



# Assessing the role that entertainers play in alcohol marketing and the maintenance of good order within on-trade licensed premises

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The authors would like to acknowledge the following individuals for assisting with this project. Firstly, thanks to Professor Martin Cloonan (Department of Music, University of Glasgow) and the Scottish Pop Music Academic Network (SPAN) for their continued support of our research, and to Ajay McFadden and Neil Seaward in recognition of their inspirational comments. Thanks also to Iftekhar Ahmed, Sam Dymond, Allie Gair, Andrew McAuley, Rachael McLeod, Oonagh Robison and Mathew Smith for assistance with recruitment, to Linda Brady for administrative assistance, to Anne Forsyth for her assistance with transcribing and Pauline Roberts for producing our recruitment flyer. Most of all, thanks to the 24 anonymous participants and three pilot interviewees who gave up their valuable time to contribute to this research.

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This report was funded by Alcohol Research UK. Alcohol Research UK is an independent charity working to reduce alcohol related harm through ensuring policy and practice can be developed on the basis of reliable, research-based evidence.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This ARUK small grant project report fills a gap in our knowledge which was identified during previous night-time economy (NTE) research projects undertaken by the research team, specifically the roles that on-trade entertainers have in alcohol marketing (e.g. attracting/retaining customers or boosting bar-sales) and also in crowd control (e.g. violence reduction or managing patron's movements).

To explore the diverse roles played by these key stakeholders in contemporary UK nightlife, 24 pub/club entertainers were recruited in Glasgow, Scotland; comprising 8 DJs (each specialising in different music genres or venue-types), 8 band-members (again each specialising across different genres or instruments) and 8 other/variety acts (including performance-artists, comedians, lounge/cabaret-acts and hosts/presenters).

All participants agreed to an audio-recorded interview, which was then transcribed and analysed thematically using the qualitative software package NVivo 10. An interview schedule asked participants about their careers in the NTE, both as entertainers and as other on-trade employees (e.g. bar-servers). This strategy produced findings that were consistent and straightforward. These are summarised as follows:

- Some participants were either formally trained entertainers (e.g. they had attended drama school or held a music degree) or they held a life-long interest in (or even family tradition of) show business. These individuals had

eventually found employment working as gigging entertainers within a variety of alcohol licenced premises.

- Other participants had previously held other jobs within on-trade premises (e.g. as bar servers) but had graduated to an entertainers role at their place of work, and then developed a career in show business from there.
- Although we selected our sample of entertainers on the basis of ever having performed in pubs/nightclubs, it was remarkable that few had ever played anywhere that alcohol was not present in some way.
- Some participants stated they had never played to a sober audience, with others claiming to have never played to an audience while completely sober themselves.
- Working in alcohol environments, often several nights per week, or gigs per day, meant that these entertainers own alcohol consumption could easily reach risky levels. This was exacerbated occupational expectations (e.g. alcohol as part of a 'rock n' roll' or 'stand-up' lifestyle).
- Some participants drank before going on stage (Dutch courage), some drank during their performance (to be on a par with audience's mood alterations) while others, those who needed to remain sober during their act, drank afterwards to 'vibe-down'.

- Additionally, this is one occupation where drinking on the job is actively encouraged (in contrast to say the bar-severing or security-staff working in the same venue who might be fired for such indulgence). This encouragement to consume alcohol included free bars, alcohol in riders, being ‘paid in booze’ (instead of cash), using drinks as stage props and managers requiring entertainers to engage in high-visibility alcohol promotions.
- Most were aware that they played a role in alcohol marketing, although their acceptance of this varied between those who only saw an association by default (e.g. if they were playing a gig in licensed venue) to others who felt that no matter how good their artistic ability was they were employed to be nothing more than mere alcohol salespersons.
- Some were directly involved in overt alcohol market (e.g. making verbal announcements to drink, brand endorsements, sponsorship, etc.), but our research suggests that this was much less important to the on-trade than more covert techniques by which entertainment provision could attract/retain customers and boost bar takings.
- Among these techniques were putting popular acts on quieter (weekday) nights, having many breaks/intermissions (when patrons would instinctively head for the bar) and playing certain beats/tempos (it was noted that people drank more once they got into the rhythm of the show by say dancing, clapping, laughing or singing along with act). Alternatively, if some

patrons were getting too engaged in the show, toning things down (e.g. playing an unpopular song) would return an audience's attentions towards the bar if required.

- Most participants described ways by which they mediated their collusion with this hidden agenda (i.e. 'playing the game' as drinks promoters). For example, by only performing for what were seen as more responsible drinks brands (e.g. craft-beers but not alcopops) or more reputable venues (e.g. 'alternative' or art-house spaces rather than 'mainstream' or student-orientated establishments). Some participants recognised that this distinction was superficial, and in fact all venues had the same underlying goal (i.e. making profits from selling alcohol) no matter how much certain operators might try to distance themselves from this reality, for example by promoting their premises to a more discerning clientele, based on the high quality of entertainment they offered rather than cheap drinks prices.
- Nevertheless entertainers were happier to perform in spaces where the focus of the establishment was the stage rather than the bar, a factor which when combined with more expensive drinks (and an affluent-employed clientele) was felt to incur less risk of alcohol-related disorder.
- These entertainers had experienced all manner of alcohol-related violence and crowd disturbances, which could on occasion be directed at them, by patrons and by other acts. However, there was no consensus on how to react to trouble. Some felt it was not their job, and in such cases the band literally

played on (some justifying this strategy by saying it drew attention away from any trouble). Others alerted security staff (e.g. by hand signals or verbally, perhaps using special code words so as not to draw too much attention to the nature of the incident). Some even chose to get physically involved in disturbances, either out of a sense of duty to protect the audience (who would also protect them) or because they themselves were intoxicated and behaving in a disorderly way.

- When asked about whether they would benefit from any training in crowd control etc., some participants felt they would like to learn about how to deal with drunken people, hecklers or group psychology, and also about the financial perils of employment in the NTE (often as a result of not getting paid properly or complicated tax arrangements). It was noted that such concerns, which all gigging musicians will face as soon as they leave college, were not dealt with in formal music courses, and that vital survival skills usually had to be learned on the job (i.e. from their own mistakes) or from experiences in other employment (e.g. bar work or 'day jobs').
- Finally when asked what they would do if there were no licensed premises to perform in, most felt they would effectively be out of a job. The link between alcohol and entertainment was so embedded that even if dry venues were available (it was felt there were none in Glasgow), people would simply not come out because it would be no fun without drink being available.

In conclusion, alcohol (perhaps in common with other recreational drugs) and entertainment go hand-in-hand, and it is difficult to imagine that any legislation (e.g. banning advertising/sponsorship, closing venues, etc.) could possibly change this ancient relationship. Entertainers felt sober audiences had less fun, and gave them more stress or hassle, than those who had been drinking. This was much the same way as they felt about dealing with extremely drunken audiences. There was thought to be a 'golden point' of mild intoxication, which maximised the pleasure felt by performers and audiences alike. With this viewpoint in mind (for example when playing a wedding gig) it is seen as the responsible thing to do to actively encourage some drinking, but while taking care not to let this consumption get out of hand. Knowingly or otherwise, our sample of pub/nightclub entertainers were not only acting as drinks promoters, they were also engaging in subtle but effective forms of harm reduction, by providing something else for patrons to enjoy on a night out, rather than the sole prospect of inebriation.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Aims

This project aims to explore the experiences of entertainers working in the UK's Night-time Economy (NTE) to assess their roles in alcohol marketing (sales promotion and crowd control), and also how they square these demands with artistic or other concerns. What are their training needs, and can their expert knowledge be built into models of good practice for responsible alcohol retailing and violence reduction/community safety?

This work aims to build upon a previous Alcohol Research UK (then AERC) project carried out by the research team, involving participant observation within eight nightclubs in Glasgow, Scotland (Forsyth, 2006; Forsyth & Lennox, 2010). In common with an NHS-funded project, conducted around the same time, which carried out similar observations in eight nearby pubs (Forsyth et al, 2005; Forsyth & Cloonan, 2008), entertainment was observably a key feature of the city's NTE, influencing patterns of substance use consumption and intoxicated behaviours. All 16 observed licensed premises in these previous Glasgow studies provided musical, and often other, entertainments.

In both studies the type of entertainment on offer (e.g. karaoke in pubs, dancing in nightclubs) was observed to dictate the characteristics of the clientele that was attracted to each premises, including their social class, age, ethnicity or sub-cultural orientation. Once inside, this in turn impacted upon patron's behaviours, including levels of intoxication, whether by alcohol or other drugs. These clientele

differences were apparent even within single venues that had more than one barroom offering contrasting entertainments.

Patrons were observed being influenced by variations in on-trade entertainment provision affecting their drinking activities (e.g. speed and duration of consumption or brand choice) and intoxicated behaviours (e.g. dancing, aggression or sexual activity). For example, a simple adjustment in music volume (loudness) could determine whether a barroom was characterised by quiet conversations or uninhibited rowdiness.

Although interviews with bar staff and patrons corroborated these observations, those who provided the entertainment were not consulted. This omission drew attention from both researchers and entertainers. For example, two international DJs, who had read the prior research online, contacted the research team personally [AF], fostering discussions that were inspirational towards the current project, as is indicated in the extracts below from their e-mail exchanges.

**"The modern DJ (post 2006) is now commonly more a promoter than artist. 'Permissive' management practices and commercial pressure to deliver attendance and drive bar-sales with 'discount alcohol gimmicks'..."**  
(Australian DJ, personal communication, 2012)

**"...they wanted more 'Viking Line' party music that you hear on the drinking cruises that go to Finland - basic pop as far as I understand. I offered to do that but the booker didn't want any of his DJs playing there anymore - a pride issue. The bar was making a lot more money when we were making proper events there but the restaurant manager didn't really have a clue, we also brought a more sophisticated crowd that bought more expensive cocktails rather than the lowest common denominator who buy pints of beer..."**  
(Swedish DJ, personal communication, 2009)

Thus, there is a need for research to assess the role that entertainers play in alcohol marketing and consequent patron behaviours. By exploring the self-reported experiences of a variety of entertainers, working across a range of alcohol-licensed venues, this project aims to address this gap in the literature.

## 1.2 Background

With increasing restrictions placed upon overt alcohol promotion (e.g. advertising, price) and in the face of competition from the off-trade, pubs and nightclubs would seem increasingly likely to employ other marketing tools to a) attract custom and b) increase bar sales. One salient but under-researched component of the UK's NTE is entertainment provision by alcohol-licensed premises of what Bell (2007) describes as 'drinkertainment' (i.e. alcohol + entertainment). This group of NTE stakeholders is certain to become increasingly important should the drinks industry's traditional routes to targeting a youth audience be further restricted. For example, legislation preventing the on-trade from offering financial incentives (e.g. student discounts, 'happy hours', '2-4-1 offers') would seem likely to encourage the use of on-premises live entertainers as a) an attraction, and b) drinks promoters.

This omission from alcohol research is surprising (e.g. in comparison to research addressing the links between the alcohol and sports industries), as entertainment can be an instrument of economic manipulation, and music has been described as one of the most important tools in modern marketing (Brown & Volgsten, 2006).

To date, designated research examining the effect of music on alcohol consumption has mainly involved quasi-experimental lab-bar studies. These have

demonstrated that musical manipulation can influence alcohol consumption rates. For example, the mere presence of music has been demonstrated to increase alcohol consumption (Drews et al, 1992), as has louder music (Guéguen et al, 2008), a faster tempo (McElrea & Standing, 1992), alcohol-related lyrics (Jacob, 2006) and more subtly via mood alteration (Bach & Schaefer, 1979). Music also has influence over consumers' beverage choice (Areni & Kim, 1993; North & Hargreaves, 1997) and it has been suggested that distracting music can make alcoholic beverages taste better (Stafford et al, 2012), arguably making consumers underestimate the strength of their drinks.

These experimental findings provide some explanation for the previous studies' barroom observations: that is, how on-trade premises' entertainment policies attract and retain a target clientele while deterring/removing others (the 'Manilow effect'), or how music can influence amounts that consumers become willing to spend (the 'Mozart effect') and on which beverages (see Forsyth, 2012 for review).

Studies of the night-time economy have suggested that music policy results in the 'sonic demarcation' between different nightlife premises (Hunt et al, 2010; Measham & Hadfield, 2009; Purcell & Graham, 2005), while within premises entertainment provision can be used to manipulate patrons, structuring their night until it signals 'closing time' (Caldwell & Hibbert, 1999; Hadfield, 2004 & 2006). To this end, pub/club entertainers (e.g. DJs or karaoke-presenters) have been observed engaging in direct drinks marketing, either by overtly verbally advertising brands and alcohol per se over the microphone (including in ways which would contravene advertising responsibility codes, e.g. *Portman Group*, 2013) or, more

subtly, by creating a drinks-party atmosphere (see also Briggs, 2013; Forsyth, 2009; Home Office/KPMG LLP, 2008; Turney, 2008).

Additionally, entertainers have been observed becoming actively involved in alcohol-related violence (i.e. ‘soft policing’), either overtly as physical peacemakers, including alerting security-staff over the microphone, or more subtly by playing calming music (Forsyth, 2009). Although in some circumstances entertainment can foster disorderly behaviour, it can also help to preserve good order, by controlling drinkers’ moods or providing distraction from potential trouble (Forsyth & Cloonan, 2006; Hadfield, 2006 & 2009; Homel & Tomsen, 1993).

### **1.3 Research Questions (what this study adds)**

Regardless of the method employed, the existing research examining the effects of entertainment upon alcohol use has produced consistent findings. What remains unknown is the extent to which these effects are intentionally employed. This project addresses that knowledge gap by conducting in-depth interviews with pub/club entertainers. A particular focus of these interviews was to investigate whether entertainers are being used purposively by the drinks industry, either to increase bar-sales, or to provide additional (non-alcohol) income by making venues more attractive to particular consumer groups, in what Winlow and Hall (2006) argue is part of the modelling of youth culture to suit the needs of neo-capitalism. In short, to what extent is live entertainment an alcohol marketing tool, particularly in regard to youthful drinkers?

This research explores the extent to which pub/club entertainers are aware of the effects that their performances may be having on audiences' drinking behaviours. If they are concerned, then how do they balance what Jayne and colleagues (2011, p19) describe as "the twin and contradictory imperatives of fun and disorder" that characterise '*Alcohol, drinking and drunkenness*'? How do they keep both the audience and themselves safe, minimising the health and other risks inherent to working in alcohol environments (i.e. do they practice Harm Reduction)?

Even if they are unaware of their performances' influence on audience's alcohol-related behaviours, this research asks, do they use self-taught techniques while performing in pubs/clubs, or have they received any training, whether at music / drama school, by professional bodies or alcohol retailers (e.g. about how to use their skills responsibly or dealing with intoxicated crowds)? Are some entertainers directed by bar-managers to attract/deter certain customers or promote bar-sales? Does working in an alcohol outlet involve risk-taking by entertainers, including the de-skilling of artistic goals under the threat of commercial or other pressures?

To begin answering these questions it was decided to conduct a small research project (pilot study) involving in-depth qualitative interviews with a sample of Glasgow-based pub/club entertainers. The next section will describe this sample's recruitment, data collection and analysis.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Ethical approval**

Before commencing this research, ethical approval was sought and granted from The Glasgow School for Business & Society, Research Ethics committee.

### **2.2 Interview schedule development**

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed to achieve consistency in data collection. Having an interview schedule allowed issues to be covered systematically while still allowing the flexibility to pursue unexpected topics when they arose. Opening topics were used to provide context (e.g. entertainment career history) before moving on to specific areas (e.g. role in alcohol marketing). Prompts were developed, should participants struggle with any of the issues raised, and probes towards detailed exploration of points or to generate examples.

The interview schedule covered areas such as participants' careers, the venues they performed in and the clientele they attracted, including their experiences with intoxicated patrons, as well as items enquiring about their own alcohol consumption, involvement with alcohol marketing and the importance of licensed venues to them as entertainers (and to the show business industry more generally).

The final interview schedule is provided by Appendix 1.

### **2.3 Piloting of materials**

Initially the interview schedule was constructed from our existing research and the knowledge gaps identified by the literature review (see previous chapter). A draft

schedule was then piloted on three existing contacts working within Glasgow's NTE (one DJ, one band-member, and one comedian). This pilot was conducted in order to assess the flow of the interview process, to make sure participants understood all questions, to ensure all items resulted in data which answered the research questions, to judge timing and provide feedback regarding topics that the schedule might have omitted. Each pilot interview informed subsequent iterations of the schedule, which was refined until finalised. Additionally, piloting gave us first-points-of-contact for subsequent recruitment.

## **2.4 Recruitment strategies**

As well as using existing contacts (e.g. pilot interviewees) as recruiters/referrers, the project was publicised on social media (Facebook/Twitter) and, once interviewing had begun, it was possible to distribute flyers at venues and via participants in respondent-driven-sampling ('snowballing'). Our recruitment flyer (poster/handbill) advertising the research was drawn-up for use both physically (via hardcopy distribution) and virtually (by posting online). This recruitment flyer is provided by Appendix 2.

This recruitment strategy was tailored to researching this specific population. The NTE uses hard-copy flyers and, increasingly, the less expensive Internet to publicise shows/venues (and alcohol) by viral marketing. Online recruitment was effective at reaching this population because entertainers also publicise themselves this way, facilitating direct communication between the researcher and participants who work unconventional hours. Unusually, this recruitment method meant that from the

outset participant's self-reports were partially corroborated from their online identities (e.g. via their SoundCloud recordings or YouTube videos).

## 2.5 Interview procedure

All interviews were conducted by the same researcher [JL] either at her workplace or at locations chosen by participants (e.g. their workplace). Before each interview, participants were given an information sheet describing the study, including what was required of them, assurances of anonymity, ethical limitations, and contact details of the research team. If they agreed to take part, they were asked to provide written consent. Both the information sheet and consent form were also read aloud. This documentation is provided in Appendix 3.

Participants were first asked to provide some brief demographic information, which was noted down by the researcher (their age, gender, postcode as well as their current act and venues). The remainder of the interview was recorded, and used the schedule (Appendix 1). Once the interview was completed participants received £15 as recompense for their participation. Recordings lasted between 24 and 77 minutes, and generated a great diversity of data.

## 2.6 Sample frame

The single inclusion criterion regarding an individual's eligibility to participate in this research was that they worked as an entertainer in alcohol-licensed premises. However, prior research (see previous chapter) had suggested that different types of entertainers may 'market' alcohol in different ways, or may interact differently with different audiences, and have different techniques for maintaining order in

different venues. To account for these possibilities, a multi-site sampling strategy was devised to recruit as diverse a group of entertainers as possible (e.g. in terms of their acts, the length of time they had spent in show business and their demographics). A sampling frame grid was drawn up to ensure that the 24 recruits would be equally distributed across three categories of entertainer, specifically: DJs (n=8), Band-members (n=8) and Other/Variety-acts (n=8), although in practice some had worked in more than one type of entertainment (e.g. as a DJ and as a Band-member).

As recruitment progressed, this grid was constantly reviewed for heterogeneity. For example, to ensure that each DJ either played a different genre of music or worked in a different venue type and that the group represented a wide range of work experience and background characteristics. From the outset (piloting) it became apparent that this was a male dominated industry; however, we aimed to have at least 2/8 female participants in each of the three categories. In practice, a very diverse sample was achieved relatively quickly and easily, perhaps reflecting this population's willingness to be interviewed (some instinctively introduced themselves by their stage-name as soon as the microphone was switched on). Tables 1–3 summarise the characteristic of the final sample across the three categories.

**Table 1: DJ category**

| ID  | Sex | Age | SIMD Quintile | Current / main act or music genres | Current venues / residency           | Prior / other acts or experience         | Prior / other or occasional venues | Alcohol work experience |
|-----|-----|-----|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| #01 | M   | 35  | 2             | Indie-rock.                        | Student club.<br>LGBT club.          | Lighting operator.<br>Karaoke presenter. | Weddings.                          | Bar server.             |
| #02 | M   | 30  | 4             | Vintage/hipster.                   | Niche club.                          | Radio DJ.                                | Student unions.<br>Student pubs.   | Waiter.                 |
| #03 | M   | 30  | 3             | Commercial dance.                  | Mainstream club.                     | -  | LGBT club                          | Bar server.             |
| #07 | M   | 42  | 2             | Cheesy pop.                        | Student club.                        | Karaoke presenter.<br>Quiz host.         | Hotels.                            | -                       |
| #08 | F   | 25  | 5             | Soul/funk/disco.                   | LGBT club.<br>Bar/restaurant.        | Radio DJ.                                | -                                  | Drinks sampler.         |
| #09 | M   | 38  | 2             | Techno.<br>World music.            | Alternative club.<br>Ethnic pub.     | -  | EDM festivals.                     | -                       |
| #10 | M   | 27  | 4             | Chart                              | Student pub.                         | Music equipment journalist               | Mainstream club.                   | -                       |
| #14 | F   | 20  | 3             | Rap.<br>EDM.                       | Student union.<br>Alternative clubs. | Radio DJ.<br>Music culture journalist.   | -                                  | -                       |

**Table 2: Band members category**

| ID  | Sex | Age | SIMD Quintile | Current / main act or music genres | Current venues / residency | Prior / other acts or experience  | Prior / other or occasional venues            | Alcohol work experience |
|-----|-----|-----|---------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| #06 | F   | 30  | 1             | Indie-pop vocal.                   | Festival circuit.          | Guest DJ.<br>Recording act.<br>Musical family.                                | Private clubs.<br>Church hall.                | Drinks sampler.         |
| #11 | M   | 31  | 3             | Rock covers<br>guitar/vocal.       | Music pubs.<br>Weddings.   | Music degree.<br>Musical family.<br>Tribute show.                             | -   | -                       |
| #18 | M   | 38  | 3             | Electro-pop guitar.                | Music pubs.                | Record shop server.<br>TV shows.<br>Recording act.<br>Guest DJ.<br>Quiz host. | Arena Tours.<br>Theatre stages.<br>Festivals. | Pub licensee.           |
| #19 | M   | 27  | 1             | Folk singer-songwriter.            | Mainstream pubs.           | Busker.   | Theatre stage.<br>Music Pub.                  | Bar server              |
| #21 | M   | 21  | 5             | Blues rock drummer.                | Music pubs.<br>Weddings.   | Musical family.   | Beer festivals.<br>Street fair float.         | Waiter.                 |
| #22 | M   | 36  | 2             | Folk percussionist.                | Tourist pubs.              | Heavy metal guitarist.  | Folk festival.<br>Tourist hotel.<br>Cafes.    | -                       |
| #23 | F   | 30  | 1             | Punk guitar/vocal                  | Music pubs.<br>Arenas.     | Gig merchandise vendor.   | Straight edge festival.                       | -                       |
| #24 | M   | 36  | 3             | Indie guitar.                      | Music pubs.                | Club promoter.<br>Recording act.<br>DJ.                                       | Private club.<br>Theatre bar.<br>Festivals.   | Bar server.             |

**Table 3: Other (musical or non-music) / variety acts category**

| ID  | Sex | Age | SIMD Quintile | Current / main act or music genres | Current venues / residency                             | Prior / other acts or experience              | Prior / other occasional venues                   | Alcohol work experience          |
|-----|-----|-----|---------------|------------------------------------|--|---|---|----------------------------------|
| #04 | M   | 28  | 3             | Quiz host.                         | Tourist pub.   | -   | -   | Bar server.                      |
| #05 | F   | 45  | 3             | Stand-up comic.                    | Comedy club.<br>Bar/restaurant.                        | Drama school.                                 | Theatre stage.<br>Arts festival.                  | Glass collector.<br>Bar manager. |
| #12 | M   | 36  | 1             | Karaoke presenter.                 | Traditional pub.                                       | -   | -   | -                                |
| #13 | M   | 33  | 1             | Stand-up comic.<br>Compere.        | Comedy club.<br>Bar/restaurant.                        | Comedy school.                                | Arts festival.<br>Church hall.                    | -                                |
| #15 | M   | 49  | 4             | Electronic performance artist.     | Alternative clubs.<br>Music pubs.<br>Art-house spaces. | Hard-core punk/metal vocal.<br>Recording act. | Student unions.<br>Private clubs.<br>Arena tours. | -                                |
| #16 | M   | 24  | 3             | Comedy sketch artist.              | Comedy club.   | Stand-up comic.                               | Mainstream pubs.<br>Bar/restaurant.               | Glass collector.                 |
| #17 | F   | 41  | 3             | Cabaret singer.                    | Burlesque clubs.<br>Bar/restaurant.                    | Showgirl dancer.<br>Talent contest winner.    | Town halls.<br>Art-house spaces.                  | -                                |
| #20 | M   | 27  | 4             | Lounge pianist.                    | Après ski bar.<br>Cruise ship.<br>Passenger ferry.     | Music degree.<br>Band member.<br>Weddings.    | International club.                               | -                                |

As can be seen from Tables 1-3, a quarter of our participants were female (the target of 2 females in each category was achieved). Participant's ages ranged from 20-49 (mean 32.6 years). There was no significant age difference between the three categories of entertainer. As they all had the same occupation, their postcode's Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintile was used as a proxy for social class (SIMD Quintile-1 is the most deprived, Quintile-5 the least deprived 5<sup>th</sup> of Scotland). There was no significant difference in SIMD quintile between categories. Only five participants lived in Quintile-1 (i.e. deprived areas). This is likely to reflect their occupation rather than Glasgow, as half of the city's addresses are in Quintile-1 (see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>).

However, their entertainment careers are likely to be influenced by this city, its available venues and cultural roots (e.g. the prominence of folk or indie music and comedy). Similarly (not shown on Tables 1-3) that 20/24 participants were White Scottish, three Irish and one from another ethnic background, is likely to be a reflection of locality. Three participants were LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered). Finally, Tables 1-3 show the diversity of acts and venues that participants were currently (or previously) engaged in. DJs, for example, varied from vintage (vinyl-based) to EDM (electronic dance music), with seven having performed in more than one category (one in all three) and half having experienced working in (overt) on-trade alcohol sales jobs (e.g. as bar-servers).

Nevertheless, we do not claim to have exhausted the pool of potential interviewee-types from the local show business community, but rather to have struck a balance

between sample diversity and manageability. For example, with our level of resources, conducting eight Band-member interviews is unlikely to cover all possible instrumentalists (e.g. no saxophone players were recruited). The Other/Variety-act category was particularly diverse, and during recruitment other performers/occupations were suggested as possible participants but were deemed either inappropriate (as pub/club entertainers), ethically sensitive, or were simply not interviewed as the category was already full, including: orchestra members, a murder mystery host, magicians, hypnotists, strippers, ceilidh-bands (playing traditional Scottish country dance music or instruments) and nightclub-photographers or other PR (public relations) workers.

## 2.7 Analysis

Interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim, removing any information that could potentially identify participants (e.g. names). Interviews were reviewed by the research team to produce notes on potential themes. The researcher who carried out the interviews conducted the final data analysis.

Thematic analysis was used for this study, due to the flexibility of this method and its ability to provide a detailed and complex analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a method for “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p79). Once transcriptions were completed they were read multiple times, searching for patterns and ideas and making notes before moving on to a more formal analysis to ensure full familiarisation with the data set (Bryman, 2012). Data were entered into the qualitative data management software NVivo 10. Initially coding was broad and inclusive in order to avoid moving

pieces of data from their context and to leave room for multiple interpretations of ambiguous sections. The data set was systematically worked through, breaking it into broad codes linked to the research questions and interview schedule.

After this process, these codes were sorted into potential overarching themes, considering how codes may combine together (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once a set of themes had been devised, these were refined, working back and forth between the entire data set, notes, research questions and coded extracts. The next chapter reports the key findings from this data analysis.

## 3.0 Findings

### 3.1 Careers in on-trade entertainment

Some participants were formally trained performers (e.g. at drama school or held music degrees) while others had a lifelong interest in entertainment, eventually finding regular employment through contacting alcohol-licensed premises. The following two quotes are illustrative of the barriers to employment in their preferred profession faced by such individuals, and the opportunities that the licensed trade can present to overcome these.

**"...I finished my course and got a degree, went into the Job Centre, and asked them to give me a job as a rock star, and they just laughed and said 'it doesn't work like that'. ...so I just started going round all the pubs with little demos that I had recorded on my computer and giving them CDs." ... [otherwise] ... "When you finish college and say you've got a music degree the first thing people ask you is 'what call centre do you work in?'" (#11, male, band-member)**

**"It's [DJ-ing] something I enjoy doing, so the reasons for moving into bars and clubs was primarily to sort of make money from it while also playing other nights and events that were maybe less sort of constricting music-wise and actually something that I wanted to do." (#10, male, DJ)**

Other participants had begun their careers by working different jobs within on-trade premises (e.g. as bar-servers), which became their route into entertainment work.

**"I got a job in the [student club] when I was a student, like a bar job and then I ended up getting enough shifts in that to keep working in there and then I moved up to being a lighting guy...then of course that was in the DJ booth with all the DJs so I go got to know all of them and found out how it worked and all that and then being really into music and all that as well I kinda sorta managed to get a break doing that as well..." (#01, male, DJ)**

**"To be honest the main reason that I knew that the bar were needing a new quiz master was I was working behind the bar, so for a time I was doing both but now I just do the quiz."** (#04, male, quiz-host)

Although eligibility for participation in this research was having ever performed in licensed premises, it quickly became apparent that these entertainers *only* performed in alcohol-orientated environments. When asked if they performed in spaces where alcohol was not available, this question was inevitably followed by a long silence or some deliberation. Even after admitting that they could not remember playing in alcohol-free spaces, some still insisted that they must have at some point, often defaulting to mentions of 'unders-nights' (under-18 events held on licensed premises when alcohol is not sold) or gigs when they themselves were under-18 (legal age of alcohol purchase in pubs/clubs in Scotland).

**"Ehm [pause] well, now that I think of it pretty much everywhere I do will have a bar eh [pause] but then again you have like when I did that party, the 16<sup>th</sup> party..."** (#01, male, DJ)

**"[Long silence] No. Not off the top of my head that I can remember. No. I've done a kids party. A kid's 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> birthday party and I don't think they drank! No, but I don't think, no, everywhere I've played has always sold alcohol."** (#09, male, DJ)

Even those who had performed outwith licensed premises realised that alcohol tended to be omnipresent, no matter what the nature of the gig or its physical location. The sole exception mentioned was work in the Day-time Economy (e.g. DJ-ing in retail environments).

**"Trying to think actually, I don't, I don't think I have in my life, somewhere that doesn't [sell alcohol] ... we even played in like the chapel hall, kind of one night, but they had a bar, because I was thinking maybe that night they wouldn't have it, but they had a hall, it was a kind of a charity night for**

[religious organisation] **but they even had alcohol here, so it's quite prevalent.**" (#06, female, band-member)

**"Oh yes, yes and no. Well I suppose I sang at [historic building]. I did an oral history with a recorder there... They weren't actually selling alcohol at that but there was wine there. I asked [name] at one point 'when are we singing?' and he said 'before you get drunk'."** (#17, female, cabaret-singer)

### 3.2 Drinking context: importance of venue

This is not say that every entertainers experience was the same across different types of venues and licensed premises. Participant's experiences of both alcohol marketing and managing disorder were influenced by the nature of venues that they performed in. Entertainers tended to subdivide work between residencies (regular 'bread and butter' pub/club gigs) and other one-off events (weddings, festivals, tours etc.). A key contextual factor was the cost of alcohol at each venue and the type of clientele different prices attracted. In central Glasgow a division was apparent between two venue types, aiming to attract two (socially and spatially) contrasting market segments. The first of these was 'mainstream' venues, which promoted themselves on cheap drink prices, particularly during weekdays, and which aimed to attract students, youths and others whose goal from nightlife attendance was intoxication. The second 'alternative' venue type aimed for more 'discerning' customers (tourists, employed or other affluent people) especially at the weekend, and which promoted themselves more around the entertainment on offer (or expensive beverages e.g. craft-beers) rather than cheap drink offers, all of which consequently meant their patrons were less likely to get drunk or become disorderly. Participants felt that if a venue was more expensive and wasn't advertising itself on the basis of cheap alcohol prices, then the audience was more

likely to be attending for the entertainment on offer (i.e. them) rather than solely to get intoxicated.

**"...the whole thing pivots very much on the environment... In terms of alcohol and environment I think it really does depend on the type of bar or club that you're playing in. If... it's the kind of place that's £4 a pint they are less likely to get so drunk, they're less likely to give you hassle and they're more likely to be there to see you or the night, whereas if you're playing to a sort of £1 mixer they're just there to get drunk. There is a different reason for them being there than to see music or appreciate music."** (#08, female, DJ)

In such venues entertainers felt it would be inappropriate to overtly promote alcohol as this would not fit in with the aesthetic of the venue and tarnish their credibility as an artist. As is illustrated in the following conversation involving participant #15 when asked if he had ever made verbal endorsements for alcohol products while on stage.

**"That's totally unethical. That is really, that would kind of mess with your credibility, em and you know, yeah and there isn't, you don't even see, occasionally you'll see somebody [drink] their rider on stage. But it's not, and the kind of venues and the kind of music, em that, that I've been involved with or that I go and see, it's not, it's not like that... It would be seen as gauche... It would be seen as quite vulgar. In a weird way to that, even though the consumption is all cool and everyone's drinking, but I think, but I don't think people would draw attention to that particularly. But don't get me wrong, you know, people will, artists will ask for a drink down the front and stuff you know."**

(#15, male, electronic performance-artist)

*"But that wouldn't be explicitly saying its vodka's on cheap tonight guys, get it yourself?"* (Interviewer)

**"That would be colluding with 'the man'."** (#15)

However another participant was cynical regarding this differentiation and felt that all venues were involved in alcohol marketing, and although some 'alternative'

venues downplayed the alcohol-entertainment link, this was just to imply credibility over more 'mainstream' venues, but underlying this distinction lay the same business goal (i.e. selling alcohol to make profits).

**"Underground clubs don't go in for that [drink promos] as much as everyone but [art-house venue name] is quite cheap anyway." ... [later] "I think venues like [two 'underground' EDM club names] rely on people buying drinks more than they let on, and drugs as well I guess... They try and distance themselves from mainstream drinking culture."** (#14, female, DJ)

Nevertheless, most participants preferred playing in more specific entertainment-orientated venues, that had an entrance fee and/or designated performance spaces (e.g. comedy clubs or music bars) rather than in 'regular' bars which had decided to put on entertainment, or as participant #15 put it "**where the proximity to the bar is more what people are worried about than their proximity to the stage**".

There were two levels to this. One was that a paying audience are attending specifically to see the entertainment, and so are less likely to be disorderly.

**"[comedy club name] that's it's a great venue to play because the audience is always so, they're a comedy crowd, but if you're playing pubs it can be quite difficult, you know, maybe they're not that used to comedy or they're out for a drink as well and they're not really expecting to see comedy, it just happens to be there. But if it's the [comedy club] they are going there specifically to enjoy a comedy show... You get a better response because it's more a comedy savvy sort of a crowd."** (#13, male, comedy-compere)

The other side being that a venue might put on entertainment in the hope of creating profit. This could put the performer in the difficult position of playing to a crowd who were not expecting and did not desire live entertainment. For example, when an 'old man's pub' regulars were suddenly confronted by female punk

rocker #23 performing “**a heavy, heavy, gig and you have these old men from like this old pub**”, or when diners were distracted by comedy sketch-act #16 interrupting their meal, such that “**everyone was just there for pizza. No one would listen to you...This guy turned round [to me] and it was as if a door was banging.** That’s what I was to him”.

### 3.3. Perceived roles of on-trade entertainers

Prior to being interviewed, many participants may not have previously considered themselves as being involved in alcohol marketing in any way. Indeed a few still refused to accept this when prompted, or at least attempted to downplay or minimise the alcohol-entertainment-link.

“**We don’t really promote drinking, like, I don’t tell people to drink, I tell them maybe what’s on offer [cheaper drinks]**” (#12, male, karaoke-presenter)

“**Not really no, never really, when I’ve compered I’ve said, you know things like that you know, like ‘Have break get yourself a drink’, things like that but I’ve never really marketed anything, no.**” (#13, male, comedy-compere)

“**I mean obviously if you are inviting people to come out to a gig in a venue where there is alcohol, then I suppose by proxy that’s an encouragement to drink in that kind, kind, of roundabout way, but I don’t think we have any direct influence on the amount that people drink.**” (#24, male, band-member)

Others had quickly become aware that they were not being invited to play in so many alcohol licensed venues because of their artistic merits, but rather on their ability to boost bar takings – i.e. there was a hidden agenda!

“**...early on I realised it’s not just, like you’re not just playing some tunes and that’s the end of it you know? You are driving bar-sales...**” (#09, male, DJ)

“**...because pubs especially want things that are upbeat because if they’re upbeat they’re [audience] more likely to stay, they’re more likely to drink**

**more. So they've [pubs] got like a hidden agenda with having a DJ because you're providing a service that's keeping people drinking." (#08, female, DJ)**

Securing a gig was therefore predicated on either how much having entertainment on boosted bar-sales or how many additional patrons an act might attract to the alcohol-licensed premises concerned.

**"...they told us it was £60 to rent this room but they said unless you bring in enough people or you make £160 on the bar then the fee is waivered. A part of me was like that's really wrong 'you're basically turning me into a merchant of death'." (#16, male, comedy sketch-act)**

**"If they [audience] are there longer then they buy more drink. It's as simple as that. I have, in the past had managers come up to me or managers come up and go "could you clear the dance floor a wee bit, there's nobody at the bar." (#07, male, DJ)**

Thus the artistic quality of entertainment did not necessarily guarantee 'success' for performers working in the night-time economy, especially if their act drew drinkers away from the bar.

**"It doesn't matter if you're the best musician in the world unless you say every half, every 15/20 minutes 'cheers everyone!' and organise everyone drinking, even in a subtle way like that, they don't want you there because you're not, people don't come to listen to music they come to get drunk pretty much, like, they come for the level of escapism and if you can make it this big hedonistic party of carnage of shots and girls taking their tops off and stuff like that then all the better, as long as it's continuing to push the alcohol sales." (#20, male, lounge pianist)**

**"I've had a full room [up dancing] and they've [the venue] closed early cause everyone has stopped buying drinks." (#02, male, DJ)**

Other occupational hazards of working in the NTE included playing too many gigs in the same place, because patrons might not wish to see the same act again, and

having fan-bases who might not have much spending power (e.g. under-18s who could not legally purchase any alcohol).

**"One of the bands I was in, we had a conversation with a promoter where he accused us of playing too many gigs, so such that not enough people were coming to see us because they had seen us you know the week before, something like that, so he's complaining not enough people were coming to his venue."** (#24, male, band-member)

**"Now, if somebody turned up [at my own pub] and wanted to book a gig and said 'our crowd is really young so can you make it all ages', as a businessman now I would see the pound signs not flashing in front of my eyes."** (#18, male, band-member – also a pub licensee, but who was once globally famous as under-18 performer himself)

Pub/club entertainers 'success' was therefore dependent upon ability to fill venues with people who would consume alcohol. This relationship could become reinforced if a particular act became associated with promoting a particular beverage, as in the following examples.

**"we were filling the place out when it was usually completely dead... and it was a younger crowd we brought in as well so, and we kind of addressed it with the publican and said look, we are bringing in this, we know we are bringing in this, people are here to see us and drink more presumably, which they were doing, just to see us... So they said 'we know you bring in a crowd', they knew they were making a profit when we played, so they paid us more! And through that we got asked to do a few beer festivals that the pub did because they had their own brewery...our music and playing was critical because we were playing in a marquee in a car park, and it was usually raining so people weren't going to be hanging about without any entertainment. They'd just be miserable and go home... and they kept getting us back for quite a few years presumably because folk bought more beer when we played."** (#21, male, band-member)

**"One pub had £4.50 bottles of beer that weren't selling so they said 'let's put them on at £2 each when the music [i.e. my show] is on' during Friday night and Saturday afternoon, so they started flying off the shelves, and they became the drink associated with it so, so they put the price back up, so the two influenced each other"** (#19, male, band-member)

### 3.4 Drinks-party marketing

While entertainers 'success' in terms of being hired by venues was often dependent on their ability to bring in enough patrons who would drink, it was also the case that from many participants own personal perspective, regarding how successful their act was, was also tied to patrons alcohol consumption. Participants frequently mentioned the importance of getting patrons up dancing or (in the case of the comedians) laughing, and becoming fully involved in the show, as a way for them to gauge the success of their act, with many mentioning the important role that alcohol played in getting patrons into this 'zone' (i.e. disinhibition).

"...some people won't get up to dance until they've had a few drinks and then I think once they do then they do tend to drink, like it kinda goes sort of in tandem with the dancing as well. It's like they're like 'oh love this song!' and then they'll maybe sort of go and get a drink but then, it's like the two things kinda sorta happen at the same time." (#01, male, DJ)

"...if you're playing a great set and the people there are responding and that like heightened emotion in the room people will generally drink more, you know, cause everyone is excited. Or maybe, maybe they're dancing too much to drink. I have had people [patrons] come up to me and say 'I can't leave the room to go to the loo or go to the bar because your tunes are good'. So that's a nice thing to hear but yeah, I think generally if people are going mad they'll drink more." (#02, male, DJ)

Additionally, participants also discussed the difficulty in playing to a sober audience, who were less likely to dance and become involved in the 'party atmosphere' of the night. Therefore participants wanted patrons consume at least some degree of alcohol in order to get them into the spirit of the entertainment provided, as can be seen in the quotes below.

*"Do you think it's a different experience or would be a different experience playing to people who were sober?" (Interviewer)*

**"Very much. Very much. People behave very differently. It's a very, people are much more reserved, it's much more sedate and it's a bit boring. But that's, you know, that's funny enough there's a wedding we played about 3 or 4 weeks ago and it was on a week night, it was like a Thursday night and... it just seemed that nobody was drinking and...nobody was up for it but I mean you could just tell people weren't drinking and it just kind of translated through people not really that up for a party, which made our jobs a lot harder and actually more stressful because we felt that folk, you know, were just sitting watching us, not really giving anything away, just kind of felt like are people enjoying this or aren't they? And you want to work a bit harder because you want to get them to work with you, trying to get them up dancing and have a good time because that's what it's all about cause, especially with weddings you're getting paid like quite a substantial amount, you do feel a bit more responsibility... you feel that you want to give them something to remember so you want people to have a good time and I guess alcohol does, when you think about it, plays quite an important role in that."** (#21, male, band-member)

**"Drunk people are alright, as long as they are not, well, being too drunk. That's not very well explained at all. You're gonnae get drunk people in this work and it's usually the drunk people that are gonnae make it. It is usually the drunk people that are gonnae drag you up to dance."** (#07, male, DJ)

**"I think if they [audience] have a few drinks they're a bit looser, you know, to enjoy, they're a bit more up for it I think. Even in pubs in Edinburgh in the middle of the day and it's about 3 o'clock and there are people there who aren't really drunk it's kind of, it can be a bit difficult.** (#13, male, comedy-compere)

### **3.5 Drinks brand / corporate marketing**

Entertainers were also aware of the potential benefits that could come through alcohol marketing in terms of playing drinks industry corporate or sponsored gigs. Participants noted how alcohol companies were keen to become involved with entertainment as a way of creating a 'cool' brand identity and increasing their market reach (e.g. youthful or affluent customers), with certain brands being associated with certain types of entertainment.

**"Tennent's and McEwan's [major Scottish beer brands] started muscling in on the alternative scene about 1989/90, and you could see the kind of sponsorship, sponsoring events, purchasing credibility, purchasing you know an alternative image..." (#15, male, performance-artist)**

**"...brands like to associate with a certain image... for example Jagermeister, they kind of associate with heavier rock" (#23, female, band-member)**

Some were positive about this association, seeing it as a way to be paid well, access better venues, get free drinks, free PR, free merchandise etc. Arguably getting involved with the drinks industry could be a shortcut to having all the visible trappings of show business success.

**"...[drinks] brands are quite good to get in with actually because they've got fucking cash to chuck at things. I did that one [major EDM festival]. I did that 2 years. They're great fun, as they're just booking me to play tunes on the strength of who I am, so just get to let loose in this tent, with all their merchandise and all their branding everywhere and they're selling [spirits brand name]... And they're dead easy to work with. The booze companies generally don't approach you directly, they get someone else to get DJs in to do it and they're great fun, they pay really well, you get tons of free booze from them and they're really good to get in with. Corporate gigs are really good. I don't have a problem with them." (#09, male, DJ)**

**"Usually they [alcohol sponsored events] are just a better gig, usually they are better paid and sometimes, in fact student gigs as well, they'll say we cannot pay you but we'll give you as much beer as you want... so usually there's free beer and, usually because they're sponsored, they're in some kind of better venue..." (#05, female, comedian)**

Others were more negative about drinks companies' involvement, seeing them as impinging upon their freedom as a performer, and they felt that it didn't sit well with their image as a credible artist to be so 'blatantly' involved in alcohol marketing by playing sponsored events. Some were also doubtful that playing sponsored gigs provided any personal benefit to their career as entertainers in the long run, as is

explained in the following quote.

*"...different playing a corporate or sponsored gig?" (Interviewer)*

**"Well I mean definitely, the one I was thinking about in [name of venue] was sponsored by [American beer brand name] and the audience was competition winners so it's just a horrible, horrible dynamic where they've got their agenda about probably flinging out cheap or free [brand name], half the audience doesn't know who you are, very different dynamic yeah. I guess that one specifically must be the closest to feeling like a corporate event that I've ever done, where you're just like what was the point in that? You know, are we going to sell five more records as a result of doing that gig? Did we get paid much for it? No, not even. If something like that was ever offered again I would remember that and just try to make sure we aren't going to get burned by that again... it would be a horrible, horrible kind of side-line to get into and then somebody would 'out' you and your credibility would be smashed."** (#18, male, band-member)

### 3.6 Marketing balance ("playing the game")

This dichotomy between the benefits of becoming involved in alcohol marketing (e.g. in terms of publicity or better paid gigs) and the potential impact this could have on an acts credibility or creative freedom, led some entertainers to strike a balance between these two positions. Some participants discussed the pros and cons of performing in a way that would not be to their personal preference in order only to appease bar-managers (who were ultimately responsible for hiring venues' entertainment). Finding employment in such 'bread and butter' gigs could not only damage their artistic credibility with their peers, but in longer term risk 'deskilling' of their artistic competency. In the extract below, a DJ discusses this concept as 'playing the game', in order to ensure continuous employment by playing music he didn't actually like but which was popular with the patrons of the venue that was his main source of income, keeping them happy would also keep the management happy and, in turn, allow him to keep his job.

**"[in a mainstream student club] I had to play stuff that eh, was more well-known"** (#01, male DJ)

*"That wouldn't be your choice?" (Interviewer)*

**"uh-huh yeah and I had to, well for a long time I just wouldn't play stuff that I didn't like, which in a way kind of narrowed down the kinda work that I was getting offered... I did have to kinda play the game, if you will. Particularly when I started doing the main room in [name of venue] I had to play a lot of stuff that I really didn't like. At all. But it was number one in the charts or everyone would love it you know so you have to totally play to your audience all the time... Some of the other DJs that I've spoken to you know at parties or whatever they're like 'how the hell can you play all that shit?' and I'm just like 'well, you know' [laughs]. I try not to play it as much as I can but just, if you've got a manager coming and looking over your, not looking over your shoulder but kinda coming in and seeing like is this busy or is it not, and if it's not then they'll replace you with someone else."** (#01)

Thus from a bar manager's point-of-view, the function of the entertainment was to either attract a certain clientele in sufficient numbers to boost bar sales (as in the above example of a mainstream/student venue), or alternatively attract more niche clientele with a greater spending power (i.e. 'Mozart effect'). From an entertainer's point-of-view this meant not only retaining patrons in a venue and encouraging them to drink but also that their act was being used to entice a certain demographic into a venue. Some entertainers had a following (fan base) which they knew meant would make certain venues more likely to book them, as guaranteeing that an alcohol consuming crowd would come in.

**"We've got a bit of a following in Glasgow, so I suppose pubs would kind of think if we were playing they know they would kind of get a decent enough crowd that they would kind of make enough money behind the bar."** (#06, female, band-member)

**"Usually you put your best DJs on on quiet nights believe it or not, cause they're able to maximise the profit of the bar, keep the people in the building, and make the night more enjoyable."** (#09, male, DJ)

Similarly venues could also use entertainers for their power to remove a potentially

undesirable crowd by simply changing the type of entertainment that they provided (i.e. 'Manilow effect'). In the example below a DJ describes how he was employed to play a style of music that would effectively remove a particular pub clientele, which the owner wished to replace.

**"A friend of mine, a guy that I have known for years bought it [a local pub] over and wanted to change it, wanted to get rid of these people and wanted to get his own clientele in... He phoned me and said 'I've got a gig you could take, I don't know whether you'll want to take it but I just want you to come in and play music you love' I go 'that's it' and he's like that 'Yeah, I don't want you to play any dance music, I don't want you to play any music that's in in the charts, I don't want you to play any music that these people might know as I am trying to get rid of them'."** (#07, male, DJ)

### **3.7 Overt or covert drinks marketing**

Entertainers discussed the practices which they had experience of engaging in to promote alcohol consumption. These ranged from the openly overt to more subtle techniques. Some would explicitly encourage drinking by verbally advertising alcohol brands, prices/discount offers, or drinking *per se* over the microphone.

**"What do you say when speaking on the mic?" (Interviewer)**  
**"Just introducing the night and what's gonna be on... You would talk about drink promo prices, you know, to get them to go to the bar... like cheap drinks from a pound, let's get to the bar, let's have a good night, so yeah, I suppose you are influencing the crowd to drink more by doing that aren't you? Absolutely!" (#03, male, DJ)**

**"...there's a manager coming to me at the start of a shift and going 'I want you to push Becks [beer brand], I really want you to push Becks tonight, tell them it's £1.50 a bottle or six for six quid or whatever it is, I want you to push it please, please, please I need to get rid of this, or I want you to push this. That's fine and if the people that are paying me are asking me to do that I don't have to do that, but I am going to do it. These people at the end of the night are going to go, 'if you don't push that I'm not gonnae pay you' which has happened and that's fine you know what I mean but you learn the hard way."** (#07, male, DJ)

**"It's like 'Cheers everyone! Drinks up like let's drink, drink, drink' the word drink 'party, party, party'... you're literally like screaming at them please take a drink right now or I won't get to keep my job!" (#20, male, lounge pianist)**

Music itself could be a subtle form of encouragement to drink, including playing songs that referenced alcohol, or was in certain time signatures (tempo or beat) that would create a party atmosphere or rhythm conducive to drinking. Some of this was intentionally conducted by the entertainers themselves and some was accidental, whereby they had observed their actions having an effect on consumption levels.

**"Sometimes I play songs that talk about drinking, and I like to think in the back of my head some people are going to be like 'ah! I'm going to have a rum and Coca Cola!'" (#02, male, DJ)**

**"You could argue that it is coincidental but I play some folkier stuff that, it's all g and c chords and dead basic and dead, dead easy... and when you play that heavier right folksy bluesy stuff, you can thump your feet to it sort of thing, the drinks start flowing to that kind of thing." (#19, male, band-member)**

Another subtle technique was making sure there were plenty of opportunities for patrons to go to the bar (e.g. by having regular breaks between frequent acts or intermissions during longer shows)

**"...between every round there's a sort of short break and without anybody needing to be told, that's when everybody will usually storm the bar. One thing I do notice is on quiz nights people tend to drink and smoke a lot more than they do any other night and it's as if they just subconsciously have this break where they think 'right we need to get everything done here'. So they're at the bar, they get their drink, they're outside, they're having a smoke, they hear me talk again and they all come storming back in, they have their drink during the round and repeat. So don't really need to promote it [alcohol], they all just seem to have it in their mind that during a break they have to drink and smoke. Automatic response." (#04 male, quiz-host)**

"....take as many breaks as you want, stop and chat to people, venues love that cause often if they [patrons] feel like a personal connection to you they are guilted into staying for more drinks. That's actually what you're there to do. You're really just an alcohol pusher in a lot of places..." (#20, male, lounge pianist)

"If you play you get a pint for playing. Yeah, if I'm being honest, because I enjoy that atmosphere, I am sure there is plenty of times I've said 'Let's all have a drink, it's the intermission, fill your wellies'" (#19, male, band-member)

On an even more subtle level, some entertainers felt that their own alcohol consumption and 'party' behaviour was likely to influence the crowd through a desire to emulate the behaviour of the act. Entertainers felt this was a partial reason why some venue managers encouraged entertainers to drink and provided them with free alcohol.

"...the thing was that you got paid in booze. So it was almost the thing like they [bar-managers] were encouraging you to look like you were drinking to keep people drinking because they were like 'well, look if the DJ is having so much fun and she's drinking and she's having a great time, then you should stay and you should drink and you should be having a great time'." (#08, female, DJ – who was once "paid in cake!" for a gig)

"[at après ski] ...it's actively encouraged. You get as much free alcohol as you can consume but only during the hours that you play. It's a curious situation because you're kind of forced then to try and get drunk before you stop... like a vodka and coke is like 12 quid, so you, and plus, they bring you shots, they set them on fire, you have to drink them and cheers the crowd. Every time you 'cheers' the crowd at least 10 people buy a shot and its 6 quid a shot. We are alcohol salesmen so they'll like sporadically, and not as sporadically as I would like, bring us unusual shots that they either set on fire or have whipped cream on them or whatever, and it's hard like, especially last season. I found I put on 2 stone, my liver was in bits like...." (#20, male, lounge pianist)

### 3.8 Effect on entertainers' own drinking

Even without drinks company sponsorship or licensed premises managers encouraging entertainers, working in an alcohol environment, often several nights a

week (perhaps at more than one venue per day), could obviously impact upon participants' own alcohol consumption levels. Firstly, the sheer availability of (free) alcohol, (often coupled with long shifts, perhaps playing the same material they did not like, night after night) led some into temptation.

**"Doing this job sober can be really hard, really dull, but if you are there for four hours, drinking passes the time and be a part of it."** (#08, female, DJ)

**"[A folk festival in the country] was just 3 days of boozing and playing. Personally I didn't stop most of the time that I was there as when we got there at about 2/3 o'clock in the afternoon, had our tea and all that, and we were on at 7 or 8 at night, so there was not a lot else to do.... plus the fact that they laid on free booze for us as well. We got tokens and stuff and we felt compelled to use them up. But pretty much we had booze back in the yurt we were staying in as well so, you know, when we weren't up at the pub we had booze back there. I just didn't want the hangover to set in after the first night they were there. We had a job to do?"** (#22, male, band-member)

Some felt this availability could be a positive thing because drinking before a performance could help nervous individuals to overcome 'stage fright' - that is drinking for reasons around 'rational disinhibition' (Dutch courage).

**"[before going on stage] I'd be a couple of drinks kind of man probably. I don't really. I wouldn't really bother not drinking at all actually going on stage. I have done that on a few occasions, but generally if I can have like maybe like one or two beers before going on then that would be fine just to relax a little bit, and if we can get a couple of free beers then all the better!"** (#24, male, band member)

**"I don't think I've ever played a gig with the band completely sober... I think there's kind of an optimum level of like drinking... one or possibly two so that you just kind of feel a bit more confident going up on stage, it's almost like a little, you know, suit of armour"** (#06, female, band-member)

**"I drank an entire bottle of Prosecco before I went on. It just went down really easily. I thought 'Oh my God I'm pissed' but I got away with it but there was a second during singing that I thought 'I can't remember the words' so I learned my lesson."** (#17, female, cabaret-singer)

One respondent even reported that a manager encouraged his entertainers to drink in order to enhance their performance.

**"... most clubs don't mind you drinking... One club [names manager] and he actually wanted DJs to have a few drinks because he knew that would bring out the best of them, you know that Dutch courage for the microphone" (#03, male, DJ)**

This was an odd position in comparison to other employees of the venue (e.g. bar or security-staff) who could lose their job for drinking on duty or turning up drunk.

**"I am an actor as well. As an actor, that would be like 'Oh my God you'll never work again' if you are seen drinking alcohol before a show. As a comedian, some people see it actually as their prop. They go on with a pint." (#05, female, comedian)**

Once on stage, a certain amount of alcohol consumption was felt to help the entertainer bond more easily with the audience by being 'in the zone', that is experiencing the show at a subjectively similar level of intoxication.

**"...I work, you know, almost every night of the week, 5 or 6 nights a week, have done for years and it's a bad idea because if you drink you drink too much, but in terms of performance and ability to do your job it's fine for me. I think I've been doing it long enough it doesn't impede me. Quite often I've said, sometimes jokingly, but I think there's a lot of truth in it that 'I'm better when I've had a few drinks' because you're on a par with people in the room." (#02, male, DJ)**

**"I don't think I ever did a set sober in there [student club] ... Just to get in to it. I think if all these steaming [drunk] people saw a DJ that was on the same level as them, just a little bit of steaming, when I say a little bit I mean pretty much pure steaming, and just like you know, dancing to the tunes the same way they were dancing. I think if punters see that then it rubs off on them." (#07, male, DJ – who once drunkenly fell asleep in the DJ booth)**

**"The main thing is to stay a little bit behind the most drunk person in the room, or the most sober person I should say. That was one of my rules for a while I**

**would stay one drink behind the most sober person." (#11, male, band-member)**

There were entertainers, who by the nature of their act were unable to drink before going on stage (e.g. comedians and performance-artists who needed to keep their wits about them) or others who simply physically could not drink while on stage (e.g. musician/vocalists) but who could postpone consumption until after the show.

**"I would get twenty quid, anyone I brought with me would get twenty quid, if I brought five musicians they would get twenty quid each and five pints at the bar. You're in for an hour so you can hang on and have those afterwards, you don't have to neck five pints in an hour. That tended to be the set-up" (#19, male, band-member)**

**"I mean I would have a drink after the show because you are vibed-up and can't get to sleep. So sometimes there's the comedown drinking, and sometimes also just with the guys and you shoot the breeze and sit up and drink till 5 in the morning, just that tour lifestyle which I've done... (#15, male, performance artist)**

Alcohol was also seen by some as an attractive component to the rock n' roll, showbiz lifestyle, particularly in Scotland (many had toured abroad, e.g. Europe or the USA, and noted that although alcohol was present at shows, it was not so central to whole entertainment experience).

**"I think it's almost impossible especially here in Scotland where the culture is about drink and even if you are not, it has happened when you say you are not going to drink and people keep offering you drinks, particularly if you are playing and I think if your band mates are also drinking it's quite difficult, you know, to say oh no I won't drink tonight'" (#23, female, band-member)**

**"...we've absolutely swallowed that hook, line and sinker, and now it just seems to be obligatory, and it's reinforced by bands getting riders..." (#15, male, performance artist)**

**"I don't know if my formative years hadn't been so pub heavy and music heavy I don't know that I would drink the amount that I do now. In fact I wager**

**that I wouldn't. I think it's been reinforced in me for so long that that's cool, you're a musician and you drink, at the time you smoke and things like that and it was all part and parcel of the same thing. I think that has had an impact on me now" (#19, male, band-member)**

Some were aware of potential health risks of this lifestyle choice, and had felt it was prudent to limit their consumption either by number of drinks or the number of occasions, although this was not seen an easy task given the expectancies, temptations and encouragements to drink that went with the job.

**"what I usually do is really, really energetic and like I found when I started early on by the time I had reached the second set and I'd had a few drinks I started getting really dehydrated and just feeling terrible and I just thought it's not even worth it so I sort of made the conscious decision that I actually would not just drink anything and then I started driving. I sort of volunteered and said I'll drive the van or whatever so that kind of meant I had an excuse almost to say... 'oh no I'm drinking water because I'm driving' so it's very much, especially in these kind of pub environments you are very much expected to be drinking as a band member, you know, and most of the other band members did have a drink, especially our singer [laughs] and in that environment everyone is drinking, and it's very much alcohol and music. Its very much part of it" (#21, male, band member)**

**"I mean now I probably only gig once a month or once every two months. So it's not like I'm spending all my time there but you're, I guess if you are spending a lot of time there then it probably would be difficult." (#24, male, band-member)**

Another incentive participants had to reduce their own consumption levels was the consequences of becoming drunk while on stage, beyond the optimal 'golden point' where they were 'in the zone' with the audience's level of intoxication. Over-intoxication could not only impact upon their ability to perform, but could even lead to alcohol-related disorder.

**"I've stormed off stage because I was drunk... I've definitely affected gigs through my own drinking and throwing a tantrum. My worst offence... I just got**

pished [drunk] and turned up totally trashed. I was having issues with my mic stand... we still had a few songs to go and it kept wandering away and I just went 'fuck this' and flung it off the stage, threw a monitor onto the empty space on the floor where the crowd should have been, and then one of the door guys [security] just came up and totally threw me against the wall, correctly, and then I just ran down the street... if I was physically allowed to drink before a gig I would find it impossible not to at least have a couple ...there is a kind of golden point where you've just had just enough to drink that you are going to enjoy it more and you're not going to spoil it." (#18, male, band-member)

"Every time he [lead-singer] plays he drinks to the point where he usually can't stand-up by end of the night... He's a character, he's like Mick Jagger, he looks a bit like like Mick Jagger, he's thinks he's Mick Jagger, he thinks he's a bit like a Jim Morrison kind of aging rock star, and he kind of plays on that character. He's a terrible singer, but he's an entertainer and that's why people come and see us... One time an audience member pushed him and swung a punch at him, and he punched him back, and there was a full-blown fight in the pub... if all of us had been sober, you know, we could have dealt with that situation differently but he, obviously our singer didn't and just launched a punch at him." (#21, male, band-member)

### 3.9 Alcohol-related disorder

Participants were aware that their central position within a venue often led to them being the first staff member to become aware when disorder was occurring and consequently this put them at risk of becoming involved.

"People misbehaving, hitting light fixtures and stuff like that. Yeah, you see everything. In certain venues you can see the whole room. You have a vantage point." (#02, male, DJ)

"Because the piano is like literally just in the middle of the room... so people can just walk over, talk to you mid-song, try and press the piano, that was the hardest gig to deal with... ...you're very much like the focal point, you know what I mean?" (#20, male, lounge pianist)

While some participants felt that being the focal point of a venue could lead to them becoming a target for intoxicated troublemakers, others felt that this offered

a sense of protection, both due to their elevated status and the perceived power that came from being on a stage or having a microphone in hand, together with the sense that to attack the entertainment could potentially ruin the atmosphere or night for everyone else in the venue.

**"Sometimes when you are getting heckled you're kind of indestructible, you've got this microphone in front of you and you're amplified over the top of people so sometimes you do have an advantage and they do back down and stuff."** (#23, male, band-member)

**"...if you punch a DJ, the DJ is a very visible figure in the room and other people are having a good time so it's not going to go down well."** (#02, male, DJ)

Despite this, participants mentioned a multiplicity of incidents of disorder they had encountered. Some were directed at the entertainers themselves, and ranged from minor incidents such as persistent or aggressive song requests and heckling to being physically attacked by patrons.

**"Never physical abuse or anything like that, verbal abuse, that happens occasionally... they sort of look at you as a human jukebox... so, you have to reason with them and sort of make them understand that you're not there solely for them and you need to cater for everyone. Some people don't like that and some people will become aggressive and swear at you or whatever or just sort of call you out or whatever as being a terrible DJ or whatever."** (#10, male, DJ)

**"I was playing at a really dodgy pub... and I think I just got a bit mouthy with this guy's girlfriend. He came over to me and wasn't happy about the way I was talking to her ...she was drunk and tried to get up on to the stage and I dunno I was a bit rude to her I think. I'd gave her a couple of opportunities to be civil about it but we just starting mouthing off and this guy came up and punched me in the face."** (#11, male, band-member)

Entertainers were not only at risk of attack from the public but also from other entertainers. As can be seen in the following example, where a musician has his equipment ruined by a member of another band on the same bill, and unsurprisingly, this could be alcohol-related.

*"...he was just slurring, he was really drunk on stage and in the last song he took his guitar and took it over to our sequencer and just started smashing up our gear ...and so we had to go on the stage and say we couldn't play and the whole place, like never been onstage with no instrument and like having 2000 people boo at you for, we didn't say it's because of that fucking guy who's trashed our gear... But yeah, genuinely not being able to play because of someone else's alcohol use and professional infighting. Strange." (#24, male, band-member)*

Relatedly, participants frequently observed that the risks of disorder were not limited to their person, but also to technological equipment such as mixing desks etc. which could be ruined through spilled drinks (they also feared that this could put someone at risk of electrocution) and also drunken patrons trying to touch or play their expensive instruments.

*"They're just drunk guys in the pub who would happily get up on the stage... it's funny for them but they don't realise the repercussions for the band about having any gear damaged. There are times when somebody will get up and swirl their beer about and then they'll smash a cymbal with their pint glass and that cymbal is smashed. One cymbal is 300 quid because we all use professional gear and, if we didn't use professional gear, it's a catch 22, we could go in with cheap gear that doesn't sound as good and we wouldn't sound as good as a band but we wouldn't have to worry about it being broken, or we could go and do a professional job and risk it getting broken. (#11, male, band-member)*

### **3.10 Dealing with troublemakers ('soft policing')**

There appeared to be no general consensus on entertainers' role (if any) in intervening in disorder. Participants varied in their opinion of how they would react when crowd trouble broke out during their performances. Some felt that it wasn't their job to become involved at all as this was the job of other trained staff such as designated security stewards. In such cases the band would quite literally play on regardless.

**"...just carry on playing unless it just got to the stage where it was so bad that you felt you had to stop or you know your space on the stage was being threatened or em, or no-one was paying attention anymore basically. But generally it would be a matter of just playing on and letting the eh, who, whatever staff were there, security-staff deal with the problem."** (#24, male, band-member)

Some justified this strategy by stating that ignoring trouble and carrying on with the show helped to maintain the positive atmosphere of the night, providing distraction from any trouble and not drawing any further attention to it, which could potentially escalate the situation.

**"I don't like to cut the music... because it focuses all the attention on it [fighting] whereas there might only have been twenty or thirty people at that certain area that are aware of it but then you're bringing the whole pub aware of it. Everybody then wants to get involved."** (#12 male, karaoke-presenter)

Other participants alerted security staff by various methods, such as eye and hand signals, using radios or the microphone. One mentioned using special code words when alerting security staff to disorder (rather than overtly announcing what exactly was going on where, over the microphone for all in the venue to hear) as a way of minimising drawing wider attention.

**"...we had code words so we would get on the microphone, so if you saw a fight that was kind of minor, so when I say minor, punches being thrown that kind of thing you would shout 'blue-2' and then you would shout the area of where the fight was... But if the fight was more severe as in maybe like a stabbing or something then I would shout 'red-1' and then the area ...it wasn't our responsibility obviously to make sure that they weren't fighting but yeah, that was a big influence for the bouncers and it helped them a lot."** (#03, male, DJ)

Some participants even chose to become physically involved in incidents, either out of a sense of duty to protect their audience or because they themselves were also intoxicated and behaving in a disorderly way:

**"I'm the first one to jump over the bar as well and try and break it up. I shouldn't get involved but I have done, cause I feel responsible, cause I genuinely believe that if I'm working in a nightclub I need to look after the welfare of the people that are there... It's like you jump in for your mates, you defend your mates. So if I'm working in a venue and something kicked off I'll generally try and do something."** (#09, male, DJ)

**"I'll be honest I'm really bad for that. If I've had a drink in me I would go out of my way to get involved [in disorder]. If I thought it was someone I knew or someone who didn't deserve it, then yeah I'd go out of my way which isn't professional it isn't what to do. Generally speaking there are staff there for that but yes 100% I would go out of my way."** (#19, male, band-member)

When asked what advice they would give to other entertainers in terms of disorder control, participants emphasised 'soft' people skills. They emphasised the importance of being able to 'read' a crowd and spot trouble brewing, conflict tactics skills, remaining calm and adopting a polite but authoritative demeanour, and avoid rising to threats or challenges by providing a plausible face-saving way out as conflict resolution.

**"I guess just kind of be nice to them [laughs]. But also, I guess you've got to be reasonably in control of the situation in a way in that you still have, you can a**

**job to do which you have to concentrate on whilst at the same time trying to pacify them." (#24, male, band-member)**

**"Just try to employ a disarming politeness. Apologize. If someone asks for a song which is completely unrelated to what I'm playing I'll be like 'ah I'm sorry, yeah it's really good but it's just not quite what I'm playing tonight' or 'I didn't bring it with me'. So lies play a big part [laughs] in trying to calm people down or yeah just saying sorry and, you know a lot of body language which comes into it as well. Appear apologetic with your body. Open your arms up and tilt your head and stuff." (#02, male, DJ)**

### **3.11 Entertainers on-trade training needs**

When asked how they had learned how to deal with disorder, entertainers often explained that this had been through work experience or trial and error, often learning from earlier mistakes they had made in dealing with drunken crowds or individuals and only thereafter gradually adapting their behaviour over time to minimise the risks.

**"I've had a few drinks thrown at me over the years [laughs]" (#01, male, DJ)**

*"And how do you deal with situations like that?" (Interviewer)*

**"Oh dear, well eh well I got better at getting out of the way [laughs] and then I kind of started realising 'well ok well why are people throwing drinks over me?' And then I realised well it's just because I was being, I was being a little bit cheeky with people." (#01, male, DJ)**

**"It's just all experience for me. I used to be rubbish at it. Just learning through trial and error. I've been punched in the face live on stage... I learned my lesson from there. It took a few of these situations to learn how to deal with people because I'm not a fighter and am never going to be you know the guy who will fight back, so I learned to be not as cocky about it." (#11, male, band-member)**

Other participants discussed having learned relevant disorder management techniques through other (non-show business) employment, such as alcohol licence training or 'day jobs', for example in social care or customer service, and

also through voluntary work with the public in other capacities, which provided people skills that they were able to apply while performing.

**"I've never had any formal stewardship or any kind of particular training around violence reduction. But I am, I am a ['day-job' in health care] to trade and I probably learned quite a lot on the hoof in terms of de-escalation."** (#15, male, performance artist)

**"Only as a license holder, not as an entertainer for sure, although admittedly having licensee training really, it's totally helped me in how to deal with anyone that's being aggressive or complaining, not even as an entertainer, just in any walk of life. As I was saying, my instincts when I was younger was just to fight fire with fire, you know, and just be like 'what the fuck are you saying?' and just, you know, not necessarily getting into endless fights but just simply not backing down and now I just, I really love to talk someone out of their anger, being very calm."** (#18, male, band-member)

When asked about receiving training in this aspect of their profession, some entertainers were enthusiastic. Participants suggested this should be integrated into formal artistic courses such as music degrees and that it would be beneficial to obtain training in dealing with intoxicated patrons in the same way that other licensed venue staff, such as bar servers and security stewards, received (they also felt that formal music courses lacked any training in the complicated financial issues that can arise from NTE work).

**"No training whatsoever. I wish I had. I feel like I'm a rational sensible being but...it can be quite difficult to rationalise with someone who is that drunk that, you know, I'm just here doing a job, you know, I'll play it if I can but don't get angry if I don't but, yeah, I think it would be really beneficial in some sense to get some kind of help. But then, I guess it comes really down to the venue. Like the venue should be seeing us as part of their staff... there's never been any sort of 'in the event that someone comes over this is what you should do' which I think I would appreciate."** (#08, female, DJ)

**"I did a music degree, and I know that out of everyone that did the degree not everyone is going to be a gigging musician, but a lot of them are, and so for**

**example the cultural relevance of music in the 80s is all well and good, but really, how to do your own accounts, how to deal with drunk people are 2 lectures I would have turned up for every time." (#20, male, lounge-pianist)**

### **3.12 The importance of licensed venues to entertainers**

Although our sample of pub/nightclub performers had diverse routes into, and careers through, show business it was clear that regardless of their background or the nature of their act(s), being a gigging entertainer in the UK meant working in alcohol-licensed spaces (from local pubs to major, often alcohol branded, festivals) performing to audiences at various stages of intoxication. There is a link between alcohol and entertainment, a symbiotic relationship that goes hand in hand, where performers need venues and on-trade premises need acts to entice drinkers.

**"[in Glasgow] ...there are no alcohol-free spaces for people to perform." (#15, male, performance artist)**

**"I don't think I ever played to anybody that's been sober to be honest" (#22 male, band-member)**

There were two reasons for the alcohol-entertainment link. The first, more obvious, reason being that without alcohol-licensed premises there would be few (if any) available spaces in the city for entertainers to perform. To this end, participants discussed the lack of alternatives to playing in licensed venues and the negative impact that the prospect of any imagined (or actual) demise of on-trade premises would have on their career as entertainers. In a similar fashion to when they were asked if they had ever performed in alcohol-free spaces, being asked what they would do if there were no pubs or nightclubs often resulted in deliberation before participants were able to provide a full answer.

"If licensed premises didn't exist as a thing what impact would that have on what you do?" (Interviewer)

"Emm [pause] possibly devastating, but it's hard to think of a world where licensed venues don't exist. So I suppose if there were, if it was exactly the same, if exactly the same venues existed but they weren't licensed then perhaps it wouldn't have a massive impact because people would hopefully still come to see the music regardless of whether they could get alcohol or not. If there were no night-time entertainment venues then obviously that would be a massive problem, because obviously that's where the majority of people play their gigs. So yeah, it's difficult to imagine." (#24, male, band-member)

"Massive impact actually. I'm just trying to think how it would even work like if you didn't have a licensed venue from you know weddings, it would work but I think it would be a bit more sedate and I don't think people would enjoy it as much, I really don't, and I don't think and pubs like forget it, there would just be no like, if there was no licensed place pub gigs wouldn't exist. I mean I've found that already like obviously pubs are quieter than they used to be and I think there are maybe less pubs than now than there were 10 years ago even, but so I think that without, you would be in trouble I guess." (#21, male, band-member)

The more pessimistic of the preceding quotes (#21) hints at the second, and more subtle, reason why alcohol and entertainment exist in the same spaces at the same times. More than just a practical commercial symbiosis based on available spaces, the synergistic relationship between alcohol *intoxication* and entertainment was felt to be culturally and socially embedded in nightlife settings.

"[Without alcohol licensed places] I wouldn't have had a job for 3 years. The relationship between bar-music-alcohol is 100s of years old, and for a good reason, they are mutually co-dependent." (#20, male, lounge pianist)

"I think it's one of those things that's just endemic of a pub. It's part and parcel of a pub. I can't think of any pubs that wouldn't have some form of entertainment, whether that's a DJ or a quiz or, and I think the pub would die out if they didn't, I think the two of them need each other." (#04, male, quiz-host)

## 4.0. Discussion

### 4.1 Summary and recommendations

This small research project set out to explore the link between live entertainment and on-trade alcohol marketing. In the event this was found to be a deeply entrenched relationship, with alcohol licensed venues and performers entwined in often complicated forms of symbiosis. Far from being restricted to overt alcohol marketing (e.g. advertising, brand sponsorship of venues or performers etc.) the powerful social/cultural linkage between entertainment and drinking was found to be a pivotal factor in shaping the night-time economy (NTE).

Entertainers (and the type or quality of their performances) could attract crowds to drink on licensed premises at times when they might otherwise lie empty (or stay sober). Entertainment could retain crowds and boost bar-sales by both obvious means (e.g. DJs openly telling patrons what drinks were available at the bar during each intermission) and much more powerful but subtle ways (e.g. the same DJs skilfully crafting gradual changes in tempo as the evening progressed in ways which were certain to get the drink flowing). In short, the goal was to harmonise intoxication levels with optimal and appropriate entertainments in order to maximise the audiences' enjoyment (and that of the performers), while in turn maximising the venues' profitability (and entertainers' career progression).

Entertainers could feel an element of personal success in getting an audience drinking, at least enough to relax, and thus enjoy or even participate in the show. For example, DJs only felt they had succeeded in their job when a crowd was up dancing, but acknowledged that this would likely require some prior alcohol

consumption by these patrons (or themselves) before anyone felt confident enough to take to the floor. Once the audience were up dancing (or clapping/singing along to the band, or laughing aloud at the comedy etc.) it was then felt that the drinking rate increased, or at least that these entertained patrons would stay on premise longer and consequently drink more. This could help to establish a venue's reputation, such that drinkers would choose to return there because of the quality of the 'drinkertainment' on offer.

However, it was not in the interests of these entertainers to foster over-consumption, which could lead to disinterest in the show or crowd disorder (perhaps threatening them or their expensive/hazardous equipment). Similarly they had to take care to control their own drinking in order to still perform to the best of their abilities (to which end, some tried to keep on a par/pace with the audience's level of intoxication).

This research also uncovered many issues faced by the entertainers themselves. Some were unhappy at the lack of non-licensed venues available (there were felt to be no such alcohol free-spaces in Glasgow). Together with often being paid in drink, or having alcohol riders, free bars etc. this could put their own health and safety at risk. As such we would suggest that more alcohol-free spaces be made available (which would have the additional benefit of allowing under-18s, religious groups, drivers and people with addiction problems greater access to live shows).

A wider range of venues might also allow entertainers to enjoy greater artistic freedom, because as things stood they were often unhappy at being deskilled to

mere alcohol promoters, rather than artists (e.g. DJs or bands often could not play the kind of music which they liked or had been formally trained in).

On gaining employment in the NTE, many entertainers had initially experienced a lack of preparedness for dealing with drunken, hostile crowds (or the often unusual financial arrangements which working in the NTE entailed). We would suggest that formal music or drama courses might include some classes to prepare their students for performing in these less glamorous, often risky, real world settings.

#### **4.2 Limitations and future research**

Our project was focussed solely on entertainers who perform in alcohol environments (pubs, nightclubs and other events) and how their acts were involved in drinks-party marketing; however, some participants spoke of alcohol-licensed premises where a greater degree of artistic freedom was encouraged. These were Electronic Dance Music (EDM) events, which, although alcohol was always available, were felt to be more drug-focussed. We did not seek to recruit EDM performers; however two participants (DJs #09 and #14) had performed at such events. Unlike 'drinkertainment' the EDM ('rave') scene was felt to be less disorderly (and therefore less stressful to perform in), with more patrons who were there for the music/dancing than to purchase alcoholic beverages (consequently these venues are likely to have higher entrance fees). One participant (#09) commented that in such premises a good night could also be measured by the volume of bar sales, but rather than alcohol this meant "we sell more bottles of water than any other night". Thus EDM entertainers (and their relationship with venues) may constitute a

group of potential interest for future research aiming to further explore the synergistic relationship between music and substance use.

At present NTE entertainers were often at the mercy of venue operators (e.g. whether they got paid properly might depend on bar sales). Some had to do their own PR work (a job made easier by the internet) while others could rely on the PR teams that pubs/clubs employed to publicise their gigs (see introduction 2.6). This is another group of stakeholders working in the NTE who we feel are ripe for the attention of future research: people who give out drink samples or flyers (often with incentives such as free entry, free cloakroom, or a free alcohol-branded gift on production of the flyer at the door) and who, like our entertainers, might be paid according to how many members of the public, or which clientele demographic, they could entice into various establishments. Two of our participants (#06 and #08) had been employed in PR work (both as free 'drinks samplers'), and in drawing comparison between Glasgow and bar marketing associated more often with Mediterranean resorts, one participant (#07) described local PR activity as "It's like being in Magaluf", yet to our knowledge, to date research has focused more on these practices at British tourist destinations than in UK settings (e.g. Briggs, 2013).

The role of online technologies also emerged as an avenue for future research. These were viewed by some entertainers to be as much of a threat to pubs/nightclubs as the off-trade (i.e. cheap supermarket alcohol), but the internet / social media also offered new marketing possibilities for the on-trade (e.g. organising 'Facebook parties', or pub/clubs employing photographers to post

pictures of patrons enjoying nights out at their venue online, perhaps offering some additional incentives for those depicted to return to the venue concerned).

Although working in pubs/clubs may not have been some entertainers desired career route, often playing music they did not like to unappreciative crowds, the on-trade alcohol sector's survival was seen as essential for them to remain employed in their chosen profession. Some participants were concerned about the potential demise of the pub/club scene and what that would mean for their future as entertainers. Future research might evaluate what this trend could mean for the entertainment industry. Similarly if any future legislation prevented alcohol provision at performance venues (as is currently the case at football grounds in Scotland), what would this mean for licensed premises (e.g. would there be more or less alcohol-related harm) and could a vibrant nightlife culture survive without the alcohol-entertainment link?

#### **4.3 Conclusion**

The underlying theme found in this research was that alcohol (perhaps in common with other drugs) alters moods, as do many forms of entertainment (e.g. music, dancing and comedy). When combined these different mood alterations synergise, usually in a pleasurable direction, to produce something greater than the sum of their parts. Entertainment and substance use do go hand-in-hand, in very a robust relationship which would seem difficult, if not impossible, to break. Perhaps inevitably we found this relationship was being used to market on-trade alcohol. Nevertheless this relationship is also very malleable, and although entertainers were uncomfortable playing to sober audiences, who might not give any visible signs of

appreciation of their performance (e.g. dancing), they were also averse to playing to drunken crowds, who might become disinterested in their act or cause trouble. On-trade entertainers felt that things worked-out best for them, and their audiences, at a certain (relatively) moderate level of alcohol consumption (usually this took place in more expensive, more entertainment-orientated venues). Thus, although entertainment provision may be seen as helping to keep pubs/clubs (i.e. the alcohol industry) in profit/business, they also provided additional pleasures, goals and outcomes for those who do enjoy the nightlife experience, as well as providing additional sources of income for licensed premises (e.g. ticket prices, new clienteles and greater attendance, perhaps at the expense of the off-trade) rather than a reliance on competitive alcohol provision alone.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1.**

#### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

##### **BACKGROUND**

Details of current entertainment role and history of career in entertainment (only one role in career history or more)

How did you get into this line of work?

Ever had any other jobs in nightlife? (e.g. bar work, promotions work?)

- How does that compare to working as an entertainer?

##### **NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT**

Types of venues you play/perform in (pubs, clubs different types of clubs, weddings etc.)

- Difference between performing at these different venues/events? In what way?

What are the audiences like in terms of age, appearance, type of person etc. (does it vary by venue?)

How much freedom do you have regarding your artistic choices (e.g. music you play, your act?). Do venues have certain rules or guidelines you need to follow?

Ever played any venues that don't sell alcohol (e.g. unlicensed venues, day time busking, radio)?

- If yes. How does it compare to working in licensed venues?
- If no. Why do you think you haven't?

What reasons are there that attract people to booking you?

## AUDIENCE INTERACTIONS

Does what you do influence the crowd? (e.g. music you play, part of your act?)

Do you think you influence peoples drinking?

Why/why not?

How do you re-capture an audience if they are losing interest in your act?

Has there ever been any trouble that has arisen in venues when you've been playing? (examples, what happened, what do you think caused it, what did you do?)

- Trouble in general, trouble directed at you (e.g. heckling, arguments, fights)

How do you deal with hassles? (e.g. hecklers, bad behaviour, drunk people, bad requests etc.)

Have you ever had to stop what you were doing as a result of crowd problems/trouble? What interventions did you make? (e.g. call security, lights up, get involved yourself?)

## TRAINING/OWN CONSUMPTION

Have you ever had any training on how to deal with patrons in terms of crowd control or dealing with intoxicated people?

What do you think people embarking on a career in entertainment should know about this aspect of the job (tricks of the trade)?

What are your views on drinking while performing? (do you drink before, during, after act? Why/why not? Examples of good/bad experiences?)

Do you think it is easy or difficult to avoid drinking when involved in your line of work?

In what way?

## **MARKETING**

How are you paid? Flat fee? Related to ticket sales/door/bar takings?

Have you ever played an event/night sponsored by a drinks company?

Have you ever been involved in drinks marketing in any of the following ways? Give examples:

- Actively so like making verbal brand endorsements, encouraging people to drink?
- Passively so like manipulating music tempo, volume, patrons mood?
- Any other way you can think of?

Does marketing practices differ by:

- Venues (e.g. different crowds students vs older etc.)?
- Subculture (like intoxication levels, genre, pulling, couples, crowds, stag hen dos etc.)?

Think about what you have seen in places you play as well as own role.

- Off own back or encouraged by management?

How do you balance marketing with your own artistic goals?

How much work do you think you would have without the presence of licensed venues?

What is your goal when performing?

Are you involved in marketing of yourself or the venues you play via social media?

- What does this involve?

[PROMPT about mentioning alcohol/promos as part of that.]

- How important is social media to what you do?

## GOOD/BAD PRACTICE

What makes for a good night? (artistic license, own substance use)

- Example of good night
- Example of bad night

## Experiences of peers

- Examples of bad practice
- Examples of good practice

## ENDING

Future of entertainment in the night time economy and your career in the future

If licensed venues didn't exist what impact would this have on what you do?

Do you think male and female entertainers have different experiences?

Anything you would like to add about your entertainment career experiences you think we haven't covered?

RECRUITMENT FLYER

**Are you an entertainer  
in pubs or clubs or at events?**

**Would you speak to us about  
your work?**

**As researchers at Glasgow  
Caledonian University we would  
like to talk to you and will pay £15.**

**Interviews will last no longer than  
one hour and be at a place which  
suits you.**

**Contact:**  
**jlennox@xxx.xx.xx**  
**0777 3XXXX XXXX**

## Appendix 3.

### INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM



### **CONSENT FORM**

#### **Assessing the role that entertainers play in alcohol-marketing and the maintenance of good order within on-trade licensed premises**

(Please tick boxes)

1. *I confirm that I have received a copy of the Information Sheet describing the above research Project, that I have read and understood it, and that I have had the opportunity to discuss my participation in the project with a researcher.*
2. *I agree to be interviewed as part of the above project and for that interview to be digitally recorded, then later transcribed by the researchers.*
3. *I understand that any information that I give will be held securely at the university and will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the research team, as only the researchers will have access to the interview's recording and transcript.*
4. *I understand that all aspects of the interview will be anonymised so that it will not be possible to identify me personally from any subsequent research outputs, such as published results or conference presentations based on this research.*
5. *I understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time, and do not have to answer any question which I do not want to, without having to give a reason.*

Sign name:.....

Print name:..... Date:.....

***Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research.***

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**I declare that I have completed a 'roles of entertainers' ARUK project interview for the Institute for Society and Social Justice Research at Glasgow Caledonian University and claim my £15.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Assessing the role that entertainers play in alcohol-marketing and the maintenance of good order within on-trade licensed premises**

I am Jemma Lennox, a researcher from the Institute for Society and Social Justice Research, at Glasgow Caledonian University. I am currently working as the Researcher on the aforementioned project along with the Principal Investigator (Dr Alasdair Forsyth). We are currently conducting research which looks at the experiences of people who have worked as entertainers in the night-time economy (NTE) that is pubs, clubs and other venues licensed to sell alcohol. You will be eligible to participate in a research interview for the above project if you have worked in the NTE as a DJ, musician or other skilled entertainer (but not if you have only been employed in bar sales/management). This research has been commissioned and funded by *Alcohol Research UK*, and aims to:

- To find out what role entertainment plays in the marketing of pubs and clubs, and in promoting specific drinks or drinking practices and subcultures (clientele) within such licensed premises.
- To assess the role of entertainers in on-trade drinks marketing, and how such employees square this role with their personal career goals or artistic concerns, either within or outwith this nightlife setting.
- To highlight entertainment practices that maintain good order or efficient service within pubs and clubs, and which make such businesses more attractive places for both staff and customers.
- To give those who work as entertainers in the night-time economy a voice, and allow their experiences inform future models of good practice within nightlife licensed premises.

To help us in these objectives we would like to invite you to take part in a research interview. This can be conducted at a time and place of your choosing, perhaps at your place of work, or if you prefer you could come to our office at the university. The interview should take approximately 20 minutes, and will cover issues such as your views on alcohol and entertainment venues, marketing practices, your career and any barrier/problems you may have encountered, as well as asking about experiences you have from nightlife work more generally.

Although participation may not benefit you directly, we hope your shared experiences will help us to make recommendations towards making licensed premises more prosperous, safer and healthier places to either visit or work in (e.g. through informing both local and national policy makers, businesses, staff trainers and by making our findings available to people like yourself online). We do however offer a sum of £15.00 as payment for your valuable time. With your permission I would like to digitally record the interview.

All your comments will be anonymised and you will not be identifiable in the research report. **All information collected will be treated confidentially unless you reveal details of harm towards yourself or that you are causing harm to others. If this occurs, ethical guidelines will be followed which involves contacting relevant bodies to enable help and advice to be given.**

**NB: You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to, and you may stop the interview at any time.**

Thanks once again for your co-operation

Jemma Lennox / Dr Alasdair Forsyth  
Institute for Society and Social Justice Research  
Glasgow Caledonian University  
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