



“A Musician Who Puts on a Gig”: Local Promoter’s Multiple Roles and Hierarchies at a Small British Jazz Club

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Abstract

The growing body of research on live music events and the industry around it has paid little attention to the lived experience of the local promoters, their work and the negotiations that take place within small venues. The aim of this article is to demonstrate the multiple roles and hierarchies that the local jazz club promoter deals within the organisation of events and the main “cooperative links” (Becker 2008) that the promoter works with. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in the southern UK conducted mainly around London, this article illustrates how external power structures emerge within a music club, which is also the terrain where the promoter negotiates with both the venue management and with musicians. The main focus here is on the physical place that a music venue provides and cooperative links that are involved in the production of live music events, with the aim to highlight the circumstances that make a music club a unique place. The case study is based on an anonymized small English jazz venue, which provides detailed insight into the negotiations between the promoter, the manager, the audience and the musicians within Britain. Finally, I argue that existing models of live music promotion do not work for all local, small-scale promoters, due to the promoter’s multiple and, at times, incompatible roles. As a marginal music culture, the jazz world intends to evade the commercial genres; I therefore offer an alternative model that involves full interaction between a small number of parties only.

KEYWORDS: jazz, promoter, venue, live music

Introduction

Since the turn of the millennium, the music industries have gone through rapid changes (Holt 2010); for example, decreasing record sales have forced musicians to alternative sources of income and focus on live performances. To ensure a vibrant scene, some musicians have become active as promoters, running their own music events. Such grass-root activism provides an interesting example of what individuals can do to ensure that their local music scene thrives. The organisation of a music club might nonetheless be anything but an enjoyable experience as the economic circumstances and arrangements are often “intransparent” to the attending audience (Holt and Wergin 2013), making the music event appear smooth and well organized.

Extensive research has been conducted on live music organisation and on the music club as social scene (see, for example, Fonarow 2006; Holt and Wergin 2013; Holt 2014; Thornton 1996) and on live music (Frith 2007 and 2010; Cloonan 2010; Frith, Brennan, Cloonan and Webster 2013). However, they seem to have neglected the work of the promoter. An exception can be found in Brennan and Webster (2011) who offer an overview of the promoter’s role at national level. Yet, the work of local live music promoters and their experiences have received little attention. Also the work of professional musicians has been widely discussed, including brief introductions to promoters, management and venues in, for example, Tsioulakis (2011 and 2013). Such studies have nevertheless lacked detailed analysis of the involvement with the promoter. Furthermore, as some musicians combine their own work with the role of promoter, this article will attempt to address the multiple roles of the small-scale live music promoter.

By using an ethnographic case study approach, I concentrate on the activities and negotiations that take place at a small music venue in running a jazz club. I therefore integrate Howard Becker’s approach from the early 1980s to the notion of “cooperative links” and aim to make the case study applicable for other contexts. “Cooperative” here indicates that individuals produce different tasks towards a shared aim; this differs from the idea of collaboration, which suggests that several people are doing the same task together. In general, Becker regards art and social life as a collective action, taking into account all the different people who contribute to the creation of a work of art (Becker 2008 and 1951; Falkner and Becker 2009). Following the idea of observing the work of participants in the production of musical events, I will concentrate on the multiple roles and hierarchies that appear within a small jazz club in mid-sized city in southern England which is anonymized for ethical reasons, and which is named here as The C.

It is my argument that the existing models of live music networks provided by authors such as Brennan and Webster (2011) do not work for local promoters. The specifics of the local promoter’s work, the variety of participants and the range cooperative links that the local promoters have to take into account when organizing events produces greater complexity than the previous models. Furthermore, the authority that the promoter presents can cause friction with musicians. Local promoters thereby differentiates themselves from commercial

ones, thereby demonstrating that the existing models cannot be adapted straightforwardly to understand the work of the small-scale live music promoter.

The article will first introduce its theoretical framework and the method in which the data was gathered, followed by a description of the specific jazz club and the events that take place in it. I will then move onto the ethnographic data with a focus on the financial circumstances of the promoter. Next I discuss the physical space of the venue and the management that it demands. The final part of ethnographical section addresses the musical choices and arrangements that the promoter may make. After laying out the ethnographical field in these three sections, with their focus on finance, space and music respectively, and reflecting on my observations in the light of the existing models of music promotion, it becomes clear that the existing models that focus on promoters at national level are not flexible enough to be applied to the work of a local small-scale live music promoter, which calls for the proposal of a new, differentiated, model.

Before addressing the specific issues in small-scale music promotion, it may be useful to gain a general understanding of the role of a live music promoter. Keith Negus (1992: 130), for example, presents a concert promoter as a person who organizes both live events and tours. It is the promoter's responsibility to hire the venue, arrange the stage, ensure public address (PA) system and that the lighting is in place, and even to employ catering and security staff, as well as attend to the advertisement of the event and ticket sale coordination. In *The C*, the person responsible for all of this is a single promoter but his work involves some additional pressure, such as the capacity to do all of the above within one single venue. As Negus' description suggests, the multiple responsibilities of the promoter are demanding from the start, as there is much personal, creative and financial pressure to enable a successful event. In addition, the promoter is part of a wider network of relations, as suggested by Brennan and Webster (2011), which will be addressed further in the light of my research findings, leading to the development of a new model to make sense of live music club promotion.

Research framework

The research for this article is part of larger ethnographic study, *The Place of Jazz*, which took place in the UK between 2006 and 2012, during which thirty-six performance venues were observed. In the overall project, eleven professional jazz musicians were interviewed between 2010 and 2012. A particular venue, *The C* was selected as case study because it has a number of distinguished features including a long history and a similarity to other music stages that are housed within a British pub.

I had the opportunity to interview the promoter and ask him about the practicalities of running the club, including his various responsibilities and specific experiences in his role of live music promoter. This was analysed through the application of techniques from discourse psychology, a form of discourse analysis. Edwards and Potter (1992: 2-3) explain that such analysis focuses on the action orientation of talk and that social action and interaction are understood to take place within the discourse itself. Therefore, the contexts of the discursive constructions are also examined. Discourse represents situated and occasioned

constructions that make sense when perceived in the light of what these discursive interactions accomplish. I have interpreted this to mean that the physical environment and the relationships within it are included in the analysis in order to fully understand the discursive constructions. The contexts within which these discourses take place explain and contribute to the actions that happen within the discourse.

In the ethnographic approach that I used, the ethnographer herself becomes the most important tool within the fieldwork. The researcher systematically observes and participates in the actions of a particular group in order to gain insight into their world (Atkinson 1991; Madden 2010). In order to stay true to the ethnographic framework of this study, the promoter’s interview was read in relation to the observations made in the at the venue. The research material discussed here was based on direct observation of two performances at the club, which took place in 2011 and 2012. The interview with the promoter, also a jazz musician, took place in 2012 at his office outside the venue and was characterized by mutual trust and interest in the current state of jazz. As part of a wider study of jazz venues, comparative observations were made to identify challenges faced by small jazz venues in the UK.

Introducing The C

The C is a small jazz club in a southern English city. Situated in a side street near the centre of the city, the club is managed by private promoter. The venue that hosts the club event is located within the premises of a pub and the same space is also used for other events, which are organized by other promoters. The arrangement is similar to many regular jazz club events that take place around Britain. Every week between autumn to early summer, The C hosts quality jazz ranging from nationally renowned artists to local musicians. The club has been running in the same venue for over ten years despite the pub having undergone some significant changes during the years. In this context, the word “jazz club” refers to particular events within a certain location, in this case within a pub.

This small jazz venue provides a detailed overview of the work and different roles of a local promoter. Even though The C is appreciated by many musicians, the venue faces several problematic features that demand negotiations in the regular management of the club night. The main organisational tasks of events are the responsibility of single promoter; however, there are several participants that collaborate in the making of a club, such as the venue management, the musicians and the audience. The expectations and actions of these parties influence the governing of the events. In this way, The C provides an insightful example of a small independent jazz club that contrasts to corporate franchising that is often seen in bigger cities and other popular music genres. This will be discussed further in terms of economic context, venue space and music policy.

The financial circumstances

Within the interview with the promoter of The C it became clear that the financial arrangements with a venue are not very straightforward. The jazz club does not pay rent for the use of the room, and the pub venue takes all the income from the bar and its sales are not discussed or shared with the promoter. Overall, when turnover is good, the arrangement seems enable a reasonable exchange between the two parties as both are offering something of value. The pub provides The C the physical place to hold the events and the pub earns the extra income from the drinks. During the midweek occasions that I attended the pub, the pub room seemed quiet. It is likely that The C offers a sufficient midweek income when the pub would otherwise be half empty. Towards the end of the week the situation might be different, and the pub could get better income from other sources. By hosting jazz events, the pub management uses live music events as a strategic tool to boost up their income on the otherwise quieter days.

The C is an example to what Falkner and Becker (2009: 93) argue, that for much of its history jazz musicians have been playing in places where “the money to support the entire enterprise came mostly from the sale of alcohol and secondarily from admission charges”. As the club does not pay anything from the admission charges towards the maintenance of the venue, for the pub the aim of the events is to have as many people drinking as much as possible. It may be expected that under such circumstances promoters are forced by the venue owners to keep admission fees low; however, in the case of The C, this was not the case according to the promoter.

The musicians’ fees are paid from the ticket sales and the pub owner does not participate in these costs. The promoter mentioned that he does not pay, or he is unable to pay, a salary for himself for the administrative work; instead he is paid a performance fee if he is to perform as a musician with the house band. The gig at The C is on some weeks possibly the only gig that the members of the house band have on that week, so the house band performers have a day job to pay their personal bills.

The external bills at the club consist mainly of the maintenance of the club’s website and some marketing costs. The small income that is left over after paying for all the running costs acts as a financial backup, for instances for when the ticket sales are not enough sufficient to cover for the musicians’ fees. The promoter explains the payment arrangement in the following way:

With groups coming from abroad, we offer them a fee. With groups in this country we offer them a sort of sliding scale, a minimum up to a maximum, which is maybe something that we’ll change [in the future]. But with groups coming from abroad, because we offer them a fee, then we’re at risk at losing money. And it wouldn’t take very much, you know, for... if we made a bad mistake one day and booked a band that was expensive, but we couldn’t be sure if they’d attract the crowd. Then it wouldn’t take very much to clean us out. (2012)

This situation, in which the musicians based in Britain are paid according to successfulness of the event and the foreign groups are offered a fixed fee no matter how well the evening has sold, can favour foreign groups. At the same

time, these groups present higher risks because the arrangement can be linked to the appreciation of the international groups (White 1987). The audience might not be familiar with an international band and sales might stay moderate at a time when a full house would be needed. The musicians’ familiarity of the audience at the scene in turn affects the success of the gig. The American acts that I encountered during my fieldwork seemed to perform a more progressive repertoire than the British groups. Perhaps because the familiarity with the local audience, the British groups seem more reserved in their overall repertoire even though some liberties can be taken.

The risks for the foreign acts are understandably greater and before a band makes a booking at a certain venue they need to know if costs of transportation and accommodation during their tour can be covered. It therefore makes sense that the foreign acts are provided with a fixed fee. By contrast, according to the promoter, the flexible financial arrangements with the UK-based bands seem to make the venue unattractive for some of those musicians. This has made him consider a possible change to the fee structure. The musicians are, after all, the most important cooperative link for the club; without them the events would not take place, especially as other venues could possibly be arranged. As Becker (2008: 16) notes, it is the artist who makes the piece of art that we appreciate.

The promoter keeps a record of the performances that the club has hosted during the year and how well the events did both financially and in terms of ticket booking patterns. This allows him to predict how some musicians are likely to do in terms of sales.

We’ve got archives on our website which go back to the very first [gig], the time when we started booking seats in advance online. [...] So it could be possible to actually quantify how people book for particular musicians. And informally we do that sometimes to check have we had... we’ve invited this person six times and each time it’s been really poor. And that means that we don’t get paid. And we’re happy to take a hit normally but it might make us think, hm, should we give it a break. Not that we don’t want to book this person you know, but just do some other stuff. I think we can usually be, usually be sure of getting a good audience if we book an international group or, you know, Gilad Atzmon [...]. (2012)

He further explains that he does not regularly use the archive to check on the sales of particular musician, but the record is used as a forecasting tool in situations where the club cannot afford to take further financial hits. He points out that he regularly books musicians who may not do well financially in terms of the sales. This indicates that, as a promoter, he is also concerned about the diversity of the music that he provides and not just the financial business. Disappointing audience turnout is even, sometimes, compensated when the house band waive their own fees.

Managing the venue space

The physical structure of the venue is the one thing that the promoter has the least amount of power to change. The C does not have a formal rental agreement or

ownership to the venue. This leads to a situation where the promoter is unable to change structural features of the physical space. Ultimately, the promoter needs to work flexibility to conform to acoustics, capacity, and other necessary features for the running of the event.

Management of the physical aspects of the club is limited to setting up the room in terms of the tables for the audience and the stage area. There were occasions when the relationship between the pub manager and the promoter did not work well. In particular, when the tasks that would be expected from the pub staff had not been taken care of:

Most of the time we, we had to put the chairs and tables out ourselves, which added an extra twenty minutes worth of work. And that the chairs are stored in an office so we had to get them out of an office. [...] With some managers we would pay them to do it. Other managers just point blank, you know, they'd say they'd do it but they never do it, so we ended up doing it ourselves. (2012)

A string of pub managers mostly took the passive role of providing an empty space, but not any services – excluding the bar – to go with it. In some situations the manager disapproved with the way that the promoter used the pub's furniture, causing strain between the promoter and the pub staff. For example, once the promoter found there were insufficient amounts of tables; to compensate for this, he used beer crates as the ticket sales desk, and this led to verbal abuse from the pub manager. Management of the physical aspects of the club has improved after changes in the pub management, allowing the promoter more power within the venue and the setup within it. This demonstrates that this particular cooperative link is highly influenced by their working relationship with the promoter, because any improvements in the physical aspects of the club are controlled by the manager. Having a good working relation with the pub manager allows the promoter to have more power within the venue.

To ensure the smooth running of an event, the promoter may, at times, feel there is the need to make some improvements in the club-room, some more tangible than others. The main feature that the promoter would want to improve is the air conditioning:

Firstly, it doesn't have a proper air conditioning so in the summer it can be murderous in there for the performers and audience. And I think we probably lose quite a lot of people in the summer, because people know now that it's extremely hot in there. [...] And although the present manager has done quite a lot to improve the circulation of air, it really needs expensive air conditioning system to make people feel comfortable. (2012)

The promoter's emphasis on control over air quality is understandable as it was based on audience experiences. If a lack of proper air conditioning deters some audience members, this in turn reduces the club's income and the enjoyment, and thereby the reputation, of the events. In the past, the club kept its windows open during hot summer days but this is no longer possible. The reason why this action was prohibited remains unclear as the promoter was not able recall any

regulations that would stop them from opening the windows. It is possible that the neighbours complained about the noise.

The less tangible things that the promoter mentioned include new furniture and carpet, but so as not to overstep his position, he did not make any demands or requests. He had to acknowledge the limitations of his position. This prohibited him from further actions, leaving him in a somewhat passive position.

In the case of The C, the musical equipment, such as the PA system, the microphones and monitors, needed on stage was provided by the house band members. This means that broken equipment needs to be replaced from the musicians’ own pocket or, in some instances, from the income that the club has gathered. The lighting rig provided by the house band is left in the club-room and is sometimes borrowed by other people using the space:

It would also be good to get new lighting. We pay for the lighting. We buy the lights and it would be good to have a sort of communal lighting rig that everyone could use. [...] Our lighting rig is the only one that is accessible for everyone. Other people’s rigs are sort of, you can’t operate without opening a cupboard and getting into. So that, that... that would improve it for us. (2012)

The possibility of other people to borrow the house band’s lighting equipment seemed to cause some level of frustration in the promoter as other people’s rigs are locked away. He has not been able to control the use of the equipment that he (or the house band) provide, making performance circumstances unpredictable, especially since borrowed equipment can break. The call for communal lighting rigs is based on the idea that the costs of repairing these would be shared with other parties. As this is not organized by the pub it remains the task of the promoter that, in turn, other operators can take advantage of.

Musical choices and arrangements

The promoter who has a double role: he is both a musician and the promoter of the club. These roles sets up different types of power struggle as most of the musicians that perform, or want to perform, at the club have just one single role when they interact with the promoter. That is, they are selected by the promoter and are there to perform to the audience under agreed conditions. There are two main ways that the promoter decides on which performing musicians to invite: either this is based on promotional material he receives or on familiarity with certain musicians. The club is sent dozens of albums and other sound recordings each year, which the promoter listens through. Although some bands are brought in on the basis of promotional materials, the promoter’s preference seems to be on events where a visiting soloist plays with the house band. The reasons for favouring this arrangement are both financial, as discussed earlier, and musical. Some of the invited soloists can be friends of the house band members. It is then the musicians’ social capital, networks and connections, that counts; in the music business your connections are sometimes more important than your skills (Hytönen-Ng 2013: 20).

The musical chemistry between musicians also affects the promoter's choices. The promoter readily states that with the visiting guests it is "more important that we get on with that person". The bands have to fit into the venue's profile, which limits the choices even further. Remaining consistent with the existing profile ensures that the audience knows what to expect. Divergences from the club's usual musical profile is likely to deter some audience members. The club has been built on a specific public identity familiar to the audience. A consistent identity can provide added value and also regulates the style of music. Some great musicians or bands that do not fit within the parameters are not booked for a performance.

The arrangements with invited acts are a potential cause of strain between the promoter and other musicians. According to him, some local musicians can feel ignored at times and, and even that they are intentionally not invited to perform, whereas the few local musicians of the house band have a regular gig. Such sentiment is based on the aspiring musician's perceived level of competence as well as the social capital in relation to the house band members.

The trend to give preference over visiting soloists has also been picked up by musicians. During my fieldwork, some musicians stated that they did not like to perform at The C due to the solo arrangements with the house band. It was clear that some musicians preferred to perform with their own established bands, playing original material. The house band cannot and should not be expected to know original material of guest musicians, which causes the performances to be limited within well-known jazz repertoires. Eventually, some musicians turned down offers to perform, demonstrating their unwillingness to conform to the power exerted by the promoter. The musicians' wish to perform original material with one's own band is similar to the discussions presented by Becker (1951) regarding the friction between commercial success and maintaining one's own vision (see also Hytönen-Ng 2013). In this case, these choices are made between the promoter's preferences, which are partly directed by the commercial consideration and partly by his musical vision. When performing musicians try to remain true to their own musical vision, this can consequently result in a situation where this musician is no longer considered for future performances.

Being present at the venue during his events makes the promoter accessible and available for the audience, enabling interaction and potential feedback. For example, in the past he tried to gather structured feedback from the audience, but participation remained low. The regulars in the audience sometimes make requests for particular performers (Hytönen-Ng 2016). The promoter, however, admits that such requests are not usually taken into account due to financial difficulties with requested performance events. Sometimes the person who made the request does not even turn up to the special gig.

Regular performances with visiting solo musicians, however, were the primary reason for the promoter to keep the club going:

I enjoy running the club because we get the chance to play every week with all these different musicians. [...] I do enjoy the administrative side of it to some degree, but if I was just a promoter I don't think I would... be so motivated to have carried on with it for so long. So it's important for me I

think to be... to feel as if I am a musician who puts on a gig rather than a promoter putting on a gig. (2012)

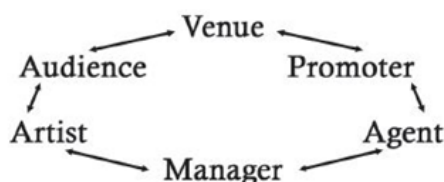
It seems that performing offered a chance to maintain and strengthen his identity as a musician. He prefers musical tasks rather than administrative tasks, while he also maintains the freedom associated with musicians. An alternative perspective is that he is just a musician who has taken on administrative tasks rather than an administrative person trying to be a musician. The promoter additionally suggests that having a regular gig with the house band allows him to develop his musical skills. If this experience was taken away and he would only have the role of promoter, the reduction in enjoyment would deter him from wanting to run this regular jazz club.

Small-scale promotion at The C

I would now like to return back to promoter’s job description by Negus. Being the one in control of almost everything related to organising an event, the promoter has a lot of power. Negus points out that this has led to situations of abuse in the past. Negus notes that the promoters have had somewhat “bad reputation in the past for being aggressive wheel-dealers, making excessive profits, and occasionally running off with the takings” (Negus 1992: 130).

Brennan and Webster (2011: 2) investigate the role of the promoter within the live music industry in the UK, observing that “promoters embody a highly complex value relationship between the musician, audiences, agents, record companies and other music media”. Brennan and Webster propose a circular model to clarify the networks participating in the creation of a large scale live popular music event and the promoters’ role in it. In this model the promoter acts in between a venue and a booking agent; in this scheme, the agent stands between the artist manager and the promoter, who also has no direct access to the audience, while the artist’s manager has no direct contact with the promoter. The relationships in this model are represented in FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 1. Live music network of intermediaries by Brennan and Webster (2011).



However, as is clear from the example of The C club, the position of, small-scale local promoters does not necessarily conform to this model.

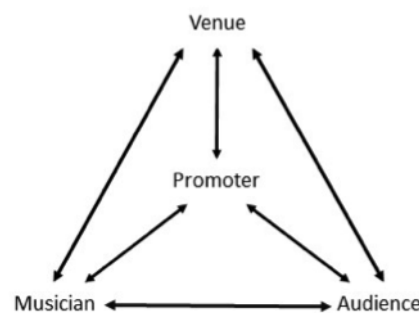
As part of their research, Brennan and Webster (ibid) propose a categorisation of three different types of promoters. First, an independent model where the

promoter acts as a facilitator while their income is made on the door from ticket sales, and they also hire the venue and the artist for the event. The second model is known as the artist-affiliated model where the promoter is connected to the artist in some way, at times being the artist; they usually also hire the venue and collect the income from the door and from other performance-associated fees. The third is the venue model, where the venue acts as the promoter, and income is created by the bar takings and catering. These models are not fixed, but they can be adjusted according to the context of an event.

In *The C*, the promoter is active only within one particular pub venue. It is only within a historical context that Brennan and Webster recognize that many of the local promoters also ran small jazz clubs, and were influential in the music scene. As the discussion above shows, this historical model of promoting a small local jazz club is still current in the twenty-first century.

It was clear the promoter has not been making a financial profit of the activities, rather the promoter barely gets enough income to keep the club going and to balance the few bad nights. I would like to claim that the promoter cannot be viewed as a commercially oriented operator. His actions seem guided by his enthusiasm and his own development as a musician. Therefore, I conclude that the promoters' position at *The C* does not conform to the circular model presented by Brennan and Webster. In addition his own role as a performing musician, the promoter at *The C* has been dealing with a smaller amount of cooperative links as to what Brennan and Webster present. I therefore propose a different model to represent a more complex and intertwined situation for promoters with multiple roles, which is illustrated by FIGURE 2.

FIGURE 2. The local promoter's networks.



The revised model is represented as a two-dimensional tetrahedron, in which the promoter is placed at the centre. Although there are less cooperative links, or nodes, involved in small clubs, this model contains the same number of interactions as the one presented by Brennan and Webster (2011). There are active relationships between the promoter and the musicians, audience, and the venue. While the promoter has the responsibility to mediate between the musicians and the venue, the musicians may find themselves directly interacting with the venue in circumstances such as setting up the equipment. In addition, the promoter mediates between the audience and the venue by bringing customers

into the pub who, in turn, also order drinks and use other services of the pub once they are on the premises. The venue management often remains faceless for most audience members as much of their activities take place behind the scenes. Once the musician is performing the interactions with the audience are based on music; although, without the involvement of the promoter, such relationships would not exist. This revised model represents the multiple responsibilities of the promoter, based on the multiple cooperative links the promoter is expected to have a good working relationship with. In particular, to create a successful event, the promoter is made accountable for actions that take place during the event, even for those that are beyond his direct control.

Brennan and Webster (2011) state that in all of the three types of promoter that they identified, the promoter negotiates with agents rather than with the artists. This type of mediation by agents does not appear in the revised model. At The C, the bookings are made directly between the musicians and the promoter in the majority of situations. From my wider research of jazz venues in the UK, this seems to be the norm in the UK jazz scene where most musicians work without an agent except for the larger well-known names.

The practice of direct bookings without mediation by agents cuts down costs, but this arrangement also means that the promoter puts himself and his trustworthiness at stake when running the venue. The promoter needs a wide social network in a specific music genre as well as awareness of new movements within the scene. He must also be familiar with music preferences of the local audience that forms the clientele of the club. The promoter is expected to provide sufficient services and a pleasant experience to the musicians playing at the venue in order to ensure they are willing to perform in the venue again. Within a small scene, word travels fast and both good and bad experiences are likely to circulate.

The size of the jazz community within a small city allows the promoter to be aware and familiar with the audience that attends the club. The promoter is likely to know some of the regular audience members personally and the performance becomes a social event for the audience as well as for the promoter. This level of personal relationship means that the responsibility of the promoter expands, as it is impossible to remain a faceless operator. Having friendships with some of the clientele for years is likely to enhance audience engagement with both the club night and the venue. A regular audience also means that the musicians and genres that the promoter books are fairly predictable. Finally, the promoter can change his role from one group of actor to another. In some events the promoter is promoting and organising the event while at other events he can act as both promoter of the event and as musician playing the event. This type of overlap exceeds the promoter's position described by Brennan and Webster (2011), and is most likely repeated at similar small-scale live music clubs.

Conclusions

The C is a prime example of multiple social realities taking place within a single music venue. The club acts as a place where the promoter, musicians and audience meet, all with different perspectives and expectations. The smooth running of a venue demands a balance between the several interdependent

factors that operate within a live music club. The promoter, at the heart of the club's performance events, is likely to turn (literally or metaphorically) his back to one group when attending another group. This problematic position becomes evident for example, in the situation when the promoter decides to focus on nationally or internationally renowned artists, and local musicians feel neglected. The same phenomenon occurs when a certain style of jazz, and musicians performing this style, are booked over others.

The examples provided here demonstrate that the promoter is dependent on, and constrained by, cooperative links when producing musical events, even though Howard Becker (2008: 25-28) discusses these constraining cooperative links only in relation to the artists. The promoter is dependent and constrained by technical equipment available, the physical space and the support provided by the pub staff, the available finances, as well as the musicians wanting to work at the club. For the customers' to come back their needs and interests should be met. The management needs to receive enough of an exchange value in order to allow the events to take place within its premises.

The cooperative links influence the kind of art and music that can be or will be produced within the club. When the art forms are such that the club do not want to assimilate – for example free jazz – the music is not likely to be performed and these musicians are excluded. Therefore, the musicians wanting to perform at this club would need to adapt to the styles that are accepted by the promoter and the audience. The acceptance is often dictated by conventions which also regulate the relationship between audiences and musicians. The interdependencies presented in a single club are a fine balance of expectations, services and creation of continuation.

Running the club is also a way for the promoter to maintain his own work as a musician. The promoter's reasons for doing the work are purely musical; to provide a small city with good quality music, offer work for fellow musicians, to work with established musicians both off- and on-stage, and to keep up his own musical competence. His aim has not been to make profit, rather to keep the performances going from one year to the next. Evidently, during the years the promoter has been able to construct a consistent musical identity for the club. The identity is mainly constructed by the promoter, but also by the audience as their choices of attending particular performances affects the promoter's choices of booking these musicians again. The audience that has a very active role in the identity formation through choosing what performances and artists they are they willing to pay for. The way the audience is constructed within the promoter's speech is therefore nothing but passive consumer.

The C, as many other similar clubs situated outside the metropolis, offers valuable live music events in an English city where these events might otherwise be scarce. For the fans, these events provide a chance to attend regular live performances. The promoter therefore has an active role in enriching, constructing and maintaining the jazz scene outside the metropolis while he also offers an alternative to the commercially oriented, bigger venues.

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