



What kinds of venue attract audiences?

By Heather Maitland, 7/10/13, heather@heathermaitland.co.uk

We all link positive stereotypes with people who like the music we like and negative ones with people who love the music we hate.ⁱ Even at nine or ten years old, children are able to associate stereotypes with fans of different musical styles.

Even jazz attenders felt that the negative stereotypes about jazz attenders were true to some extent, even if they didn't apply to themselves.ⁱⁱ

“The demographics of the audience speaks for itself - it's older men.”

But they couldn't be more wrong. Unlike other types of music, roughly equal numbers of men and women say they like jazz.^{iii,iv} The age of the audience at the jazz gigs in the research simply reflected the age of the audience at the venue as a whole.ⁱⁱ

“Where everyone's got to hush”

Audiences' prefer venues where they feel they belong:

“If it's at a venue you think you don't fit into or you don't want to go to or it's too far then it doesn't matter who's playing.”

Audiences generally agree that venues needed to strike a balance between informality and formality. Where that balance lies depends on the type of music and individual preference.

“I'm interested in the music and I don't want somewhere that's filled with people who ... just want to drink. I want people there who are interested in the music. But what I don't want is to go somewhere it feels like ‘Oh, we're going to church now.’”

Most audiences feel that cabaret-style tables, low lighting and food and drink help create an intimate and informal atmosphere.^v

Third Space

Our lives are mainly spent in two places: home and work. At home we can't be ourselves because we have to be "father", "mother" or "sister". At work we can't be ourselves because we have to be "composer", "manager" or "marketer". But we actively seek a third space in which we can meet our social needs through creative interaction with others. The author of the theory says third places have the following in common:

- free or inexpensive
- easy to get to
- nearby
- welcoming
- comfortable
- food and drink
- people who use it regularly so people feel companionship
- new people to make friends with^v

Third spaces lose their power if they are dominated by a single group with a particular focus or the place changes eg by becoming a tourist attraction.^{vi}

Research looked at the extent to which visitors at two arts venues in London saw them as third places: the art gallery Tate Modern and the performing arts centre, the South Bank Centre. Only the South Bank Centre was used as a third place even though the Tate Modern showed some of the necessary characteristics. The atmosphere at the South Bank Centre created a sense of belonging with the key factors being:

- people feel they can have a private corner within a bigger building
- intimate and friendly
- fun, playful atmosphere
- a feeling that they can use the building as they wish without criticism – "where you can stretch your arms, run, walk if you choose to"
- creative and inspiring place
- a feeling of sanctuary^{vi}

i

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