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Music for Festivals: mediation, remediation and re-intermediation.

Introduction

The business of live music has been central to my life for over thirty years. From enthusiastic consumer, through to nervous performer and on to accidental promoter, live music has remained a constant in both my personal life and my career. Where Henry Jenkins (2006) sees the merging of the academic and the fan into the Aca/Fan, my own experience has seen the merging of the performer with the promoter, the Per/Pro perhaps, where the desire to perform when no-one will book you to play leads to the inevitable decision to put the gig on yourself. This philosophy led initially to the creation of the *Buzz Club*, a once a month opportunity to support all the bands you wished to see, from The Stone Roses to Primal Scream, from the Happy Mondays to Blur, from Suede to the Manic Street Preachers. Moreover, when the music industry began to shift from the primacy of the sale of recorded music through to the income generator of live music, this philosophy laid the foundations for my most important step into popular culture.

In 2003, I co-founded the Green Man Festival with my partner Jo Bartlett. Having lost our recording contract with BMG through the reported effects of the new file-sharing software Napster, the opportunities to play festivals were also removed. This led to the inevitable decision to put on a festival ourselves. The first, one-day event was held in Craig-y-Nos castle in the Tawe valley and was attended by 345 people. By 2005, the festival had

grown to 2,200 attendees and now lasted for three days. By multiplying the number of days spent by the number of visitors, the Green Man saw an increase from 345 to 6,600 Visitor Days in two years, a growth of almost 2000%. In 2010, 13,000 people came.

My personal interest and motivation for undertaking my MA was to try to understand how such a small-scale event, located at some distance from the more densely populated metropolitan areas, could grow at such an exponential rate. While I undertook much research into the Creative and Cultural industries, this paper looks into more experiential aspects of the festival, the ways in which the landscape is transformed into transgressive spaces and temporal communities are formed. In particular, it looks at the ways that meanings are conveyed from the stage to the audience, through the mediation of the Front of House (FOH) engineer, the remediation of the imperfect forces of sound and space, and the re-intermediation of the active consumer, whose decisions regarding the music they wish to hear at the festivals they attend, provide the ideal means for 'voting with your feet'.

Music for Festivals

When releasing the first Ambient record *Music for Airports* in 1978, Brian Eno used the inner sleeve to set out his manifesto for Ambient Music. Outlining a break with the past and questioning the background music of Muzak Inc., Eno (2004) described ambience as:

> an atmosphere, or a surrounding influence…for particular times and situations (pp.96-97).

With the growth in outdoor festivals, music that was often recorded and produced for individual consumption in the home or to mediate the urban landscape, is taken to new situations of collectivity and acoustic space. This has led to new and exciting ways for listeners to experience sound, both as individuals and as part of new, temporal communities. These interactions are often heightened moments for both the performer and the listener, in the process of creating meaning through mutual identification. As Shank confirms:

> because of its power to unify body and mind in a physical experience of promise and excess, musical practice acts as a structured process of subject production (2004, p.249)

As this unity is experienced so strongly, it is easy to overlook the complex mediations between the sound production and reception. For the sound waves to enter the cognitive part of the brain and create meaning, they must first pass through a series of interventions, from the generating instrument to

the amplification, from the mixing desk to the loudspeakers, from the acoustic space to the body. This paper investigates these intervening processes, with a particular focus on the human intervention offered by the sound engineers responsible for translating the generated sounds into a balanced reflection of the performer's intentions. The decisions they make, both as performers and listeners, condition the meaningful outcomes of the experience for everyone present.

Taking music out of the concert hall and amplifying it in the rural landscape, opens a new dialogue in the relationship between sound and space. Jensen (2006) recalls the historical belief in music as part of the harmonic whole:

> The notion that the natural environment, indeed, the entire universe, carries meanings that are articulated, in part, through sound, is familiar from the ancient idea of the music of the spheres (p.15).

Music was produced from naturally occurring objects and was felt to be integral to the design of nature. Its production could therefore be measured in the same numerical ratios as other concepts such as distance and time. To McLuhan (2004), this was the beginning of a movement away from the primitive association with sound that is absorbed at all times and from all directions:

> Acoustic space structure is the natural space of nature-in-the-raw inhabited by non-literate people (p.71).

By formulating a musical literacy, McLuhan sees unnecessary layers of complexity and the inserting of boundaries where none should exist. This leads to the dictates of a logical causality that seeks to place restraints upon the randomness and immediacy of sound.

The translation of sound into numerical measurements led to a system of musical notation. From this, Kahn (1994) identifies a process leading to "the privileging of music as the art of sound in modern Western culture" (p.3). In the same way, as music became the sound produced by instrumental machines, the tether to nature was also altered. The natural environment was no longer a significant element in music and it moved from outdoor acoustic spaces into the concert hall and the home. This set the limitations for the affective relationship between the performer and the listener, for as Stockfelt (2004) observes:

> the situation in which one encounters music conditions the music itself (p.89).

The sensual environment is necessarily circumscribed by the cultural norms of engaging with music set by the dominant society. Notions of appropriate behaviour determine the liminality of the experience and condition the music that might be performed before the select members of a cultural elite:

> Various musical styles were implicitly bound to specific environments and specific relationships between the performer and the listener (p.90).

The space for transgressive actions was therefore limited by the available technologies, until the advent of amplification created the opportunity for new relationships to be formed, and for new identities to rise beneath a canopy of sound.

Amplifying sound bears as much relation to industrial production as it does to music. Russolo (2004) in his *Futurist Manifesto* recognised how the ear took pleasure in the familiarity of the "different noises (p.12)" of modern life, and how the:

> evolution of music is comparable to the multiplication of machines, which everywhere collaborate with man (p.11).

With the ability to make sound louder, amplification does more than enable the listener to move further away from the performer. On the contrary, the proximity of the listener to the loudspeaker is a major factor in the affectiveness of the performance, demonstrating that loudness forms an emotional part of the experience. The visceral pull towards the source of the sound is evident in many genres of music, from metal to dance, where the body reacts to the sound. This may be a modern enactment of the primitive relation to sound that has been lost in more logical interpretations.

Through the process of amplification, it became possible to return music to the ancient landscape, for a vastly increased audience. Schafer (2004) sees this as symptomatic of an ongoing pattern of conquest:

> Just as we refuse to leave a space of our environment uncultivated, unmastered, so too we have refused to leave an acoustic space quiet and unpunctured by sound (p.36).

This reflects his desire for a "repatriation of quiet groves and times" (p.36), an almost idealistic search for an innocence lost through sound. It does not accord with the modern practices of music, but its mystical yearning may still be satisfied in the communion of spirit at a modern festival, when the loudness allows the individual to transcend the boundaries set by the cultural limitations of unamplified sound. In an age of ever increasing collaboration between body and machine, through mobile phone and laptop, we may need ever increasing volumes of sound to reach the point where:

> Music is supposed to bring out the spontaneous, essentially human element in its listeners and in virtually all human relations (Eisler and Adorno, 2004, p.74).

The ritualistic need for community through music may be evidenced by the traditional forms of religious and social celebration, and their dedicated sites of interaction. The awe-inspiring cathedral of the Middle Ages, with its dramatic, reverberating acoustics, may be replicated for the modern era by the rural landscape of the amplified festival.

The transgressive power of festivals is perhaps common to all times, but their mobility and ubiquity were highlighted with the rise of the rave scene. Here the music was deliberately excised from the confined spaces allotted by

society, and taken to new areas of unpoliced experience. Thornton (1995) asserts the value of geography in the formation of subcultural capital:

> When raves moved clubs out of traditional dance venues into new sites like disused warehouses, aircraft hangars, municipal pools and tents in farmers' fields, it was partly in pursuit of forbidden and unpredictable senses of place (p.22).

These new communities with their reliance on mobile sound systems offered a template for the creation of an almost instant collective identity. This preceded the more formalised reworking of the licensing laws that allowed for the proliferation of outdoor events, which as Gibson (1997, p.3) noted "amounts to what Foucault described the construction of *heterotopias* – the formation of legitimised spaces set aside for deviant behaviour." Such behaviour only becomes possible when the sound remediates the surroundings, creating new soundscapes that change aircraft hangars into pleasure domes, and farmers' fields into zones of primitive ritual. It is the first act of any outside intervention to put a stop to the music.

What the rave scene proved was the ability of sound to flood the senses. In general, the DJs routed recorded sounds through turntable mixers and set the master volume for the loudspeakers. With the addition of live music performers though, the festival represents a far more intricate system of sound production, and relies heavily upon the skills of the front of house (FOH) sound engineer. They are responsible for translating the on-stage

performance into a meaningful balance of sound, to ensure that the listener receives the correct message from the music. They are in fact the primary receptors of the message and fulfil Gould's (2004) function of the listener who:

> is able to indulge preferences and, through the electronic modifications with which he endows the listening experience, impose his own personality upon the work (p.122).

It is a matter of considered judgement to intervene between the performer and the audience, and is of the utmost consequence. It is impossible to gain full enjoyment of a performance when the sound is bad and in the context of a festival performance, the pressure is accentuated by the unfamiliarity of the surroundings, the time restraints of the sound check, and the increased size of the audience.

Decisions therefore have to be made based on experience and instinct. When working with an indoor venue, certain heuristics can be applied, as Ian 'Nelly' Nelson (2010), FOH engineer for *Placebo* attests:

> With experience you get a handle on generally how a venue will sound from the shape, surfaces, ceiling construction etc. However, you never really know until you turn the PA on and have a listen.

A FOH engineer is therefore utilising his spatial awareness before his auditory reception is employed. This aligns with Rumsey's (2001) realisation that it is

the higher level brain activities that are engaged when sound engineers make their judgements:

> Cognitive issues in sound listening concern the higher level interpretative aspects of the brain's function, and relate to the ways in which people make sense of their environment and experiences (p.42).

The use of experience is crucial then to the speed of decision-making, along with the ability to utilise a number of cognitive functions to build a mental picture of the acoustic space structure before the auditory information is processed.

FOH engineers also aim to build this picture more quickly by working with familiar equipment. John Haskett (2010), FOH engineer for *Killing Joke*, explains his favourite technical aids: "I like to carry my own microphones, at least then you have consistency of source. There's nothing worse than not having your preferred mic." Microphones are transducers that convert physical energy to electrical energy and it is significant that Haskett seeks to control that energy at the source. However, it may not be that the signals the microphones generate are entirely accurate, more that the FOH engineer is aware of their weaknesses, for as White (1999) identifies:

> microphone technology isn't perfect, and in order to make a microphone perform particularly well in one area it's generally necessary to compromise its performance to some extent in another (p.12).

Again the sound engineer is employing experience to improve their own performance and ability to make key decisions. Employing a range of microphones enables the minimum of disruption to the originating electrical source.

From the microphone, the signal is transmitted to the mixing desk. FOH engineers make individual assumptions about the differences in operating the desks, particularly in their attitudes towards digital and analogue technologies. Haskett (2010) who, while enjoying high end digital equipment also admits to being "a bit of an analogue dinosaur," believes that it is the way that the source signal leaves the desk that marks the technologies apart:

> It's all down to summing. Analogue is great throughout. Digital may sound great per channel, but by the time it gets summed to stereo it all goes pear-shaped.

Within the technical reasoning then, aesthetic decisions may also be discerned. The FOH engineer is doing much more than merely acting as an open conduit for the sound signal, as Nelson (2010) demonstrates with his vision of the difference between the two technologies:

> I prefer digital. Analogue is a big comfy armchair where you need to walk to a massive fridge to get a beer. Digital is a slightly less comfy, but much more modern armchair, where you have 60 types of virtual beer on tap at all times.

Notions of comfort and playfulness paint an evocative background to the meaning-making and identity building of the FOH engineer. It is a role that appeals to problem-solvers and those who like to make artistic decisions.

How much of their personality is employed in their work may be gauged by Nelson and Haskett both asserting they have their own signature sound. Haskett (2010) observes, “whatever I do people always say there is an edge to it. I don't mix safe.” Both though always ensure that the mix is appropriate for the style of the music and for the individual tracks being performed:

> Mostly I listen to the sound but you have to tailor the sound to the music. It’s no good having a massive kick drum going on during a ballad (Nelson, 2010).

A close relationship with the performer is obviously desirable and it is no surprise that both engineers see their own performance as tied in with the artists. This is particularly true over the course of a long tour, where Haskett (2010) compares the beginning to the latter stages and says his own performance improved: “without a doubt. Especially with solos and FX cues. Towards the end of the *Jet* world tour it was almost auto-pilot.” Over time the conditioned reflexes of the FOH engineer harmonise with the artist, and reduce the level of mediation between the performer and the audience. It is not the case though that the engineer’s personality is being reduced, for Haskett is still adding the necessary edge to his own performance, whilst appearing to act almost automatically.

When Nelson (2010) distinguishes between the 'sound' and the 'music', he raises one of the most important questions regarding FOH engineers. How much are they working with sound, the movements in the air that physically affect the body, and how much are they working with music, the way in which sound is culturally organised into emotionally affective units? Cook (2000) points out the artificiality of the latter:

> It is one of music's special characteristics that it appears to be a product of nature – that it appears, in a widely used phrase, to be a 'universal language' – but, in reality, this appearance is an illusion (p.18).

The FOH engineers are evidently literate in this 'language' and it may be significant that neither Nelson nor Haskett have a background in acoustic science. Haskett (2010) joined the Ents committee at Portsmouth Poly and "was basically taught by a fellow student" while Nelson (2010) claims the almost traditional proving ground:

> I got into this through playing in bands and messing about with a 4-track tape machine that my father owned.

This blend of music industry contact and intellectual curiosity is the key to the FOH engineer's skill-base. The desire to be involved, coupled with a certain scientific leaning is probably at the heart of the profession.

Without any specific training, there are obviously other methods of working with sound. The composer Oliveros (2004) points out the need to look beyond the tendency to rely solely upon the ears:

> As I lean on my wooden table, my arm receives sympathetic vibrations from the low frequencies of the bulldozer, but hearing seems to take place in my stomach (pp.102-103).

Nelson (2010) confirms the physical process of working with sound, and notes how, alongside his ears, other parts of the body come into use:

> There are other routes of sound transmission to the brain, such as bone transmission, which tend to work at the lower end of the frequency spectrum. This area helps to perceive the low frequency power of the system eg the Kick drum punching you in the chest.

This more primitive and visceral link to the sound source is one of the ways in which the FOH engineer acts as both the primary listener and as part of the wider audience community, ensuring that the mediation between performer and listener is undertaken sympathetically. By accepting the validity of their own physical reactions, the FOH engineers act as taste-makers and arbiters for every listener. As experienced receptors of amplified sound they are able to ensure the affective intent of the music is both corporeal and cerebral.

The ears receive auditory support from the body, but they are still the primary tool in the FOH engineer's trade. In achieving the aim of connecting performer to listener, their primacy in particular functions is unquestioned:

> The human ears are very good at detecting distortion and things like *balance* – the relative loudnesses of sources – and also perspective. No electronic device has yet been made to replace the ear in these matters (Talbot-Smith, 1996, p.132).

This is confirmed by Haskett (2010) who, whilst mindful of the need to protect his ears against levels in excess of 90 dBA, insists on removing earplugs when mixing, because otherwise "you tend to up the level too much for the punters." Nelson (2010) too will only wear ear protectors when "not mixing or monitoring the audio." The responsibility the FOH engineers take for "the punters" demonstrates their role as controllers of the sound source, and also highlights their trust in the ears as the representative method of receiving meaning for everyone present.

Visual aids are employed by both to aid aural monitoring, but only act as a secondary tool. Talbot-Smith (1996) asserts that, "the ear is very poor indeed at assessing *absolute* loudness (p.132)" and it is here that systems such as Smaart are useful to the FOH engineer, particularly during sound checks. However, Nelson (2010) is quite insistent that the ears are in control throughout the performance:

> During the show the mixing side of things is all auditory as opposed to

visual. The sound can't "look" right, it has to sound right.

Experience again plays a larger part in determining that the performance is sounding right, and it may be that that brain does not need additional visual stimuli while making rapid calculations.

The main cognitive task for the FOH engineer is to successfully translate the mass of input data into the correct physical reactions of adjusting the comparative sound levels. Rumsey (2001) describes the processes involved in balancing the stream of received information:

> From the complex collection of frequency components and time-related features sent from the ears, the brain has to decipher meaningful information…The feat of signal processing and associative memory involved here is quite remarkable (p.43).

The powerful link between hearing and memory allows the FOH engineer to make the necessary decisions, but an outdoor event obviously poses a unique set of problems. In a festival situation, the engineer will have very few aids for his performance. The microphones and desk will generally be supplied by the in-house production team and the time allowed for sound check may be as little as thirty minutes, only enough time for a simple line check.

Although digital desks now allow for the possibility of using pre-set monitor levels to increase the speed of setting the sound, Nelson (2010)

prefers not to rely on the technique unless he has used the particular desk several times before. He believes that:

> As a pro engineer you have to familiar with all the types of desk that you could come across. It's just a case of being prepared and having an idea of how you are going to approach the show with the equipment that has been provided.

This sense of professionalism is rooted in a set of highly developed technical skills, but also draws on a well of physical reactions and subjective emotions. Standing behind an unfamiliar desk at a variable distance from the sound source requires spatial information to be reconfigured, much as the on-stage performers who:

> are concerned with making balances and arrangements of interesting sounds to produce desired aesthetic effects (Schafer, 2004, p.37).

In a natural landscape the terrain introduces new elements of uncertainty, with no ceilings or walls to provide the usual end points for projected sounds. No amount of technical experience can fully prepare the FOH engineer for the infinite variety of acoustic spaces that festivals provide, when modern industry and urbanity intrude upon the ancient rural calm.

There are indeed some technical advantages in working with an outdoor sound, as the environment has certain sonic qualities that the purpose-built indoor venue cannot match. As Nelson (2010) explains:

> Outdoor shows have a tendency to be almost anechoic. You rarely seem to get any reverb or EQ anomalies. Mountains tend not to be a problem as they are very random shapes and actually act as sound diffusers because they create thousands of random echoes which kill the energy of the wave quite quickly.

It is easy to detect here an emotional response towards those 'thousands of random echoes' generated through the front of house mechanical systems, "that feeling that sound is leaving us with no hope of being reflected back" (Varese, 2004, p.18). The imagination is drawn to the diffusion of music back into the spheres, and the mind is left to wonder if they still form a part of an harmonic whole, tamed for a while within the poor forms of technological progress, before being joyously returned to their universal home.

The inadequacy before nature is illustrated by the powerlessness of the FOH sound engineer against the elements. As Haskett reveals:

> On a clear, windless day outdoor sound is amazing, but wind is the killer of all outdoor shows. Nothing can be done about it.

It is this unwritten pact with the environment that adds so much extra excitement to the festival experience. A moment when nature re-communes with the music and fuses an almost magical alchemy of inter-connections between performer, mediator and listener.

The heightened atmosphere that surrounds the on-stage performer is more than merely the size of the audience or the loudness of the sound. Alongside the edge provided by professionals working at the top of their game, the festival creates the arena for new enlightenments as Bendix (2000) discovered in the performance of the classical musicians who took their music out of the concert halls and into the mountains:

> Playing outdoors, especially in scenic elevation, provided a different aural experience for them as much as it did for those who listened, but while they concentrated on each other's playing, the audience had the opportunity to turn inside themselves (p.39).

Turning inside is not an introspective action, but rather a chance to examine individual identity within a new collective holism. Beneath the canopy of the enveloping sound, the individual gains the freedom and safety to form a new collective identity, as recognized by Attali (2004): "All music, any organization of sounds is then a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality" (p.7). It is the function of the FOH engineer to ensure that sounds are organized meaningfully as they mediate between performer and listener. Their role is to be the primary receiver, the safe pair of hands and ears in the performance chain. Through their work they both help form the new community and occupy a vital place within it.

The festival listening experience is suffused with codes and meanings. Led by the musical genres, the formation of new geographical zones within

proscribed time frames creates a unique set of affective experiences. Stockfelt (2004) describes this phenomenon as *adequate listening* which occurs:

> when one listens to music according to the exigencies of a given social situation and according to the predominant sociocultural conventions of the subculture to which the music belongs (p.91).

Within the formation of the collective identity of a festival, the sociocultural conventions take on new meanings as subcultures are formed that are both inside and outside the music. While the music provides the auditive background, group identities are formed around the nuclei of camping zones, food outlets and natural spaces. As these groups coalesce into larger collectives, a festival identity is formed and new societal boundaries of transgressive behaviour are set.

Hearing and listening are the primary means for the formation of these identities. As Bendix (2000) understands, they are the methods that most determine our positioning within the multi-sensory environment and that, "The ear is an enormously important place for selecting and mediating from this gigantic soundscape who we are and who we want to be" (p.42). While often seconded to sight in the sensory modernities, hearing links more directly to memory and previous experience than visual recollection. Looking at a photograph is a much more distant way of experiencing the past than hearing a piece of music associated with the same event, and visuality is largely an individual re-enactment. As Eisler and Adorno (2004) point out, far more

collective information is stored within acoustical perception than optical perception:

> This direct relationship to a collectivity, intrinsic in the phenomenon itself, is probably connected with the sensations of spatial depth, inclusiveness, and absorption of individuality, which are common to all music (p.74).

Sound binds us together in a way that vision cannot. This is evident in both the meditative chant of organized ritual and in the minutes of remembrance when a complete silence is observed. A communion of spirit can be experienced through collective harmony and collective silence.

In the festival soundscape, a new music is created. It is a sound that combines environment and performance, listening and identity. Through movement and activity in acoustic space, everyone present can, "directly influence their sonic environment and collectively create the aural landscape they desire" (Lorstad, d'Inverno & Eacott, 2004, p.155). The influence and satisfaction of desire leads to the creation of new knowledge as the participants move "from passive consumers to active creators" (p.155) and begin to form empathetic social relationships:

> culture heard is always a complex of orientations toward others, echoic of the other's expectations (Carter, 2005, p.56).

It is through hearing that 'others' are most immediately experienced and identities shaped. This allows for the integrated actitvities of sound, sending a positive answer to Schafer's (2004) question:

> Is the soundscape of the world an indeterminate composition over which we have no control or are *we* its composers and performers, responsible for giving it form and beauty? (pp.29-30).

The boundaries between composition and performance are removed, as the collective engagement takes the experience higher. Just as the FOH engineers' performance develops over the course of a tour, the adequate listeners "transcend the limitations that performance imposes upon the imagination" (Gould, 2004, p.118) growing closer together and taking greater responsibilities for the form and the beauty.

Festivals offer new geographies for creating meaning from acoustic space. With their separation from the everyday, they allow for the growth of relationships and facilitate the creation of alternative values that, "can generate new modes of music making and new social textualizations of music" (Russo and Warner, 2004, p.52). These textualizations involve vectors of communication and meaning passing between all the participants, removing the barriers of the concert hall where Bendix (2000) believes:

> Performers and performance have been too starkly separated from audiences' perception (p.42).

As the boundaries are dissolved, collective identities are formed beneath the protective umbrella of sound, with the music becoming something much greater than the simple performance of compositions in a new distribution. Following the rise of the Internet, this can be seen as a process of re-intermediation, where the consumer is no longer merely the passive receptor for the available recorded output:

> The most important effect is likely to be found in the shift in the locus of decision making regarding what music is made available to the public, what music can be heard, where that music is available, and its cost (Jones, 2002, p.223).

The locus shifts to the transgressive and creative spaces provided by festivals, where the music is formed collectively in temporal subcultures of auditory meaning-making and identity. Its availability is determined by the music's ability to be shared and re-shaped according to the collective desire.

In order for this to take place, the mediators have to perform their functions. For the individuals this requires their ears to decipher meanings within the multiplicity of sensory information. Before their ears receive this data though, the sound source has already been mediated through the skilled hands and ears of the FOH engineer. Nelson (2010) sees clearly that fulfilling this crucial role requires more than just technical experience:

> Sound engineering is like photography. It's an area where art meets science. You need a great deal of technical knowledge to be able to

> use the equipment and understand how audio "works." But you also need an artistic side to interpret the music and bring it across as the audience expects to hear it.

The audience does more than just expect the music. Through their listening they act through the performer to shape their collective experience and forge new meanings and identities.

These modern rituals require new places of worship. Jensen (2006) notes how the interactions of landscapes and sound has led to transformations where "soundscapes have increasingly been reengineered and remediated, from historical spaces of hearing to dedicated places of hearing" (p.16). The technology of the loudspeaker has allowed for larger and larger collectivities to gather outside the purpose-built structures of venues and cathedrals, and to experience the awe of the loudness of sound. These technologies require mediation, much as in Schafer's (2004) account that:

> In the Zoroastrian religion the priest Srosh (representing the genius of hearing) stands between man and the pantheon of the gods transmitting the divine messages to humanity (p.31).

FOH engineers would probably not recognise themselves as priests, but they might accept the role of transmitters. Their primary function may be one of liberators, as they unleash the sounds which:

> have been torn from their natural sockets and given an amplified and independent existence (p.34).

The amplification provides the space for communities to form and liminalities to be explored. It is a time of independent existence and freedom for every participant. Music for Festivals is a release. For the FOH engineer it is the release of skills and experience, and the release of aesthetic judgment. For the performer and the listener, it is the release of communications and meanings, and a release from the everyday. Most of all though, it is the release of sound; the joyous union of energy and noise and its rightful re-integration into the music of the spheres. Music's coming home.

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