

A Spatial History of Arena Rock, 1964–79

Michael Ethen  
Schulich School of Music  
McGill University, Montreal

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## Abstract

This dissertation traces a history of popular music and explores problems in social space theory from the perspective of the genre called Arena Rock. Many of the popular music practices between 1964 and 1979 have been the work of performers who attracted enormous live audiences, and the 1970s has been called “the age of the arena.” Yet problems of live performance are neither confronted by the prevailing theories of social space nor adequately foregrounded in popular music historiography. The case of Arena Rock presents a unique opportunity to address these urgent historical and theoretical issues, because it marks the moment at which chroniclers of popular music recognized the importance of performance venues to the definition of a genre. An indispensable but neglected area in popular music history, Arena Rock constitutes a fundamentally nodal genre that encompassed performers of diverse aesthetic priorities, from the reputed British originators the Beatles and Led Zeppelin to the American bands Styx, Kiss, and Boston, and spanned a range of geographic locations and venue types, from rural farmland to urban and suburban stadiums and arenas. Through close interpretations of the developmental contexts of Arena Rock, this study demonstrates how the genre came to represent a contentious field of popular culture riven by divergent views on the construction of social space. In doing so, this study charts a history of musicians, critics, and fan communities that grappled with questions of commercial music and live performance, with chapters that focus on the relationship between rock concerts and characteristic uses of urban space; Led Zeppelin's practice of designing compositions suitable for and redolent

of reverberant stadiums; the politics of improvisation and routine in the music of Grateful Dead; the complex interconnectedness in the early 1970s of the faltering rock festival industry and the burgeoning urban field of arena rock; and the hoary question of authenticity around 1977, when rock critics began using, in a fairly consistent manner, the genre term Arena Rock.

## Abrégé

Cette thèse retrace l'histoire de la musique populaire et examine les problèmes de théorie en terme d'espace social — dans la perspective du genre musical appelé «Rock d'aréna». Plusieurs formules de musique populaire se retrouvent dans les œuvres de performeurs sur scène qui, entre 1964 et 1979 attiraient des publics énormes. Les années 1970 sont ainsi devenues «l'âge de l'aréna». Mais les problèmes de performance en direct ne sont pas confrontés aux théories qui prévalent dans l'espace social, ou encore mis en valeur dans l'historiographie de la musique populaire. Le cas du Rock d'aréna présente une opportunité urgente et unique de confronter ces problèmes historiques et théoriques, parce que cette époque marque le moment auquel les chroniqueurs de musique populaire ont reconnu l'importance des lieux de performances dans la définition d'un genre musical. Un genre incontournable mais négligée par l'histoire de la musique populaire, le Rock d'aréna constitue une catégorie fondamentalement nodale qui comprenait des performeurs aux priorités esthétiques diverses, en commençant par les Beatles et Led Zeppelin – présumés créateurs anglais du Rock d'aréna – en passant par les groupes américains comme Styx, Kiss, et Boston et tout cela dans une variété d'endroits géographiques et de types de scène – à partir des fermes rurales jusqu'aux stades et aux arènes des villes et de leurs banlieues. À travers l'interprétation méticuleuse des contextes développementaux du Rock d'aréna, cette étude démontre comment le genre a évolué pour représenter un domaine controversé d'une culture populaire tourmentée par des points de vue divergents dans la construction de l'espace

social. Pour ce faire, cette étude trace l'histoire des musiciens, des critiques, et des communautés d'amateurs confrontés à des questions de musique commerciale et de performance en direct, dans des chapitres qui font le point : sur les relations entre les concerts rock et les usages caractéristiques d'espace urbain; sur la pratique du groupe Led Zeppelin de développer des compositions qui évoquent les stades réverbérant; sur les pratiques routinières d'improvisation dans la musique des Grateful Dead; sur l'inter-connectivité complexe au début des années 70s d'une industrie des festivals rock en déclin malgré la demande urbaine croissante du Rock d'aréna; et sur la question déformée de l'authenticité quand les critiques de rock ont commencé à utiliser, autour de 1977, le terme générique «Rock d'aréna» de manière plus ou moins consistante.



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## Introduction

This dissertation is a study of music and musicians associated with the genre of popular music that emerged in the 1970s under the name “Arena Rock.”<sup>1</sup> The genre comprises a constellation of musicians who have secured their place in popular music histories, of recorded songs that figured prominently in popularity charts across the media, and of live performances in arenas, in stadiums, and at festivals that created the appropriate conditions for “Arena Rock” to be conferred its name. The term Arena Rock itself has an interesting history: although chroniclers of popular music came to deploy it consistently around 1977, the term entered the lexicon gradually over a period of years, and the performance practices that it signifies have an even longer history which this dissertation will explore. Thus, this study will focus on music and musicians firmly connected to the term, as well as predecessors for whom the association with Arena Rock is more tenuous. Such Arena Rock musicians and practices *avant la lettre* began with the Beatles, attended a tremendous growth of the rock concert industry into the 1970s, and established the performance horizon of aspiring musicians throughout the period 1964–79. One goal of aligning these disparate musicians is to foreground the development of the Arena Rock industry during the period, measured in terms of the substantial material growth in concert technology and

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<sup>1</sup> This phrase should be taken to signify concerts in arenas as well as in other venue types, such as stadiums and rural festivals. Many rock bands alternately performed at all three, and we needn't confuse the issue by suggesting that these musicians performed “arena rock,” “stadium rock,” and “festival rock.” Throughout the dissertation I intend the phrase Arena Rock—with upper-case letters—to convey the sense invoked by critics around 1977, when the term became for them a convenient and derisive shorthand to dismiss what they considered the least attractive aspects of rock composition, theater, fandom, and attitude. Later in this introduction, I will examine the phrase more closely to explicate its origins and the root causes of its negative valence.

alterations to music composition as arena concerts became a standard practice.

Another goal of aligning these diverse musicians is to help establish Arena Rock as a viable object of study, and to join the rapidly growing body of scholarship in this area.<sup>2</sup> To help my case, it is worth acknowledging at the outset that Arena Rock encompasses musicians and concert events that held considerable sway within the popular music industry during and beyond the period 1964–79. In addition to the Beatles, those musicians directly examined in this document—Led Zeppelin, the Grateful Dead, Boston, KISS, and Styx—are bands that generated their influence in no small part through their extensive touring and concertizing in arenas, in stadiums, or at festivals such as Woodstock. Indeed, the gradual but sure acceptance of Arena Rock by chroniclers of popular music and the phenomenal success of these musicians among fans should compel critical investigation, but musicologists have thus far been reluctant to tackle this topic. Scholars need to address this lacuna before claiming to understand the 1970s, a period of popular music history recently labeled “the forgotten decade.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This project represents the first full-length musicological study of the genre. To be sure, scholars from disciplines other than musicology have discussed Arena Rock at various lengths. For example, Philip Auslander, a scholar in Performance Studies, has provided helpful analysis in the brief article “Music as Performance: Living in the Immaterial World” *Theater Survey* 47 (2006): 261–269, and in his monograph on a related genre, *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006). Ethnomusicologist Laurel Sercombe deftly analyzed Beatles concerts to suggest that their fans themselves offered a type of performance in, “Ladies and Gentlemen . . .” The Beatles, *The Ed Sullivan Show*, CBS TV, February 9, 1964” in Ian Inglis, *Performance and Popular Music: History, Place and Time* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006): 1–15. Steve Waksman, an American History scholar, has come closest to providing a comprehensive view of Arena Rock’s origins, in the article “Grand Funk Live! Staging Rock in the Age of the Arena” in Eric Weisbard, ed., *Listen Again: A Momentary History of Pop Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007): 157–71, and later in the book *This Ain’t the Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover in Heavy Metal and Punk* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Andy Bennett, “The Forgotten Decade: Rethinking the Popular Music of the 1970s,” *Popular Music History* 2 (2007): 5–24. Tellingly, in this article which attempts a recuperation of neglected aspects of the 1970s, Bennett omits any significant discussion of Arena Rock music

Glaring lacunae such as this are characteristic of relatively young fields such as popular music studies, but I believe that a more unhappy reality can help explain this gap in our knowledge. The gap is based in predominantly negative critical evaluations of the music and performance practices. Today, these evaluations echo in academic writing, where one author recently concluded that the widely popular music lacked depth and was merely a “radio programmer's dream.”<sup>4</sup> Judgments such as this bear a striking resemblance to the contemporaneous sentiments of Arena Rock critics, many of whom reviled the commercialism of the music and performances even as audiences sometimes as large as 100,000 attended concerts in the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> Although Arena Rock music engendered positive associations among its fans, its critics usually deployed the term in a pejorative sense. This sharp disparity of understanding and the tension that results lie at the heart of this dissertation, and an examination of them will aid the understanding of the term Arena Rock as it coalesced around 1977. In light of this cleft in reception, perhaps the most compelling reason to study Arena Rock is the sense of tension that resonates through the corpus of literature on the subject.

This research is motivated by at least two additional factors. First is the fact that Arena Rock music of the 1970s maintains a continued presence in today's American soundscape. For example, Hollywood film soundtracks frequently, and often ironically, return to the sounds of Arena Rock to capitalize on the music's

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or musicians.

<sup>4</sup> Kevin Holm-Hudson, “‘Come Sail Away’ and the Commodification of ‘Prog Lite.’” *American Music* 23 (2005): 391.

<sup>5</sup> A more recent position on the genre aligns it with “the most vapid organics of culture (heavy metal arena rock, team sports, and dead end jobs).” See Mark Zimmerman, “Review: Colloquial Arabesques” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 21 (1999): 71.

resonance with a wide audience. Likewise, Arena Rock songs have recently been incorporated into United States presidential campaigns, where their anthemic lyrics tend to inspire audiences to unite around a simple, terse message. Whether ironic or otherwise, the recirculation of Arena Rock music attests to the initial significance of these songs and the continued cultural resonance of them.

Moreover, the continuing presence of Arena Rock bands in our time—often with the original members, usually playing the old songs—testifies to the grip Arena Rock music has on the public musical consciousness. Second, Arena Rock is rich with uplifting and optimistic lyrics, which helps explain why it succeeded in its own time and why it persists today. Such a tone could seem like a palliative to Americans in the late 1970s, a period marked by economic, political, and natural disaster: persistent stagflation, the Iran hostage crisis, the energy crisis of 1979, the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the eruption of Mount St. Helens. Composed against this tumultuous background, one optimistic song by the Arena Rock band Journey was recently employed in a U.S. presidential campaign; its chorus begins, “Don't stop believing/hold on to that feeling.” This kind of tone also pervades the compositions of the band Boston, an Arena Rock band whose compositions evidently improved the outlook of some fans. Boston's guitarist Tom Scholz said recently that

The best thing is getting letters from people who have genuinely been helped in some way by this music – whether it helped them get through tough times, or inspired them to stop taking something, or go back to school or make some sort of positive life changes. That type of success means a lot more to me than anything else.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> David Wild, “Better Music Through Science, or, The Biggest Basement Tapes Ever Made: A Fan's Notes,” last modified June 22, 2010, accessed February 2, 2011,

In light of these two reasons, one might conceive of Arena Rock as a rich field of study replete with themes of optimism and promise, and that for these reasons this field would be thoroughly studied. However, as I have alluded, few writers have taken up the issue of Arena Rock, a state of affairs that echoes the sentiments of contemporaneous, nationally syndicated critics more than those of writers from middle America.

As the first full-length study of Arena Rock, this dissertation is concerned with five primary issues: the genre's name itself, authenticity, security, concert technologies, and urban space. Concerning the name, with the possible exception of garage rock, Arena Rock is the first genre of popular music to be named specifically after its place of performance. To be sure, genres before Arena Rock have taken the name of their origin, such as Motown (Detroit) and Northern (U.K.) soul, and genres subsequent to it have taken their name from their place of consumption, such as disco. But Arena Rock marks the moment at which chroniclers of popular music recognized the importance of performance venues—specifically, urban and suburban stadiums and arenas—to the definition of a genre. Is it really so simple; did critics arrive at the appellation Arena Rock merely in recognition of the place of performance? No, the name derived from a complicated value system that took into account venue as well as musical style and concert technology, band popularity and musicianship. These venues, however, were important because they allowed and encouraged the material growth in concert technology and alterations to music composition, elevating the

amplitude and theatrical nature of concerts, and intensifying the relationship between the popular music industry and urban architecture. Critics like John Rockwell of the *New York Times* recognized the increasing potential for grand spectacle, but saw in the most elaborate of concerts only disappointing failure. He wrote of the band KISS that, “Even with their smoke, flames, spat blood, explosive charges and levitating drumstands, they are still tied to the stiff format of the arena rock show and, as such, their theatricality looks limited and lame.”<sup>7</sup> This study will be particularly concerned with the negative connotations offered by rock critics, since their opinions arguably remain the prevailing view of Arena Rock.

Second among the guiding issues for this dissertation is the hoary issue of authenticity.<sup>8</sup> In one view, authenticity and rock music have an uneasy relationship within critical discourse, such that the history of rock “can be read as unfolding in cycles of waxing and waning authenticities: the creation of an ‘authentic’ style, its transformation into a marketable commodity, followed by a push to renew authenticity by turning to a fresher style.”<sup>9</sup> Since it focuses on

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<sup>7</sup> John Rockwell, “Kiss Satisfies Need for Glitter At Rock Show,” *New York Times*, February 20, 1977.

<sup>8</sup> I take up this issue head-on in the final chapter. The best and most recent research into authenticity is as follows: Emily I. Dolan, “. . . This Little Ukelele Tells the Truth!: Indie Pop and Kitch Authenticity,” *Popular Music* 29 (2010): 457–469; Allan Moore, “Authenticity as Authentication,” *Popular Music* 21 (2002): 209–23, and “U2 and the Myth of Authenticity in Rock,” *Popular Musicology* 3 (1998): 4–24; Keir Keightley, “Reconsidering Rock,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Rock and Pop*, edited by Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 2001): 109–42; Mark Mazullo, “Authenticity in Rock Music,” PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1999; and Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); “Art Versus Technology: The Strange Case of Popular Music,” *Media, Culture and Society* 8 (1986): 263–79; and “‘The Magic That Can Set You Free’: the Ideology of Folk and the Myth of the Rock Community,” *Popular Music* 1 (1981): 159–68.

<sup>9</sup> Dolan, 458. With polemical rather than synoptic language, Simon Frith casts this uneasy



musical styles, this cursory view promotes the notion of intrinsic authenticity, an incomplete notion which fails to account for the act of authentication; the “authentic” requires an authenticator. A more complete view suggests that “authenticity is a value, a quality we ascribe to perceived relationships between music, socio-industrial practices, and listeners or audiences.”<sup>10</sup> Like beauty, then, authenticity is in the eye of the beholder, and Allan Moore has spearheaded an attempt to revive the authenticity debate with this action in mind.<sup>11</sup> A still more comprehensive view of authenticity, beyond musical styles and the process of authentication, would also incorporate a discussion of relative autonomy and the question of authorship emerging from historical movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Romanticism and Modernism.<sup>12</sup> In Keightley's binary construction, Romantic authenticity tends to value tradition where Modernist authenticity tends to value progress; Romantics downplay technology where Modernists celebrate its importance. Keightley was careful to note that authenticity within this binary construction is no either-or proposition, stating that “While most performers or genres will line up on one side or the other of [his summary Table], rock's internal complexity makes it difficult to label individual genres or performers as completely and exclusively 'Romantic' or 'Modernist'.”<sup>13</sup> This nuance allows Keightley to argue that “Rock culture tends to regard as most

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relationship in a similar fashion: “If, for example, the standard line of rock 'n' roll history is that an authentic (that is, folk) sound is continually corrupted by commerce, it could equally well be argued that what the history actually reveals is a commercial musical form continually being recuperated in the name of art and subculture.” See Frith, “The Sociological Response,” in *Performing Rites*, 42.

<sup>10</sup> Keightley, 131.

<sup>11</sup> Moore, “Authenticity as Authentication.”

<sup>12</sup> Keightley, 135.

<sup>13</sup> Keightley, 138.

innovative those rocker performers who deploy Romantic and Modernist authenticity more or less equally, in a productive tension.”<sup>14</sup> Launching from this formulation, I argue in the final chapter of this dissertation that although the Arena Rock bands Boston, KISS, and Styx displayed both Romantic and Modernist tendencies, they were nevertheless considered inauthentic by high-profile critics, and not consecrated by those avenues of power.

Third among the guiding issues is an aspect of social space not normally considered in popular music studies: security. This topic is not a customary consideration within popular music studies because it is a marginal issue for those interested in musicians and the production, circulation, and consumption of music. Yet the topic of security—especially breaches of security—has strongly influenced how many events in rock history are remembered. To illustrate, those familiar with the history of rock festivals in the 1960s will remember the Altamont Free Concert sponsored by the Rolling Stones on December 6, 1969, and immediately recall the tragic homicide that evening of an armed teenager named Meredith Hunter at the hands of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club.<sup>15</sup> I argue that the extent and efficacy of security measures play an unaddressed role in the development of Arena Rock: they reveal institutional strategies of containment and regulation against large crowds, and they succeeded in fundamentally altering the basic structure of rock festivals in the 1970s. In the first chapter I demonstrate how the 1965 Shea Stadium performance by the Beatles, remembered today for its

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<sup>14</sup> Keightley, 139.

<sup>15</sup> For a fuller analysis of Altamont see Norma Coates, “If Anything, Blame Woodstock: The Rolling Stones: Altamont, December 6, 1969,” in *Performance and Popular Music: History, Place and Time*, edited by Ian Inglis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006): 58–80.

record-setting attendance and financial statistics, succeeded where previous concerts had failed precisely because animate and inanimate security forces minimized the threat of the crowd and removed the musicians from harm's way. In Chapter Four I analyze the fundamental alteration of festivals just mentioned, as well as the concurrent transmutation of security, suggesting that Michel Foucault's formulation of *biopower* is the most illuminating framework for aligning this shift in rural rock festivals with the network of urban venues implied by the genre's title.<sup>16</sup>

Fourth, this dissertation attends to advancements in concert technology during the period 1964–79. The most obvious sector of these advancements encompasses the growth in speaker technology. This growth was famously parodied in a scene of the 1984 mockumentary film *This is Spinal Tap*, a scene in which a heavy metal band's lead guitarist (“Nigel Tufnel,” played by Christopher Guest) boasts of his speaker system’s extraordinary amplitude capabilities to the fictional director (“Marty DiBergi,” played by the film's actual director Rob

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<sup>16</sup> Introduced in Foucault's classic *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1975), *biopower* is succinctly defined as a drive “to insert the power to punish more deeply into the social body” (82). As such, *biopower* denotes for Foucault the intensification of power, a shift toward dominating entire populations through self-regulation. Gilles Deleuze recognized Foucault's term as operating within “control societies” where power is diffused, in contrast to the centralization of power endemic to “disciplinary societies.” Deleuze wrote, “In disciplinary societies, you were always starting all over again (as you went from school to barracks, from barracks to factory), while in control societies you never finish anything—business, training, and military service being coexisting metastable states of a single modulation, a sort of universal transmutation” of power. See Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995): 179. Similarly, Foucault scholar Jeffrey Nealon writes that, “So far as *biopower* is concerned, the functioning of power becomes less invested in regulating behavior through panoptic, institutionally based training exercises, and more invested in directly targeting life and lifestyles—inside and outside the factory, the army, or the school, those recognizable sites of disciplinary power.” See Nealon, *Foucault Beyond Foucault: Power and its Intensifications Since 1984* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008): 47.

Reiner).<sup>17</sup> The scene encapsulates the pervasive drive for greater amplitude that chroniclers of rock music observe in arena concerts and, more specifically, in the genre of heavy metal performers. Robert Walser argues that amplitude itself became the medium between heavy metal compositions and the listener's experience, and that

Intense volume abolishes the boundaries between oneself and such representations; the music is felt within as much as without, and the body is seemingly hailed directly, subjectivity responding to the empowerment of the body rather than the other way around.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, the growth in speaker technology is perhaps the most commented upon aspect of arena concerts, yet others are worth remarking upon. Although remembered for introducing Tufnel's "one louder" thesis, the scene from the fictional *Spinal Tap* also provides a glimpse into actual advances in concert technology during the fifteen-year period covered by this dissertation, advances such as wireless connections between instruments and amplifiers, which allowed for more complicated choreography, although not every band took advantage of this new freedom. Moreover, elsewhere in *Spinal Tap* are parodies of concert technologies such as smoke machines, video projection screens, and elaborate

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<sup>17</sup> A transcript of the exchange in question follows. [Tufnel]: If you can see, the numbers all go to eleven. Look, right across the board: eleven, eleven, eleven. [DiBergi]: And most amps go up to ten. [Tufnel]: Exactly. [DiBergi]: Does that mean it's louder? Is it any louder? [Tufnel]: Well, it's one louder, isn't it? It's not ten. You see, most blokes would be playing you're on ten here. All the way up, all the way up, all the way up. You're on ten on your guitar, where can you go from there? Where? [DiBergi]: I don't know. [Tufnel]: Nowhere, exactly. What we do is if we need that extra push over the cliff you know what we do? [DiBergi]: You put it up to eleven. [Tufnel]: Eleven, exactly. One louder.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1993): 45. Other formulations of this argument about the power of amplitude are located in Robert Duncan, *The Noise: Notes from a Rock 'n' Roll Era* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1984): 39–47; as well as in Steve Waksman, *Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover in Heavy Metal and Punk* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009): 19–23.

mobile staging, technologies that characterize Arena Rock as much as they intensified the visual component of the industry. This dissertation examines the reciprocal relationship between the concert industry and technological developers, and demonstrates how musicians employed advancing concert technologies to enhance the aesthetic production of their compositions.

Finally, this dissertation is guided by the question of how rock music performance practice intersects with urban space more generally. This topic helps explain the employment of spatial theory within this dissertation. Constructed amenities such as Arena Rock venues drive the development of urban areas because they entertain locals, attract tourists, and inform people's decisions to relocate in the long run.<sup>19</sup> It follows that as rock and roll took up residence in arenas between 1964–79, the concert industry attracted human capital to cities like New York known for their sponsorship of Arena Rock. This is one way to begin thinking about how rock intersects with urban space; another way is by examining the material benefit afforded to cities by the industry of Arena Rock. In 1975 the general manager of the Pasadena, California Center and Rose Bowl stated that there was “No use trying to kid anybody, rock concerts mean a lot of money to a city.”<sup>20</sup> In neighboring Anaheim, for example, Anaheim Stadium officials hired top-tier popular musicians in 1970 to fight the deficit incurred by exorbitant operational costs of the venue. “The yield to the city [for each concert]

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<sup>19</sup> Terry Nichols Clark, “Urban Amenities: Lakes, Opera, and Juice Bars: Do They Drive Development?,” in *The City as an Entertainment Machine*, edited by Clark (New York: Elsevier, 2004): 103–140.

<sup>20</sup> Bill Hazlett, “Policing Rock Concerts: A Question of Priorities,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1975.

would be in excess of \$100,000, according to Tom Liegler, stadium and convention center director.”<sup>21</sup> It is clear that maintaining security had become a prime consideration of venue owners and operators. Liegler later stated that, “We [Anaheim Stadium officials] want to avoid any possibility for trouble, because rock concerts are an important source of revenue for the city. To show how important, five successful rock concerts can produce more money for the city than the California Angels do in their entire 81-game schedule.”<sup>22</sup> Cities like Anaheim had much revenue to gain, as ticket sales, parking, towing, and drug busts all accelerated the flow of capital in their jurisdiction. By 1977, the city of Anaheim was collecting ten percent on all stadium ticket sales, approaching \$100,000 per event between parking and concessions, and during just three rock concerts (Peter Frampton, Pink Floyd, and Alice Cooper) earned more than \$430,000 overall.<sup>23</sup> In short, cities like Anaheim were becoming (or had already become) dependent on Arena Rock, the musical genre reviled by critics and adored by fans. To help probe this intersection of Arena Rock and urban space, Simon Frith reminds us that

Musical disputes are not about music ‘in itself’ but about how to place it, what it is about the music that is to be assessed. After all, we can only hear music as valuable when we know what to listen to and how to listen for it. Our reception of music, our expectations from it, are not inherent in the music itself—which is one reason why so much musicological analysis of popular music misses the point: its object of study, the discursive text it constructs, is not the text to which anyone else listens.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Jack Boettner, “Top-Name Concerts Planned to Fight Anaheim Stadium Deficit,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1970.

<sup>22</sup> Bill Hazlett, “Policing Rock Concerts: A Question of Priorities,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1975.

<sup>23</sup> Jack Boettner, “87 Arrested at Stadium Rock Concert,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 1977.

<sup>24</sup> Frith, *Performing Rites*, 26.

Thus, by paying attention to the discourse of urbanity that surrounds Arena Rock, we enrich our understanding of the music, and a productive framework for such an analysis is spatial theory. We will survey the basic texts of spatial analysis at play momentarily, after a more thorough examination of the genesis of the term Arena Rock.

### **Genealogy of Arena Rock**

What follows is a genealogy of Arena Rock, inspired by the methods of Michel Foucault. This section will neither be the search for the phrase's origins nor the construction of its linear development, but instead will trace a distinctively non-linear development as it follows a compounded sequence of accidents that lend meaning to the term.<sup>25</sup> In this sense, a genealogy is a history of discursive constitution rather than a history of origins, concerned more with formative processes than with the causes of discourse. As demonstrated by Foucault, the genealogy is historically specific and political, and seeks to demonstrate how the past—plural and sometimes contradictory—can reveal traces of the influence of power on the truth.

This genealogy is based on evidence located during an extensive search of newspapers and other repositories, without laying claim to comprehensiveness.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> As Foucault wrote, “Genealogy does not [. . .] map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of dissent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations—or conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but at the exteriority of accidents.” Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 81.

<sup>26</sup> The digitized newspapers, publications, and databases that returned results for this search

It supports the claim that the term Arena Rock achieved widespread circulation around 1977, when mainstream newspapers such as *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* assigned critics who adopted the term to cover the industry.<sup>27</sup> Prior to this mainstreaming process, the term circulated among middle-sized newspaper and smaller press outlets, but not in the same consistent manner – as a noun phrase – with which it was used after 1977. This period of inconsistency is remarkable for how the loose discourse surrounding the early concerts coalesced into “Arena Rock,” creating a placeholder in the lexicon for a variety of concert types. To examine this rupture in the language and the earliest discourse surrounding Arena Rock concerts, we turn to the American rock trio formed in the summer of 1968 named Grand Funk Railroad.<sup>28</sup>

“Oddly enough,” wrote the critic Danny Goldberg in January 1970, “the first question that comes to mind writing about Grand Funk Railroad is, why don't people like them? This is followed quickly – Why do people like them? A question that is bound to be asked, about a group that sells a million copies of all

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include *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, fifteen additional newspapers accessible through Google News ([news.google.com](https://news.google.com)), the online storehouse Rock's Back Pages ([rocksbackpages.com](https://rocksbackpages.com); includes all issues of *Rolling Stone* [1970–78] and *Billboard* [1972–2004] magazines, most issues of *Creem* [1971–88], and many issues of *Circus* magazine [1969–85]), Robert Christgau's personal website ([robertchristgau.com](https://robertchristgau.com)), and *Journal Storage* ([jstor.org](https://jstor.org)). Though incomplete, this list is representative of press outlets that covered the rock industry during the period 1964–79; the genealogy it produces, then, constitutes a predominant view of Arena Rock.

<sup>27</sup> As Richard Taruskin suggests, “The incorporation of rock criticism on newspaper ‘culture’ pages, all but universal by the end of the 1970s, was perhaps the most decisive symptom of the revolution the sixties had wrought on the patterns of musical consumption.” Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol.5, *The Late Twentieth Century*, 333. For an in-depth discussion of the rock beat within these two particular press juggernauts, see William Robert Nowell, “The Evolution of Rock Journalism at the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, 1956–78: A Frame Analysis,” PhD Dissertation, Indiana University, 1987.

<sup>28</sup> For a penetrating discussion of this band and their early influence on the field of Arena Rock, see the first chapter of Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 19–69.



albums, and fills up arenas the size of Madison Square Garden, all across the country.”<sup>29</sup> Goldberg wrote these lines during a pivotal moment for the rock industry marked by “a change in the meaning of live rock performance, which no American band symbolized at the dawn of the 1970s as did Grand Funk Railroad.”<sup>30</sup> As exemplified by Goldberg’s testimony of the band’s early reception, Arena Rock garnered the praise of millions and the scorn of rock critics, a polarized condition stretching back to the moment of its formation.

“True rock and roll,” Goldberg continued, “always starts out with the audience and then catches up to the critics.” While album production and sales are important for the attainment of success, rock concerts are crucial in this context, for each presents the musicians with the opportunity to entertain devotees and win converts.<sup>31</sup> Giving expression to Goldberg’s axiom, Grand Funk Railroad “was born on the festival circuit in the summer of 1969,” performing in ten festivals—in Atlanta, Cincinnati, Nashville, Los Angeles, Detroit, and elsewhere—before the release of their first album, a tactic that gave the first voice to audiences primarily in middle America rather than to the tastemakers of the emerging rock press. This process of winning fans, as Goldberg suggests, will unfold more quickly than the conversion of rock critics, who by 1970 could proclaim their opinions from several emerging outlets, such as *Rolling Stone* magazine in San Francisco, and *Crawdaddy*, the *Village Voice*, and *Cheetah* in the northeast. Even *Creem*

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<sup>29</sup> Danny Goldberg, “Grand Funk Railroad,” *Circus*, January 1970.

<sup>30</sup> Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 20.

<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Grand Funk Railroad issued albums at a frenetic pace (three studio records and one live album) between May 1969 and December 1970, and played nearly 150 concerts across the United States in those twenty months.

magazine, based in Detroit near Grand Funk Railroad's provenance, was denied early access to the band. As guitarist Mark Farner admitted at the time, "We've refused to play our home state until we established ourselves elsewhere because it can be a group's graveyard. We upset a lot of promoters there but we know a lot of groups who play Detroit and never get out."<sup>32</sup> As influential as these magazines may have been among rock audiences, the opinions expressed by critics could never impose a singular reception. Readers who had experienced bands like Grand Funk Railroad in concert were more likely to disagree with rather than be converted by the contrary statements of critics. Thus, Grand Funk Railroad and their management sidestepped the traditional route to fame through the wickets of gatekeepers. In this way the band's experience paralleled that of another band firmly connected to origins of Arena Rock—Led Zeppelin.<sup>33</sup> In the context of newly standardized arena concerts, both Grand Funk Railroad and Led Zeppelin forged their path to success through extensive touring, to let audiences decide their fate, fomenting a kind of antagonism with the rock press. Thus, one explanation of why people liked Grand Funk Railroad centers around concert experiences and an appreciation of the bluesy musical style that Grand Funk

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<sup>32</sup> Keith Altham, "Grand Funk Railroad: Grand Funk — Or Bunk?" *Record Mirror*, February 6, 1971. Farner appears to be overlooking the band's performance at Detroit's Olympia Stadium on October 18, 1969, an evening shared with both MC5 and Led Zeppelin, as well as at the Detroit Rock and Roll Revival of May 30–31, 1969, and the Cosmic Circus of October 26, 1969. As Waksman notes, this amnesia may have been deliberately manufactured to allow manager Terry Knight to capitalize on the band's burgeoning "underdog" narrative; see Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 33n27. Robert Christgau wrote that when he saw Grand Funk Railroad perform in Detroit, he "enjoyed them for 15 minutes, tolerated them for five, and hated them for 40." "Consumer Guide (7)," *Village Voice*, January 29, 1970, <http://www.robertchristgau.com/xg/cg/cg7.php>.

<sup>33</sup> I take up the problems Led Zeppelin encountered with the rock press in Chapter Three of this dissertation. Critic Keith Altham averred that, "the establishment tends to object to those who make it without their helping hand. Ask Led Zeppelin." See Altham, "Deep Purple: 'The Stones Are Out of Date' — Ian," *Record Mirror*, July 10, 1971.

Railroad purveyed.

At Grand Funk Railroad concerts, something other than technical proficiency thrilled their audiences, as Goldberg explains, “They did not appear to be extraordinary musicians; their lyrics were not outstanding and yet, they drove audiences wild from the outset. The group communicates on an entirely different level; they just know what the people in the audience want and give it to them.” It is improbable that one Grand Funk Railroad audience could achieve consensus on a singular desiderata, as Goldberg seems to suggest, and even more unlikely that, with each successive concert, the band could provide exactly what each new audience craved. Nevertheless, as critics believed, with their unremarkable musicianship Grand Funk Railroad aimed to satisfy something like a “lowest common denominator,” which, because of the band's sweeping success, amounted to a victory for commercial radio and a large scale debasement of the rock audience.<sup>34</sup> To be fair, Goldberg's claim of average musicianship is aimed at formal design and harmonic and melodic intricacy rather than at sheer technical execution; I think Grand Funk Railroad performs admirably within the context of their straightforward rock songs.<sup>35</sup> But as Goldberg suggests, criticism based on low technical proficiency is standard fare: “The Beach Boys, Johnny Cash, Jerry

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<sup>34</sup> As the critic Robert Christgau wrote in 1980, “In popular music, embracing the '70s meant both an elitist withdrawal from the messy concert and counterculture scene and a profiteering pursuit of the lowest common denominator in FM radio and album rock. But soon after this process began, the spectre of the previous decade was invoked to rather different ends. Nascent punks reviled the '60s because they had spawned the '70s, blaming the excesses and dishonesty of hippiedom for everything softheaded, long-haired, and piggy in rock industry grown flatulent beyond its greediest fantasies.” Christgau, *Rock Albums of the '70s: A Critical Guide* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1981): 10.

<sup>35</sup> Indeed, a close listening of the band's first single “Are You Ready” reveals what Steve Waksman calls “progressive intensification,” which demonstrates how straightforward musical form can nevertheless result in musical complexity. Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 36–7.

Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, The Stones, The Animals, and The Rascals were all appreciated by the audience first and the critics much later. Early criticisms are always the same: 'bad musicianship, imitative, too loud . . .'"<sup>36</sup> This question of high amplitude will be taken up presently. "But," as Goldberg continues, "none of these things has anything to do with rock and roll. Rock and roll has to do with getting it on [i.e., knowing what the audience wants, and giving it to them]." Thus, charges that Grand Funk Railroad lack musical skills constituted a continuation of early rock and roll critiques, rather than a novel object; what was actually new was the magnitude of the live audience regularly attending such concerts. From this evidence, it appears that Arena Rock was founded on musical production that pleased audiences rather than critics, an acrimonious situation that would grow more pronounced as the rock press grew in size and stature over the 1970s.

Another pressing subject in early Arena Rock discourse was that of amplitude. Grand Funk Railroad played no small part in the escalation of concert technology and speaker amplification. Keith Altham indicated how the band's drive for volume intertwined with their popularity and the critical resentment just described. "Resentment from the critics," he writes "is something that Grand Funk Railroad are having to live with in the United States, but the pill is made the easier to swallow by the colossal following which they have created in just one

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<sup>36</sup> Later criticisms, in comparison with such early ones, appear no different where Grand Funk Railroad is concerned. Ira Robbins, founder and co-editor of *Trouser Press* from 1974–84, recently wrote that Grand Funk was just "long hair and loud music" and that a "lack of skill has to be mortgaged against some brilliant idea or at least a clever novelty. The members of Grand Funk, God love 'em, didn't have an original bone in their body [. . .] their unmitigated shittiness became an acceptable '70s benchmark." See Robbins, "Grand Funk Railroad: The Band that Killed Rock 'n' Roll," *salon.com*, April 10, 2000.

short year. The indignation would appear to stem from the fact that Funk are very loud, quite young and very successful.” This drive for high volume pressed the concert industry into new levels of operational intensity, as it raised the ire of critics. At the Los Angeles Forum, for example, a typical concert took a production company forty-five minutes to prepare; a Grand Funk Railroad concert required two days of preparation.<sup>37</sup> Their resultant speaker arrangement produced an overwhelming level of 142 decibels, the first-hand report of which is worth quoting at length. “The sound,” wrote Kathy Orloff,

is so loud it shakes the floors and rattles ceiling and walls, operating so close to the threshold of absolute pain that it almost disappears into itself, blaring out of endless columns of speakers, pouring out in blazing, careening screams, hurtling forward, wound around through miles of wire and tubes and bits of heavy metal, lost in the electric pitch of sonic amplitude, vibrating and surging, enveloping everything even remotely close, heartbeats absorbing thundering bass to brain waves synched in with tonic horn treble sounds of total consonance.<sup>38</sup>

The extreme amplitude described left this writer searching for ways to describe what she experienced; the figurative “bass to brain waves” is only the most salient of such attempts. Orloff's intent was to introduce readers to the Tycobrahe company and their activities, rather than to cover the musical performance *per se*, but with such striking commentary on the unusually high volume, it is difficult to imagine a critic in her position offering much in the way of musical description. That is, in Arena Rock extreme amplitude tends to overshadow technical performance, and concert technology tends to be taken more seriously in press

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<sup>37</sup> Kathy Orloff, “Bogdanovich Runs a Sound Business,” *the Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 1970.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

reports than the music that it mediates, tendencies which followed the development of Arena Rock from this period of inconsistent usage to the year 1977.

That Grand Funk Railroad concerts were very loud was not solely objectionable to critics; some fellow musicians took umbrage with the escalation of volume. Rod Stewart, for one, stated that “Grand Funk Railroad really do me in; they've gotta be the all-time loud white noise, haven't they?”<sup>39</sup> Briefly injecting Stewart into this genealogy can lead to another informative discussion of early Arena Rock discourse, that of rock audience demographics. At the dawn of the 1970s, rock audiences were fragmenting to an unprecedented degree, as one article on Stewart indicates. “He has it in him,” John Mendelsohn wrote of Stewart, “to save a lot of souls, to rescue those of us who are too old for Grand Funk, but not old enough for those adorable McCartneys [Paul and Linda, of the band Wings], from being nearly consummately bored with the current rock and roll scene.”<sup>40</sup> Mendelsohn's idea that Stewart appeals to a certain “in-between” demographic broaches a central discussion of rock audiences in the 1970s. As the critics above have indicated, concert audiences on the order of twenty thousand were gathering nationwide and becoming a standard element of the industry, the public manifestation of a statistical anomaly of human reproduction. Considered the largest generation yet witnessed, the 1970s rock audience splintered as it understandably developed more refined aesthetic judgments than their counterparts in the 1960s, creating the necessary conditions for the opposing

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<sup>39</sup> John Morthland, “Rod Stewart: In Conversation,” *Rolling Stone*, December 24, 1970.

<sup>40</sup> John Mendelsohn, “Rod Stewart: Every Picture Tells A Story,” *Rolling Stone*, July 8, 1971.

views outlined by Goldberg. Traces of the dawning community are visible from 1964–5 onward, as the demographics of popular music audiences complexified from a bipartite, adult-teen (or, mass-minority) division toward a tripartite, adult-youth-teen division.<sup>41</sup> This fragmentation of “teen” into “teen and youth” audiences enabled bands like Grand Funk Railroad to achieve a massively popular “anti-mass” status, to position themselves both in opposition to the adult-oriented music that dominated film and television, and as more serious musicians than teen idols.<sup>42</sup> Even as it fragmented, the 1970s rock audience could appreciate in large numbers early Arena Rock bands like Grand Funk Railroad, who won the hearts of audiences but not the minds of critics, because they performed with ordinary musical ability and extraordinary amplitude, all of which helped the audience “stay young.”

Although there are more avenues to cover (e.g., the use of stage props, the advent of “cock rock”), the evidence uncovered thus far outlines only an archaeology of Arena Rock, revealing essential structures of thought while leaving the causes of the transition from one dominant mode of thought to another unexplored. To leave the discussion here would be to ignore perhaps the most forceful case for the contingency of entrenched contemporary positions, and to

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<sup>41</sup> See Keightley's analysis of the new youth category, 122–5. For an examination of how Grand Funk Railroad helped create and exploit the “youth” category, see Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 38–41; see also *ibid.*, 84–6, for a striking analysis of how Alice Cooper capitalized on the new in-between youth demographic in his song “Eighteen.”

<sup>42</sup> As Steve Waksman put it, manager Terry Knight “put forth a construction of the audience to go along with his definition of the band, as a group of people who were young but not *too* young, who were not “just” girls [as Beatlemaniacs predominantly were] but a collection of “brothers and sisters” whose attraction to rock and roll made them automatic rebels ready for action.” This type of rhetoric was particularly exasperating to early Grand Funk Railroad interviewer Kenny Kerner. See Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 39.

abandon the opportunity to ascertain what this evidence can suggest about a new mode of thinking brought about by the irruption of Arena Rock. Foucauldian genealogies are characterized by the taking of this extra step, and one way to complete Foucault's project where Arena Rock is concerned is to introduce and apply Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *field*.<sup>43</sup>

Bourdieu developed the concept of *field* because the two dominant modes of sociological analysis that he received – Subjectivism and Objectivism – each produced incomplete conclusions about the meaning of works of art, for Subjectivism tended to imagine the artist as autonomous creator while ignoring social reality, the struggles that shape human consciousness, and Objectivism did “just the opposite, failing to recognize that social reality is to some extent shaped by the conceptions and representations that individuals make of the social world.”<sup>44</sup> Bridging the gap between these two modes of analysis, Bourdieu developed his concept of field by merging content analysis and discourse analysis within the context of social reality, insisting that analysis must not only locate the

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<sup>43</sup> Bourdieu first introduced his concept in 1971, at a time when Foucault had just finished his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and had yet to fully transition to his so-called “genealogical period” epitomized by *Discipline and Punish* (1975). By the time Bourdieu published “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed” (1983), he still considered Foucault as “refus[ing] to look outside the field of discourse for the principle that would cast light on each of the discourses within it [and] refus[ing] to relate works in any way to their social conditions of production, i.e., to positions occupied within the field of cultural production.” I think his phrase “in any way” overstates the case, since the importance of positions occupied with fields is taken up by Foucault in “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” (1971), *Discipline and Punish*, *History of Sexuality* (1978), and elsewhere, but Bourdieu only cites work from 1968, during Foucault's so-called “archaeological period.” At any rate, it remains useful to consider Bourdieu's concept of field as an advance beyond Foucault's discursive method, and to envision how the two strategies can combine productively. See Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed,” in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, edited by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 33.

<sup>44</sup> Randal Johnson, “Editor's Introduction: Pierre Bourdieu on Art, Literature and Culture,” in *Field of Cultural Production*, 4.



work of art in its specific historical context, but also interrogate “the ways in which previous knowledge about the object under investigation had been generated, by whom, and whose interests were served by those knowledge-generation practices.”<sup>45</sup> The concept of field can be elucidated by a number of analogies, such as the field of a football game, which is limited in scope by certain boundaries, involves a number of rules including the exact number of player positions, each with its own set of roles. Like this football field, the fields (or social spaces) of life are competitive, the players all vie to improve their position within their field, and each move within the field (*prise-position*) consists of a struggle for the accumulation of different types of capital, since agents are not entirely free to move about the field as they wish.

As Bourdieu explained, historical analysis discovers evidence which captures the artist in a struggle within their field. The struggles associated with a *prise-position* are won by agents as they negotiate the conferral of status by “elders” in their field.<sup>46</sup> In the case of Grand Funk Railroad, the band enjoyed little of this conferral in their earliest months; remember that Goldberg's first question was “Why don't people like them?” But Bourdieu's concepts of *field* and *prise-position* help demonstrate that critical denial of Grand Funk Railroad may have had the unintended consequence of further ingraining the band in the social fabric. The band was clearly acting not in accordance with how critics, who fancied themselves at the top of a hierarchy, thought they should perform and

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<sup>45</sup> Patricia Thomson, “Field,” in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, edited by Michael Grenfell (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2008): 67.

<sup>46</sup> Boudieu, “Field of Cultural Production,” 59.

behave.<sup>47</sup> As critics took umbrage with the popularity of Grand Funk Railroad, they foregrounded some of the principles required to gain recognition in the field of rock music, and their criticisms became tokens of how to attain membership.

“There is no other criterion of membership of a field,” Bourdieu argued,

than the objective fact of producing effects within it. One of the difficulties of orthodox defence against heretical transformation of the field by a redefinition of the tacit or explicit terms of entry is that fact that polemics imply a form of recognition; adversaries whom one would prefer to destroy by ignoring them cannot be combated without consecrating them. The *'Théâtre libre'* effectively entered the sub-field of drama once it came under attack from the accredited advocates of bourgeois theater, who thus helped to produce the recognition they sought to prevent. The *'nouveaux philosophes'* came into existence as active elements in the philosophical field – and no longer just that of journalism – as soon as consecrated philosophers felt called upon to take issue with them.<sup>48</sup>

Much in the same way, Grand Funk Railroad became “active elements” within the field of rock music discourse, as the critical objections to their manner of addressing a wide audience contributed obliquely to the band's growing popularity across the United States. In other words, Bourdieu's concepts of *prise-position* and membership within a field can illuminate how critiques of early Arena Rock led to the formation of new mode of thinking about the concert industry.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 39–40, for a fuller discussion of the tension between band and critics during this period.

<sup>48</sup> Bourdieu, “Field of Cultural Production,” 42.

<sup>49</sup> Another way to conceive of a modal shift in thought about rock is through what Foucault developed in *History of Sexuality*, taking the major themes of early Arena Rock discourse (e.g., fragmentation, massive “youth” audiences, ordinary musicianship, and extreme volume) as evidence of the installation of an apparatus for producing an even greater quantity of discourse about Arena Rock, which dominant powers converted into a form of “truth” about such concerts to stir up people's fears of anything from violent mobs and illicit drug use to sexual promiscuity and satanic messages.

This new mode of thinking arguably included one final element worth remarking upon: the discourse of Arena Rock divided audiences as it intensified the drive for audiences to self-identify according to their musical taste. As the Rolling Stone critic John Mendelsohn stated above, Rod Stewart could “rescue those of us who are too old for Grand Funk, but not old enough for those adorable McCartneys,” a clear sign of the drive to locate performers in-between two poles of some perceived spectrum. By 1979, the end of the period under discussion in this dissertation, this form of discourse had the effect of inviting rock fans to identify their own subject positions as between two available options, never fully one or the other. As we will see in the final chapter, fans in the late 1970s described their favorite band in negative terms: Styx is “not really hard, hard rock,” for example, “but they’re not disco either. I like them because they’re in between.”<sup>50</sup> So that this commentary may not appear coincidental, it is contrasted with professional rock journalism from six months earlier, when critic Andy Gill envisioned Styx as intersecting not one continuum, but several simultaneously: besides the “[Peter] Frampton/F[leetwood] Mac easy-listening axis,” they rank alongside “bands like Kiss/[Led] Zep[pelin] and Yes/Queen. So, find a point somewhere equidistant between the last two areas, and there shall ye find Styx, purveying pomp-rock purgatory.”<sup>51</sup> The pervasive use of binary constructions almost inevitably produces the discourse of “in-between,” as Gill demonstrates here. Caught between heaven and hell, KISS and Queen, and heavy metal and

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<sup>50</sup> Lani McClure, “Who’s Your Favorite Musical Group or Singer?” *Evening Independent (St. Petersburg, FL)*, January 6, 1979.

<sup>51</sup> Andy Gill, “Styx: Top Rank, Sheffield,” *New Musical Express*, June 1978.

progressive rock, Styx has been identified almost inescapably in negative terms, never fully one end of a spectrum or another, the product of the discourse of in-between. One conclusion to be advanced from this is that rock audiences increasingly self-identified by the process of negation, conscripted into the ideology of opposing rather than ignoring, and exacerbated the critical antagonisms that fueled the discourse of in-between.

### **“Arena Rock”: Ambiguity Before 1977**

These last bits of evidence abruptly snapped the argument forward to the end of the 1970s, a full decade beyond where the genealogy began. By that time Grand Funk Railroad had disbanded (twice) and were quietly slipping into the forgotten past. Rock critics had taken up the phrase Arena Rock in a fairly consistent manner around 1977, including those employed by the mainstream newspapers. However, before Arena Rock solidified as a genre term, chroniclers of the concert industry often presented the phrase (and its cousin, “stadium rock”) ambiguously. In other words, students of the genre should recognize that “arena-” and “stadium-rock” could be understood as both a noun, as in the 1977 sense, or as some other part of speech; doing so will help focus attention on the priorities of those in a dominant position within the field of discourse.

To illustrate this potential for ambiguity, on August 21, 1969, editors of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* presented students of popular music with something of a puzzle.<sup>52</sup> Describing a multimedia event in Milwaukee Stadium sponsored by the

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<sup>52</sup> Marilyn Kucer, “Young America Makes Stadium Rock,” *Milwaukee (WI) Sentinel*, August 21, 1969. The event featured the talents of some 425 different participants, including one hundred dancers, numerous fashion show models and beauty pageant winners.

*Sentinel*, their front-page, above-the-fold headline read “Young America Makes Stadium Rock,” a sentence rich with linguistic ambiguity centered on the last three words. In one sense the headline could be understood as employing “rock” as a verb, suggesting that Young America—a large, entertainment production company—made, or caused, Milwaukee Stadium to rock. One could argue, in recognition of the emerging discourse on amplitude, that the event titled “Young America on Stage” did in fact shake the venue at its foundation, given the noise produced by the powerful amplification technology, the loud strains of college fight songs, “the roars of minibikes and motorcycles and the bursts of rockets,” and the full-bodied roars of the crowd reported by the *Sentinel*. Yet, in another sense the headline's final three words signify a noun phrase, suggesting that Young America made something called “Stadium Rock.” The event indeed featured musical performances by “the world's largest rock band” the Sentinels, an ensemble of fifty-five musicians assembled for one evening from twelve existing groups, and by the more legitimate rock duo Zager and Evans, composers of the hit song “In the Year 2525.” There can be no question that rock music played an important role in this grand spectacle, alongside fireworks and the rest, but in spite of the evening's rock performances, the event overall was too diverse as to imply a singular focus on “Stadium Rock,” and in the final analysis, the *Sentinel* editors intended to suggest that Milwaukee Stadium “rocked” on account of the event staged by Young America.

I take this linguistic puzzle to be emblematic of a great shift in the reception of large-scale American entertainment during the years 1964–79. Before

this period and in its early phase, rock and roll performance resided outside of grand sports stadiums, in dance halls and theaters across the country. The Beatles themselves had “rocked” Carnegie Hall in 1964, their chroniclers exhibiting the playful use of language at the heart of the potential for ambiguity.<sup>53</sup> During and immediately after the Beatles came a period where “arena rock” or “stadium rock” appeared in papers as both a noun and in other forms. When the Beatles performed in stadiums across North America between 1964–66, the relationship between rock and roll and urban space altered dramatically, inciting a mutation in the language.

Evidence for the ambiguity during this transition period reveals the priorities of the newspapers, and resides chiefly in the disparity of detail between headlines and the body of the story. Headlines are by definition arresting and truncated versions of the prose explanations that follow them, so those containing the phrase “arena rock” could be read in one of two ways.<sup>54</sup> In this transition

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<sup>53</sup> Associated Press, “After the Beatles Carnegie Hall Won’t Ever Be the Same,” February 13, 1964; and from the same date, United Press International, “Beatles Rock Carnegie Hall.”

<sup>54</sup> For example, when a *Los Angeles Times* headline reports “Police Make 125 Arrests at Arena Rock Concert,” scholars in retrospect have to decide if that means in the sense of an “Arena Rock” concert, in the 1977 sense, or if it simply means “a rock concert held in an arena,” without the value judgments later ascribed to the term. See “Police Make 125 Arrests at Arena Rock Concert,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1975. In this case, the story points to a Pink Floyd concert held in the Los Angeles Sports Arena, the name of which is at the heart of the ambiguity. To describe a concert held in that venue, it would be tempting to include the phrase “Los Angeles Sports Arena rock concert,” linking the building with the type of concert. This is, in fact, the phrase deployed verbatim in “Davis Attacks Softening of Marijuana Law,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1975. As presented here, the meaning is clear from the use of capital letters—the arena is a proper noun, the concert a common one. The problem recurred just two months after the Pink Floyd concert, when a Times headline read “5 Anaheim Stadium Rock Shows Canceled.” Anyone who read the full story would discover that “Five rock concerts [had] been canceled at Anaheim Stadium,” making clear the intended sense of “stadium rock” as the location and type of entertainment, rather than a single noun phrase. However, in the conventions of headlines, capital letters confuse the issue, such that to someone glancing through the newspaper—and we have to assume that not everyone read every story carefully—“Police Make 125 Arrests at Arena Rock Concert” might just take on the meaning of “arrests

period, it is tempting to view instances of “Arena Rock” in headlines as representing another hyphenated -rock category like acid-rock, folk-rock, and so on, given the mainstreaming of such concerts and their promulgation through national print, radio, and television media. The right view on this, however, is that papers were describing rock concerts in arenas rather than “Arena Rock” concerts; the prose beneath the headlines bears this out in every case. It is nevertheless important to recognize how “arena rock” and “stadium rock” appear in the discourse, to help understand how the terms accrued meaning and the concert industry was incorporated by the mainstream.

A discursive grey area exists between the dawning of rock concerts in arenas (à la Grand Funk Railroad) and the mainstreaming of “Arena Rock” as a distinct genre around 1977, an area that reveals how the meaning of such terms is contingent and determined in large part by who was in the position to wield it. That the term coalesced with major newspaper critics at all is precisely the point, demonstrating how Arena Rock played a role in the continuing mainstreaming of rock. Prior to 1977, when newspapers reported on arena rock concerts (that is, rock concerts in arenas), the stories were normally anonymously written, run-of-the-mill human interest stories rather than the commentary of a regularly read journalist.<sup>55</sup> Critics like John Rockwell of the *New York Times* probably recognized how intimately connected the concerts were to city life and commerce.

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were made at the concert of Arena Rock music.” The period from 1964–77 is replete with additional examples of this ambiguity. The same could be said, for example, of headlines in Pittsburgh, when after a bawdy performance by Alice Cooper, a “Smut Screen for Arena Rock Shows [was] Proposed” (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 24, 1973), or when bitterly cold weather prompted fans waiting outside to demand early admittance, reported as “Arena Rock Rowdies Won’t Sink Concerts” (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 29, 1976).

Their informants in this matter, arena owners and officials, certainly understood the relationship between large venues and municipal budgets. Many of these critics had witnessed first-hand the transformation of the industry, thus when they began to use the term “Arena Rock” their usage was laden with traces of its development.

This seemingly laborious examination of parts of speech is important because “Arena Rock” entered the language as it experienced nominalization. As a noun phrase, “Arena Rock” joined the marketplace, and its commodification was signaled by the use of capital letters, as when the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, the same paper that brought us Young America, announced that Styx, whom I study in the dissertation's final chapter, and their back-up band Starz were “now at the pinnacle of what could now be called Arena Rock.”<sup>56</sup>

### **1977 and “Arena Rock”**

If I have been emphasizing the importance of the year 1977, it is because in that year critics writing for major press outlets began to use “Arena Rock” consistently. The year already holds a special place in popular-music historiography, as a marker of an especially brilliant year for punk rock in the United Kingdom and the United States. In rock histories, the punk culture has been opposed to disco, as its do-it-yourself aesthetic appeared on the other end of the spectrum from heavily produced dance music. But I argue that punk was also antithetical to the subset of popular music that came to be known as Arena Rock.

Some Arena Rock bands, like Led Zeppelin, were rather squarely targeted

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<sup>56</sup> “Styx, Starz Display Fiery Arena Rock,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, December 21, 1978.



by punk's scorn. In this tension we can see a battle for authenticity argued on the basis of crowd size, and something like a generational clash. The slightly younger punk rockers had all but accused the members of Zeppelin of treason on account of their affinity for large-scale concerts. The younger musicians and fans found repugnant how heavily the economic scales of large concerts were tipped in favor of these bands. Punk practitioners took aim at Plant and Zeppelin, calling the older band “dinosaurs” in the hopes of hastening their curtain call. Eight years after Led Zeppelin disbanded in 1980, singer Robert Plant was asked about his band's reception among the punk culture. He responded by saying that

Those accusations that were leveled at Zeppelin at the end, during punk, those accusations of remoteness, of playing blind, of having no idea about people or circumstances or reality, of having no idea about what we were talking about or what we were feeling, of being deep and meaningless and having vapid thoughts – there was a lot of substance in what was being said. People were quite right to say all that. It hurt at the time but I'd have to plead guilty.”<sup>57</sup>

Punks regarded large-scale concerts like Led Zeppelin's as fuel to their acrimonious objections to superstar practices indicative of the continuing friction between musicians over the types of places they were invited to play. In the smaller clubs of punk rock, fans were situated more intimately with respect to the bands and each other. As Sylvie Simmons enumerated, a Clash concert in 1979 consisted in the following elements: “Contact with hot pogoing bodies, smell of overheated energy (something you forget is sanitized for your protection in sports arena rock gigs) and the sound; a brain battering ‘Tommy Gun’, an exhilarating ‘Stay Free’, a scorching ‘Gun On The Roof’, ‘I Fought The Law’, ‘Cell Block

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<sup>57</sup> Tom Hibbert, “Robert Plant: Guilty!” *Q Magazine*, March 1988.

No.9' and the hardest, fastest, most powerful encore in rock with 'White Riot'.”<sup>58</sup>

To the punks, this intimacy signaled an authentic concert environment. Likewise, the punks eschewed an elaborate visual presentation such as laser light shows, smoke machines, and other accoutrements. Simmons also said that, “Though I could see little more than the flag used a backdrop and Jones’ and Simonon’s electrocuted leaps about head level, all other rock and roll senses were gratified.” The intimate setting and lack of visual pretense signaled for punk fans and practitioners the authentic concert mode.

All of this casts Arena Rock concerts in an inauthentic light. As typified by Johnny Rotten's quip above, the punks took aim at the evident measures of success of bands like Led Zeppelin, keeping their competition on a personal level. Rotten's quip is effective where people recognized the vast economic disparity between such successful musicians and their paying customers. As a British citizen, Johnny Rotten knew perfectly well the dank conditions of some quadrants of England in the 1970s, and for him these poor British were being duped by stars like Plant. Yet, the sentiment that Arena Rock was a commercial rip-off was hardly the exclusive domain of the British, nor was it confined to conditions of material wealth. The correct size of crowd was also an issue, as the comments from Simmons above suggest: she cast small, sweaty punk rock shows to one side, large and sanitized Arena Rock shows to the other. It was as if the irruption of small-scale punk prompted critics to take a harder stance on defining Arena Rock.

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<sup>58</sup> Sylvie Simmons, “The Clash In America” *Sounds* February 1979.

This tension, observable along the lines of venue size, corresponds with a retreat from the larger to the smaller. The overly large crowd size precipitated a withdrawal from musicians such as Joe Perry of Aerosmith. The band had already attained arena rock greatness, and after years at the highest level, Perry preferred small clubs to large arenas. In his view, “[L]arge stadiums are a rip-off for the kids and it's not rock and roll as far as I'm concerned. It's taking money for nothing and I just got fed up with it. I'd rather play four nights in a 3,000-seat hall than have to play the big hockey rinks. It's better for the kids and it's better for us.”<sup>59</sup> Perry seems to share the punk desire for intimate spaces.

The large spaces of Arena Rock also invited critics such as those writing for the *New York Times* to view the enterprise as bloated, weak spectacle, too large for its own good. The touchstone in this regard was the psychedelic rock band Pink Floyd, whose phenomenally elaborate tour in support of *The Wall* (1980–81) left the competition far behind. John Rockwell for the *New York Times* wrote in 1980 that “no band has better solved the problem of how to make a large-scale arena rock show visually distinctive.”<sup>60</sup> “Never again,” Rockwell opined months later, “will one be able to accept the technical clumsiness, distorted sound and meagre visuals of most arena rock shows as inevitable.”<sup>61</sup> Critics beyond the *New York Times* offered corroborating opinions. In 1977, writers from the Associated Press observed how the large-scale stadium concerts were beginning to prove untenable: “Others admit that maybe rock has become too big, that many fans

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<sup>59</sup> Sylvie Simmons, “Joe Perry: I've Done It All,” *Sounds*, July 5, 1980.

<sup>60</sup> John Rockwell, “The Pop Life,” *New York Times*, December 14, 1979.

<sup>61</sup> John Rockwell, “Pink Floyd's Great 'Wall',” *New York Times*, March 2, 1980.

prefer to see unknown bands at a 300-seat club than big stars at 20,000 seat arenas.”<sup>62</sup>

A tension between preferences for small and large venues is almost palpable here. Although arena concerts continued apace after 1977, musicians, fans, and critics all responded to an urge to withdraw from the large format and return to more intimate settings. Critics were beginning to promulgate a modernist view of Arena Rock: something that popular cannot be any good. Musicians like Bob Dylan, who had lived through the era of smaller club performance, made attempts to relive those bygone days. Dylan's Rolling Thunder Tour of 1975–76 tried to recreate the mystique of “the days of pre-stadium rock.”<sup>63</sup> Even his mode of transportation—by tour bus rather than luxury jet—signaled his nostalgia for the 1960s, which helped the tour appeal to those audiences who had also lived through those halcyon days.

Yet critics were slow to acknowledge that Arena Rock audiences did not share their 1960s value system. These fans enjoyed the particularly urban social space of rock created by the Beatles, perpetuated by Led Zeppelin, and harnessed by the machinations of the rock festival industry. This social space of rock remained a site of contestation: Young fans seemed only too willing to follow the Arena Rock bands into the arena, but antagonisms persisted, from the punks to the critics, leaving Arena Rock as the largest unanswered question in the history of rock. In response, this dissertation has for its main goal to shed some light on what it meant for popular music to have taken up residence in society's largest

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<sup>62</sup> James Simon, “Punk Rock Fills Music Gap,” *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, October 24, 1977

<sup>63</sup> “Books of The Times: A Rock Tour Recalled,” *New York Times*, September 17, 1977.

buildings.

## **Literature**

This discussion of Arena Rock around 1977 and punk's objections foregrounds the conflicting viewpoints on urban space and its musical uses. The use of public space was central to the discussion of the genre. As Arena Rock was mainstreamed by major newspapers, the genre's use of urban space, and in particular the financial benefit afforded to cities, had been widely publicized, leading in part to punk's objection to the genre. A complete understanding of the meaning of Arena Rock will include both a study of these urban effects and an explanation of the musical texts. This dissertation will deal with musical texts in the manner customary to most musicological projects, but in order to account for both the meaning of compositions and of those performances within the wider consideration of the concert industry, this investigation will necessarily be interdisciplinary in nature. All of these factors and more have led me to adopt an approach grounded in the literature of spatial theory.

Spatial theory is entirely appropriate to the study of the development of Arena Rock, since the field is by nature interdisciplinary. As two spatial theorists recently stated, “space is a vehicle for examining what it means to be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary, because so many lines of thought converge on the topic of spatiality.” Spatial theory can help “cross the borders and divides that have organized the academic division of labor, to reveal the cultures that pervade different fields of knowledge, and to bring these contrasting lines of

thought into a productive engagement with one another.”<sup>64</sup> It is suggestive of the wide-ranging nature and interdisciplinary implications of spatial theory to note that neither David Harvey nor Edward Soja – two luminaries among spatial theorists, both with geography PhDs – today identifies strictly as a geographer.<sup>65</sup> Soja has observed that the advent and wide acceptance of spatial thinking has had the effect of blurring academic disciplinary lines: “Through a process of hybridization, it has become increasingly difficult today to draw boundaries between who is a geographer and who is not, for the unprecedented transdisciplinarity of the Spatial Turn is making almost every scholar a geographer to some degree, in much the same way that every scholar is to some degree a historian.”<sup>66</sup>

The “Spatial Turn” alluded to by Soja amounts to a sea change of preoccupations concerning the concept of “space,” which originated with geographers and has enjoyed its flowering in academic thought over the past half-century. Although spatial thinking has been incorporated in many academic corners, popular-music studies (and music studies more generally) has few spatial adherents and is relatively unacknowledged by those at the core of the spatial turn. For example, Soja enumerated twenty-three disciplines that employ spatial theories, but left music studies to the side. Which is not to say that spatial thinking is entirely absent from musical inquiry. Indeed, space has been foundational for

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<sup>64</sup> Barney Warf and Santa Arias, “Introduction: The Reinsertion of Space into the Social Sciences and Humanities,” in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Warf and Arias (New York: Routledge, 2009): 2.

<sup>65</sup> Harvey has taught in CUNY’s department of anthropology for a decade, and Soja claims that “there is no word” for what he passionately professes.

<sup>66</sup> Soja, “Taking Space Personally,” in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Warf and Arias (New York: Routledge, 2009): 24.

several popular-music scholars, whose studies demonstrate the manifold relationships between urban life and music production and consumption.<sup>67</sup> In short, these authors “are all concerned with sound as a spatial topography as well as a cultural technology, examining relations of power as located in the shifting boundary between noise and music and how that boundary is manifested in the sites, practices, and institutions of musical production, distribution, and consumption.”<sup>68</sup>

### The Spatial Turn

Michel Foucault declared in 1967 that “the present epoch will perhaps above all be the epoch of space.”<sup>69</sup> With this declaration Foucault heralded an arrival, the dawning of a new mentality in civic life and the third stage in a succession of historical thought. In his view, the first epoch covered humanity up to the Renaissance, when history was understood to unfold in “a hierarchic

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<sup>69</sup> The best examples of spatial literature with a tight focus on music and historical methodology include Sara Cohen, John Schofield, and Brett Lashua, eds., *Popular Music History* 4 (2009), special issue on music, characterization and urban space; Adam Krims, *Music and Urban Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Cohen, *Decline, Renewal, and the City in Popular Music Culture: Beyond the Beatles* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007); Ian Biddle and Vanessa Knight, eds. *Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location: Between the Global and the Local* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007); Sheila Whiteley, Andy Bennett and Stan Hawkins, eds. *Music, Space and Place: Popular Music and Cultural Identity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); and John Sloop, Andrew Herman, and Thomas Swiss, eds., *Popular Music and Society* 21 (1997), special issue on cartographies of sound, noise, and music at century's end. In this list must also be included John Williamson and Martin Cloonan, “Rethinking the Music Industry,” a bold attempt to foreground live performance in popular music studies, which preceded and informed Cloonan's and Simon Frith's recently completed three-year study “Researching Live Music in the UK” at the University of Glasgow. The most recent project to be completed on the question of music and stadiums is Matthew W. Mihalka “From the Hammond Organ to 'Sweet Caroline': The Historical Evolution of Baseball's Sonic Environment,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2011. While relating musical practice to material culture and built environments, popular music scholars who take up space frequently grapple with Jacques Attali's concern for the spatialized politics of music in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

<sup>68</sup> Sloop, et al, “Introduction,” 1.

<sup>69</sup> Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16 (1986): 22.

ensemble of places,” unmistakably emplaced on one side or the other of binaries: sacred or profane, urban or rural, and so on. Foucault then credited the inauguration of the second epoch to Galileo, whose discovery of an infinitely open outer-space collapsed such binary constructions as it revealed a world of endless extension. Finally, Galileo's view of the world yielded to space in the present epoch; as Foucault announced: “the site has been substituted for extension, which itself had replaced emplacement.”<sup>70</sup> As it prioritizes space, Foucault's declaration draws our attention to the challenge to modernist historiography posed in the middle twentieth century, and to the importance of relational modes of thought.

Unpublished in his lifetime, Foucault's heraldry nevertheless accorded with contemporaneous philosophers who collectively initiated what is now referred to as “the spatial turn.” In this light, it is perhaps fortuitous that Foucault identified the new “epoch” of space, since the term strictly speaking means “a turning.”<sup>71</sup> New paths were forged in this spirit across disparate intellectual realms, encouraging geographers, for example, to abandon forever a linear and descriptivist sense of place in favor of dialectical and phenomenological methods. This had the effect of dissolving Cartesian mind-body dualism into a unitary, shared conception of space. In essence, the spatial turn betokens a set of questions, following Hegel, Marx, and Heidegger, that insist on a relational ontology. Foucault encapsulated the program when he wrote, “[W]e do not live in

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>71</sup> Jacques Barzun, “Towards the Twenty-First Century,” in *The Culture We Deserve* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989): 163. Perhaps more properly, “epoch” can be rendered as a turning *point*.



a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things, we do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside *a set of relations* that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.”<sup>72</sup>

The spatial turn contributed to a larger sea change of critical thought, a reevaluation of priorities most familiarly understood as the shift from modernism to postmodernism. The epoch that Foucault saw dawning witnessed major upheavals in our understanding of space, time, and society, realms of experience once considered distinct or compartmentalized. Space and time after Einstein became viewed as ineluctably related; society and space were seen to merge, each becoming dependent upon—if not determined by—the other; and incipient questions of time were informed by the changing roles of society. As these conceptual boundaries dissolved, the sector of human life that most reliably exhibited the vicissitudes was public space.

Scholars came to recognize public space as the most advantageous object for envisioning a set of relations between and among space, time, and society. Promoters of this view such as Jürgen Habermas and Mikhail Bakhtin offered what amounts to an action theory of public space. Habermas insisted that a *vox populi* depended on the existence of and actions within public space, the domain “in which such thing as public opinion can be formed.”<sup>73</sup> In his view public space is a constant among the possibilities for historical change. Bakhtin, a student of

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<sup>72</sup> Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 23. Emphasis added.

<sup>73</sup> “The Public Sphere,” in *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*, edited by Steven Seidman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989): 231.

the medieval carnival, also celebrated the potential for public activity to influence governments, arguing that public space is a site of conflict, a testing ground, and a heteroglossia where history is enacted and where publics are enabled to speak back to rulers.<sup>74</sup> These scholars agreed that public space accrues its meaning at the intersection of the public sphere and interpersonal transactions. Foucault, too, understood this when he ushered in the epoch of space, having already participated in student protests, and with the tumultuous May 1968 coming into view. Still other scholars argued that public space showcased architecture in which the power of business is all the more palpable, and that the success of capital in the public sphere rendered questions of public space all the more urgent.<sup>75</sup> Finally, with respect to time and society, Robert Dodghson has introduced the term *inertia* to help us envision the trends of building usage and large-scale shifts of social space.<sup>76</sup>

In the view of these theorists, social space produces architecture, which produce and reproduce the relations of society. The architecture of social space, in a traditional Marxist view, is considered as an expression of reification, or, as Marx wrote, *Verdinglichung* (sometimes translated as reification or “thingification”). Buildings are the processes of capital made manifest, and they mask the social relations of capital while expressing—in their temporary

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<sup>74</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

<sup>75</sup> Daniel Boorstin, *Democracy and its Discontents* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974): 55–65.

<sup>76</sup> Rather than study “where change has taken place or the reconstruction of particular instances of change,” Dodghson attempts “to show how understanding this geography can contribute to a concept of how society changes, one that helps to explain how and why change tends to occur where it does.” See Dodghson, *Society in Time and Space: A Geographical Perspective on Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 1.

appearance—the priorities of the capitalist. David Harvey provides a useful framework for this process, conceiving of built environments on three levels. The first allows us to think of how governments organize the finite resource of land, with zoning practices that are simultaneously expressions of civic value. The broadest and most familiar application of Harvey's first level is the distinction between the urban and rural. His second exposes the diachronic nature and finite temporality of built environments. Harvey is fond of saying that buildings are “annihilated by time.” Implicit in this is the possibility to understand social space by observing the rate and priorities of the demolition-construction cycle. Harvey's third level concentrates on the extreme fluidity of capital, focusing on the commerce internal to architecture such as shops and material upgrades. In this view, just one venue would provide ample material for a thorough spatial analysis. This dissertation, however, takes a broader view of the music industry and its social space, as articulated by rural and urban venues.

### **Space and Music**

It comes as small surprise that some music scholars, amid the emerging and widespread emphasis on relational thought, have also interrogated the relations of public space appropriate to their field. After all, performance venues are as interconnected to space, time, and society, and as enmeshed in the machinations of capital as any other construction. Trailblazers in this field include scholars wielding tools honed in both sociological and Marxist schools of thought. Sara Cohen demonstrates how the relative success or failure of venues can electrify or devastate social groups, and how “businesses and organizations [. . .]

became implicated in the efforts of the local state to categorize and develop music as a city or regional history.”<sup>77</sup> By highlighting such fleeting, transient relationships, Cohen exposes the related nature of music, performance venues, and larger questions of social space. Likewise, Adam Krims demonstrates how music, as it exists in urban environments, possesses a sort of agency.<sup>78</sup> While showing how music conditions the experience of daily life, Krims articulates the oppositions often perceived between the global space of capitalism and local places of resistance. He reminds us that for each “place” that resists, there are countless oppositional forces of space, such that the two appear inseparable. Thus, local music can enrich us, but we must keep in mind the greater stakes at play. Arena Rock is a prime example of how the local connects and reciprocates with the global. These two scholars have helped set a sub-discipline in motion, and their approaches have helped fuel a spate of recent scholarship from a variety of perspectives.<sup>79</sup>

In this document, local venues for music performance are viewed as part of a global process, and are reduced to two major types according to the first of Harvey's three levels of space described above: urban and rural. The line dividing them is illusory, since all manner of human activity binds them together, but as contentious as these categories may be, they enable a first-pass understanding of

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<sup>77</sup> Sara Cohen, *Decline, Renewal, and the City in Popular Music Culture: Beyond the Beatles* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007): 123.

<sup>78</sup> Krims, *Music and Urban Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>79</sup> Consider the special issue of *Popular Music History* on music, characterization and urban space edited by Cohen, John Schofield, and Brett Lashua (volume 4, number 2, 2009). The interdisciplinary issue features a variety of authors from urban specialists and archaeologists to musicologists. By examining diverse topics as low frequency noise, music designed for car stereos, and international touring schedules, these authors demonstrate the wide application of spatial thinking and the urgency with which the field of popular music studies is adopting it.

kinds of concerts under discussion. The rural festival and urban concert industry overlapped and intersected in fascinating and mutually influential ways during the development of Arena Rock.

The rural category is constituted primarily of rock festivals, such as Woodstock. Festivals near the beginning of this dissertation's ambit represented rural, multiple-day affairs that attracted huge crowds on the order of hundreds of thousands. It was the nature of early rock festivals to be characterized by their temporary existence and their placement deep in rural areas.<sup>80</sup> In comparison to this rural configuration, there are two types of urban venue. The larger of these is the sports stadium.

Sports stadiums, again as physical manifestations of a capitalist process, often begin as an opportunity for the public to speak out against ruling powers, as suggested by Bakhtin. The publics speak out against new sports stadium construction on the question of who should fund the project. Citizens have resisted where sports stadium planners intend to fund their projects with taxpayer subsidies, unwilling to fund a new facility or upgrade they are personally unlikely to patronize. From 1964–79 alone, the period of this dissertation, stadium project proposals in Seattle, San Francisco, San Diego and other cities incited protests as governments struggled to convince the public to fund stadiums.<sup>81</sup> Most often,

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<sup>80</sup> There are exceptions, such as the first rock festival, Monterey Pop, which transpired inside the fairly stable environment of the Monterey country fairgrounds.

<sup>81</sup> In Pittsburgh, for example, protesters rallied against a proposed new facility, while the city council authorized construction plans without specifying the building's precise location or cost to taxpayers. "1,000 Protest Plan To Build Stadium," *Gettysburg (PA) Times*, August 19, 1964. [. . .] I believe one could use those protests as centerpieces to construct a compelling history parallel to the one that follows, a history that evaluates the stakes involved in modern stadiums from the perspective of those opposed to new construction.

however, corporations win this struggle, and professional sports teams regularly enjoy new homes. As one critic of modern stadium construction put it, “Fans, forever caught between the real and the ideal in the cultures of their favorite sports industry, are at the mercy of stronger, more powerful special interests.”<sup>82</sup> From a relational perspective, one could expand that quotation to include non-fans, since all taxpayers within a certain jurisdiction are subject to such funding schemes. The financial stakes of new sports stadium construction are important to keep in mind because the time period at hand witnessed a veritable renaissance in stadium construction. As the *Washington Post* reported in January 1966, “The ‘in’ thing now is to build a stadium. Everybody is building a new stadium.”<sup>83</sup> The drive for new stadiums is one facet of the Cold War legacy that has yet to be thoroughly examined with respect to popular music.<sup>84</sup>

Among the two urban venue types, the stadium is paired with its diminutive cousin: the arena. The distinction between the two does not turn precisely on the issue of enclosure, since all arenas are indoor structures while only most stadiums are roofless.<sup>85</sup> Nor does the distinction revolve neatly around

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<sup>82</sup> For a trenchant critique of both stadium funding and six of the latest books on the subject, see John Rouse, “Corporate Welfare, Taxpayer Subsidies, and Home Field Advantages” *Public Administration Review* 61/5 (2001); this quotation from page 634.

<sup>83</sup> Bob Addie, *Washington Post* January 7, 1966. The following eleven sports stadiums were either built or significantly renovated in that decade: Candlestick Park (San Francisco, 1960); Met Stadium (Minneapolis, 1961), (Washington) D.C. Stadium (1961); Dodger Stadium (Los Angeles, 1962); Shea (New York City, 1964); Houston Astrodome (1965); Anaheim Stadium (1966), Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium (1966), Oakland-Alameda County (1966); San Diego Stadium (1967), Busch Stadium (St. Louis, 1967). In contrast, only four stadiums of similar size and purpose were erected between 1920–1960.

<sup>84</sup> Caroline O'Meara and I did present some preliminary views of this topic at the 2010 annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in Indianapolis during the Cold War and Music Study Group session.

<sup>85</sup> The first fully-enclosed stadium was the Houston Astrodome. Since its opening in 1965, the enclosed stadium design has proliferated only slightly. A more kinetic system, the retractable

the venue's primary use, because although stadiums primarily housed professional sports teams in 1964, by 1979 popular music concerts had certainly challenged the primacy of sports in these structures. Moreover, while many arenas specialize in music and theater, larger ones like Madison Square Garden are well-known as sports facilities. Thus the distinction ultimately rests with the question of size. Stadiums are society's largest buildings and, depending on the specific structure in mind, can hold upward of 100,000 people, while arenas hold at a maximum one-fifth that number. What binds huge stadiums to smaller arenas, and what links them both to rural festivals are rock concerts enacted by performing musicians, adulating fans, savvy promoters, and discerning critics, the humans that breathe life into the social space of Arena Rock.

Social space is where experience is inscribed and stored for future observers. More than a physical setting, social space is a combination of geographical location, physical setting, and social interaction. Feats of architecture such as arenas have their unique emplacement, are constructed according to tailored plans, and can be experienced by imagining or looking into them, and “read” by historians who array the right kinds of evidence.<sup>86</sup> Spaces are thus accessible to those beyond the temporary inhabitants of venues. (Indeed, venues lack inhabitants of any permanent sort.) It follows from this thesis that Arena Rock helped shape the social space of the popular music industry. The five chapters of this dissertation aim to reveal ways in which concerts and spaces are

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roof, has similarly found support only in a few cities such as Pittsburgh, Toronto, Seattle, Milwaukee, and is gaining momentum world-wide as a standard in stadium construction.

<sup>86</sup> This, at any rate, is the thesis of Steen Eiler Rasmussen's *Experiencing Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1959), an influential tome associated with the spatial turn.

important for understanding and writing the history of popular music.

### **Chapter Outlines**

This dissertation examines the formation of the genre bearing the title Arena Rock, and elements of social space that influenced its reception. Its objectives are to discover the meaning of rock concerts having taken residence in society's largest venues between 1964–79, measured in terms of the effects of compositional practices and reception. Because the document is organized chronologically, and because the label “Arena Rock” found wide acceptance around 1977, those musicians under examination who were received as practitioners of Arena Rock are located at the end of the dissertation, while those whose concert history is important to, but nevertheless predates, the ascription of the title, are presented first. The first four chapters cover overlapping swaths of time, and each focuses either on a single band (the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Grateful Dead) or on a larger scope of musical practices (rock festivals after 1969). Thus, the dissertation has for its endpoint the genesis of the genre Arena Rock, and for its beginning, the Beatles first American concerts in 1964.

The first chapter examines the disruptions to social space posed by the adoption of rock and roll concerts. From Elvis Presley to Bill Haley, early rock and roll musicians were notorious for inciting chaos among fans during their concerts, and the foremost of these were the Beatles. Wherever they went, so followed the contagion of “Beatlemania,” and in the United States this translated to a demand for large-scale performances. This chapter follows the Beatles from their first appearances in small arenas of New York and Washington D.C., through



large arenas nationwide, and finally to their infamous concert before fifty-six thousand at Shea Stadium in 1965. It foregrounds the problems of security and intimacy as it demonstrates how the Beatles rendered large concerts fashionable, and how venues prepared for and responded to the touch of popular music. As the Beatles personified the danger of large-scale rock and roll performance, they set the stage for the development of concerts in stadiums, forcing stadium owners and police officials to solve the problems of control associated with large, temporary populations.

Chapter Two examines the relationship between technologies of musical mediation and the social space of rock concerts. Led Zeppelin first performed for North American audiences in Winter 1968–69, and adopted a particularly intense touring schedule during their early years. While concertizing heavily in 1969, the band wrote and recorded material for their second album. The contention of this chapter is two-fold: first, that Zeppelin translated their live concert experiences into recorded sound through the use of echo effects, and second, that the recorded echo effect was transmogrified and reintegrated into their live performances as crowd participation. Analyzing Jimmy Page's live guitar solos and “Black Dog,” this chapter shows how Zeppelin's popularity can be understood as a direct result of the technological mediation of their live and recorded music, and how both undermined Zeppelin's already tenuous claims on authenticity. This chapter also recuperates Led Zeppelin's relationship with rock festivals, an under-appreciated factor in the band's rapid ascent and their ability to emerge from under the long shadow of the Beatles.

The third chapter examines the role of routine and speaker technology in Grateful Dead concerts between 1970 and 1973. The band employed recording technology to improve their live performances, adopting or rejecting elements as they saw fit. At the same time, the band continually developed their live speaker systems to enhance the aesthetics of performance. Their state-of-the-art speaker systems enhanced the sound quality of their performance as their recording technology enhanced the structures within which the band improvised. The combination of these two technologies can lead to the view that the band's performances of their country shuffle "Truckin'" were essentially rehearsals during which they improved musical elements such as formal structure. In another view, however, these "rehearsals" distance the band from prevailing, Romantic views of authenticity which privilege inspiration over calculation.

Chapter Four examines the social space of large rock festivals after 1969 from the standpoint of security and economics, in order to clarify how practices on this scale could influence urban indoor concerts. Rock festivals of the 1960s have commonly been reduced to a clear triumvirate to represent the genre: Monterey (1967), Woodstock, and Altamont (both 1969). The perception of these three is typically one of arch-like simplicity, with Monterey marking the genesis of festivals, Woodstock the historic pinnacle, and Altamont the violently sudden demise. While the durability of this perception tends to erase the histories of many rock festivals between Monterey and Altamont, it is the latter's seemingly firm position as an endpoint that most hinders a more complete understanding of these events. By looking closer at how rock festivals and the American legal system

changed after 1969, we can see how questions of security and commerce forced event planners to discover streamlined solutions. As a result, long festivals were truncated to one-day affairs, and rural sites were abandoned in favor of urban and suburban facilities, pulling the new “festivals” in a commercial direction antithetical to the primary reception of events like Woodstock.

The final chapter examines the social space surrounding the genre of Arena Rock and the debate on authenticity. Rock critics with a Romantic sense of authenticity have rendered Arena Rock a much maligned genre virtually from its beginning. They typically targeted what they considered to be wooden choreography, vapid lyrics, and insufficient willingness to push musical boundaries. Because of these objections, the critics especially resented the Arena Rockers' ability to reach such heights of fame, and viewed them as unwanted leaders of rock's decline. This chapter situates this debate of authenticity within the context of urban social space and a growing municipal reliance on the rock concert industry.

## Chapter One

### In the Beginning Was the Beatles: Security and Intimacy of Live Performance, 1964–66

“It was better than the World Series, the All-Star game, and 50 grand slam homers rolled into one.”<sup>1</sup> Thus extolled the Associated Press on August 15, 1965, describing a landmark rock and roll concert headlined by the Beatles, using a sporting lexicon appropriate to its setting in Shea Stadium, home of major league baseball's New York Mets. This event was highly anticipated, as it occurred one day after the celebrated band's fourth appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* and inaugurated their third tour of North America. The remarkable statistics of this event are well-known: A total of 55,600 obstreperous teenagers and their chaperones attended, and the four Beatles each collected \$40,000 for their half-hour performance, two unprecedented tallies that helped secure the historical importance of Shea Stadium's first concert.

For these statistics, and for additional reasons to be discussed in this

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<sup>1</sup> “55,000 Screams vs. Beatles Ends in Tie,” *The Miami News*, August 16, 1965.

chapter, this concert offers a window into multiple facets of the rock and roll concert industry, including two factors in the formation of a sturdy rock and roll mythology. First, this event (hereafter: Shea 1965) is often viewed as the origin of rock and roll concerts held in stadiums. Today, for example, the popular video game *Beatles: Rock Band* lists Shea Stadium as “the NYC ballpark where a spectacular Beatles show began the era of stadium rock.”<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking this view is erroneous, since several stadium concerts were offered in the 1950s by Elvis Presley, and in 1964 by the Beatles themselves. But none of these counterexamples were as well-attended as Shea 1965, leading directly to the second factor: the concert, widely viewed as a high-watermark, was immediately associated with the discourse of record-breaking. Attendance figures for the concert nearly equaled those for the top draw at Shea Stadium and far surpassed the norm for rock and roll. The attendance and purse statistics listed above not only established benchmarks for a new era, but also saturated newspaper headlines of the event and helped shape the terms of rock concert discussion.<sup>3</sup> Thus in the 1970s when concerts of this magnitude were more common, rock fans and chroniclers pointed to Shea 1965 as the origin of their era, the foundation of their concert mythology. Those with this view tend to recognize the unprecedented magnitude of the crowd and money earned, the very statistics that preoccupied chroniclers of rock as a measure of success in the following years.

However, as both a mythological origin and a pinnacle of success, Shea

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<sup>2</sup> “Venues,” last modified December 23, 2010, accessed September 17, 2010, <http://www.thebeatlesrockband.com/story/venues>.

<sup>3</sup> As one example, Murray Schumach, “Shrieks of 55,000 Accompany Beatles,” *New York Times*, August 16, 1965.

1965 further represents a broader shift in the social space of rock and roll concerts, and the emergence of new rules and benchmarks in the field. This shift has recently been acknowledged by scholars in the field of performance studies.<sup>4</sup> Some of these scholars have begun to reassess the ontology of live performance, while others have become keenly interested in audience reception of live music amid the extraneous noise of their counterparts.<sup>5</sup> These promising new directions have provided compelling research into how the practices of bands and the imaginations of fans produce the social space of concerts.

Although the 1965 Shea Stadium concert represents the origins of stadium rock, its premier position is based on attendance and earnings records which tend to obscure the significance of other Beatles concerts in America and to minimize the importance of two important experiential dimensions of these events, security and intimacy. With a view to these two dimensions, this chapter examines three performances to demonstrate how the Beatles concert audience underwent

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<sup>4</sup> Shea 1965 has prompted these scholars to reassess what precisely constitutes a performance. In the traditional view, a live performance consists of musicians performing while the audience receives. Dennis Kennedy views this sender-receiver model as creating a “simple” audience, and contrasts it with two other audience types in the postmodern era: “mass” (those who view television and film), and “diffused” (the intended recipients of saturated media messages). See Chapter One of Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> For example, the supremacy of a uni-directional performance model has been challenged, most convincingly by Laurel Sercombe. She has argued that the Shea 1965 crowd gave a performance of its own, a performance rooted in excitement and adoration for the musicians. In Sercombe's view, both crowd and musician are interlocked in a dual performance, a conceptual move that encourages scholars to consider the dialogics of concert social space more than is currently practiced. Laurel Sercombe, “Ladies and Gentlemen . . . The Beatles, *The Ed Sullivan Show*, CBS TV, February 9, 1964,” in *Performance and Popular Music: History, Place and Time*, ed. Ian Inglis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006): 1–15. Sercombe's colleague in performance studies, Philip Auslander, has argued that although fan noise impedes listening to musical performance, most are able to enjoy concerts by imagining the ideal sounds, a concept he calls “immaterial performance.” For Auslander, the crowd noise at Shea 1965 had a negligible effect on its reception, for the fans already knew the Beatles's records and required only a minimal aural cue to enjoy the music. Philip Auslander, “Music as Performance: Living in the Immaterial World,” *Theater Survey* 47 (2002): 261–69.

processes of expansion and extension, and how these concerts initiated shifts in attitudes toward large crowds and entertainment.

## § Security

When large crowds gather as they do for stadium concerts, authorities generally want the assurance that life and property will go unharmed. Thus, from their beginning, rock and roll concerts have been intertwined with the most pressing concerns for security.

Security was already a foremost issue when the Beatles arrived in North America in 1964, as the earliest rock and roll concerts were understood to have ignited an attitude of rebellion among its teenaged audiences. One early rock and roll performer, Bill Haley, was seen to incite riots by teenaged fans during 1955–6, first in the United States and later in England, with songs such as “Rock Around the Clock.”<sup>6</sup> A growing sense of community and rebellion was captured in the film *Blackboard Jungle*, which centers on teens listening to Haley's rock and roll. Rock and roll was of course a source of great generational conflict, but in particular, the concerts themselves were moments in the teens' life where the presence of authority was not so clearly felt. In school, at home, on the soccer pitch, activities like these all had a leader in the form of an adult, and rock and roll concerts were a place where an authority figure was lacking, or were places where teens could challenge the security guards and other authority figures there.

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<sup>6</sup> This particular song “caused riots worldwide when it was included on the soundtrack of *Blackboard Jungle* [1955], a movie that captured the spirit of teenage rebellion embodied by rock during the mid-1950s.” According to rock critic Lillian Roxon, this song introduced “the first inkling teenagers had that they might be a force to be reckoned with, in numbers alone. If there could be one song, there could be others; there could be a whole world of song and, then, a whole world.” See David P. Szatmary, *Rockin' in Time: A Social History of Rock-and-Roll*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2010): 42.

The new music offered encouragement to act out, and those teens predisposed to rebellion frequently damaged property and injured one another.

The challenges to security were acutely felt around public appearances by the Beatles. From an early point in their career, the Beatles were followed by masses of their teenaged fans clamoring for their attention.<sup>7</sup> This frenzied activity, called “Beatlemania,” seemed to follow the Beatles across the United Kingdom, and preceded their visit to North America through news media. Film footage of the Beatles traversed the Atlantic more than two months before the band’s visit in February 1964, beginning with network newscasters on NBC and CBS. NBC’s *Huntley-Brinkley Report* broke the news of Beatlemania sweeping England on November 18, 1963, followed by Walter Cronkite on December 10. “Wherever the Beatles go,” Cronkite reported,

they are pursued by hoards of screaming, swinging juveniles. They and their press agents have to think up all sorts of ways to evade their adoring fans. Thousands of teenagers in every city and town stand in line all night to get tickets for their touring show. Girls faint when the tickets run out. The other night, the Beatles played Bournemouth, the south coast family resort, and Bournemouth will never be the same.<sup>8</sup>

Insofar as “American teenagers learned Beatlemania from local media coverage of their British counterparts,”<sup>9</sup> this coverage can be construed as the first televised American lessons in Beatle fan behaviour. Four weeks later, Cronkite was joined by another prominent television host and would-be Beatles publicist, Jack Paar, who discussed the sociological impact and threat to security of Beatlemania.

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<sup>7</sup> The band’s real-life chase scenes and other adventures were later parodied in the Beatles first feature film *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964).

<sup>8</sup> Film footage, *CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite*, December 10, 1963.

<sup>9</sup> Sercombe, “Ladies and Gentlemen,” 11.



Although news footage of Beatlemania clearly made its way to the United States and Canada, it remained to be seen whether Americans would mimic the behavior of their British counterparts. But Americans could be forgiven for assuming that their teens would follow suit, and that the public appearance of the Beatles would threaten social order and challenge the capabilities of the strongest police forces.

In several cases in North America, social order did break down and lead to personal injury at Beatles concerts. For example, the Beatles began their second North American tour in San Francisco. Their arrival in California demonstrated that reporters could accurately predict crowd turnout no better than could venue officials provide sufficient security. Estimates of the crowd to greet the Beatles ranged from fifty to one hundred thousand; the real number turned out to be nine thousand.<sup>10</sup> The San Francisco International Airport officials lacked a sufficient policy to address the issue of security. Nor could San Francisco officials prevent two thousand fans from swarming the Hilton Hotel in which the band stayed. The following evening, on August 19, 1964, the Beatles took the stage at the Cow Palace where crowd unrest nearly ended the concert prematurely. "Officials twice had to ask the teenagers to stop throwing jelly-beans [a sign of endearment] at the Beatles, threatening that they would leave the stage if the deluge did not stop. Two teenagers were injured in wild crowd scenes. One 16-year-old boy had a dislocated shoulder."<sup>11</sup> As we will see, the band later performed in even larger venues, raising the potential for larger crowds and greater unrest.

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<sup>10</sup> "Thousands to Storm Frisco Cow Palace for Beatles Show," *Ocala (FL) Star-Banner*, August 19, 1964.

<sup>11</sup> "American Beatle Fans Hurt," *The Age*, August 21, 1964.

## § Expansion and Extension

One way to appreciate the potential for larger crowds and greater unrest is to gauge both the magnitude of individual crowds and the geographic reach of their live performances. In other words, the security challenge posed by the Beatles operated on two levels in North America: expansion and extension.

The band's first tour in February 1964 brought them to New York City initially, for performances in Ed Sullivan's studio where the audiences numbered 728 (see Appendix A). Although the Beatles had entertained crowds of this size in the U.K. And Europe, their North American premiere attracted, by necessity of the studio space, their smallest crowd of this brief tour. The audience size expanded for their very next performance in the Washington D.C. Coliseum, where the crowd exceeded eight thousand. Eighteen months later, in August 1965 at Shea Stadium, their audience had expanded to a pinnacle of 56,000. At the same time, with each new city their audience was extending, or covering a larger area with each tour. While expansion—the growth of individual audiences—implied that more and possibly new security measures were required in each location, extension complexified the notion of Beatles security as it challenged authorities in more locations and more venues, and tested a grater cross-section of social norms and tolerances. For what worked in one location had no guarantee to work in the next city. The success of security would depend ultimately on officials and implementation at each venue, which motivates a turn now to examine the types of venues concertized by the Beatles.

The uneven expansion of the Beatles audience was afforded by the great

diversity of venues in America. According to seating capacity, the band performed in a wide array of venues which can be reduced according to two general types, arena and stadium.

Arenas are indoor performance venues, further separable into two major types according to size and function. Small arenas have a capacity of a few thousand, exemplified by the Washington Coliseum, location of the first Beatles concert in North America. On the other hand, large arenas such as the Cow Palace in San Francisco have seating capacities some three times larger than small arenas, on the order of eighteen or twenty thousand. The function of small arenas is to produce theater and music, with a full range of amplitude from a stage whisper to military band. To facilitate this function, theaters like Carnegie Hall foreground a stage at one end with seats typically arranged in proscenium theater style. In other words, small arena planning takes acoustic fidelity as a prime consideration.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, large arenas are primarily known for hosting sports and other spectacular events like the circus where the visual entertainment supersedes the aural. As Beatles concerts expanded from small arena to large arena, it entailed an expansion of security efforts to match.

Still larger than large arenas, stadiums are society's most capacious public venues. Those in which the Beatles performed, like Shea Stadium, have a long list of predecessors, from the ancient Roman Coliseum and Hippodrome, to more

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<sup>12</sup> The primary function of venues largely influences the relative emphasis on acoustics. Small theaters are designed with sound-absorbent curtains, chairs, and panels, while large arenas tend to downplay acoustic sound quality. An example of poor quality comes from Minnesota Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, who when campaigning in Washington Coliseum – site of the first Beatles concert – said that amplified voices and music there sounded like “talking down a salt mine.” Humphrey uttered this when on the campaign trail in the previous year. Samuel Shaffer, “Hubert Humphrey Comes On Strong,” *New York Times*, August 25, 1963.

modern constructions such as the Amphitheater built in Paris after the French Revolution. Such stadiums have been our largest public facilities, and have occasionally gathered the largest organized fraction of society gathered for a single purpose. Though still larger gatherings are possible, such as the 1963 march on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King, where enclosed spaces are concerned, stadiums are the largest. As the Beatles moved from arenas to stadiums, it placed an increased demand on the number of security guards required to maintain order.

In addition to gathering steadily larger crowds in North America, the Beatles extended their audience as their tours covered more cities. These tours thus exemplified how their live network underwent the process of extension.

From a chronological perspective, it is clear that their first tour targeted the American east coast, while their second covered a more extensive area. One reason for the limited initial scope was the band's association with Ed Sullivan, who broadcast his television program from New York City and arranged appearances for the band from his studio.<sup>13</sup> The band's performance in Miami was on account of Sullivan's idea to broadcast on location, leaving three performances in New York City and Washington D.C. After departing North America and spending several months away, the Beatles returned for their second tour, which extended their live performance network to the American west coast, as well as to major cities in Canada and into the interior of the continent. Beginning in San Francisco, the Beatles made their way up the Pacific coast playing large arenas

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<sup>13</sup> Bruce Spitzer, "The Story Behind the Beatles on Ed Sullivan," last modified June 8, 2009, accessed September 17, 2010, <http://www.beatlesagain.com/the-beatles-on-ed-sullivan.html>.

like the Cow Palace, and their first stadium concert, in Vancouver.

The group covered still more ground on their third tour (August 1965), performing further inland in cities like Kansas City. This third tour represents the end of their vertical expansion, for crowds seemingly could grow no larger after Shea 1965. Nor did the Beatles seem to enjoy such large engagements. As John Lennon said in 1966, “I reckon we could send out four waxwork dummies of ourselves . . . and that would satisfy the crowds. Beatles concerts are nothing to do with music, any more. They're just bloody tribal rituals.”<sup>14</sup> By the end of the band's fourth tour (August 1966), they had had enough, and ceased their touring, a decision which “has to rank as one of the most important turning points in the history of 1960s rock, though its meaning was and remains far from clear.”<sup>15</sup>

In short, the first Beatles tour enhanced the size and scope of their network of live audiences only slightly; in contrast, their second tour allowed and witnessed a sharp rise in both expansion and extension; they reached the peak of expansion during their third tour, and covered slightly more ground in North America; on their fourth tour audiences actually contracted, while the band reached new cities.

From tour to tour, the Beatles expanded and extended their live audience in North America as part of a strategy. To be clear, this touring strategy of expansion and extension was beyond the direct control of the four Beatles

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<sup>14</sup> James Miller, *Almost Grown: The Rise of Rock* (London: William Heinemann, 1999): 229. This comment helped Miller to describe the “vacuity” of such large rock concerts. Lennon's imagery of wax dummies quoted by Miller was brilliantly brought to life on screen in the film *Head* (1968) starring the Monkees, in which the bodies of that band are savagely dismembered after a concert by hysterical fans.

<sup>15</sup> Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 27.

themselves, who left such decisions to their management. Nevertheless, this strategy seems to be one of calculation and caution: rather than plan an intense tour, manager Brian Epstein seemed to view the east coast as a test market before committing to more and larger performances. In fact, the Beatles themselves displayed moments of hesitation. “They’ve got everything over there,” said George Harrison, “what do they want us for?”<sup>16</sup> Another Beatle recalled that “People said just because we were popular in Britain, why should we be there [in North America]?”<sup>17</sup> This strategy, though initially cautious, allowed the Beatles to march from city to city, market to media market, and grow the sense of anticipation along the way.

In summary, the Beatles increased their North American live audience through the combined processes of expansion and extension. The combination was contingent upon the material reality of each city: expansion was possible only where a larger venue were available, and extension possible only if the Beatles had not already played there. With each new city and setting came new potentialities for the concert experience in terms of security and intimacy.

### **§ Expansion, Extension, and Intimacy**

The processes of expansion and extension have a complex relationship with the concept of intimacy. On the one hand, expansion had the effect of reducing intimacy, removing the Beatles farther from their fans during the concert.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, however, extension brought their live performances

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<sup>16</sup> Charles Hirshberg, *The Beatles: From Yesterday to Today*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert Friedman and Robert Sullivan (New York: Bulfinch Press, 2001): 50.

<sup>17</sup> Szatmary, *Rockin' In Time*, 106.

<sup>18</sup> As the Associated Press reported on Shea 1965, “The Beatles stood on second base,” some 211

to a wider audience, offering more people a greater taste of intimacy than could be offered by radio or by televised performances.

Intimacy is defined in this context as a variable which depends on the magnitude of the crowd and the maximum proximity available to those fans. Proximity and intimacy are directly proportional, whereas intimacy and crowd size are inversely proportional. It is difficult to theorize about intimacy as a constant, because two spectators of the same event can leave with wildly different perceptions of intimacy.<sup>19</sup> Yet certain characteristics related to venue size can directly contribute to intimacy, or a lack of it. In most cases, it is useful to imagine the difference between those spectators farthest removed from the stage and those much closer: spectators near the stage will perceive a good deal of intimacy with the performers, and those farther from the stage will enjoy a diminished sense of this relationship. Beyond a certain distance from the stage, spectators would agree to being “far” from the stage, so it follows that larger venues will increase the percentage of spectators who perceive a lack of intimacy. Thus, venue type directly correlates to the fraction of spectators who perceive intimacy during concerts.

Defined in this way, the concept of intimacy intersects with the process of expansion in the following ways. The first is a common sense judgment: venue

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feet away from the fans seated directly behind home plate. To arrive at the total distance, the distance from home plate to second base (127') is added to the “backstop distance,” a straight shot from home plate to the nearest seats. “The big field in the Bronx [i.e., Yankee Stadium] still has an 84-foot backstop distance, as does the other New York ballpark, Shea Stadium.” See William McNeil, *Backstop: A History of the Catcher and a Sabermetric Ranking of 50 All-time Greats* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006): 146.

<sup>19</sup> As Dennis Kennedy argues, for each performance there are many observers: “The unwilling spectator, the reluctant spectator, the spectator in a bad mood or feeling poorly, the accidental spectator, the snoring spectator. The only universal is the event itself, which for performance scholars cancels the randomness of the audience.” *Spectator and the Spectacle*, 13.

size is inversely proportional to the perception of intimacy. The closer the spectator to the performer, the clearer the observable physical detail, and perhaps the more likely one is to make eye contact with a performer. Beatles manager Brian Epstein enjoyed the proximity afforded by the Cavern in Liverpool, where he met the band. The Cavern club held several dozen spectators at most, much like the venues across the U.K. and in mainland Europe where the band first found international success. There, the personalities of the band shone through. At the Cavern, Epstein “was immediately struck by their music, their beat, and their sense of humour on stage. And even afterwards when I met them I was struck again by their personal charm.”<sup>20</sup> By saying “struck *again*,” Epstein makes it clear that his perception of their personal charm was negligibly different when the band was on stage and when they met in person, because the Cavern stage was small and the setting intimate. Had Epstein first seen the Beatles from the back of a much larger venue, he would have been left with a different impression. So as the Beatles traveled from venue to larger venue, the process of expansion diminished the perception of intimacy. Paul McCartney admitted that in small venues the Beatles “used to do more between-songs patter and jokes onstage,” but after moving into large stadiums “it became futile when their every word was drowned out by screaming.”<sup>21</sup> Expansion thus relates to Laurel Sercombe's proposition that audiences perform for musicians, since the corollary of intimacy is that the closer one is, the less exaggerated the performance needs to be. Those in the front row

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<sup>20</sup> Alistair Taylor, “The Life of Brian,” last modified on February 13, 2011, accessed September 17, 2010, <http://www.brianepstein.com/brian.html>.

<sup>21</sup> John C. Winn, *Way Beyond Compare: The Beatles' Recorded Legacy, 1957–1965*, (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2003): 234. The excerpt is taken from an interview in Vancouver, Aug 22, 1964. More on the event at Vancouver's Empire Stadium below.



have a better chance of being perceived by the musicians, for their “performance” to get noticed.

Intimacy relates differently to the process of extension. With expansion, each increase in venue size brought a loss of intimacy; but intimacy increases with each new city. This, again, is a common sense judgment: the more evenly dispersed the performances, the more opportunity for people in each region to become spectators. Insofar as North American Beatles fans conceived of themselves in local, regional, and national senses, they could feel as though the band had been nearby even if the musicians performed in the neighboring state or province. Had the Beatles only performed live on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, only those 728 in the New York studio audience could say they had seen them live, raising the value of the experience while highlighting the narrowness of the band's geographic reach.

In summary, the expansion and extension of the Beatles live audience worked in contradictory ways to both increase and decrease the perception of intimacy. From one tour to the next, the Beatles performed in new cities and ever larger venues. The claim that follows from this, tested in the next section of case studies, is that venue size had the more direct influence on the sense of intimacy and the issue of security.

### **§ Intimacy and the Washington Coliseum**

With the concepts of intimacy and security in mind, primary evidence from three Beatles concerts—in Washington D.C., New York City, and Vancouver—will help characterize the alterations to rock and roll social space.

Tracing how intimacy and security intertwine here will enrich our general understanding of the net effect of Beatles concerts in North America, and develop our understanding of how the Shea Stadium concert has enjoyed the status as the origins of stadium rock.

Notwithstanding their appearance on *the Ed Sullivan Show*, the Beatles first live performance in North America occurred at the Washington Coliseum. The Coliseum offered a fairly high degree of intimacy, as a small arena primarily known at the time for hosting professional sports and civic events like the circus. The Coliseum commenced material renovations five years earlier, and the success of the Beatles concert on February 11, 1964 would contribute to the renovation of venue officials' attitude towards entertainment.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Before the renovation, the Coliseum periodically hosted large-scale entertainment like the circus, but was primarily known for sports, as the building intended to “elevate Washington to the stature of a major sports city.” Built by the company that erected New York’s Yankee Stadium, the building would introduce Washington to indoor ice-skating and -hockey, building upon techniques the original owner Miguel Uline learned with his ice company. Its entertainment scheduling began with the Ice Capades when it opened in 1941, a company it hosted on an annual basis for decades. Similarly, the Coliseum hosted both the Ringling Brothers’ and Barnum and Bailey’s circus. Between these events and sports, the building was kept in use year-round, but concerts never factored importantly into the scheduling. See “Sports Arena to Seat 10,000, Cost \$300,000, Planned Here,” *Washington Post*, January 18, 1939, quoted in Justine Christianson, “The Uline Arena/Washington Coliseum: The Rise and Fall of a Washington Institution” *Washington History* 16 (2004): 18.



*Illustration 1: Washington Coliseum (February 1964), external signs of renovation.*

Completed during the Second World War, the Washington Coliseum was primarily a sports facility until it came under new management in 1959. The death in that year of its original owner, Miguel Uline, “allowed a reinvention of the venue.”<sup>23</sup> Although the new owner, Harry G. Lynn, shared Uline's sporting vision of the arena and promised to host more sporting events, he immediately ordered \$100,000 in indoor renovations unrelated to sports, including new paint, upholstering, and extensive woodwork. The overhaul rendered the Washington Coliseum fit for President Kennedy's inaugural ball in 1961.<sup>24</sup> Externally, Lynn

<sup>23</sup> Christianson, “Uline Arena/Washington Coliseum,” 27.

<sup>24</sup> These renovations also helped Lynn distance the facility from the image of the fiery, who had developed an acrimonious relationship with the greater Washington community. Part of Uline's problem was his dual role as owner and event promoter, but the greater source of problem was his Jim Crow seating policy. When African-American D.C. residents protested against the owner's segregated seating policy and declined to attend the 1947 Golden Gloves tournament in support of community boxers, the promoter Uline threatened to host the event elsewhere. To his credit, in 1941 Uline scheduled a Paul Robeson concert at the Coliseum, when the Daughters of the American Revolution prohibited Robeson from Constitution Hall, a facility under their control. Still, Uline temporarily lifting his segregation policy and thus only gestured toward an integrated seating policy.

re-branded his facility with a new electric sign that incorporated a silhouette of the Washington Monument, providing clear evidence of the changes within (see Illustration 1). The original facility had been touted for its innovation, exemplified by the curved roof design which eliminated the requirement for interior pillars and which improved sight lines, and Lynn's renovations were entirely consistent with this spirit. Moreover, in Lynn's continuous attempts to project a “new” Washington Coliseum, he chose wisely to host the Beatles' North American debut concert.

When the new management agreed to host the Beatles in 1964, the Coliseum had barely any record of concerts. Designed for two sports, the Coliseum interior flooring alternated between two surface types, parquet flooring for basketball, and the largest ice surface east of St. Louis. Little thought was given to stages for musical and dance events. The Coliseum had hosted a few concerts prior to the Beatles, but those events were considered unenjoyable since the Coliseum was ill-equipped for entertainment of that kind. To illustrate, because the Coliseum boasted unobstructed lines of sight, spectators on concert nights clearly saw a temporary wooden stage with noisy spots that resonated under foot.<sup>25</sup> Two years before the Beatles concert, the Coliseum hosted the first International Jazz Festival, during which “the overpowering echoes set up by the amplifying system would completely drown out any possible understanding of

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<sup>25</sup> Another great distraction was probably the poor Washington Coliseum ventilation system, for although “Four exhaust fans, located on the north and south walls, provided adequate ventilation for the seating capacity of 6,000,” audiences larger than that “suffered sublimely” in D.C.'s notoriously humid summers. Christianson, “Uline Arena/Washington Coliseum,” 26.

what was being played or sung.”<sup>26</sup> The Coliseum was only the final stop of many involved in the festival, but when the music arrived there the festival sank to “suffocating, noisy depths.”<sup>27</sup> Despite the noisy setting, the first Beatles concerts was enjoyable in part because of the high proximity between performers and fans.

The success of the Beatles concert in February 1964 was colored by a high degree of intimacy for spectators. Taking the stage, the musicians scurried down the aisle between seating sections, past the outstretched arms of their adoring fans. Once onstage, bassist Paul McCartney announced over the crowd's screams the special place of “I Want to Hold Your Hand” in D.C., and offered the crowd thanks “for buying this particular record and starting this thing off in America, and giving us a chance to come here and see you all in Washington. Thank you!” Fittingly, they began the concert with this song. This comment lent a personal touch to the performance, and invited the spectators to believe that they had brought the Beatles.

The special place of “I Want to Hold Your Hand” in Washington D.C. began with a minor scandal over the official release of the record. At the time of Walter Cronkite's reporting, Capitol Records had not yet released the single in America. Following Cronkite's reporting, two events created the conditions for the scandal: a WWDC radio station deejay named Carroll James arranged for a copy of “I Want to Hold Your Hand” to be sent over from England, and Washington D.C. fans deluged his station with phone calls demanding more Beatles songs. James placed “I Want to Hold Your Hand” on the WWDC playlist

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<sup>26</sup> John S. Wilson, “Amplifying System Drowns Out Music At Capital Festival,” *New York Times*, June 2, 1962.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

immediately, and when Capitol discovered the false start they unsuccessfully filed cease and desist papers against the radio station. “Believing that this was an isolated incident that would not spread elsewhere, Capitol decided to press a few thousand copies of ‘I Want to Hold Your Hand’ to send to the Washington area.” Unbeknownst to Capitol, James had leaked the single to radio deejays in Chicago and St. Louis, helping increase the demand for Beatles records in those two markets as well.<sup>28</sup>

The Washington Coliseum audience particularly responded to “I Want to Hold Your Hand” at two distinct moments: at the end of verses and at the end of the B-section. Both moments are characterized by an elevated vocal tessitura, preceded immediately by downward motion to set the higher register apart. In the first of these moments, the vocal melody begins on scale degree 6 of G Major and descends to scale degree 3; the next segment begins on 3, lifts to 5 and falls to scale degree 2; the next segment drops from 3 down to the leading tone. The consequent phrase is virtually identical, with one crucial distinction: as the verses end, dovetailing into the chorus lyric, the lead vocalist John Lennon displaces the F-sharp of the antecedent phrase up one octave, while Paul McCartney harmonizes a perfect fourth above (Example 1).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Spitzer, “Beatles on Ed Sullivan.”

<sup>29</sup> British newspapers saw these moments as identifying traits of their original compositions. “Those submediant switches from C major into A-flat major, and to a lesser extent mediant ones (e.g., the octave ascent in the famous “I Want to Hold Your Hand”) are a trademark of Lennon-McCartney songs—they do not figure much in other pop repertoires, or in the Beatles arrangements of borrowed material—and show signs of becoming a mannerism.” “What Songs the Beatles Sang . . .” *The Times* (UK), December 27, 1963.



*Example 1: “I Want to Hold Your Hand,” first verse, descending motion prepares upward leap.*

The second moment involves standing on the dominant where the B-section ends. Here, they sing “it’s such a feeling that my love,” descending to the lowest pitch of the song with the word “love.” This nadir is followed immediately by escalating harmonies, as the Beatles sing “I can’t hide” three times, first in unison, then harmonized in parallel thirds, and finally in fifths above the melody. These two moments enraptured the crowd, injecting electricity into the already-charged coliseum air. From the documentary evidence, the high-pitched moments of the song elicited the biggest responses of the evening, perhaps because of its special place among fans and because these moments shared a common tessitura with the mostly teenaged audience.<sup>30</sup>

The design of the Coliseum itself, in contrasting ways, both increased and diminished the perception of intimacy during the concert. One peculiarity of the Coliseum stage is that it was centered in the arena, leaving roughly one-fourth of the audience on each side. The band always only faced one-fourth of the audience

<sup>30</sup> As Wayne Koestenbaum notes, the male falsetto voice has a long and disparaged history that, like other ornaments such as tremolo, has evaded significant exploration. *The Queen’s Throat: Opera, Homosexuality and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993): 164–5; compare with a more extended study of ornaments in Stan Hawkins, *The British Pop Dandy: Masculinity, Popular Music and Culture*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009): 70–4. Video evidence taken from, “The Washington Coliseum Concert,” *The Beatles: The First U.S. Visit*, directed by Alfred Maysles and David Maysles (1964; London: Apple Corps Limited, 2003), DVD.

and after one or two songs they rotated their entire stage setup ninety degrees to face another quarter of the audience. Then again, that also meant that each quarter of the audience saw the Beatles in profile for roughly half the concert and looked at their backs for one-fourth of it. As the Beatles negotiated the theater-in-the-round in this way, the audience arguably could base their impression of intimacy at any moment by which aspect that band was showing.

The Beatles concert increased the likelihood that Coliseum officials would continue to host popular music concerts. Lynn took a gamble with his renovations to the Washington Coliseum, but the Beatles concert was a reward that altered the trajectory of his facility. After the Beatles, Lynn began hosting popular music concerts more regularly. In 1965, for example, the Coliseum hosted Bob Dylan, a moment captured on the cover of his *Greatest Hits* LP (1967). Still later, the Coliseum also became the flagship venue for performers of Go-Go in the 1970s, a subgenre of funk that originated in Washington D.C. It is fair to say that concerts in the Coliseum were no longer rare after the Beatles; the space had been altered by the touch of popular music. The next example will demonstrate why this positive change did not always occur where the Beatles performed.

### **§ Security and Carnegie Hall**

Two nights after their Washington Coliseum concert, the Beatles played twice in Carnegie Hall, an historic venue known for its broad stylistic programming. The success of these concerts initially persuaded venue officials to welcome additional rock and roll acts in the future, until a single breach of security changed their minds.



The Washington Coliseum and Carnegie Hall could scarcely be further removed from one another with respect to their relationship to concerts. Whereas the Coliseum was primarily a sports venue, Carnegie Hall has since its opening in 1891 been first and foremost a concert hall.<sup>31</sup> Two important issues are raised by these two Beatles concerts: first, they expanded the already inclusive history of Carnegie, written with stories of jazz, folk, and mainstream popular music; second, the Beatles were followed into Carnegie by other British Invasion bands, which posed serious questions to hall officials about their ability to maintain security.

The Beatles concerts were scarcely Carnegie's first performances of vernacular music. Just six months earlier, for example, folk singer Pete Seeger staged a famous comeback there.<sup>32</sup> Before hosting the Beatles, Carnegie Hall also hosted mainstream popular music and jazz concerts. Judy Garland's concert three years earlier was recorded and sold as a double-album (*Judy at Carnegie Hall*, 1961), which won multiple Grammy Awards and sat at #1 on *Billboard* for thirteen weeks. In winter 1938, Benny Goodman and his orchestra debuted there with a concert that "marked a turning point in the public acceptance of swing."<sup>33</sup> Five years after that, Duke Ellington expanded the presence of jazz in Carnegie,

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<sup>31</sup> Open mostly to Western Art Music, Carnegie scheduled other musics as well, and by the time the Beatles performed there twice on February 12, 1964 Carnegie had long been known for its broad event schedule.

<sup>32</sup> Seeger's history with Carnegie extends back to the 1950s, when impresario Harold Leventhal organized a reunion concert for Seeger's ensemble, the Weavers, after their left-wing politics earned them the reprobation of the McCarthy-era government. Seeger's comeback concerts in June 1963 provided momentum for the civil rights movement and popularized the song that would become its anthem, "We Shall Overcome."

<sup>33</sup> "Carnegie Hall: Then and Now," last modified August 29, 2010, accessed September 17, 2010, <http://www.carnegiehall.org/Article.aspx?id=4294968156>.

making his debut there with his suite *Black Brown and Beige*.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to these genres, Carnegie Hall had actually welcomed rock and roll's debut nine years before the Beatles performed there, an event facilitated by jazz musicians. In May 1955, musicians including Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Billie Holiday, and Count Basie – who had backed Goodman in 1938 – all starred in a “jazz and variety” benefit concert for the New York Association for the Blind.<sup>35</sup> The “variety” portion included guitarist and inventor Les Paul with his wife Mary Ford, as well as Bill Haley and the Comets just as “Rock Around the Clock” was ascending the charts and the great cultural shift was getting underway. Carnegie appeared ready to add the Beatles to a litany of vernacular music performances.

Which is not to say that the Beatles concerts in Carnegie Hall were unanimously accepted. Rather, they ignited a broad debate in New York over the appropriate correspondence between venues and particular types of music. Newspapers accentuated the perceived challenge to Carnegie's image represented by the Beatles, some suggesting that since the Beatles “rocked” Carnegie Hall, it – like the city of Bournemouth in Walter Cronkite's December 1963 report – had been altered forever.<sup>36</sup>

On the heels of the nationwide *Ed Sullivan* broadcast, the Beatles concert at Carnegie Hall was matched in anticipation only by the noise of its audience.

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<sup>34</sup> The premiere garnered “the biggest media build-up yet assembled on Ellington's behalf . . . [and his suite] represented the highest profile example in Ellington's lifelong efforts to advance the politics of race through music, lifestyle, and image.” Harvey G. Cohen, “Duke Ellington and 'Black, Brown and Beige': The Composer as Historian at Carnegie Hall,” *American Quarterly* 56 (2004): 1003. On this composition, see also Mark Tucker, “The Genesis of 'Black, Brown and Beige'” *Black Music Research Journal* 13 (1993): 67–86.

<sup>35</sup> “Stars Assist the Blind,” *New York Times*, May 7, 1955.

<sup>36</sup> “After the Beatles Carnegie Hall Won't Ever Be the Same,” Associated Press, February 13, 1964; and “Beatles Rock Carnegie Hall,” United Press International, February 13, 1964.

Major press outlets reported the event as a “scream along” (not “sing along”) concert. Because of the incessant noise in Carnegie, John Lennon sternly but ineffectively implored their fans to “Shut up!”<sup>37</sup> For Lennon, the screaming fans created a disturbing scene too much like the chaotic press conferences conducted in recent days, and his own yelling is indicative of how he felt about the substantial amount of noise in the hall.<sup>38</sup> Remarkably, amid all the commotion, no damage was done to the interior of Carnegie Hall.<sup>39</sup> In the end, because the Beatles' New York concerts were largely successful, Carnegie officials decided to host more concerts of the kind.

Because the Beatles concerts brought only noise and not material damage, Carnegie officials chose to pursue their relationship with rock and roll by inviting other bands of the so-called British Invasion: the Dave Clark Five and Rolling Stones. With this move, Carnegie appeared ready to redefine itself partially as a promoter of rock and roll, and of the continued trans-Atlantic musical exchange. The Dave Clark Five concert reported generated crowd noise on par with the Beatles concerts.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, the Clark fans caused no harm to Carnegie Hall seats. However, on June 20, 1964 the invitation of the Carnegie administration was taken advantage of by the Rolling Stones fans who caused excessive damage

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<sup>37</sup> John S. Wilson, “2,900-Voice Chorus Joins the Beatles; Audience Shrieks and Bays and Ululates” *New York Times*, February 13, 1964. Also reported in “Singers: The Unbarbershopped Quartet,” *Time Magazine*, February 21, 1964.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Gardner, “3,000 Fans Greet British Beatles,” *New York Times*, February 8, 1964.

<sup>39</sup> Nor did the Beatles themselves cause disturbances during their visit: a New York Plaza hotel representative said, “They couldn't have been better behaved. We expected they would throw their clothes around and do things like that, but they didn't. They were as clean and neat as could be and they didn't take so much as a towel or an ashtray.” Charles McHarry, *Reading (PA) Eagle*, February 28, 1964.

<sup>40</sup> John S. Wilson, “Din Overpowers Dave Clark Five,” *New York Times*, May 30, 1964.

to the hall's seats.<sup>41</sup> Recognizing their mistake, Carnegie officials swiftly banned rock shows after the Stones concert, a decision which made one thing clear: if rock concerts continued to prove explosive, officials had better avoid them or invest in strict controlling measures to minimize the damage wrought by fans. As Carnegie closed its doors to rock, renovated sports venues like the Washington Coliseum seemed the more welcoming choice for promoters.

The Beatles's first tour marked the end for them of small arena concerts in North America. When they returned for their second tour, they inaugurated their career in large arenas, posing new challenges to those in charge of security.

### **§ Security and Empire Stadium**

This second North American tour, which began in San Francisco, has been called the “tour that changed the world.”<sup>42</sup> In duration, this twenty-three city tour would be twice as long as their subsequent two tours, and its average concert attendance more than quadrupled the statistics of their brief first tour. Perhaps the most significant advance for the concert industry was that the Beatles began to concertize in outdoor stadiums, attracting the largest crowds and inviting the most danger.<sup>43</sup>

After the Cow Palace debacle, the Beatles continued up the Pacific coast to their first outdoor concert performed, at Empire Stadium in Vancouver, British Columbia. Large outdoor stadiums such as Empire pose a new set of questions

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<sup>41</sup> Harold Lundstrom, “Banjo's Fun Is Back,” *Desert News and Telegram*, July 1, 1964.

<sup>42</sup> The reference here is to journalist Larry Kane, *Ticket to Ride: Inside the Beatles' 1964 Tour that Changed the World* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2003).

<sup>43</sup> During their brief first visit the band attracted 3,080 fans on average, and attracted 14,202 fans on average during the extended 1964 tour. In the following year, the Beatles drew 20,132 fans on average over eighteen concerts, an average boosted by the Shea concert attendance of 56,500.

that relate to intimacy and security. First, such stadiums present problems of staging: where should four musicians be placed on large fields in relation to their audience? In concert halls like Carnegie, their placement on stage is taken for granted, and the proximity between fans and performers is relatively high. However, such intimacy was erased when rock and roll shifted into stadiums, and the perception of humor that Brian Epstein loved in the early Beatles was removed. Intimacy erasure is intensified with certain situational factors of the physical space. Consider the vantage point of proportion: how much of the stadium surface do musicians use? During sporting events, athletes occupy most corners of the large field, but when our attention is concentrated in a small point at the center of the interior surface, the entertainers will appear smaller. Tightly grouped on stage, the Beatles were in fact viewed as dwarfed during stadium performance. This illusion was later suggested by reports of a concert in Kansas City's Municipal Stadium, where the Beatles resembled "worms in a lighted box."<sup>44</sup> Following Laurel Sercombe's argument that fans offer a performance of their own, I suggest that this lack of intimacy had the effect of intensifying their performance, as they leaned forward in their attempts to have their "performance" register with the Beatles.

As for security, Elias Canetti maintained that crowds at a facility like Empire Stadium are imbued with a carnival-esque sense of freedom, combined with the temptation to move forward. An influential student of crowds, Canetti argued that although massive crowds can be fearsome, those which fill large

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<sup>44</sup> "Beatles Look Like Worms in Lighted Box Thursday," *Lawrence (KS) Journal-World*, September 18, 1964.

venues enter into a state of safety and are paradoxically liberated from fear, as fear becomes its opposite. He argued that “As soon as a man [*sic*] has surrendered himself to the crowd, he ceases to fear its touch.”<sup>45</sup> The magnitude of crowds, like the immense stadium itself, is a strong visual and experiential factor in the creation of this freedom. Compared with the audience in Washington D.C., the crowd at Empire Stadium was nearly three times as large. As we shall see, the Empire crowd liberated themselves to the point of recklessness, threatening the safety of the Beatles and their equipment.

A sense of freedom rendered Empire Stadium a dangerous scene just one year before the Beatles concert. In 1963 the British Columbia Lions football team hosted the Grey Cup championship game at Empire. During the festivities, participants stormed the streets in celebration and consolation, and caused great damage.<sup>46</sup> Partially fueled by alcohol, hooligans temporarily achieved this freedom, and their behavior epitomized a more reckless version of the behavior exhibited by Rolling Stones fans in Carnegie Hall, and Beatles fans in England.<sup>47</sup> As Canetti argues, and as this evidence suggests, various contexts can produce large crowds free from fear. It is not so much the event itself as the size of its crowd that would seem to invite a threat to security.

On the night of the Beatles concert at Empire Stadium, a thick foreboding

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<sup>45</sup> Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (New York: Noonday Press, 1984): 15.

<sup>46</sup> “Drunken celebrants tossed mattresses and broken whiskey bottles from hotel windows, injuring six pedestrians. Roving bands of rowdies snake-danced up Granville St., wreaking havoc. They tore phones from outdoor booths. They uprooted decorative tree plantings outside department stores. They smashed a jewelry store window. They ripped Grey Cup parade standards from lamp posts. They pelted police with rotten eggs.” “Echoes of a Barrel Roll Down Ludgate Hill,” *Montreal Gazette*, November 21, 1964.

<sup>47</sup> “Thousands of fans mobbed a cinema where the Beatles were appearing and teenagers smashed seven plate glass windows and overturned cars.” “Hooliganism 'Will Be Stamped Out,” *The Times* (UK), October 23, 1964.

overcame the venue, and one security official predicted that the crowd would storm the field.<sup>48</sup> Over 20,000 spectators purchased reserved seating tickets for the concert, many of whom confirmed the security official's prediction.

It was after nine when the Beatles took the stage, and five minutes later when about six thousand spectators (as police would estimate) started swarming onto the field, making a mad rush for the stage . . . and the Beatles. Adding to the mayhem were fans without tickets running in from outside the complex, using the force of sheer number to batter down the gates.<sup>49</sup>

Fans with tickets abandoned their assigned seats and rushed forward. They toppled six rows of impermanent fencing which served as a buffer.<sup>50</sup> Those outside without tickets challenged the venue's structural integrity when they attempted to force their way inside. That fearless crowd “smash[ed] down an entrance gate in their frenzied determination to see their heroes,”<sup>51</sup> overwhelming security temporarily before being shut out again. Of course, Empire had sturdy concrete walls, with a boundary clearly delineated between those with a ticket and those without, but the attraction inside proved irresistible. In all, 135 fans were injured under these conditions.<sup>52</sup>

Journalist Larry Kane enjoyed a first-hand experience of the entire 1964 tour, and vividly recalls the melee at Empire Stadium. In August 1964 Kane noted the somewhat commonplace assertion that Beatles concerts “provoke maddening

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<sup>48</sup> Kane, *Ticket to Ride*, 48.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., For another thorough description of the Empire show, Barry Miles and Keith Badman, *The Beatles Diary: The Beatles Years* (London: Omnibus Press, 2001): 162–3.

<sup>50</sup> “Beatle Plan Set,” Canadian Press, August 18, 1964. In a related attempt to buffer the artists from their fans, Vancouver's Hotel Georgia even erected a temporary barbed wire fence to stave off the Beatles's pursuers.

<sup>51</sup> “Beatlemania Claims New Victims,” *The Age*, August 24, 1964.

<sup>52</sup> Kane, *Ticket to Ride*, 51.

reactions and potential violence among their charged fans.”<sup>53</sup> As hosts of the Beatles first stadium show, planners of the Empire concert thus seemed to ignore press reports, and grossly underestimated the number of policemen that would suffice to maintain a modicum of security. A near riot at the Seattle Center Coliseum the night before provided Empire officials with the clearest signal to ratchet up security.<sup>54</sup> Acknowledging the threat to themselves and their equipment, the Beatles made an early exit. Kane recalls that

After the third song, 'All My Loving,' John [Lennon] looked over at Paul [McCartney] and they both shook their heads, signaling over the roar of the crowd that they would move from one song to another without waiting for the audience to react. No small talk or chitchat in this concert. By the time they reached the seventh song, “Can't Buy Me Love,” there was hardly a pause to breathe. They were segueing briskly from song to song, their eyes moving steadily to survey the situation on the field.<sup>55</sup>

The Beatles knew that running songs together saved them time, and that omitting an entire song would make their brief appearance even shorter. And so they made a “seemingly impromptu decision” to drop “I Wanna Hold Your Hand,” their big hit released ten months earlier.<sup>56</sup> Although this single did not have the same history or cache as it had in Washington D.C., the band was well aware that fans adored that record, evidenced by its quick ascendance in magazine charts since the official release in January. Over the course of their touring, the band became acutely aware over the course of performances of precisely where their fans could be expected to enter peak moments of excitement. The Beatles moved through

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. See also Craig Cross, *The Beatles: Day-by-Day, Song-by-Song, Record-by-Record* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2005): 129–30.

<sup>55</sup> Kane, *Ticket to Ride*, 49.

<sup>56</sup> Winn, *Way Beyond Compare*, 234.



their songs quickly, cut their biggest hit in the process, and although Beatles' concerts were never lengthy, the Empire concert lasted only twenty-nine minutes. By dropping "I Want to Hold Your Hand," the Beatles avoided adding fuel to the fire at Empire Stadium, and avoided singing the high-pitched lyrics that intensified crowd excitement.

The journalist Kane summarized the first outdoor Beatles concert alternately as a "slugfest," the "harrowing escape from Empire Stadium" and "the great escape from Vancouver."<sup>57</sup> Distilling his experiences into axiomatic advice, he wrote "Never underestimate the will of the crowd, always have more police than you think will be needed."<sup>58</sup> Finally, Kane felt sure that manager Brian Epstein would hire special security forces ever after: "The scene at Empire Stadium had been enough to convince him [Epstein] that the threat to the band's safety was real, and real serious."<sup>59</sup> Above all, the scene at Empire Stadium demonstrated the great need for event security if stadium concerts were to move forward successfully.

### **§ Intimacy and Spectacular Transportation**

Outdoor stadiums like Empire not only raised new questions of security because they allowed a dramatically larger crowd, they also afforded performers opportunities for theatrics that further reduced the feeling of intimacy. In particular, as the Beatles shifted to outdoor arenas they took advantage of ceiling-less stadiums to open a new realm of possibilities for performer transportation,

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<sup>57</sup> Kane, *Ticket to Ride*, 125, 186, and 178.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

arriving and departing at several of their 1964 concerts by helicopter.<sup>60</sup>

In their earliest North American concerts, the Beatles were physically located close to their fans during performances. As I argued above, the proximity of performers to their fans is directly proportional to the perception of intimacy, and that intimacy was highest when, for example, they passed through the crowd en route to their stage, as they did at the Washington Coliseum. Outside, fans were occasionally able to achieve this high level of proximity outside the band's hotel. But transportation by automobile denied such intimacy, as the enclosed cabin ensured a space between the band and the Beatlemaniacs. The Beatles frequently used sleight of hand to send fans off their scent: in San Francisco, "officials sent a decoy limousine escorted by police cars from the Cow Palace immediately after the performance, and thousands of fans waved good-bye. The Beatles in fact were waiting in their dressing room for the crowds to clear before they drove to the airport."<sup>61</sup> Alternately, the band tucked themselves into Brinks armored vehicles before entering the vicinity of performance venues, a move suggestive of their exalted status within popular culture. But the most significant move regarding transportation was the shift to swiftly exit the premises by helicopter, a mode of transport unavailable to almost everyone.

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<sup>60</sup> This transportation stunt was foreordained by the final scene in their first feature film *A Hard Day's Night*. When the Beatles left the United States for England on February 22, they set out almost immediately to work on their film project. Plans for the film, begun in October 1963, were informed by the band's recent concert experiences and fueled by six new songs. Directed by Richard Lester (who also directed their follow-up film, *Help!*), the film famously begins and is suffused with scenes that caricature the Beatles' constant attempts to evade fans, and ends with a scene not yet realized in the Beatles' off-screen life: the Beatles finally evade their fans by rushing into a ready helicopter that lifts them to safety. The film and soundtrack LP were released in August in America, a carefully timed anticipation of the Beatles' return less than a week later.

<sup>61</sup> "American Beatle Fans Hurt," *The Age*, August 21, 1964.

Later in the tour, helicopters were firmly part of the plans to usher the band in and out of venues.<sup>62</sup> Among the first of these stunts took place at New York's Forest Hills Tennis Club on either August 28 or 29.<sup>63</sup> To one fan in attendance, the Beatles's spectacular exit trumped the musical experience at Forest Hills: "While hearing their music live in the open air was exhilarating, the most impressive thing was their leaving the stadium in a helicopter, made golden by the searchlights trained on it, and inside the four black-suited boys waving as it rose up into the dark sky."<sup>64</sup> For fans with musical aspirations, traveling by helicopter became integral to their daydreaming, and signaled the last blow to intimacy. Guitarist Leslie West of the rock band Mountain remembers wanting to mimic the Beatles's spectacular transportation as much as their imitation of American music. He revealed that after "copying these English guys copying us [American blues musicians]" he "wanted to make it so badly."<sup>65</sup> Clearly drawn to rock spectacle, West continued his testimony: "After the Beatles show in Forest Hills, I remember their helicopter pulling away, and all you could see was these four lit cigarettes. I said I want to do that."<sup>66</sup> For West, "making it" meant living a glamorous rock and roll lifestyle, which, after the Beatles, might include spectacular entrances and exits, and exploring the possibilities of ceiling-less outdoor spaces. His comments are entirely consistent with other rock musicians and their conception of large

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<sup>62</sup> "Helicopter May Rescue the Beatles," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 3, 1964.

<sup>63</sup> The Beatles performed there on both nights, but I write "either" because neither Haslam nor West (informants in this section) specifies which performance they attended at the tennis club.

<sup>64</sup> Nicholas Haslam, *Redeeming Features: A Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009): 207.

<sup>65</sup> Celia Farber, "Coming Down the Mountain with Leslie West," *Spin Magazine* (September, 1996): 40.

<sup>66</sup> The interviewer then interjected, "And at Woodstock, you did." West responded in the affirmative: "We played on Saturday night, and the helicopter came at five the next morning." Ibid.

stadiums.<sup>67</sup> Although transportation by armored truck or helicopter enforced the distance and minimal intimacy between performers and fans, after the Beatles such spectacular entrances and exits associated with outdoor stadiums became goals in and of themselves.

Helicopter departures signify more than rock and roll grandeur; they also remind fans of the extensivity of the musical tour. In light of helicopters, fans can imagine that their event was one of many in the larger picture of concert space. Fans understand that when a helicopter departs, it is en route to the next concert. When fans like West watch the helicopter arrive and depart impressively, they fantasize about the changing picture of rock and roll social space and develop a fuller conception of their desired lifestyle. Thus, the “British Invasion” not only concerned commandeering the airwaves, but also crucially included controlling air space, inventing novel uses of physical places in the development of arena rock social space.

### **Shea Stadium, 1965**

The preceding discussions will have shed a light on the concert at Shea Stadium in 1965 that typically goes unacknowledged in rock discourse: Shea 1965 was not only the largest-grossing and most well-attended performance the Beatles would ever deliver, it was proof of the importance of maintaining security during such large events. Three factors primarily contribute to this success: the design of the stadium, the disposition and behavior of the crowd, and the number

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<sup>67</sup> Aerosmith's Steven Tyler once gained admittance to Madison Square Garden during off-hours, where he “was overwhelmed by instant delusions of rock and roll grandeur . . . And I said to myself, *Someday a band of mine is gonna fill this fuckin' place.*” Original emphasis. Aerosmith with Stephen Davis, *Walk This Way: The Autobiography of Aerosmith* (New York: Spike, 1999): 54–55.

and actions of the security forces. As opposed to Empire Stadium, for which seating is arranged in a single ring, Shea Stadium has three tiers of seats, partitioning the crowd and all but precluding the upper two-thirds from storming the field as fans had in Vancouver. Of course, storming the field is a volitional act, so Shea and other tiered stadiums preclude riots only insofar as fans are disposed to that activity. Beatles fans weren't always as ill-behaved as in Vancouver; in Montreal on September 8, 1964, the teenagers comprised “one of the best behaved audiences' of the quartet's North American tour,” and only “Two girls attempted to rush the stage while the singers were performing but were restrained by security officials.”<sup>68</sup> As for the number of security forces, those of Shea 1965 remarkably large by comparison with other Beatles concerts. At Vancouver's Empire Stadium, for example, “One hundred policemen were there—That's all that stood between the way it wound up and a national tragedy.”<sup>69</sup> And at the Hollywood Bowl, “A sellout crowd of 17,600 watched the show. Thousands of others milled around outside, held away from the box office by a force of 100 police and 266 private security guards.”<sup>70</sup> Compare the total of 366 officials outside the Hollywood Bowl with the two thousand security officers who patrolled the crowd at Shea Stadium.<sup>71</sup> Their careful preparations for the concert are captured in a documentary produced by Ed Sullivan.<sup>72</sup> In non-musical terms,

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<sup>68</sup> “Montreal Youths Behave for Beatles,” *The Calgary Herald*, September 9, 1964.

<sup>69</sup> Stan Shillington, “Only 100 Police Between Youngsters and Disaster,” *The (Vancouver) Sun*, August 24, 1964.

<sup>70</sup> “Beatles Use Armored Car,” *St. Petersburg (FL) Times*, September 1, 1965.

<sup>71</sup> Roy Carr and Tony Tyler, *The Beatles: An Illustrated Record* (New York: Harmony Books, 1976): 46.

<sup>72</sup> George Harrison is heard on this film saying, “Any concert that you go on and there are so many people like that, it's always amazing. Last year it was the Hollywood Bowl, at that time it was about the biggest show we've done, but this one tops that.” *The Beatles at Shea Stadium*,

the success of Shea 1965 was a direct outcome of the absence of security gaffes, forestalled by a combination of the tiered stadium design, the crowd's behavior, and the actions of security forces.

While Shea 1965 was neither the first outdoor nor the first stadium concert for the Beatles, it is important to re-visit because the rock and roll discourse which holds Shea as the fountainhead of stadium concerts and attributes primacy to attendance and gross earnings records says much about the historical mindset. Steve Waksman, a thoughtful commentator on the history of rock concerts, wrote that arena concerts “reconstituted the rock audience as a community during a pivotal shift in the music's history. That shift, in a sense, had its roots in 1965, when the Beatles played the first of two engagements at Shea Stadium in New York. . . . In 1965, a concert at Shea Stadium was testimony to the mass phenomenon that was the success of the Beatles, which exceeded the bounds of rock and roll proper.”<sup>73</sup> The Beatles were clearly exceedingly popular, but why emphasize Shea 1965 as the roots of that pivotal shift in the music's history? Three Beatles concerts from a year before Shea 1965 are equally worthy of being called a large assembly and “testimony to the mass phenomenon”: Municipal Stadium in Kansas City and Empire Stadium both hosted over twenty thousand, and the Jacksonville (Florida) Gator Bowl housed 32,000 fans, in spite of a very recent hurricane.<sup>74</sup> The earliest of these, the relatively unknown Vancouver

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produced by Ed Sullivan (London: NEMS Enterprises Ltd., 1966).

<sup>73</sup> Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 25–6.

<sup>74</sup> In retrospect, the Jacksonville concert has been considered “the most memorable stop on their second American tour, for they arrive to find that Hurricane Dora has preceded them. So has President Johnson, who has declared Jacksonville a disaster area. On top of that, the show had almost been canceled days earlier—for reasons entirely unrelated to the tempest. Revolted by the racial tension they’d seen throughout America, the band had insisted it would play the

concert, would also support the argument. Waksman's choice, however, seems to accord with the literature that illustrates a continuing pattern of reporting on record-breaking events.<sup>75</sup>

Which individual or ensemble fell to second place when the Beatles set those records at Shea Stadium? The answer cannot be found anywhere in the literature, and the lacuna exists because the Shea milestone initiated a sharp discursive preoccupation with record-keeping. For example, in 1971 critic Keith Altham claimed that “The Moodies [the Moody Blues] have shattered every attendance and percentage record by a British group in America,” a claim which wasn't true, and, in 1973, Led Zeppelin was said to have dethroned the Beatles, “smashing the U.S. attendance record for a single concert, set in 1965.”<sup>76</sup> Which is not to say that statistics such as these were introduced in entertainment reports in this year; they date to at least the 1850s, when concert programs from Jenny Lind's American visit announced the number of tickets sold and revenue generated. However, to focus on largest-ever crowds and purses is an intellectual cul-de-sac which privileges the successes of few over the experiences of many. Alternatively, one may focus on the minimization of injuries (the Empire Stadium concert thus marks an inauspicious origin of stadium concerts). The point is that

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Dixie venue only with assurances that the audience would not be segregated. In the end, the Fabs take the stage with 40-mile-an-hour winds whipping through their mop-tops. Ringo's drums have to be nailed to the stage to keep them from blowing away.” Hirshberg, *From Yesterday to Today*, 60.

<sup>75</sup> To raise this issue here is to build contrast with the end of the period 1964–79, when amassing such large crowds was less a badge of honor in the eyes of rock commentators than a mark of blatant commercialism, an issue more fully developed in this dissertation's final chapter.

<sup>76</sup> Keith Altham, “The Moody Blues,” *Record Mirror*, January 16, 1971; Damien Cave, “Led Zep Rule the U.S. in 1973,” *Rolling Stone*, June 24, 2004, accessed October 28, 2010, [http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/ledzeppelin/articles/story/6085498/led\\_zep\\_rule\\_the\\_us\\_in\\_1973](http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/ledzeppelin/articles/story/6085498/led_zep_rule_the_us_in_1973). The record Led Zeppelin crowd (56,800) surpassed the Shea Stadium crowd by a scant 1,200.

the Beatles gave many concerts in North America, and to hold Shea 1965 as representative erases a much more complex history of security and intimacy in rock and roll's changing social space, and says much about the framework in which critics and historians have viewed these concerts—in terms of ticket sales, gross dollars, and underpinning it all, the industry of manufacturing competition.

### **§ Shea Stadium, post-1965**

The success of security made the Shea 1965 so remarkable, a fact that generally goes unacknowledged. However, with that success Shea Stadium officials were emboldened to experiment with their entertainment calendar.

Shea Stadium had been designed and funded by professional sports teams; the chapter-opening quotation makes clear that many readers would be familiar with or charmed by the use of baseball lingo. The stadium normally hosted professional baseball's New York Mets, and the National Football League's New York Jets. Even so, an air of experimentation pervaded the early years of Shea. At one point, officials succeeded in scheduling a regular season college football game between the University of Pittsburgh and Syracuse University on the neutral turf of Shea. This experiment changed only the level of sport on display, leaving the type of entertainment unchanged.

After the Beatles concert, Shea officials were emboldened to adopt a more liberal approach to musical entertainment. The success of the Beatles Shea Stadium concert (and thus the security) served to encourage Shea officials, to dispose them toward accepting concerts like the Beatles in the future. Shea had much to gain materially, since their primary tenants – the baseball and football



teams – reserved the stadium for less than one hundred days of the year between them, leaving much of the calendar open for more events. With a considerable mortgage to pay off, Shea officials could convert concert revenue into financial solvency, adding popular music to the baseball and football industries on which they relied. This had the effect of providing a modicum of security against the unlikely occurrence of the sudden departure of one professional sports team for another city.

With an open attitude toward entertainment, Shea officials would invite more musical events to increase revenue. A corollary of this attitude is that still more diverse entertainment might also succeed as stadium entertainment. To increase the diversity of events would be to appeal to a broader cross-section of the populace, and thus to assure planners of a greater likelihood of high attendance. This is how it appeared, at any rate, in 1966, ten months after the Beatles first performed there. To court the television audience, Shea officials scheduled a diverse event that featured many types of musicians as well as prominent television actors. In this context, an upstart rock band called the Young Rascals functions to interlace the first Beatles concert with the continuing efforts of Shea officials to define the venue's *inertia*.<sup>77</sup> The Rascals helped open the 1965

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<sup>77</sup> In physics, the term *inertia* refers to the resistance of any physical object to change its state of motion or rest: a body in motion tends to stay in motion, and a body at rest tends to stay at rest, unless and until acted upon by an outside force. As used in spatial theories, *inertia* was introduced by Robert Dodgshon in his attempts to reorient geographical thought from place to process, “to explain how and why change tends to occur where it does.” We can observe *inertia*—or patterns of social process—by orienting ourselves toward the history of performance venues. By observing the history of what practices these buildings include or exclude, one gets the sense of new events offering negligible or significant challenge to each venue's resistance to change. The first rock and roll concerts in stadiums, for example, offered a significant challenge to the sporting customs of these venues. Dodgshon, *Society in Time and Space: A Geographical Perspective on Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press,

Beatles concert at Shea, along with the rhythm and blues King Curtis Band, the Mexican-American group Cannibal and the Headhunters, Motown singer Brenda Holloway, and the British dance band Sounds Incorporated. Only ten months later, the Rascals returned for another revue concert from the infield at Shea. On June 25, 1966, two months before the Beatles would return to Shea, the Young Rascals were headline performers at an eclectic concert at that stadium billed as “The most explosive rock and roll show of the year!!” A motley collection of performers joined them, from a jazz orchestra to Motown stars the Temptations, but all the musicians were subordinated in event advertising to the announcement of actors Adam West and Frank Gorshin, stars of the television program *Batman*.<sup>78</sup> In this context, diverse popular musicians were absorbed into the orbit of television celebrity, Batman opened for the Beatles in the context of Shea's summer programming, and the professional sports teams had to wonder whose stadium Shea was becoming. The Shea approach to filling seats was of the “something for everyone” variety, and this Batman Concert of 1966 drives home the notion that the young and famous Shea stadium had been fully integrated with television and the establishment producers of family entertainment. Furthermore, as a stadium renaissance swept across America, new stadium officials would carefully consider the role of rock and roll concerts in their entertainment scheduling.

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1998).

<sup>78</sup> Batman fans would have been pleased to watch West (as Batman) chase Gorshin (Joker) across the infield of Shea, a scene similar to those seen on the Batman program. This routine capped the evening and interjected the space with theater. This is important to remember because, according to the scheme above, the intimacy at a venue like Shea is low, so Batman and the Joker had to exaggerate their performance to be seen and understood by those farthest away.

## Conclusion

When cultural historian Jacques Barzun wrote that “Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball, the rules and realities of the game,” I believe he meant for “realities” to signify how Americans associated professional sports with the grandeur of society’s largest entertainment buildings.<sup>79</sup> Those realities expanded considerably when the Beatles elbowed their way onto Shea Stadium on August 15, 1965, but that single concert presents a limited perspective on a movement already in progress.

The seventy Beatles performances in North America can be summarized by *expansion* and *extension*. Beginning with the east coast, the Beatles performed in all regions of the United States and three major markets in Canada over three years, substantially extending their live audience. The ever larger physical spaces of their performances served to expand audiences as they correspondingly reduced intimacy: from Carnegie Hall and the Washington Coliseum, to indoor arenas like the Cow Palace, and then outdoor stadiums like Empire in Vancouver, and Shea in New York. Crucially, outdoor stadiums allowed for the theatrical expansion into the third dimension overhead, evinced by the band’s repeated use of helicopter transportation.

As Beatles concerts expanded, they left a trail of evidence indicating how rock and roll concerts altered – or did not alter – social practices and customs, or *inertia*. Many factors beyond the scope of this dissertation similarly influence the characteristic uses of performance venues. Nonetheless, the renovated Washington

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<sup>79</sup> Jacques Barzun, *God’s Country and Mine: A Declaration of Love Spiced with a Few Harsh Words* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1954): 159.

Coliseum was boosted by the Beatles concert; Carnegie Hall was left substantially unaltered, having welcomed rock and roll only to reject it posthaste; and Shea Stadium was marked virtually from its opening in 1964 as an entertainment venue.

In the broader context of this dissertation, I propose that more than simply inaugurating “the era of stadium rock,” the Beatles concerts also constitute an important endpoint, a sudden confrontation with the upper limit of expansion in terms of architectural space—with important implications for the aesthetics of future concerts – and the definitive end of single-purpose venues. Though some of society's largest buildings had been designed for and funded by professional sports, professional football and baseball leagues would have to account for new rock and roll tenants. Having infiltrated society's most capacious facilities, rock and roll audiences could grow no larger without the construction of still larger venues or rural festival sites, both of which would become reality by the end of the decade. The effects of this realization reverberated throughout the North American public performance industry, providing a crisis moment for venue officials to declare their priorities for the rapidly shifting architectural hierarchy. More than anything else, the Shea concert of 1965 marks the moment at which popular music took its place alongside the professional sports trade as strong contenders for the great American audience.

## Chapter Two

### Sounding Live: Led Zeppelin and the Echo-poetics of Arena Rock

#### Introduction

Although it accomplished additional goals, the previous chapter had the unavoidable effect of re-inscribing the Beatles as founders of the stadium rock era when, in fact, there are competing views of its origins. In one view, the Beatles inaugurated the genre with their emblematic Shea Stadium concert of 1965. In one opposing view, it was the younger British band Led Zeppelin who inaugurated the stadium rock era eight years later, in 1973. Led Zeppelin's guitarist Jimmy Page recently announced that his band's thirty-six-date tour of the United States in the summer of 1973, “gave birth to the modern arena-rock experience,” effectively shoveling the achievements of the Beatles and other earlier bands into a “pre-modern” oubliette.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Led Zep Rule the U.S. in 1973,” *Rolling Stone*, June 24, 2004, [http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/ledzeppelin/articles/story/6085498/led\\_zep\\_rule\\_the\\_us\\_in\\_1973](http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/ledzeppelin/articles/story/6085498/led_zep_rule_the_us_in_1973).

However interesting these competing originary claims may be, what is more important than considering when and by whom the industry took flight is the question of how and to what effect the reputed originators got it off the ground. A major distinction between these two claims to stadium rock origination concerns aesthetics. The Beatles are considered to have inaugurated stadium rock on the basis of having gathered a portion of their large fan base as a live rock and roll community in society's largest buildings downtown. Once downtown, however, the Beatles and the greater rock performance industry had no place larger than stadiums to go, and its practitioners were busy implementing technologies to overcoming the challenges presented by such large venues. Page's claim, then, rests on his assurance that in 1973 Led Zeppelin not only gathered large stadium crowds, but also entertained them in novel and interesting ways. The aesthetics of Led Zeppelin concerts in 1973 and beyond relied on technologies that the band previously eschewed, such as video projection screens, smoke machines, and elaborate light shows. What was the purpose of adopting such technologies?

Although the Beatles are credited with inaugurating “the era of stadium rock,” it was Led Zeppelin whose output between 1968–73 is the first identifiable as “Arena Rock,” because the band valued live performance as self-promotion, fashioned studio recordings as concert re-creations, and manufactured audience participation while compensating for the intimacy lost in massive venues.

## **§ Context**

After swerving through the biography of the band members and their

manager, Peter Grant, this section characterizes Led Zeppelin as originators of heavy metal and “cock rock,” stylistic chameleons, and, for some, the antidote for psychedelic rock.

Before they formed Led Zeppelin, each of the four members had gained considerable musical experience across southern England. The guitarist Page was the organizer and arguably the most seasoned, having labored as a studio musician before joining the Yardbirds in 1966, gaining important experience in the process in the areas of composition, rehearsal, recording, and touring. The bassist John Paul Jones came from a musical family and had frequently crossed paths with Page during session work before joining Zeppelin. John Bonham began drumming at the age of five and had performed with several semi-professional bands, and had received two other lucrative offers at the time he was asked by Page to join the band. Robert Plant sang in a number of bands, including two he shared with Bonham, and had earned a reputation for his strong voice before auditioning for Page.

In the words of *Melody Maker* editor Tony Horkins, “Led Zeppelin only ever thought big.”<sup>2</sup> Upon the band's very first rehearsal, the musicians gelled and looked to their collective future with confidence. “All four musicians have since used the same word to describe their first rehearsal in a crowded little room below a record store on Gerard Street: magic.”<sup>3</sup> Plant said that “Although we were all steeped in blues and R&B, we found out in the first hour and a half that we had

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<sup>2</sup> Tony Horkins, *Led Zeppelin* (St. Martin's Press, 1997): 11.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Davis, *Hammer of the Gods: The Led Zeppelin Saga* (New York: Harper Entertainment, 2008): 55.

our own identity.”<sup>4</sup> Jones remembered that “Jimmy said, 'Do you know “Train Kept A-Rollin’?”’ I told him no. And he said, 'It's easy, just G to A.' He counted it out, and the room just *exploded*. And we said, 'Right, we're on, this is it, this is going to work!!!’”<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Page recalled that the “Four of us got together in this room and started playing. Then we knew. We started laughing at each other. Maybe it was from relief or from the knowledge that we could groove together.”<sup>6</sup> Clearly, the consensus was that the band had great potential ripe for development.

The band was managed by Peter Grant (1935–95), a burly Englishman with significant experience in entertainment prior to Led Zeppelin.<sup>7</sup> Grant was a stagehand at thirteen, grew to become a large man with a tough exterior, and worked in film studios as a stunt man by age thirty. After founding his own management company, Grant was hired by luminary English music manager Don Arden. “By the end of the [1950s] he was a tough U.K. Tour manager for American rockers like Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Gene Vincent, and the Everly Brothers [. . .] By the mid-sixties, Grant had learned the ropes of touring in the States as tour manager for the Animals.”<sup>8</sup> Grant helped accentuate Led Zeppelin's competitive spirit, and translated his previous entertainment experience into remarkable success in terms of how the band earned their money and where they performed. He developed a no-nonsense approach to his business, and was known occasionally to resort to brute force to make his point. Led Zeppelin biographer

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<sup>4</sup> Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 55.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>7</sup> For a brief introduction to Grant's career before managing Led Zeppelin, Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



Stephen Davis reported that

Grant caught the hall's [Chicago's Kinetic Circus] manager surreptitiously selling tickets to an already sold-out show and confiscated the cash. Something else felt wrong. Neither Grant nor [road manager Richard] Cole believed the tally of heads and cash. In the office Cole took apart the waste bin and came up with ticket stubs of the wrong color. Again, Grant demanded and received whatever illicit cash was due the band. Grant's tenacious instinct for the scent of cash would eventually mean that his clients Led Zeppelin would earn (and keep) more money than any rock musicians before them.<sup>9</sup>

It is safe to say that Grant's aggressive attitude helped win the band an upper hand in the promotion of Led Zeppelin concerts.

The critical and scholarly reception of Led Zeppelin places the band at the origins of the heavy metal genre. Founded in London in the fall of 1968, Led Zeppelin started out geographically and chronologically close to the singular fount of heavy metal and its earliest practitioners in Ozzy Osbourne and Black Sabbath.<sup>10</sup> More to the point, Zeppelin foregrounded an aggressive musical style similar to Sabbath's, rooted in heavily distorted power chords and a bottom-heavy musical texture mediated by powerful speaker systems.<sup>11</sup> Led Zeppelin were perceived as originators from the start: the critic Felix Dennis wrote of their debut

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 85. The band also dealt with promoter Bill Graham, who sneaked people into his Winterland Ballroom after concerts sold out. "Winterland: A Million Memories," *The Closing of Winterland*, produced by Jeffrey Norman and David Lemieux (Monterey, CA: Monterey Video, 2003), DVD. Peter Grant's stolen cash story was followed by a strikingly different treatment when they returned to Chicago: "The [Kinetic Circus] manager there presented them with 18-carat gold watches from Tiffany's after their performance. Somewhat different from Denver, where they were not even mentioned on the bill." Howard Mylett, *Led Zeppelin* (Frogmore, U.K.: Panther Books Ltd., 1976): 41.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Walser, *Running With the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1993): x.

<sup>11</sup> The band's association with heavy metal's origins is sometimes contradicted. Lead singer Robert Plant said of their eponymous debut album, "That was not heavy metal. There was nothing heavy about that at all. . . . It was ethereal." Quoted in Walser, *Running With the Devil*, 6.

recording, that “Very occasionally a long-playing record is released that defies immediate classification or description, simply because it's so obviously a turning point in rock music that only time proves capable of shifting it into eventual perspective. (Dylan's *Bringing It All Back Home*, The Byrds' *Younger Than Yesterday*, Disraeli Gears, Hendrix's *Are You Experienced?* and *Sgt. Pepper*). This Led Zeppelin album is like that.”<sup>12</sup>

As strongly as they are linked to heavy metal, Led Zeppelin are also known as progenitors of “cock rock.” Steve Waksman has claimed that “The quintessential cock rock song, by almost unanimous critical decision, is Zeppelin's “Whole Lotta Love,” the lead track from their second album.”<sup>13</sup> The term customarily connotes homosocial, male rock performance, and found its first scholarly description in 1978. In that year, Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie described “cock rock” more specifically as “music making in which performance is an explicit, crude, and often aggressive expression of male sexuality.”<sup>14</sup> At least two scholars have brought attention to how Frith, in his later work, explicitly associated the term with Led Zeppelin.<sup>15</sup> In this way, Frith's work accords with criticism contemporaneous with early Led Zeppelin, when the male sexuality of “cock rock” seemed to overlap with the new sounds of heavy metal. Illustrating this overlap, the critic “Metal Mike” Saunders wrote that “As much as I hate heavy music – cock rock, macho rock, or whatever the current name for it is – I

<sup>12</sup> Felix Dennis, “Led Zeppelin: *Led Zeppelin* (Atlantic),” *Oz*, March 1969.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Waksman, *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999): 248.

<sup>14</sup> Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie, “Rock and Sexuality,” in *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, ed. Frith and Andrew Goodwin (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990): 374.

<sup>15</sup> Susan Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001): 162; Waksman, *Instruments of Desire*, 247–8.

have to admit to having every Blue Cheer album ever made, and then to having a peculiar liking for *Led Zeppelin II* because of its undeniable stupid-rock punch.”<sup>16</sup>

However, Led Zeppelin appeared most comfortable when sliding between musical styles. As Susan Fast has persuasively argued, nothing “threatens the perceived stability of Led Zeppelin's identity as 'proto-metal,' as 'cock rock,' or as participating in the gnostic peregrination of progressive rock as much as their acoustically based music and, especially, the acoustic set that became part of many performances in 1970 and after.”<sup>17</sup> The band's exploration of both clean acoustic and distorted electric sounds found no better recorded expression than their third album (*Led Zeppelin III*, 1970), which, from one track to the next, almost without exception, oscillates from one pole to the other. That album's acoustic songs align the band with the folk revival of the 1960s, and help “shape the band's mythology in terms of linking them to ideals of perceived noncommercialism, simplicity, the feeling of intimacy that came with such musical means, and “meaningful,” sometimes “serious” texts.” The band's oscillation from acoustic to electric further confounded their critics' ability to contain them linguistically, and compounded their reception as musicians with

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<sup>16</sup> Metal Mike Saunders, “Sir Lord Baltimore: *Kingdom Come* (Mercury),” *Creem*, May 1971. As exemplified by Saunders's statement, Zeppelin was aligned from the beginning with the sounds of heavy metal (and Black Sabbath) as well as with the performances of “cock rock” (and Alice Cooper and David Bowie), two areas covered in the following statements: Robert Walser suggested that, “The sound that would become known as heavy metal was definitively codified in 1970 [*sic*] with the release of *Led Zeppelin II* [actually, October 1969], Black Sabbath's *Paranoid*, and *Deep Purple in Rock*.” Walser, *Running With the Devil*, 10; the sociologist Serge Denisoff wrote, “The pansexual, ‘cock rock’ phenomenon of Alice Cooper, David Bowie et al, is limited. It’s good entertainment – once. Musically both acts are weak.” J. Montague Fitzpatrick, “Rock Critics Rule...and other startling musical revelations!,” *Coast*, April 1973.

<sup>17</sup> Fast, *Houses of the Holy*, 79.

eclectic influences.<sup>18</sup> Jimmy Page attributed his wide-ranging musical interests to his previous career as a session musician in London.<sup>19</sup> Led Zeppelin appeared eager to avoid the pigeonholing effect of musical categories, preferring to adopt a “less reverent attitude toward the [blues] form” and their remaining influences.<sup>20</sup>

Even while alternating between musical genres, Led Zeppelin forged a direct and accessible performance style. In this context, the band stood opposed to the genre of psychedelic rock. As Steve Waksman has put it, “In the crisis of definition that followed [Altamont in December 1969], the constituent elements of what had been considered the rock community began to diverge. For some, the heavy sounds that had dominated rock music during the 1960s represented an exhausted form. This segment of the audience opted for quieter, more introspective music, such as that purveyed by singer-songwriters or by the new way of country-influenced rock musicians. Others still preferred loud rock dominated by the electric guitar, and it was for this segment of the audience that Led Zeppelin stood as heroes.”<sup>21</sup> Jimmy Page felt that the band's streamlined

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<sup>18</sup> Early in 1969, for example, a British critic named Mark Williams wrote that “[Robert] Plant's style is, thankfully, pretty hard to categorise,” a perception based in the singer's own testimony of his influences: “The first music that appealed to me, when I was at school even, was stuff like [Bob] Dylan's 'Corrina, Corrina' and when you look deeper into that sort of thing you find there's a lot of the same feelings that are in blues music, like Leadbelly's stuff and then you realise that the blues field is a very wide one.” Williams, “Led Zeppelin: Plant,” *International Times*, April 11, 1969. Plant's invocation of Dylan is apt, since Dylan personified the anxieties and enthusiasms of the acoustic-electric divide, and his statement testifies to the influence of the blues – in addition to much of the rock and roll it inspired – on him and his band mates. For more information on the band's musical influences see Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 10–39.

<sup>19</sup> Page said, “In America, you were a specialist [. . .] but in Britain you had to do everything. I had to do a hell of a lot of work in a short time.” Dave Schulps, “The Crunge: Jimmy Page Gives a History Lesson,” *Trouser Press*, September–November, 1977, 21–23. Reprinted in David Brackett, *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009): 320–326.

<sup>20</sup> Brackett, *Pop, Rock, and Soul*, 310.

<sup>21</sup> Waksman, *Instruments of Desire*, 239.

originals and adaptations appealed more to American audiences, where “There is a tendency to return to some of the early rock and roll songs now almost as a reaction against the heavy, intellectual and analytical forms it has been taking. . . . You can't read anything but what there is into songs like 'I've Gotta Woman'. Some music has just got a little too complicated for the public.”<sup>22</sup>

As stylistic chameleons and two-fold originators, Led Zeppelin amassed a large following during a shift in tastes and a pivotal upswing in the overall growth of the rock audience. The American rock music was fragmented and fragmenting, creating niche audiences who tended to ignore each other. As Reebee Garofalo points out, musical eclecticism reached a high point in the late 1960s, but “as the industry tried to rationalize production, such a range of artists would be spread over a number of more discrete, less overlapping audiences.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, Zeppelin arrived in North America with a chance to develop their own niche audience and create a loyal following. A large portion of Led Zeppelin's audience consisted of the “youth” as opposed to the “teen” demographic.<sup>24</sup> Whereas Beatles fans in the middle 1960s were predominantly teenaged, Zeppelin's earliest audience comprised a larger cross-section of society. Drummer John Bonham remarked on the diversity of Zeppelin's audience in 1970, as Zeppelin topped the field in

<sup>22</sup> Keith Altham, “Led Zeppelin Are Not Prefabricated,” *Top Pops*, September 13, 1969.

<sup>23</sup> Reebee Garofalo, *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the U.S.A.*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: 2002): 200. The author attributes the flourishing of diversity to radio, and the demise of diversity to the record companies: “Because of the technical development of FM rock radio, which led to short-lived experiments in free-form programming, there was a brief moment in the late 1960s when it was not out of the ordinary to hear the Beatles, Stevie Wonder, Janis Joplin, Aretha Franklin, Jimi Hendrix, Pink Floyd, Simon and Garfunkle [*sic*], and the Grateful Dead on the same radio program or to find them in the same record collection.”

<sup>24</sup> For a penetrating discussion of “teen,” “youth,” and “adult” demographics, see Keir Keightley, “Reconsidering Rock,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Rock and Pop*, ed. Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 2001): 122–5.

*Melody Maker's* annual poll for world's top band. Bonham insisted, "let's say *the public*, let's not just say "the kids" because we've had all sorts of people at concerts, you know. I think that they're coming to listen to what you're playing and not just to look at you and see what you are."<sup>25</sup>

### § Live Performance as Self-promotion

One of the main reasons for crediting Led Zeppelin with advancing arena rock is that the band valued live performance as self-promotion. The Beatles in 1965 had no need for stadiums to be considered stars, but the upstart Led Zeppelin relied on live performance because very few in America knew who they were.

From their first concerts of December 1968, Led Zeppelin had to negotiate their status among Americans as an unknown quantity. To begin with, Led Zeppelin was omitted from pre-concert promotional material before the band's first three concerts in Denver, Seattle, and Vancouver. Another measure of Zeppelin's relative obscurity is how frequently promoters misrepresented them by name and membership. Several promoters misprinted the band's unusual name.<sup>26</sup> For example, an early Zeppelin concert promoter mistook their name for a singer-songwriter who did not exist. Before Zeppelin's concert at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington on December 30, 1968, "the ads in both *The Spokesman-Review* and *Chronicle* read, 'The Vanilla Fudge, with Len Zefflin.' The ad

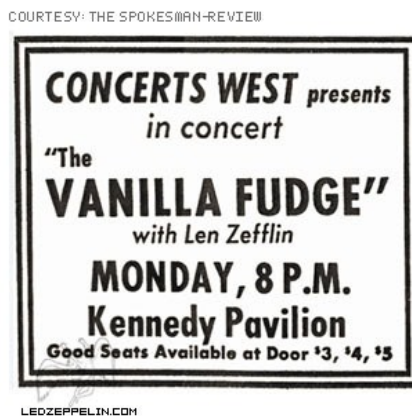
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<sup>25</sup> Transcribed from an interview with Bonham and Plant on *London and the Southeast*, Britain's long-running news program, September 1970, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0fqgq6ZMZY>.

<sup>26</sup> The name "Led Zeppelin" was famously suggested by Keith Moon, drummer of the Who, who invoked the Hindenburg disaster of May 1937 when he scoffed, "you'll go down like a lead zeppelin," after learning of Page's new project and personnel. Keith Shadwick, *Led Zeppelin The Story of a Band and their Music 1968–1980* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005): 36.

copywriter misheard the name and thought it was some guy named Len Zefflin.”<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, the band was announced as “Led Zeptlin” before their three January 1969 concerts in Detroit.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, some press outlets misrepresented the band's instrumentation, as when a Toronto reviewer swapped the instruments of two musicians: “Led Zeppelin is a quartet, consisting of John Paul Jones on drums, John Bonham on bass . . . Jones is a fine drummer with precision timing.”<sup>29</sup> Consider the Beatles's dramatically different early reception in North America: virtually every newspaper article provided the names, ages, and instruments of each musician, and sometimes commented on their marital status. To assert themselves and emerge from under the Beatles penumbra, Led Zeppelin went on the attack.



*Illustration 2.1: Concert advertisement (1968): The Vanilla Fudge with Len Zefflin.*

What Americans did know about Led Zeppelin before they arrived was that the guitarist Page had been a member of the Yardbirds. After three

<sup>27</sup> Jim Kershner, “Dazed and Confused,” *The (Spokane, WA) Spokesman-Review*, December 23, 2007, page D1.

<sup>28</sup> Dave Lewis and Simon Pallett, *Led Zeppelin, the Concert File* (London: Omnibus, 2005): 35.

<sup>29</sup> Ritchie Yorke, “The Pop Scene,” *The Globe and Mail*, February 3, 1969.

unadvertised concerts, the band was finally given recognition, but only by making reference to Jimmy Page's personal history as a guitarist with the Yardbirds, a group that once claimed guitar heroes Page, Jeff Beck, and Eric Clapton among its members. Page had the helm of the Yardbirds when they disbanded in late 1968, only to have Page's new project complete their intended tour under the guise of the New Yardbirds. That project became known as Led Zeppelin, and advertisements for a concert in Portland on December 29, 1968 read "Vanilla Fudge, with special guest Led Zeppelin, featuring Jimmy Page." Although audiences could not be expected to recognize the name Led Zeppelin, many would have recognized the capital Page had earned with his most recent musical endeavor.

Led Zeppelin was also unknown in North America because the band performed live before releasing their first album in the United States on January 12, 1969. The main attraction of these concerts was well-known, the New York psychedelic band Vanilla Fudge, a band that achieved nationwide popularity with their 1967 reinvention of the Supremes's "You Keep Me Hangin' On," a cover that peaked at #6 on *Billboard* magazine charts, and which garnered several television appearances including the *Ed Sullivan Show* in January 1968. Zeppelin, as the upstart band, was subordinated in the concert order to Vanilla Fudge, who in the months prior had opened for Jimi Hendrix and Cream, gaining broad exposure through their close association with such successful acts.<sup>30</sup> Fans attending these first concerts had no warning that Led Zeppelin would be opening for Vanilla

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<sup>30</sup> "The Beat Goes on & Renaissance (1968)," last modified July 14, 2001, accessed March 2, 2011, <http://www.vanillafudge.com/vfchron3.htm>.



Fudge, thus affording an unbiased first impression. As we will see, Zeppelin's first impression won them many supporters, and even seduced fans away from Vanilla Fudge.

Another reason that Led Zeppelin valued live performance as self-promotion is that the band enjoyed fortuitous timing with respect to the American rock festival and concert industries. Early in 1969 Led Zeppelin was confident yet relatively untested, relatively unknown yet surging in popularity; but by the end of the summer – thanks in no small part to scores of performances – the band would become new favorites of the industry.

The band's conscious strategy was to take North American audiences by storm. This first tour attached them to a long and growing list of British musicians who found success earlier across the Atlantic. Before the first wave of the British Invasion, before the Beatles, the Dave Clark Five, and the Rolling Stones, these ensembles were preceded by radio broadcasts of the Tornadoes, Dusty Springfield, and other English bands that allowed Americans to foresee an “invasion.” This trans-Atlantic musical exchange persisted for years, as British rock ensembles such as Cream, the Who, and the Kinks continued to find welcome in North America. In this light, the term “invasion” has been appropriate since it nicely encapsulates the duration and wide geographic reach of the Beatles and others during this period of Anglophone musical exchange more generally. Similarly protracted and foreseeable to a degree are military invasions like those of the 1770s, from which the “British Invasion” took its name. With the British invasion tapering, Led Zeppelin came to America operating under a terser and

surprising strategy of *ambush*. When the band arrived in December 1968, Led Zeppelin was inserted into a complex rock music context that provided possible motivations for their ambush.<sup>31</sup> Manager Peter Grant surely recognized opportunity in the void left by the Beatles when he said, “My instructions were to go over there and really blast them out. They really did that. Maybe they weren't the greatest thing ever on that first trip, but they got themselves across and the enthusiasm just exploded.”<sup>32</sup>

Led Zeppelin arrived in North America as arena concerts were becoming the standard mode of performer-fan interaction. In their first year together (1968–69), Led Zeppelin expanded their audience through their participation in festivals as well as indoor concerts. “Led Zeppelin was happy,” the band's biographer reports of their early days, “to take gigs at \$1,500, and as low as \$200. The idea was simple: Go out and play.”<sup>33</sup> Contemporaries such as Grand Funk Railroad shared this work ethic, and along with Led Zeppelin helped shape the burgeoning form of American rock community. Grand Funk Railroad's Midwestern provenance and avoidance of tastemakers along the eastern seaboard shaped the band's image as a “people's band,” and their popularity in minor media markets “demonstrated the persistence and, indeed, the growing demand for a heavier brand of rock that was only beginning to be termed 'heavy metal.’”<sup>34</sup> With large amplification systems, heavy metal bands like Zeppelin and Grand Funk began

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<sup>31</sup> For example, the band must have been responding to the concert achievements of the Beatles. It is unthinkable that Led Zeppelin or any other aspiring musician could ignore massive concerts like Shea 1965, nor the Beatles's decision to withdraw from the concert stage in 1966, which “has to rank as one of the most important turning points in the history of 1960s rock.” Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 27.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Horkins, *Led Zeppelin*, 24.

<sup>33</sup> Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 68.

<sup>34</sup> Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 21.

more regularly to concertize in and fill large arenas and stadiums, “dramatiz[ing] the status of rock as a mass medium more powerfully than any other form of the music in the early 1970s, raising both fears and possibilities concerning the gathering of the crowd.”<sup>35</sup>

In addition to an aggressive touring schedule, Led Zeppelin also harbored a reluctance to engage with the media. “Led Zeppelin had made a conscious decision to bypass the media—radio and the press—and go directly to its audience by playing live without diluting its sound.”<sup>36</sup> This do-it-yourself approach retained control of promotion with the band, while requiring that they tour widely and often. By spring 1969, Led Zeppelin could hardly claim anonymity in the United States, but they remained unseen in much of the country beyond the west coast, New York City, and a few cities of the mid-west, like Chicago and Minneapolis. To assist their self-promotion, Zeppelin managed to schedule themselves in many rock festivals of the year.

In 1969 rock festivals were entering their third summer season, and cropped up in virtually every region of the United States. Although popular music festivals predate the 1960s, these early events were comprised of jazz and folk musicians; the specifically rock music festival was inaugurated in 1967 with the Monterrey Pop festival in California. Just sixteen months later, the rock festival culture had blossomed into a loose industry of its own throughout the country. The highlight festivals of the calendar year were Woodstock in August, and Altamont in December, but Led Zeppelin performed at neither of those.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 21–2.

<sup>36</sup> Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 100–1.

Nevertheless, since festivals attracted large crowds, their proliferation in combination with Zeppelin's "get out and play!" attitude conduced to an enormous opportunity to expand the band's renown within the U.S. They took advantage of the field in summer 1969, performing at eight festivals.

Although some of these events were indeed quite small when compared to Woodstock, they each gathered a sizable audience to help promote Zeppelin in their early stage.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Attendance (x1,000)</b>
July 5	Atlanta (GA) International Pop Festival	140
July 6	Newport (RI) Jazz Festival	78
July 11	Laurel (MD) Pop Festival	50
July 25	Mid-West Rock Festival (West Allis, WI)	45
July 27	Seattle (WA) Pop Festival	70
August 29, 30	Singer Bowl Music Festival (Flushing Meadows, NY)	18
August 31	(Lewisville) Texas International Pop Festival	120

*Table 2.1: Festivals of 1969 with Led Zeppelin*

Led Zeppelin won the hearts of a very large crowd at their first festival in America, the Atlanta Pop Festival.<sup>37</sup> Atlanta Pop brought together diverse rock talents and attracted an estimated crowd of 140,000 over the July 4 (Independence Day) weekend. In addition to Led Zeppelin, those performers included Blood, Sweat & Tears, Delaney & Bonnie Bramlett, Dave Brubeck, Canned Heat, Chicago Transit Authority, Joe Cocker, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Grand Funk Railroad, Janis Joplin, Al Kooper, Pacific Gas & Electric, Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Johnny Rivers, Spirit, Sweetwater, Ten Wheel Drive, and Johnny

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<sup>37</sup> For an insightful essay on Atlanta Pop 1970 and how such events illuminate a growing mainstream acceptance, tolerance, and cooption of distinctive counter-cultural symbols and ideological positions, see Edward Chatterton, "'Southern-Fried' Woodstock: The 1970 Atlanta Pop Festival" (M.A. Thesis, Western Washington University, 2006).

Winter.<sup>38</sup> Zeppelin had not yet played in the American south, so most of the crowd was seeing Zeppelin (or “*The Led Zeppelin*,” as they were announced here) for the first time. According to local reporting, the Atlanta crowd enthusiastically supported each band, but Led Zeppelin left an especially strong impression and were among the crowd favorites: “All acts received applause and many were asked for encores – Led Zeppelin played for one hour and 10 minutes – the audience wouldn't let them leave.”<sup>39</sup> The band's set was long, compared to other musicians, because the fans encouraged them to stay. After the festival, reports of Led Zeppelin's pleasing musical efforts rippled through not only Atlanta and the southeast, but through “many states and Canada,” the extensive provenance of the large audience.<sup>40</sup> Although it is difficult to assess how the word-of-mouth advertising after festivals enhanced the careers of performing musicians, one gets a sense that events such as Atlanta Pop helped to disseminate the excitement over bands and their music.

Despite their winning performance in Atlanta and at other festivals, Led Zeppelin is customarily unassociated with rock festivals in popular music histories. Their omission from discussions of rock festivals arguably stems from the fact that they missed both Woodstock and Altamont, rock festivals routinely regarded as pillars of the industry.<sup>41</sup> Bands who missed them are understandably omitted from the copious literature that followed. As the most heavily promoted

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<sup>38</sup> Grand Funk Railroad was unsigned until Capitol Records made them an offer at the Atlanta festival. Their success at this festival was converted into advertising for their next. See Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 19.

<sup>39</sup> Linda Matheson, “Atlanta Pop Festival,” *Metro Beat*, August 20, 1969.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Beeman, “Polite at Pop Festival,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 5, 1969, 6A.

<sup>41</sup> Zeppelin was invited to Woodstock, but declined the offer, and they were in Paris on the night of the debacle at Altamont.

of early rock festivals, Woodstock was enormously beneficial for folk rockers Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, whose performance there was only their second ever together.<sup>42</sup> Woodstock has also had the unintended consequence of erasing the history of relatively minor festivals, such as Seattle Pop, during which Led Zeppelin performed. I suggest that the association between Zeppelin and rock festivals should be reconsidered, even if our collective memory of those smaller festivals is vanishingly small, because festivals helped boost the band's fan base. Popular music histories tend to emphasize how festivals like Woodstock “echoed the energy and vitality of an action-packed decade,” rather than what participation in a succession of festivals could mean to a single band in terms of their growth and the acceptance of their performance style.<sup>43</sup> In Led Zeppelin's case, rock festivals were as crucial to the development of their fan base in North America as arena concerts were to sustaining it. In the coming years, audiences who saw them at festivals would follow them in the arena.

A third reason that Led Zeppelin valued live performance as self-promotion is that, as British outsiders, the band felt compelled to play up their competitive spirit in America. If they did view sharing the stage as competitive, then Led Zeppelin demonstrated by the end of 1969 that they had the upper hand over psychedelic rock.

Led Zeppelin's competition with other bands involved the social space and etiquette of rock and roll concerts. In light of their relative obscurity, Zeppelin's

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<sup>42</sup> The follow-up media (e.g., the *Woodstock* film and triple-LP) also contributed to launching the group into wide celebrity and positioning the group as emblems of the “Woodstock Nation.”

<sup>43</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising: The Rock Festival Years* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1980): 87. Steve Waksman has also considered the role of festivals in Grand Funk Railroad's career: *Summer of Love*, 19–20.

early success depended in part on their behavior within the customary structure of concerts with multiple bands. Then and now, it is assumed that those that receive “top billing” are the most successful or prominent bands among them, and that they will perform last in the sequence. Accordingly, these performers appear at the top of promotional material, in a font larger than the others, as with the Vanilla Fudge in Illustration 2.1. Movie posters, marquees, and other advertising spaces have followed this scheme for decades. The remaining, “opening” bands prepare the room and customarily agree to less time on stage, structuring the event with a temporal form that gives prominence to the headliners. With protracted performances of “Dazed and Confused” and other songs, Led Zeppelin rarely abided by this scheme, threatening the social order of the concert industry.

Led Zeppelin's competitive edge obtained from the combination of their loose interpretation of the blues, and an aggressive performance style. As an opening band for headliners Vanilla Fudge, Led Zeppelin performed during their first concerts their version of such standards as “Train Kept a Rollin’,” a Tiny Bradshaw jump blues number that the Yardbirds converted into straight-eighths rock, “I Can't Quit You Baby,” a down-tempo twelve-bar blues written by Willie Dixon, and “Dazed and Confused,” a re-working of the Yardbirds’s cover of the Jake Holmes number. They contrasted these with original songs such as “How Many More Times,” many of which were codified on *Led Zeppelin* and which they extended in concert well beyond their recorded length.<sup>44</sup> Epitomizing the band's stylistic shifting, Page employed a violin bow during live performances of

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<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of how these and other Zeppelin songs were influenced by the blues see Fast, *Houses of the Holy*, 8ff.

these last two songs to produce avant-garde sounds from his instrument.<sup>45</sup> Their distinctive musical style worked in combination with their aggressive approach to live performance. Fans of the Vanilla Fudge remember driving to see the headliner, “only to be blown away” by the opening act Led Zeppelin. In Spokane, Washington, at Gonzaga University – site of Zeppelin's fifth North American concert, and of the first Zeppelin bootleg recording – fans were stunned by the opening band's performance. On that cold winter's night, some fans of Vanilla Fudge “were hoping that the first band wouldn't stay on stage too long,” but then “[John] Bonham came out and started drumming on 'Train Kept a-Rollin',' and everybody went, 'Holy crap.' [. . .] It took about a half a song before everybody was blown away. [. . .] Then when Vanilla Fudge came on, they were so sleepy. It was like, after that, psychedelia was dead and heavy metal was born, all in a three-hour show. We didn't care about psychedelia anymore. We all just ran back to our Yardbirds records.”<sup>46</sup> As an opening band, Led Zeppelin was upstaging the headliners and making a name for themselves as a loud, misbehaving quartet.

Although the band headlined a few concerts in January, Zeppelin spent the majority of this season opening for bands, while word of their explosive act spread quickly around the industry.<sup>47</sup> A debacle ignited as they planned to open

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<sup>45</sup> Fast suggests that the bow represents, at a minimum, a phallic symbol, Page's appropriation of the “weightiness” of music written for the violin” in his quest for virtuosity, and a connection to magic and the occult. Fast, *Houses of the Holy*, 38–39. See also Waksman, “Heavy Music: Cock Rock, Colonialism, and the Music of Led Zeppelin,” in *Instruments of Desire*, 237–76.

<sup>46</sup> Kershner, “Dazed and Confused,” D1.

<sup>47</sup> According to Jimmy Page, the band's popularity was increased with the assistance of radio: “In America the big difference is that most of the cities have a couple of FM Underground Stations and they keep everybody informed about what's happening nationally, which groups are coming to town, and they play the records that the groups they're talking about have made. So the kids are fully aware of everything that's going on.” Mark Williams, “Led Zeppelin: Jimmy Page,” *International Times*, May 9, 1969.



for Iron Butterfly on January 31 at Bill Graham's Fillmore East in New York City. Hailing from San Diego, Iron Butterfly had recently attained nationwide recognition with their seventeen-minute psychedelic song "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida," released in the summer of 1968. Intimidated or otherwise disturbed by the presence of Led Zeppelin, Iron Butterfly demanded that Graham drop the British quartet from the evening's bill. Peter Grant retaliated against this unusual demand by rousing his band. "Just before Led Zeppelin went onstage, Peter was almost out of control. In the dressing room, he gathered the band together and told them what was happening with Iron Butterfly. [He said,] 'Go out there and blow them out of this place!'"<sup>48</sup> In another stirring example of how Zeppelin transgressed concert norms, roadie Jeff Wolff recalls that "I had the unenviable task of throwing Zeppelin off the stage." Wolff is recalling the concert on May 25, 1969 when Led Zeppelin opened for the Who in Columbia, Maryland. As the Who's roadie, Wolff watched the opening band, "playing over time, stringin' it out, and there was a curfew, so I was saying, 'I've got to get you off!' I had to pull the plug on them, otherwise we [the Who] were never going to go on!"<sup>49</sup> Zeppelin's long sets posed a challenge to headlining bands, and intimated their irreverent attitude towards their competition within the industry.

With competition becoming a performance strategy, Led Zeppelin took a new view of their future in the rock concert industry. Road manager Richard Cole recalls that "After the second of the San Francisco gigs [opening for Country Joe

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<sup>48</sup> Richard Cole and Richard Turbo, *Stairway to Heaven* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992): 61.

<sup>49</sup> Andrew Neill and Matt Kent, *Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere: The Complete Chronicle of the Who 1958–1978* (New York: Michael Friedman Publishing Group, 2002): 162.

and the Fish], Jimmy turned to me on the ride back to the hotel and said, ‘This is a turning point for us, Richard.’ He laughed with excitement. ‘When a supporting band starts overshadowing the headliner, you know something's happening. Brace yourself for a pretty thrilling ride.’”<sup>50</sup> By the end of spring 1969 it had become clear that the band's ambush strategy was working, and that Led Zeppelin had emerged as a competitive force to be reckoned with.

During the summer of 1969, at a festival in the Pacific Northwest, Led Zeppelin continued their record of upstaging more well-known bands. Zeppelin was invited to the Seattle Pop Festival, which “was a marvel of crowd control and smooth organization,” that lasted from July 25–28.<sup>51</sup> The festival attracted twenty-six performers, such as Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and Santana; Zeppelin was scheduled to follow the Doors on the third evening. Hailing from Los Angeles, the Doors rose to fame with their early singles “Break on Through” and “Light My Fire” from their debut album, which also included the uniquely twisted psychodrama “The End.” At the Seattle festival, “Sunday night was supposed to belong to The Doors but it was stolen right out from under them by the great English blues group, Led Zeppelin. Coming onstage about 11:30pm, immediately after the forced extravaganza of The Doors, the Zeppelin faced a jaded and uncomfortable audience that had been standing in the cold all evening. But the electricity of lead singer Robert Plant and guitarist Jimmy Page quickly warmed them up.”<sup>52</sup>

Although the Doors were the more familiar band, Zeppelin upstaged them and

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<sup>50</sup> Cole and Turbo, *Stairway to Heaven*, 50.

<sup>51</sup> Patrick Macdonald, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 30, 1969, reproduced at <http://www.ledzeppelin.com/show/july-27-1969>.

<sup>52</sup> Mylett, *Led Zeppelin*, 49.

continued their early ascent in the hearts of American audiences.

Although Led Zeppelin continued to upstage popular bands, their early concerts were reviewed by newspaper reporters in frequently unsympathetic terms. A fraught relationship thus obtained between Led Zeppelin and the critical press, the band began refusing interviews, and writers with no interaction wrote disapproving pieces which tended to obscure how live audiences responded favorably to the band's loud and long concert sets.

Early in their career, Led Zeppelin was characterized by “the gap between their success with audiences and the negative response from critics.”<sup>53</sup> As Robert Walser has suggested, Led Zeppelin's association with the heavy metal genre contributed to this gap: “The rise of heavy metal was simultaneous with the rise of professional rock criticism, but their relationship was not cordial. Flushed with enthusiasm for the artistic importance of rock music, critics were deeply suspicious of commercially successful music, which smacked of “sell-out” because it appealed to too many people.”<sup>54</sup> From an early point in their career, Zeppelin recognized that critics – not they – decide how such interactions will be printed, and was therefore reluctant to engage with the same mechanism that had savagely criticized their first tour of the United States (December 1968–February 1969).<sup>55</sup> Recalling that period of concerts, the band's road manager Richard Cole said he hid injurious reports from the band, especially from the lead singer.

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<sup>53</sup> Brackett, “Led Zeppelin Speaks!” in *Pop, Rock, and Soul*, 319.

<sup>54</sup> Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 11.

<sup>55</sup> This is what critic Keith Altham meant when wrote that, “the establishment tends to object to those who make it without their helping hand. Ask Led Zeppelin.” Keith Altham, “Deep Purple: 'The Stones Are Out of Date' — Ian,” *Record Mirror*, July 10, 1971. Zeppelin went roughly five years (1970–5) without a significant interview.

“Throughout America,” a leading biography states, “the pop critics insulted his [Plant’s] arialike blues wails and his prissy, hypermasculine posing. Cole remembers that ‘I used to hide the press write-ups from him because they were so critical. I wouldn’t let him see them.’”<sup>56</sup> Likewise, the band’s first album was panned by reviewer John Mendelsohn in *Rolling Stone* magazine (then less than eighteen months in operation), a famously disagreeable view which aroused the ire of the newly-converted on the American east coast.<sup>57</sup>

While ignoring the press, Led Zeppelin persisted with an early onslaught of loud concerts. Manager Peter Grant’s instructions were to “really blast them [their audiences] out,” which I take to mean to leave a forceful impression, whether through high physical or electronic energy. Grant first wanted the band to leave an impression of amplitude visually, and he achieved this by filling the stage with amplifiers. During a concert in Minneapolis on May 18, 1969, “Grant made them [Zeppelin] bring the Rickenbacher [*sic*] amps onstage and yelled at them, ‘I don’t give a damn whether you use them or not.’”<sup>58</sup> For Grant, the visual element was a crucial part of Zeppelin’s strategy. Beyond their visual impression, Led Zeppelin was actually loud and, gauging from the press reports, Zeppelin’s early concert amplitude was itself a surprise: “Led Zeppelin is brutal. [. . .] Their music’s loud, almost to the point of pain, but they don’t use volume to cover up deficiencies. The volume is part of their attack. They don’t titillate or tease

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<sup>56</sup> Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 75.

<sup>57</sup> David Brackett, “Heavy Metal Meets the Counterculture” in *Pop, Rock, and Soul*, 310–14. Mendelsohn’s view was based primarily on how he thought Led Zeppelin stacked up against the recently disbanded Cream and other acts of the “second” British invasion. See Ken Emerson, “Britain: The Second Wave,” in *Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock and Roll*, ed. Anthony DeCurtis and James Henke (New York: Random House, 1992): 419–28.

<sup>58</sup> “LZ II songs at Guthrie Theater 05/18/69,” accessed March 2, 2011, <http://www.ledzeppelin.com/node/375/3862#comment-3862>.

audiences to share their inspiration . . . raw, jagged power, enough to bust a new door into your brain.”<sup>59</sup> The *Rocky Mountain News* review of their American debut in Denver described Zeppelin as “Blues oriented (although not a blues band), hyped electric, the full routine in mainstream rock—done powerfully.”<sup>60</sup> Of course, “powerfully” needn’t signify amplitude at all; a slightly more nuanced description was provided by a fan who attended this concert: “They were so different.....moody, powerful, and LOUD! Became a lifelong fan that night.”<sup>61</sup> Amid a hurried schedule of these loud concerts, Led Zeppelin turned their attention to studio recording throughout 1969, producing material that was arguably redolent of the working environment of live performance.

### § Studio Recordings as Concert Re-creations

The claim that Led Zeppelin invented arena rock is based on their record of live performances as well as their studio recordings. In this view, portions of Led Zeppelin’s studio albums can be heard as forging a stronger link between their live and recorded music, by recreating the echoic properties of their many concert experiences in the year 1969.

The band’s first two albums were recorded amid arduous touring. After months of rehearsals and performances across Europe, the band efficiently recorded their eponymous debut album in October 1968 with very little studio manipulation. This procedure reproduced on record what the foursome could perform live, and factored heavily into the songwriting style of Jimmy Page. “My

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<sup>59</sup> Bob Harvey, “Hot Rock Band Loud, Frenzied,” *The Edmonton Journal*, May 10, 1969.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas MacCluskey, “‘Rock’ Concert is Real Groovy,” *Rocky Mountain News*, December 27, 1968.

<sup>61</sup> “Went to See Vanilla Fudge,” accessed March 2, 2011, <http://ledzeppelin.com/node/310/32#comment-32>.

prime aim,” Page said, “is to get a lot of new ideas off quickly, especially with workable combinations of instruments – not ones that you can't reproduce onstage.”<sup>62</sup> Although Page worked out the arrangements for this first album alone, subsequent albums would be more collaborative. “It was the time factor,” Page continued, “that caused me to work out all the instruments on the first LP, but from now on each member will be contributing equally to what we do.” One gets the sense that Zeppelin recorded in this efficient manner not only because Page had already composed and arranged the material, but also because they were looking ahead to their first tour of North America, which was scheduled to begin in December. Biographer Stephen Davis states that “*Led Zeppelin* was intended to duplicate the band's early live shows so the new band would have something to sell while it spent the following year touring America.”<sup>63</sup> Although the band released the album weeks into their tour, selling records in this way was the band's way to promote their new project while helping to subsidize their travel.

The band's second album, *Led Zeppelin II* was conceived in the spirit of the concert experience. In this section I argue that Zeppelin's live performance experiences led them to craft and record music that was designed to recreate the experience of hearing their music live, as an extension of the large physical spaces in which they were regularly performing. The recording of *Led Zeppelin II* took place between January and August, 1969, during the band's first three tours of North America. The first tour lasted from December 26, 1968 until February 15, 1969, at which point they returned to the United Kingdom. After performances in

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<sup>62</sup> Mark Williams, “Led Zeppelin: Jimmy Page,” *International Times*, May 9, 1969.

<sup>63</sup> Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 58.

Sweden, Denmark, and in Germany, Led Zeppelin returned to North America for performances in the United States and Canada between April 24 and May 31. The band's third tour of the continent included their first festivals and extended from July 5–August 31. The album was, quite unusually, “recorded piecemeal in [thirteen] studios located in London (Olympic, Morgan), Los Angeles (A&M, Quantum, Sunset, Mirror Sound, Mystic), Memphis (Ardent), New York (A&R, Juggy Sound, Groove, Mayfair), and Vancouver (a “hut”) whenever Jimmy Page and crew could take short breaks from touring.”<sup>64</sup> Road manager Richard Cole has a similar recollection. “Whenever we had a day off,” he wrote, “wherever we were, Jimmy would find an available studio—the Ardent Studio in Memphis, the Gold Star Studio in Los Angeles—and the band would isolate themselves there from early evening until late at night, adding one more track to the album. Robert [Plant] occasionally entered the studio alone to record some voice-overs. He laid down the lead vocal for “Whole Lotta Love” in a single take.”<sup>65</sup> The following analysis of “Whole Lotta Love,” as recorded in May 1969, will suggest that Led Zeppelin used electronic manipulation to convert studio recordings into the music of large stadiums.

One of the ways that Led Zeppelin forged a link between recordings and live performance was to suffuse their studio work with a depth and timing of echo that reasonably recreated the live experience. Upon close listening, one hears that “Whole Lotta Love” is shot through with echo that moves beyond being a studio technique into replicating the natural echo experienced in the vast physical setting

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<sup>64</sup> Barry Cleveland, “Mixing *Led Zeppelin II*,” *Guitar Player Magazine*, June 2008.

<sup>65</sup> Cole and Turbo, *Stairway to Heaven*, 72–73.

of stadiums. Furthermore, the style of echo used in “Whole Lotta Love” bears a strong resemblance to Jimmy Page's live guitar solos.

At first glance, the recorded version of “Whole Lotta Love” may not immediately evoke the concert experience. As mentioned above, Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page emphasized how the band's first album was conceived with “workable combinations of instruments – not ones that you can't reproduce onstage.” Yet, much of this song contains layers of sound and stereo panning difficult or impossible to reproduce during concerts of that era.<sup>66</sup> Page's slide guitar descends smoothly in pitch as the sound moves from the left channel to the right. Likewise, Plant's voice and other sounds oscillate from side to side wildly during the middle section of the song. This famous middle section “was an abstract (but carefully rehearsed) gyre of sound—clamoring trains, women in orgasm, a napalm attack on the Mekong Delta, a steel mill just as the plant shut down. It had a strange, descending riff that Page sculpted with a metal slide treated with backward echo. There were frightening whooping sounds from Page's theramin.”<sup>67</sup> This series of seemingly formless and unsettling sonic effects would certainly have been difficult for Zeppelin to reproduce faithfully in concert.<sup>68</sup>

The recorded version of “Whole Lotta Love” extended a tradition of relying on heavy electronic manipulation in the studio. In the late 1960s, studio electronics were used widely across the rock music community, and, the rock

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<sup>66</sup> Allan Moore and Ruth Dockwray have devised a graphic system to represent such stereo panning and other elements in, “The Establishment of the Virtual Performance Space in Rock” *Twentieth-Century Music* 5 (2010): 219–241.

<sup>67</sup> Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 96.

<sup>68</sup> Although, as Susan Fast notes, Page did perform the theramin in this song during concerts “from 1969 onwards.” *Houses of the Holy*, 199.



soundscape was filled with recordings featuring more than simple amplification. The studio became an important instigator in the middle-1960s truncation of “rock and roll” to “rock,” which signaled an acceptance by mainstream media and a significant change of aesthetics – with roots extending back ten years or more – that included a heavier emphasis on elaborate studio production.<sup>69</sup> At that time, the Beatles led efforts to employ studio manipulation after they withdrew from live performance, in the 1966 recording *Revolver*, and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967). Likewise, Jimi Hendrix prioritized the manipulative abilities of the studio, and in live performance used fuzz distortion and other effects to convert the electric guitar almost single-handedly into the “electronic” guitar.<sup>70</sup> Led Zeppelin, too, relied on studio manipulation to provide depth to their acoustic songs, and create disorienting effects in songs like “Whole Lotta Love.” Yet, the beginning and ending sections of “Whole Lotta Love” do exhibit a quality of echo redolent of the arena experience.

To understand how the echo effect in “Whole Lotta Love” corresponds to live performance, one can turn to the arena in which the song debuted. Led

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<sup>69</sup> The earliest purveyor of such effects was guitarist Les Paul, whose “How High the Moon” showcased Paul's pioneering overdubbing techniques. Experiments of this kind were also apparent in the early recordings of Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, and many others. See Chapter Two of Waksman, *Instruments of Desire*; Allan Moore, *Rock the Primary Text* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 2001): 120ff; and chapter two of Theodore Gracyk, *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996). The increased emphasis on studio manipulation thus enhanced the role of the producer. See Albin Zak, *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Virgil Moorefield, *The Producer as Composer: Shaping the Sounds of Popular Music* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); and Simon Frith, “The Industrialization of Music,” in *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (New York: Routledge, 1988): 11–23. See also Paul Théberge, “Plugged In: Technology and Popular Music” in *the Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, eds. Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 8–13.

<sup>70</sup> See Albin J. Zak III, “Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix: Juxtaposition and Transformation 'All along the Watchtower',” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57 (2004): 599–644; and David Brackett, “Jimi Hendrix and the Electronic Guitar,” *Pop, Rock, and Soul*, 247–49.

Zeppelin first performed “Whole Lotta Love” at San Francisco's Winterland Ballroom on April 26, 1969, near the beginning of Zeppelin's second North American tour. Recorded in the following month, “Whole Lotta Love” was plausibly stamped with the mark of live performance. The song opens with Jimmy Page playing the main riff, “a repetitive groove that stutters toward resolution with every measure,” tracked hard to the left stereo channel.<sup>71</sup> Milliseconds later, an exact replica of the riff sounds in the right stereo channel. The precise interval between the guitar onset and its echo is 180 milliseconds, or roughly one-fifth of a second. This recorded procedure gives the impression that the source of the sound (Page's guitar on the left) has encountered a barrier on the right and bounced (or echoed) back toward the listener at the center. In this way, the recorded version corresponds to the physical setting of the Winterland Ballroom. At an average speed (340 meters per second), sound will travel roughly 60 meters in 180 milliseconds, which is approximately the distance from the source of “Whole Lotta Love” in concert on stage to the back wall in Winterland. Of course, more precise calculations would be required for any acoustic study of the venue. The point here, however, is that Zeppelin's studio recording replicates the reverberant experience of venues the size of Winterland; my calculations are meant to be suggestive rather than precise.

The example of “Whole Lotta Love” demonstrates the importance for Zeppelin of echo in creating recorded rock music that “sounded live.” Other musicians in the 1970s employed echo in a similar fashion, rendering that studio

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<sup>71</sup> Waksman, *Instruments of Desire*, 248.

effect a more general signifier of the concert experience. The strongest “live” signifier was surely recorded crowd noise, but the two worked in combination.<sup>72</sup> When, for example, David Bowie's *Diamond Dogs* was reviewed by *Phonograph Record*, the element of echo was brought forth as crowd noise's equal signifier of the live experience. Ron Ross, the reviewer, claimed that “By adding a great deal of echo to the basic track, Bowie puts us back in that huge arena with him, singing our catechism back to Big Brother.”<sup>73</sup>

The echo effect was as important to Led Zeppelin's “Whole Lotta Love” as it was to their live performances. As early as 1968, Jimmy Page customarily took a guitar solo during Zeppelin concerts.<sup>74</sup> These solos were drenched with echo, and for this reason have been discussed in terms of how the ethereal sounds produced were equivalent to hallucinogenic experiences.<sup>75</sup> The use of echo helped accentuate the ethereal sounds produced by the violin bow on the guitar. Following the lugubrious performance at the heart of these discussions, Page normally shifted abruptly from a legato bowing technique to a ricochet technique, using the bow as a percussion mallet. The guitarist shapes a chord with his fret hand, strikes his strings once with the bow, and waits for a softer echo to fill the arena. In this solo, as in “Whole Lotta Love,” the echo is delayed about one-fifth of a second. Page typically plays a progression of power chords (A5-G5-D5-E5,

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<sup>72</sup> Take the title track from David Bowie's 1974 album *Diamond Dogs*: by the year of its release, live concerts had been fully incorporated by film, radio, and television media, and the roaring crowd was an established sign in the vocabulary of rock. Thus when Bowie used fan sounds at the beginning of “Diamond Dogs” he reproduced a sound people would easily associate with the concert experience. This issue of “sounding live” can influence perceptions of authenticity and is taken up in this dissertation's final chapter.

<sup>73</sup> Ron Ross, “David Bowie: Diamond Dogs,” *Phonograph Record*, July 1974.

<sup>74</sup> To see how Page's live solo performances derive from “Dazed and Confused,” see Fast, *Houses of the Holy*, 36–8.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 18ff.

or, in the key of A, I-<sup>b</sup>VII-IV-V), and alternately poses to bask in his limelight.

Page's solos helped to demonstrate that Led Zeppelin was in the business of producing music that “sounded live,” that called attention to the reverberant experience large arenas whether recorded or in concert.

### § **Manufactured Audience Participation**

In addition to “sounding live” on record and in concert, one reason to ascribe the invention of arena rock to Led Zeppelin is the way they manufactured audience participation. That participation took both volitional and involuntary forms, as Led Zeppelin incorporated their audience into their advertising and into their live performances.

When arena concerts were becoming the standard mode of performer-fan interaction, “The crowd was becoming a commodity in popular music to an unprecedented degree.”<sup>76</sup> Steve Waksman has discussed how Led Zeppelin's counterparts in Grand Funk Railroad used an advertising campaign in 1969 which sold the upstart band to audiences by informing fans of the extensivity of Grand Funk's performance network.<sup>77</sup> Led Zeppelin operated under this familiar scheme by encouraging fans to see themselves as one of the crowd in two ways. Some advertisements announced “Every Concert Sold Out,” to reward the loyalty of fans, especially those who had purchased concert tickets in advance of a tour.<sup>78</sup> A second form of advertisement used images from a previous Led Zeppelin event,

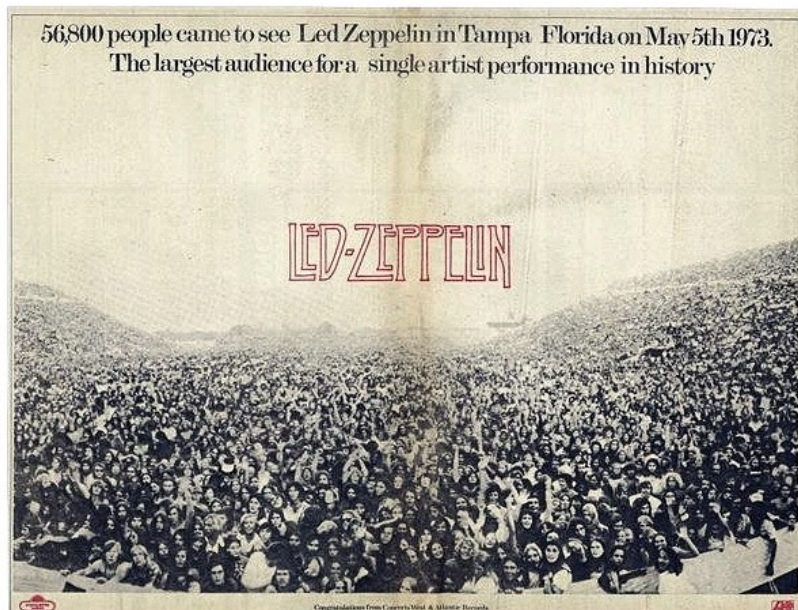
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<sup>76</sup> Steve Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 20.

<sup>77</sup> On this geographic theme, see Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 19.

<sup>78</sup> The Dutch rock group Golden Earring, following this lead, advertised in *Rolling Stone* on August 1, 1974 to thank the audiences of its recent tour of the United States. The advertisement, based on a photograph of an arena crowd taken from the stage, read: “321,479 people, 27,486 miles, 61 concerts in 82 days, and 514,070 units sold. Thank you.”

as part of their competitive strategy within the field of arena rock (Illustration 2.2).



*Illustration 2.2: Led Zeppelin advertisement following record-setting Tampa concert (May 1973).*

This Tampa advertisement testifies to the changing nature of the rock audience in the age of the arena. Massive crowds such as this significantly reduced the intimacy between audience and performer, and diminished the performer's and management's ability to assess who was attending their concerts. As Led Zeppelin explored ways to compensate for lost intimacy, they also devised advertising schemes to attract future audiences, including those who might be wary of such large events. Whether looking backwards in congratulations, or forward to a host of sold out performances, both strategies operate on the principle of using the audience in advertising.

Led Zeppelin's approach to advertising also betokens their competitive strategy in the field of arena-rock. Not satisfied to simply advertise the quantity of

tickets sold, Led Zeppelin also began to report their efficiency and speed of sales to the press.<sup>79</sup> As with their advertising, Led Zeppelin used their success with audiences, in this case to convince the press of the band's value. The band's public relations activities of 1977 provide the clearest evidence of this predilection. The band's publicist Janine Safer and general manager Mitchell Fox released the following statement on May 6 1977, in anticipation of the second leg of their United States tour.

On Saturday April 30 Led Zeppelin set a new world's record for the largest paid attendance at a single-artist performance in history. [. . .] The previous record had been set by fellow Britons, The Who. [. . .] Zeppelin's gross for the evening, \$792,361.50, was also a record-breaker. [. . .] Even more remarkable, the Zeppelin show was sold out in one day over the counter at the stadium box office, while it took The Who ten days to sell their tickets by mail order. This historic sell-out was a fitting climax to the first part of Led Zeppelin's U.S. tour. In every city where the group played, they broke records for speed of ticket sales. In New York, where Zeppelin will play six nights at Madison Square Garden in June, nearly 140,000 mail order ticket requests arrived in one day. In Los Angeles, where they will be the first group ever to play six nights at the Forum, tickets vanished in less than twenty-four hours."

Recovered from 1977, this evidence is chronologically far from our main period of 1969–73, but it does display the tendency to think of success in terms of record-breaking and efficiency. Moreover, this press release further implants the idea that Led Zeppelin formed and projected an image based on an interaction with live audiences, an image that also carried over into their live performances.

In addition to projecting their crowd-based image through advertisements, Led Zeppelin is also characterized as arena rock progenitors for their success at

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<sup>79</sup> The band sold tickets quickly by collaborating with the growing business called Ticketron, a computerized ticket sales company with outlets located in department stores and other public places. Rather than sell tickets through mail order, or through the venue box office, Led Zeppelin opted for the multiplicity of sales locations afforded by the automated service of Ticketron.

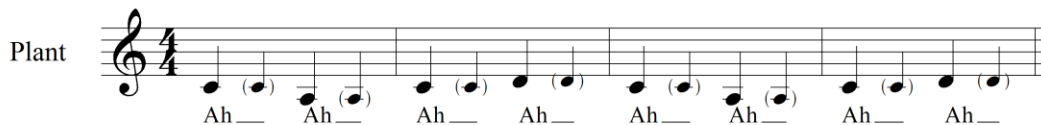
eliciting audience participation during concerts. To develop the analogy between advertisements and music, we turn our attention to their song “Black Dog,” its use of the echo effect, and Robert Plant's live performances from 1973.

“Black Dog” was positioned as the lead track on the band's fourth, untitled album, nicknamed “Zoso” (1971).<sup>80</sup> On that studio recording, an echo effect reproduces some of the reverberant experience of large venues much in the same way as “Whole Lotta Love.”<sup>81</sup> The focus of this analysis is Robert Plant and the echo effect applied to his voice, rather than on Jimmy Page as in the discussion of “Whole Lotta Love.” The song alternates between two tempos, the opening pulse of roughly 166bpm, and a second tempo half as fast as the first. The first shift from faster to slower tempo occurs abruptly at roughly the one-third mark of “Black Dog,” and this shift allows the relationship between echo and tempo to emerge. At this point, the band allows their chord to decay as Plant repeats the syllable “Ah” on each pulse in the half-time tempo (Example 2.1). From the beginning, Plant's voice is drenched with echo, and during the half-time second section, when the instrumental texture is much sparser, it becomes obvious that the delay interval is related to the song's opening tempo: the ratio between this short interval and the opening tempo is 1. In other words, the echo interval reveals itself as equivalent to the song's opening pulse, and equivalent to the subtactile pulse in the half-time section.

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<sup>80</sup> It became one of Led Zeppelin's best-known tunes, peaked on the charts in the top 25 in at least nine countries.

<sup>81</sup> Unlike in “Whole Lotta Love,” the sound source in this case is about equally distributed between left and right channels. Similar to the earlier song, however, the echo is panned hard to the right.



*Example 2.1: “Black Dog,” studio version (1973), echo interval revealed.*

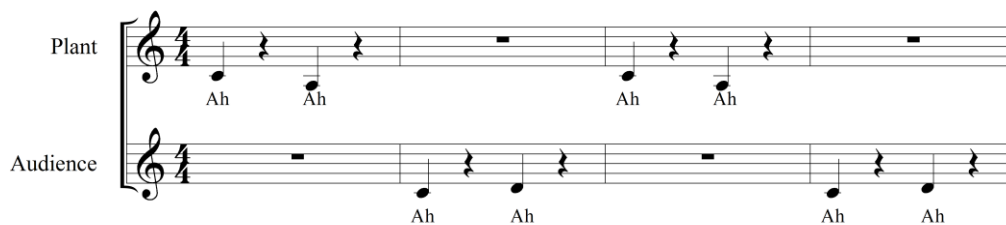
Between the time of the song's release and 1973, Led Zeppelin performed “Black Dog” in the manner recorded on *Led Zeppelin IV*, with a detectable echo effect at an interval equivalent to the opening tempo. To those who recognized the echo from the recording, the special effect in a concert setting would come across as unsurprising. To their chagrin, Led Zeppelin was criticized occasionally for introducing such special effects to their performances. A reviewer from Seattle reported that, “Of course he [Plant] was helped a bit last night by the sound man who added echo, reverb and other aural tricks to augment his voice.”<sup>82</sup> The reviewer does not specifically mention, but could reasonably be thought to have in mind “Black Dog,” because it was the band's custom to drench Plant's voice with echo during that song. What the reviewer perceived as an “aural trick” would soon be converted into genuine audience participation.

The use of echo on Robert Plant's voice changed during the final leg of Zeppelin's 1973 tour. In fact, the effect appears to have been removed completely during “Black Dog.” During performances from this final leg, Plant sang the half-tempo second section without any detectable echo, and also changed what he sang, irrespective of the special effect. On the recording and during performances before this final leg Plant sang the complete line printed in Example 2.1, but

<sup>82</sup> “Led Zeppelin—Rock as Extravaganza,” *Seattle Times*, July 18, 1973, reproduced at <http://www.ledzeppelin.com/show/july-17-1973>.



afterward he sang only the first half of each phrase. After singing “Ah” twice Plant pointed the microphone toward the crowd, prompting them to sing the phrase twice in return (Example 2.2). Plant's microphone gesture was in fact answered by the crowd, which had become the transmogrified personification of the echo they knew from the recorded version. When Led Zeppelin incorporated their audience into the performance of “Black Dog,” they seemed to create an analog with their Tampa advertisement displaying an undifferentiated mass of people.



*Example 2.2: “Black Dog,” as performed live (1973) with audience participation.*

### **§ Compensating for Intimacy Lost**

Led Zeppelin's practice of inducing crowd participation was one way that the band attempted to connect with those farthest from the stage and to compensate for the intimacy lost in large stadiums. In addition to this call-and-response, the band developed additional extra-musical technologies for the same purposes, because Peter Grant's business strategy acquired the necessary funds for them, and because large stadiums seemed to call for visual and aural supplements.

Peter Grant's business practices sharpened as the band increased in popularity. One of his remarkable tactics altered the relationship between Led Zeppelin and local concert promoters. Before Grant managed Zeppelin, even very successful bands were fortunate to keep more than fifty percent of the box office

revenue while concert promoters collected the lion's share. “But,” biographer Stephen Davis adds, “in setting up Led Zeppelin's 1972 summer tour of America, Peter Grant astounded the American promoters by informing them that henceforth Led Zeppelin would be taking 90 percent of the gate.”<sup>83</sup> In order to accomplish this, Grant redesigned to role of band manager and shouldered the responsibilities previously given to concert promoters. Under his new plan, Grant counted on promoters to be more amenable to accepting one-tenth of something than fifty percent of nothing. “Peter Grant would be the real promoter,” Davis continues, “and pay all the expenses. The local promoters would do all the detail work and receive 10 percent and the glory of being associated with 'the top grossing band in the world.' . . . Grant's new formula would quickly become standard among the big rock stars. Grant took on an entire industry and won.”<sup>84</sup>

With this aggressive management style, Led Zeppelin quickly became one of the richest bands in the industry. Grant's most remarkable strategy involved eliminating opening bands and reducing the number of concert performers until only Led Zeppelin remained. With these two maneuvers, it is easy to see why people believe that Grant, “changed the way business was done on the concert circuit, shifting the power—and the money—from the pockets of the promoters to the hands of the artists.”<sup>85</sup> From a purely mathematical perspective, this strategy was clearly advantageous: any amount of box office revenue divided by one band was larger than the same sum divided by any other number of bands. Grant

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<sup>83</sup> Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 163–4.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Fast, *Houses of the Holy*, 4.

demanded single-band concerts from an early point, and with the swelling popularity of his band he was usually accommodated, further establishing Zeppelin's niche audience.

Grant's single-band concert model directly shaped the social space of rock concerts in at least two ways. First, his strategy had the welcome effect of streamlining concert arrangements. From the perspective of band management, single-band concerts eliminated much of the logistical problems that arose from sharing the bill with one or more bands: contracts, stage and dressing room space, and so on. Second, and more importantly, single-band concerts ensured that an evening's entertainment would diminish in musical diversity, insofar as multiple bands brought multiple aesthetic practices. Richard Cole remembers Grant's model as eliminating a needless component of the rock and roll concert industry. "Peter Grant," he said, "was a brilliant manager, believe me.

He realized that if the act was that big and that good and could hold an audience's attention for a couple of hours, there was no fucking point putting a support group on, wasting people's time waiting for the main attraction. If you go to a concert, you don't want to see the Shmuck Sisters singing for 30 minutes. You'll sit at the bar, right? It stopped all that fucking aggravation, the arguments between groups about equipment and all that shit. It was like, we go in, that was it, our stuff was there and we were ready to work.<sup>86</sup>

At a time when rock "became diffuse, scattered and unfocused, fragmenting into little genres whose fans paid less and less attention to other genres," Grant's single-band model tended to reinforce the boundaries between audiences, even as it increased the market share for his band and himself.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 115.

<sup>87</sup> Steve Pond, quoted in Garofalo, *Rockin' Out*, 200.

Single-band concerts became a Zeppelin trademark and Grant appeared never to relent from this approach as the band grew even larger in popularity. Although Led Zeppelin did share the stage with other bands, especially during festivals and in their first months as a group, Grant's more exclusive strategy allowed the band to keep a greater percentage of the revenue of arena and stadium concerts, and negotiate for much higher contracts than when they began at \$200 per night. Although they earned great sums of money, Led Zeppelin refrained from converting this resource into additional extra-musical technology for their concerts beyond a few sound effects. For example, in 1970, on their sixth tour of North America, Zeppelin was "Playing for a minimum of \$25,000 a night (and often much more), with no support band, no stage set or pros other than their amplifiers and lights."<sup>88</sup> As we will see, Zeppelin's no-frills stance on concert technology substantially changed in 1973, as the band approached the moment at which Jimmy Page claimed they inaugurated arena rock. With a large store of cash, Led Zeppelin could afford to invest in extra-musical technologies to compensate for the intimacy lost in large stadiums. Although they initially refrained from such purchases, the band eventually relented because the large arenas that had become their standard in 1973 seemed to require augmented aural technologies.

Led Zeppelin positioned themselves as ready to reclaim the intimacy lost in stadiums by boosting the aural dimension of their concerts. Audiences of stadium concerts, it could be said, gambled each time they attended a concert that

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<sup>88</sup> Davis, *Hammer of the Gods*, 126.

the sound quality offered would be worthwhile. In 1973, two requirements stood between performers and a successful concert, at least according to fellow musician Frank Zappa. He claimed that “If all the [diverse musical] parts aren't audible, it isn't right – and that goes back to the technology and the money to provide it.”<sup>89</sup> By the time Led Zeppelin broke the attendance records set by the Beatles, they had access to both the capital and the technology to reach the fans most distant from their stages. However, economic capital alone would not suffice to produce a quality concert: the Beatles possessed relative economic autonomy when they performed in America, but their speakers were outperformed at concerts by the screams of their fans. The journalist of their 1964 tour, Lenny Kane, suggested that during the famous concert at Shea Stadium in 1965, “You couldn't hear them (at all: speaker technology was still in the primitive stages).”<sup>90</sup> Although the rock industry in 1973 still produced concerts sprinkled with sound problems, bands with the financial resources of Led Zeppelin mediated their music with the most powerful and sophisticated speakers. Singer Robert Plant said that “We use four systems of 3,000 watts each. It's bigger than the equipment they used at the Woodstock festival. I tried it out before the concert, alone in the empty stadium, and I sounded like the hammer of the gods. I reckon the clarity comes through despite competition from freeway traffic and planes.”<sup>91</sup> With their very powerful speaker systems and video projections, Led Zeppelin was exploring ways to reduce the loss of intimacy that comes with performing in stadiums. This

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<sup>89</sup> Richard Williams, “Frank Zappa: Past Flops And Future Shocks,” *Melody Maker*, August 25, 1973.

<sup>90</sup> Lenny Kaye, “To Live Outside the Law You Must Be Honest,” *Creem*, June 1971.

<sup>91</sup> Ian Dove, “The Pop Life,” *New York Times*, May 18, 1973.

augmentation incurred a physical cost with those seated nearest the speakers, but it also demonstrates an attempt to reach fans in the back row.

In addition to reclaiming lost intimacy with more powerful speakers, the band employed visual technologies to augment their presence during concerts. These technologies included large video-projection screens and a host of smaller devices.

The visual dimension of intimacy was perhaps the most pressing issue facing bands like Led Zeppelin in the early stages of arena rock. In the previous chapter, I outlined how venue size relates to intimacy, suggested that stadiums such as Shea reduce intimacy during concerts, and provided examples of how the Beatles appeared miniscule to those furthest removed from their stadium stage. As festivals and other large crowds became more of a routine, Led Zeppelin performed while a majority of their fans stood or sat quite distant from the stage. For instance, Led Zeppelin began their 1973 tour of North America by performing in two stadiums consecutively, in Atlanta and Tampa. The large venues of performance prompted one reviewer to write that, “Led Zeppelin, in two open-air concerts in Atlanta and in Tampa, pulled in a total audience of 107,000, breaking all kinds of rock 'n' roll attendance records but hardly, you'd think, making for an intimate soirée with the fans.”<sup>92</sup> This tour is when Jimmy Page insists Zeppelin “gave birth to the modern arena-rock experience,” which could be the result of such impressive attendance statistics, but I argue that the claim should also be characterized by a negotiation with the problem of intimacy lost. Led Zeppelin's

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

solution in 1973 was to insert extra-musical visual technologies to compensate for the lack of intimacy. “We can get ourselves across,” Robert Plant said of concert in stadiums, “even at Tampa where the back row of the audience was half a mile away. We use a couple of video-projection screens, some mirrors and a lot of lights.”<sup>93</sup> The introduction of a projection screen allowed distant fans to reclaim some connection with the band they had come to see. What was projected remains unclear – whether close-ups or full-stage shots, whether live or pre-recorded film – as do the dimensions of the screen itself, but we can assume that Zeppelin “got themselves across” by including video projections that involved the performers' bodies.

That the band projected their carefully framed bodies onto video screens raises further issues of how such technologies could influence reception. Video close-ups and other technological framings can alter our perception of theater, according to Dennis Kennedy, a scholar of performance. Kennedy has suggested that “it is likely that the electronic reification of the actor's body has affected the way those spectators watch in the theater. They are more likely to look for psychological explanations of action, more likely to heed small intense moments that clarify inner states, unlikely to listen for rhetorical structure or be patient with self-conscious theatricality.”<sup>94</sup> This is a compelling claim which deserves a closer inspection in the context of musical performances, where it may apply to slightly different effect.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Dennis Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 146.

<sup>95</sup> In Kennedy's example, Shakespeare's *Othello* broadcast over the BBC, the actor playing Iago

One can begin to assess the viability of Kennedy's claim by reviewing *The Song Remains the Same*, a filmic documentation of the final three concerts of their tour of 1973, held in New York's Madison Square Garden. The close-ups and gestures of Led Zeppelin captured in the film are likely to have resembled those gestures on display earlier in the tour. Susan Fast reports that as Jimmy Page plays the opening riff to "Rock and Roll," the first song of the film and of the three concerts, "he stands in place for a moment, stomping the ground with one foot, then his heel, the same foot again, then the other, and back again to articulate the quarter-note-beat. When he changes the riff slightly, he assumes his most frequently used stationary position, with his left leg extended forward, torso bent slightly back."<sup>96</sup> Although "Jimmy Page is in motion" as the film begins, and despite the fact that "there are three quite spectacular gestural moments that help to articulate the form of the piece," Page settles into poses that invite steady camera framing. Fast suggests that the gestures documented in Zeppelin's film are Page's usual ones, and are likely to have been the same images projected onto video screens for those in the back row, as in Atlanta and Tampa. From the standpoint of social space, the projected image of Page that "towers above" the audience created an interesting and unequal power dynamic. According to Henri Lefebvre's concept of phallocratic power, those fans near the stage were likely to have been impressed with the video projection of Page, impressed because the technology was novel and because the image towered high above the audience

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kept to a minimum his gestures during "small intense moments," well within the occasional close-up frame effected by camera operators.

<sup>96</sup> Fast, *Houses of the Holy*, 113.



and stage.<sup>97</sup> The phallocratic power dynamic obtained as images of the guitar hero stretched to the ceiling, inducing fans closest to the stage to adjust their posture—almost as if in supplication—before taking in the dramatic projection. Thus, in their attempt to reclaim lost visual dimension of intimacy for those in the back, Led Zeppelin unwittingly used the vertical dimension of their performance venues to project a domineering image of the artist over the crowd. The effect of this compensation for the lost visual dimension strikes me as analogous to the effect of Led Zeppelin's attempts to reclaim the lost aural dimension of large venues: the extra-musical technologies that draw back row fans psychologically toward the stage can also have an oppressive effect on those much closer.

## § Conclusion

If Led Zeppelin gave birth to the modern arena-rock experience in 1973, they did so with the assistance of extra-musical concert technologies and the musical participation of their audience—theirs was musical performance designed for stadiums. They embarked on their path to arena rock origination as relative unknowns touring ceaselessly in 1968–69, including a handful of festivals for swift word-of-mouth advertising, and with the release of their first two albums in 1969. Recorded amid a spate of concerts, *Led Zeppelin II* opens with the echo-laden “Whole Lotta Love,” an index of how the band fashioned studio recordings as reverberant concert re-creations. As Led Zeppelin and their contemporaries began filling arenas and stadiums in the early 1970s, they began developing ways

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<sup>97</sup> Susan Fast has shown how, in another context, Page's projected image helped him tower above other musicians “a bit like the Wizard of Oz.” *House of the Holy*, 110ff. Lefebvre and phallocratic power will be taken up again in Chapter Five of this document, in the context of the Grateful Dead.

to compensate for the intimacy lost in such large spaces, including visual and aural technologies that reached out to the farthest fans while having an overwhelming effect on those closer to their stage. In combination with these technologies, Led Zeppelin manufactured audience participation with printed promotional material and during performances of “Black Dog,” a combined strategy that at once helped sell the crowd to itself to an unprecedented degree, and helped establish a pattern of critical denigration.

## Chapter Three

### An American Beauty: Grateful Dead, “Truckin’,” and a Question of Routine

“The psychedelic age (1965 to 1969) is over. The Dead's creativity ended with it [. . .] The Dead are still here, but they serve as more of a reminder of the glories of the spiritual revolution than a call to a new one [. . .] all they have to say . . . they have said.”

Andy Kowal and Larry Black (1973)<sup>1</sup>

## § Introduction

Addressing the Grateful Dead community on the band's official website ([www.dead.net](http://www.dead.net)), a devoted fan named “deadmnkj” recently conveyed the memory of his first interaction with the legendary improvisers. “It was my first concert,” “deadmnkj” wrote, “and first Dead show. I was 13 years old.”<sup>2</sup> The recalled event was held on May 26, 1973 in the band's hometown of San Francisco, and was organized by the promoter Bill Graham under the title “Dancing on the Outdoor

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<sup>1</sup> Kowal and Black “But Are They Grateful?” *The Express*, March 15, 1973: 10.

<sup>2</sup> “Kezar Stadium – May 26, 1973,” accessed March 3, 2011, <http://www.dead.net/show/may-26-1973>.

Green.”<sup>3</sup> The venue for this event was Kezar Stadium, with an approximate capacity of sixty thousand spectators, rather than in the considerably smaller Cow Palace, where two previously scheduled Grateful Dead concerts (May 22, 23) were canceled in lieu of the larger event days later. After the event, “deadmnkj” continues, “I remember telling people at school that I went to the concert. Someone replied, ‘why see the Dead when you could have gone to see Led Zeppelin the next week at Kezar?’”

That Grateful Dead and Led Zeppelin were plausibly exchangeable to these schoolchildren suggests a degree of similarity between them, and the fact that the two bands performed on back-to-back weekends in Kezar Stadium was no accident. This momentary coordination of schedules invites further discussion, specifically within the context of how the Grateful Dead figure in more general discourses about arena rock concerts. Bill Graham arranged the schedule and forged a link between the two concerts through advertisements (Illustration 3.1). By hiring both local favorites and industry magnates, Graham aligned the histories of Grateful Dead and Led Zeppelin with the history of Kezar, and the inauguration of its next stage as a fund raiser for the city of San Francisco.<sup>4</sup> When this advertisement appeared in spring 1973, Led Zeppelin had become the largest concert attraction in the industry, and had recently set new attendance and earnings records along their landmark concert tour of the United States. They had

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<sup>3</sup> The title is similar to Graham's “Day on the Green” concert series in Oakland, the premiere of which was yet three months away. A larger discussion of this series follows in Chapter Four.

<sup>4</sup> “When the [National Football League team San Francisco] 49ers moved to Candlestick, the city apparently decided to rent Kezar as a way of paying off the Candlestick Astro-Turf and expansion project. So far, said [Bill] Graham, the city has realized more than \$65,000 from the two weekends.” Harry Huddleston, “Led Zeppelin: Kezar Stadium,” *Rolling Stone*, July 5, 1973.

already performed several times in San Francisco, but their concert in 1973 lacked



*Illustration 3.1: Joint advertising, Led Zeppelin and Grateful Dead, May 1973.*

freshness; it was reported that, “The quartet's performance lacked the dynamic spark of earlier local presentations. Plant's vocals and bodily gyrations seemed tired and routine, and drummer John Bonham and bassist John Paul Jones had trouble solidifying their back-up sounds in the early going.”<sup>5</sup> One week before this concert, when Led Zeppelin collected their greatest box-office revenue yet, Grateful Dead were reported to have “christened Kezar as a supershow rock

<sup>5</sup> Phillip Elwood, “Led Zeppelin Zooms High at Kezar,” *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, June 3, 1973.

arena.”<sup>6</sup> In coordinating these concerts, Graham aligned two bands with significant amplification technology to their credit: as we read in Chapter Two, Led Zeppelin singer Robert Plant boasted of how in 1973 the band operated a speaker system more powerful than that used at Woodstock. In that year, as we will see, the Grateful Dead was also operating their “Wall of Sound,” one of the largest speaker systems ever assembled, presenting Graham with the opportunity and similarity of technology to unite the bands under a common inaugural project. Finally, and most contentiously, Graham appeared to bring together two bands that offered performances marked by routine.

Grateful Dead are customarily unassociated with Arena Rock and with musical routine. This chapter argues for a reconsideration of these positions, suggesting that the performance “deadmnkj” attended represented a moment when the celebrated improvisers had drifted toward predictability. Specifically, my analysis of their song “Truckin’” (1970) intimates a broad stylistic evolution away from free-form improvisation for which the San Francisco band had been celebrated. During the period 1970–73, the band dramatically increased its touring radius, earned proportionately more money, and reinvested their earnings into concert technology. Critics and erstwhile fans viewed “Truckin’” and the balance of their tightly-arranged songs from 1970 (as released on *Workingman's Dead* in June, and *American Beauty* in November) as routine, too radical a departure from their counter-cultural roots; in their view, the Dead were aligning themselves with more conspicuously commercial rock operations such as Led Zeppelin. To pursue

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<sup>6</sup> Elwood, “Kezar,” *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, June 3, 1973; Harry Huddleston, “Led Zeppelin: Kezar Stadium.”

these issues, this chapter frames the Grateful Dead within discussions of San Francisco and the psychedelic rock scene around 1970, and of the state of concert technology, then goes on to forge a linkage between the Dead and arena rock more generally.

Although Grateful Dead are remembered, *inter alia*, for improvisation and for what Nadya Zimmerman called their “anti-commercialism,” scholars should also inquire about the band's materialism and routine processes in the early 1970s, as popular music performance transitioned into a new economy of scale, because the band's song “Truckin’” and their Wall of Sound speaker system evince three hallmarks of Arena Rock, commercialism, predictability, and extra-musical props.

## § Context

Textbook characterizations of the Grateful Dead have long centered on the touchstone of musical improvisation and experimentation.<sup>7</sup> “No group of musicians,” says Katherine Charlton, “mastered the techniques of extended improvisations better than the Grateful Dead.”<sup>8</sup> Charlton's characterization of the band positions them comfortably with the genre of 1960s psychedelic rock, the salient musical characteristics of well-known.<sup>9</sup> As the epicenter of such counter-

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<sup>7</sup> The intellectual aspirations of the psychedelic rock community manifested themselves, in part, through song lengths that exceeded the bounds of the traditional radio format. These extended songs often included the wild feedback (typically from the guitar amplifier), which had become synonymous with the “Berkeley sound.” See Paul Williams, “The Golden Road: A Report on San Francisco,” *Crawdaddy!*, June 1967.

<sup>8</sup> Katherine Charlton, *Rock Music Styles*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2003): 162. In a separate account, Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman state that, “The Dead were the quintessential ‘live’ rock band, specializing in long jams that wander through diverse musical styles and grooves and typically terminate in unexpected places.” Starr and Waterman, *American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MP3* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007): 304.

<sup>9</sup> For musicologist Edward Macan, “Psychedelic music of the 1966–1970 period was considered at the time to be a single style, and certainly there are common elements which unite the music

cultural energies, San Francisco was the cradle of rock music improvisation during the 1960s, and home to the Grateful Dead. Having emerged during the middle 1960s, the band flourished where social experimentation reigned and like-minded bands such as Moby Grape, Jefferson Airplane, and the Quicksilver Messenger Service gave the city's underground music scene the definitive stamp of improvisation.<sup>10</sup> Musical performances were frequently accompanied by a melange of experimental light shows, body art, film projections. The counter-culture created their social space by experimenting with new technology, and using standard technology in experimental manners.<sup>11</sup> The Dead experimented “with sound alterations, such as guitar fuzz, feedback, and tremolo bar,” offering the harnessed noise as an aural counterpart to the cultural threads of protest, liberation, and stream of consciousness.<sup>12</sup> The Dead, in short, were a constant element of the city's counter-cultural soundtrack, at home in this milieu of

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of the psychedelic era. Long pieces (ten minutes or more was not uncommon) with prominent instrumental sections and lengthy solos became a hallmark of psychedelic music. So did a fascination with electronic experimentation: the exploitation of feedback, the use of echo machines and other effects devices that appeared during the late 1960s, and the utilization of then novel tape effects such as multitracking and splicing.” Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997): 18. Fittingly, echo effects have been called the sonic equivalent of the hallucinogenic experience. See Susan Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001): 18.

<sup>10</sup> Jeff Tamarkin, *Got a Revolution! The Turbulent Flight of Jefferson Airplane*, (New York: Atria Books, 2003). The author convincingly establishes the central role Jefferson Airplane played in introducing extended improvisation into rock and roll.

<sup>11</sup> Examples include the Open Theater projecting images during concerts, and the semi-official light show of the Merry Pranksters. Audiences were encouraged to bring their own devices to happenings, where strobe lights and Day-glo paint abounded. See Charles Perry, *The Haight Ashbury: A History* (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1984): 22, 39, and 46.

<sup>12</sup> Joe Stuessy and Scott Lipscomb, *Rock and Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006): 228. Feedback itself had shaped critical reception of the Monterey Festival in 1967. Michael Lydon, “Monterey Pops! An International Pop Festival,” (unpublished review, *Newsweek*, June 1967). Feedback signified politically as well as musically, as rebellion against social order, and freedom from the restraints of the Western tonal system. The Dead's employment of feedback found its highest expression in concerts, and in an eight-minute feedback section of their first live recording *Live Dead* (1969).



experimentation and improvisation.

But San Francisco experienced dramatic changes in the late 1960s which turned the bristling community into a blight characterized by pervasive social problems. The year 1967 foreshadowed the end of an era, as San Francisco began to falter under the weight of social chaos. The most pressing social issues were rampant sexual assault and drug abuse.<sup>13</sup> Hepatitis and gonorrhea spread quickly; the adoption of methamphetamines and harder drugs accelerated the decline. But to many insiders, the utopian spirit of San Francisco was crushed under the upswing of commercialism. The Human Be-In of February and the Monterey Pop Festival of August precipitated two unintended consequences: drawing thousands of runaways to the area, and attracting intense media attention to the city. As rock critic Barney Hoskyns put it, “If Monterey was the beginning of the acid era for the world at large, it was the beginning of the end for San Francisco itself.” Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter added that, “As soon as the TV cameras screwed down on it, the vampire began to drink.”<sup>14</sup> The imperatives of capitalists were chiefly responsible for spoiling the counter-cultural roots, by these accounts, and sober promoters like Bill Graham saw economic opportunity where musicians

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<sup>13</sup> Chester Anderson said that even before the summer of 1967, the district was in over its head with run-aways, and that gang rapes were “as common as bullshit on Haight Street.” Quoted in Mikal Gilmore, *Stories Done: Writings on the 1960s and its Discontents* (New York: Free Press, 2008): 93. For Mountain Girl, who would later marry Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia, “the freedom thing was being turned into the freedom to fuck up in public—the freedom to break a bottle, the freedom to hit somebody, the freedom to step on somebody who was on the ground. . . . These powerful elements of destruction had suddenly entered this beautiful street party that had been going on ever since the Be-In.” Quoted in *ibid.*, 97.

<sup>14</sup> Barney Hoskyns, *Beneath the Diamond Sky: Haight-Ashbury, 1965–1970* (New York: Simon & Schuster Editions, 1997): 155. The radical Emmett Grogan remonstrated the media for “drawing a disproportionate number of kids to the district . . . who fell for the Love Hoax and expected to live comfortably poor and expected to take their place in the district’s kingdom of love.” Grogan, *Ringolevio* (New York: Citadel Press, 1990); quoted in Mikal Gilmore, *Stories Done: Writings on the 1960s and its Discontents* (New York: Free Press, 2008): 85.

and hippies saw “freedom” and community.<sup>15</sup>

It is against this commercial backdrop of San Francisco that Nadya Zimmerman has classified the Grateful Dead approach to entertainment as “anti-commercial.”<sup>16</sup> Zimmerman argues that although the counter-culture was losing ground to commercial interests, the Dead demonstrated their “anti-commercial” demeanor by showing their loyal fans how it was permissible to experiment with commercially-dependent technology. The band took an oblique approach to commercialism, often sidestepping the usual routes of commerce like “liberating” rented speakers for an extended period. With this “anti-commercial” framework in mind, this chapter takes a closer look at the band's approach to promotion in and after the year 1970, when Grateful Dead manager Rock Scully said that, “The trouble is that the Grateful Dead is a more 'heard of' band than a 'heard' band, and we want people to hear us. But we won't do what the system says—make single hits, take big gigs, do the success number.”<sup>17</sup> In order to gain listeners while passing on making hits, Grateful Dead resolved to extend their musical ethos by

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<sup>15</sup> With the encroachment of blatant commerce, the Dead recognized their cue to seek greener pastures. Before they left, they even found fault with the familiar setting of Ken Kesey's Acid Tests, which they understood as stagnating and waxing formulaic. At the time guitarist Jerry Garcia said that “The Acid Tests have come down to playing in a hall and having a light show. It's watching television, loud, large television. Like [promoter Bill] Graham, he was at the Trips Festival and all he saw was a light show and a band. Take the two and you got a formula. It is stuck, man, hasn't blown a new mind in years.” *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>16</sup> Nadya Zimmerman, “Consuming Nature: The Grateful Dead's Performance of Anti-Commercial Counterculture” *American Music* 24 (2006): 194–216.

<sup>17</sup> “The summer of '67,” Scully continues, “when all the other groups were making it, we were playing free in the park, man, trying to cool the Haight-Ashbury. So we've never had enough bread to get beyond week-to-week survival, and now we're about \$50,000 in debt. We won't play bad music for the bread because we decided a long time ago that money wasn't a high enough value to sacrifice anything for. But that means that not nearly enough people have heard our music.” Jonathan, Eisen, ed., *The Age of Rock 2: Sights and Sounds of the American Cultural Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1970): 59.

bringing it to more locations. Thus, in 1970 Grateful Dead hosted a farewell concert, prepared themselves for an arduous touring schedule, and extended their live network under the aegis of their powerful record company (Warner Brothers), which in many respects resembles Led Zeppelin's strategy of 1969.

### **§ Commercialism and Routine**

Among the most discussed aspects of the transition into the 1970s, commercialism and routine not only presented problems to San Francisco, where resident hippies were experimenting with all manner of technologies, but also indexed a more general condition of commercialism within the popular music performance industry amid a new economy of scale.

Simon Frith's view of this situation is that San Francisco ushered in the era of commercial rock. Among the most perspicacious commentators on popular music, Frith observed that the commercial agents came primarily from within, rather than from outside of the counter-cultural scene. The problems began when entrepreneurs like the Acid Test organizers profited from charging admission to public spaces they had rented, such as the nightclub called the Big Beat.<sup>18</sup> Another culprit, in this view, were external entrepreneurs such as Bronx-native and west coast transplant Bill Graham, who profited greatly from concerts of psychedelic rock musicians held in the venues he owned. In addition to concert promoters, record company executives descended on the area to sign recording contracts and lift musicians into positions of status. "The rock 'revolution'," Simon Frith wrote, "far from being anticommercial, was going to transform American popular music

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<sup>18</sup> Perry, *Haight-Ashbury*, 38.

into an even bigger business.”<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, the birth of rock commercialization in San Francisco was the birth of rock idolization, and it signaled that the counter-cultural community was losing its cohesion. Signs of commercialism seemed to adorn Grateful Dead in the early 1970s, during a period when they significantly increased their exposure to audiences outside of San Francisco. Along with the increased exposure, the band faced the objections of their loyalist fans and critics. Even the band's sartorial choices belied their mainstreaming to the eyes of *Rolling Stone* magazine. Lenny Kaye reviewed a Grateful Dead concert for the magazine in 1973, and sighed, “It had to happen,” he wrote, “even the Dead have gone glitter. Resplendently suave in Nudie-type sequined suits [even as their fans] nonetheless held true to their flannel shirt and dungaree colors.”<sup>20</sup> Kaye's comment suggests a path marked by Grateful Dead's shifting attitudes toward commerce between the “glitter” and the halcyon days in San Francisco.

The saturation of commercialism that befell San Francisco seemed to index a force against the musical styles that made the area famous. In particular, a segment of popular musicians distanced themselves from the unbridled style of psychedelic rock and gravitated toward more scripted performances, routines that derived from arrangements and began to supplant extended improvisation. For all its experimentation, psychedelic rock was not always guaranteed acceptance among fellow musicians. John Fogerty of the band Creedence Clearwater Revival (CCR), “turned against what he saw as the specious cult of instrumental virtuosity

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<sup>19</sup> Simon Frith, “1967: The Year It All Came Together,” *The History of Rock*, 1981, <http://www.rocksbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=2587>.

<sup>20</sup> Lenny Kaye, “The Grateful Dead on Long Island,” *Rolling Stone*, April 26, 1973.

and mystical vagueness associated with psychedelic rock; he began to produce short, tightly arranged songs about specific situations and the emotional responses to them, which drew on the early rock-and-roll, blues, and country music styles.”<sup>21</sup> The shift from extended improvisation to tight arrangements would become a theme in San Francisco after 1967. With the influx of people to the Bay Area arrived opportunist musicians who, like Fogerty, were unsympathetic to the high-minded improvisation of psychedelic rock. These outsider musicians were intent on staging “fee concerts” rather than “free” ones. Steve Miller is one such musician and band leader, whose career was lifted by his performances in San Francisco. One Bay Area resident recalls that, “You had Steve Miller coming from Texas and the Youngbloods from New York, becoming 'San Francisco bands,' and we were going, 'Who *are* these people ?!’”<sup>22</sup> Miller, for his part, reveled in the opportunity to perform tight arrangements for cash: “I knew I couldn't miss,” he said. “The Dead and the Airplane barely knew how to tune up at the time; the big highlight was playing “In the Midnight Hour” out of tune for forty-five minutes. It took me no time at all to put together a band that could play songs—in tune and tight.”<sup>23</sup> Although hyperbolic in his assessment of Bay Area musicians, Miller was confident that there was money to be won from the now much larger San Francisco population.

Like the San Francisco music scene generally, Grateful Dead produced music in the early 1970s that de-emphasized the role of improvisation. A point of

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<sup>21</sup> Greil Marcus, *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, vol.2, ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie (New York: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, 1986): 533.

<sup>22</sup> Hoskyns, *Beneath the Diamond Sky*, 137.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 141.

contention was the batch of songs recorded on the two 1970 albums. Robert Hunter dubbed songs on *American Beauty*, “Traditional music augmented by the power of rock 'n' roll.”<sup>24</sup> For those who associated the Grateful Dead sound with noise and free-form jams rather than traditional (i.e., folk and bluegrass) music, there was little in these two albums to enjoy. These songs sounded more like country music or “cowboy songs” than critics were ready to accept: “Almost overnight,” writes one band biographer, “Garcia and Weir transformed the Dead from streetwise hippies to closet rednecks. Early songs reappeared in sets to go along with the shorter, more compact tunes from *Workingman's Dead* and *American Beauty*.”<sup>25</sup> Short, more compact tunes were not what every loyalist was used to, nor did fans evidently anticipate close vocal harmonies in the style of Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. Such harmonies were a highlight of Kaye's concert review, and sounded clearly more coordinated than in his previous experience with the band.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, these folk- and bluegrass-inspired songs were off-putting to some loyalists for their resemblance to mainstream popular music rather than acid rock. The Dead's eponymous double-live album, released in October 1971, was met with cool praise from the rock press establishment. One reviewer confessed, “I approached this album with mixed feelings; one side of me saying ‘Well, you love the Dead don't you?’ and the other half repeating ‘They went commercial, and this ain't no different. [. . .] This is an album for followers

<sup>24</sup> Stephen Peters, *What a Long, Strange Trip* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1999): 73.

<sup>25</sup> Jason Schneider, “Crank Up the Old Victrola: Discovering the Grateful Dead's Earliest Influences,” *Relix*, August 1996; reprinted in John Rocco, *Dead Reckonings: The Life and Times of the Grateful Dead* (New York: Shirmer Books, 1999): 112.

<sup>26</sup> “The improvement and strength of the group's vocal harmonies was readily apparent; no more do their voices quaver up and down the scale trying to find the right series of notes.” Kaye, “The Grateful Dead on Long Island.”

of the new Dead, the Grateful Dead quartet that plays pretty songs.”<sup>27</sup> The albums of 1970 conspicuously lacked the type of musical experimentation that sectors of the band's audience preferred.

One year later, Lenny Kaye reviewed Grateful Dead's live double-album as a significant step toward off-putting, predictable songwriting. “If nothing else,” he wrote

*Grateful Dead* does make me a bit nostalgic for them golden days of yore, when not much of anything could be predicted from the group . . . [E]ver since the pyrotechnics of *Live/Dead*, our boys seem to have backed away from such experimentation and confrontation, and the result is a mixture of pleasant good-time music.<sup>28</sup>

To Kaye, the lack of urgency and frenzied improvisation was troubling; even the drum solos sounded to him predictable and contrived, “as if he [the drummer] had a list of tricks in front of him, and as he does each one he mentally crosses it off and jumps to the next.” If Grateful Dead performance had become marked by predictability, it had also become stronger and more polished: these are arguably chief characteristics of their mainstreaming phase. A reviewer from the *New York Times* concurred with the positive remarks of Kaye, writing of the live triple-album *Europe '72*, “There is now little of the erratic, often boring time-marking and sloppiness which once marred sections of their performances; they have been

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<sup>27</sup> Jon Tiven, “The Grateful Dead: *Grateful Dead* (Warner Bros.),” *Phonograph Record*, November 1971. Although the album contain no song released on *Workingman's Dead* or *American Beauty*, this reviewer makes clear that the Dead broke from a previous style around 1971, suggesting that their new material had a pervasive influence on the band's performance style.

<sup>28</sup> Lenny Kaye, “The Grateful Dead: *Grateful Dead* (Warners),” *Rolling Stone*, November 11, 1971.

together for long enough to make every note count.<sup>29</sup> For Grateful Dead and the music industry more generally, the early 1970s seemed to constitute a period of polish and refinement, and even of routine.

A phrase like “routine” was more normally reserved for acts like Alice Cooper, who repeatedly claimed to have rehearsed five months before going on tour.<sup>30</sup> To invoke “routine” was to invoke uninspired, or even dishonest music. Eric Clapton, referring to his split from the Bluesbreakers to form the supergroup Cream (1966–68), discussed routine with filmmaker Tony Palmer: “I probably would have been better to stay with John Mayall. Because then, you know—that Cream thing was all like . . . it was just aggressive music. And it wasn't honest, either.” When Palmer pressed Clapton on the charge of dishonest music, Clapton responded, “Well, we weren't being truthful to the audiences we were playing to. And the band I'm with now [Derek and the Dominoes] does its best every night. You know, does its best every night. Cream we just did the same—we had a routine worked out. Did the same things every night. I mean for three years, every night in the same order. That's not honesty, that's not being truthful at all.”<sup>31</sup> Clapton projected onto the audience his own discomfort with routine, uncertain of just how many people watched Cream perform on consecutive nights or what those fans were thinking. At any rate, it was bad enough *for him* that Cream played the same thing over each night; for Clapton, routine was the inauthentic,

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<sup>29</sup> Patrick Carr, “The Grateful Dead Makes a Real Good Hamburger,” *New York Times*, March 11, 1973.

<sup>30</sup> Alice Cooper, and Steven Gaines, *Me, Alice: The Autobiography of Alice Cooper* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976): 16.

<sup>31</sup> Tony Palmer, *All You Need is Love* (London: Zeit Media, 2008), DVD.



easy way out. I do not claim in this chapter that early 1970s Grateful Dead performances, in total, resembled the manner of routine indicated by Clapton, performing the same songs in the same sequence night after night. Nor do I hold that the band entirely abandoned its penchant for live improvisation. Rather, what the analysis will show is that Grateful Dead performances were marked by the occasional routine, during a period when “routine” was becoming a touchstone for uninspired, inauthentic rock. Certainly, there is much more to Grateful Dead concerts than what one analysis can reveal, but it represents a small piece that may be connected to a much larger puzzle.

From the year 1970 forward, the Dead radically increased the scope of their touring (see Appendix B). Near the time of the band's formation in the early 1960s, they understandably performed mostly in the San Francisco Bay Area. Soon after, this narrow range extended to all parts of California and the west coast of North America. In 1967 they played their first concerts in New York City, and continued to work with Bill Graham to perform extensively along the eastern seaboard. Yet, their performances before August 1970 (i.e., the debut of “Truckin”) remained predominantly along the two coasts. The band took a crucial step in their relative mainstreaming when they played more consistently in the space between. The band's manager Rock Scully said that, “In 1970, the Grateful Dead started going on the road seriously with major national tours, playing more shows that year than ever before or since.”<sup>32</sup> They toured extensively to disseminate their music more widely, since the band avoided the traditional route

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<sup>32</sup> Peters, *Long, Strange Trip*, 76.

to musical promotion (i.e., radio, television). Wide touring was an important corrective: “Outside of the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and parts of New York,” said Joe Smith, president of Warner-Reprise, “promotion was necessary—and usually a problem. Songs were too long or too “uncommercial” to be played on AM stations. We found we couldn’t sell the Grateful Dead’s records in a traditional manner. You couldn’t take your ad in *Billboard* and sell a record that way. We found that they had to be seen. They had to play concerts.”<sup>33</sup>

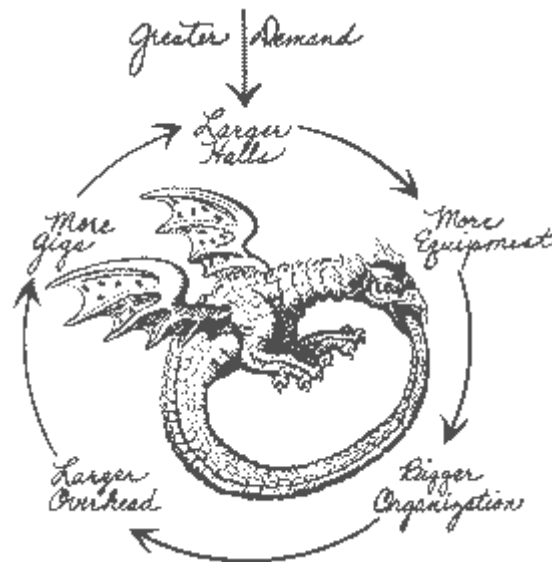
And play concerts they did: for wider and larger audiences in more capacious venues. The net result of touring in support of mainstreaming was a substantial amount of money, which provided sustained motivation for, among other things, continually improving their self-designed sound system. Jerry Garcia said that, “our point of view has been, well, since we’re playing to larger audiences in larger places, the thing to do should be to divert the energy into improving the quality of the performance.”<sup>34</sup> As the Dead toured, they encountered at least two motivations for recirculating their money back into their speaker system. First, over-the-counter equipment failed to survive much of the traveling associated with their mainstreaming phase, since the industry was evidently not yet selling concert-grade equipment. Second, without their own system, the band was required to rent speaker systems from the venue, which they usually found acceptable but somehow inadequate. Sound engineer Ron Wickersham said near end of 1972 that, “The Dead kept playing bigger and

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<sup>33</sup> Steve Chapple and Reebee Garofolo, *Rock 'n' is Here to Pay: The History of Politics of the Music Industry* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1977): 75.

<sup>34</sup> Charles Shaar Murray, “Grateful Dead—How the hell do ya play them five-hour sets without slinkin’ off for a leak?,” *New Musical Express*, September 21, 1974.

bigger venues, and the house or rented sound systems kept sounding worse and worse.”<sup>35</sup> Recirculating their capital became part of Grateful Dead lore, in the form of an illustrated, tail-eating dragon, an Urobouros named “Giga Exponentia” (Illustration 3.2). The seemingly endless cycle represented by this dragon outlined the process of greater demand: larger halls lead to → more equipment → bigger organization → larger overhead → more gigs → larger halls, and so on. Until the time of the oil embargo of 1973, it seemed as if the Dead would inexorably travel this path; the associated costs of operating their so-called “Wall of Sound,” explored in detail below, proved too much for the Dead to sustain; they retired the system in October 1974, and ceased touring for approximately two years.



*Illustration 3.2: Urobouros, or, “Giga Exponentia” (1973).*

This cyclical process of growth invites the discussion of live performance and commercialism. Grateful Dead were known in San Francisco during the

<sup>35</sup> Blair Jackson *Grateful Dead Gear: The Band's Instruments, Sound Systems, and Recording Sessions from 1965 to 1995* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2006): 123.

middle- and late 1960s as “anti-commercial,” but the increasing demand of fans across the United States and beyond seemed to force the band into performing in larger venues and, accordingly, into developing larger sound equipment. This quandary attends the career of those who wish to appear to be operating with an enlightened relationship to commerce, as the Dead appeared to be.<sup>36</sup> On the one hand, musicians risk alienating fans whose identification with the band rests on a principled stance against the machinations of commerce. On the other hand, becoming “corporate” is not entirely negative: sometimes major record company support offers an aegis under which musicians can flourish, where otherwise they would not have had the opportunity.<sup>37</sup> As Frank Zappa said, bands need ample technology to sound good in hockey rinks, and need financial resources to buy that technology.<sup>38</sup> For the Dead, those resources were obtained through concertizing rather than through intense marketing campaigns.<sup>39</sup>

All of this points to the question of authenticity during the nascent years of arena rock. As Keir Keightley notes, no one definition of “authentic” will hold, but the question must be raised with respect to the Dead, who represent a strong impulse toward outfitting the social space with concert technologies. New clothes and tightly arranged songs placed the band at odds with early fans, jeopardizing

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<sup>36</sup> Nadya Zimmerman, “Consuming Nature: The Grateful Dead’s Performance of Anti-Commercial Counterculture” *American Music* 24 (2006): 194–216.

<sup>37</sup> In what seems to be the first iteration of “corporate rock,” James Lichtenberg suggested that a major record company could function as a musical ally, since it provides a shield “for the truly outspoken, probing voices in the new culture music.” Lichtenberg “Making Rock Respectable; Blood, Sweat & Tears,” *New York Times*, February 28, 1971. Grateful Dead similarly recorded under a major label, Warner (but left them to found their own label in 1973).

<sup>38</sup> Richard Williams, “Frank Zappa: Past Flops And Future Shocks,” *Melody Maker*, August 25, 1973.

<sup>39</sup> The prize for self-marketing goes to the band KISS, which I will discuss in the final chapter of this dissertation.

their authenticity during a sea-change in the status of rock musicians, who were being elevated by the rock press and writers who believed in the righteousness of their taste. In the 1970s, a war of authenticity was being waged on bands like Led Zeppelin, those more closely aligned with “Arena Rock,” whose career was defined by their relationship to large venues.

The analysis of “Truckin’” that follows will, I hope, raise questions about live performance with a broader implication. The question, colloquially speaking, is about polish: If a band sounds rehearsed, when does that polish incur a cost with audiences looking for authenticity? As Allan Moore argues, authenticity requires an authenticator; thus, the question of the Truckin’ routine is also about audiences: With the development of the routine, Grateful Dead might be seen as offering their audiences a better product. Between 1970–73, the Grateful Dead were walking contradictions of modern musical success. Backed by Warner, the Dead rose to popularity through extensive touring, and a batch of new songs. After extending their touring network far beyond San Francisco and New York City, modesty was not easily achieved, although as Nadya Zimmerman has argued, the Dead only needed to *appear* as though not caught up in consumerism.<sup>40</sup> For Grateful Dead, the appearance of modesty faced its most strenuous challenges with the speaker system that previewed for audiences the pinnacle of concert technology, and with the prospect of routine developing in their song “Truckin’.”

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<sup>40</sup> Zimmerman, “Consuming Nature,” 212.

## § Forging a Routine

If Grateful Dead did develop a routine in “Truckin’,” this process was aided by the use of extra-musical concert technologies. In addition to using their speakers to enhance their performance, the Grateful Dead also relied on audio recording technology. The band recorded, and encouraged the recording, of virtually every one of their more than 2,300 career concerts (1965–95).<sup>41</sup> The band frequently “sold a limited number of special tickets directly behind the soundboard called “taper tickets” so that people could bring in taping equipment and make copies of the show.”<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, both the band and their fans were fascinated with capturing live performance, but the band used them to correct performance whereas certain Deadheads created a network of tape exchange both at and outside of the immediate concert experience. The band's own recordings allowed the band to evaluate the peaks and valleys, and home in on exemplary moments. Through this feedback loop the musicians developed the “Truckin’” routine between August 1970 and October 1973. After concerts, the band would learn to improve their performances from reviewing the recordings. “We listen to the tapes,” said drummer Bill Kreutzmann, “and scrutinize what we've been

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<sup>41</sup> Two massive repositories of archived recordings include Archive.org and SugarMugs.org.

<sup>42</sup> When “taper tickets” were sold, the band requested that copies of audience recordings be exchanged rather than sold, a clear indication of their counter-cultural mores. These exchanges occurred both during concerts and afterward, when tapers returned to their homes: “the recipient [of a copied recording] either trades copies of another show or sends the taper blank tapes and return postage.” See Zimmerman, “Consuming Nature,” 213. The aggregated collection of Grateful Dead recordings has also been chronologically ordered and systematically evaluated by the fan community, edited by Michael M. Getz and John R. Dwork; see *The Deadhead's Taping Compendium: An In-depth Guide to the Music of the Grateful Dead on Tape*, 3vol. (New York: H.Holt, 1998–2000).

playing . . . We listen to see how we can correct ourselves.”<sup>43</sup> Bassist Phil Lesh noted that recorded technology could be the sober reminder of reality in the aftermath of drug-addled performance. “Listening back to what I’ve played later on a tape, because the drugs can’t have any influence on a tape, I find that generally speaking the quality is just what I thought it was. . . . The relationship between what I was playing and the whole band is not always that good because not everybody is always on the same plane. Or on the same trip.”<sup>44</sup> Submitting to the authority of the tape to learn from their recorded performances helped the band to enact a “Truckin’” routine. I cannot place performances of “Truckin’” in the earphones of the Dead, and cannot account for which musician listened to which tape and how this may have resulted in corrections of subsequent performance as a result, but the principle of reviewing tapes has been clearly established during the period 1970–73, and is suggestive of how the routine may have developed.

### **§ Formal properties of the Routine**

In 1970 the Grateful Dead wrote and debuted many songs recorded on *American Beauty*, including “Truckin’.” At the time, the Dead were seen to be altering course musically, steering closer to folk stylings and acoustic instruments, and away from psychedelic rock and electrified noise. A short discussion will first better acquaint us with the song, a moderate rock shuffle in twelve-eight time and the key of E mixolydian. Concerning its lyrical structure, “Truckin’” begins with the first of seven choruses, and contains five verses, each followed by another

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43 Steve Turner, “The Legend Of The Dead,” *Beat Instrumental*, June 1972.

44 Andy Childs, “A Conversation with Phil Lesh,” *ZigZag*, September 1974.

chorus, or the bridge, or both in that order (Example 3.1).<sup>45</sup>

	Chorus 1	_____	
Verse 1	Chorus 2	_____	
Verse 2	Chorus 3	_____	Bridge_____
Verse 3	Chorus 4	_____	
Verse 4	Chorus 5	_____	
Verse 5			Bridge_____
	Chorus 6	_____	[gtr. solo; becomes “routine”]
	(Chorus 7	_____)	

*Example 3.1: Generic formal design of “Truckin’.”*

Internally, each Verse comprises eight measures over tonic harmony, and every Chorus evenly traverses the chord sequence I-IV-V-IV in the same space of time, eliding into a short vamp on tonic. Similarly, each of the first five Choruses and both Bridges yield to a tonic vamp, the next section in the sequence. What follows Chorus 6 has our attention here, as the initial placement of a short guitar solo – leading to Chorus 7 – but also as the eventual location of the “Truckin’” routine.<sup>46</sup> The formal section after Chorus 6 becomes the pivot between the lyrically-coordinated portion of the song and the freer instrumental improvisation which follows.

The debut of “Truckin’” provides a baseline for formal comparison with later performances. (Material after Chorus 6 will be treated separately below.) The Dead opened their August 18, 1970 concert at San Francisco's Fillmore theater

<sup>45</sup> In discussions of the *American Beauty* recording, this chapter relies on the transcription of “Truckin’” printed in *Guitar for the Practicing Musician*, April 1990, 113–26. For all other musical examples, I have made my own transcriptions.

<sup>46</sup> Chorus 7 effectively disappeared from live performance after August 20, 1972, explaining its parenthetical inclusion above. The song's formal history can thus be partitioned into three overarching phases with respect to the routine's development: first, when chorus 7 was usually performed (debut, August 1970–August 1972); second, when chorus 7 becomes intermittent and disappears while the routine develops (August 1972–October 1973); third, when only the fully-developed routine follows chorus 6 (October 29, 1973 and beyond).



with the debut of “Truckin’.”<sup>47</sup> The formal structure of that performance is shown in paradigmatic form in Example 3.2a. The form primarily alternates between verses sung by a solo singer (Bob Weir) and choruses in three-part harmony. The strophic song’s lyrics help maintain this sense of regularity, since each verse and chorus is structured identically. Notice how in the debut each iteration of the A and B sections were equally eight measures in length, whereas the vamps that comprise the A’ sections, which function as interludes, are unequal, fluctuating with extemporaneous decisions onstage. In this debut performance, two-measure iterations reveal an anxious Weir beginning Verses 1 and 2 early. But the most anomalous variant of the A’ section occurred as the band transitioned to the first Bridge: a ten-bar A’ follows Chorus 3. Since the A’ vamps function to segue to the Bridge and to the verses, their irregularity indicates that the musicians were struggling to coordinate during this performance. Six measures into the vamp, one can hear Weir coordinating the ensemble with, “Here we go,” and, we can presume, with non-verbal cues. In later performances, they continued to show signs of coordination with their new song. During the next performance the following evening, “Truckin’” still had irregular A’ section vamps: the first three lasted two measures while the rest were four. Weir and the band eventually settled on four-measure breaks rather than the variants shown in Example 3.2a, as a comparison with their studio recording will make clear.

The version of “Truckin’” recorded on *American Beauty* shows signs of rehearsal and improvement over the song's debut. For the sake of comparison,

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<sup>47</sup> Like many performances of the period, this began with acoustic instruments and later in the concert moved to electric instruments.

Examples 3.2a and 3.2b show the formal structure of the debut performance and album version, respectively. The form of the *American Beauty* version corroborates the assertion that four measures was the desired length between verses. In preparation for the *American Beauty* recording sessions in August and September, by day the Dead assiduously rehearsed their new songs, including “Truckin’,” while also performing them nightly. In this light, the debut performance constituted a rehearsal in preparation for the studio recording session. Between the premiere and the time it was recorded, the band reached agreements on the formal design of the vocal section, which they finalized by September 18. One possible motivation for their careful rehearsals was to avoid wasting studio time either recording or re-recording their vocal harmonies. Another possible motivation was the pressure the band felt from their record label, Warner Bros., to produce a radio-friendly single of “Truckin’” in addition to the version destined for the LP.<sup>48</sup> Although the form of “Truckin’” is highly regular in its first recorded form, in concert the song would remain a work in progress.

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<sup>48</sup> The single version seemed to band members like a capitulation at the time, and in particular “smelled like a request, and sort of a concession for Joe Smith [president of Warner Brothers] to do a single mix of it, or at least to do a single edit.” Peters, *Long, Strange Trip*, 86.

Example 3.2a, Form of “Truckin” as performed at debut (August 18, 1970).

	A (I)	B (I/IV/V/IV)	A' (I; vamp)	Bridge	A' (I)
→	vamp (8)	Chorus 1 (8)	2		
	Verse 1 (8)	Chorus 2 (8)	2		
	Verse 2 (8)	Chorus 3 (8)	10	14	4
	Verse 3 (8)	Chorus 4 (8)	4		
	Verse 4 (8)	Chorus 5 (8)	4		
	Verse 5 (8)	→		14	8
		Chorus 6 (8)	4+14		

Example 3.2b, Form of “Truckin” as recorded on *American Beauty* (November 1970).

	Intro (I)	A (I)	B (I/IV/V/IV)	A' (I; vamp)	Bridge	A' (I)
2		vamp (4)	Chorus 1 (8)	4		
		Verse 1 (8)	Chorus 2 (8)	4		
		Verse 2 (8)	Chorus 3 (8)	4	14	4
		Verse 3 (8)	Chorus 4 (8)	4		
		Verse 4 (8)	Chorus 5 (8)	4		
		Verse 5 (8)	→		14	4
			Chorus 6 (8)	4+7 (fade)		

Two years after its debut, “Truckin” was distributed by the band as a live recording, exhibiting another significant transformation in its improvisational

form. The form was relatively stable from its debut in late 1970 until spring 1972, when the band performed slightly longer renditions of “Truckin’” during their tour of Europe. During this international tour, the Dead adjusted their approach to the material after Chorus 6 in “Truckin’,” a reconfiguration codified on the band's live triple-album, *Europe '72*.<sup>49</sup> In their final recording opportunities, during concerts in London's Lyceum, Grateful Dead gave an anomalous performance of “Truckin’” that far surpassed in length any previous rendition. The London concert, and thus the *Europe '72* recording, mark a turning point in the song's improvisatory section (i.e., after Chorus 6). The form of “Truckin’,” as performed in London, is shown in Example 3.2c.

Example 3.2c, Form of “Truckin’” as recorded on *Europe '72* (May 1972).

Intro (I)	A (I)	B (I, IV, V, IV)	A' (vamp; I)	Bridge	A' (I)
2	vamp (8)	Chorus 1 (8)	4		
	Verse 1 (8)	Chorus 2 (8)	4		
	Verse 2 (8)	Chorus 3 (8)	4	14	4
	Verse 3 (8)	Chorus 4 (8)	4		
	Verse 4 (8)	Chorus 5 (8)	4		
	Verse 5 (8)	→		14	4
		Chorus 6 (8)	272		

<sup>49</sup> Some of the background vocals on *Europe '72* (as in “He's Gone”) were re-recorded upon the band's return to the U.S., so the ostensibly live album is only mostly live. This editing practice was not uncommon during this period.

The preceding examples introduced the form but neglected to discuss the final box (marked in black) in the paradigmatic examples, the space when “Truckin’” sometimes comes to a rousing conclusion. (The debut and *American Beauty* versions anomalously lack Chorus 7.) In concert, this final solo section could lead to one of two things: conclusion, or segue into the next piece. If the band chose to conclude, there were two further, recursive options: once through Chorus 6 → A' (solo), then conclude, or Chorus 6 → A' (solo), followed by Chorus 7 → A' (solo), then conclude. The latter option essentially creates space for two separate guitar solos. Since Chorus 7 was neither included in the debut performance nor recorded on *American Beauty*, it appears as an option that the band inserted along the way. After the debut, the band iterates Chorus 7 in about 50% of their performances over the next month, and after December 1970 it is nearly standard, but only temporarily.

Two observations help make meaning of the London performance: the solo after Chorus 6 is exceptionally long, and Chorus 7 is omitted. Although the Dead omitted Chorus 7 only one other time during their European tour, this rather open-ended form became the preferred structure for “Truckin’.” Thereafter, when they returned to the United States, Chorus 7 disappeared by February 1973. With this form, the band freely segued from the solo into other songs in their catalog, raising the experiential question of where “Truckin’” ends and the next piece begins. Furthermore, this extremely long rendition of “Truckin’” occupies one full side of a LP record, a musical extension that simultaneously opens questions of how the Dead might want to corral that material. The next section describes this

process.

### § The Crescendo-climax

The main analytical target of this chapter is the device the band developed over a period of three years to corral the form of these improvisational sections. Before examining this development, we need to clarify the form leading up to the solo: after February 1973 Chorus 7 is non-existent, though it was preferred early on, paving the way for a single, open-ended jam where the routine was inserted. The device I examine will end up resembling Graeme Boone's description of the social convention associated with "Dark Star," which begins with a musical cue among performers.<sup>50</sup> The "Dark Star" cue emerges clearly, from a moment of low amplitude, so that band members can synchronize easily. Boone shows how fans, too, will be prepared to "listen for clues to form and direction in a long-winded, somewhat unpredictable flow."<sup>51</sup> I argue that the "Truckin'" device created a social convention between performers and audiences, who share in the experience of crescendo and climax. Where Boone's essay discusses one-time clues, the examination below shows how the clues developed over the course of many performances.

Fans adore music they know well, and thus enjoy a certain amount of routine from performers. Even Deadheads, whose revered musicians are renowned improvisers, might expect a certain degree of routine to be paired with the flights of fancy for which the band was known. In the previous section we saw

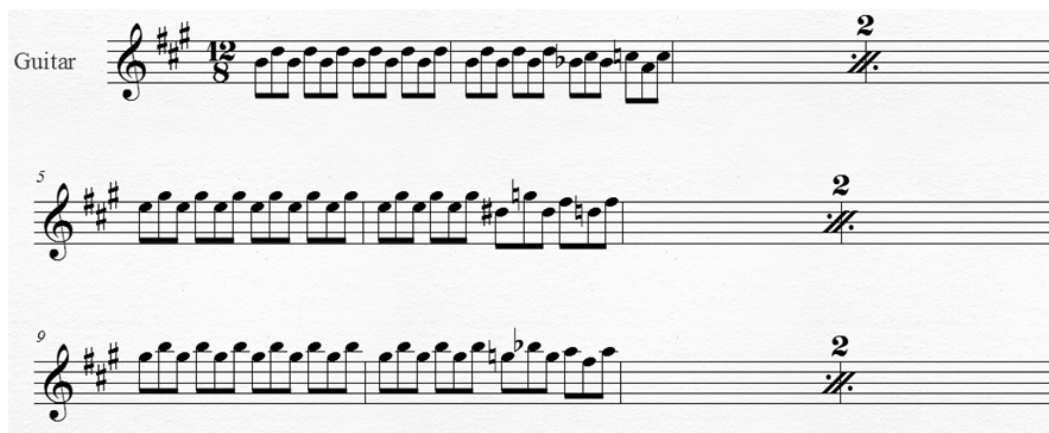
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<sup>50</sup> Boone, "Tonal and Expressive Ambiguity in 'Dark Star'" in *Understanding Rock*, ed. Boone and John Covach (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997): 202.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

how “Truckin’” debuted as a modest acoustic number that grew in dimension, rupturing with the performance documented on *Europe '72*. Next, the band corralled this sprawling improvisation, “perfecting” a device that I call “crescendo-climax.”

The archive of recordings shows that on October 29, 1973 the Dead first “perfected” the “Truckin’” routine. Before examining the routine in its development, we will take a closer look at the finished product, which became a permanent feature of the song. Readily apparent with this routine are a bipartite structure and function. The first part, which is tension-building, consists of three units of eight measures each; the second, which is tension-dissolving, spans just one unit of eight measures. The first part is characterized by a prolonged  $I^7$  chord, during which all instrumentalists increasingly accentuate the triplet division of the beat. In this section, lead guitarist Jerry Garcia outlines an E-dominant seventh chord harmony by alternating between two adjacent chord tones, for eight measures each: first on B-D, then E-G#, finally on G#-B (Example 3.3). This three-stage ascent is typically matched by an increase in Garcia's right-hand picking intensity and his band mates' increase in participation and volume.



*Example 3.3: Crescendo-climax, first part.*

The first-half of the routine, which has the band and audience stirred to a fever pitch by the third interval, is followed by the second part, characterized by long, bombastic *tutti* chords dissolving the tension. The chords come crashing down on beat two of odd-numbered measures after a virtually silent beat one: 1-and-a, 2-and-a, 3-and-a, 4-and-a, [one], TWO . . . I label this half of the device “the 2.”<sup>52</sup> Since the second half of the device maintains the metrical grouping of the first (two-measure groups stated four times each) the climax is not one, but a series of powerful *tutti* bombs, which showcased the band's enormous sound system and in particular, allowed bassist Lesh to take full advantage of his spatialized speaker interface (more below). These bombs demarcate form and launch the band and audiences into the true improvisatory section of “Truckin.” As the band “perfected” this device, they received ever more enthusiastic applause from audiences excited by the synchronized performance.

<sup>52</sup> I do so for this reason and for its readiness to be incorporated into two existing fields of popular music discourse. First, “the 2” is a grand example of backbeat and could easily figure into future discussions of the so-called “phallic backbeat.” Secondly, “the 2” creates a field of comparison with what is called “the 1” in funk discourse. I will not pursue these issues, but rather delve deeper into the development of the crescendo-climax.



The crescendo-climax shows how the Grateful Dead tailored the ending of “Truckin’” to create maximal tension in the concert space and release it to great effect. One could hardly expect “Truckin’” to behave exactly like another piece, but since Boone is among the few scholars to tackle Dead aesthetics, we can use his analysis of “Dark Star” as a foil to broaden our understanding of the band’s improvisational practices. The crescendo-climax of “Truckin’” requires synchronized performance that is absent from the two climaxes in “Dark Star”: Boone demonstrates that the second climax in “Dark Star” is actually a series of connected but not simultaneous individual climaxes. He further argues that, insofar as coordination is present, the performance he analyzed was exceptionally coordinated: “no other recording I have heard presents quite this romantic a reading of a final climax, if indeed there is a climax at all.”<sup>53</sup> Perhaps this coordinated second climax is an important component of why this particular performance “is one of the most highly regarded renderings of [“Dark Star,”] . . . highlight[ing] essential, enduring, and emblematic features of the group’s style.”<sup>54</sup> Like Boone, I am arguing for an emblematic feature of Grateful Dead music: the coordinated climaxes in “Truckin’.”

Though emblematic of the Dead’s style, the crescendo-climax developed over the course of many performances rather than being instituted in one stroke, as a few examples will demonstrate. Example 3.4 shows how Jerry Garcia played fragments of the developed crescendo-climax long before it was perfected, fragments observable at least one year before achieving “perfection.” At Ford

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<sup>53</sup> Boone, “Ambiguity in ‘Dark Star,’” 198.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 172.

Auditorium in Detroit, the assembled audience identified “Truckin’” as a favorite, clapping and presumably dancing enthusiastically. As the solo begins, Jerry Garcia first plays sixths on the upper stings, entirely appropriate to the musical texture, then shifts to a triplet figure on B and D in measure 9. Retrospectively, from a post-1973 vantage point of the settled routine, Garcia's soloing sounds like a distant, incomplete anticipation of “perfection.” “The 2” is essentially absent from this performance; it appears in the next two examples, but in an uncoordinated manner that suggests the band had more tapes to listen to before “getting it right.”

Guitar

*Example 3.4: Crescendo-climax fragments, October 30, 1972 (Ford Auditorium, Detroit).*

Although Garcia led the development of the routine, the device resulted from the band’s collaborative efforts to synchronize themselves. Were the routine Garcia's alone, it may still display the characteristics of tension and release. But the routine became a routine for the *entire* band when the remaining performers

appear to follow Garcia's lead. The crucial step was the development of the *tutti* chords.

Example 3.5, from February 21, 1973, demonstrates Garcia's continued preference for the triplet figure outlined in the previous example. Both examples 3.4 and 3.5 begin with Garcia playing sixths, then gravitating toward the B-D triplet figure. In Example 3.5, rather than proceeding to the next stage in the developed crescendo-climax, Garcia stays with those two notes, bending the double-stop up to scale degrees 6 and 1 (end m.8–13 of the example). Then, after iterations of a terrific 4-3 suspension (mm.15–22), Garcia and his band mates proceed to four uncoordinated attempts at “the 2” (mm.23, 25, 27, 29). In these exemplary disjunctions, the cymbal crashes on the “and” of beat 2, rather than squarely on it. What the guitarists and bassist coordinate in this performance is still unsettled as a routine, though this performance clearly resembles its final shape and imminent “perfection.”

*Example 3.5: Uncoordinated routine, February 21, 1973.*

The musical score is organized into four systems, each containing staves for Drum Set (D.S.), Guitar (Gtr.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 12/8. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the Drum Set with a steady eighth-note pattern, the Guitar with a melodic line, and the Piano with block chords. The second system (measures 5-8) features a 'full' dynamic marking on the Guitar. The third system (measures 9-12) also has 'full' markings on the Guitar. The fourth system (measures 13-16) shows the Guitar playing a melodic line with a 'full' marking, while the Piano continues with block chords. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

*Example 3.5 (continued).*

Measures 17-20 of Example 3.5. The score is for three parts: D.S. (Drum Set), Gtr. (Guitar), and Pno. (Piano). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. Measure 17 starts with a repeat sign. The D.S. part features a steady eighth-note pattern. The Gtr. part has a series of slash marks, indicating a rhythmic pattern. The Pno. part has a complex, fast-moving melody in the right hand, while the left hand is mostly silent.

Measures 21-28 of Example 3.5. The score continues for D.S., Gtr., and Pno. In measure 21, the D.S. part has a more complex pattern. The Gtr. part features a series of eighth notes. The Pno. part has a complex, fast-moving melody in the right hand, while the left hand is mostly silent. Measures 25-28 show a continuation of the complex patterns in all three parts, with the Gtr. part featuring a series of eighth notes and the Pno. part featuring a complex, fast-moving melody.

In the months leading up to October 1973, the band treated climaxes in “Truckin’” in the uncoordinated way Boone recognized in “Dark Star.” In Example 3.5 (February 1973), “the 2” was uncoordinated but involved all players rather than just guitars and bass. Garcia’s solo begins like the previous examples, with sixths leading to the triplet figures, but the band flubs the *tutti* chord after the build-up: Garcia hits a strong chord on beat 1, Lesh plays a low perfect fifth on beat 2, and Weir’s second guitar is in on beat 3. Months later, on September 24, “the 2” is still uncoordinated, but sounds closer than previous examples of tying all the elements together. Though the drums, keyboard, and guitars are synchronized, the bassist prematurely climaxes on 4 of the previous measure, producing a certain deflated feeling in the next bar. Uncoordinated bombs like these may excite audiences plenty, in the way that Boone’s “Dark Star” study shows. But comparatively speaking, strictly coordinated climaxes have the edge, as the evidence below suggests.

After numerous uncoordinated attempts, on October 29, 1973 Grateful Dead finally perfected the crescendo-climax device. The fully-developed routine frequently resulted in the apex of crowd excitement within “Truckin’,” if live recordings are any indication.<sup>55</sup> None of this appears accidental, considering the band’s off-stage practice of reviewing their performance and the gradual development of similar musical gestures. From the evidence arrayed in this chapter, clear antecedents of the crescendo-climax emerge from earlier

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<sup>55</sup> A thorough sampling of future shows confirms that the crescendo-climax became a staple. Fans in Iowa City seemed particularly to admire the device used during a performance in February 1978.

performances, and the routine was adopted by the band as a legitimate extension of the initial composition. After October 29, 1973 the “Truckin’” form is routine: verses and choruses, ending with “Get back, truckin’ on,” then a solo beginning with the crescendo-climax, then a jam over tonic that segued into another song.

### § Extra-musical Technologies

While Grateful Dead were developing their routine in “Truckin’,” the concert music industry was focusing attention on the development of extra-musical technologies. Among the most notable of these developments were those that produced massive stage props, which helped compensate for the intimacy lost in large venues by providing clear visual simulation for those fans farthest from the concert stage.

We saw in Chapter Two how bands like Led Zeppelin incorporated extra-musical technologies to compensate for lost intimacy. The memorable extra-musical props of the early 1970s were deployed by bands in the psychedelic rock genre, such as Pink Floyd, as well as those from the Glam rock genre, such as Alice Cooper. Bands like Pink Floyd and Alice Cooper used elaborate props and stage contraptions to accentuate rock theatricality, to highlight the psychological dimension of their lyrics, and to serve as a platform onto which audiences could project their desires and anxieties.<sup>56</sup> In this section, I argue that Grateful Dead's Wall of Sound took a form that rendered it analyzable not only as a concert speaker system but also as a stage prop.

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<sup>56</sup> Pink Floyd offered helium-filled giant pigs flying overhead, at once signaling technocratic surveillance and the attainment of the impossible. On the other hand, Alice Cooper staged a beheading, promoting theatricality and inviting his audience to project anxieties about the age of transition. See Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 70ff.

## § “Wall of Sound” as Prop

Massive speaker systems were bound up with the new economy of scale afforded by large performance venues. By the year 1969, speakers for individual bands had grown much larger than the Beatles’s 100-watt amplifiers of 1965.<sup>57</sup> In terms of size, large systems for arena concerts were fantasized as “10-foot amplifiers.”<sup>58</sup> In terms of wattage, the measure of illumination as well as electrical power, in 1969 a speaker considered large for an arena concert was 200-watts.<sup>59</sup> When guitarist Eric Clapton was asked about the development of rock and roll amplifiers, he said, “Well, the amplifiers got bigger and bigger didn't they. That was all there was to it. You went from 50 watts to 100 watts to 200 watts to . . . God knows what. I mean it was just bound to happen. I don't like that, really.”<sup>60</sup> Larger, more powerful speaker systems have readily been connected to the economic advantage of larger audiences. For Loyd Grossman, “The equation was

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<sup>57</sup> A layman's definition of watts: “when you say 10 watts electrically, it's 10 watts that the amplifier gives out . . . and any speakers are, at the most, only ten per cent efficient — so the sound power given out is only one watt. You can go up to about 30 watts, and each step of 10 watts is about twice as loud. But above that it gets a lot more complicated, and to get twice the volume of 30 watts, you'd have to have about 200 watts . . . and to get twice as loud as 200 watts, you'd need about 2000 watts. But it's the quality that's important rather than sheer volume.” John Tobler, “Tony McPhee . . . Groundhog,” *ZigZag*, March 1971.

<sup>58</sup> Jerry Wexler, “What It Is – Is Swamp Music – Is What It Is” *Billboard*, December 1969. In 1965, according to Lenny Kaye, “speaker technology was still in the primitive stages.” Lenny Kaye, “To Live Outside the Law You Must Be Honest,” *Creem*, June 1971.

<sup>59</sup> Mark Williams, “Country Joe: Fish Head,” *International Times*, April 11, 1969; Chris Welch, “Deep Purple: The Smashing-Up Bit Is Valid!” *Melody Maker*, September 26, 1970. Outdoor festivals required larger systems: promoters of the Isle of Wight in 1969 used a 2000-watt PA. Miles, “Bob Dylan, The Band: Isle of Wight Festival,” *International Times*, September 12, 1969. According to this tongue-in-cheek report, the Wight festival PA system “enabled the music to be heard not only by the festival visitors but also by the men in Parkhurst jail and the monks in Quarr Monastery who hadn't heard music since the war.” See also, John Tobler, “Steve Tilston's *An Acoustic Confusion*” *ZigZag*, 1971: “There is something very satisfying about listening to live music in small smoke-filled rooms. It creates an intimacy between artist and audience that cannot exist when listening to a postage stamp image coming through a two thousand watt p.a.”

<sup>60</sup> Palmer, *All You Need is Love*.



simple: better equipment made it possible to play to larger crowds, larger crowds meant more money. There was an impetus to develop bigger and better speakers and amplifiers for on-stage use, and these more powerful amplifiers made new sounds possible: Led Zeppelin couldn't have existed in 1965.”<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note how Grossman singles out Led Zeppelin, the purported originators of heavy metal and arena rock.<sup>62</sup> When that band performed in San Francisco's Kezar Stadium, the 1973 concert which opened this chapter, “It was reported that the band could be heard up to a half-mile away.”<sup>63</sup> When Led Zeppelin singer Robert Plant said that the band used a system larger than Woodstock, he was probably right, which says much about the growth of speaker technology and usage for arena concerts between 1970 and 1973.

Of course, many chroniclers of popular music history have commented on the growth of the speaker systems in rock, and have placed an emphasis on the relationship between high amplitude and heavy metal. Robert Duncan wrote of extreme amplitude that, “*loudest* is not only the best and most important part of the heavy metal style, loudest is also why this style was so suited to the cavernous, sound-devouring arena and so to the economy of scale that would be the linchpin of mass production rock 'n' roll.”<sup>64</sup> Irrefutable are Duncan's connection between amplitude and heavy metal style, and his fusion of sound with stadiums and economics. I suggest that performers outside of heavy metal –

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<sup>61</sup> Loyd Grossman, *A Social History of Rock Music: From the Greasers to Glitter Rock* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1976): 124.

<sup>62</sup> Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 21.

<sup>63</sup> Huddleston, “Led Zeppelin: Kezar Stadium.”

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Waksman, *Summer of Love*, 21.

such as the Grateful Dead – likewise ratcheted up amplitude and wattage around 1970. As stadiums became the standard mode of rock concertizing, every performer who played in large venues projected through similarly updated speakers, from Led Zeppelin to pop stars such as the Osmonds. Heavy metal has no exclusive claim on large speakers: *Loudest* was an aspiration across the board.



*Illustration 3.3: Wall of Sound schematic layout (1973).*

Yet, in their desire to improve their sound, Grateful Dead produced one of the most *visually* distinctive speaker set-ups ever devised. Its schematic design, at least the design implemented to the delight of “deadmnkj” at Kezar Stadium in May 1973, was published on November 8, 1973 in *Rolling Stone* magazine (Illustration 3.3). The remarkable Wall of Sound produced a combined 26,400

watts of total audio power, achieved through eighty-nine 300-watt solid-state and three 350-watt vacuum tube amplifiers. (For reference, the Isle of Wight PA system in 1969 rated 2000 watts.) More electrical power does not only translate into higher amplitude; it also leads to better sound fidelity, less signal loss, and a longer life-span when used properly. Yet, the Wall of Sound lends credibility to the claim that “*Loudest*” was an aspiration across the board.<sup>65</sup> The Grateful Dead’s participation in this continual escalation of concert technology aligns them with Led Zeppelin and other musicians who refused to settle for less than the industry maximum, and beyond amplitude it enhanced the aesthetics of their concerts in terms of the spatialization of sound, signal clarity, and visual affect.

The Wall of Sound was designed to spatialize sound. Each stack of speakers was assigned to an individual instrument. Two stacks of eighteen speakers each were assigned to bassist Phil Lesh, who – along with his technicians – creatively wired the system to allow him to send the signal from each of his instrument’s four strings to one quadrant of the two stacks assigned to him (thirty-six speakers total). This spatialization required a further design change in his instrument. As Lesh explained, “It [the Wall] has lots of different filters on it and the capability of switching from one kind of sound—like, the same sound coming from all speakers—to one string coming from half of one of these

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<sup>65</sup> In one view, it was technologies driving genres, not the other way around: “Evolutions in outward style and technology, spanning rockabilly to surf to folk-rock to hard rock to metal music, have affected the music more than any intrinsic changes.” Metal Mike Saunders, “Brinsley Schwarz’ Amazing Twelve Inches,” *Phonograph Record*, November 1972; “Each tour, it seemed, their commitment to better, cleaner (*and* louder) sound became more apparent,” Jackson, *Grateful Dead Gear*, 114; the Dead even used Mac 3500 high-grade speakers, the same model used to test U.S. Department of the Navy sonar systems, *Ibid.*, 123.

stacks.”<sup>66</sup> After this brief explanation, Lesh gestures with his swirling hands to communicate both the Wall's remarkable aural effects and to indicate his own momentary inability to convey this affect verbally. In the words of Dead historian Blair Jackson, “For chords and for special effects it [the Wall] was absolutely glorious.”<sup>67</sup>

In addition to spatializing sound, one of the main achievements of the Wall of Sound was its verticality, which offered the dual advantage of signal clarity as it towered over audiences. The advantage worked on a principle the designers called the “as above, so below” paradigm. Rather than sending all the instrument signals through a few very large speakers, which would over-tax the speaker, the Wall designers stacked multiple speakers of either 11” or 13” in diameter, two sizes available to home stereo systems everywhere. The signal from each instrument was sent to each speaker from top to bottom in the stack assigned to it. Designer Dan Healy explains the principle behind the nickname: “If you stack a bunch of speakers vertically and stand close to one, you hear the volume of that one speaker. If you move a little farther away, you hear two speakers; move away some more and you hear three. If you have a lot of them stacked up high, you can move quite a ways away and the volume stays the same.”<sup>68</sup> With this design, Healy and the Dead conquered the physics of concert spaces, notorious for their

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<sup>66</sup> Edward Washington, Jerry Garcia, Leon Gast, Bill Graham, *The Grateful Dead Movie* (Monterey, CA: Monterey Media, 2004), DVD. Also found online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQvGSzi9bi0>, accessed June 6, 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Jackson, *Grateful Dead Gear*, 141.

<sup>68</sup> David Gans, “The Grateful Dead: A Continual Development of Concert Sound System Design for Twenty Years,” *Recording Engineer*, June 1983, 98. For a much more technical discussion of the Wall of Sound, see Marc Silag, “The Grateful Dead's P.A.” *Musician Player and Listener*, September–October 1981, 72.

poor acoustic design, and they minimized the loss of intimacy with very large venues by not only increasing the amplitude but also the quality of their sound. Additionally, since the Wall was set up behind the players, the system pushed them toward synchronized playing.<sup>69</sup> Finally, the larger conception of the Wall was supposed to eliminate feedback altogether.<sup>70</sup> All of these contributed to the aesthetic enhancement of Grateful Dead concerts.

The final advantage of the Wall of Sound, resulting from the system's sheer verticality, is visual—and arguably psychological—rather than aural. The thirty-six speakers assigned to Phil Lesh's bass were each fifteen inches in diameter, resulting in two stacks over 22.5 feet (6.8 meters) high. Today, Dead fans recall the Wall rose “up like the skyline of a small city with its towering stacks of speakers.”<sup>71</sup> Like skyscrapers, the stacks of speakers create what theorists of space call *phallocratic space*.<sup>72</sup> Coined by Henri Lefebvre, the term describes the relationship between persons and the verticality built around them. Lefebvre was particularly interested in architectural environments and the vectors of power that inhere in them. In the context of urban residences, Lefebvre argued that “the [great] size or façade of an apartment building substitute[s] for the pitiful

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<sup>69</sup> Evidently, the system was not successful from every perspective: drummer Bill Kreutzmann reported that “You were supposed to have monitors that were going to help—ha-ha-ha. It was not my favorite time. They had done the phase-canceling microphones, and those sounded terrible. Things can look good on paper but not be so great in reality.” Jackson, *Grateful Dead Gear*, 147.

<sup>70</sup> The principle is much the same as today's noise-canceling headphones promoted by companies like Bose.

<sup>71</sup> “Wall of Sound,” accessed June 6, 2011, [http://obie1.homesite.net/deadcd/wall\\_of\\_sound.htm](http://obie1.homesite.net/deadcd/wall_of_sound.htm).

<sup>72</sup> For a fascinating introduction to how phallocratic space has been used in literature studies, see Roxanne Mountford, “On Gender and Rhetorical Space,” *Rhetorical Society Quarterly* 31 (2001): 42–8.

'pathetically small size' of each person's living quarters."<sup>73</sup> In the semiotic web, the resident suffers the phallocratic power of verticality when she recognizes her own window among the multitudes; the body is transported out of itself, "transferred and emptied out, as it were, via the eyes: every kind of appeal, incitement and seduction is mobilized to tempt them with doubles of themselves."<sup>74</sup> Lefebvre's argument can be a model for analyzing the Grateful Dead's stacked speaker configuration. These tall stacks of individual speakers induce a process of metonymy in the viewer, of scanning from part to whole to assess the Wall. Individual fifteen-inch speakers like Lesh's would have been familiar to many Dead fans, in a domestic setting and in much smaller quantities. Such home speakers, although no smaller than any individual Wall of Sound component, might seem "pathetically small" to the viewer when compared to the towering professional model. Grateful Dead concert stages from this period, then, seem to be shot through with visual theater, with its effects based on vertical and phallocratic power in much the way that Lefebvre suggests. Tall speaker stacks, afforded by ceaseless touring, towered over audiences and enhanced the aural aesthetics of rock performance, calling attention to the economic power required to construct such a prop.

## § Conclusion

Grateful Dead are remembered for their dedication to rock improvisation and for what Nadya Zimmerman called their "anti-commercialism." In this

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<sup>73</sup> Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love & Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (New York: Routledge, 1998): 79.

<sup>74</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991): 98.

chapter I have argued that their history of materialism and performance in the early 1970s represents evidence to the contrary, and evinces hallmarks of the burgeoning Arena Rock industry: commercialism, predictability, and extra-musical props. The evidence presented has been limited to the development of the Wall of Sound and to performances of their country-shuffle “Truckin’” between 1970 and 1973, and does not indicate that the band shifted wholesale away from the improvisatory, counter-cultural ethos toward routine processes. The isolation of a routine, however, demonstrates how Grateful Dead “participated” without “belonging” in a Derridean way to the Arena Rock genre, and it raises questions about the nature of rock performance after the industry transitioned into large venues and a new economy of scale.<sup>75</sup> For instance, how would young arena rock fans in the 1970s, who observed only fading linkages with the psychedelic movement, make meaning of the spectacle, routine, and high commercialism?

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<sup>75</sup> Jacques Derrida, “The Law of Genre,” trans. Avital Ronell, *Glyph* 7 (1980): 202–13.

## Chapter Four

### The Festival is Dead, Long Live the “Festival”

“I knew the 60's were over when Bambú started putting the universal price code (UPC) on packages of rolling papers.”  
 –Anonymous respondent, from *Woodstock Census: The Nationwide Survey of the Sixties Generation*

#### § Introduction

What became of American rock festivals after the year 1969? For many observers at the time, the passing of the decade seemed to coincide with the sudden demise of the festival industry. Only four months after the landmark Woodstock gathering, the industry hit its nadir when a concert on December 9 in Altamont, California – which gathered some 300,000 spectators – was tarnished by a tragic homicide, the most conspicuous evidence of the concurrence of festivals and social impropriety. Altamont provoked nationwide shock from the public and the press. Critics immediately pronounced the rock festival industry



moribund and declared the “death of innocence in the Woodstock nation.”<sup>1</sup>

Sutured to the end of the 1960s, Altamont also came to represent for rock chroniclers the final installment in a triumvirate of counter-cultural rock events that originated at the Monterey (California) Pop Festival in June 1967 and peaked with Woodstock; in short, “Altamont was hailed as the end of the counterculture.”<sup>2</sup> However, few festival promoters believed these to be other than spurious claims, and their productions in the 1970s demonstrate that rock festivals continued apace after Altamont. But the real question is how these promoters responded to the changing legal system set in motion by the most egregious breaches of festival security. As state and local governments enacted legislation that rendered festivals increasingly difficult to execute without certain assurances – such as maximum crowd size, which rural events could not provide – promoters nevertheless persisted, and the most enterprising of them found success in adjusting the duration and location of rock festivals.

Although the most storied American rock festivals date from between 1967–69, those of the 1970s are no less important to the history of the industry, as they reveal how promoters navigated through a new field of public security measures (“Woodstock laws”), advanced idiosyncratic techniques for minimizing

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Eisen, *Altamont: Death of Innocence in the Woodstock Nation* (New York: Avon Books, 1970): 25.

<sup>2</sup> John Morthland, “Rock Festivals,” in *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock and Roll*, ed. Anthony DeCurtis and James Henke (New York: Random House, 1992): 476. The scholar Thomas Kitts recently demonstrated how three festivals-turned-major motion pictures (*Monterey Pop*, *Woodstock*, and *Gimme Shelter*) “illustrate how myths in the postmodern age are created, propagated, dissolved, and then perpetuated.” However, by envisioning these films as a trilogy, Kitts merely re-inscribes the mythological birth-apex-nadir trajectory of these festivals, and seems to foreclose on other interpretations of festival history, including those that incorporate events from after Altamont. Thomas M. Kitts, “Documenting, Creating, and Interpreting Moments of Definition: *Monterey Pop*, *Woodstock*, and *Gimme Shelter*,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 42 (2009): 730.

breaches of security, truncated their events from three days in length to one, and ultimately relocated these “festivals” to urban stadiums, where the distinction from Arena Rock effectively vanished.

### **§ Context: 1969 Festivals and Security**

Rock festival promoters in 1970 labored in an industry context dominated by two contrasting stories of the previous year, Woodstock and Altamont. Despite their superficial differences, these two events actually prompted similar reactions on the common front of maintaining festival security.<sup>3</sup>

As discussed in Chapter Two, rock and roll crowds had challenged security forces virtually from the inception of the genre in the middle 1950s, and in the 1960s, teenaged fans of the Beatles especially caused disturbances wherever they followed the band. Many of these fans displayed this behavior in American stadiums in groups as large as fifty thousand, but none would observe their Beatles during a rock festival, where crowds easily quadrupled that total. If large stadium crowds posed a security risk, then festival crowds arguably posed a greater challenge, and placed greater demands on promoters for basic resources such as food and drink, sanitation, and security. The year 1968 in particular brought attention to the question of how to gather large crowds while maintaining security.

Two rock events of 1969, Woodstock and Altamont, highlighted the

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<sup>3</sup> Security is a common theme in the relevant festival literature, which includes Robert Spitz, *Barefoot in Babylon: The Creation of the Woodstock Music Festival, 1969* (New York: Viking Press, 1979), Robert Santelli, *Aquarius Rising: The Rock Festival Years* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), and Marley Brant, *Join Together: Forty Years of the Rock Music Festival* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2008).

continuing primacy of festival security. Woodstock did so because major press reports indicated that its participants were surprisingly well-behaved. In the months leading up to the rural festival, many predicted a huge crowd but few anticipated that Woodstock would entirely live up to its slogan “three days of peace and music,” and some writers predicted that unbridled energy would get the better of the audience. For example, the *New York Times* warned that the festival would collapse under social chaos and insufficient security.<sup>4</sup> This warning missed for several reasons. The chief of Woodstock security designed a strategy for minimizing crowd unrest that relied more on self-policing than on state or federal security officers.<sup>5</sup> Some believed that the absence of unrest was attributable to the elevated level of experience that the Woodstock audience had with similar situations: the critic Tom Smucker wrote that “the crowd knew how to function as a very large crowd not only because of experiences as rock concerts but also because of experiences at marches and demonstrations.”<sup>6</sup> The festival schedule itself included activities between sets, such as yoga routines that attracted roughly sixty percent of the massive crowd.<sup>7</sup> Instead of riots, the Woodstock audience

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<sup>4</sup> Simon Warner, “Reporting Woodstock: Some Contemporary Press Reflections of the Festival,” in *Remembering Woodstock*, ed. Andy Bennett (Burlington, VT: Ashgate): 57.

<sup>5</sup> Weeks before the festival, the chief Wesley Pomeroy told the *Times* that he lacked official support: “I don’t have security people at all. I’ve been struck. We’re having the biggest collection of kids there’s ever been in this country without any police protection.” Quoted in Warner, 57. But Pomeroy, a U.S. Department of Justice official, continued with a progressive approach to his task, stating that, “What we need to do is be more advocates with the people.” Attempting to downplay the law-and-order posture normally associated with police, Pomeroy established a “*Please Force*” rather than a police force, helping the crowd and promoters to maintain security. Joel Makower, *Woodstock: The Oral History* (New York: Doubleday, 1989): 61–4. Interestingly, Pomeroy had organized the security for both Republican and Democratic national conventions of 1968, and later provided security for Led Zeppelin.

<sup>6</sup> Warner, “Reporting Woodstock,” 71.

<sup>7</sup> The uniformity of this action surprised one participant: “In China, it’s not unusual. But in America, that was a very, very unusual sight because we’re all individuals and we don’t do

produced a calmer sense of conspiracy, a sense of calm that was rewarded by the 600-acre festival site landowner, Max Yasgur.<sup>8</sup> For these reasons, Woodstock was and continues to be perceived as a primarily peaceful affair.

However, the peace of Woodstock has been somewhat romanticized and the truth of its social unrest has been downplayed. In one case, the unrest manifested itself as a simple bypassing of the mechanisms of capitalism without damage to property. Fans awaiting admission grew impatient with the sluggish pace of exchange at the Woodstock box office, an inefficiency that prompted some to enter the site without paying.<sup>9</sup> Thousands of fans either knocked down the temporary perimeter fences or arrived before that structure was fully completed, since fencing was among the Woodstock promoters' last considerations. To his chagrin, one promoter said, "Sometimes people would walk in and the fence would go right after them. They'd walk right through and—*ta da*—a fence was put there."<sup>10</sup> Other manifestations of social unrest at Woodstock were more dangerous. One of the first to write about the unrest was the activist and co-founder of the Youth International Party (YIP), Abbie Hoffman. At the time of Woodstock, Hoffman was familiar with social unrest, having been arrested and tried for his role in the demonstrations and confrontations outside the 1968

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those kinds of things." Makower, *Woodstock: The Oral History*, 244–45.

<sup>8</sup> In his farewell speech to the festival crowd, Yasgur thanked the fans for their civility over the weekend. He said, "the important thing that you've proven to the world is that a half a million kids – and I call you kids because I have children that are older than you are – a half million young people can get together and have three days of fun and music and have nothing but fun and music." Michael Wadleigh, and Bob Maurice, *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music* (Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1997), DVD.

<sup>9</sup> Scheduled to commence on Friday, August 15, Woodstock had already attracted some 25,000 fans by Wednesday. When additional attendees arrived with greater consistency closer to opening night, the site was swamped with youths eager to approach the performance area.

<sup>10</sup> Makower, *Woodstock: The Oral History*, 178.

Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The unrest that Hoffman witnessed at Woodstock also revolved around economic issues. He wrote of some perceived profiteering that, “Two of those concession stands at Woodstock got burned to the ground, locals who wanted to make a killing selling apples for fifty cents got ripped off good.”<sup>11</sup> These two instances help make the case that Woodstock's “three days of peace and music” was slightly misleading. The intersection of festival security and economics will be addressed in the next section.

If Woodstock was primarily received as a peaceful festival, the Altamont Free Concert of December 6, 1969 has been positioned as its polar opposite. To be sure, the two festivals share common traits, as Reebee Garofalo points out, but the process of canonization has accentuated their differences.<sup>12</sup> Today, Altamont represents the endpoint of early rock festivals, ranks among the most durable of rock and roll myths, and its valedictory character derives predominantly from the brutalization and grisly homicide perpetrated by the security force, the Hell's Angels motorcycle club, famously captured in the documentary film *Gimme Shelter*.<sup>13</sup> To some critics, these unsavory acts spelled the end of rock festivals,

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<sup>11</sup> Abbie Hoffman, *Woodstock Nation: A Talk-Rock Album* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969): 98.

<sup>12</sup> Garofalo writes that “There are, in fact, a lot more similarities between Woodstock and Altamont than it is comfortable to remember—an audience numbering in the hundreds of thousands, inadequate food, water, and toilets, shifting sites at the last minutes, traffic jams, equal numbers of deaths and births.” Reebee Garofalo, *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the U.S.A.* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002): 197. Altamont was not unique: motorcycle gangs “guarded” other festivals including Atlanta Pop and the Great Easter Rock Festival.

<sup>13</sup> The title of the film was taken from a song of the same name written and performed by the Rolling Stones, the band that organized the Altamont Free Concert. Since they planned and headlined Altamont, newspapers were quick to note the band's penchant for dark or violent lyrics (e.g., “Rape/murder!/it's just a shot away” in “Gimme Shelter”). Critics chastised the Stones for having hired a motorcycle gang to provide security, and insinuated that the band deserved their comeuppance. Five weeks after Altamont, one *New York Times* reader suggested to the editor that Mick Jagger was culpable of negligence and “out to lunch” when he hired the

the “crashing down” of the Woodstock generation.<sup>14</sup> “After the debacle of Altamont,” as one representative summary goes, “and the evaporation of the political energy that produced the Chicago riots of '68 and the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, the bubble of rock and youth culture burst.”<sup>15</sup> That Altamont is located mid-way between the actual demise on “the day the music died” in 1959 and the figurative death on “disco demolition night” in 1979 is more than a chronological convenience, because actual and symbolic deaths coincide with the term “Altamont.”<sup>16</sup> The event is rightfully remembered as a focus of security

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Angels, while another reader suggested that arguments currently in circulation were “mixed up in defending Jagger,” the high-profile artist, instead of searching the root of the problem. Activist Carl Oglesby said that the Rolling Stones’s “bluff was called,” identifying Jagger’s flamboyant mannerisms and the band’s practice of charging high ticket prices as the source of resentment. With the Hells Angels at their side, the Rolling Stones appeared deservedly at the heart of a serious legal problem. Technically, since the motorcycle gangster brought to trial was acquitted, Hunter’s death was considered a justifiable (self-defense) homicide, rather than a murder. In contrast, the writer Kandia Crazy Horse has recently insisted on calling attention to the tragedy with inflammatory rhetoric: “Meredith Hunter was murdered by racist savages at Altamont Speedway.” From “Another Badass Blue-Gum White Man: Essays Honoring Stanley Booth On The Occasion Of His 60th Birthday.” *Rock’s Backpages*, January 2002.

<sup>14</sup> For the most succinct summary of the Altamont Free Concert, see Garofalo, *Rockin’ Out*, 197–98. Altamont is clearly entrenched as an endpoint for many writers. One recent study positions Altamont as the “the Hippie Apocalypse,” suggesting that its reception as an end-point remains strong. Rob Kirkpatrick, *1969: The Year Everything Changed* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2009). And although Reebee Garofalo would contest the claim that Altamont was the definitive end of the counterculture, he nevertheless headlines his discussion of early rock festivals, “Woodstock and Altamont: Reaching the Heights, Taking the Fall,” in *Rockin’ Out* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002): 193. This chapter pursues the leads presented by John Morthland, who wrote that, “After Altamont there were few successful rock festivals, though there were many attempts, including some that were downright fanciful.” Morthland, “Rock Festivals,” 476.

<sup>15</sup> Mick Gold, “The Band: A Tree With Roots,” *Let It Rock*, April 1974.

<sup>16</sup> On February 3, 1959, three of rock and roll’s early icons perished in an airplane crash, a demise eulogized since late 1971 as “the day the music died.” In 1979 Chicago disc jockey Steve Dahl anxiously attempted to “kill” disco along with the gay, black, and Latino subcultures it was seen to represent by publicly exploding representative LP records, an event Dahl was proud to call “disco demolition night”; Finally, a more recent fatality provides a potent reminder of Altamont’s position in rock’s death mythology. Guitarist Jeff Buckley was found dead in Spring 1997, a rising star by all accounts who had been enjoying the critical acclaim of his first and only full-length album. Oliver Lovesey writes that when “Buckley’s drowned body was recovered from the Wolf River after days of frantic searching, he was unrecognisable. He was identified partly by the Altamont T-shirt he was wearing, thereby recalling the Rolling Stones’ concert since widely mythologised as the note of doom ending a decade of peace and love,

questions.

Yet, the canonized image of an Altamont endpoint bears little resemblance to the contemporaneous response. In early 1970, mainstream newspaper critics reported on the verifiable facts of the matter, including the homicide, estimated attendance, and festival sponsors; the *New York Times* followed the litigation involving the Rolling Stones and the canister of film that contained the homicidal scene. Meanwhile, *Rolling Stone* magazine offered in January 1970 its first reports of Altamont in an extensive article entitled “Let it Bleed,” which provided eyewitness accounts of the homicide, and commented equally on the Rolling Stones and on the future of rock festivals.<sup>17</sup> Reader response to this sensational article was decidedly mixed. Some of those whose response was printed in a subsequent issue lauded the magazine editors and praised the in-depth coverage of “Let it Bleed” as “one of the best pieces of pop journalism,” “the best job of total reporting . . . seen anywhere in the Sixties.” Other readers were incensed, upset at those “Trying to figure out who to put the blame on” and off-put by “the wonderful assassination of the Rolling Stones and company.”<sup>18</sup> Beyond this *Rolling Stone* forum, the mainstream newspaper reportage, and letters to editors in both cases, there appeared to be “precious little reaction, or even mention of the event in the national media” up to February 1970.<sup>19</sup> The security problems of

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rock and recreation” see Oliver Lovesey, “Anti-Orpheus: Narrating the Dream Brother,” *Popular Music* 23 (2004): 337.

<sup>17</sup> Like the film *Gimme Shelter*, the title of this article was taken from a song of the same name written and performed by the Rolling Stones. “Let it Bleed,” *Rolling Stone*, January 21, 1970. At the time, *Rolling Stone* circulated fairly widely, as the largest popular culture magazine with a circulation in 1970 on the order of 500,000.

<sup>18</sup> “Letters to the Editor,” *Rolling Stone*, February 7, 1970.

<sup>19</sup> Eisen, *Altamont*, 25.

Altamont provoked alarm and mixed responses, but nothing suggesting that the festival industry was in steep decline.

As Altamont headlines circulated, professional musicians opined on the future of rock festivals. These musicians' best interests were served by learning from examples from within the industry, since they staked their own reputations with each performance. With Altamont in recent memory, a few professional and seasoned performers offered their calm, level-headed response to the state of popular music performance. Musicians far from Altamont's epicenter offered comments; trombonist James Pankow of the band Chicago, for one, voiced his opinions to the *Georgia Straight* in April 1970. Pankow spoke frankly in this context, since he and his band were far removed from the litigation surrounding Altamont, initially offering a bland comment on the state of social unrest at rock festivals, saying that "the younger generation's not happy with the way the older generation's running the country." But when pressed on the issue of Altamont, he maintained a broad perspective on the concert industry, stating that "Well, you can't judge them all by one or a couple."<sup>20</sup> Pankow, at least, was prepared to reserve judgment on the state of rock festivals *even if* a grim scene like Altamont was repeated.

Artists much closer to Altamont offered similarly level-headed evaluations. The Grateful Dead were among the closest to the debacle, because they were scheduled to perform (but withdrew upon arrival at the scene), and their

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<sup>20</sup> Rick McGrath and Mike Quigley, "Chicago: Another Interview with Jimmy Pankow," *The Georgia Straight*, April 1970.



manager had steered the Rolling Stones toward associating with Hells Angels.<sup>21</sup> The band's de facto spokesman, guitarist Jerry Garcia, indicated nine months after the event that the band had learned from Altamont, using the event to inform their future concert preparations. He said that “Altamont taught us to be more cautious, to realize and respect the boundaries of our power and our space.”<sup>22</sup> Garcia may have given an especially careful response to the interviewer's question, given his close relationship to the event and to the Rolling Stones.<sup>23</sup> Even if his response was professionally diplomatic, his comment sounds responsible, as if Garcia is looking forward rather than over his shoulder. The comments of Garcia and Pankow suggest that Altamont was certainly remarkable and regrettable, but also that it presented a learning experience for the industry to be understood in a much larger context, rather than as the fiasco to end an era.

In combination, then, Woodstock and Altamont basically represented contradictory examples of festival security worthy of a moment's reflection, an image that extended beyond America's territorial borders into Canada. Editors of Canada's leading Anglophone newspaper, *the Globe and Mail*, clarified their view of the problem in June 1970: “The pop festival, that mystical, orgiastic phenomenon of our time, seems to have arrived at the critical point which will

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<sup>21</sup> The Dead were scheduled to play just before—and then, as the line-up was scrambled, just after—the Stones but did not perform. When they arrived the situation the crowd was already terribly chaotic. This scene is captured in *Gimme Shelter*, the Dead's cameo appearance in the film.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Lydon, “An Evening with the Grateful Dead,” *Rolling Stone*, September 27, 1970.

<sup>23</sup> Linda Martin and Kerry Segrave extend this idea, writing that, “One has to wonder if the music wasn't an easy scapegoat for Garcia to nail, however. Some sources said it was the Grateful Dead who okayed the idea of hiring the Angels in the first place.” Martin and Segrave, *Anti-Rock: The Opposition to Rock and Roll* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993): 140.

determine whether it survives or vanishes. Will society quietly throttle it by making it unwelcome, and thus dispose of an event which has demonstrated its potential for danger? Or will we accept it as inevitable and devise ways of accommodating it?"<sup>24</sup> Clearly responding to a crossroads produced in America, the *Globe* offered this editorial not in vain but in anticipation of the Festival Express, an innovative musical performance venture traveling across Canada by locomotive to three major cities: Toronto, Winnipeg, and Calgary.<sup>25</sup> Inside the train were darlings of the music industry and the counterculture, including the Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, Buddy Guy, and the Band. The "orgiastic" tendencies of festival audiences showed themselves during the first and last of these three stops: some 2,500 protesters outside the Canadian National Exhibition Stadium in Toronto marred that concert by attempting to crash the stadium gates and scale the barbed wire fence, and one week later, protesters in Calgary similarly inveighed against Festival Express promoters for what they considered price-gouging, insisting that rock concert admission ought instead to be handed over *gratis*. Stunningly, when Calgary mayor Rod Sykes suggested to Festival Express promoter Ken Walker that he, Walker, grant protesters outside McMahon Stadium free admission, the promoter is alleged to have punched Mayor Sykes in the mouth.<sup>26</sup>

The Festival Express, Altamont, and Woodstock all sustained a form of

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<sup>24</sup> Editorial, "Accommodating Pop Festivals," *The Globe and Mail*, June 12, 1970.

<sup>25</sup> Although Montreal and Vancouver were part of the original plan, both were later dropped.

<sup>26</sup> Walker recalled that after refusing to admit Calgarians for free, Mayor Sykes called him an "Eastern scum and a capitalist son of a bitch," the comment which provoked Walker's assault. See Gavin Poolman and John Trapman, *Festival Express*, directed by Bob Smeaton (Los Angeles: MGM Home Entertainment, 2004).

security setback, and set in high relief the disparity between festival culture and mainstream institutions. To be sure, counter-cultural crowds held views toward illicit drugs and sexual promiscuity with which mainstream residents were generally unsympathetic. But, as Abbie Hoffman suggested, the social unrest at festivals could expose the contradictory worldviews *within* the industry, between the countercultural ethos and the imperatives of capitalists. Fans at Woodstock demonstrated that profiteering concert promoters would have to weigh seriously the force that such temporary communities represented. At that rural site, impatient fans easily jumped or destroyed the weak and impermanent fencing perimeters, a sidestep unavailable to protesters outside of the rigid exterior wall at McMahon Stadium in Calgary, suggesting that stadiums themselves may provide a form of security, and in the long run help promoters retain greater profits. Perhaps more visibly than the others, the crisis in Calgary dramatized the growing perception of clashes within the social space of festivals, between promoters and their anti-capitalist customers calling for “free music.”

### § “Free Music”

The security problems facing festival promoters originated, in a sense, with economics and the growing demands for “free music.” A closer look at the origins and applications of this term will provide clues into the forces that compelled festival promoters of the 1970s to adjust the duration and location of their events.

“Free music” was a politically-motivated battle cry of disaffected American youths in the 1960s. These persons tended to abhor the inequities of

high capitalism, to hold dovish views toward American intervention, and to distrust the American two-party political system. Insofar as they were able, these persons agitated for a complex assortment of corrections to the world around them, including the prospect of free rock concerts, in the hopes that their actions would effect consequential change to existing mentalities and power structures.

The concept of “free music” took flight in August 1968 during the Festival of Life in Chicago. During that season, as the festival historian Robert Santelli notes, “young people with activist blood in them forgot about rock festivals for the summer.”<sup>27</sup> The Festival of Life was organized by Abbie Hoffman's Youth International Party in opposition to the Democratic National Convention. More than a simple demonstration, the Festival of Life was advertised to be a music festival, one “that would rival or even eclipse Monterey Pop.”<sup>28</sup> “Join us in Chicago in August,” the festival advertisements read,

for an international festival of youth music and theater. Rise up and abandon the creeping meatball! Come all you rebels, youth spirits, rock minstrels, truth seekers, peacock freaks, poets, barricade jumpers, dancers, lovers and artists. It is summer. It is the last week of August and the NATIONAL DEATH PARTY meets to bless Johnson. We are there! There are 500,000 of us dancing in the streets, throbbing with amplifiers and harmony. We are making love in the parks. We are reading, singing, laughing, printing newspapers, groping and making a mock convention and celebrating the birth of a FREE AMERICA in our own time.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 65.

<sup>28</sup> Don McLeese, *Kick Out the Jams* (New York: Continuum, 2005): 3. As activists gathered around the Democratic convention, the Festival of Life itself became a source of contention: critics within Chicago published premonitions of violence, and those from within the counter-cultural epicenter of San Francisco deeply distrusted the newly-formed “Yippies.” In one participant's view, the metaphorical writing was on the wall in the weeks leading up to the event: “The message was clear. Chicago was a rough town. The Yippies were hucksters. Those who followed them were dupes.”

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

The rock musicians most strongly associated with promoting the discourse of “free music” was a band that performed at Hoffman's Festival of Life, the MC5 (the “Motor City” Five).<sup>30</sup> A rock quintet from Detroit, Michigan, MC5 shared their strong anti-establishment inclinations with David Sinclair, leader of the White Panther Party, who had managed the band virtually from their inception. Along with the release of their first album, the “guerilla” rock group MC5 elected Sinclair to write their liner notes, and to explain their politics of noise.<sup>31</sup> One segment of Sinclair's notes highlights MC5's drive to use their music to galvanize communities in pursuit of a different economics: “The MC5 is the source and effect of the music, just as you are. Just as i am. Just to hear the music and have it be ourselves is what we want . . . WE are a lonely desperate people pulled apart by the killer forces of capitalism, and competition and we need the music to hold us together. Separation is doom.”<sup>32</sup>

Aspects of the MC5's enthusiasm for “free music” was shared by more celebrated rock musicians of the day. The British heavy metal group Deep Purple was generally sympathetic with MC5's rebellious ethos, but remained unresolved on the issue of how professional musicians should be remunerated. The band's organist, Jon Lord, suggested that he agreed in principle with “free music” in

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<sup>30</sup> The best examples of MC5 literature at this time are McLeese, *Kick Out the Jams*; Steve Waksman, “Kick Out the Jams: MC5 and the Politics of Noise” in *Instruments of Desire*, 207–36; and Brent Callwood, *MC5 Sonically Speaking: A Tale of Revolution and Rock 'n' Roll* (Detroit: Painted Turtle, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> “The MC5 will make you feel it,” Sinclair wrote, “or leave the room. The MC5 will drive you crazy out of your head and into your body. The MC5 is rock and roll. Rock and roll is the music of our bodies, of our whole lives. . . . We are free men, and we demand a free music, a free high energy source that will drive us wild into the streets of America yelling and screaming and tearing down everything that would keep people slaves.” Mike Jahn, “MC5 Brings Back Body Rock To Overthrow The Country,” *Pop Scene Service*, March 24, 1969.

<sup>32</sup> Dave Marsh, “MC5 Back On Shakin' Street,” *Creem*, October 1971.

pursuit of community formation, stating that, “The only objection I have to playing free are the obvious ones in as much as we are professionals who have a right to be paid for our work.” Lord held that moderation was crucial for performers and promoters in the enabling of free concerts. “I’m against the excessive fees,” he said, “which some artists seem to collect and equally against the excessive charges made to some audiences for admission – this is primarily responsible for the movement towards free music. But if both sides kept a sense of proportion there would be no real difficulty.”<sup>33</sup> In Lord’s considered opinion, “free music” was an ethical issue in which musicians, promoters, and audiences were equally implicated.

Like Jon Lord and MC5, guitarist Jimi Hendrix openly discussed the issue of “free” concerts, and seemed agreeable to playing such events. During his final interview before his untimely death in September 1970, Hendrix essentially concurred with Jon Lord, suggesting that professional musicians would be more likely to perform *pro bono* provided that the bills for venue rental, transportation, and lodging were paid.<sup>34</sup> Other musicians entertained the prospect of “free music,” but, like Hendrix, suggested that a hurdle lay with satisfying the avaricious record

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<sup>33</sup> Keith Altham, “Deep Purple: Rock Is Where We’re At,” *Record Mirror*, October 3, 1970.

<sup>34</sup> “We should be able to [play free concerts],” Hendrix said, “there’s no reason why we shouldn’t. We should only collect enough as where we can pay the expenses from the last town to the next town, you know, do one of them kind of things. Because we have time, you know, this, there’s no big rush. We’ll see, sometimes the music people, I mean that’s the other end of the business, you know, they put you into these big rush things as of where you don’t get a chance to even reply to all that. But we could do, there’s no reason why we can’t do free concerts here. But like, we would, you know, we would get, we would blow a lot of money if we had to pay for everything, like the theater. If we can get enough money as of where we could like, um, have the, ah, the people, all together pay for the theater (laughs) and our fare and our hotel to er, you know, between, them are just expenses. That’s all they’ll have to pay, so the tickets would really drop down in price, so that’ll actually be free, it’d be a donation money.” Keith Altham, “Jimi Hendrix,” (unpublished interview transcript, September 11, 1970).

industry. One group to weigh in was Fleetwood Mac. When their leader and namesake Mick Fleetwood, was asked, “What do you think about the music scene,” he responded by saying “The record business is fucking up the whole scene. There should be more free music. I think the people are putting too much responsibility on the bands for charging too much. And it's got nothing to do with them.”<sup>35</sup> As he targets the record companies, Fleetwood also seems to suggest that promoters, rather than musicians, were mainly culpable for the exorbitant rates charged at rock concerts. Later in the interview, both Fleetwood and interviewer Rick McGrath took aim at Jethro Tull and Led Zeppelin for justifying their high ticket rates with allusions to their longevity in the system, seemingly disappointed by what to them looked like a money grab.

The statements from Fleetwood, Hendrix, Lord, and the MC5 suggest a shared general position on the status of “free music,” without regard to the specifics of location. Hendrix specifically mentions urban theaters, but Lord and Fleetwood avoided specifying either rural rock festivals or urban arena concerts when they weighed in. The two circuits are connected by economics and the artists and their populist audience who regularly alternated between them. Yet, if the two circuits were united in these ways, festivals clearly drew the larger crowds, and thus, the larger public outcry when issues such as “free music” precipitated breaches of security. In response to such breaches, rural communities and legislators “quietly throttled” the festival industry, in the words of *Globe and Mail* editors, by ratifying laws intended to increase their own security or, in some

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<sup>35</sup> Rick McGrath, “The Fleetwood Mac Interview,” *The Georgia Straight*, April 18, 1971.

cases, to prevent rock festivals outright, a batch of laws that threatened the viability of the festival industry under the collective name “Woodstock Laws.”

### § “Woodstock Laws”

Whether prompted by economic or political disaffection, the evidence of social unrest at rock festivals provoked public outcry and a heterogeneous rather than uniform alteration to the American legal system. These so-called “Woodstock laws” gained momentum after the turmoil of 1969, dominated the nationwide discourse, and jostled festival promoters for years.

By the time of Woodstock in August 1969, many Americans had come “to view the rock festival as a harbinger of moral collapse, drug addiction, and general social chaos.”<sup>36</sup> Socially conservative citizens and lawmakers fundamentally objected to such mass gatherings, and lobbied to prevent the spread of such chaotic conditions to their jurisdiction, a protectionist mentality later coined Not in My Back Yard (“NIMBY”). Although named for the most well-attended festival of the decade, “Woodstock laws” date from as early as 1967, when the Monterey Pop organizers began planning a second festival with the city council.<sup>37</sup>

Following conspicuous unrest at a number of rock festivals in 1969, the national attention paid to festival security increased swiftly. The earliest alarms

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<sup>36</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 188.

<sup>37</sup> The Monterey city council is reported to have placed the following demands on festival organizers: a local curfew to be enforced by police officers, time restraints on music, a costly insurance policy against false-arrest, religious service on Sunday morning, segregated campsites, and a donation to anti-narcotic program. The council and organizers later aborted such talks and plans. Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 63. The author points to similar cases predating Woodstock in Tampa, Atlantic City, and Orlando, where the legislature issued mass-gathering laws.



sounded during Newport '69, a three-day festival held in Costa Mesa, California that attracted 150,000 rock fans to hear the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Joe Cocker, and the Byrds. "Never before," writes festival historian Robert Santelli of Newport '69, "had rock festivals been subjected to large-scale gate-crashing. If anything, the violent eruption was a spontaneous reaction to the commercialism of the festival format."<sup>38</sup> Yet, festivals seemed to invite protest spurred by commercial dissatisfaction as well as violence. The Altamont Free Concert most clearly demonstrated this point, highlighted the problems of the countercultural nation, and fomented great discussion in chambers of legislation. The Altamont debacle understandably created uneasiness and prompted experienced festival organizers to take extra security precautions in the following season. One crew member at Atlanta Pop 1970, Bill Mankin, suggested that that festival was "very different" from his previous festivals, adding that Altamont "gave Byron an added, subtle, edge of dread . . . We just didn't know if it [the dark cloud] would appear or not."<sup>39</sup>

The "Altamont" discourse was awakened in August by conservative critics comparing the latest batch of festivals to Altamont and Woodstock. That month witnessed a spate of festivals nationwide, perhaps by virtue of Woodstock's first anniversary, and though many were successfully carried out, others were suppressed or forced to cancel by local authorities. In tiny Middlefield, Connecticut, the Powder Ridge Festival promoters expected only 30,000

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 90–91.

<sup>39</sup> Chatterton, "'Southern-Fried' Woodstock: The 1970 Atlanta Pop Festival," (master's thesis, Western Washington University, 2006): 36.

spectators (one-tenth the Altamont attendance), but local police and elected authorities intervened before the event could begin, placing an injunction against promoters and directing the power company to cut electricity to the site.<sup>40</sup>

Archconservative William Buckley responded by suggesting in his syndicated review that the cancellation of Powder Ridge was entirely appropriate since “the kids, and their detritus, spill out over the entire neighborhood and make life hell.”<sup>41</sup> He took great pleasure in ridiculing the youths who loitered after the cancellation, hoped that the decision would be reversed, and took drugs while they waited.<sup>42</sup> Buckley's Powder Ridge post-mortem was surely received sympathetically by a conservative readership antagonistic to rock festivals.

A slightly less conservative view of mass gatherings circulated across the United States in the mainstream *Newsweek* magazine, through author Peter Benchley's descriptive article of August 1970.<sup>43</sup> Benchley wrote of the most rambunctious 1969 festival crowds that “the Woodstock nation took the American nation by surprise. But this year, community forces were ready.”<sup>44</sup> The author, who would go on to publish his novel *Jaws* in 1974, set his literary sense of description on display: the surge of large festivals “finished almost before it

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<sup>40</sup> Though authorities shut down the power supply to the official sound system, the assembled crowd adapted and rigged their own system powered “with generators from two ice cream trucks, and local groups played.” “Yankee Ingenuity at Rock Festival,” *Times Wire Service*, August 2, 1970.

<sup>41</sup> William Buckley, “How the Tragedy at Powder Ridge Happened,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, August 7, 1970.

<sup>42</sup> Many of the 30,000 persons gathered lingered and enjoyed simply being around the others, suggesting that the canceled music would have been a welcome addition to an already enjoyable party. Briefly adopting a mock-Pollyanna voice, Buckley writes, “Something would happen, something always does, when the kids' happiness is at stake.”

<sup>43</sup> Peter Benchley, “The Rise and the Fall of Summer Rock Festivals,” *Newsweek Feature Service* August 20, 1970.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

began, a kind of nova that burned with incredible brightness for a brief moment then and the expired into chill darkness.” Benchley concluded that of the planned festivals in 1970, “not one has been anything but a drag—either killed aborning by authorities or mismanaged or ruined by a rash of bad trips.” In the weeks following the article, promoters across the country produced enough successful festival entertainment to suggest that Benchley was dead wrong.

Of what did these “Woodstock laws” consist? Where they impeded rather than canceled festivals, such laws comprised both reasonable and Draconian measures. Much of this legislation concerned public health issues, establishing, for example, a proper proportion of portable toilets compared with the anticipated festival attendance. In Peter Benchley's article, the author remarked that, “A Miami promoter was ordered to provide 10,000 [portable toilets] for his estimated 100,000 customers.” These measures were both common sense and difficult to adhere to, since the comings and goings of festival attendees could neither be accurately predicted nor precisely measured. Other measures obstructed the promoter's path to temporary rural land acquisition. Upon public resistance, promoters of the namesake Woodstock festival were forced to relocate their project from Wallkill, NY to its ultimate location in nearby Bethel. Judges occasionally issued such injunctions in the eleventh hour, causing promoters to scramble and readjust their festival plans before the scheduled start time.<sup>45</sup> More

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<sup>45</sup> In Florida, citizens of Punta Gorda launched a preemptive strike against festival culture in January 1970. Although no festival was yet planned there, the local government prepared an ordinance to place restrictions on festivals, limiting the maximum number of spectators to 5,000 and setting additional strict guidelines. The ordinance passed in April. Although Punta Gorda press outlets made no mention of Altamont, the chronology supports the claim that residents were prompted at least in part by the Rolling Stones concert.

impishly, one judge effectively canceled a West coast festival with a last-minute injunction. One of the festival's scheduled performers, Deep Purple keyboardist Jon Lord, said of this situation that, "I'm totally opposed to the militant political elements who have been infiltrating the music business. Conversely, I am just as opposed to those who stopped a festival we were to have played in Portland, Oregon, by taking out an injunction against us and shipping the judge out of town before a reverse injunction could be raised."<sup>46</sup> This case in Oregon may not be entirely representative of "Woodstock laws" or of the American judicial system, but it does raise the prospect of legal gamesmanship intended to tamp the flames of rock festival culture. If a game it was, then a risky game was played by judges who ordered late injunctions. Benchley wrote about how such an injunction caused a ripple effect of distraught social energy that threatened to overtake a mid-west community.<sup>47</sup> Beyond these injunctions, many Woodstock laws were punitive, and much too severe to be followed. The point of this legislation was to place festival promoters in very difficult legal situations, where transgression of legal code was never far away. This type of legislation also included establishing

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<sup>46</sup> Altham, "Deep Purple."

<sup>47</sup> At the Grant Park Festival in Chicago, fans heartily protested upon learning that Sly and the Family Stone would not appear as scheduled, conjuring the worst memories of the previous year, when that park was the epicenter of the DNC melee. The energy of protest was immediately palpable some 180 miles west of Chicago, where authorities cited Grant Park as sufficient cause for issuing an eleventh hour injunction, and forced festival plans from the city of Galena, IL to Wadena, IA. The three-day event was known as the Wadena Rock Music Festival. Some 50,000 persons descended upon Wadena, swamping the 250 town residents and their few law enforcement officials, and the festival began on July 31 despite the injunction. Local police steered clear of the site once the festival was in progress for fear of inciting a riot. The Wadena sheriff astutely remarked that if he and his cadre "tried to keep those bands from playing, we'd really have trouble on our hands." Promoters were immediately sued afterward for knowingly violating Iowa state regulations.

check points at the perimeter of festival grounds, to enforce drug laws.<sup>48</sup> Despite the reactionary laws and ordinances, “the more ambitious promoters found loopholes in the laws or disregarded them entirely in their quest for the big money”<sup>49</sup> Clearly, promoters persisted with their events despite the changing legal system that seemingly attempted to contain or to prevent the practice of rock festivals, and they persisted by developing ways to minimize the threat of social unrest.

### **§ Innovation after Altamont**

Rock festivals of the early 1970s, the major, minor, and canceled events of the new decade evince signs that promoters were innovative and confident in their ability to continue offering festivals while satisfying the conditions of the changing legal system. While some were abandoned, these innovations amounted to adjustments to the design, size, duration, and location of the rock festival.

A few festival promoters navigated the minefield of “Woodstock laws” by redesigning the basic concept of their events. In central Illinois, promoters bought nearly eighty acres of land in November 1969 (i.e., before Altamont), on which they intended to construct a permanent “cultural-recreation facility.” This facility in the town of Carbondale would have hosted two rock festivals yearly, in addition to off-Broadway and symphony concerts, were it not for the injunction filed against promoters in early 1970. With reports from Altamont buzzing, a

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<sup>48</sup> A riveting legal battle ensued in 1974, after a festival attendee claimed the check-point established by Glynn County (GA) police was a subterfuge, a ruse “allegedly set to check driver’s licenses but which was situated only to stop automobiles headed toward [the Jekyll Island] rock festival,” which, in practice, “resulted in 65 illegal drug arrests but only a few traffic citations.” See *Swift v. State*, 206 S.E.2d 51.

<sup>49</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 185.

group of residents petitioned their government in the new year to prevent similar events, adopting the collective name Concerned Citizens of Southern Illinois (CCSI). The promoters were “easy targets in politically conservative, fundamentalist, underdeveloped” state of Illinois, and their clash with the CCSI typifies the clash between urban rock ideology and the rural sensibilities it routinely disrupted.<sup>50</sup> Not every citizen was up in arms; no less a figure than Southern Illinois University professor R. Buckminster Fuller thought the prospective festival provided an opportunity to demonstrate tolerance rather than flat rejection of a generation's values. Nevertheless, the innovative promoters were thwarted in their quest to redesign rock festivals in Carbondale.

The proposed “cultural-recreation facility” represents one unrealized innovation aimed at reducing the anxieties and culture clashes associated with festivals. Another unrealized alternative was offered by a prominent New York critic, Albert Goldman, who saw a solution to social chaos in bringing the festival downtown. Goldman believed that substituting concert films like *Woodstock* for live performance was a safer alternative because theaters permitted smaller crowds and provided “a voyeuristic treat for the millions who can't abide the traffic jams, the skin-drenching rains, and the drug-induced shreck of the real thing.”<sup>51</sup> He also believed that Radio City Music Hall would make an excellent venue for weekend rock performances, satisfying the demands for live music and physical security while bringing new life to the hall and absorbing the surging

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<sup>50</sup> J. Anthony Lukas, “Rock Festival in Illinois, Like Many Others Now, Meets Bitter Community Hostility,” *New York Times*, April 27, 1970.

<sup>51</sup> Albert Goldman, “Besides Rockettes, Let There Be Rock,” *New York Times*, January 11, 1970.

demand for concerts. Goldman seemed to think that the combination of indoor concerts and concert films would function as a relief valve in the highly pressurized festival system. Even if Goldman's solution would have only obliquely alleviated the worst festival problems, it represents the innovation and reasoned thinking intended to prevent another Altamont.

The goal of drastically reducing the size of festival crowds was shared by folk singer Joan Baez, who in September 1970 organized a festival in Big Sur, California. Viewed as an extension of the Monterey Pop festival of 1967, Big Sur promoted the music of Baez, Joni Mitchell, Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, and others.<sup>52</sup> Baez's festival provided a forum for her and her colleagues to continue peace activism which extended back to the early 1960s. It was held at a retreat for alternative health, and therefore kept purposefully kept small. Big Sur left Robert Christgau with the impression that the counterculture was alive and well, avoiding bad press by holding relatively small gatherings: "The big thing," he wrote, "was to avoid the mob. Keep the numbers down. Shun the mass with its mass taste. Let the city government move in with its decibel-meters. Let it be a one-day affair. Perhaps the sense of that lost promise would be regained, if only for a day or two."<sup>53</sup> Christgau's characteristically lucid observations raise not only the issue of

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<sup>52</sup> Together with the Festivals for Peace, Big Sur represents an early stage of 1970s peaceful assemblies: the Concert for Bangladesh, sponsored by George Harrison and Ravi Shankar; and the anti-nuclear power festivals, led by Musicians United for Safe Energy (MUSE). Collectively, though, these activities symbolize a minority position within a new liberalism generated in the 1960s, "keyed less to liberal politics than to more liberal assumptions about etiquette, clothes, language, music, and sexual mores." Mark Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003): 1.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Christgau, "A Musical Weekend," *Village Voice*, October 1970. Reprinted in *Any Old Way You Choose It: Rock and Other Pop Music, 1967–1973* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000 [1973]).

festival size, but also of duration. The festival at Big Sur made no attempt to sprawl as Woodstock had, and lasted just two days. In addition to the reduced crowd, this truncated duration also contributed to Christgau's perception of the resilient promise of festivals.

Urban stadiums provided festival promoters with an additional means for reducing the festival crowd. In February 1970, Peter Yarrow sponsored, along with the organization called the Moratorium, the first of two Festivals for Peace inside Shea Stadium. (The second occurred in August.) Yarrow, of the recently disbanded Peter, Paul, and Mary, occupied the politically active quadrant of the counterculture and used his renown to inspire public action. His festival was a success: all tickets were sold within two days of the announcement, and the event proved to be an alternative to “dropping out, taking to the street, or ripping off rock festivals.”<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the *New York Times* reviewer saw in the festival a “continuation and expansion” of the previous summer's best ideas, looking straight past the calamity at Altamont. In one respect, Yarrow's events resemble Baez's peace festival at Big Sur, since all proceeds went “to peace candidates' campaigns and to related peace movements like GI and draft organizing.”<sup>55</sup> In another respect, the placement of his festival inside Shea Stadium ensured Yarrow that the crowd gathered would not exceed 56,000, a considerably smaller maximum than either Altamont or Woodstock. Instead of recoiling from the recent events at Altamont, Yarrow's stadium “festival” bustled, and “the energies of the

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<sup>54</sup> Dan Heckman, “Rip-offs and Revivals,” *Village Voice*, July 30, 1970.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*



Moratorium and the community of the Woodstock Nation seemed alive as ever.”<sup>56</sup>

These stories of innovation from the year 1970 raised thus far share one common feature: the rock festivals were preempted, canceled, or cut short for various reasons, corroborating the “fall of the festival experience” myth attributed to Altamont. As we turn to examine two fully realized festivals from the early 1970s, Goose Lake and Erie Canal, the paths to festival success and failure amid uncharted legal territory will become better illuminated.

Festivals of the early 1970s remain relatively hidden in the literature for at least two reasons (see Table 4.1).<sup>57</sup> First, few festivals were promoted or received with the comprehensiveness of either Woodstock or Altamont. Those two landmark events of 1969 were both converted into major motion pictures (*Woodstock* and *Gimme Shelter*), both sold tremendously well at American box offices, and both were screened at the Cannes International Film Festival. In contrast, the Atlanta Pop festival of 1970 was filmed but not converted into a motion picture, because “Both the company that shot the film and its financial backers went bankrupt.”<sup>58</sup> Producers of the Atlanta festival managed, however, to record and release on LP a good portion of their concerts, in the model of the ground-breaking *Woodstock* triple album.<sup>59</sup> Goose Lake and Erie Canal enjoyed

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<sup>56</sup> Heckman, “No, the Flowers Have Not All Gone,” *New York Times*, February 8, 1970.

<sup>57</sup> Each of them is addressed cursorily in Brant, *Join Together*. Atlanta Pop received a much fuller treatment in Chatterton ““Southern Fried” Woodstock.”

<sup>58</sup> Chatterton, ““Southern-Fried’ Woodstock,” 17–18.

<sup>59</sup> Some footage of Jimi Hendrix’s July 4 performance was released by his estate. Audio excerpts from the Atlanta Pop Festival and the Isle of Wight Festival were sold in 1971 as a double album under the title *The First Great Rock Festivals of the Seventies*, featuring Jimi Hendrix, Johnny Winter and Sly and the Family Stone, Ten Years After, Miles Davis, etc. The Allman Brothers played at Atlanta Pop, and released material in 2003 under the title *The Allman Brothers Band: Live at the Atlanta International Pop Festival*.

no such production value. Following from the first reason, festivals of the early 1970s were essentially buried under the success of *Woodstock* and *Gimme Shelter*. As the 1970s elapsed, journalists redoubled their efforts to mythologize Woodstock and Altamont as apex and nadir, Cain and Abel, leaving little room in their saga for festivals of little publicity.

Date	Event	Attendance (x1,000)
April 24–26	Sound Storm (Poynette, WI)	30
June 26–28	Iola (WI) Rock Festival	50
July 3–6	Atlanta Pop (Byron, GA)	200
July 17–19	Randall's Island (NY) Rock Festival	30
July 31–August 2	Powder Ridge Rock Fest (Middlefield, CT)	30
July 31–August 2	Wadena (IA) Rock Festival	50
August 7–9	Goose Lake International (Jackson, MI)	200
August 28–September 3	Vortex I (Portland, OR)	75
September 4–6	Kickapoo Creek Outdoor Rock Concert (Heyworth, IL)	60

*Table 4.1: Rock Festivals of the year 1970.*

## § Goose Lake

One such festival, the Goose Lake Festival of Jackson, Michigan, ought to be remembered because its experienced chief organizer demonstrated real sensitivity for what was likely to encourage and prevent festival success. The three-day event showed all signs of learning from past festivals.

The Goose Lake Festival was organized and promoted by Tom Wright, an accomplished construction worker who staged the event on a large plot of personal property. The event occurred on the last weekend of July, met little initial resistance from Michigan residents, and showed signs of real innovation in

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festival promotions. Wright was intent on building a “permanent” festival site like the one planned but left unrealized in Carbondale, IL.<sup>60</sup> The appearance of permanence was achieved by the twelve-foot high fence Wright had erected along the site perimeter, a structure intended to preclude a repeat of the gate-crashing at Woodstock and other festivals. Inside the fenced area, spectators amused themselves inside Wright's mock theme park on large slides and a bouncy “balloon-like surface.” Local newspapers reported that the festival site included “two medical teams, separate grounds for parking and camping facilities, [and] stores where camping equipment and food can be purchased.”<sup>61</sup>

Wright's preparedness and attention to detail created the setting for a thoroughly peaceful festival. Although 300,000 spectators descended upon Jackson, “There were no reports of violence inside the huge grounds.”<sup>62</sup> In fact, the fans appeared to consciously counter the negative associations that had befallen festivals like Altamont; “togetherness” was the theme of the day. A fan from neighboring Ohio perceived that “friendship prevailed and everyone had a great time” at the festival. Everyone, that is, except for those turned away at the gate: once Wright's private property reached his limit, promoters turned people away to prevent a potentially dangerous overcrowding situation. The town's sheriff instructed his deputies not to enter the park, saying that “I don't care what

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<sup>60</sup> David A. Carson, *Grit, Noise, and Revolution: The Birth of Detroit Rock 'n' Roll* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005): 243.

<sup>61</sup> Larry Perrault, “Park Near Jackson Throbs with Swarm of Rock Fans,” *Toledo Blade*, August 8, 1970.

<sup>62</sup> Larry Perrault, “Fans Are Turned Away As 300,000 Jam Park,” *Toledo Blade*, August 9, 1970.

the hell they do once they're inside that private park.”<sup>63</sup> Those remaining outside the fence, however, remained subject to the law and 123 of them were arrested, mostly on narcotics charges. When the crowd dispersed it left a trail of debris, inviting a backlash from local residents, but none was forthcoming since the event took place on private land.

The biggest innovation of Goose Lake was a revolving stage designed by Wright.<sup>64</sup> Large crowds gathered for summer rock festivals tend to expect near-continuous activity or entertainment, and large delays without distractions from the heat could lead spectators to view festival organization negatively. Wright's revolving stage minimized delays between bands and increased the overall efficiency of his event. The promoter was especially proud of the taut organization he and his team achieved, saying that “whereas at Woodstock everything was eight hours late, at Goose Lake, everything was four minutes ahead of schedule. I busted my ass.”<sup>65</sup> With images of festivals in wide, cinematic circulation, promoters like Wright strove to avoid previous disasters, and match or improve upon previous successes while adding their own innovations. Wright's Goose Lake Festival ultimately provides an example of successful three-day rural

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<sup>63</sup> United Press International (UPI), “200,000 Youths at Goose Lake Festival,” *Bryan (OH) Times*, August 8, 1970.

<sup>64</sup> Visual evidence of the rotating stage has yet to surface, according to critic Mark Deming, who said that, “I’ve yet to find a picture of the rotating stage in action! It seems odd that for something so unusual, no one seems to have any photos or film of it. More than one of the people I interviewed about the story mentioned that. There’s a documentary on the festival that circulates as a bootleg (for some reason it was never given an official release), and while there’s a bit of performance footage, there’s nothing of the rotating stage.” Private email communication, August 25, 2009. See also Deming, “Goose Lake Memories: Why Michigan's Most Important Rock Fest Remains an Obscure Footnote in Rock History,” *Metro Times Online*, July 2, 2008, <http://www2.metrotimes.com/editorial/story.asp?id=13036>.

<sup>65</sup> Tom Wright and Susan VanHecke, *Roadwork: Rock and Roll Turned Inside Out* (New York: Hal Leonard Books, 2007): 144.

festivals in the early 1970s. His stage, efficient regimentation, and permanent recreation facility created an atmosphere of fun that went rewarded by a pleasant crowd. In the next analysis, however, the Erie Canal festival of 1972 will serve to dramatize the weakness of festival plans designed by promoters motivated more by financial gain than by the spectator experience, and will represent the last of the three-day rural festivals before the industry transitioned into a shorter, urban model.

### **§ Erie Canal: A Case Study**

The end of protracted, Woodstock-style rural festivals arrived with the Erie Canal Soda Pop Festival of 1972. This festival, though all but forgotten today, presents special problems with respect to social space, and can help explain the pressures on festival promoters to prevent crowd unrest and streamline festivals.

The first issue of space centers upon geopolitical boundaries. Held over the Labor Day weekend of 1972, the Erie Canal Soda Pop festival was held at a special location on the southern Indiana-Illinois border named Bull Island.<sup>66</sup>

While an isthmus rather than an island, the distinguishing feature of this land area is that it constitutes an exclave of Illinois, east of the dividing Wabash river. Since the only land access is through the state of Indiana, authorities in both states were placed on alert for the Erie Canal festival. Police officers from both Indiana and Illinois were brought in to protect “as much as possible the participants from themselves”: White County, Illinois provided two full-time deputies and 20 patrolmen, three large boats and “possibly two or three” small ones to patrol the

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<sup>66</sup> No explanation for the festival's strange name is evident: set in southwest Indiana, the site is located hundreds of miles from the Erie Canal system on the Great Lakes.

Wabash river, while extra officers were called in from across Indiana, enough to monitor a crowd up to 100,000 persons.<sup>67</sup> When the festival began, the two states' security forces appeared plentiful, if not entirely adequate, and it remains an open question whether still more personnel would have prevented the destructive scene that followed.

Though ultimately held on Bull Island, the Erie Canal festival was relocated at the eleventh hour from the originally scheduled city of Chandler, Indiana, as promoters encountered the obstacles of Woodstock laws. The Chandler public anxiously followed festival plans, as the Erie Canal promoters spent weeks in court for weeks prior to their event. Preparatory stages such as this reveal how festival promoters interacted with the changing legal system. Within this relationship, festival promoters aspired to gather large crowds in order to provide entertainment and collect revenue, but were equally keen to avoid embroilment with local, state, and federal authorities, all of whom had a new-found interest in mass gatherings. Erie Canal promoters Bob Alexander and Tom Duncan had some recent festival planning experience, but were unprepared for the resistance they encountered before Erie Canal.<sup>68</sup>

Less than three weeks before Labor Day, Alexander and Duncan faced strong resistance from the legal system in both states. On August 15, Indiana special judge Lester Nixon served Erie Canal promoters Alexander and Duncan with a restraining order. The order legally prohibited the promoters from selling

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<sup>67</sup> Cynthia Kirk, "Rockfest Systems All Go," *Evansville (IN) Press*, September 1, 1972.

<sup>68</sup> "The two promoters had organized a small, successful music festival in Evansville, Indiana featuring Ike and Tina Turner, Johnny Winter, and the New Riders of the Purple Sage at the start of the summer." Brant, *Join Together*, 125.

any tickets and advertising their festival, while the state built a case for a permanent injunction against them. While Nixon built his case, the promoters stood to lose \$320,000 on their venture, an event which the State claimed posed “immediate or irreparable danger [ . . . ] to the community.”<sup>69</sup> The promoters protested, suggesting that their festival would be tightly supervised since “a staff of karate experts ha[d] been hired to provide security.”<sup>70</sup> Unconvinced, the Indiana attorney general Theodore Sendak presented sufficient evidence at a special hearing for the permanent injunction, “gathered by undercover agents of the state police at other rock festivals.” The anxiety in Warrick county spread to neighboring Pike and Gibson counties, where authorities provided ample justification for a court injunction, preventing any possible relocation of the festival within their jurisdiction.<sup>71</sup> With public health officials, Erie promoters fared no better. Indiana sanitarian Hallgarth declared the site at Chandler “inadequate for the expected crowd,” and the White County Attorney General filed criminal charges against the promoters for not having obtained the proper permit from the Illinois Department of Health sixty days in advance, at a rate of \$5,000 per festival day.<sup>72</sup> Intrepid or foolhardy, Alexander and Duncan

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<sup>69</sup> Terry English, “City Officials Seek Order to Block Rockfest Move,” *Evansville (IN) Press*, Aug 23, 1972.

<sup>70</sup> Cynthia Kirk, “Rockfest Police Plan Up In Air,” *Evansville (IN) Press*, Aug 15, 1972.

<sup>71</sup> Chandler authorities claimed that promoters had inadequately secured sanitary facilities and that the Erie Canal festival would pose a fire hazard in nearby Boonville, for example, by drawing unprecedented quantities of water from their shared reservoir. Authorities in neighboring Posey county initially welcomed the prospect of hosting the festival, but eventually filed a temporary restraining order against festival promoters. Not every community was against the festival, however: Alexander and Duncan were reported to have received over fifty inquiries from various neighboring officials about hosting the event. “Promotors of Rockfest are Still Selling Tickets,” *Evansville (IN) Press*, August 25, 1972.

<sup>72</sup> At the time, an estimated 60,000 persons were expected to attend the Erie Canal festival. Indiana state law required “one water closet for every 200 men and 125 women, one urinal for

contravened Nixon's injunction and continued to sell advance tickets via the Ticketron network, and expected 50,000 fans one week before the festival. On August 23<sup>rd</sup> Judge Nixon finally issued a permanent injunction barring the event from Warrick country, sending the festival plans into a tailspin.

Although barred from Warrick country, the defiant Erie Canal promoters were unswerving in their commitment to execute a large festival. When the Woodstock festival faced similar problems, its promoters Michael Lang and Artie Kornfield chose steadfastness because they perceived the stakes to be unimaginably high. "You can't stop this now," Lang said to Kornfeld, "if we don't do it, these people are going to murder you."<sup>73</sup> Likewise, Erie promoters Duncan and Alexander persevered even though court injunctions and hearings prevented them from knowing where, or even if, they could host the event. Duncan was emboldened by the disarray and "appeared quite pleased" at the prospect of a state intervention: "You don't have a festival without an injunction," he said.<sup>74</sup> During the legally embattled preamble, Alexander and Duncan remained undecided about when they would announce the official site.<sup>75</sup> Although promoters and an Illinois farmer settled on Bull Island as the official site three days prior to Labor Day weekend, it is unclear if Alexander and Duncan ever made a public declaration,

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every 150 men, and one lavatory for every 250 men and women," which would mean 240 lavatories if estimates proved true. "Hallgarth also noted that state law required five gallons of potable water per person per day, which would mean 300,000 gallons of water per day at the rockfest, if 60,000 persons attended." Cynthia Kirk, "Hearing Set Tuesday to Determine the Fate of Chandler Rockfest," *Evansville (IN) Press*, August 17, 1972; and "Rockfest Systems All Go," *Evansville (IN) Press*, September 1, 1972.

<sup>73</sup> Makower, *Woodstock: The Oral History*, 179.

<sup>74</sup> *Mount Vernon Democrat*, August 25, 1972.

<sup>75</sup> "Promoters of Rockfest are Still Selling Tickets," *Evansville (IN) Press*, August 25, 1972.



and fans relied on word of mouth to ascertain the official festival location.<sup>76</sup> The promoters leveraged the apparent confusion to increase public interest in the development of their festival, and took the liberty to float rumors that one of five area sites would be selected.

The musicians scheduled to perform at Erie Canal ranked among the more celebrated of the era. Their names were posted in local newspapers two weeks prior to the festivities: “the Faces featuring Rod Stewart, R.E.O. Speedwagon, Flash, the Doobie Brothers and Captain Beyond, a group comprising members of Deep Purple and Iron Butterfly.”<sup>77</sup> The Erie Canal promoters “sold thousands of tickets based on an advertised bill that included the Eagles, Black Sabbath, the Allman Brothers, Nazareth, Fleetwood Mac, Bob Seger, and many other name performers.”<sup>78</sup> An eclectic mix, this lineup provided “something for everyone” and promised to draw a significant crowd, although attendance estimates fluctuated wildly. Promoters went so far as to falsely claim that “an unannounced superstar—probably George Harrison of the Beatles or Bob Dylan—would also appear.”<sup>79</sup> In their attempts to sustain the interest of their potential audience, Alexander and Duncan appear in retrospect more like reactionaries than visionaries, but at the time were projecting a sense of feigned command and

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<sup>76</sup> The *Indianapolis (IN) Star* reported on Friday, September 1 that no announcement had been made. The Bull Island landowner, Erwin Hagedorn, said he was “strictly tricked into selling” his property for the weekend. *Mount Vernon Democrat*, August 30, 1972.

<sup>77</sup> Cynthia Kirk, “Rockfest Police Plan Up In Air,” *Evansville (IN) Press*, Aug 15, 1972. The full advertised line-up also included John Mayall, Cheech & Chong, Canned Heat, Ballinjack, Amboy Dukes, Bob Seger, Bang, Ravi Shankar, Albert King, Brownsville Station, Mike Quatro, Gentle Giant, Black Oak Arkansas, The Eagles, The Chambers Brothers, Boones Farm, Slade, Nazareth, and Delbert & Glenn. However, many of the most successful bands withdrew, or were never actually scheduled in the first place.

<sup>78</sup> Brant, *Join Together*, 126.

<sup>79</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, September 5 1972.

sprezzatura.

For all their projected nonchalance, Duncan and Alexander also set themselves up for disaster by keeping their customers and scheduled performers uninformed of festival developments. One week before the event, the festival's site had not been officially declared, although the promoters allegedly had received fifty private queries, and only 12,000 tickets were reportedly sold, even though promoters continued to sell them illegally and advertise on the radio.<sup>80</sup> Festival opponents considered Bull Island, the eventual site, "a decoy" since no preparations had been made there since Nixon filed the injunction; over four hundred youths camped on grounds in Chandler, unaware that the festival had been barred from the original Raceway site.<sup>81</sup> Only the day before the festival was Bull Island announced in local newspapers.<sup>82</sup> Although high-caliber ensembles were advertised to perform at Erie Canal, many withdrew from the festival on account of the disorganization; those who did arrive faced a scene dramatically different from their expectations.<sup>83</sup> For example, Joe Cocker withdrew upon arrival because the crowd gathered was much larger than anticipated, and Erie Canal promoters refused to increase Cocker's fee.<sup>84</sup> Cocker's reaction demonstrates one musician's perspective on the responsibilities of promoters, and

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<sup>80</sup> Terry English, "City Officials Seek Order to Block Rockfest Move," *Evansville (IN) Press*, August 23, 1972.

<sup>81</sup> Bull Island was "accessible only by a bumpy, sandy road," and thus seemed the improbable choice. Cynthia Kirk, "Pike, Gibson Counties to Join Rockfest Fight," *Evansville (IN) Press*, August 31, 1972.

<sup>82</sup> Cynthia Kirk, "Rockfest Systems All Go," *Evansville (IN) Press*, September 1, 1972.

<sup>83</sup> "'Bull Island' Rock Fest Shaky from Start to Finish," *Evansville Courier & Press 150th Anniversary Special Section*, January 8, 1995.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. Erie promoters had paid Cocker in advance and were embroiled in a legal battle with him until 1976 over this incident. Cocker retained his fee until an Indiana court ordered police to seize the money from his hotel room. "Country Police Seize \$1000 in Receipts at Cocker Show," *Evansville Press*, April 14, 1976.

in fact, his actions were replicated by other well-known bands, who left as final attendance estimates of 300,000 were some five times greater than early attendance predictions. The disappointment of this large group ran high, as local newspapers captured the chaotic scene. The *Evansville Press* characterized the festival as a “grand ripoff” because of the no-show and withdrawn bands. “Who wants to stick around this place,” asked one fan as he left the disarray, “and listen to Joe Nobody?”<sup>85</sup>

The vacuum of withdrawn talent was just one symptom of the larger festival failure. Further complaints, such as the rainy, inclement weather, had come to be expected of festivals, but could hardly have been anticipated or overcome by Erie promoters. However, the crowd expressed still more basic concerns. The *Indianapolis Star* reported that many in attendance expressed “anger at festival promoters for not living up to promises to provide adequate water, food, and sanitary facilities.”<sup>86</sup> Disgruntled and presumably hungry youths set fire to several vehicles, including an emptied catering truck, as well as to the bandstand on the festival's last day. In the week following the event, the catering company, Reis Catering, sued promoters for \$75,000, covering the \$45,000 worth in property damage and food reportedly stolen.<sup>87</sup> So disorganized was Erie Canal, that one youth from Vermont said, “It's my last festival. From now on, my festivals will consists of sitting around a campfire with a few friends singing folk songs.” Evidently, many in attendance still believed in “free music”: that youth

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<sup>85</sup> Joseph Gelarden, “Disgruntled Fans Begin Exodus from Rock Fest,” *Indiana Star*, September 5, 1972.

<sup>86</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, September 3 1972.

<sup>87</sup> “Bull Island Rockfest Problems Mounting,” *Evansville (IN) Press*, September 6, 1972.

called Erie Canal “a 'bad scene' mostly because of the lack of money on the part of those in attendance,” a crowd shoved over the ticket booth on the third day, “and the festivals was declared what else? 'Free.’”<sup>88</sup> That youth also cited “drug overuse and bogus drugs” as causing the bad scene, a combination of immoderate consumption, inadequate supervision, or demonstration prevention: Illinois police made no arrests during the festival, and Indiana police made “about 25.”<sup>89</sup> From the vantage point of transportation, the isolated festival site was a poor choice: “There were only two roads into the area and by the opening day of the festival, traffic was backed up nearly twenty miles.” Comedian and Erie Canal entertainer Tommy Chong recalls that “The van we were in crawled along so slow that people were walking faster than we were driving.”<sup>90</sup> Entertainers like Chong and audiences were losing their patience with poorly planned and uncoordinated rock festivals like Erie Canal.

From nearly all perspectives, the Erie Canal Soda Pop festival of 1972 was a disaster. Festival historian Marley Brant provides a detailed summary of the festival:

By the time it was all said and done, the promoters of the Erie Canal Soda Pop Festival found themselves facing lawsuits from various local and state entities, vendors, the IRS, and the owner of the island itself. Damages were reported from corporate sponsors including Coca-Cola, Hertz, and local ice and food concessioners. The promoters were made responsible for a \$52,000 lien by the IRS [dropped in October 1973].

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<sup>88</sup> “Question of When to Play Politics,” *Evansville (IN) Press*, September 11, 1972; and Brant, *Join Together*, 126.

<sup>89</sup> L.D. Seits, “Human Stream of Bull Island,” *Evansville (IN) Press*, September 4, 1972. During the Woodstock festival, a police official said they were “not arresting anybody for grass. If we did there isn't enough space in Sullivan or the next three counties to keep them in.” Had there been arrests, the streets would have filled with paddy-wagons and that “would have undoubtedly triggered demonstrations.” Warner “Reporting Woodstock,” 59, 63.

<sup>90</sup> Brant, *Join Together*, 126.

Over fifty land owners in Posey County filed suit. The era of Peace and Love appeared over.”<sup>91</sup>

The era was not yet over, however, for the incorrigible Alexander and Duncan, who, immediately following the proposal and speedy approval of the Indiana “Bull Island” Bill in April 1973, announced a sequel to Erie Canal, “Bull Island II.” What the promoters learned from their experience is telling: “Duncan said [. . .] that plans call for the rock festival to last two days and readily admitted that ‘three days is just too long.’” “We’re going to do it right this time – no matter what it costs. This is going to be done as a business, not as a bunch of hippies giving a party. And this time there won’t be a frog [sic] to get in free.”<sup>92</sup> Several more lessons from Erie Canal recommended themselves to future promoters. The vitality of rock festival audiences needed to be contained. Containment was most efficiently accomplished by placing festivals inside the confines of existing structures, which, while establishing a maximum crowd magnitude, also served to minimize and localize the damage to public areas. Also, festival tickets needed to be sold in advance rather than on site. Automated mechanisms like Ticketron facilitated this scheme, and prevented the needless toppling of ticket booths, while allowing promoters to recover some expenses. Since it was ultimately prevented, “Bull Island II” will remain the fantasy of two promoters and their venture capitalists, a fantasy rooted in the ideals that survived Erie Canal: shorter, more efficient festivals, where the notion of “free music” falls on deaf ears, and crowds

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<sup>91</sup> Brant, *Join Together*, 128. In the end, this festival was not “said and done” for years, as promoters filed counter suits refuting the “false assertions” of the police, commencing a long legal entanglement that ascended through the legal system to the U.S. Supreme Court. The last report of the festival aftermath appears almost nine years later, as a slander suit filed by Erie promoters against a retired police officer was settled for \$1,000.

<sup>92</sup> “Illinois Permit Sought for Bull Island Fest,” *Evansville (IN) Press*, May 10, 1973.

are restrained from wreaking havoc on temporary sites. The rock festival industry was undergoing a phase of professionalization.<sup>93</sup>

### **§ Long Live the “Festival”**

Erie Canal represented the dying breath of protracted rural festivals in the style of Woodstock, and marked the transition into a second era of mass gatherings in the 1970s. This era was characterized by single-day “festivals” located in urban or suburban stadiums run by promoters keen on maximizing efficiency.

Festivals of the 1960s and early 1970s more often than not lasted three days; at one day, Altamont was the clear outlier. One major difference between these events and the post-Erie Canal industry was that the later festivals were reduced in duration to one day. When promoters truncated their festivals, at least two elements in the planning and execution stages seemed advantageous. First, the legal requirements for land-use permits were cut proportionately, reducing the promoter's overhead cost and allaying the fears of local communities who were less tolerant of sprawling festivals. Second, the requirement for provisions like food and water were likewise reduced. As exhibited at Erie Canal, because promoters in the old model could predict neither how many nor when rock fans would arrive at their site, they provided for festival crowds inadequately and provoked the worst from hungry or disaffected youths. Third, promoters planning

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<sup>93</sup> That is, festivals after 1972 ran more smoothly on the whole than those before. Jim Koplik and Shelly Finkel, planners of Watkins Glen in 1973, are recognized as students of the festival industry. To *New York Times* reporter Les Ledbetter, “the experienced promoters also take pride in believing they have planned a festival that will incorporate all the best features of the large rock gatherings in the past and eliminate the faults.” Ledbetter, “Rock Promoters Expect 150,000 at Watkins Glen Fete July 28,” *New York Times*, July 19, 1973.

one-day “festivals” considered urban and suburban facilities more attractive than a rural setting, since stadiums established a maximum crowd size and thus provided a reliable estimate for provisions, and they provided a proportion of water and toilet facilities already approved by municipal governments. Removing festivals from their rural origins had the effect of recirculating capital to urban centers, further separating the new festival model from the notion of “free music.”

The post-Erie Canal rock festival industry was shaped most strongly by two promoters, Bill Graham and Don Branker. Between 1973–9, Graham and Branker produced compact events that developed into major institutions of the era. Bill Graham's enterprise was called the Day on the Green series, and as its name suggests, was compressed into the space of one day, beginning in the year 1973. Graham's concert series was held in the Bay Area, inside Oakland Coliseum Stadium, a multi-purpose stadium with a capacity slightly beneath Shea Stadium, thus setting himself up to avoid many of the security problems that troubled outdoor festivals like Erie Canal. By 1973, Graham had significant promotional experience: he began with the San Francisco Mime Troupe in 1965; promoted several luminaries of the city's counterculture such as Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company, Country Joe and The Fish, and The Grateful Dead; and operated the Fillmore West and Winterland venues in San Francisco, as well as the Fillmore East in New York City. He was, in short, a juggernaut, a seasoned professional and serious student of rock promotion. His “Day on the Green” events annually showcased a number of popular artists until 1992, and quantitatively peaked around 1977 (seven events overall), just as critics were

consistently deploying the term “arena rock.” Furthermore, the format of Graham's concert series strikingly resembles the arena rock genre: its location in an urban stadium matches exactly, and its twelve-hour duration looks more like a beefed-up version of an arena concert than Woodstock.

Graham's counterpart in Don Branker promoted a single-day event called California (“Cal”) Jam that likewise symbolized the new, more efficient model of mass entertainment. Unlike the Day on the Green series, Cal Jam was staged only twice (in 1974 and 1978), but Branker ensured a significant public reception when he struck a broadcasting contract with a national television network, the American Broadcasting Corporation. The first Cal Jam transpired on a clear Saturday in April 1974, when some 200,000 spectators filled the Ontario (CA) Motor Speedway to enjoy the twelve-hour event. During that interval, Branker delivered on his promise to showcase eight veteran bands representing several musical genres. ABC broadcast live segments of Cal Jam, requiring careful coordination with event organizers. Careful coordination was the theme for set changes between bands at Cal Jam: like the revolving stage at Wright's Goose Lake festival, two railroad cars at Cal Jam propelled the event forward as one transported equipment off of the stage, while the other simultaneously wheeled equipment onto it. To distract the fans between sets, Branker arranged for hot air balloons, skywriting planes, and other spectacles to occupy the third dimension of space overhead. To signal set breaks to television audiences, ABC announced the schedule of events while showing a brief preview:

California Jam, starring in order of appearance: Seals and Crofts, balloons, Rare Earth, flying people, Earth, Wind, and Fire, flying



machines, the Eagles, talking monkeys, Black Oak Arkansas, melodrama, Black Sabbath, interviews, California sunsets, Deep Purple, explosions, lighting effects, Emerson, Lake and Palmer, tonight only a special guest appearance—the amazing flying piano, elaborate display of fireworks, all this and 200,000 music lovers. California Jam! We'll be right back.

The production value of Cal Jam, including Keith Emerson's carnivalesque piano, far surpassed any previous rock festival, and its spectacle resembled in scope the most elaborate stagings of arena rock. At the time, Cal Jam set industry records for largest attendance and total earnings. When he closed Cal Jam, Branker perspicaciously envisioned his twelve-hour festival ushering in a new age of rock festival following a moribund period, applauding the orderly conduct of his audience: “that concludes the California Jam,” he said. “Before you do go I must say you deserve to be congratulated for maintaining your cool for the last 24 hours, for bringing back the fact that festivals can happen in this day and age I want to thank you and good night.” In the end, Branker and his team managed to avoid significant delays: Cal Jam began promptly, ended on schedule, and proceeded, as the saying goes, like clockwork. But for all its efficiency, the event lacked vitality and critics labeled it “a computerized rock festival,” because “the musicians were forced to perform in a machinelike fashion.”<sup>94</sup>

Two months after Cal Jam—on June 26, 1974 at 8:01 A.M., to be precise—the universal product code (UPC) was officially put into service in the United States, launching a computerized system of commercial order.<sup>95</sup> This

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<sup>94</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 256.

<sup>95</sup> Randy Alfred, “June 26, 1974: By Gum! There's a New Way to Buy Gum,” *Wired Magazine*, June 26, 2008.

chapter has attempted to draw parallels between rock festivals and a drive for ordering the commercial exchanges of culture epitomized by this contemporaneous new system. Like Cal Jam, the UPC introduced a integrated system of organization rather than an entirely new product. Barely noticeable in its materiality, its primary benefits were of efficiency for vendors and consumers, reducing the risk of human error and streamlining the processes of commercial exchange. Both the UPC and Cal Jam represent transitions from one era to the next: from sprawling festivals like Erie in the case of Cal Jam to a contained and regulated system of rock concerts, each bearing the mark of such streamlined exchanges.

## **§ Conclusion**

The most storied American rock festivals date from between 1967–69, when demands for free concerts and social unrest generally began to provoke public outcry and prompt lawmakers to draft legislation intended to disrupt and deny event planners. The legal pressure of “Woodstock laws” could be viewed as helping to produce some of the more innovative mass entertainment of the 1970s, rock festivals of importance to the history of the industry but unduly forgotten without an accompanying motion picture. A new, more efficient model of rock festival was fully in place by 1974 which served to contain the energy of early rock festivals. This new model was characterized by techniques for minimizing security breaches, a one-day duration rather than three, and an urban rather than rural setting. Perhaps the most significant of these was the relocation to urban stadiums, where festival proceeds returned to municipal governments. Amid this

transition, then, not only did the characteristic differences between festivals and arena rock fade, but the “festival” industry helped increase the dependency between rock music and American cities.

## Chapter Five

### “Spend a Week in St. Louis”: Arena Rock and the Unities of Discourse

#### § Introduction

In season two of the *South Park* television program, the episode “Gnomes” depicts the boys – Stan, Kyle, Eric, Kenny, and their new friend Tweek – as caught in the crossfire of the potential corporate takeover of a local business. Tweek's parents, who own and operate Tweek Bros. Coffee in their quaint town, face the buyout of their family business by the national chain Harbucks Coffee. One night, while the boys cavort in Tweek's room, Tweek's father ghost-writes an expository essay about the proposed buyout, which the boys present in class the following morning. The presentation ultimately crosses the desk of the school principal, who, unaware of the plagiarism, enthusiastically brings the boys' project to the attention of the South Park Mayor. Sympathetic but unable to simply ban Harbucks, the Mayor calls an emergency election based on a bill called Prop[osition] Ten: Should Harbucks be allowed to open a store in South Park? During the ensuing town hall, the boys (introduced as “five innocent starry-

eyed boys from middle America”) debate “a big, fat, smelly corporate guy from New York,” making clear the small town's allergy to large businesses. On the day of the referendum, the Mayor insists that the casting of ballots should be preceded by entertainment, in the form of a popular music concert. “Before the vote we'll get a band everyone likes, like, uh, like . . .”

“Toto,” her assistant offers.

However, it becomes plainly evident that *not* everyone in South Park likes Toto, the real-life rock band momentarily transplanted into television: after the band's performance, the Mayor-emcee proclaims “Toto, ladies and gentleman!” to which only one South Park resident—a white, thirtysomething male—responds enthusiastically. The other South Park residents silently eye him askance.

The humor of this moment obtains where viewers recognize Toto as among the most commercially successful bands of the late 1970s and 1980s, one which earned three RIAA-certified gold-, and two multiplatinum records. In the cartoon town of South Park, Colorado, Toto's success runs comically parallel to the commercial achievements of Harbucks (an obvious allusion to coffee giant Starbucks), and their performance was as unwanted there as the hostile corporate takeover. Both Toto and the coffee giant represent the insincere machinations of high capitalism, inauthentic corporate monoliths whose prominence owes more to business strategy than to content. It may appear ironic that Toto and Starbucks should be parodied for their commercial success on *South Park*, a cartoon broadcast by the Comedy Channel television network, which is owned by MTV Networks, a subsidiary of the media conglomerate Viacom. Nevertheless, this episode demonstrates how commercial success is legitimately attacked in mainstream

entertainment and how prevalent in 1998 was the attempt, ironic or not, to discredit a band such as Toto, a band widely recognized as instrumental in the continuation of Arena Rock.

This chapter launches from two basic and related premises about the naming of the Arena Rock genre. First, Arena Rock bands like Toto were grouped together and collectively named as such on the basis of their regular performances in arenas. This apparently self-evident premise raises the issue of authenticity as it masks a conflict over the conditions of space around 1977, when the name acquired mainstream visibility: Concerts held in large venues were viewed by critics as commercial rip-offs where insincere performers fleeced unsuspecting audiences. The majority of these critics were either writers for nationally-syndicated rock publications who prized the status of the solo artist as hero, or punk and new wave musicians, whose objections were rooted in what they perceived to be the characterless nature of these bands and in the commercial values and media saturation that performance in large venues had come to represent. Second, Arena Rock bands were grouped together and collectively named as such on the basis of *how* they performed in arenas. Around 1977, when “Arena Rock” took hold, there seemed to be little resistance to musical performance in such venues *per se*. Rather, virtually every major entertainer played arenas in 1977, whether dubbed Arena Rock or not. The naming of the genre and the assignment of groups to that genre had, in short, to do with the technical-formal rules of the genre, including choices of meter, instrumentation, and musical influences. These related, and in some ways contradictory, premises summarize the social forces animating the debates over rock performance in large venues in the late 1970s, and serve as a background to this chapter in which they

will be developed.

Accordingly, this chapter is organized around issues raised by these premises. The first step is to continue the discussion of authenticity in order to contextualize the value judgments published by critics, the second is to identify the bands that constituted the core of the burgeoning Arena Rock genre, a process carried out through an examination of rock journalism between 1977–9. With a core of musicians established, the third step will be to discuss the technical-formal rules of the genre, the musical and performance characteristics imprinted on the genre. Finally, this chapter unpacks the evaluative judgments of Arena Rock by both critics and punk/new wave musicians, paying special attention to the terms of space lurking just beneath the surface. The genre title “Arena Rock” arrived around 1977 because nationally-syndicated critics tended to lump together a diverse group of bands known for their large-venue performances, and used those bands as a foil for musicians they perceived as authentic according to Romantic tendencies—solo artists, punk, and new wave bands who valued such large spaces negatively—but such claims of inauthenticity can be challenged by expanding the scope of critical evidence to include press coverage from the interior of the United States.

## § Authenticity

Among the hoary issues of popular music studies, one which courses through the center of Arena Rock discourse is authenticity.<sup>1</sup> As we will see below, Arena Rock bands

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<sup>1</sup> Although the literature on authenticity in popular music is rich, arguments in this chapter are informed most directly by Keir Keightley, “Reconsidering Rock,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Rock and Pop*, edited by Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2001): 109–42; and Allan Moore, “Authenticity as Authentication,” *Popular Music* 21 (2002): 209–23. An authority on authenticity in popular music, Simon Frith is known in this context for *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); “Art Versus Technology: The Strange Case of Popular Music,” *Media, Culture and Society* 8 (1986): 263–79; and “‘The Magic That Can Set You Free’: the Ideology of Folk and the Myth of the Rock Community,” *Popular Music* 1 (1981): 159–68. Still more vantage points are offered in Emily I. Dolan, “. . . This

faced charges of inauthentic comportment from nationally-syndicated writers and fellow musicians, many of whom called for a return to what they received as be rock's core values: low- rather than high-tech production (do-it-yourself, or DIY), amateur- rather than virtuosic musicality, a strong rather than diffuse sense of community, and small-scale rather than grandiose performance. Perhaps the most efficient way to contextualize the multiple problems of authenticity facing Arena Rock bands in the late 1970s is to schematically trace their development during the dozen or so years before the mainstream acceptance of the term.

In most assessments, musician authenticity is adjudicated within a binary framework not unique to rock, but time-tested and pervasive within rock's parent culture in Western society. The binary framework emerges “out of two complimentary but distinct historical movements of the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries: Romanticism and Modernism.”<sup>2</sup> Romantic and Modernist tendencies for achieving authenticity were studied carefully by Keir Keightley, an analysis which synthesized mass media portrayals of the question (Table 5.1). Although both Romanticism and Modernism aspire to authenticity, the Romantic tendencies were predominant among major critics when Arena Rock was forming.

Since the 1980s, Romantic tendencies have gone under the name of *rockism*, an evaluative principle that judges according to these tendencies. “A rockist,” according to Kalefa Sanneh of the *New York Times*, “is someone who reduces rock 'n' roll to a caricature, then uses that caricature as a weapon. Rockism means idolizing the authentic

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Little Ukelele Tells the Truth': Indie Pop and Kitch Authenticity,” *Popular Music* 29 (2010): 457–469; Moore, “U2 and the Myth of Authenticity in Rock,” *Popular Musicology* 3 (1998): 4–24; and Mark Mazullo, “Authenticity in Rock Music,” PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Keightley, “Reconsidering Rock,” 135.



old legend (or underground hero) while mocking the latest pop star; lionizing punk while barely tolerating disco.”<sup>3</sup> The firmament of a rockist's soundscape, then, are those artists possessed of little economic capital who demonstrate a great disinterestedness in accumulating material wealth, by performing, for example, in denim rather than elaborate costumes to appear as one of the crowd. Accordingly, rockist critics usually take aim at commercially successful ensembles of the late 1970s and early 1980s, since rockists tend to oppose the authentic and local with the inauthentic and corporate. These critic also remarked upon how Arena Rock bands were neither sincere, nor possessed of sufficient irony, sarcasm, or obliqueness. Critiques of Arena Rock bands such as these depict them as caught in-between two poles.

Romantic authenticity tends to be found more in	Modernist authenticity tends to be found more in
tradition and continuity with the past roots	experimentation and progression
sense of community	avant gardes
populism	status of artist
belief in a core or essential rock sound	elitism
folk, blues, country, rock'n'roll styles	openness regarding rock sounds
gradual stylistic change	classical. Art music, soul, pop styles
sincerity, directness	radical or sudden stylistic change
'liveness'	irony, sarcasm, obliqueness
'natural' sounds	'recorded-ness'
hiding musical technology	'shocking' sounds
	celebrating technology

*Table 5.1: Tendencies of Authenticity (reproduced from Keightley, 137)*

The rockist sense of authenticity valued community, but large arena and stadium concerts militated against the satisfactory achievement of this value. As noted in the previous chapters, such large venues afforded little of the intimacy of small theaters, a loss that performers attempted to reduce with the addition of large extra-musical props and stage effects visible from the farthest seats from the stage. Critics seemed never to

<sup>3</sup> Kelefa Sanneh, “The Rap Against Rockism,” *New York Times*, October 31, 2004.

experience the Romantic tendency for community during concerts, and so tended to lump together a group of the most commercially successful bands under the title “Arena Rock.” Punk and new wave bands (e.g., the Clash, Elvis Costello), who had a different relationship to the physical spaces of rock performance, attacked these bands and positioned them as a foil for themselves and others that they perceived to be “more authentic.”

Authenticity in rock discourse stems from the middle 1960s, following the success of the first North American Beatles concerts, as the rock and roll industry slowly but surely gained in significance within the larger cultural sphere. Its striking emblem, that of Bob Dylan's decision to “go electric” during the Newport Folk Festival of 1965, represented an appreciation of the newly-presumed aesthetic autonomy of rock and roll musicians.<sup>4</sup> Dylan's move to electric guitar brought along the folk-authenticity won in his early years to the growing field of rock and roll, which, through the concomitant growth of pop music criticism, was legitimated as more serious under a new aesthetic framework and the truncated term “rock.”<sup>5</sup>

Within this new aesthetic framework, the growth of rock's significance within the larger cultural sphere permitted and encouraged a range of aesthetic positions, epitomized in the differing styles of the new rock criticism. Start-up magazines like *Rolling Stone*,

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<sup>4</sup> Dylan had absorbed a sense of autonomy from the folk revival with which he was associated, a field of cultural production based on a “reversed” economic world, to paraphrase Pierre Bourdieu, where commercial success could spell aesthetic ruin for performing artists, and where “symbolic capital” (a transparent form, which includes its own sub-types: “cultural capital,” “linguistic capital,” and so forth) and “economic capital” (the money form: wages, interest, etc.) stand opposed in the “marketplace of symbolic goods.” Symbolic capital accrues in inverse proportion to the disinterested stance of the artist and art works in question, and in proclaiming disinterest it denies and suppresses its instrumentalism. See Pierre Boudieu, “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed,” in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, edited by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 29–73.

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Gendron, “Gaining Respect,” and “Accolades,” in *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 161–234.

*Creem*, *Crawdaddy!*, and others encouraged mainstream outlets (e.g., *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times*) to enter the realm of rock journalism.<sup>6</sup> The blossoming of a critical rock press hastened the growth of rock within the cultural sphere, and concurrently shifted some prestige away from jazz and classical music.<sup>7</sup> These early rock press outlets and the major coastal newspapers inform much of current popular music studies, ignoring for the most part critics who wrote for newspapers of middle America.

Within the rock press emerged new wine in old bottles: the mind-body problem and aesthetic debate which stretches back to the time of Descartes and incorporates debates in Western culture over “composed” and “improvised” music, and takes the particular shape of “mind music” versus “body music,” between rational, planned music on the one hand and inspired, improvised music on the other. This debate circulated within rock culture at the time Arena Rock launched, and found Romantic expression through guitarist and bandleader Carlos Santana. He partitioned music into “mind music” and “soul music.” “Mind music” said Santana in 1977, “is very fabricated. People sit down and look at *Billboard* and say, 'This is what's going to hit next, so I'm going to hit that.' With 'soul music' you'll be taking a shower and a melody will hit you upside the head. It's not fabricated. It's spontaneous.”<sup>8</sup> Santana is suggesting that while some musicians merely copy the popular songs of their day, the sincere, or Romantically authentic artist produced genuine music. “When you break down the music,” he continued, “there's only two kinds: sincere and insincere.” Santana was far from the only

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<sup>6</sup> Even critics who until 1966 made their careers writing about jazz and folk music, such as Robert Shelton and Ralph J. Gleason, entered the fray. Steve Jones, ed., *Pop Music and the Press* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> David Brackett, “Rock,” (working paper, *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Musics of the World*), 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Abe Peck, “Santana's Cosmic Soul Sound,” Associated Press, January 23, 1977.

rock performer from this period who held these values with regard to sincerity.

Santana's values were corroborated above by guitarist Eric Clapton (p.150), who opined that performing a routine rather than making extemporaneous choices was dishonest and insincere. Clapton's self-reflexive tone is remarkable, and his recognition of his earlier “dishonest” behavior with Cream is as striking as the forces that precipitated it. Only when Clapton freed himself of routine was he able to feel like an authentic musician, a value system shot through with Romantic tendencies. By citing routine, both Clapton and Santana manifest Romantic tendencies of authenticity at the heart of attacks on Arena Rock, critiques which claimed that these bands merely went through the motions during concerts on their path to collecting their paycheck.<sup>9</sup> In this light, live performance and questions of space begin to appear more important to the authenticity debate than is currently recognized.

The institutionalization of rock of the late 1960s and early 1970s further impeded the pursuit of authenticity for the most commercially successful bands. The closer rock bands appeared to be associated with these avenues, the more likely they were to be targets of scorn from those who held Romantic notions of authenticity. Chief among the avenues of institutionalization were the new rock press, the formation of a distinct “youth” (as distinct from “adult” and “teen”) audience, and an identifiable, circumscribed core of musical sounds and practices, and the new, experimental FM radio stations (which played longer cuts than their AM predecessor). As a rule, Arena Rock bands were perceived to be very close with the institution of FM radio during a fundamental realignment in radio space. These bands succeeded with the generous assistance from FM radio and its new, listener-driven format called album-oriented rock (AOR).

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<sup>9</sup> Tony Stewart, “Deep Purple: Empire Pool, Wembley,” *New Musical Express*, March 20, 1976.

The brainchild of a teenaged Lee Abrams, AOR gained momentum as a viable radio format beginning in 1971–2 by offering listeners the songs they preferred, a market-driven research approach that was its hallmark. Abrams converted the research results into playlists for FM stations, promoting music that would keep listeners tuned in and advertisers content. Station by station, Abrams expanded his business by peddling his innovative format across the country, converting the FM bandwidth from an experimental outpost in the early 1970s to the dominant musical medium. “By 1979 he was consulting over one hundred stations, reaching more than 80 percent of the top hundred markets, and his success spawned competitors like Jeff Pollack, who consulted for dozens more of the remaining rock stations using similar programming theories.”<sup>10</sup> Between the efforts of Abrams and his competition, “By 1980, FM listening had edged out AM in the country's ten largest markets.”<sup>11</sup> Public visibility of the changes to FM brought about by AOR reached a high-water mark around 1978, the year CBS launched its sitcom *WKRP in Cincinnati* and Universal Studios released the film *FM*, a box-office flop that nevertheless scored a hit with Steely Dan's title song. Thus, at the time “Arena Rock” gained wide acceptance, the sensational changes in radio space were incontrovertible and unmistakable.

Because of its commercial success, AOR endured criticism virtually since its inception, such that it seems unsurprising that “rockism” was coined on the heels of AOR

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<sup>10</sup> Danny Goldberg, *Bumping Into Geniuses: My Life inside the Rock and Roll Business* (New York: Gotham Books, 2008): 120.

<sup>11</sup> Marc Fisher, *Something in the Air: Radio, Rock, and the Revolution That Shaped a Generation* (New York: Random House, 2007): 211. For more on the development of FM radio see Michael Keith, *Voices in the Purple Haze: Underground Radio and the Sixties* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997); Susan J. Douglas, “The FM Revolution” in *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004): 256–283; and for an insightful discussion of these problems outside of rock see Diane Pecknold, *The Selling Sound: The Rise of the Country Music Industry* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

rise to prominence. Charges against Arena Rock and AOR were normally leveled at what critics identified as a routine, a set of standards, and a formulaic approach to radio programming that impeded progress and stifled experimentation. Critics include writers from *Rolling Stone*, who averred that “The success of AOR would give rise to a generation of bands whose music fit AOR specifications impeccably.”<sup>12</sup> This view implies a conservative rather than swift rate of stylistic change, since aspiring musicians are supposed to have deduced a formula from what they heard on FM and composed only to mimic the latest AOR hit. At first glance, these charges would seem to reject Romantic tendencies for authenticity in favor of the Modernist tendency for “experimentation and progression.” However, as AOR expanded and gained economic autonomy, it appeared in no way disinterested in the art it reproduced. It was AOR's trajectory within the field of economic capital that raised the ire of critics. Today, in one view, “AOR is a much besieged area of contemporary popular music, widely derided for its intention to take rock 'n' roll away from its youthful progenitors and market it as 'serious music.’”<sup>13</sup> This definition exposes the deriders' insistent sense of propriety and also betrays the power of AOR to sanitize rock of its rebellious and potentially liberating character, but it is far from unique. Since the AOR research provided audiences with the artists they wanted to hear, it follows that new artists would experience difficulty breaking into the rotation. Furthermore, AOR stations played fewer songs per hour than did Top 40 stations, preferring longer cuts by Led Zeppelin, Grateful Dead, Iron Butterfly, and others than the three-minute standard on AM. In this way AOR could be seen to subvert one aspect of

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<sup>12</sup> Kevin Holm-Hudson, “‘Come Sail Away’: The Commodification of ‘Prog-Lite,’” *American Music* 23 (2005): 382.

<sup>13</sup> Colin Larkin, *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006): 215.

commercialism in radio, by reducing the frequency of advertisement interruptions.

Because the average song was longer, the artist who did make it into the rotation would still be heard less frequently than on a Top 40 station playing the same record. So the critical position that AOR could “give rise to” a generation of commercially successful bands is at least incomplete, if not misleading.

Still further impediments to authenticity lay within the realm of live performance. At the beginning of the 1970s, Led Zeppelin, Grand Funk Railroad, and others catalyzed a new mode of live performance based on large crowds. Grand Funk, and to a lesser extent Led Zeppelin, earned little of the critical praise enjoyed by their predecessors in rock, but enjoyed great success on tour and in the sales department, throwing into question the relationship between objective popularity and subjective quality. The most visible byproduct of such commercial success was the increasing economic distance between rock performers and their audience, represented by private jets and other accoutrements of ostentatious wealth. This increasing distance disadvantaged the rock performer in pursuit of rock and roll authenticity, as the economic capital they acquired through large-venue concerts and record sales placed them on the opposite end of the spectrum.

### **§ The Unities of Discourse and Arena Rock**

This dissertation presumes in its title the validity of a genre called “Arena Rock,” and the document has gone to some length to explain the performance practices preceding the establishment of the term around 1977. However, even if the term “Arena Rock” had never been uttered, historians could observe how rock critics grouped certain rock bands of the late 1970s as if in a genre, and evaluated these in summary fashion

rather than individually. A closer look at representative samples of this literature will show how a core collection of bands emerged at the heart of the genre, bands whose compositions and performances constitute the musical characteristics of Arena Rock.

It is safe to say, regarding this chapter's gambit, that the *South Park* writers anticipated that their joke would be received by an audience uneasy with the style of musical composition and performance characteristic not only of Toto, but of the Arena Rock genre in general. In other words, Toto was merely the token of that genre which allowed the general potential for humor to take the form of a joke. That Toto could have been replaced by a number of similar bands suggests notion of a zeitgeist, in this case a shared mode of composition and performance among a large swath of musicians at virtually the same moment. That is, the genre of Arena Rock was held together, or perceived as unified, on account of shared characteristics. It is their common approach to music composition and performance that binds them together under the term, and this is reminiscent of what Foucault called the notion of 'spirit' in his pursuit of the unities of discourse.<sup>14</sup>

In order to discuss a broad theme like Arena Rock, one inevitably, if only initially, conceives of it as continuous. Foucault challenged the perceived unities of discourse in his book the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). He believed that broad terms (such as 'science' or 'madness') were “unities of discourse” that only appear continuous, shorthands which actually mask a complicated history of words and deeds spanning great amounts of time. These unities were held in place by four notions—tradition, influence, development and evolution, and 'spirit'—all of which diversify the theme of continuity,

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<sup>14</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Unities of Discourse,” in *The Archaeology of Knowledge, and The Discourse on Language*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972): 21.



and which Foucault claims represent “ready-made syntheses, those groupings that we normally accept before any examination, those links whose validity is recognized from the outset.”<sup>15</sup> Below, as the core Arena Rock groups emerge from the literature, it will become clear that they were linked to one another by the notion of 'spirit', an approach to songwriting and performance that critics saw in common. Similarly, this argument about Arena Rock in the late 1970s will consult the notion of development, since the genre arguably represents a decade of work to evolve arena performance from its incipient state

In this chapter, the term Arena Rock will be subjected to an investigation similar to what Foucault offered in his *Archaeology*, and its perceived unities of discourse will be challenged. Neither intrinsic to nor originating in the discourse of Arena Rock, these four notions represent the habits of mind of individual rock writers and readers, of those who produced and interpreted the early history of Arena Rock. The notions understandably arise when the producers and interpreters of this history tend to group similar lines of thought under a common theme group. In Foucault's view, analysts must suspend these notions long enough to investigate the unities of discourse and to show why things happened the way they did, and not in some other way.

### **§ The Discourse on Arena Rock**

The rock literature from 1978–9 exhibits traces of what is now recognizable as a unified discourse on Arena Rock, even if the term was not used in each magazine issue. The articles below reveal a persistent drive to group bands that are now recognizable as forming the core of the genre. By presenting a few examples of this grouping style, it will become clear that there was in the late 1970s a consensus as to which bands to group

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 22. Just to avoid unnecessary confusion, “development and evolution” are shortened within this chapter to “development.”

together. Once the unified discourse has been discovered, we will then examine, question, and oust the notions that give the illusion of unification under the term Arena Rock.

The following evidence contains some of these tell-tale band-groupings as well as some evaluative claims. The latter will be bracketed for the moment, not in order to ignore or downplay the author's (often pejorative) claims about the bands they grouped together, but to produce something like the "field of the facts of discourse" required of a Foucauldian analysis. "We must recognize," Foucault wrote, "that they [the unities of discourse] may not, in the last resort, be what they seem at first sight. In short, they require a theory, and that this theory cannot be constructed unless the field of the facts of discourse on the basis of which those facts are built up appears in its non-synthetic purity."<sup>16</sup> The evaluative claims will return to the foreground in a later section of this chapter, when the full force of their importance can be apprehended and their meaning applied to the argument of Arena Rock already in progress. The themes of these claims include authenticity as well as problems of geography and of physical space, problems that resonate with the overall project of the dissertation to introduce spatial theory into the discussion of rock performance.

The first piece of evidence implicates Toto as associates of several other bands we now consider Arena Rock groups. The article's author, Harry Doherty, begins his review of Toto's eponymous debut album by noting the professionalism of the musicians.<sup>17</sup> With

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>17</sup> Toto was composed of technically proficient session musicians with pop recording credentials, which precipitated some of their criticisms. By the time of their founding in 1977, drummer Jeff Porcaro had recorded with Warren Zevon, Steely Dan, Allen Toussaint, Rickie Lee Jones, Etta James, Leo Sayer; his brother, keyboardist Steve Porcaro had recorded with Earth, Wind and Fire, Eddie Money and The Pointer Sisters; keyboardist David Paich had recorded with Joan Baez, Elkie Brooks and Jackson Browne; and bassist David Hungate had recorded with Stephen Bishop, Donovan, Barbra Streisand, and Bert Jansch. All of these musician combined forces on Boz Scaggs's album *Silk Degrees*, which peaked at #2 on the U.S. pop charts, and which also featured the Porcaros' father, Joe, whose history recording

a wry insinuation, Doherty begins, “This could have been an unholy disaster,” implying that studio musicians like those in Toto with vast experience in the industry inevitably produce sterile, “boring” music. To his surprise, Doherty finds the band exciting, and that “[Toto] goes some way towards redressing the damage caused to American credibility by the formula-riddled antics of the likes of Boston, Foreigner and Kansas (to name a few).”<sup>18</sup> The four bands resembled each other closely enough for Doherty to consider three of them together as stale, and position Toto as the refreshing antidote. Doherty's use of the term “formula” harkens back to Santana's and Clapton's views on routine and Romantic tendencies for authenticity.

The perception of a unified discourse on Arena Rock is bolstered by a second statement from the same author. Grouping bands as he did during his *Toto* review, Doherty opposes the new wave group Blondie with a litany of Arena Rock bands: “Kiss, Boston, Foreigner, Kansas, etc., give Americans what they want, i.e. straight-ahead, uncomplicated, pretty rock. Blondie offers contrasts. Blondie offers pop.”<sup>19</sup> In this case, one is tempted to align the two comments from the same author. Yet, Foucault warns that this problem of one author producing multiple texts is more complicated than it first appears. The designation of *oeuvre* is often spoken of homogeneously, but “if one speaks, so indiscriminately [*sic*] and unreflectingly of an author's *oeuvre*, it is because one imagines it to be defined by a certain expressive function. One is admitting that there must be a level (as deep as it is necessary to imagine it) at which the *oeuvre* emerges.”<sup>20</sup> Rather than imagine both of Doherty's articles as identical in purpose under the concept

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work was impressive in its own right. Toto guitarist Steve Lukather had somewhat more obscure credits, having recorded with Eric Kaz, Harvey Mason, Lee Ritenour, and John Mayall.

<sup>18</sup> Harry Doherty, “Toto: *Toto*,” *Melody Maker*, February 3, 1979.

<sup>19</sup> Harry Doherty, “Blondie: Pinecrest Theater, Shelton, Connecticut,” *Melody Maker*, July 7, 1979.

<sup>20</sup> Foucault, “Unities of Discourse,” 24.

of oeuvre, the analyst must examine each statement individually, and in this specific examination we find in these two articles that the author uses the same bands (with the addition of Kiss, in the second) to serve two ostensibly separate purposes, one to elevate Toto, the other to praise Blondie. The unity of Arena Rock discourse is predicated on the unified manner with which Kiss, Boston, and the rest are grouped together, in seemingly disparate contexts. Doherty's statement about Blondie helps prepare the discussion below about Arena Rock versus New Wave and Romantic authenticity.

A unified discourse on Arena Rock emerges more clearly with evidence provided by a separate critic. This third statement highlights the very bands invoked by Doherty, but deploys that grouping for a slightly different effect. Rather than contrasting them with a new wave band, the Arena Rock musicians grouped here represent the collective target of scorn from the punk band the Clash as they were ascending the ranks. The author is describing how the Clash has its eyes set on dismantling the rock industry, suggesting that “their ambitions are to do away with Boston, Kansas, Foreigner and Kiss as quickly as possible and become 'the best rock and roll band in the world.'”<sup>21</sup> Between these last two documents, it appears that the two authors and the Clash took a common view toward Arena Rock bands, that they were part of a group. Like the Blondie statement above, this article helps prepare the discussion below about Arena Rock versus punk and Romantic authenticity.

These contemporaneous statements are suggestive of the ways in which a handful of rock bands of the late 1970s were casually lumped together by diverse authors and publications. Although none of them actually included the term “Arena Rock,” the bands mentioned above form the core of the genre, based on additional accounts and more

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<sup>21</sup> Sylvie Simmons, “The Clash in America,” *Sounds*, February 17, 1979.

recent documentation of the period.<sup>22</sup> It should not be surprising that the term was used regularly only after the practices of Arena Rock were underway. Genres, as Franco Fabbri points out, “can help us understand musical events, but above all they permit us to speak of them. It is not by chance that, most typically, a new music or genre manages to be spoken about when it is considered to be unclassifiable at that moment: it does not explain what it is, but says what it is not with respect to other known genres.”<sup>23</sup> Defined by negation, the Arena Rock genre was clearly on the path to acceptance, with a critical consensus of a core of bands. However, as soon as the term was established, a new set of problems arose for analysts: three issues of connotation and denotation that Fabbri calls “frontier problems.”

### § Technical-Formal Rules of the Genre

Fabbri's frontier problems form the backdrop of the technical-formal rules of Arena Rock, and will illuminate some of the contradictory forces at work in the naming of the genre. The problems are (1) that genre terms connote diverse things even if they

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<sup>22</sup> To wit, John Rockwell wrote of Kiss that “Even with their smoke, flames, spat blood, explosive charges and levitating drumstands, they are still tied to the stiff format of the arena rock show and, as such, their theatricality looks limited and lame.” “Kiss Satisfies Need for Glitter At Rock Show,” *New York Times*, February 20, 1977; Robert Palmer wrote of Alice Cooper that, “The theatrical elements that Mr. Cooper introduced into arena rock—and theatrical means the full panoply of Hollywood and Las Vegas show business, from lights to choreography to elaborate costuming—have swallowed up his music.” “Theatrics Overwhelm Show by Alice Cooper,” *New York Times*, July 23, 1977; Robert Christgau wrote that the Rolling Stones album *Love You Live* (1977) was, “lazy, unfocussed, desperately mannered music that like all arena rock attempted to make up in obvious gestures what it lacked in subtlety and feeling.” “Some Guys,” *Village Voice*, July 10, 1978; Robert Palmer observed that, “With Aerosmith, Ted Nugent, and Mahogany Rush coming into Giants Stadium in New Jersey’s Meadowlands Sports Complex on Aug. 6, big-time arena rock in the metropolitan area seems to be in reasonably good health.” “The Pop Life,” *New York Times*, July 21, 1978; Rockwell must have been laughing to himself when he wrote that, “Even more than most arena rock concerts, a Dead concert appeals to its audience for extra-musical reasons; two young men in front of this writer spent all of 45 minutes trying to light their marijuana pipe.” “Rock: The Grateful Dead Open Series at Garden,” *New York Times*, September 6, 1979; and Palmer said of Starz (an opening band for Styx) that, “From the obligatory keyboard and drum solo features to the lead vocalist’s ‘All Right, New York, Let’s Have a Look at You,’ this was arena rock by the book. At this point the book is in serious need of revision.” “Pop: Styx at the Garden,” *New York Times*, February 8, 1980.

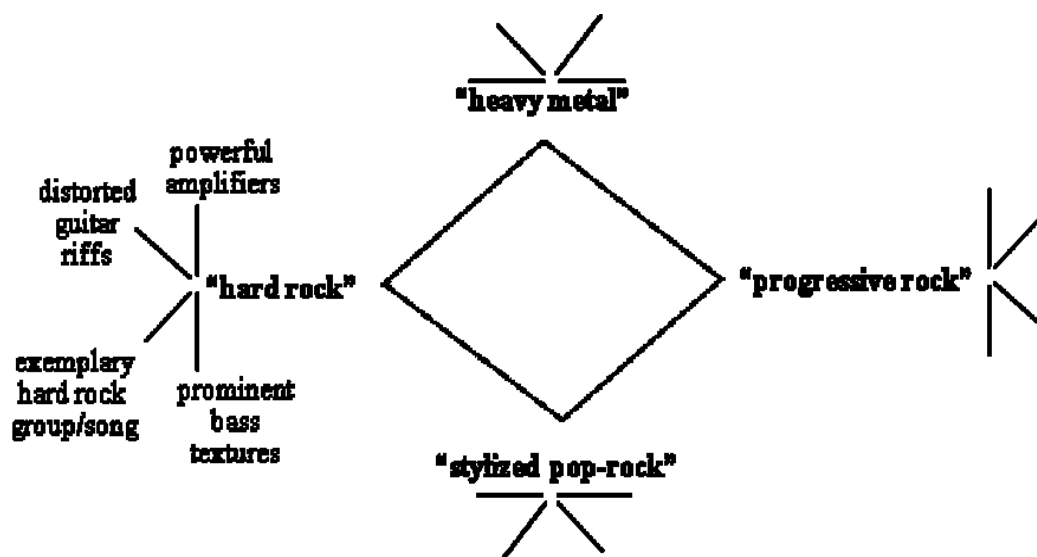
<sup>23</sup> Franco Fabbri, “What Kind of Music?” *Popular Music* 2 (1982): 142.

*can* denote in the same way; (2) that genre terms denote precisely different things; and (3) that the question “what kind of music?” can lead to a host of different answers.

With a core of Arena Rock bands in place, and with the layered issued of authenticity raised, these problems carve out in musical detail the technical-formal rules of composition and performance that will in turn enrich the discussion of the unities of discourse already underway. The technical-formal rules of the Arena Rock genre comprise a wide variety of musical decisions made by bands and their management, including instrumentation, the number of band members, musical style, compositional form, choices of timbre, and manner of performance, especially vocal performance. This chapter examines the work of just three bands, but a more complete study of Arena Rock’s style features would likely arrive at consistent musical characteristics from across the genre. These features would certainly include a core Arena Rock ensemble (lead and backup vocalists, one or two guitarists—both electric and acoustic, bass, drums, and optional keyboardist); extended instrumental solos for many of these musicians; an anthemic lyrical style that uses and a delivery by backup vocalists, in the style of Queen’s “We Will Rock You,” that in conjunction tend to encourage audience participation; a preponderance of power chords and root-position harmonies, in which the lowest sounding notes produce overtones supported by—rather than clashing with—higher chord tones; and an abundance of electronic manipulation beyond mere distortion pedals, such as chorus, flange, and reverb, that significantly broadened the palette of rock timbres in the 1970s. By examining, at least schematically, the musical decisions that combined to form Arena Rock, both the commonalities and differences among the groups emerge. The rules examined below will reveal clues about the nature of the unity of Arena Rock

discourse, and will further develop two of Foucault's notions that diversify the theme of continuity: development and influence.

The first frontier problem suggests that a single genre term like “hard rock” “has different meanings for different people or at least that, even if it can *denote* the same thing for different people, it *connotes* diverse things.”<sup>24</sup> For example, to some the term “hard rock” may point to powerful amplifiers, distorted guitar riffs, or bottom-heavy musical textures, while for others the term may be best represented by a particular song or band that includes any or all of these elements. In this case the genre term can denote the song title, but needn't be restricted to it, as the remaining elements can testify. Keep in mind that “hard rock” shares a field with heavy metal, progressive rock, stylized pop-rock, and more, each with their own appropriate connotations.

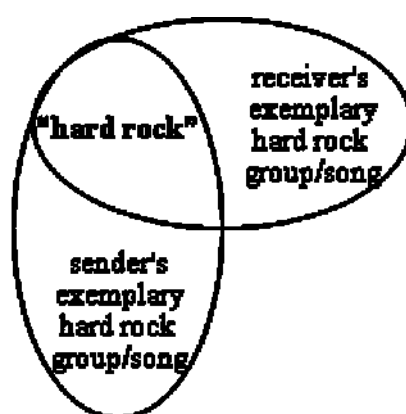


*Illustration 5.1a: Fabbri's first frontier problem.*

Fabbri's second frontier problem suggests that a single signifier like “hard rock” “not only connotes different things for two different people – according to the diversity of

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 132.

their interests in the denoted object and therefore according to the diverse processes of understanding involved – but precisely denotes two different things.”<sup>25</sup> Agreement between these two hypothetical people is closer at hand when more precise signifiers are provided, such as a particular band or song. As Fabbri shows, this problem is especially prevalent across borders of culture and language.



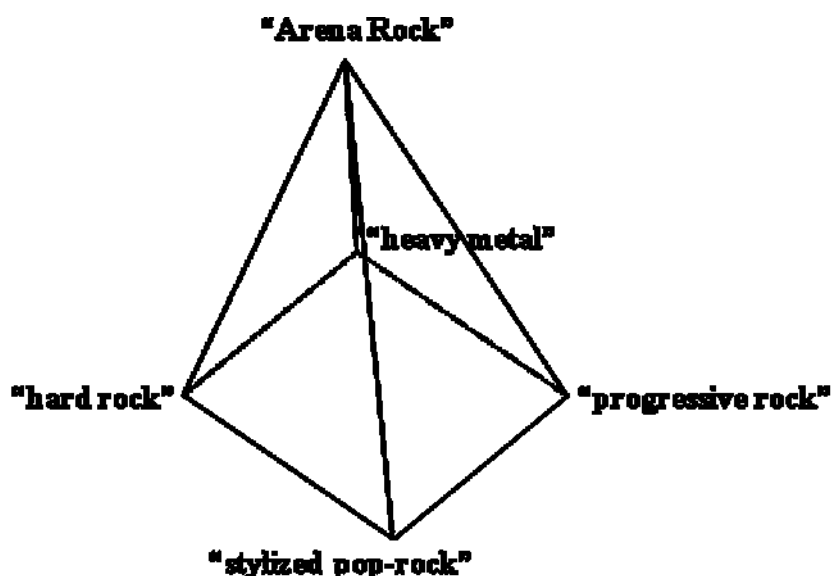
*Illustration 5.1b: Fabbri's second frontier problem.*

Finally, Fabbri's third frontier problem suggests that genre terms are inherently loose signifiers, such that the question “What kind of music does [band *x*] play?” is answerable with more than one genre term. The band Kiss, for example, may sound like “hard rock” to some but look like “glam rock” to others, a characteristic incompleteness or looseness of genre terms that an umbrella terms like “Arena Rock” seems to redress. By installing the term into the language, critics effectively created a super genre which complicated or exacerbated the first two frontier problems while appearing to solve the third. If “hard rock” connoted diverse things, then its super genre “Arena Rock” connoted

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 133.



even more diverse things; as “hard rock” required translation across cultures, so too did “Arena Rock”; and the term “Arena Rock” became a catch-all category for bands, with diverse aesthetic outlooks, grouped together by rock press writers, a loaded term which, as intimated above, critics deployed in the service of distinguishing what they viewed as authentic from the insincere, formulaic, and uninspired routine of mass music. In these ways, critics who adopted the term contributed to the construction of a unity of Arena Rock discourse. The argument following from that is that since “Arena Rock” comprised bands ostensibly representative of numerous genres, it also encompassed the technical-formal rules of each.<sup>26</sup>



*Illustration 5.1c: Fabbri's third frontier problem, as applied to Arena Rock.*

<sup>26</sup> What I have just described is a thought process by which early critics of Arena Rock could have conceivably converged on the genre title, and does not necessarily align with the hierarchical concept of supra genre as discussed in David Brackett, “(In Search of) Musical Meaning: Genres, Categories and Crossover,” in *Popular Music Studies*, ed. David Hesmondhalgh and Keith Negus (London: Arnold): 65–83. The disparity between these two views is suggestive of how critics readily lumped Arena Rock bands together without processing the fact that their newly-minted genre title encompassed some, but not all, of the distinctive elements beneath it.

Foucault's notion of development runs parallel to progressive rock, the sub-genre of primarily British rock music contemporaneous with Arena Rock. Built into the genre name itself, the Foucauldian notion of development signified a strategic move espoused by bands who imagined themselves moving forward from rock styles of the 1960s, a sense of “progress” that occurred with respect to musical style (meter, timbre, lyrical themes), compositional form, and the staging of live performance. These three elements were adopted by bands such as Styx, who wore the label “progressive” before being dubbed “Arena Rock.”

The second element of compositional form represents one area where progressive rock bands believed themselves to be “progressing.” Songwriting styles of the early- to mid-1960s predominantly centered on the alternation between two major sections, the verses and choruses, often with an interlude third section (called the “middle eight”). Typically, these verses, choruses and middle eight were composed and performed with a steady tempo and time signature, and typically, the key areas of the sections were identical or closely related. The rigidity of these norms weakened as musicians experimented with form and studio techniques while the 1960s elapsed; progressive rock bands ensured their differentiation with respect to these fading norms, as representative bands composed into their material contrasting tempos, mercurial time signatures, and more distant keys.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The Progressive Rock genre was represented by predominantly British bands, such as Genesis (*The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, 1974), Yes (*Close to the Edge*, 1972), Emerson, Lake, and Palmer (*Pictures at an Exhibition*, 1971), as well as American bands like Kansas (*Leftoverture*, 1976). Stylistically, these musicians shared an affinity for drawing from classical music thematic material in an attempt to boost the perceived artistic credibility of rock. Multi-section songs, long instrumental textures, mercurial time signatures, mystical or other-worldly lyrical themes, and instrumental virtuosity are its hallmarks. See Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Kevin Holm-Hudson, ed., *Progressive Rock Reconsidered* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

### § Styx, “Fooling Yourself” (1977)

We can observe how Arena Rock encompassed the formal-technical rules of progressive rock by examining the formal design of the Styx song “Fooling Yourself (the Angry Young Man)” from their 1977 concept album *The Grand Illusion*. The song contains many of the attributes of the progressive rock genre, and in particular consists of several time signature changes. As with many songs, this one begins with an instrumental introduction, a keyboard feature in 6/8 time punctuated with strummed, acoustic twelve-string guitar chords in D major and cymbal crashes on strong beats (Example 5.1a). This eighty-second section concludes with the keyboardist, guitarist, and drummer slowing, then striking and holding a unison chord to allow the energy to dissipate somewhat, after which the twelve-string guitarist alone begins a second riff in 4/4 time in D mixolydian (Example 5.1b). Eighth notes are equal across the sections, and the keys are closely related, so contrast between them is fairly unpronounced but clearly marked by the new time signature and the addition, in the second section, of the vocalist. Tommy Shaw sings the first verse and chorus before keyboardist Dennis DeYoung leads the next section with a solo in 7/4 time. DeYoung's solo segues back to the next verse by ending in 4/4. The second chorus ends with a two-measure 5/8 transition into a reprise of the initial 6/8 texture, led by a second DeYoung solo in place of the plain instrumental which began the song (Example 5.1c).



Example 5.1a: “Fooling Yourself” opening instrumental texture.



*Example 5.1b: “Fooling Yourself,” acoustic guitar riff during verses.*



*Example 5.1c: “Fooling Yourself,” background riff for second keyboard solo.*

“Fooling Yourself” ends with a strict repeat of the two-measure 5/8 transition phrase. Although the contrast between sections is low, it is marked by shifting time signatures and, at the beginning, by a dramatic fermata. Insofar as Styx composed shifting time signatures into their songs, they were considered progressive rock, and insofar as Arena Rock discourse included Styx, it encompassed musical elements considered “progressive,” and it supported the notion of development.

### **§ Boston, “Foreplay / Long Time” (1976)**

The third element of progressive rock mentioned above is the attitude toward live performance and extra-musical concert technologies. As we saw in Chapter One, the Beatles performed live without any additional concert technology like video projection screens, props, or lighting displays. In contrast, progressive rock is marked by its differentiation from this rather plain approach to performance with elaborate staging that included fantasy-like costuming and instruments elevated on hydraulic lifts, most notably, perhaps, with Emerson, Lake, and Palmer (ELP), as we saw in the fourth chapter, with their somersaulting piano at California Jam in 1974. Grandiose performance of this kind

was often labeled “pomp rock.”<sup>28</sup> The addition of concert technology to this degree represented compensatory actions for the loss of intimacy in large venues, to entertain the farthest fan with an exaggerated materiality. This exaggerated approach to musical performance was shared by ELP as well as musically different bands Alice Cooper and Kiss, all of whom connected to each other by virtue of their common penchant for elaborate staging and concert technology. In Foucault's terms these bands shared a common 'spirit' in performance, implying that the unity of Arena Rock discourse is unified in terms other than strictly musical ones.

This drive for elaborate technology, although in a substantially less theatrical guise, was represented most clearly through the music and promotion of the hard rock group Boston. Originating in Cambridge, Massachusetts in winter 1969, the project went forward under several names and personnel configurations before it settled on Boston six years later. Amid these changes, two consistent members of the organization were Tom Scholz and Brad Delp, the guitarist-organist-producer and lead vocalist, respectively. Between 1969 and 1975, Scholz, Delp, and their band mates labored virtually unnoticed in bars of the Boston area before finally achieving a contract with Epic Records to record what became their eponymous debut album. It was during this period that Scholz developed his intricate, signature sound in the home studio he constructed in his basement. Before examining music from *Boston*, an examination of Scholz's engineering background will provide for clues into both why that album became the best-selling debut in American history and why the band faced such critical scorn in the bicentennial era.

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<sup>28</sup> Rick Wakeman, keyboardist of the progressive rock band Yes, ranks among those associated with creating “pomp rock.” See Chris Welch, “Rick Wakeman: Liszten To Rick!” *Melody Maker*, August 1975.

Scholz studied mechanical engineering at MIT and earned a Master's degree in 1970, moving from the classroom to the crosstown workshops of the Polaroid Corporation. As a product engineer, Scholz was given a handsome salary and invested a portion of his earnings into his home-studio where he could continue recording demos of his bands with Delp. Scholz's engineering background was both a blessing and a curse for the band, since it resulted in their highly polished signature sound, and created a convenient point of entry for press coverage. The image of Boston as technically-minded soon escaped the control of the band. Boston's record company used Scholz's technical proficiency as part of their promotional strategy when the band decided on a futuristic design for their debut album—guitars as spaceships. “When the [Boston demo] album began to catch on, Epic churned out reams of promotional copy, calling Scholz a mechanical genius and keying the group's appeal to the slogan 'Better Music Through Science,’” a play on the DuPont corporation's famous advertising slogan “Better things for better living . . . through chemistry.”<sup>29</sup> Scholz quickly discovered his distaste for such a strategy: “All that promotion drove me crazy . . . The science rap was dreamed up by one guy, who took a look at the spaceships on our album cover and bombarded everyone with the slogan . . . We tried to stop it, as we got a lot of bad reviews from people who came up to us and said, 'What makes you so special?’”<sup>30</sup> So as Boston began to crest, their popularity came mixed with a critical suspicion of Scholz's technical proficiency and Boston's richly layered studio sound. Indeed, this perception persists today in academia, where Boston's music has been labeled “antiseptic” without qualification.<sup>31</sup>

Yet the recording equipment used to produce Boston's debut album was personally

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<sup>29</sup> James Simon, “Boston: Rock and Roll Band,” Associated Press, April 7, 1977.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Holm-Hudson, “‘Come Sail Away,’” 391.

rather than institutionally owned. Although their polished sound was exactly the style of production that burgeoning AOR critics scorned, it was far from corporately produced. As Scholz explains, “The record was done when we got our contract.”<sup>32</sup> Institutional equipment has a long history of appearing inaccessible to new producers, from Pierre Schaeffer's *Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrète* (associated with the French national broadcasting organization), to the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, both founded in the immediate post-war context. Especially in the 1950s, electronic music and the associated recording equipment was prohibitively expensive for hobbyists, and required more operational area than most individuals could easily provide. Highly technical music also seemed diametrically opposed to a “do it yourself” aesthetic. Government-funded broadcast institutions and elite colleges could afford the exchange of both money and space, so strictly from a technical point of view this type of equipment appeared inaccessible. To be sure, such equipment had reduced in both cost and size since the 1950s, through continued and intensified research and development, placing elaborate recording technology more firmly in the hands of hobbyists by 1976, the year of *Boston's* release. Yet, the prevailing view of technically proficient rock production at the time of *Boston's* debut was still incompatible with rockist tenets of accessible, authentic, “do it yourself” music. This paradox and Scholz's apprehension of Epic's promotional strategy provide clues into how *Boston* felt misapprehended from the beginning.

Despite the initial criticism of their technology, *Boston* won the admiration of audiences at an astoundingly rapid pace. Epic went on record to say that sales were the fastest in history; the album was reported to sell 75,000 copies per week in January 1977, and 2.5 million copies in its first eight months. These reports of the speed of sales are

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<sup>32</sup> Patrick Goldstein, “Boston: Beantown Bombers Break Big,” *Creem*, January 1977: 28.

curious, for the national audience had no previous encounter with Scholz or anyone else in the band prior to *Boston*. Why did that album sell so well, so quickly? The rapid success caught even Scholz by surprise. “I’d been making tapes in my basement for close to six years,” Scholz said in 1977, “and I had no perspective, no way of telling how good they were.”<sup>33</sup> Strong evidence for their rapid success lies in the manner in which audiences are encouraged to participate in their first radio single, “Long Time,” which I argue oscillates between the Romantic and Modernist tendencies of authenticity.

The Modernist tendencies are represented by the technologies just described as well as the musical form of the first two songs from the album *Boston*. Side 1 of the album concludes with two conjoined songs: the formally-complex “Long Time” preceded by a terse instrumental track, “Foreplay,” which, as it segues into “Long Time” articulates an elaborate iv (IV) – V – I chord progression in the key of F.

“Foreplay” is partitioned into two major sections, and the first begins as a keyboard solo in the key of B-flat Dorian in 12/8 time, at 180 beats per minute. Once the keyboard is joined by distorted electric guitar and choked cymbals crashing on beat one to outline the meter, a tenor voice on the keyboard plays the first riff in the home key (Example 5.2a), repeatedly immediately by the bass guitar, then the electric guitar.



Example 5.2: “Foreplay” bass riff.

The drums play an important role amid these repeats, growing more excited with each iteration. When all instruments have entered the band plays a second riff, longer but

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

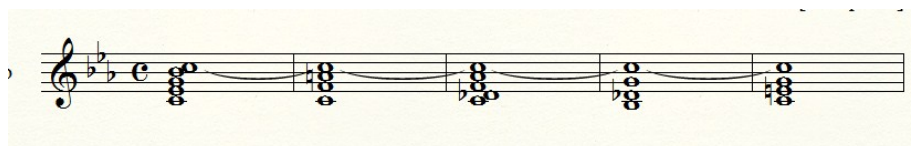


related to the first, leading to a cadential riff in the home key. These riffs are repeated nearly verbatim, with the solo presentation of the first riff omitted, and a cadence in B-flat major rather than the initial minor, and this entire first section of “Foreplay” can be heard in retrospect to function as a predominant in F, the home key of “Long Time.”

The second section of “Foreplay” constitutes a prolongation of the dominant of F, manifested by two different chord progressions both cadencing on C (Examples 5.3a and 5.3b), played by the keyboard. Its tempo is much slower than the first section, and this space allows the guitarist Scholz to showcase his technical prowess with gear boxes he created himself. As the keyboardist performs the first progression, Scholz creates noisy sound effects based on high pitched feedback and echoes, all abruptly silenced to allow the tonic C to hang in the space between chord progressions.



*Example 5.3a: “Foreplay,” first cadence.*



*Example 5.3b: “Foreplay,” second cadence, with C common tone.*

During this second progression, Scholz's sound effects are much less noisy and more ethereal, still full of echo but resembling dripping water more than a raging conflagration. To end “Foreplay,” the final chord on C is held for many seconds before the bass guitar enters with a steady pulse of 120 beats per minute, and a distorted guitar increases tension by sustaining a C power chord that fades into the mix until it is on the

level of the organ. Just as the guitar peaks in volume, the snare drum raps twice (unambiguously heard as beats three and four in retrospect) to introduce “Long Time.” The full band performs and repeats a two-measure vamp behind the lead guitarist for an eight-measure guitar solo in the home key of F.

Compared with “Foreplay,” “Long Time” is fairly conventional in its formal construction. When the short solo is finished, the vocalist Brad Delp sings the first verse over eighteen bars, a set of four 4-bar units with an additional two measures appended to the end. The final four bars of the first verse outline the first real departure away from the prolongation of the tonic chord, with bars 15–16 on V (C), and 17–18 on IV (B-flat). As the first verse cedes to the first chorus, the ensemble texture changes dramatically: The two distorted guitars give way to one acoustic guitar strumming a new chord pattern, a double-plagal cadence using I-<sup>b</sup>VII-IV; the rest of the instrumentalists drop out of the texture.<sup>34</sup> Led by Delp, the band sings the chorus, all the while inviting the audience to participate. To assist in this project, Scholz recorded band members clapping on every beat during the chorus, a technique which tended to encourage crowd participation, a clear nod to the Romantic inclination to value the artist's community.

Having won over fans in the bicentennial year, Boston required nearly two years to produce their second album, *Don't Look Back*, which may have increased the winning effect of “Long Time.” Twenty-five months is a length of time most acts and records wished to avoid between albums, for the fear of losing the all-important and elusive momentum among audiences, and when Boston toured in support of their second album, it probably felt to audiences like a long time since the band had performed in their city.

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<sup>34</sup> For an in-depth look at the wide variety of double-plagal cadences in rock music, see Nicole Biamonte's “Triadic Modal and Pentatonic Patterns in Rock Music,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 32 (2010): 95–110.

However, audiences showed their enthusiastic support by clapping along in the manner encouraged by “Long Time.” In a mid-Atlantic college town, the band was a hit; “The crowd was on its feet the entire performance. Everyone was clapping their hands above their heads keeping time to the music. The crowd went wild, refusing to yield until Boston had played three encores . . . No band plays three encores unless the audience enjoys their music.”<sup>35</sup> That kind of crowd engagement was evident in Pittsburgh two months later. There, house lights came up inexplicably during the performance of “Feeling Satisfied” and “Long Time.” While this would normally draw a cascade of boos, the crowd in Pittsburgh persisted, “clapping and cheering with nary a catcall in the place.”<sup>36</sup> It is likely that some, if not all Boston audiences in 1978 were counted among those who lifted the band to stardom two years earlier, a lasting success based on the oscillation between Romantic and Modernist principles of authenticity.

### **§ Kiss Army and Romantic Authenticity**

In another realm of Arena Rock, the most telling example of the commitment to a sense of community and the Romantic tendencies of authenticity was the KISS Army. Though the original sense of this is lost, the genesis of the KISS Army concerned a struggle for the radio airwaves. “The early growth of the Kiss Army surely was fueled by an 'us against them' mentality among fans.”<sup>37</sup> In this case, the fans were “us,” and “them” was represented by a local radio station plus the conglomerated industry. Since radio stations were slow to introduce KISS, the fans decided to band together and persuade them. Crucially, the fans who instigated the revolt and organized the Army were not

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<sup>35</sup> John Reed, and Ed Tatum, “Boston Concert: 'Real Rock And Roll,' letter to the editor, (*Charlottesville, VA*) *Cavalier Daily* January 24, 1979.

<sup>36</sup> Pete Bishop, “Boston Throws 'Party' at Arena,” *Pittsburgh Press*, March 27, 1979.

<sup>37</sup> “KISS: The Loyal Legion,” *Billboard*, October 3, 2009: 30–32.

loyalists from their hometown of Queens, NY, but mid-western fans who were early adopters of KISS, disappointed with the lack of airplay. Bassist Gene Simmons explains:

That [the KISS Army] started in 1975 in Terre Haute, Indiana. A guy named Ray Sharkey [*sic*], I think, was a fan who wanted his local radio station to play Kiss in Terre Haute, but they wouldn't do it because it wasn't the Bee Gees or Pablo Cruz. And he threatened them; he said, "Me and my friends, we call ourselves the Kiss Army. We're going to come down there and surround the station," so the radio station gets nervous and calls the cops. The radio station refuses to play Kiss, the newspapers send over a photographer, the next day a big photo of thousands of fans surrounding this little station, which looks like an outhouse in the middle of a cornfield outside of Terre Haute. Headline: "Kiss Army Invades Terre Haute," something like that, and there and then the Kiss Army was born.<sup>38</sup>

Ray Starkey, the Terre Haute fan named by Simmons, remembers this moment slightly differently.

I had befriended some of the DJ's at the [radio] station. They told me that the program director hated the band when he first saw the cover of the first album. He supposedly called them "a New York fag band" and threw the album out. So they couldn't play any KISS [. . .] One evening we, (Jay Evans and myself) called his request line and he told us that, "KISS was just a mediocre Bachman Turner Overdrive." I think that's when we really got pissed and started writing nasty letters about artists that the program director favored [. . .] Another radio [station] popped up and was looking for listeners. They gave in and the dj would say, "This song goes out to the KISS Army." People would immediately call the station and ask how they could join.<sup>39</sup>

The concept of a KISS Army, or fan club, was arguably born out of competition between radio station program directors over audience membership and thus advertising revenue. Nevertheless, once Terre Haute residents were introduced to the concept, they appear to have been catalyzed instantly, growing a community of fans that would have persisted whether or not a particular radio station supported its listening habits.

Even before the KISS Army concept was launched in Indiana, still other mid-

<sup>38</sup> Ray Waddell, "Shout It Out Loud," *Billboard*, October 3, 2009: 34–41.

<sup>39</sup> "Morley Views: Bill Starkey (KISS Army Founder)," accessed February 20, 2011, <http://www.antimusic.com/morley/05/BillStarkey.shtml>.

westerners were providing evidence of similar fan loyalty in Cadillac, Michigan. In 1974 KISS labored to grow their fan base in small towns like Cadillac through wide touring and public appearances. Meanwhile, at Cadillac High School, an assistant football coach named Jim Neff capitalized on the resonance between the band's name and an acronym made from an axiom he employed with his team: Keep it simple, stupid. After Neff introduced KISS's recordings to the team's practices and "going so far as to incorporate KISS song titles into the names of various plays," Cadillac High won the remaining seven straight games of their season, and the community at large came to appreciate the band.<sup>40</sup> Emboldened by his team success, the coach called KISS manager Bill Aucoin to arrange a visit to Cadillac High School, and after several months of negotiations the upstart band accepted.<sup>41</sup>

Just one month before the KISS Army was catalyzed in Terre Haute, Cadillac coach Neff and Aucoin coordinated to have KISS perform at the school gymnasium during the customarily grand homecoming in 1975. "The concert turned into a two-day event, complete with a parade, the presentation of the key to the city, the concert itself, and a large breakfast banquet on October 10 featuring members of Cadillac's political establishment in full KISS make-up."<sup>42</sup> Although the gymnasium could accommodate only 2,000 people, the whole Cadillac community was invited to participate in one form or another that weekend. We cannot know what every Cadillac resident thought about the KISS appearance, and some surely thought ill of it, but clearly many loved it. The *pièce de résistance* of this weekend was KISS's surprising departure from Cadillac, by way of

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<sup>40</sup> Curt Gooch and Jeff Suhs, *KISS: Alive Forever: The Complete Touring History* (New York: Billboard Books, 2002): 55.

<sup>41</sup> Many moments of this event were captured on film, and are currently available on *Kissology Vol. 1, 1974–1977: The Ultimate Kiss Collection*, VH1 Classic Records, 2006, DVD.

<sup>42</sup> Gooch and Suhs, *KISS: Alive Forever*, 55–6.

chartered helicopter from the middle of the school's football field. Taking a page from the Beatles's playbook, KISS was lifted into the sky by the aircraft, from which they then distributed flyers to the stunned onlookers below. Of course, the major difference between KISS and the Beatles is that KISS had to grow their audience with publicity stops such as this, whereas the Beatles seemed to rely on aircraft for their personal safety.

The weekend in Cadillac is also significant because it demonstrates how the band envisioned small communities as the key to their success. Rather than remain in New York, they decided to go virtually everywhere else, in order to create a geographically-dispersed fan base. Playing smaller markets could work to their promotional advantage: although playing four shows for 3,000 spectators is numerically equivalent to playing one 12,000 seat arena, the geographic coverage is four times as significant. It would involve roughly four times the radio stations and print media coverage. Furthermore, the way in which KISS focused their attention on smaller markets points to a similarity between Arena Rock and the truncation and dispersion of festivals as described in Chapter Four. Kiss entered the music scene as festivals were contracting from three-day events into one-day affairs and the industry was dispersing across the country. Their strategy was to perform frequently for several thousand fans rather than work to generate the excitement for fewer, but more well-attended concerts.

With the unspoken support of Cadillac and Terre Haute residents, the KISS Army was a grass-roots organization that ultimately spun off from its origins in Indiana into a nationwide organization. A KISS associate, Ron Boutwell of Boutwell Enterprises, directed the KISS Army organization from its inception in 1975. In this capacity, Boutwell managed the financial organization of the fan club in coordination with the

band's manager Bill Aucoin. It was Aucoin's and the band's calculated risk at the dawn of the bicentenary year that KISS fans would espouse the name “army,” with celebrations of the American Revolution lurking in the background. The gamble paid off, for the Army grew and became legion. Not only was the fan club large, they began to dress like KISS, as if the musicians were the actual leaders of an army, and they the fans were to mimic their mannerisms. Soon fans across the country, members of the KISS Army all, began wearing the make-up and aspiring to wear clothes like their leaders. The Army appeared with every concert given by Kiss in the United States, from high school gymnasiums up to the largest stadiums. Thus, as Kiss made their way to the top of annual polls, their fan base created a community around themselves, and this was no clearer than during live performance. After months of surprising success with the new organization, Boutwell wrote wryly to Aucoin

“I approach this subject with great trepidation, for I find myself in a rather embarrassing position. If you will recall our meeting in September of 1975, wherein you forced me to organize and manage a fan club, i.e., the KISS Army, my promise to you at that time was that we would do it and probably end up losing money, or at best, break even. However, the bottom line is that in spite of all my efforts, the fucking fan club has made money, too much goddamn money!”<sup>43</sup>

Although the Army was the brainchild of a fan, the band quickly incorporated the idea and converted into a money-making enterprise. The fan club sold, for example, comic books, action figures, even vitamins. This commercial aspect of the band, of course, was the obvious target of attack by those who believed such practices to detract from musical aesthetics. The Romantic tendency of authenticity was firmly in place wherever they went.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

## § The Discourse of In-between

In addition to the notion of development, the unity of Arena Rock discourse is held in place by the notion of influence, “which provides a support – of too magical a kind to be very amenable to analysis – for the facts of transmission and communication; which refers to an apparently causal process.”<sup>44</sup> Again, the band Styx will represent how this notion helped to shape the discourse of Arena Rock. In 1979 Styx released their ninth album, *Cornerstone*, which according to Steve Pond of the *Los Angeles Times*, “synthesize[d] clichés of the 1970s.” More specifically, Pond alleged that “On record, Styx mixes Yes' ethereal art-rock sound with lots of Led Zeppelin's chunky hard rock.”<sup>45</sup> The genre connections that Pond makes are unequal, since “art-rock” is more or less synonymous with progressive rock, within which Yes fits squarely, but “hard rock” is merely one facet of what Led Zeppelin does. Although they are customarily linked to the origins of the contentious heavy metal (or hard rock) genre, Zeppelin also forged links to more traditional types of rock by incorporating acoustic guitars and writing ballads, maneuvers that kept symbolic capital close at hand.

At any rate, Pond wants readers to hear Styx as carrying forward – or being influenced by – the previously recorded elements and codes of Zeppelin and Yes, of heavy metal and progressive rock. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Styx was not the only band allegedly influenced by heavy metal and progressive rock generally. More curiously, however, Styx was not the only Arena Rock band to weather allegations of the particular influence of Led Zeppelin and Yes. Three years prior to Pond's review of *Cornerstone*, Robert Christgau panned Boston's eponymous debut album, describing the band's music

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<sup>44</sup> Foucault, “Unities of Discourse,” 21.

<sup>45</sup> Steve Pond, “Styx Synthesizes Cliches of the 1970s: At the Forum,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 22, 1979, C3.



as “an American synthesis of Led Zeppelin and Yes.”<sup>46</sup> A cynical view of this evidence might suggest that Pond immersed himself in rock literature and collected phrases such as Christgau's, which he then incorporated into his own criticism; more generously speaking, how Pond arrived at his judgment is beyond the point. More remarkable is that these two reviewers, from different publications and opposite American coasts, took virtually the same tack (the “synthesis” of Led Zeppelin and Yes) to describe two different bands. Here Styx and Boston are linked together under the notion of influence, another element that ossifies the unity of Arena Rock discourse.

Furthermore, within this discussion of the Foucauldian notion of influence, the unspoken truth about these depictions of Styx and Boston is that they serve to support what I call the discourse of in-between. To the ears of these critics, both Styx and Boston were part-Zeppelin, part-Yes, neither fully heavy metal nor progressive rock, but both simultaneously. While these descriptions cannot represent the very first to introduce bands by referring to two others, it is interesting that the two bands invoked by Pond and Christgau both form the core of Arena Rock bands as indicated above. Pond and Christgau both provided readers with the sense that to understand either Styx or Boston, one had to understand heavy metal and progressive rock and to be able to imagine the space between those genres. It should be noted that both critics relate their subject to heavy metal and progressive rock in a “both-and” fashion. This positive conception of “in-betweenness” was familiar to audiences; as one example, a Florida teen stated that “I listen to mostly rock—hard, soft, a little of both and a little in between.” Formulated differently, however, critics and audiences could relate their subject to heavy metal and

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<sup>46</sup> “Christgau’s Consumer Guide,” *Village Voice*, November 1, 1976, [http://www.robertchristgau.com/get\\_artist.php?name=boston](http://www.robertchristgau.com/get_artist.php?name=boston).

progressive rock in a “neither-nor” fashion, which is how other teenagers interviewed in Florida responded when asked to describe their favorite bands in 1979. One of these teens described his favorite band in negative terms, saying that Styx is “not really hard, hard rock but they're not disco either. I like them because they're in between.” Whether attempting the positive or negative relation, whether defining what a band is or is not, critics and fans arrived at something in-between. Another band under discussion in these reviews and the Florida interview was Boston, who likewise defied easy categorization. The teen who selected Boston said, “I just like that kind of music. It's not really hard rock. It can be classified as hard rock, but it's not, really.”<sup>47</sup>

As another, more substantial example, I offer an excerpt from Kevin Holm-Hudson's article concerning Styx and their anthem “Come Sail Away.” As the author shows, *South Park* writers created, in the same year as the corporate coffee takeover depicted in the show, the opportunity for one of the comedy's central characters, Eric Cartman, to cover “Come Sail Away.” Irresistibly drawn to the song, the eight year-old Cartman enthusiastically performs the multi-sectional anthem in a theatrical manner, with very little of the original accuracy of pitch, rhythm, or timbre. I sense that rockism not only led *South Park* writers to parody Styx here as they had Toto, but that rockism has also seeped into popular musicology discourse. Holm-Hudson's description of this item is worth quoting at length.

The updated-for-the-1990s rendition of “Come Sail Away,” sung by *South Park* character Eric Cartman on *Chef Aid: The South Park Album* (1998), ironically highlights the song's “whiteness” while attempting, humorously, to restore racial balance. Chef (the voice of Isaac Hayes) interrupts the last repetitions of the chorus by saying, “make it funky now,” leading to a version of the chorus in rhythm-and-blues style; Cartman protests that he

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<sup>47</sup> All of these quotations taken from Lani McClure, “Who's Your Favorite Musical Group or Singer?” *Evening Independent* (St. Petersburg, FL), January 6, 1979.

is “screwing up” the song. Chef’s urban musical codes are perceived as incongruous both to the song’s predominantly White musical styles (“classical” music, progressive rock, heavy metal) and to its previous reception history. Although comical, this moment in the South Park version can be interpreted as an effort to reintroduce African American elements into a musical idiom that had long ago lost its African American historical roots.<sup>48</sup>

Readers are meant to recognize Hayes (Chef) as the musician responsible for the soundtrack to the 1971 film *Shaft*, a film largely intended for an urban, black audience. Notice how the author excuses the Chef’s short interjection in order to position “Come Sail Away” as inauthentic by comparison. This section of Holm-Hudson’s article does not concern Styx directly, but under the light of rockism, Cartman’s performance and, by extension, the Styx original are considered incomplete; the addition of “urban musical codes” would correct a deficiency and render the song a more authentic token of the idiom indexed by “Come Sail Away.” However, the author has also convincingly argued that “Come Sail Away” is a poor example of the predominantly White musical style of classical music.<sup>49</sup> What is to be made of this doubly-inauthentic rock song, or this idiom remarkably devoid of both “urban” and “White” musical codes? As a *bona fide* AOR hit, “Come Sail Away” was undoubtedly crafted in some sense with a broad audience in mind. This sense of in-betweenness was a calculated musical and, yes, business decision, that to my ears sound designed to be inclusive, to unify audiences, and to create communities wherever Styx performed.

The sense of in-between can dramatically affect how bands are perceived, especially where authenticity is concerned. Keir Keightley argues that “Rock culture tends to regard as most innovative those rock performers who deploy Romantic and

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<sup>48</sup> Holm-Hudson, ““Come Sail Away,”” 389–90.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 382–88.

Modernist authenticity more or less equally, in a productive tension.”<sup>50</sup> In other words, bands that play in the space between the two poles of authenticity are highly esteemed precisely because of their reluctance to remain at either extreme. Although the Arena Rock bands Styx and Boston came across as in-between, it remains to be seen whether this translated into a perception of oscillating between the two poles of authenticity; in either case, they are rarely “regard[ed] as most innovative.”

I argue that in many cases the Arena Rock bands did “deploy Romantic and Modernist authenticity more or less equally,” and will demonstrate that with another look at Styx's song “Fooling Yourself.” This means not only that the Arena Rock bands pull from both sides of the table (e.g., one group has sense of community as well as celebrating technology), but also that they offer both poles of the same row. That is, the bands often are found in-between columns, at once sounding like they believe in a core or essential rock sound and also having an openness regarding rock sounds. Styx appears dedicated to a core rock sound, judging from their instrumentation: guitars, bass, piano, drums. Yet, the band alternated between “classic” sounds from these instruments and more adventurous timbres, especially keyboard sounds. In fact, they alternated between “classic” and “progressive” sounds within individual songs, such as “Fooling Yourself.” This song was reviewed by British critic Andy Gil, who remarked on the keyboard timbres that help demarcate the musical form, but not before considering “Fooling Yourself” the touchstone of artistic insincerity. As Gil wrote, “Fooling Yourself – a song informing angry young men of their insincerity (which is not unlike the pot calling the kettle black) – has a pompous intro totally divorced from the song proper, and features a

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<sup>50</sup> “Reconsidering Rock,” 139.

synthesiser tone straight out of ELP's 'Lucky Man'.”<sup>51</sup> Part of Styx's appeal was their near constant shifting of the musical focal point from DeYoung's keyboard, to Shaw's acoustic guitar, to James Young's edgy electric guitar. The band's decision to highlight the guitar was accentuated when they brought in Tommy Shaw in the middle 1970s, who was hired because of his dedication to and virtuosity on the rock guitar, honed through years of performance in the southern rock context. The bands seem to craft their records and live performance based on the oscillation from one side to the next. And they used technology to facilitate their oscillations. In this light, Styx's role-swapping is recognizable as a conscious effort to straddle the “number of fault lines running through the centre of rock,” to oscillate between the poles of authenticity, and to invites listeners to regard Styx as in-between.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, these oscillations suggest that Styx imagined a multi-faceted audience, a generationally diverse one which sympathized with both Romantic and Modernist tendencies of authenticity. Nevertheless, most critics upheld Romantic sensibilities and decried Styx when they crossed over between tendencies.

### **§ Evaluative Judgments**

It is now time to return to the evidence that initially constituted the view of a unified Arena Rock discourse. This section will demonstrate how critics leveraged a specific form of discourse on authenticity, one based on space, to separate the Arena Rock musicians from those they tended to lionize.

Before returning to evidence already viewed, I submit a statement that could have been introduced above which groups Arena Rock bands as a unit, a statement by the leader of the British punk band Boomtown Rats, Bob Geldof. The punk community

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<sup>51</sup> Andy Gill, “Styx: Top Rank, Sheffield,” *New Musical Express*, June 3, 1978.

<sup>52</sup> Keightley, “Reconsidering Rock,” 136

generally antagonized mainstream rock. Like many punks, Geldof believed that the Arena Rock bands impeded his band's trajectory within the field of rock, and thus threatened his ability to deliver a message to a wide audience. Punks like Geldof wished in part to reorganize the modern economics of the music industry, and so linked the Arena Rock bands together as the institutional heavy. Curiously, Geldof also believed that the key to reorganizing economics was to open for the most successful of these bands. "I'd like to play," he said, "with some turkeys like Aerosmith, who are still pulling large crowds but in my opinion are on the way down. They haven't got one wit of musical bollow [*sic*] between them. And not only will Steve Tyler (of Aerosmith) get pissed off because he's got another Jagger look-alike [Geldof] up his sleeve but also 'cos I'm a lot better on stage than he could ever be. I'd love to play with any of them . . . those characterless turkeys, those faceless American bands . . . Foreigner, Boston."<sup>53</sup> Geldof clearly envisions his brand of music in opposition to that peddled by the other three bands; but his deployment of the terms "characterless" and "faceless" opens up the related issue of personality.

As an adjective, "faceless" has a long history, and in specifically musical circles it originates much earlier than late 1970s, when Geldof uttered his statement. One of the more obvious cases of "facelessness" is the British band the Hollies, who scored hits in the late 1960s with the originals "Bus Stop" (1966), "Carrie Anne" (1967), and "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother" (1969). Prior to these two original hits, however, the Hollies were largely considered a derivative band, having made their name with covers of American songs. The Hollies were viewed during this period to lack character until one of their members started to acquire some individual notoriety. "The Holly who has found

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<sup>53</sup> Paul Morley, "Boomtown Rats: Today: *Top of the Pops*, Tomorrow: The World," *New Musical Express*, December 16, 1978.

his face,” one critic wrote, “is Graham Nash. For too long the Hollies have been written about as “the faceless wonders of pop” – the hit group (‘Stop Stop Stop’ is their 13th consecutive hit to enter the *NME* Top Ten) without a member sufficiently forceful to stamp his personality upon the imagination of the public.”<sup>54</sup>

As a second example of “characterless,” the *Creem* magazine critic Gene Sculatti profiled the British band Ace in 1975, and related them to American bands he similarly considered lacking in personality. “Maybe the phenomenon of these inoffensive soundalikes [Ace] is England’s answer to the legion of low profile, near-faceless bands currently grabbing a good portion of the pie on these shores; all the Doobies and Montroses running on the steam of skill and stock licks and indebted to producers for endowing them with the personality they never could have fashioned for themselves.”<sup>55</sup> In the eyes of Sculatti, “faceless” in this context carried the meaning of derivativeness, as Ace comes across in his review as unoriginal artists, as the Hollies did above.

In addition to the musical sense, the term “faceless” registered in a slightly different way with respect to Grand Funk Railroad. Where the Detroit band was concerned, their “facelessness” derived from the perceived lack of character or a predominant persona, similar to the Hollies case. Grand Funk Railroad intentionally constructed their image as a band of equals, with no individual, with the possible exception of guitarist and songwriter Mark Farner, becoming too prominent during interviews and other interactions with the press. For this, the band faced criticisms of lacking that all-important quality that individuals can possess. “Solo artists,” wrote Dave

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<sup>54</sup> Keith Altham, “Hollie Graham Nash Finds His Face!,” *New Musical Express*, October 28, 1966.

<sup>55</sup> Gene Sculatti, “An Ace Album,” *Creem*, June 1975. To see this question of anonymity at work in another musical field, see Wayne Robins, “Doobie Brothers: The Reward Of Facelessness,” *Creem*, December 1975.

Marsh of *Creem* magazine, “do not have the intuitive sense of community that bands have, nor do they foster it. Grand Funk, Black Sabbath and the rest, as groups, are the force posited, consciously or no, against the separatism of the solo artist; because we still recognize individuals within this context, though the sight of Stewart doing solo albums is not only allowable, it is even welcomed. Grand Funk, save Farner, are individually virtually faceless, for instance.”<sup>56</sup> This sense of “characterless,” as opposed to musically derivative, resonates with the way in which Geldof invoked the terms with reference to Foreigner and Boston.

A band of equals such as Grand Funk Railroad had little chance of receiving a high valuation from critics who upheld a Romantic view of authenticity embodied by the solo singer. One such critic, the *Los Angeles Times* writer Robert Hilburn, articulated this view of the individual in 1978 upon a review of Bruce Springsteen. The budding “saviour” of rock music, Springsteen was considered by Hilburn as among a small batch of heroes who recaptured the rock spark. “Rather than fit into the faceless identity of outfits like Kansas, Chicago, Supertramp and Styx, they [Elvis Costello, Tom Petty, Bob Seger, Patti Smith, and Springsteen] focus attention again on the individual and the classic concept of rock star as *hero*. [. . .] Rather than the strong figures of the past, the music has been bogged down with timid, anonymous practitioners. While the pseudosophisticated explored sterile studio perfection, heavy metal groups dealt in a mindless assault equally void of emotional challenge.”<sup>57</sup> Several elements of this statement need unpacking. First, the so-called “classic concept” of individuals as heroes tends to support the view of directness of expression valued by Romantics. Hilburn

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<sup>56</sup> Dave Marsh, “The Faces: A Nod Is As Good As A Wink,” *Creem*, April 1972.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Hilburn, “Springsteen and Rock: Reborn and Running; Return of Rock,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 1978, N63.



contrasts these heroes with progressive rock bands (the “pseudosophisticated”) and heavy metal, arguing that Springsteen's passion in particular had “a fiery, impatient tone and imagery that deals with cars, romance, racing and other classic teen concerns.” By recurring to his “classic” formulation, Hilburn demonstrates his sympathy for “tradition and continuity with the past” and a “belief in a core or essential rock sound,” two of Keightley's determinants in the Romantic tendency of authenticity. The critic imagines Kansas, Chicago, and the rest to represent flamboyance, which rock artists in the 1960s rejected in favor of a “rigid, no-nonsense stage presence. The aim, reasonably enough, was to let the music speak for itself.” So even though Hilburn avoids invoking “Arena Rock,” he names enough bands at the core of the genre to create his argument that the entire genre of Arena Rock is wrongheaded, and that Springsteen can reorient the industry towards what, in his opinion, really matters.

In addition to critics like Hilburn, rock musicians outside of the Arena Rock core lambasted the commercial aspects of the music industry. One of these musicians, the British pub-rocker Nick Lowe, provided representative commentary during interviews from September 1979. Lowe publicly derided bands that failed to match his view of rock and roll. “People are now starting to realize,” he said, “that super-groups like Kansas, Styx, Genesis, and even Queen are just a joke now. The stuff we do is rock 'n' roll – inspired by the Everly Brothers, Eddie Cochran. It's basically American and it's fun. It's dance music.”<sup>58</sup> For all the aesthetic diversity suggested by these band names, the problem of authenticity is drawn by Lowe as antagonistically as it has ever been. Lowe seems to have imagined that his band had a monopoly on “fun” “American” “dance music,” and that the rest was rubbish. He was keen to draw the line at elaborate stage

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<sup>58</sup> “Nick Lowe: Forever Synchronized To The Rock Beat,” *Beaver Country Times*, September 26, 1979.

shows, suggesting that the state of music “was all Glam Rock and dry ice.” As a producer for fellow countryman and new wave sensation Elvis Costello, Lowe makes clear the aesthetic stakes involved in distancing his act from AOR ensembles. Costello was indeed finding his largest audience in 1979, and in a separate interview Lowe celebrated the territorial claim by repeating that “I think kids are starting to realize now that those groups we mentioned earlier on – your Styx, Kansas, Journey – what a lot of old garbage it is and how old-fashioned that sort of music is.”<sup>59</sup> Lowe's comments about “old-fashioned” music is mildly perplexing, since he himself paid explicit homage to Eddie Cochran (d. 1960), but in the same breath proclaims Styx to be old-fashioned.

This sense of opposition between the Arena Rock bands and heroes like Springsteen replicate the same opposition between Arena Rock and punk rock. “In the 1970s, punk was seen as the antithesis of rock, a mortal enemy intent on destroying rock culture.”<sup>60</sup> As Keightley argues, this opposition to mainstream rock like Boston and company helped legitimate punk in accordance with “rock's traditional investment in differentiation.” While punk did attempt to discredit Arena Rock, much of the discussion of this antagonism avoids discussion of musical details. Paul Simonon, bass player for the Clash, was quoted as saying, “Led Zeppelin? I don't need to hear the music – all I have to do is look at one of their album covers and I feel like throwing up.”<sup>61</sup> When punk musicians expressed their disdain for Arena Rock, it was based on the economic order of the music industry. Punks argued that commercially successful bands should share their wealth to help aspiring musicians rather than spend it on upholding their opulent lifestyle.

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<sup>59</sup> “Lowe Rides Rock's New Wave To Success,” *Tri City Herald*, September 17, 1979. For a concise discussion of Costello's own affinity for 1960s pop sensibilities, see David Brackett's *Interpreting Popular Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 168–171.

<sup>60</sup> Keightley, “Reconsidering Rock,” 138.

<sup>61</sup> Tony Horkins, *Led Zeppelin* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997): 26.

Sex Pistols singer Johnny Rotten held views similar to Simonon with respect to Led Zeppelin, and said of their unmistakable stardom that, “Robert Plant came down [*sic*] The Roxy surrounded by millions of bodyguards. I just looked at him, and he's like a real ignorant northerner, and I felt really sorry for him. Now, how can you respect someone like that?”<sup>62</sup> In short, an antagonism existed between sectors of the punk community and Arena Rock musicians, based in part on gaudy displays of the economic gain afforded by performance in society's largest venues. The relationship between these musicians and their place of performance is the final topic of this chapter.

### **§ Arena Rock, Authenticity, and Space**

Current debates over authenticity tend to include analysis of discourse and music, but rest there, leaving the question of space to linger. The following examination of the topic will suffuse the debate of authenticity with a much needed spatial element.

Folding performance into the discussions will highlight the key spatial issues, as perceived by musicians and critics of the late 1970s, that influenced the prevailing conception of Arena Rock's relationship to authenticity. The claim in this section is that discussions of authenticity have more to do with space than is currently recognized. Thus the prevailing view of Arena Rock will be more complex than it currently stands, and the live performance at the center of the new development.

The predominant spaces of performance in the late 1970s consisted of stadiums and arenas on one hand, and smaller clubs and bars on the other. Practitioners of the genre “pub rock” like Lowe customarily performed in the much smaller venues, spaces that were two orders of magnitude smaller than stadiums, and one-quarter the size of

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

sports arenas. Arena Rock and punk rock performers each placed a different value on these venues, depending on their frame of reference. The prevailing view is that punks seemed to preferred the intimate small spaces while aspiring Arena Rock performers longed to play in stadiums. That much was generally true at the end of the 1970s, until erstwhile members of the Arena Rock community began to resent performing in such large spaces after many of them had done so for the better part of ten years.

The challenges associated with large venues intersected with the problem of authenticity, and in some cases exacerbated the rifts already at work within Arena Rock bands, such as Aerosmith. Earlier in this dissertation, we met Aerosmith lead singer Steven Tyler as he proclaimed from inside Madison Square Garden that someday his band would fill the space. Tyler, at least in the early 1970s, aspired to fill large venues routinely and absorb the fame associated with that lifestyle. In Tyler's way of thinking, Aerosmith needed to exercise restraint and offer a routine performance, the Apollonian foil to the rather Dionysian impulses of guitarist Joe Perry. According to Perry, the two had opposite takes on what made good rock entertainment. Tyler valued precise execution while Perry preferred to allow for more improvisation and difference among Aerosmith concerts, a veritable personification of the mind-body problem. Perry had had his fill of routine and large arena performance by the end of the 1970s, at which time he disbanded and formed his own ensemble that played exclusively in small halls, closer to those of the “pub rock” genre. Perry considered small clubs the safe harbor for the improvisational style that he wanted to explore, and believed that large stadium concerts came attached with a pressure to offer the same musical experience night after night—a routine.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Providing the most entertaining example of performers caught repeating yesterday's material, David Lee Roth of the group Van Halen shouted “Thank you, Cleveland!” following an encore performance in

Of course, retreating musicians such as Joe Perry had much to gain by returning to small clubs. As Perry broke from Aerosmith, he began to resemble Hilburn's authentic hero. It became clear that he could reclaim authenticity in the eyes of critics by exercising creative autonomy, by calling his own shots rather than negotiating with the rest of his band. Performers like Perry could also regain intimacy that was lost with the industry move into stadiums in the first place. Smaller clubs allowed performers to create a stronger sense of community with their audiences. Furthermore, these performers reduced their expenses since they were required to transport less equipment from city to city. These facts contributed to the performer's impulse to emphasize the music over elaborate stage shows, which, as Robert Hilburn pointed out, was the "classic" view of rock performance. Thus, the end of the 1970s signaled a return to basics in terms of performance venues for some, and a continuation for others. It should be recognized that this retreat from large-scale spaces to pubs was not all-encompassing; indeed, by all accounts the arena concert industry grew ever larger throughout the 1980s. Nonetheless, Perry's actions foreground the questions of space and betoken a devaluation of large stadiums that was shared by many across the industry.

This more extensive sense of location foregrounds the question of where authentication occurs. From Allan Moore's argument that the authentic requires an authenticator, it follows that authentication occurs in specific places, and that these places each constitute a site of valuation. The early discourse of Arena Rock, which incorporates only the views of taste-making critics away from the center of the United States, leads to a narrow sense of American tastes. To be sure, a definitive sense of "American tastes" is illusory, but the point is that more vantage points lead to a fuller and fundamentally more

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Columbus, Ohio. Sylvie Simmons, "Van Halen: Platform Boots Still Make It," *Sounds*, May 13, 1978.

complex view of Arena Rock. One person who understood the value of incorporating nationwide perspectives was Lee Abrams, founder of AOR. Having traveled extensively, Abrams formed an alternative vision of authenticity from the critics already viewed in this chapter, such as Lowe and the writers at *Rolling Stone*. While peddling his AOR concept, Abrams ran into the occasional blockage from tastemakers on the coasts, who preferred radio to remain close to the Top 40 format. To these reluctant officials Abrams insisted that, “if you would just go and spend a week in St. Louis, you would look at this all very differently.”<sup>64</sup> That is, the values of middle America are not necessarily those of Los Angeles or New York, to which we could add that the question of rock's mediation is not necessarily the question of rock performance or reception. After all, the rock manager and public relations personality Danny Goldberg proclaimed that radio station owners and rock musicians fundamentally “were in an entirely different business.”<sup>65</sup> Therefore, we should add voices from middle America to critiques of AOR, for a more complete understanding of Arena Rock.

One of the few scholarly articles to tackle commercially successful bands of this era virtually excluded the questions of performance and reception.<sup>66</sup> The author instead sided with taste-making critics by concluding that Styx's anthem “Come Sail Away” (1977) was “short on *Verdichtung* [Einstein's notion of conceptual density], but it was an AOR programmer's dream.”<sup>67</sup> More than simply a radio hit, the song has another life in

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<sup>64</sup> Goldberg, *Bumping Into Geniuses*, 120.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 118–19. “The ‘corporatization’ that rock critics picked up on was not in the hearts and minds of artists such as Styx but in the transformation of much of rock radio. During the brief “underground” phase the rock stations, artists, rock writers, and record companies were partners in the launching of a new business and a new culture. By the mid-seventies it was clear that while rock radio stations had overlapping interests with the rest of the rock world, they were in an entirely different business [that of selling advertisements].”

<sup>66</sup> Holm-Hudson, ““Come Sail Away,”” *American Music* 23 (2005): 377–394.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 394.

concert halls, recorded in concert reviews from local writers across the country.

Surveying that evidence from 1977 alone brings us closer to an understanding of “Come Sail Away” and Styx more generally.

In Salt Lake City, Utah, Tamera Smith offered qualified praise of their show, which earned two encores from the audience.<sup>68</sup> The Pittsburgh critic Pete Bishop was captivated by the overall ensemble performance.<sup>69</sup> The same reviewer saw beyond the elaborate stage show to hear enjoyable music: “And it [the Styx concert] had all the gimmicks: dry ice fog, flash pots, dramatic lighting, John Panozzo's drum kit on a sliding platform, a white piano rising from below the stage and a large screen backdrop for showing pictures of woods, sky and clouds and red and green highlighted by a rotating mirror ball behind it.” But the songs had “strong, recognizable melodies to embellish.”<sup>70</sup> In Milwaukee, two competing reviewers weighed in on the success of the Styx concert, both suggesting their props enhanced rather than detracted from their music.<sup>71</sup> A reviewer in Washington state not only enjoyed the band's “very obvious sophistication and sureness on stage,” but noticed a marked improvement from the most recent Styx appearance.<sup>72</sup> In a Michigan college town, Styx's stage show came across as tasteful, and the reviewer noted how “the band and the audience really had a lot of fun with” the song 1975 “Suite Madame Blue.”<sup>73</sup> Judging from the praises of middle American critics, it would appear that the appeal of Styx lies in their oscillation between Romantic tendencies

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<sup>68</sup> Tamera Smith, “S.L. [Salt Lake] Loves What Styx Has To Peddle,” *Deseret News*, March 11, 1977.

<sup>69</sup> Pete Bishop, “Superb Group Effort Styx In Your Mind,” *Pittsburgh Press*, December 10, 1977.

<sup>70</sup> Pete Bishop, “Show That Has It All Really Styx Out,” *Pittsburgh Press*, December 15, 1978.

<sup>71</sup> Mike Plemmons, “Slick Styx Is Stickler For Classy Sounds Music,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, December 31, 1977; and Bill Milkowski, “Rock Fans Fill Auditorium For Styx's Energetic Tour Finale,” *Milwaukee Journal*, December 31, 1977.

<sup>72</sup> Carol Wetzel, “Styx Hot Rock Concert Offers Flaming Finale,” *Spokane (WA) Daily Chronicle*, August 19, 1977.

<sup>73</sup> Mark Beyer, “Styx Charms, Back-up . . . Doesn't,” (*Ann Arbor*) *Michigan Daily*, September 15, 1977.

of authenticity (such as crowd participation) and Modernist ones (such as the extra-musical concert technologies). In short, perhaps one reason Arena Rock has been basically neglected in scholarly circles thus far is that the evidence has come from only a small number of sources, whose writers were – unlike much of Styx's youthful audience in middle America – steeped in the “classic” rock and roll culture of the middle 1960s and possessed of deeply Romantic tendencies of authenticity.

As one final example that incorporates space, this argument incorporates the views of Richard Ogden, another rock industry professional who, like Abrams, traveled extensively in the execution of his duties as a promoter of British bands. Ogden gained considerable experience promoting these bands in the United Kingdom and in the United States, and his observations help us understand that authentication relies on both recorded artifacts and on live performance. In America, Ogden recognized, Arena Rock bands were foisted onto the public sphere with no small thanks to commercial FM radio, a publicity mechanism unavailable to those aspiring to performance in Britain.

Nevertheless, without the assistance of radio, Arena Rock bands became quite sensational in Britain, and would clean up with a strong showing of performances. If the authentic requires an authenticator, the British audience seemed ready to perform that task, even as the Arena Rock bands were getting panned in North America. This difference based on geography suggests that the story of waxing and waning cycles of authenticity is based on a rather static view of authentication and could be improved by taking into account a wider view of the rock audience. Even when Arena Rock was deemed inauthentic in the United States, it was clearly on the rise in Great Britain. Combining Ogden's views with those reviews from middle America, perhaps what is required for Arena Rock bands to



appear more authentic is for historians to incorporate additional viewpoints and, in short, to look in other spaces.<sup>74</sup>

## § Conclusion

Two major threads led to the naming of Arena Rock. The first was based on the problem of authenticity: large venues were considered mechanisms used to fleece audiences and promote insincere music, and those who performed in them regularly were the target of scorn by those upholding Romantic values. Punk and New Wave resented what performance in those spaces represented. The second was based on musical style and performance: critics viewed Arena Rock bands as musically derivative ensembles who synthesized clichés of their time. These critics resented how large spaces were used.

Bands like Toto were likely to be grouped together, in what we now recognize as clusters of Arena Rock bands, because their critics, without stating precisely why, viewed one band as inauthentic as the next; all were considered guilty by association. These associations arrived as critics installed the term “Arena Rock,” which encircled bands from diverse sub-genres. Suddenly, a host of technical-formal rules became available to critics in their attempts to distinguish authentic musicians from the insincere competitors: musical form, extra-musical concert technologies, etc. Although several of these Arena Rock groups proved adept at oscillating between Romantic and Modernist poles of authenticity, their “rockist” critics tended to reprove what they considered faceless, anonymous bands, and lionized rock “heroes” like Bruce Springsteen. The critics' view was shared by musicians in punk and new wave, both of which groups rejected the values of large-scale concerts rather than what precisely was performed inside.

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<sup>74</sup> Chris Welch, “American Revolution: Aerosmith, Boston, Kansas and co.,” *Melody Maker*, February 25, 1978.

From this discussion should follow two amendments to the theoretical apparatus that precipitated it. First, analysis that incorporates Foucault's "unities of discourse" should reconsider the notion of influence. I suggest that the term needs to be split into two kinds of influence, one positive, as the notions stands currently, and a negative kind of influence observable in this chapter. Both punk and new wave were, in a sense, influenced by the monolithic features of Arena Rock, but in a negative sense, in a way that encouraged them to espouse opposite principles, such as playing in small spaces rather than large, with one leader (or hero) rather than a group of faceless musicians. Second, the discourse of authenticity needs to be updated to include discussion of space. As it stands, the authenticity discourse makes little attempt to foreground the place of performance, sticking instead to arguments based on recorded artifacts alone. To foreground space in future analyses would be to concede that authenticity is derived from both recordings and live performance, and that the cycles of waxing and waning authenticity highlights the importance of who authenticates, and where.

## Epilogue

### Conclusion, Summary, Final Thoughts

The main goal of this dissertation has been to shine a light on Arena Rock, the popular music genre with roots in 1964 Beatles concerts and branches throughout the 1970s. This fifteen year forest represents tremendous growth in the rock concert industry by virtually every metric. Audiences grew in terms of sheer quantity and extensivity in response to the brief concert excitement caused by the Beatles, and continued to expand as arena rock concerts became standardized in the 1970s. Rock bands and rock critics proliferated in response to, and to advance the growth of, the arena concert industry. Extra-musical concert technologies grew in terms of type, sophistication, and deployment by musicians, and developed at an astounding pace, initially to compensate for uncharted large venue territory and soon after propelled by the urge for aesthetic design in the social space of rock. If this project has sketched the terrain's basic outline, identified the salient problems, made some sense of the endless detail, and

prompted further questions, then it will have achieved its main goal.

I chased this goal by tracing characteristic practices of musicians in terms of how they construct the social space of rock concerts. In the opening chapter I demonstrated how the Beatles electrified North American venues and helped set in motion new entertainment practices. In the next chapter I argued that Led Zeppelin helped to create such a thing as music designed for stadiums, using electronic echo effects that resonated with the ways in which audiences were hailed as a vital Arena Rock ingredients. I used Grateful Dead in the next chapter to argue that the relationship between the new economy of scale and live performance resulted in critical questions of authenticity and routine, as the band wrestled with its anti-commercial origins as it entertained with aurally – and visually – remarkable speakers. The chapter on rock festivals showed how fundamental alterations to the basic length and location of events efficiently regulated musician and fan behaviors to resemble the now substantially grown Arena Rock industry. Finally, the last chapter showed how critics grouped together bands of disparate aesthetic priorities under the term “Arena Rock” in order to distinguish between them and what the critics considered “authentic” rock: the solo (“hero”) artist, punk, and new wave.

The common themes racing through these chapters include the relationship between the rock performance industry and its socio-political climate. Chapters One, Four, and Five tell a story of American society responding to the touch of rock and roll, with the Beatles altering *inertia* here, rock festivals challenging local propriety there, and Romantic critics and musicians castigating Arena

Rockers everywhere. Another common element has been the ways in which musicians consciously design their performances for aesthetic purposes. But whether Led Zeppelin or Kiss, none of these bands fully escaped the critic's charges of excess, such that extra-musical technologies seem the predominant cleft between the perception of fans and writers.

In addition to this sense of overlap, the chapters expose gaps to be analyzed at a later date. One lacuna exists with respect to the professionalization of musicians. The period between 1964 and 1979 is characterized by promoters, musicians, and technicians all adopting and adapting to society's largest buildings, and mastering their new surroundings. Just as extra-musical concert technologies improved during this period, so did performers that graced the stage, many of whom received institutional music training. Boston's Berklee School of Music is the most obvious institution in this respect, and since the 1960s its students have been shaping the popular music industry. A few examples of Berklee alumni placement should suffice: John "J.R." Robinson (class of 1975) played drums for Chaka Kahn and on Michael Jackson's *Off the Wall*; bassist Neil Stubenhaus (1975) played with Blood, Sweat, and Tears in 1977 and became a legend among session musicians; Vinnie Colaiuta (1975) and Steve Vai (1979) both went on to perform and records with Frank Zappa; Steve Smith (1976) became the drummer for Journey; and Brad Whitford and Joey Kramer (both 1971) became Aerosmith's guitarist and drummer, respectively. The connections between institutional music education and rock performance deserve close examination.

But perhaps more urgently, the relationship between popular music and

urban architecture poses questions that can help forge links with an interdisciplinary scholarly audience. Arena Rock, once off the ground in the 1970s, arguably impelled the sustained development of arenas and stadiums, joining the professional sports trade and other top-tier entertainment among the major contributors to large-venue finance and the spatial logic of urban organization. It is not for nothing that stadiums are destroyed and built: construction serves to provide location for the accelerated circulation of capital, and practices such as Arena Rock and sports form a system of needs, a collection of activities that comprise a coherent vision of accumulation, wealth, nationalism, etc. But as I alluded to in the introduction, new stadium construction has not always been free and easy. Protesters of new stadium construction should also have their place in the discussion, because histories of stadium entertainment that omit them ignore the stakes of new construction, and take high-level real estate maneuvers for granted rather than probing the important debates that such expansions provoked.

I have often wondered why arenas and stadiums are often demolished after only a quarter century. My real fascination with such facilities began in my teens, on the afternoon I watched the televised, controlled demolition of the Metropolitan Sports Center in Bloomington, Minnesota. Watching its implosion was no accident; I had gone out of my way to observe it. Like many Minnesotans I wanted to watch the demolition because it signaled the closing of a chapter in the region's sports history. In particular, the demolition capped the irrevocable loss of our North Stars, the professional hockey team sold in the previous year to

Dallas, Texas. (*Dallas!*) But my attachment to the building, and thus my interest in its demolition, ran deeper than a single sports allegiance. Met Center had been the physical setting of some of my earliest entertainment memories, like the hockey and indoor soccer games but also, when I was much younger, the circus and *Sesame Street Live*. Many people I knew, including close family members, had enjoyed rock concerts there. Met Center had been a place I associated with reverie, family bonding, and awe-inspiring spectacle. Yet there it lay in ruins, on a site destined in fact to become the primary Mall of America parking lot. Though my understanding of its consequences was initially dim, the inglorious demise of Met Center marked the genesis of my real fascination with the life of buildings.

The next significant episode occurred less than six years later, when I observed the demolition of an even larger structure, the Seattle Kingdome. On this occasion, now living in Washington, I watched the demolition “live” rather than on television. I parked my truck a far distance from the stadium and approached Kingdome as closely as local authorities allowed on the morning of its demolition. As I waited with my fellow onlookers, I wondered why another large facility—no older than I—was facing what I considered its early demise. The standard (but to me unconvincing) explanations were that its intended replacement (with a state-of-the-art, retractable roof) would enhance the pleasure of stadium events, and that the new construction had been mandated by a state-wide voter referendum (which passed by a whisper, 51% to 49%). Suddenly, it happened: we onlookers saw—and then heard and felt—the Kingdome explode. In the aftermath, I began to question my fascination with the life of buildings,

wondering if instead I was fascinated with their death.

If we can agree with Rob Wegman that, “architecture is today regarded as the chief emblem of our own cultural period,” then we should also agree to pay attention to how society's largest buildings are valued.<sup>1</sup> From my vantage point, our society values arenas and stadiums less than our collective ability to demolish and start anew. The construction-demolition cycle of these sports-and-music buildings is incredibly rapid when compared with more venerable feats of architecture. Perhaps meditating on that fact will help us understand arenas and stadiums, as well as the popular music concerts that breathe life into them.

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1 Rob Wegman, “Reviewing Images,” *Music & Letters* 76 (1995): 268.



## Appendix A

The Beatles: Concerts in North America  
(city, venue, date, and attendance)  
Boldfaced entries discussed in Chapter One

First Tour: February, 1964

Performances: 7

Average attendance: 2,580

Low: 728 (Ed Sullivan Studio)

High: 8,092 (Washington Coliseum)

City	Venue	Date	Attend.
*New York City	*Ed Sullivan Theater (x2)	<b>Feb 9</b>	<b>728</b>
*Washington D.C.	*Washington Coliseum	<b>Feb 11</b>	<b>8,092</b>
*New York	*Carnegie Hall (x2)	<b>Feb 12</b>	<b>2,954</b>
*Miami	*Deauville Hotel (x2)	Feb 16	2,600

Second Tour: August–September, 1964

Performances: 32

Average attendance: 14,202

Low: 3,682 (New York, Paramount Theater)

High: 32,000 (Jacksonville, FL, Gator Bowl)

City	Venue	Date	Attend.
*San Francisco	*Cow Palace	August 19	17,130
*Las Vegas	*Convention Center (x2)	August 20	16,816
*Seattle	*Seattle Center Coliseum	August 21	14,382
*Vancouver	*Empire Stadium	<b>August 22</b>	<b>20,621</b>
*Hollywood	*Hollywood Bowl	August 23	17,256
*Denver	*Red Rocks Amphitheatre	August 26	7,000
*Cincinnati	*Cincinnati Gardens	August 27	14,000
New York City	*Forest Hills Tennis Stadium	<b>August 28</b>	<b>16,000</b>
New York City	<b>Forest Hills Tennis Stadium</b>	<b>August 29</b>	<b>16,000</b>
*Atlantic City (NJ)	*Convention Hall	August 30	18,000
*Philadelphia	*Convention Hall	September 2	13,000
*Indianapolis	*Indiana State Fair	September 3	12,413
Indianapolis	Indiana State Fair	September 3	16,924
*Milwaukee	*Milwaukee Arena	September 4	11,500
*Chicago	*International Amphitheater	September 5	13,000
*Detroit	*Olympia Stadium (x2)	September 6	30,000
*Toronto	*Maple Leaf Gardens (x2)	September 7	35,522
*Montreal	*Forum	September 8	9,500
*Montreal	Forum	September 8	11,500
*Jacksonville	*Gatorbowl	September 11	32,000
*Boston	*Boston Garden	September 12	13,909

## Second Tour: August–September, 1964 (continued)

*Baltimore	*Civic Center (x2)	September 13	28,000
*Pittsburgh	*Civic Arena	September 14	12,603
*Cleveland	*Public Auditorium	September 15	11,000
*New Orleans	*City Park Stadium	September 16	12,000
*Kansas City	*Municipal Stadium	September 17	20,214
*Dallas	*Memorial Auditorium	September 18	10,500
New York City	*Paramount Theater	September 20	3,682

## Third Tour: August 1965

Performances: 18 (including 2 in Sullivan studios)

Average attendance: 20,132

High: 55,600 (New York, Shea Stadium)

Low: 12,000 (Houston, Sam Houston Coliseum)

City	Venue	Date	Attend.
New York City	Ed Sullivan Theater (x2)	August 14	728
<b>New York City</b>	<b>*Shea Stadium</b>	<b>August 15</b>	<b>55,600</b>
Toronto	Maple Leaf Gardens (x2)	August 17	18,000
*Atlanta	*Atlanta Stadium	August 18	30,000
*Houston	*Sam Houston Coliseum (x2)	August 19	12,000
Chicago	*White Sox Park	August 20	25,000
Chicago	White Sox Park	August 20	37,000
*Bloomington	*Metropolitan Stadium	August 21	25,000
*Portland	*Memorial Coliseum (x2)	August 22	20,000
*San Diego	*Balboa Stadium	August 28	17,000
<b>Hollywood</b>	<b>Hollywood Bowl</b>	<b>August 29</b>	<b>17,256</b>
<b>Hollywood</b>	<b>Hollywood Bowl</b>	<b>August 30</b>	<b>17,256</b>
San Francisco	Cow Palace (x2)	August 31	18,000

## Fourth Tour: August 1966

Performances: 19

Avg attendance: 19,402

High: 45,000 (LA, Dodger Stadium)

Low: 8,200 (Seattle Center Coliseum)

City	Venue	Date	Attend.
Chicago	International Amphitheater (x2)	August 12	13,000
Detroit	Olympia Stadium	August 13	14,000
Detroit	Olympia Stadium	August 13	16,800
Cleveland	*Cleveland Stadium	August 14	20,000
Washington D.C.	*D.C. Stadium	August 15	32,164
Philadelphia	*J.F.K. Stadium	August 16	21,000

## Fourth Tour: August 1966 (continued)

Toronto	Maple Leaf Gardens	August 17	15,000
Toronto	Maple Leaf Gardens	August 17	17,000
Boston	*Suffolk Downs	August 18	25,000
*Memphis	*Mid-South Coliseum	August 19	10,000
Memphis	Mid-South Coliseum	August 19	12,500
Cincinnati	*Crosley Field	August 20	12,000
*St. Louis	*Busch Memorial Stadium	August 21	23,000
<b>New York City</b>	<b>Shea Stadium</b>	<b>August 23</b>	<b>44,600</b>
Seattle	Seattle Center Coliseum	August 25	8,200
Seattle	Seattle Center Coliseum	August 25	14,382
*Los Angeles	*Dodger Stadium	August 28	45,000
San Francisco	*Candlestick Park	August 29	25,000

\* indicates a first-time performance in that city or venue

## Appendix B

## Grateful Dead Concerts, November 1965–October 1974

Part I: November 1965 to August 1970 (i.e., debut of “Truckin”)

Summary: 4 years, 9 months  
 451 performances in 72 cities and 147 venues  
 city with the most performances (222): San Francisco, CA  
 super-majority of performances in California and New York

One venue, one performance

Calgary, AB	Boulder, CO	Delhi, NY
Compton, CA	Fairfield, CT	Millbrook, NY
Costa Mesa, CA	Middletown, CT	Stony Brook, NY
Crockett, CA	Dania, FL	Cincinnati, OH
Eureka, CA	Miami, FL	Columbus, OH
Hillsborough, CA	Edwardsville, IN	Ashland, OR
Marin City, CA	West Lafayette, IN	Corvallis, OR
Modesto, CA	Prairieville, LA	Eugene, OR
Monterey, CA	Worcester, MA	Montreal, QC
Moraga, CA	Winnipeg, MB	Memphis, TN
Muir Beach, CA	Ann Arbor, MI	Dallas, TX
Napa, CA	Detroit, MI	Fort Worth, TX
Northridge, CA	Minneapolis, MN	Houston, TX
Oakland, CA	Kirkwood, MO	San Antonio, TX
Redwood City, CA	Omaha, NE	Salt Lake City, UT
Rio Nido, CA	Alfred, NY	Sultan, WA
San Bernardino, CA	Bethel, NY	Poynette, WI
San Rafael, CA	Binghamton, NY	
Santa Monica, CA	Buffalo, NY	

One venue, two performances

Phoenix, AZ	Santa Rosa, CA	Cambridge, MA
Mt. Tamalpais, CA	Hollywood, FL	Flushing, NY
Pescadero, CA	Chicago, IL	

One venue, two performances

Newcastle, England

One venue, three performances

Pasadena, CA  
 New Orleans, LA

One venue, seven performances

Port Chester, NY

Two venues, two performances

Sacramento, CA	Athens, GA
Santa Barbara, CA	London, England

Two venues, three performances

Novato, CA	Santa Clara, CA	Philadelphia, PA
San Jose, CA	St. Louis, MO	

Two venues, four performances

Vancouver, BC	Lake Tahoe, NV
Denver, CO	Seattle, WA

Two venues, seven performances

Toronto, ON

Two venues, nine performances

Honolulu, HI  
Boston, MA

Three venues, three performances

Palo Alto, CA

Three venues, five performances

Berkeley, CA  
San Diego, CA

Three venues, eight performances

Portland, OR

Six venues, fifteen performances

Los Angeles, CA

Ten venues, forty-two performances

New York, NY

Twenty-two venues, 222 performances

San Francisco, CA

## Part II: August 1970 to October 1974 (i.e., Wall of Sound retirement)

Summary: 4 years, 2 months  
 343 performances in 111 cities and 138 venues  
 city with the most performances (35): San Francisco, CA  
 extensive coverage outside of California and New York

One venue, one performance

Tempe, AZ	Missoula, MT	Amsterdam, the
Fresno, CA	Charlotte, NC	Netherlands
Long Beach, CA	Omaha, NE	Arhus, Denmark
Palo Alto, CA	Edison, NJ	Bremen, West Germany
Pasadena, CA	Albuquerque, NM	Dusseldorf, West
San Jose, CA	Reno, NV	Germany
San Pedro, CA	Cortland, NY	Frankfort, West
Santa Rosa, CA	Eugene, OR	Germany
Boulder, CO	Veneta, CA	Hamburg, West
New Haven, CT	Lancaster, PA	Germany
Indianapolis, IN	Lewisburg, PA	Heronville, France
Wichita, KS	Meadville, PA	Lille, France
Louisville, KY	Scranton, PA	Luxembourg,
Landover, MD	Nashville, TN	Luxembourg
Bangor, ME	Dallas, TX	Manchester, England
Detroit, MI	El Paso, TX	Newcastle, England
Lansing, MI	Fort Worth, TX	Rotterdam, the
Saint Paul, MN	Roanoke, VA	Netherlands

One venue, two performances

Davis, CA	Tampa, FL	Buffalo, NY
Sacramento, CA	Des Moines, IA	Stony Brook, NY
San Rafael, CA	Iowa City, IA	Utica, NY
Santa Barbara, CA	Champaign, IL	Watkins Glen, NY
Denver, CO	Baltimore, MD	Pittsburgh, PA
Hartford, CT	Ann Arbor, MI	Houston, TX
Waterbury, CT	Lincoln, NE	San Antonio, TX
Miami, FL	Patterson, NJ	Williamsburg, PA

One venue, three performances

Vancouver, BC	Durham, NC	Madison, WI
El Monte, CA	Syracuse, NY	Copenhagen, Denmark
Universal City, CA	Providence, RI	
Springfield, MA	Austin, TX	

One venue, four performances

Kansas City, MO

One venue, six performances

Berkeley, CA

One venue, seven performances

Uniondale, NY

One venue, eleven performances

Port Chester, NY

Two venues, two performances

Oakland, CA

Columbus, OH

Munich, West Germany

San Diego, CA

Salt Lake City, UT

Two venues, three performances

Atlanta, GA

Oklahoma City, OK

Minneapolis, MN

Milwaukee, WI

Two venues, four performances

Portland, OR

Two venues, five performances

Paris, France

Two venues, eight performances

Jersey City, NJ

Two venues, ten performances

St. Louis, MO

Three venues, three performances

Cincinnati, OH

Three venues, four performances

Rochester, NY

Washington, D.C.

Three venues, five performances

Seattle, WA

Three venues, seven performances

Philadelphia, PA

Three venues, ten performances

London, England

Three venues, thirteen performances  
Boston, MA

Four venues, four performances  
Cleveland, OH

Four venues, ten performances  
Chicago, IL

Four venues, eleven performances  
Los Angeles, CA

Five venues, thirty-five performances  
San Francisco, CA

Eight venues, thirty performances  
New York, NY



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