimal environment for this experience to happen?

"Today's standard needs to offer a uniqueness that is unmatched in order to be sustainable." (*"The Soup & Sound House Concert Series"*, Soup & Sound, 2019, <http://soupandsound.org/concert-series/>) Larger venues need to have a visual element that accompanies an act in order for audience participation. For example, if one is seated farther in the back from the stage and cannot see the people performing, some sort of extra visuals are needed. The most basic would be screens set up displaying the performers. This lessens the proximity between the stage and viewers in the back. This works, but is not as interesting or creative for captivating an audience and creating an experience. More often, musical acts will have an uncommon stage design in a large venue environment. This could be a laser display, large props or mechanisms that showcase the artist, video displays that showcase visual elements that work with the artist or song being played.

## Perceiving Space

"Our eyes are said to take in 85% of our sensory perception." (*"Vision Is Our Dominant Sense"* Brainline, Pulitzer,

2008, <https://www.brainline.org/article/vision-our-dominant-sense>) The ability to see faces of the performers and the emotions expressed upon them can certainly influence how we perceive their performance. An intimate physical relationship is important to create visual connections between audience and musical act.

A factor in the viewing experience is the positioning of the stage relative to the audience. A common approach to concert hall design is placing the stage at one end of a room with the audience all facing the musical act. Visual communication between musical act and audience is still a constant, there may still be a sense of separation between performer and observer.

The musicians see the audience...the audience sees the musicians. So what element is missing? How about the audience seeing the audience? Placing a portion of the audience on the side walls of the auditorium or around the orchestra platform, not only puts people closer to the performers but also creates a sense of community... the shared experience.

When a performance occurs in

a special place, the communal experience is enhanced to a new level. During performances, concert halls are rarely fully darkened. This gives the opportunity for the audience to take in their surroundings, looking at other people in attendance, the architecture, as well as the performance. The movement from entrance, through open areas, to concert hall.... all should build to the sense of occasion, and expectation. Expectations are very powerful moments in creating memorable concerts. If the experience is recognized as exceptional before the first note sounds, prepare to expect the exceptional concert experience.

The visual experience is a very important, and it's the principal of what people will comment about. But sound will be the dominant question. There are actually two aspects to this question. The sound experienced by the audience will sometimes be commented upon in the news and social media. A few spectators on hand for the occasion, experienced in listening in many important concert rooms. They may use comparative technical attributes of the sound such as loudness, envelopment, blend, reverberance, clarity, and silence in a



critic's review of a event. More often they will simply comment on the impact of the performance itself upon the audience.

## Critics of Sound

According to the demands of one of the greatest theaters in Nashville, the Nashville Symphony wanted to be on a expert level. These extravagant theaters are becoming increasingly rare in some countries, particularly in the USA where media outlets are cutting and consolidating staff in their entertainment divisions. There are, however, other sound experts involved in each traveling performance: the musicians themselves. Their opinion is more likely to have a long term importance in the assessment of a venues acoustical reputation. The concert hall is, after all, an instrument that all the musicians in the act "play". Just like an instrument that is strapped over a shoulder, blown through a mouthpiece, or struck with a mallet, every hall gives back to the musician, its own sonic personality. In the best cases, the room gently "pushes back" to the platform with well balanced and late energy. This provides critical information of balance and tone. This information is letting the players know, that their efforts are reaching the back of the concert hall. In a room like this, the players can truly relax and focus on the expression of the music. In concert halls with less room acoustics, this return may be weak or non-existent. The musicians on stage may feel like they have to force their sound to be heard. The results in a hall like this, are often harsh and sound out of tune.

(*Symphony Center Nashville Symphony, Schermerhorn, 2019, [https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/media/1484/ssc\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/media/1484/ssc_fact_sheet.pdf)*)

An article by Event Trends predicts that "Immersive theatre will influence live music performances. From popular events like Secret Cinema and the Crystal Maze, to the topic of breakout HBO show Westworld, immersive theatre made a big splash in 2016. These shows make audience members a part of the performance, and this year, we'll see their influence begin to make live music performances more multidimensional." ("*4 Live Music Trends Changing the Industry in 2017*", *Event Trends, 2017, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/4-live-music-trends-changing-industry-2017-ds00/>*)

"The world of immersive theatre is about to explode," says Nick Panama, the founder of Cantora. "We'll be seeing a lot more experiential storytelling, and its influence on live music." Nick Panama predicts that live shows will expand the storytelling from the music itself, to other senses. "Instead of relying solely on audio cues or a screen behind them to tell a story, performers will begin to activate the entire room or stadium with immersive sensory details. Using a variety of new technologies, fans will become part of an alternate reality for the duration of the show." ("*4 Live Music Trends Changing the Industry in 2017*", *Event Trends, 2017, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/4-live-music-trends-changing-industry-2017-ds00/>*) In 2002 a company named, Akustiks,

was hired to design a new concert hall for the Nashville Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra had been playing for many years in a large multi-purpose theater under the direction of Kenneth Schermerhorn. A new home would be needed because of increasing difficulties in scheduling the theater to accommodate what was becoming a full-time orchestra, led to the realization that if the orchestra was to reach its full potential. (*Symphony Center Nashville Symphony, Schermerhorn, 2019, [https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/media/1484/ssc\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/media/1484/ssc_fact_sheet.pdf)*)

Another factor was the quality of sound in the old theater. When the orchestra first went on tour to Carnegie Hall, 1000 members of the Nashville community also went along. What they heard astonished them. These people had attended the orchestra's concerts for years, but, because of the theater's acoustics, they really had no idea just how good an ensemble the orchestra had become. Strong public support for a new hall literally began that night, and money was quickly raised for the effort. (*Symphony Center Nashville Symphony, Schermerhorn, 2019, [https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/media/1484/ssc\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/media/1484/ssc_fact_sheet.pdf)*)

Early in the design process, Akustiks led a small group consisting of an architect, theater consultant, construction management, orchestra leadership and financial backers on a tour of highly regarded concert halls in Europe. After a Sunday afternoon concert in Vienna's Musikvereinssaal,

one of the participants, a leader of the construction management team, was heard to say: "Now, I get it! In our old hall, I was an observer of the orchestra's performance. In a hall like this I feel like I am a 'participant' in the performance!" Obviously the gentleman was not actually playing the music, but the comment goes to the heart of the concert experience. A great concert is more than just a fine orchestra playing great music. That experience is much more conveniently acquired by listening to a CD or download at home. A great concert comes from a shared musical and communal experience between orchestra and audience that can happen only in the moment, never in quite the same way again. (*Symphony Center Nashville Symphony, Schermerhorn, 2019, [https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/media/1484/ssc\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/media/1484/ssc_fact_sheet.pdf)*)

## Musical Communities

Thinking on a larger scale, areas of a city can have a musical community. Many cities have this kind of community that offers multiple venues in a small area, that are uncommon throughout the United States. Haight Ashbury in San Francisco, Sunset Strip in Los Angeles, Greenwich Village and the lower east side in New York City and Asbury Park in New Jersey, These places are a music lovers amusement park.

In the documentary "Sunset Strip" ("*Sunset Strip*." Hans Fjellestad, performance by Cisco Adler, Lou Adler, Ahmed Ahmed, Slash, Johnny Depp,

Mickey Rourke, Dan Aykroyd, Keanu Reeves, Ozzy Osbourne, Hugh Hefner. Tommy Alastra Productions, 2012. *Amazon Prime* [www.amazon.com/Sunset-Strip-Slash/dp/B00G3OJOQ8](http://www.amazon.com/Sunset-Strip-Slash/dp/B00G3OJOQ8)) the narrator opens "In Los Angeles, Sunset Boulevard is a famous place that was glorified in movies, song, and story." For musical artists, the Sunset Strip was a sacred place for all that called it home. "You can feel the living history from decades past. It is a civilization of the broken-hearted, the mistreated, and the under-loved." (*Sunset Strip*, Fjellestad, 2012, [www.amazon.com/Sunset-Strip-Slash/dp/B00G3OJOQ8](http://www.amazon.com/Sunset-Strip-Slash/dp/B00G3OJOQ8)) says a quoted concert attendant.

From the 1930's to the mid 1950's, small night clubs catered to the rich and famous. The exclusivity of the Sunset Strip was made of a community full of Hollywood stars that were well known throughout western civilization. These nightclubs thrived on illegal activities such as gambling, burlesque, and serving alcohol during prohibition.

Early to mid 1960's and 70's, the younger generation transitioned the strip to their more contemporary scene. Places like the Whisky a Go-Go, the Rainbow, and the Roxy began thriving. Beginning by playing records, droves of kids would meet up with friends and at the strip to be apart of the excitement because of where it was, and where it started. This was the pinnacle of the strip, so many people were there, that the police forced a curfew which eventually began riots. After the calm of almost 5 years

later, the late 1970's and 80's was an explosion of punk rock and hair metal music scene. Again, the boulevard was packed with people, so many people would stand outside just to hear a performing act.

Once grunge music broke, nightclubs in the 1990's started to go towards a speakeasy ambiance. Less of a show and more of a gathering space. The Viper Room was the club that set this tone and precedence along the Sunset Strip. Generations of people preceding, felt this was a sad time, the music didn't fit with the crazy and outlandish of the strip's culture.

The nightclub's that are on the strip, are all family businesses and past down to the next generation. With that, comes change, a new energy, and determination in order to face classic venues. Nic Adler says "Standing in the front row and seeing their favorite musicians creates a lasting memory for that person. This happens night after night, and has been happening for decades. This makes the business of owning a concert venue worthwhile."

## Haight Ashbury

Haight Ashbury is the heart of another neighborhood that has gone through rebirths reflecting it's monumental past. It is defined by a single summer, called the 'Summer of Love' in 1967. (*Haight Ashbury: The Beat of a Generation*." Scott Baker and Del Feltz, performance by Peter Coyote, David Freiberg, Ben Fong Torres. Concept One Media, 2012. *Amazon Prime* [\[www.amazon.com/Haight-Ashbury-Generation-Peter-Coyote/dp/B07FQ2TJ1K\]\(http://www.amazon.com/Haight-Ashbury-Generation-Peter-Coyote/dp/B07FQ2TJ1K\)\) Peter Coyote narrates during "Haight Ashbury: The Beat of a Generation", and says "Young people there were idealistic and felt they were going to change the world. A rock and roll scene started in San Francisco and the movement lifted everyone's spirits."](http://www.amazon.com/Haight-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

During the 1960's, peaking in 1967, people from all over the United States flooded San Francisco. The Haight was the epicenter of free love, drugs, and rock and roll. At it's peak, the neighborhood couldn't handle so many people. Overcrowding, homeless, drug problems, and starvation was so prevalent that people started to move away. There was a mock funeral for Haight-Ashbury and it was said that "People should not come to San Francisco, you should start a movement where you are."

## Music Row

I am not a country fan by any means, but country music does play a significant role in music history. As a musical community, Music Row in Nashville, is one of those places in America that has made a substantial mark on the music industry. This neighborhood started housing recording studio's in the 1950's. By the beginning of the 1960's, a hand full of large recording businesses had started branches of their corporations there, like RCA, BMI, and Columbia Records. Amongst them were many other local recording studios.

As country music gained popularity through the 1960's and 70's, it still

rode the coat tails of rock music. Music Row was still thriving. Ambitious developers started buying up land for more recording businesses as well as restaurants and bars. In the next 40 years, business continued and the country music scene on Music Row had to transition the same way as rock music did. Country music developed sub-genres like outlaw, country-pop, and others. Music Row is still changing with the times, utilizing technology, live music, and new faces to keep it alive. It doesn't matter which genre in the music industry an artist is aligned with. The struggles are the same across the board.

**"People should not come here to San Francisco, you should start a movement where you live."**

# Accompaniment of Visual Elements

## Visual Performance

I argue the requirement of musical artists during a live concert. Musical artists that put on a show, that consists of multiple elements of visual displays, versus musicians playing to an audience. Bands that I enjoy seeing, are not only playing the music, but jumping around on stage and feeling the energy of the room. They are just as engaged in the music as their biggest fans. Other visual elements is lighting, stage design, and visual projections. This is the art of putting on a show. Venues can use this to their advantage when it comes to getting people in the doors. When I saw Roger Waters, at the Xcel Center in Hartford CT, it consisted of a highly complex light show and visual propaganda surrounding the world we live in today. I have seen Motley Crue and other hair metal bands that incorporate pyrotechnics which add to the entrancement of the concert.

On the other hand, some think it detracts from the show. These people want only to see the artists performing the songs. This is a valid point, but if a musical act is just playing the songs, how interesting is it to stare at the

guitarist beard for hours? Why not incorporate some other visual element to keep it stimulating?

Today, our attention spans are very short and concert promoters need to keep this in mind. Large venues definitely know this, and it is time for the smaller to mid size establishments to get on board. From the people I have interviewed have said that "The place has no influence on the performing act." This is discouraging to me, but this also means there is an untapped niche that could be filled.

Live performances can always be a great experience. Musicians should be able to let loose and let opportunities arise when they can. As an attendee, you never know what to expect. This is the same as a performer. Musicians could get booed off the stage, I've seen this once in my life at a Red Hot Chili Peppers concert. Other things could go awry such as when Milli Vanilli was caught lip syncing. These performances are disappointing, but when an act can give a great show, they don't play the music as we all know it on the radio or on a record. They may extend the song with intros or solo's that catch the audience off

guard which give the performance everyone's attention. Frank Zappa has said "Music, in performance, is a type of sculpture. The air in the performance is sculpted into something."

When listening to recorded music, that is just the tip of the iceberg. The perfect experience is being surrounded by the people who enjoy the music as much as you do. There is nothing more boring than to watch an act stand and perform the song exactly as they were recorded. With no movement or energy, it becomes lackluster. A concert should have a dimension that goes beyond standing and playing. Granted some musicians don't have the flamboyance on stage, and that is when other visuals should be added in.

## Unconventional Illusions

Stage design is an important aspect to a live concert. When supporting visuals are added to the live act, it helps and produces lasting memories. Es Devlin is a stage designer that crafts sets for concerts, operas, plays and runway shows using light, film, and sculpture. She will use unconventional objects and methods to ensure the

audience has a memorable experience. (*Abstract: The Art of Design Es Devlin: Stage Design Dadich, 2017, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80093809?trackId=14277283&tctx=0%2C2%2C94a55d12-a9bb-4f66-96a2-35fd2def7dcb-55316969%2C%2C>*)

The five ingredients that she uses consistently are space, light, darkness, scale and time. Es uses a playfulness and a surrealist approach when dealing with space, light, darkness, scale and time. She started out designing sets for a very small theater that held about 80 people. She had to overcome the size restraint and a lack of equipment with dynamic scenery. With the help of projectors, she was able to create an illusion of a much bigger scene. This is an example of how unconventional methods create experiences. She was one of the first people to introduce film projections in theater. She mentions the amount of research and planning that goes into a concert. Es and her team do whatever it takes to complete the client's goals. She has worked with Kanye West, Jay Z, U2, as well as many others. Es and her team have created very large scale sculptures, interactive graphic boards, and movable stages.

Es Devlin says, "It is an extraordinary event when 80,000 people's attention focus on one person. Shows after 2002 when people started recording concerts from all different angles."

Es feels now she has to make sure everything looks perfect from every angle. What will the audience feel? Is what Es asks herself for every project. "Medium to smaller venues do not need to focus on the grandiose because of the environment that it inhabits." says Devlin (*Abstract: The Art of Design Es Devlin: Stage Design Dadich, 2017, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80093809?trackId=14277283&tctx=0%2C2%2C94a55d12-a9bb-4f66-96a2-35fd2def7dcb-55316969%2C2C>*)

## Seeing Is Believing

A writer at "God is a Glitch", says in the article "VJ or Visual Artist" writes "At larger venues or festivals visual elements are much more common. A DJ-set today have transformed into an unforgettable, transcendent, multi-sensory experience. In the hands of specialist artists, the lights, images and physical environment that surrounds the DJ are becoming an art form in their own right. DJ's have incorporated visuals into something as crucial as the music for EDM fans across the world, the festival and concert visual performances is just as transforming. Jettisoned by the explosion of popularity of live electronic music plus technological advances like projection mapping, innovative VJ (video jockey) software, mushrooming visual computing power, and those famous holograms, these artists are

now getting the chance to display their creations on a spectacular scale." ("VJ or Visual Artist?", *God is a Glitch, 2017, <http://www.godisaglitch.com/AVfeed/vj-visual-artist/>*)

VJing is the art of projecting video for an audience, that is witnessing a musical performance. While it has different practical limitations than video art, or more broadly, experimental film, it shares a distinct relationship to them. In the 2005 foreword to "Video Art: The Castello di Rivoli Collection," curator David A. Ross remarks that " 'video art' is not a historical category, but simply a medium. With this in mind, the work of the video jockey deserves some missed critical attention." (*Video Art: The Castell di Rivoli Collection, Gianelli & Beccaria, 2005*)

Light and time are the primary mediums of the projection show, which has been one of the foremost tools of visual artists. VJing manages to combine the two without a need of an overlying story. This has been a central part of the techno club and underground party scene, where projections and lights are used to complement both the feeling or trance of the music and the drug use which is common in these venues. Video jockeys largely remain behind the scenes, supporting the artists as they perform. Responding to the work of a musician in real time, they co-create the experience for audience members. They focus on the moment and the rhythm of a performance.

As the digital world allows creative practices to merge more seamlessly, an important strand of music, especially in its live presentation, is visuals. Romain Tardy a VJ and display artists explains "We're now in an era where you can easily find an underground festival devoted solely to audiovisual, or A/V, performances - such as LEV Festival in Spain - and the cross-platform pair-up has long been standard practice for large-scale music events. Just look at clips from stadium shows from Kanye West, Taylor Swift, Katy Perry, etc. Any musician that reaches audiences of a certain size will eventually face the question of A/V accompaniment, regardless of whether visual presentation has been central to their work or not." ("VJ or Visual Artist?", *God is a Glitch, 2017, <http://www.godisaglitch.com/AVfeed/vj-visual-artist/>*)

Few musicians work in the visual arts and create their own visual element. A vast majority of audio visual performances are collaborations. Some find it hard working with an artist from another area of art, but it has the potential to grow and even transform a performance in many ways.

While audio and visual installations are heavily reliant on the venues resources, some work to highlight aspects of a particular space. Romain Tardy is an artist who has done a number of projection-mapping projects with ANTIVJ, (*ANTIVJ, 2019, <http://www.antivj.com/>*) he is a self-described "visual label" who has worked closely in creating immersive

video. He says, "I'm more interested in a specific context rather than just a physical site or building. By context, I mean everything which is part of the experience you have in a given place and at a given time: it goes from the ambient temperature, the language spoken around you as well as the social context, to the building itself - both as an architecture and as a piece of history. I like to be surrounded by things I don't know and/or I don't understand - it can be a very overwhelming feeling sometimes, but I tend to think that habit and comfort are not the best allies when it comes to create something interesting." (*ANTIVJ, 2019, <http://www.antivj.com/>*)

**"Es Devlin will use unconventional objects and methods to ensure the audience has a memorable experience."**

Romain Tardy goes on to say "If I take a little step back from this practice of projection mapping, I'd say that technology is both what made it possible, and what is limiting. On one hand, the fact that digital projectors have become more and more accessible over the past 20 years has given visual artists a whole lot of new opportunities for large-scale image projects. On the other hand, I would also put this thing into perspective as the emergence of projection mapping is not only due to technical innovation, but also – and I would say essentially – to conceptual innovation. Projection mapping is nothing more than taking the projector outside of the projection room, and using three dimensional objects as a projection canvas instead of a screen, which, on a technical level, is nothing extraordinary. It's also amazing to realize that this action of taking the projector outside, and expanding the picture outside of the flat canvas, is another loop in the history of art: from the first immersive visual environments such as the Sistine Chapel (or, if we want to go waaaay back in time, the Lascaux cave!), to more contemporary painters such as Ellsworth Kelly with his angled canvases, it seems that connecting a flat picture to the 3rd dimension has always been a recurring research theme since art exists. The concept of AR [augmented reality] is not really new, if you look at it from this angle." (ANTIVJ, 2019, <http://www.antivj.com/>)

"I think being aware of the latest technical evolutions/tools is great, as

it also strongly connects you to your time (and of course, it's also part of your responsibility as an artist to have at least a little idea of how you want to realize a project technically), but giving it too much importance will make you miss most of the really interesting things you could say – not from a machine perspective but from a human perspective. This is something very important to keep in mind, especially when you spend most of your time on a computer to create a piece. This is also why I love working on site-specific projects: you cannot get rid of the physical challenges and difficulties, but also the great source of pleasure and inspiration that the physical world is." (ANTIVJ, 2019, <http://www.antivj.com/>)

## 2020 Hindsight

Today's concerts are getting bigger and more expensive than ever. Live events are more of a money maker for the music industry since the streaming is so prevalent. During the 1980's and 90's, touring and live music was a promotional way to advertise the groups new music. Now, music artists need to tour and present themselves in a creative way. Challenging how concerts were in the past. Amy Wang at Rolling Stone magazine interviews Ray Winker, CEO and design director at Stufish Entertainment Architects. Stufish creates visuals and stage design for large concerts throughout the world. Winker speaks about "People are no longer content with an experience that creates a barrier between them and the experience. They want to be much more immersed in the event. People go to these shows

to experience something, and if there's a certain distance between them and the artist, the link between the two can be severed quite easily. So new ways of bringing the show closer to fans are being extensively researched." Winker goes on to say "The desire for humans to be entertained – it's a very important part of how we express ourselves. And entertainment architects apply understandings from one industry to another. For example, lightweight facades, LED technology: U2 went on tour a few years ago with the largest screen ever that created the backdrop to the band's performance. That was revolutionary. You wouldn't have found that scale of screen anywhere. And now, it's pretty much present in any city center around the world. There's direct tie-ins, [which is] how entertainment architecture works."

Winker goes on to talk about how technology and social media are taking a front seat in the concert setting. "In the day and age of Instagram and Snapchat and all other social media, far more people know about the show than the people actually sitting in the stadium. The "Instagram moment" is a very important aspect of how we design things. At the start of the On the Run II show, before it's even started, there will be thousands of photos circulating on the internet about how it looks like. So a show no longer starts when the curtain rises. The show starts the moment the first person takes a picture of it. Getting that moment right – making sure the show looks impressive and enticing before it starts – is a challenge you wouldn't

have thought about, 10 years ago. Yes, nowadays, you're very minded to make the experience mobile-friendly. As soon as the doors are open for the very first show, the excitement mounts. People talk. A lot of people don't even watch the show anymore – they film the show and watch it on their phones. That changes the way one thinks about design, quite considerably. You can't underestimate the power of making sure a show looks good the moment people walk into a stadium – it's now as important as the show itself." ("Why Your Favorite Concerts Are Bigger – and More Expensive – Than Ever" 2018 <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/why-your-favorite-concerts-are-bigger-and-more-expensive-than-ever-699722/>)

While live music is making a strong comeback, it takes on a different face than in the past. Some concerts take the more traditional setting, while others could be more grandiose. Whatever live experience you may encounter in the future, it will be a memorable one, shrouded with Aura.

**"People go to shows to experience something."**

# Part 3

PORTFOLIO

# Artist Statement

P r i n t   D e s i g n

My work consists of a variety of mediums from photography to mixed media in a digital format. My photography captures moments of magical experiences when attending a concert. I show moments from literal and "in-focus" images to very ambiguous and abstract images. In a print format I express an in the moment instance combined with typography. My short film showcases how music can escalate from recorded music to the live music experience.

The history between music and design has been very intimate. Designers have been shaping the music industry for decades. From Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec way of creating advertising posters to the "branding" of musical acts, like Art Chantry. Up until recent times graphic designers created illustrations, photography, typography, and packaging for bands or musical groups. Now that digital streaming has taken the music industry in a different direction, live music and the promotional aspects that surround touring payoff for an artist.

Taking words from Walter Benjamin, the reproduction of works have already been done. Vinyl, cassettes, CD's ect. Now it is time for the aura aspect of the music industry. How, as a designer, can I create a better experience in the concert space. I have gone to a variety of music venues to see what is out there. I ask myself what is holding venues back from exceeding other venues? Musicians is the answer. Musicians that want to put on an act. What else could be done to complement musical acts? Much more, stage performance makes a much more entertaining show.

# B r o o k l y n   S t e e l   P o s t e r

This was a photograph taken by me while attending a show at Brooklyn Steel. Using images from within the establishment makes the venue more appealing to people that have never been and will entice them to attend. This image illustrates the closeness of attendees as well as a unique and underground atmosphere that is very intriguing.





# College Street Poster

This was a photograph taken by me while attending a show at College Street Music Hall. This image is a composite two different moments during the night, coming together to show a community of like-minded individuals conversing about the concert.

The black and white image in combination with a red marquee draws in attention to what is going on within the image.



**COLLEGE STREET music HALL**

APR 12 TWIDDLE  
APR 13 THE CLAYPOOL LENNON DELIRIUM  
APR 14 LESS THAN JAKE  
APR 27 TREY ANASTASIO BAND  
MAY 4 JOHNNY MARR  
MAY 9 TURNOVER

**UP-COMING SHOWS**

APR. 12 TWIDDLE  
APR. 13 THE CLAYPOOL LENNON DELIRIUM  
APR. 14 LESS THAN JAKE  
APR. 27 TREY ANASTASIO BAND  
MAY 04 JOHNNY MARR  
MAY 09 TURNOVER

COLLEGE STREET  
**music HALL**  
NEW HAVEN

# W e b s t e r   T h e a t e r   P o s t e r

This was a photograph taken by me while attending a show at the Webster Theater. One of the attendees agreed to pose for this gritty image.

The chosen colors and simple shapes are taken from within the building. This art deco influenced venue has been going strong for decades



## C a f e N i n e P o s t e r

This was a photograph taken by me while attending a show at Cafe Nine. Another composited poster using the same crowd as the College Street Music Hall signifying the same ownership.

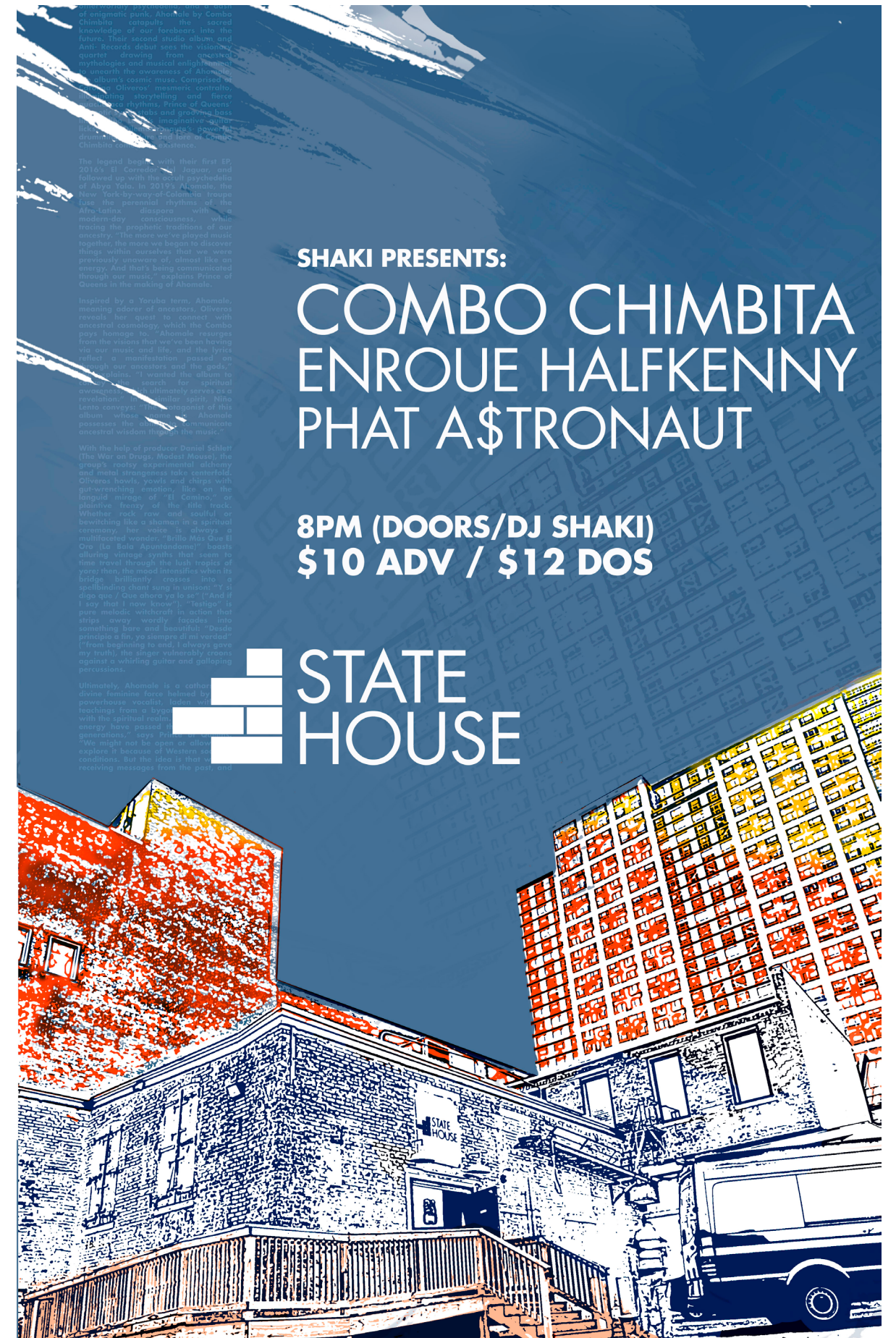
I exaggerated the building, making it seem larger than it actually is. This very small venue packs in diverse sound and eclectic shows.



# State House Poster

I created this poster after attending this concert at the State House. This image evolved into an illustration because of the diversity of people that attend this venue. I wanted to capture that diversity with a colorful palette.

The overall poster has a split complementary color scheme. The use of typography conveys the information clearly. The use of image, gives this poster depth and also communicates ideas and emotion about the State House.



# M u s i c H a l l o f W i l l i a m s b u r g P o s t e r

I created this poster after attending this concert at the Music Hall of Williamsburg or NorthSix. This mainly black and white image has a flash of red that illuminates the facade of the nightclub. As a venue, this image is descriptive of the venue itself. Nothing flashy or out of the ordinary here. Music Hall of Williamsburg or NorthSix only illuminates the artist that is playing that night. This is the message that I am trying to convey in this poster.

If and when the viewer understands the message, the use of color in this poster is understood. The use of dynamic angles, when shooting the outside of the building, enhances the art deco architecture of the building. Using those angles of the building and point of view from the camera, pushes the viewers eye throughout the poster.



# Space Ballroom Poster

I created this poster after attending this concert at the Space Ballroom. This image captures an experience everyone will go through while attending the Space Ballroom. This small venue gives the opportunity to get close to the performers and be apart of the energy in the room.

From a design sense, the use of color in this poster works. Colors from the logo can be found within the guitarist. The overall poster has a split complementary color scheme. The use of typography could be worked on more but it conveys the information clearly. The use of image, gives this poster depth and also communicates ideas and emotion about the Space Ballroom.



# Film Short



## View this short film here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tkKOpfj8U>

This is a short film that I produced called "The Aura of Live Music." It begins to describe the live music environment from a music lovers point of view. I visited local venues, record stores, and other music establishments to observe how the power of music effects people and our society.

Live music and the energy that is delivered in those spaces leaves me to think about how venues can create an atmosphere that enhances the experience.

Live music is a common place that brings people together and creates a culture within society. While musical acts are the main draw of a crowd, can small venues manage to add more sustainable assets to the venue in order to cause a tipping point for concert attendees.



Recorded music is everywhere and in all forms. Record stores like this are becoming a popular hang out again and offer more than recorded music. To get more people in the store live music is becoming more and more prevalent. The increase in record sales has tripled in the last year.

Live music venues can create a tipping point by adding visual assets that accompany a musical act. People that go the venue should be positively influenced by the experience and want to come back even if the act is mediocre.

I interview concert promoters during the course of discovery. I get their feelings on the future of live music and where it will be in the up-coming years.

Live music creates an excitement and energy that is like nothing else. I look forward to taking this project further and using design to enhance the live concert experience.

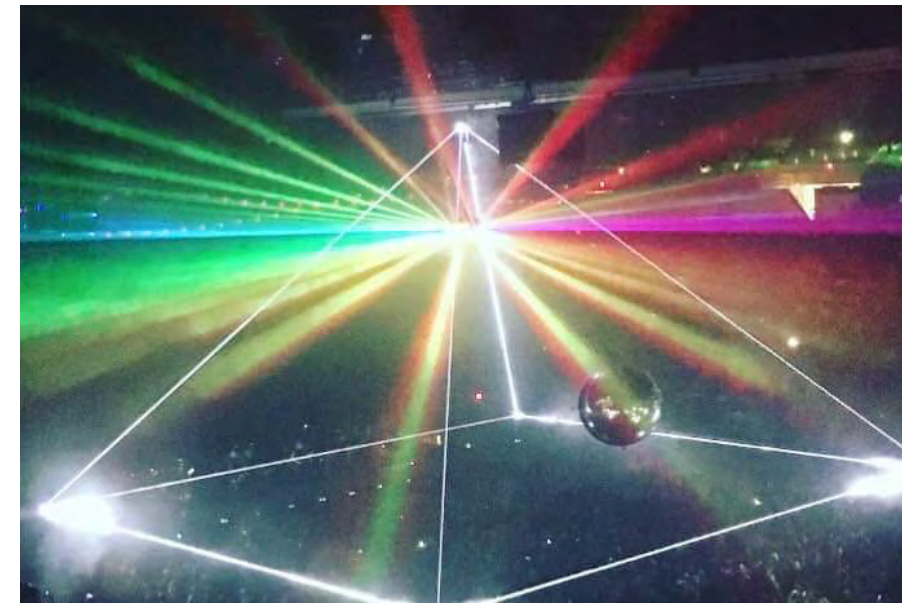
You can view my short film here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tkKOpfj8U>

# Photography

These photographs were taken by me, while attending concerts from a variety of locations. The images reveal a variety of points covered in my narrative such as lighting and visual effects, proximity to performers, and art within a venue.

I have included information with each image, documenting where the concert was held, date of event, who was performing, and some highlights of the show.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Roger Waters Us + Them  
**LOCATION**  
XL Center  
**DATE**  
Sept. 24, 2017  
**EXTRA INFO**  
Light show & propaganda!



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Dead and Company  
**LOCATION**  
Xfinity Theater  
**DATE**  
Jun. 13, 2018  
**EXTRA INFO**  
Back in the grass.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Surfbort  
**LOCATION**  
Bowery Ballroom  
**DATE**  
Nov. 11, 2016  
**EXTRA INFO**  
Balcony shots.  
NYC up and coming





**MUSICAL ACT**  
Barrece Whitfield

**LOCATION**  
Cafe Nine

**DATE**  
May 4, 2019

**EXTRA INFO**  
One of the smallest and best venues in New Haven.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Eye Flys

**LOCATION**  
Space Ballroom

**DATE**  
Jul 19, 2019

**EXTRA INFO**  
Great venue with 2 stages.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Motley Crue

**LOCATION**  
Mohegan Sun

**DATE**  
Dec. 14, 2018

**EXTRA INFO**  
Thanks for the extending stage in order to reach the back.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Psychedelic Porn Crumpets

**LOCATION**  
Music Hall of Williamsburg

**DATE**  
Aug. 27, 2019

**EXTRA INFO**  
Best Manhattan small venue.

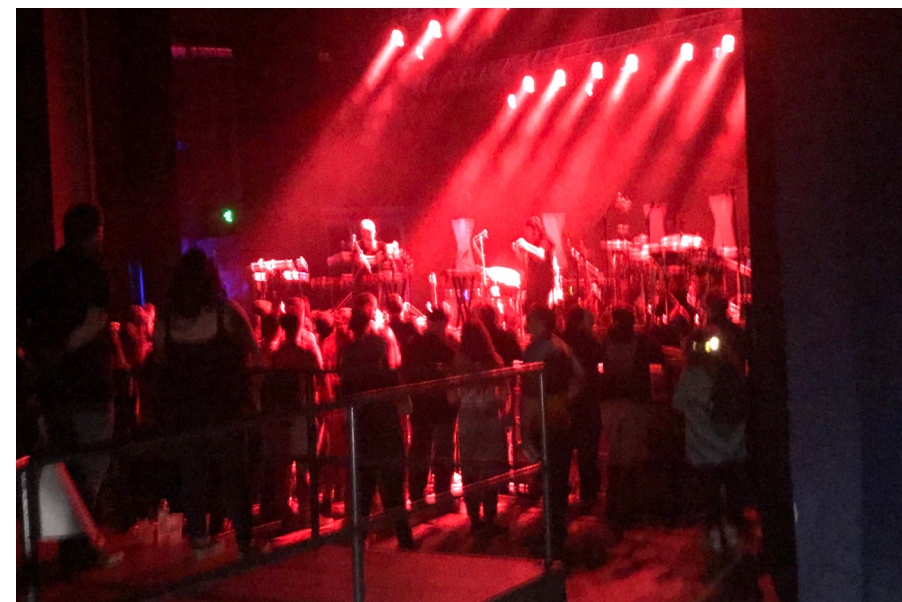


**MUSICAL ACT**  
Twiddle

**LOCATION**  
College Street Music Hall

**DATE**  
Apr. 12, 2019

**EXTRA INFO**  
Pre-show



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Twiddle

**LOCATION**  
College Street Music Hall

**DATE**  
Apr. 12, 2019

**EXTRA INFO**  
Best theater in New Haven

PHOTOGRAPHY

Eric Ahrens

LOCATION

Cafe Nine

DATE

May 10, 2019

EXTRA INFO

A venue that  
embraces design.  
Triad of color.



**PHOTOGRAPHY**

Eric Ahrens

**LOCATION**

Webster Theater

**DATE**

April 24, 2019

**EXTRA INFO**

Before the  
doors open.





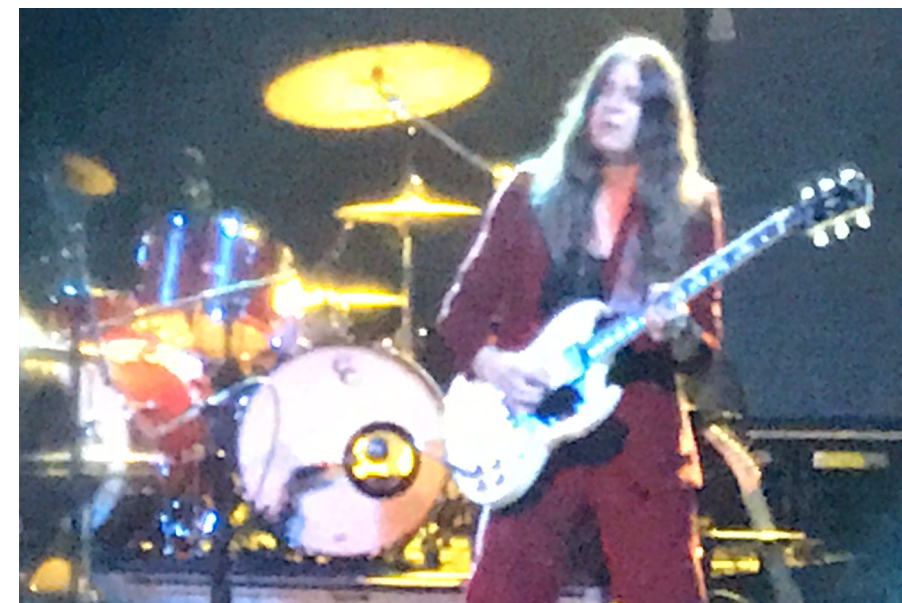
**MUSICAL ACT**  
Prettiest Eyes  
**LOCATION**  
Warsaw  
**DATE**  
Oct. 19, 2019  
**EXTRA INFO**  
Brooklyn small venue.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Thee Oh Sees  
**LOCATION**  
Warsaw  
**DATE**  
Oct. 19, 2019  
**EXTRA INFO**  
A lot of up and coming musical acts going through.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Daughters  
**LOCATION**  
Space Ballroom  
**DATE**  
Jun. 16, 2019  
**EXTRA INFO**  
In the pit.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Stonefield  
**LOCATION**  
College Street Music Hall  
**DATE**  
Aug. 27, 2019  
**EXTRA INFO**  
Great venue for a medium-large space.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Thee Oh Sees  
**LOCATION**  
Bowery Ballroom  
**DATE**  
Nov. 11, 2016  
**EXTRA INFO**  
Up in the balcony. Can see me in the pit.



**MUSICAL ACT**  
Local H  
**LOCATION**  
Space Ballroom  
**DATE**  
Jul. 19, 2019  
**EXTRA INFO**  
In the pit.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Eric Ahrens

LOCATION

College Street  
Music Hall

DATE

May 16, 2019

EXTRA INFO

A venue that always  
moves forward.



**COLLEGE STREET music HALL**

APR 12	MIZEN COPE	APR 12	TWIDDLE
APR 13	ATEBREED	APR 13	THE CLAYPOOL LENNON DELIRIUM
APR 16	SUNN O	APR 16	LESS THAN JAKE

**COLLEGE STREET music HALL**

877-63  
**COOKIE**

**COLLEGE STREET music HALL**

**COLLEGE STREET music HALL**  
NEW HAVEN

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

Eric Ahrens

**LOCATION**

State House

**DATE**

May 16, 2019

**EXTRA INFO**

A venue that  
always changes.



# Part 4

CONCLUSION



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# Appendices

I have included my survey and a review of venues I have recently visited. My findings over the last year have been quite interesting and not exactly as I envisioned. My opportunistic outlook was damaged a bit but I still feel that my underlying need for improving small venue performances is needed for the future.

My survey was taken from a small group of 20 people at 5 different venues. 4 of them were in Connecticut and 1 venue was in New York. 5 questions were asked, and everyone in the group answered.

I reviewed 9 music venues which were mostly local but not all. 5 Connecticut venues and 4 in New York.

## S u r v e y o f L o c a l V e n u e s

\*\*\* A survey was taken from a small group of 20 people at 5 different venues. 4 of them were in Connecticut and 1 venue was in New York. 5 questions were asked, and everyone in the group answered.

### Do you regularly come to this venue?

\*\*\* 90% of the people interviewed had been to that venue previously.

This outcome was expected due to my thoughts on the local venues and how they interact with the community. A concert venue owner should know who their audience is, and how they can get people in the door.

### Does the performing artist determine where you will travel to see the concert?

\*\*\* 80% of the people interviewed would travel to see an artist.

Based on the geographical location of Connecticut and the amount of venues that are in the area, people said they would only travel 100 miles at most to see an artist perform that they really liked.

### Does the venue determine whether you would see an artist?

\*\*\* 27% of the people interviewed said a venue has a factor.

This answer was the most disappointing in my entire thesis. People would go to a larger venue just to see an act. I started to think if it is the venues job to create an atmosphere or is it up to the performing act? I feel strongly that a venue should be able to support an act and any theatrics that they need.

### Does the venue have any influence on you at all?

\*\*\* 15% of the people interviewed say the venue influences them.

Another disappointing result. This maybe because no venues are doing the things I have described throughout my paper. People are accustomed to the normal venue and what is or is not there in the space.

### Would you go to a venue that offered more visual accompaniments?

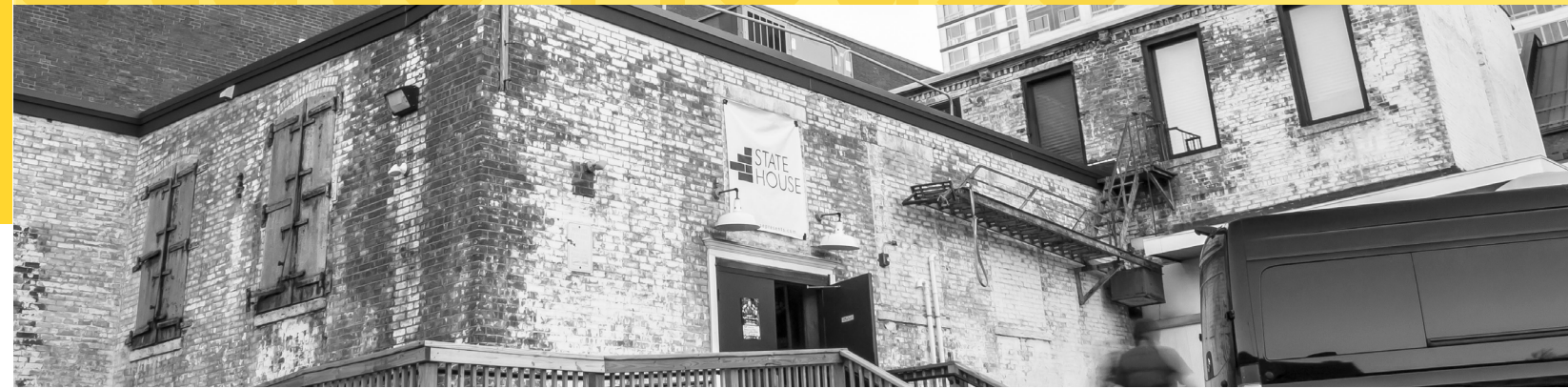
\*\*\* 65% of the people interviewed say they would like more visual elements.

This is a promising outcome. For most young people attending they need extra stimulation while visiting a venue.

# A Review of Venues

An overall view of where venues are, where they were in history, and assets they have.

## State House



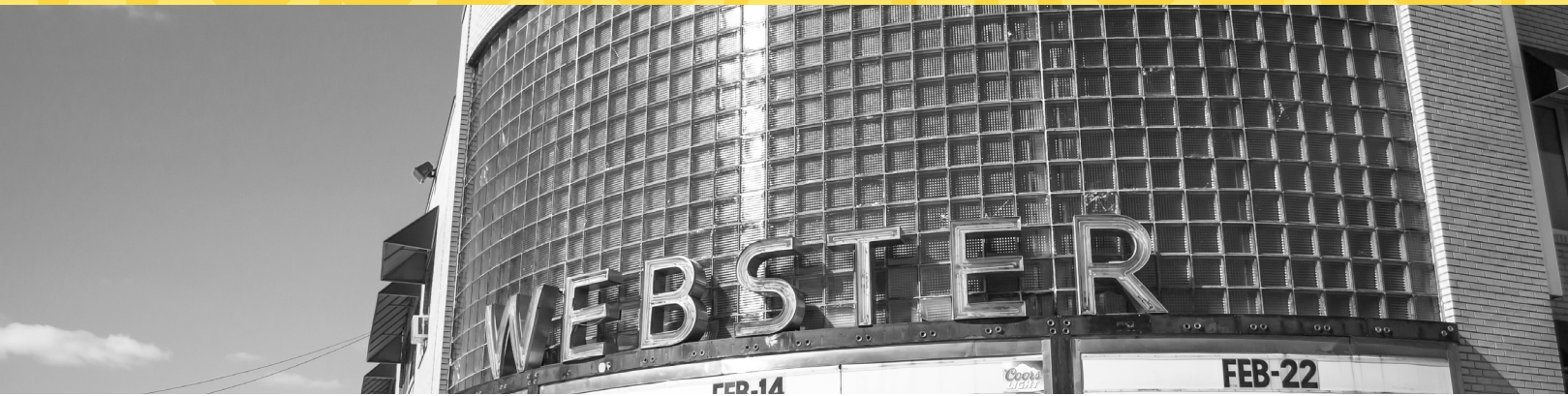
### Background

The State House is a small night club with a very diverse concert listing. The venue opened with the vision of bringing a worldly sound to New Haven. The venue has state of the art equipment, from a great sound system, lighting, and a visual projection screen. If given the opportunity to see an act here, I would definitely seize it.

### Information

Opened	2017
Seating Capacity	400
Location	New Haven CT
Genre	Hard Rock, Metal, Rap, Hip Hop, World, Punk

## Webster Theater



### Background

The Webster Theater was originally a movie theater. In 1974, showcasing family films, did not bring in enough revenue which caused the theater to only show adult films. In 1992, owners restored the theater to its original art deco style. Today, the venue is going through another renovation that will include its roots of art deco and today's culture. I have always enjoyed going to the Webster. It is a small to mid sized venue with great acoustics, lighting, with a very edgy and energetic crowd.

### Information

Opened	1937
Seating Capacity	1200
Location	Hartford CT
Genre	Hard Rock, Metal, Rap

## Space Ballroom



### Background

This venue has a house party feel that is the middle of an industrial park. Local acts have always been welcomed here. Space Ballroom have all of the good qualities of a small venue such as, visual capabilities, sound, and lighting.

### Information

Opened	2017
Seating Capacity	400
Location	Hamden CT
Genre	Hard Rock, Punk, Ska, Alternative

# Cafe Nine



## Background

Cafe Nine is a small sized club with a very diverse concert listing. Early shows consist of jazz or blues rock. The second set is targeted towards the college age group which could get very diverse.

## Information

Opened	2017
Seating Capacity	200
Location	New Haven CT
Genre	Acoustic, Jazz, Ska, Alternative, Punk, Emo, Indie

# Brooklyn Steel



## Background

An industrial warehouse that has a lot of history. With a second story viewing area, this building is a great venue to see any artist. All of the good qualities like, visual capabilities, sound, and lighting.

## Information

Opened	2016
Seating Capacity	1800
Location	Brooklyn NY
Genre	Rap, Hip Hop, Alternative, Punk, Emo, Jazz, Hardcore, Pop

# College Street



## Background

In 2015, 238 College Street became College Street Music Hall. It is a venue that has a great community, sound and lighting, with visual displays that doesn't compare any other concert facility in Connecticut. A mid sized venue with an edgy and energetic crowd.

## Information

Opened	2011
Seating Capacity	2000
Location	New Haven CT
Genre	Hard Rock, Punk, Ska, Alternative, Rap, Hip Hop

# Warsaw



## Background

The Warsaw is a medium sized night club with a very diverse concert listing. The doubles as a polish bar with perogies and lager. The venue has state of the art equipment, from a great sound system, lighting. If given the opportunity to see an act here, I would definitely seize it.

## Information

Opened	1904
Seating Capacity	1000
Location	Brooklyn NY
Genre	Hard Rock, Metal, Punk, Ska, Alternative, Rap, Hip Hop

# Bowery Ballroom



## Background

The Bowery Ballroom is a small night club with a very diverse concert listing. The venue has state of the art equipment, from a great sound system, lighting. One of the best concert halls in Manhattan.

## Information

Opened	1998
Seating Capacity	575
Location	Manhattan NY
Genre	Hard Rock, Metal, Punk, Acoustic, Ska, Alternative, Rap, Hip Hop, World

# Northsix



## Background

Northsix has an eclectic booking schedule and hosted countless notable music/comedy performances. Now called Music Hall of Williamsburg, the vibe and persona still lives on at this great concert venue.

## Information

Opened	2001
Seating Capacity	650
Location	Brooklyn NY
Genre	Indie, Hard Rock, Metal, Punk, Ska, Alternative

