

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Glasgow (UofG)		
Unit of Assessment: 33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Supporting grassroots venues and industry organisations through music industries research		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2006-ongoing		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Matt Brennan	Reader in Popular Music	2018–present
Martin Cloonan	Professor of Popular Music Politics	1999–2017
John Williamson	Lecturer in Music	2012–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014–31 st July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Since 2009 until the coronavirus outbreak, live music has become dominant within the UK music industries, valued at GBP1.1 billion in 2019 by UK Music. However, this spectacular growth was driven by festivals and large-scale events, and grassroots venues were ‘undervalued, underfunded and ignored’. Research by Brennan, Cloonan and Williamson explored the implications of these changes, generating methodological insights, including a census toolkit, that have supported music industries organisations. This research led to attitude change among policymakers, for example helping to establish the ‘agent of change’ principle in planning policy and concessions on business rates for small venues – two legislative changes that help smaller live music venues remain viable. Finally, their research collaboration has enhanced awareness of the challenges facing the live music industry in the UK.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Brennan, Cloonan and Williamson have been researching the music industries individually, jointly and collaboratively in various combinations for the last 15+ years. Their research has combined historical research with studies of the challenges facing the 21st century music industries, in the wake of significant technological, industrial and societal changes.</p> <p>The first major output of this body of work was an influential, much-cited article by Williamson and Cloonan (2007) critiquing prior theorisations of a singular, unified ‘music industry’ (as understood by academics, journalists and policymakers). They make a compelling argument for pluralisation of the term (‘music industries’) to better indicate the diversity (and sometimes competing interests) of professional music sectors, encouraging increased focus on contemporary musicians in distinct areas, such as live performance, teaching and recording, with which they engaged. This became a basis for two major, AHRC-funded projects, on which Cloonan was Co-I (‘The Promotion of Live Music in the UK’, 2008, PI Simon Frith at Edinburgh) and PI (‘The Musicians’ Union: A Social History’, 2012) respectively. Brennan (then at Edinburgh) worked as research assistant on the former and Williamson (at Glasgow) the latter.</p> <p>The projects provide thorough historical accounts of live music in the UK since 1950 and musical work in Britain during the 20th century. Both projects shifted the focus of prior research from recording to live music, and from the idea of the musician as an artisan or creative to more of a common worker. The initial outcomes of these projects were books (Frith et al, 2019; Williamson and Cloonan 2016) but these were a starting point for a much wider series of engagements with audiences, policymakers and industry organisations, with an underlying aim of addressing the methodological challenges that such collaborations present.</p>		

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Most notably, Brennan and Cloonan co-founded [Live Music Exchange](#) (LMX) in 2012 and have since worked with its other directors (Simon Frith, Emma Webster, Adam Behr) on wide-ranging research within the live music industry. Behr et al (2016) proposed the analytic concept of an 'ecology' as a means of understanding wider cultures around live music, on a local, national and international level. Initially, this manifested itself in studies of individual venues (the Queen's Hall) and cities (Edinburgh), but more recently (2016–2017), the research methods applied to these studies were further developed in consultation with key stakeholders in the music industries, and rolled out on a national level with the first UK Live Music Census in the first half of 2017 (Webster et al 2019).

Crucially, the body of underpinning research conducted by staff at UofG has addressed wider methodological problems concerning the relationship between academic research with both music industries' organisations (Williamson, Cloonan and Frith 2011) and governmental bodies (Behr, Brennan and Cloonan 2016). These argue for the importance and value of such relationships but problematise the bidirectional flow of data between the various parties and the uses of academic research for policy making, promotion and lobbying, proposing instead a more integrated, pragmatic, adaptive and co-operative approach.

3. References to the research

- 3.1 Frith, S., Brennan, M., Cloonan, M. and Webster, E. (2019) [The History of Live Music in Britain, Volume 2: 1968-1984. From Hyde Park to the Hacienda](#). Routledge. ISBN 9781409425892. [available on request from HEI]
- 3.2 Behr, A., Brennan, M. Webster, E., Cloonan, M., and Ansell, J. (2019) Making live music count: the UK live music census. *Popular Music and Society*, 43(5), pp.501–522. ([doi:10.1080/03007766.2019.1627658](https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2019.1627658)).
- 3.3 Behr, A., Brennan, M., Cloonan, M., Frith, S. and Webster, E. (2016) [Live concert performance: an ecological approach](#). *Rock Music Studies*, 3(1), pp.5–23. ([doi:10.1080/19401159.2015.1125633](https://doi.org/10.1080/19401159.2015.1125633))
- 3.4 Williamson, J. and Cloonan, M. (2016) [Players' Work Time: A History of the British Musicians' Union, 1893-2013](#). Manchester University Press. ISBN 9781526113948. ([doi:10.7228/manchester/9781784991326.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9781784991326.001.0001))
- 3.5 Williamson, J., Cloonan, M. and Frith, S. (2011) [Having an impact? Academics, the music industries and the problem of knowledge](#). *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 17 (5), pp.459–474. ([doi:10.1080/10286632.2010.550682](https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2010.550682))
- 3.6 Williamson, J. and Cloonan, M. (2007) [Rethinking the Music Industry](#). *Popular Music*, 26(2), pp.305–3. ([doi:10.1017/S0261143007001262](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143007001262))

Quality: The body of work comprises publications based on original research that are peer-reviewed, and is therefore likely to satisfy or exceed the 2* threshold.

4. Details of the impact

Building research capacity across music industries, through accessible data and toolkit

The UK [Live Music Census](#) (LMC) is the world's first national census of live music, designed to address transparency and reliability of datasets used by industry and cultural organisations [3.5]. Using methods developed by Cloonan and Brennan, the LMX team, together with key partners the Music Venues Trust (MVT), Musicians' Union (MU) and UK Music, carried out venue and online surveys and focus groups. As UK Music's Director of Education and Skills [5.1] explained, this led to: '*the most comprehensive snapshot of live music ... to date in the UK ... For an*

organisation like UK Music and its members in the live music sector, such data is extremely useful in providing evidence when it comes to both informing and supplementing our own data collection...'

Lord Clement Jones, Liberal Democrat Digital Economy Spokesperson, commented [5.2], *'the robust methods developed in the census gives those groups involved in campaigns around live music an excellent evidence base for both current and future lobbying of parliamentarians'*. The Executive Director of the Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA) [5.3] said that LMC *'provided a robust methodology for measuring live music activity within particular cities as well as conducting the most detailed study of live music activity in Glasgow to date'*. The data collection toolkit is [freely available](#) for use by other city authorities, industry organisations and researchers to inform policy recommendations and decisions. As UK Music [5.1] noted, the LMC *'has the added benefit to the partner organisations of leaving a reliable methodology for measuring live music activity both nationally and locally which can be used as a basis for future research'*.

Changes to regulations in England & Wales and Scotland planning systems

By going beyond previous research that focused on economic value to encompass social and cultural value of live music, LMC provided evidentiary support to lobbyists and policymakers for the 'Agent of Change' principle which places responsibility on the party who initiated the change. Previously, new city centre housing developments could force existing music venues to bear consequential costs like additional soundproofing to offset noise for residents to the newly constructed housing, which disproportionately affected the sustainability of smaller venues. LMC provided evidence that enabled MVT, MU and UK Music to effectively lobby for Agent of Change, which would reverse this. The MVT's Strategic Director stated [5.4]: *'the type of rigorous and impartial data produced by the Live Music Census has undoubtedly helped us not only to build a case but also to successfully influence legislators in the UK, Welsh and Scottish Parliaments on these issues.'*

During the campaign, Lord Clement-Jones remarked that the case for such changes in Parliament *'will be reinforced by the authors of this UK Live Music Census'*. In July 2018, the principle was subsequently adopted into England's *National Planning Policy Framework* [5.5] and adopted into Scottish law under the *Planning (Scotland) Act* June 2019 [5.6]. MSP Kevin Stewart commented during the debate: *'the Scottish Government recognises the importance of ensuring that new development does not adversely impact existing businesses, particularly music venues.'* [5.7]. To give an example of the benefit of this change, the Star Inn, Guildford, faced a Council noise abatement order, forcing it to cease hosting live music. This was successfully appealed in July 2018 as a direct result of Agent of Change [5.8] because the Star Inn had existed as a music venue prior to construction of the block of flats affected by noise.

The challenge of increased business rates for smaller music venues was another issue raised by the LMC and lobbied by partner organisations. [IQ magazine](#) [5.9] reported in February 2019 that senior politicians across main political parties, having met with the then Chancellor Philip Hammond, supported UK Music's call *'to make grassroots music venues eligible for business rates rebates'*. Labour's then Shadow Culture Minister, Kevin Brennan, called for a reduction, citing grounds (via the LMC) that *'33% of small music venues reported that business rates increases had an "extreme, strong or moderate" impact on their existence in the past 12 months'*. In January 2020, the UK Government announced a 50% rates reduction, again connected to UK Music's campaigning using the LMC [5.10]. This was [subsequently increased](#) to 100% as a Covid-19 mitigation.

Enhanced co-operation between music industries, public and academia

The impact of this research extends beyond the music industries and policymakers to a wider audience via websites, the media, exhibitions/events and networks. The [Live Music Exchange](#) and [MU History](#) websites highlight issues of current and historical public interest, and both projects were covered in the media. Cloonan's media appearances on issues related to the [Live Music Census](#) and other [musical work](#) helped raise the profile of issues affecting small venues and working musicians. Cloonan and Williamson's work also featured prominently in the MU members' publication, *The Musician*. The MU History site (up to end January 2020) had 59,985 visitors and 102,045 page views since launching in 2014. [5.12]

Williamson and Cloonan produced the MU history exhibition at the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, in January 2016, and also the Peoples' History Museum, Manchester, and Congress House, London. The Musicians' Union [5.11] stated that the exhibition '*deftly illustrated key moments in the working lives of musicians through the decades*', adding it presented a superb opportunity to showcase how '*the MU has played a pivotal role in the lives of musicians across the UK and abroad.*' Alongside this, Cloonan and Williamson organised Glasgow's 2016 'Working in Music' conference, bringing together the MU's secretariat and executive committee, musicians, journalists and academics. The resulting dialogue led to the [Working in Music Network](#), which now has ~100 members internationally, including academics, musicians, and trade unionists. A further two international conferences were organised in 2018 and in 2020, an event delayed due to Covid.

Williamson and Brennan have further developed their work to help build capacity and data relating to the music industry in Scotland via collaborative research with the SMIA. This includes supervision of an AHRC-funded doctoral student and a number of Master's research projects. SMIA's Executive Director noted that this work '*has and will make a significant and valuable contribution to understanding and lobbying on behalf of the music industry in Scotland, supported by accurate and reliable data and analysis.*' [5.3]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 Testimonial letter, Director of Education and Skills, UK Music – project partner on AHRC “Great British Live Music Census” grant [PDF]
- 5.2 Testimonial letter, Lord Clement Jones, Liberal Democrat spokesperson Creative Industries (2014–2017), Digital (2017–) in House of Lords [PDF]
- 5.3 Testimonial letter, Executive Chair, Scottish Music Industry Association.
- 5.4 Testimonial letter, Strategic Director, Music Venues Trust – project partner on AHRC “Great British Live Music Census” grant [PDF]
- 5.5 [National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 182](#) [PDF]
- 5.6 [Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019, section 25](#) [PDF]
- 5.7 [They Work For You transcript from Planning \(Scotland\) Bill: Stage 3](#) [PDF]
<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/sp/?id=2019-06-18.16.142> [PDF]
- 5.8 News article, the Stage: <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2019/live-music-venue-threatened-closure-wins-relieve/> [PDF]
- 5.9 IQ Magazine <https://www.iq-mag.net/2019/02/cross-party-support-music-venues-business-relief/#.Xi8a7TL7Tcs> [PDF]
- 5.10 Guardian 27 Jan 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/jan/27/small-music-venues-to-get-50-reduction-in-business-rates> [PDF]
- 5.11 PR and Marketing Official, Musicians' Union. [PDF]
- 5.12 Google Analytics report [PDF]