

***Why do we drink alcohol at concerts? An exploration into the relationship between alcohol and live music settings.***



Mia Johanne Lund Fagervoll, spring 2023

Department of Musicology

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## **Abstract**

Consuming alcohol at concerts is arguably a big part of many live music cultures, and normalized to a point that it is accepted as part of the culture, without too much reflection on why.

This thesis takes a look primarily at the social psychology of alcohol consumption in concert, but also lays out a brief history of music and alcohol in order to solidify the understanding that music and alcohol have long shared a bond. Further, it explores different aspects and concepts, mostly within social psychology, to understand *why* audiences consume alcohol at concerts. It takes an additional interest in how alcohol consumption is largely affected by other people.

To explore this topic even further, an anonymous questionnaire was conducted to understand what audience members themselves believed were the reasons for alcohol consumption in concert. The questionnaire also takes a brief look at aspects such as genre and peer pressure.

## Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor and professor Kyle Devine, who has helped me navigate through this thesis and stay on track, and for giving me advice when I felt like giving up. I would also like to thank professor Marek Susdorf, who last semester gave me some good insight on improving my writing and how to be a good researcher.

Further I would like to thank my wonderful partner Chris Poland, who has been a great support and kept me motivated throughout the process, and for celebrating small victories with me throughout the writing process. I promise you will not hear the words 'thesis' or 'stress' for a while.

I would also like to thank Astrid Hauge for being my writing buddy, and for texting me to meet up for study sessions even when I did not want to.

Finally, I would like to thank all my friends for being understanding of me disappearing for the last few months of writing this thesis. A special eternal thank you to my parents who have supported me wholeheartedly throughout all my academic endeavors.

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# 1: Introduction

On the topic of music and alcohol, there has been musicological research conducted in several different aspects. The discussion of musicians and alcohol, for instance, is not a new one. Geoffrey Wills conducted, in 2003, a psychological evaluation of jazz musicians between 1945-60, based on their biographies. He found that 27,5% of them suffered from alcohol-related disorders (2003), while a study among Norwegian rock artists found that they are more prone to alcohol abuse than the control group of non-musicians (Stormer, Sorlie and Stenklev, 2017, p.56). Atte Oksanen (2013) writes about drug and alcohol addiction in female rock stars, and several books and articles are written about male musicians and their issues with substance abuse (Beaumont, 2020, Osbourne & Ayres, 2010 & 2011). Even though concerts are an essential part of the music experience, there is little research done on audiences and their relationship with alcohol at concerts. Though Forsyth, Lennox and Cloonan (2016) writes about the issues musicians face with drunk audiences, there is little research done into the world of music fans and how their alcohol consumption affects their live music experience, or their drinking habits.

The topic of music and alcohol is explored in many different ways, but it is very often explored through the lens of musicians' alcohol consumption, and audiences are an aspect of concerts that can often be inadvertently ignored. Though audience theory is a part of the musicology discussion, it is often in relation to their role to musicians. An example of this is LeBlanc et.al (1997) discussing the effect audiences have on musicians' performance anxiety, or Forsyth, Lennox and Cloonan (2016) writing about the effect a drunk audience can have on musicians. Though this is in essence discussing audiences, it is more often than not seen through the lens of musicians, and not discussing audiences as a separate entity, worthy of its own research. In essence; as much research as there is within music and alcohol, there is arguably a field that is missing - the research of the common man, who arguably needs more research and more focus.

In 1988, Jon D.Cruz wrote, about music and alcohol, that:

Given these considerations [of how intertwined alcohol is in popular culture], it is somewhat perplexing that the intimate relationship between alcohol and popular culture has been an underexplored area. The gap between studies of alcohol and popular culture is perhaps the result of trained oversight, omission, and in some cases reluctance to address the "banal" and "mundane" dimensions of social life which make up the "stuff" of popular culture. (Cruz, 1988, p.152)

It is also important to note that, as observed, there are many different aspects to consider when exploring the relationship between music and alcohol; like psychological, social, historical and through statistical analysis. Though, it is arguably the social and social psychology aspect that is the most important. This is mostly because both the act of drinking and the act of listening to music are often enjoyed in company with others, and it is arguably in the presence of other people that we tend to drink the most. The social aspects of alcohol are visible everywhere in the music industry; from networking events where they serve alcohol, down to, clearly, audiences at concerts and festivals. Focusing on the social aspects also includes understanding how society facilitates the drinking culture in the music industry; like the alcohol sponsorships at festivals, to venues and festivals creating an environment where the enjoyment of alcohol plays a bigger role, and broader; how our society has grown to accept drinking, and in parts, binge drinking at events.

On the note of alcohol consumption being a social thing, so is the act of going to a concert. Small writes that, when describing the foyer before a concert; "even if we have come alone and know nobody, we can still feel a part of the event" (Small, 1998, p.24). Pitts further writes that "being among like-minded people, assumed to share the same values, is an important part of audience experience" (Pitts, 2020). This has in many ways never been more important than after the Covid-19 pandemic, where concerts were unavailable for up to two years. Though, the pandemic perhaps proved more than ever how essential audiences are to concerts, as audiences were still very willing to watch concerts online. Concerts would not happen without audiences, and the pandemic undoubtedly proved just how important live music was for audiences, as they were willing to pay to watch something on a screen even if they were not able to be there physically.

As mentioned, music and alcohol is in no way an unexplored topic, but it is however an underexplored area. As I have conducted my research, it has become ever so clear that in order to understand the relationship between music and alcohol, the missing piece is the audience. Although the music industry itself consists of the professionals - the musicians, producers, conductors, engineers, promoters etcetera, it is possible to argue that the audience, the consumers, are just as important, but still often left out of research on musicological issues. Additionally, throughout the process of writing this thesis, I have had many encounters with people who, when told what my master's thesis is about, reflect on why we drink at concerts, and often answer something along the lines of: "that's just what you do?". In many ways, this is why I wanted to write the thesis on music and alcohol, and specifically audiences in live music settings - it all seems to be taken for granted as something you just *do*, in some cultures.

Before going more in depth on the different theories around music and delve deeper into the source material, there are some important distinctions, definitions and rationales that need to be made. Although the topic of audience alcohol consumption can seem like a very narrow subject, there are still several things that need to be mentioned to make it clear what this thesis is about, and maybe equally importantly, what it is *not* about.



## 1.2 Limitations and rationals

### Live music and genres

One of the most essential definitions that needs to be made here is, simply and yet very complicated, is live music. When we talk about live music and concerts, it is important to understand that there are many different ways of defining live music. Even a quick google search shows different definitions and arguments of what live music is. Some think that live music encompasses all performance with instruments, with some arguing that most things can arguably be an instrument, meaning that almost all things can be a live music experience.

I am also purposefully excluding online live performances, while still being aware of these types of live music events becoming more popular, even more so with the rise of metaverses and such events. However, if one is to talk about alcohol consumption in that setting, it is often enjoyed in your home, or even someone else's home, where the reasons and the background on alcohol consumption are completely different. For instance, in your home, alcohol is presumably cheaper and even more available. However, you also lose some of the social aspects of a concert when the audience is at home. Either way, the discussion becomes different, which is why that is not the type of live music that will be discussed here.

Additionally, street performances and other performances outside of concert venue settings are also being excluded for many of the same reasons. It is also, in some countries like Norway, illegal to drink in public, which adds a different element to the discussion. Simply put, when this thesis is referring to concerts, it is referring to a live music experience in a concert venue, whether outside or inside, that serves alcohol. It is also not referring to performance art where the audience are directly involved in the actual performance, although there will arguably always be some audience participation in the form of for instance shouting, applause and cheering. This is not to say that any other forms of live music are less than, it is because these events purely require another form of discussion, and understanding drinking culture in these settings is different than understanding it in a 'standard' concert setting.

In terms of musical genres, the thesis will as far as possible be general and not necessarily focus specifically on particular genres, although some genres will be brought forward for the purpose of giving more context to the historical and social entanglement between music and alcohol. Though there are genres that are possible to focus on, that have the historical evidence of being tied with alcohol for decades, this thesis is more concerned with the overall issue of why we drink at concerts, almost regardless of what genre it is.

## **Alcoholism and alcohol issues**

Additionally, what is also important to note, is that the thesis will not contain a main focus on major alcohol issues and alcohol disorders. There are several reasons for this; first of all, the intricate and complicated psychological elements to the disease that is alcohol use disorders deserves full attention, should it be written about. That is not to say that understanding the social implications of alcohol generally is not also quite complex; but the focus of this thesis is not to vilify or criticize alcohol consumption. The basis of the thesis is rather a genuine interest in the way in which alcohol and live music is intertwined, removed from the societal issues of what alcohol actually *is*. Though, it is absolutely possible to argue that writing about audience alcohol consumption and music paints the picture of an industry and a business that is dependent on intoxicating substances to enjoy art, that is in no way the point that is being made here.

A significant point here is that this thesis is not meant to be either alcohol positive or negative. Although there is poignant evidence and countless research done on how problematic alcohol is in society, it is still a big part of many cultures, and remains legal in most Western countries, with varying degrees of laws. Nevertheless, this thesis is not concerned with criticizing alcohol consumption as a whole, neither is it concerned with praising or encouraging it. This thesis is an exploration of something that in many ways seems so matter-of-fact or mundane that it has been ignored as a research topic.

## **Alcohol free venues and the decline of people drinking at concerts**

There are, of course, people who do not consume alcohol, either at all or at concerts. There also seems to be a rise of alcohol free concert alternatives. In 2016, Yousif Nur wrote an article in the Guardian entitled “Dance yourself happy: the rise of the sober rave”. He writes that;

In recent years, these events have been cropping up around the world, from Sober Sweden in Stockholm to UK rave nights such as Awakening, We Are One, Right Here Right Now, Love is Key and perhaps the granddaddy of them all, Morning Gloryville. (Nur, 2016)

There are also other smaller companies that do the same thing; the company Morning Beats, for instance, arranges sober raves in several cities in Europe, but are based in Oslo. On their webpage they write that: “Morning BEAT has a strict no-drugs and no alcohol policy. This means we offer everything else”. They further write that: “we are not abstinent [from drugs or alcohol], but we wish to offer a different alternative” (translated from Norwegian). There are also other alcohol free spaces where there is usually alcohol present; like sober discos and alcohol free venues. However, it is possible to argue that the rise of alcohol free concert experiences also speaks to how ingrained concerts and alcohol actually is. There would not be a need for alcohol free spaces if alcohol in concerts was not so normalized.

Although it can seem polarizing that there is little mention of this in this thesis, it is simply because the exploration into why people consume alcohol at concerts does not necessarily need a focus on those that do not drink. Though it is possible to argue that excluding those who do not drink is polarizing, there is an argument to be made for the opposite; reasons for not drinking are vast and complicated, and having one or two sections about it in a thesis about alcohol consumption can seem as though they are not treated as equally important to those who do drink. This also means that there will be no focus on the venues that choose to be alcohol free, which in Oslo includes Sub Scene. This is for the same reason.

## **Western culture**

What is also incredibly important to mention, is that this thesis will intentionally only focus on Western music cultures, which there are several reasons for. First of all, there are so many cultures that have such a different relationship with alcohol than the Western culture, with some cultures banning alcohol altogether, even though this also, in some countries and territories, has its religious reasons. This also means that there are areas where alcohol does not have the same casual connotation it does in Western countries, and writing about alcohol consumption in those cultures and areas means also understanding their relationship with alcohol, which could be a thesis in itself.

Additionally, the Western culture is where I have personal experience. More importantly, I do not think I would, as a white, ethnically Norwegian woman, could do justice to other musical cultures in the span of this thesis. It is also important to note that musicology as a field has and still is going through an essential shift in how we research non-Western cultures, and many feel that if you are not part of the culture you are researching, it is almost impossible to truly understand it. On this, musicologist Danielle Brown writes that “over the years, I have witnessed white ethnomusicologists attempt to dominate and exert power over scholars and artists of color who did not kowtow to their status as an expert” (2020). This is not to say that white musicologists should ignore non-Western cultures altogether, but rather that as the researcher, it is important to understand my own bias and that it might not be responsible to discuss all culture’s relationship with music and alcohol.

Though I will not take the full discussion of that here, I feel it is important that the thesis does not read as being unaware of non-Western cultures, but rather the thesis and the issues that are being brought up are with deliberate focus on Western cultures. Robinson writes, referring to including indigenous performances in Western classical music that “to include Indigenous and non-Western musicians in [intercultural performance] may just as easily take part in a representational politics that does not necessarily address the structural inequities that underpin inclusion.” (Robinson, 2020, p.5). This means that including non-Western cultures in this thesis

for the sake of inclusion could potentially have the opposite effect, and the thesis would not be able to include all the intricate reasons and cultures in a way that is both respectful and insightful.

### **1.3 Overall research questions and arguments**

The main goal of this thesis is to explore the simple yet very complicated question of why we consume alcohol at concerts. To understand this, I developed a questionnaire to understand, from the audience themselves, their own reflections on their own alcohol consumption. The answers from the questionnaire gave the research both insightful and interesting results that were possible to support with further theory.

This thesis also relies heavily on theory mostly from social psychology, and ties aspects from social psychology as possible reasons for alcohol consumption in live music settings. This means that one of the central research questions becomes: what social psychology concepts can further explain alcohol consumption in live music settings? This is explained through concepts such as social conventions and norms, social priming through implicit memories and further understanding how individuals are affected by other's alcohol consumption.

Additionally, in order to understand audiences' alcohol consumption at concerts, the thesis takes a look at some history of both music and alcohol, and makes an argument that it is tavern culture that has developed into concerts as we know them today. In this part, the thesis also argues that part of the relationship is also partly due to the financial gain for venues, and further that it is integral for especially local music scenes. This chapter also takes a look at how the societal view on classical music can be a factor in lower alcohol consumption at classical music concerts, and how the history of classical music can potentially have had an impact. Further, it takes a look at blues history as an example of a genre who has had ties with alcohol almost since its inception.

## 2: Theoretical framework

In this chapter I present the theoretical framework for my thesis. When it comes to a topic like music and alcohol, there are several different approaches one could take; one of which would be looking at how music affects the brain in a neurological way, and doing the same with alcohol. This however, demands an understanding of the brain that I simply do not possess, even as much as I tried during my research. More importantly, through this research I have found that what arguably is more important than *how* the brain responds to either music or alcohol, is *why*. In my opinion, the best way of figuring out the *why*, is to look mainly at social psychology and other social aspects, mostly because, simply; music and alcohol are both very social. Additionally, in order to further understand why we drink at live music events, it is important to understand the historical context of how these two social aspects are so embedded in each other, because it aids the understanding of why we drink in concert today.

### 2.1 A brief history of music and alcohol

In order to understand the relationship between music and alcohol, and ultimately why we drink at concerts, it is important to look at the long shared history between the two. Neither alcohol consumption or music are new concepts in society, and understanding them both from a historical perspective can in many ways aid in understanding alcohol consumption in live music settings today. This part of the thesis will not necessarily take the approach of understanding the origins of either, and will not aim to fully understand the history of both. However, this part of the thesis aims to give a brief introduction into the part music and alcohol has played in society for a number of decades. To begin understanding the relationship between the two, Negus and Zhang, in an article about the change of live music in the era of digitalization, and especially the corona pandemic that:

there is a longer history of live music providing a context for other activities. For thousands of years the world's vernacular musics have been embedded in the activities of work and leisure, dancing and devotion, social ritual from

birth to death. Whether in blues juke joints or formally organized concerts, from Italian opera to jazz and rock gigs, performing musicians have provided a context for social interaction rather than a focal point; music venues have been a place to meet friends, catch up on gossip, eat food and drink alcohol, hang out at a bar, and be seen (Negus and Zhang, 2021, p.546)

Further, Jon Cruz writes, in an article about jazz musicians and alcohol consumption, that: “analyses of alcohol or popular culture-or combinations of the two-cannot be dislocated from their historical contexts without some loss of critical understanding. To complement and to better situate the wide-ranging approaches of alcohol research, we need a "historical social constructivist" perspective” (Cruz, 1988, p.152). The first aspect to take a look at, is the direct correlation between the two in the forms of drinking songs.

### **Drinking songs and tavern culture**

One of the most detailed articles about the history of music and alcohol is written by Angela McShane, features the rise of drinking songs in England, starting from the 1500s. She writes that there were several reasons that drinking songs became popular; the arguably most important one being that alcohol became more popular for recreation, and that “in 1577 there was one alehouse for every 142 heads of the population; by the 1630s it was 1:95; by 1700 it was 1:87 (McShane, 2016, p.168). Songs, known as ballads, that were printed out on leaflets and hung up or sold, had at that point been used extensively as political songs; in support or against different political parties. Ultimately, as ales and wine becoming normalized in all social classes and ages, it led to governmental and religious authorities wanting to control the heavy drinking, but also to “a plethora of classically inspired literary and musical peons in praise of the grape [wine] and the grain [beer]” (ibid.).

Baird also speaks to how long drinking songs have been part of other Western musical cultures:

From the Middle Ages onward, drinking songs swept across Western Europe and found eager voices in defiant American colonists who departed Europe to

stake their claim on new ground. Americans used drinking songs as a rally cry and point of communion—a way to band together in ale and song. (Baird, 2014)

When it comes to drinking in concerts, this too happened early on in England. McShane writes that it was not uncommon for musicians, either solo or as a group, to play in taverns and alehouses in exchange for drinks; and it was the drinkers at the taverns and alehouses that paid for them (McShane, 2016, p.170). Though this is not necessarily how one thinks of concerts today, it still tells the tale of people enjoying music and drinking together for literally centuries. Furthermore, the tradition of buying musicians a drink either during or after a concert is still part of the live music culture.

Further, Cruz also writes about how important alcohol use was in the arts during prohibition, in many ways as a sign of rebellion. From poets and musicians, drinking became a sign of removing themselves from “the norms” of American society, sometimes even physically, like in the case of Earnest Hemingway, who lived abroad for longer periods of time. Cruz further writes that: “these bohemian countercultural artists and temporary refugees-by-choice served as the vanguard for the cultural reorientation that highlighted the consumption of alcohol as an emancipatory practice” (Cruz, 1988, p.155). He further explains how alcohol also became important for middle class college students “in the decade after the First World War” (ibid.), and how closely this was also tied to a sense of freedom and rebellion. This also kept being prominent in the arts, and films from the 1930s became a “very ‘wet’ medium” (ibid.) and was often portrayed as something luxurious and powerful, often tied with success and beauty. It is however important to note that the rise of alcohol consumption is a complicated matter, and several of the reasons will not be fully discussed here, such as the World Wars and their aftermath.

Looking specifically at drinking songs in relation to today’s culture, they are still very present in different parts of Western culture. They are often present at parties, where the songs are used to encourage more or faster drinking. They are even present in Disney movies (Jack Sparrow from *Pirates of the Caribbean* sings about rum more than once). Drinking songs today however, in a concert setting, is perhaps most



important when the songs themselves mention different alcoholic beverages. It has been proven that music affects our behavior in different ways;

A study done by Biswas, Lund and Szocs, testing the effects of ambient music on patrons at a café, found that “lower (higher) ambient music volume led to a greater degree of healthy (unhealthy) food sales” (2018). They further found the same results in a lab setting (ibid.). A study done on the correlation between wine and music found that “participants appeared to perceive the taste of the wine in a manner consistent with the connotations of the music” (North, 2012). Garlin and Owen (2006) studied the general effect of background music in retail stores, and found that the general presence of background music had a positive effect on the customers (Fagervoll, 2021, p.5)

Looking at this in relation to concert going, although the concert is not in the background, meaning that the conditions are not exactly the same - it does however speak to how audiences are affected by music, and that it can affect behavior. Further, looking at this in relation to drinking songs, it is not impossible to imagine that the patrons of bars and tavernas with live music were directly affected by the song lyrics being about alcohol itself. Behavior being affected by music and context is also something that will be discussed further on in this thesis.

Many of the earlier drinking songs were often about the hardships of labor, and Baird writes that:

It was the seaman who popularized a majority of labor-themed drinking tunes. While performing their own kind of backbreaking work, 19th-century European sailors encountered African and Caribbean deckhands warbling together as they hoisted sails and rowed oars (Baird, 2014)

Further, she writes that the drinking songs of the Victorian era took a different turn and “lyrics and melodies turned away from simply rousing, merry tunes and began to meditate on deeper, darker subjects” (ibid.) Though it is possible to argue that there is still a link between alcohol and working songs and maybe especially dark lyrics

within drinking songs, alcohol has arguably become more a sign of leisure, if we exclude alcohol use disorders, and is rather used for celebrations and enjoyed in settings such as concerts, which again have a celebratory connotation to it. This also means that drinking songs are not necessarily what they once were. Today when we listen to music in concert, it is often not shanties and drinking songs in the same way. Rather, the tavern drinking culture has turned to concerts as we know it today. Matthew Hirst writes that, in the UK: “concerts have always been great opportunities for social mingling, and it is no surprise to learn that in a country where drinking has long been a favorite pastime, concerts grew out of a tavern-based culture of music making” (Dirst, 2007, p.331).

## **Temperance songs**

Another aspect of alcohol and music that is worth mentioning, were the temperance songs from the US. The temperance movement was a movement rooted in the American Protestant churches, and they were trying to convince and warn the public about alcohol consumption. Annemarie McAllister writes that “when drunkenness was publicly visible, and indeed led to public disorder, it became seen as a social problem” (McAllister, 2016, p.193). Further, on temperance songs, she writes that “an investigation of hundreds of such songs reveals not only humour and wordplay, but mock drinking songs, comments on government policy, and stirring calls to action alongside the predictable praise of water and tales of drunkards” (McAllister, 2016, pp.191-192). In other words, music was not only the subject of alcohol and a part of the musical sphere, but it was also used in trying to fight alcohol consumption as a whole.

## **Laws, licensing, finance and the rise of concerts**

As much as bar patrons in taverns drinking to music is important, it is with this systematization and structuring of music that it becomes clearer that alcohol is a part of the celebration. An important part of alcohol becoming part of the social scene means that licensing acts and laws also become necessary. Using the US as an example, prohibition was in place from 1920. However, there was quickly groups that protested the act, and Levine and Reinerman write that:

Prohibition's supporters had long argued that it would ensure prosperity and increase law and order. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, prohibition's opponents made exactly the same argument. Repeal, they promised, would provide jobs, stimulate the economy, increase tax revenue, and reduce the 'lawlessness' stimulated by and characteristic of the illegal liquor industry (Levine and Reinerman, 1991, p.464)

What this illustrates are some important points: 1) just because alcohol was illegal did not mean that it was not made or consumed, 2) alcohol has always been a point of financial gain, and 3) it shows just how prevalent alcohol is in many societies. When prohibition was lifted, the different states still regulated alcohol consumption, and music was a part of that. Levine and Reinerman further write that, including many states not allowing gambling and pinball machines, "many states prohibit dancing or live music except under special license" (Levine and Reinerman, 1991, p.479). This, once again, shows that music has always been used where alcohol has been present, and further that the legislators believed that live music would lead to a higher level of alcohol consumption.

Looking at music licensing, tavern music was even the topic of a music licensing debate in the US in the early 1940s. The feud was between ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers and BMI (Broadcast Music Inc.), who had both been tasked with collecting music licensing fees in taverns. However, in 1941, BMI was giving out the music they licensed for free, meaning that the songs that were available through BMI were being played in taverns without having to pay the licensing fee. The then general manager of ASCAP, John G. Payne, wrote a public letter warning taverns to accept this. He wrote that "any intelligent business man knows that nobody gives away anything of value for nothing. A tavern keeper doesn't give food or beverages to the public for nothing. Why should a music publisher give its music?" (Payne in the Billboard, 1941). Criticizing BMI, he writes that "in about a year of activity, BMI has turned out fewer song hits than there are fingers on one hand - in spite of all the financial and plugging facilities provided by the radio chain [...] which proves that you can't force the public to accept songs they don't like" (ibid.) What this clearly shows is that Payne recognizes the financial gain

of having their music played in taverns, and thus wants the establishments to choose ASCAP over BMI.

Looking at this in relation to alcohol, it is clear that alcohol was both purchased and consumed at taverns, and music has always and will always be used to keep patrons in the bar, as a sort of entertainment and has a big social factor. Forsyth and Cloonan write that: “there is also a long history of music being used as a vehicle to advertise alcohol, and thus promote consumption, at a macro-level” (Forsyth and Cloonan, 2008, p.61). This macro-level can in some ways be explained as music being used to not only promote alcohol consumption, but further that the presence of music becomes a vital part as well. Alcohol and music thus exist together also for financial gain, and has since the beginning of recorded music being available to the public.

This is also true in today’s pub and bar culture. There are also important changes in the pub (tavern) scene that have happened in recent years, and somewhat explains the rise of alcohol consumption, and on the rise of alcohol consumption in bars and pubs:

This had several aspects: the advent of the night-time economy, which has lengthened licensing hours; the rise of larger “superpubs”; branded chains of license premises (dubbed by Muspratt the “McDonaldsization” of pubs); increased alcohol consumption by some groups (e.g. young women); the introduction of new drinks (such as fruit-flavored “alcopops”); and increasingly inventive marketing. These changes in the pattern of alcohol consumption are thought to have led to an increase in “binge drinking” (Forsyth and Cloonan, 2008, p.60)

They further write how popular music can be seen as a very important factor in pub advertisement and that “the use of popular music is often a key part of the marketing strategies of such pubs” (ibid., p.62), and found that pubs, in this case in Glasgow, used different types of music to attract different kinds of pub patrons, and often had a variety of genres and acts on throughout the week in order to ensure a variety in clientele (ibid, p.66-67). It is possible to see the continuation of the tavern culture

here. Whereas musicians would draw people to taverns before, it is now a mix between recorded music, and different genres being played that bars and venues use to entice crowds to enter their establishment. Although attending concerts is arguably different from playing music in a bar, there is little doubt that concerts are a massive financial factor for venues, as revenue will come from both concert tickets and alcohol/beverage consumption. Thus, in the tavern turned pub and concert culture, music and alcohol are in many ways dependent on each other.

The financial factor of alcohol in live music settings is arguably the most important facet in local music scenes. Shane Homan explains alcohol “as the primary historical source of financial support for live music venues” (Homan, 2019, p.500). The article was written about the Sydney lockout laws that came into effect in 2014. The lockout laws put curfews on bars and limited the times in which alcohol could be sold in popular entertainment areas. One of the major consequences of this was that they were “contributing to the closure of half the city’s venues in short time” (Brandle, 2019). This resulted in the then mayor of Sydney to, in 2016, propose that “live music and performance venues [are] to be exempt from the legislation” (Needham, 2016). Although the lockout laws were introduced for valid reasons, it still shows the importance of alcohol sales for live music venues, and the dire consequences when curfews and laws are passed that makes alcohol sales in live music venues more difficult.

Looking at the tavern culture becomes important because as mentioned, there are arguments to be made that the tavern culture is where concert culture got many of its norms and social rules. Thus, it is important to remember that understanding alcohol’s role in the music industry also means understanding alcohol’s role in society, while also looking at music’s role in society. One way of further understanding this is to look at the history of concerts. Although there is awareness that concerts have existed in different forms for hundreds of years, this thesis will focus on when concerts became structured and part of social society. Going back to systematization, Matthew Dirst writes that in the UK, concerts started getting structured in the eighteenth century;

this is when the public concert came into its own, supplanting the aristocratic chamber concert and the church concert at the center of British musical life [...] the public concert, which by mid-century (according to Simon McVeigh) "had crystallized into an event of its own, independent of the usual activities to which music formed an accompaniment, such as eating or drinking, dancing or conversing, praying or marching" (Dirst, 2007)

One of the things that is important to understand about this as well, is the aspect that concerts became a type of celebration, an occasion to go out specifically to enjoy music while being social. And with that, alcohol followed.

## **Classical music**

Additionally, one of the aspects that will be discussed later on in this thesis, is the argument that audience members have a general tendency to consume less alcohol if the genre is classical music, situated in a concert hall. Historically, Fleiner writes that:

classical music became associated with wealth, education, and the middle to upper classes as it was promoted by state-supported arts councils and performed in majestic arts centers. Popular music, on the other hand, was more strictly controlled because of its venues—pubs, theatres, taverns—and, as a consequence, became associated with the working and lower classes, drinking, and public disorderliness. The antecedents to such segregation pre-date the war (Fleiner, 2014, p.689)

Although the social aspects of this will become clearer at a later point, it is also important to understand that the view on classical music versus popular music is an important aspect of alcohol consumption today.

This is not to say that alcohol was not consumed by the upper class or in classical music. However, consuming alcohol to the point of intoxication can arguably be connoted with being unclassy or unfit for an event such as a classical music concert. It can then further be argued that societally, intoxication does not fit in a perceived

upper-class, wealthy environment. Thus, it becomes clear that alcohol consumption, from early on, had a stronger tie with popular music due to the societal view on classical music being for the wealthy and white. Historically it was not only a societal view, it was also made in to acts and laws; “[e]ven the most casual observer is likely to be struck immediately by the plethora of Acts of Parliament determining what may and may not be done in which premises at what times and with which people” (Frith and colleagues in Fleiner, 2014, p.689). This in other words means that attending classical music concerts was not permitted for everyone, including non-Whites, and it kept its exclusivity due to ticket prices being too high for people outside the upper and middle class.

It is very possible to argue that this view of classical music is still alive today; that classical music is viewed as more serious and more ‘high brow’ than popular music. Looking at the argument that concerts grew from tavern culture, it is possible to argue that the history of classical music concerts is still the reason why alcohol consumption often looks different in a classical music setting. Although classical music is not withheld from any particular people with laws or acts, the view of the concert remains somewhat the same. It is often held in big concert halls, and the audiences still apparently keep the same seriousness while attending; by sitting down, being quiet and understanding the social etiquettes of applauding and behaving.

## **Blues**

To further gain an insight into the intertwined relationship between music and alcohol historically, there are a few genres that can be highlighted, like classical music. Although it will become clear that today in concerts, people drink to all different types of genres, looking at genres with specific histories of alcohol consumption will undoubtedly shed more light on the topic. One of the musical genres that arguably has one of the strongest historical entanglements with alcohol is blues. Though there are other important genres that would be possible to discuss, blues illustrates some of the important parts of the historical aspect of music and alcohol:

Went to bed last night, and folks, I was in my tea,

Went to bed last night, and, I was in my tea,  
Woke up this morning, the police was shakin' me.

I went to the jailhouse, drunk and blue as I could be (2x)  
But the cruel old judge sent my man away from me.  
They carried me to the courthouse, Lordy how I was cryin' (2x)  
They gave me sixty days in jail, and money couldn't pay my fine  
Sixty days ain't long when you can spend them as you choose (2x)  
But they seem like years in a cell where there ain't no booze.  
My life is all a misery when I cannot get my booze, (2x)  
I can't live without my liquor, got to have the booze to cure these blues.

-Ma Rainy, "Booze and Blues" in Cruz, 1988, p.166

One of the interesting aspects of blues and alcohol, is that blues did not become widely known until the 1920s, which was at the same time as the 'Roaring Twenties', and was a genre started by and for African Americans. However, where the roaring twenties might have been a time for celebration and rebellion for white middle and upper-class Americans, it was not true for African Americans. Cruz writes that: "when we turn to images of alcohol in Afro-American blues, we do not find individuals wearing drunkenness as wet badges of courage" (Cruz, 1988, p.158) and further that "drinking is frequently accompanied by imprisonment and tormenting emotion, the anguish of sexual insecurity, and with a deep and exacting depression from which there is often no escape" (ibid, p.159). Further, Baird writes that blues still has strong ties with alcohol today:

Entering into the 20th century, country music and the blues[...] grabbed hold of the heartbroken, liquor-fueled genre and held on for dear life. There's a country or blues drinking song for every single variety of sadness, from no-good husbands on to heart-stomping breakups to the loneliness of being on the road (Baird, 2014).

As much as blues still has the same lyrical content, and the same bond with alcohol it has always had, the shift has arguably happened in the overarching context of



watching blues in concert. A study by American Addiction Centers found that, in a study of over 900 people, 50% of blues fans said that they consume alcohol while in concert (American Addiction Centers, 2016). There is also no reason to believe that blues fans are less celebratory in concert than other concert goers.

The reason this is also important is to understand the historical aspect that music and alcohol have existed together in many different aspects, and still do. Whereas music and alcohol historically has had its celebratory aspects, it is important to understand that even in song lyrics and topics, music and alcohol have a strong bond. Music has been used to facilitate alcohol consumption, and alcohol consumption has been the topic of music. Taking a brief look at blues is simply to illustrate a different side of music and alcohol than looking at classical music.

Additionally, it is to highlight that drinking songs are still to be observed in modern times, and thus, the historical context carries on to modern times.

Seeing how genres such as blues has always been intertwined with alcohol, and how it keeps the same bond today lyrically is an interesting insight into the relationship between music and alcohol. It is also worth to be aware that as much as alcohol exists and has existed as part of celebrating the live music atmosphere, it has also been an important outlet for frustration and sorrow. Further, observing how alcohol consumption functions in a classical music setting, and where that comes from historically, demonstrates that today's musical society is in parts based on its history.

## **Concluding thoughts**

Understanding the historical complications between music and alcohol does in many ways deserve more time and understanding than it has been given in this thesis. It means among other things to further understand the gendered and race complications of music and alcohol. As Cruz writes:

As is true with popular culture, the cultural complexity of alcohol derives from its capacity to function as a *multipurpose symbol* capable of reflecting and refracting a wide array of socially embedded issues. Its meanings shift across

social groups, classes, subcultures, and sectors and take on different implications in different historical periods (Cruz, 1988, p.151)

Albeit important, understanding these issues is not the main focus of this thesis. It is however important to give a brief overview of some of the aspects of music and alcohol's story to further move on to the social implications of the matter in modern times, more specifically today. It is also important to be aware that the issues exist, and it further illustrates just how complicated the relationship between music and alcohol actually is. What has hopefully become clear in this chapter as well, is that the historical aspects of music and alcohol cannot exist without the social contexts. Therefore, the next part of this thesis will focus on what is arguably one of the most essential parts of music and alcohol; the social aspect.

A final important note about this chapter is that prohibition has purposefully been somewhat excluded. This is because the aspects of prohibition are many and complicated, and in order to understand the relationship between music and alcohol historically, it can be argued that drinking songs and a slight genre theory is more important than understanding music's role when alcohol was illegal. Although there is awareness that music was used both pro- and anti- alcohol, it is arguably not the most important part of the shared history between music and alcohol. Additionally, prohibition speaks more to alcohol's history in American society rather than a music and alcohol together.

## 2.2 Social psychology, music and alcohol

The importance of social psychology is not hard to argue, as is evident in the first sentence in *An Introduction to Social Psychology* by William McDougall;

among students of the social sciences there has always been a certain number who have recognized the fact that some knowledge of the human mind and of its modes of operation is an essential part of their equipment, and that the successful development of the social sciences must be dependant upon the fulness and accuracy of such knowledge (McDougall, 1908, p.6)

He further criticizes the scholars and psychologists of his time for gravely ignoring the importance of the social within psychology (ibid, p.8). Today, social psychology has more space in academics. Jonathan Potter writes about the evolution of social psychology as a discipline from the 1970s and forward, and discusses further discourse in social psychology (Potter, 2012, pp.1-15). In other words, social psychology is still an evolving field, which in many ways speaks to the importance of it in academia today. When it comes to social psychology within music, David Hargreaves and Adrian North argue that:

The psychology of music should deal with the effects of the physical properties of musical sounds themselves, with the ways in which individual listeners perceive and interpret those sounds, and with the social and interpersonal context in which musical meaning is constructed. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the last of these, which might be described as the social psychology of music [...] (Hargreaves and North, 1997, p.3)

Although this thesis is not necessarily concerned with musical meaning in the same way as described here, it is the social that will be discussed here, in many forms; social psychology, norms and patterns. Further, it is important to note that social psychology within music entails so many different aspects; from individual aspects of how we experience music, gender and introversion/extroversion, early development etcetera, to how it affects social interaction and vice versa. This thesis will focus somewhat on both an individual and group basis, including discussing social priming,

conditioning and other social and social psychology concepts. Further, Jon Cruz writes that “drinking is fundamentally social. It has often been implicated as a contributor to other social issues as well as viewed as a social issue. Even isolated, private drinking in certain cultural contexts frequently takes on social significance.” (1988, p.150). He also writes that:

Alcohol cannot be studied outside of social contexts; likewise, alcohol cannot be separated from popular culture. In its manifestations (however defined), it is woven into popular culture because it is part of popular practices. Regardless of the preferred terms-“folk knowledge,” “common sense,” “cultural norms,” “social practices of everyday life,” and the most nebulous and perhaps limited of them all-“behavior”-the cultural uses of alcohol exist as forms and modes of popular knowledge (including, but not limited to “attitudes”) (Cruz, 1988, p.152)

It is therefore impossible to look at either as isolated from their social aspect, and understanding the entanglement between the two means taking a look at how they work socially. And as Cruz writes, “drinking is a part of popular culture. As with popular culture, alcohol cannot be extracted from its social context and treated as an entity in itself (unless we are simply satisfied by addressing questions of chemistry or physiology).” (1988, p.150). Music, as well, is inherently social. David Hargreaves and Adrian North write, in their introduction to the book *The social psychology of music*, that “music has many different functions in human life, nearly all of which are essentially social. We use music to communicate with one another; it is possible for people from widely differing cultural backgrounds to establish contact through music even though the languages they speak may be quite incomprehensible to one another. Overall, humans are inherently social, and as mentioned before, both music and alcohol are also indeed, social. Thus, this is where the theoretical focus will remain.

It is important to again note that little has explicitly been written about audience alcohol consumption, and so; in order to gain an understanding the social aspects of alcohol consumption in concerts, it becomes necessary to look at both alcohol and music and their social implications, to understand how incredibly interlinked they

both actually are. This chapter, which is arguably the most important theoretical research of the thesis, will first take a look at some of the social reasons why people might consume alcohol at concerts. Further it will, throughout the section, look at music and alcohol, side by side, to create a picture of how they function in society, which will ultimately give a more in depth picture of how they fit together.

Cruz writes that “the ‘use’ of alcohol, then, goes beyond simple consumption. Societal uses of alcohol have run the gamut, from aspects of religious ritual to banned and countercultural practices” (Cruz, 1988, p.151). So now, we will discuss some different aspects of social psychology; namely social priming, social conditioning and social influence. On first glance, these concepts can seem very similar, and in some ways they are. There are several overlapping aspects between them, but there are also important distinctions that will become clear. More importantly, all the concepts give a slightly different view on alcohol consumption in concert, and all help understand the research question better, from slightly different perspectives.

One other important aspect of alcohol consumption in concert is that it is for many a habit. It is important to distinguish habit from addiction, which is not what is being discussed in this thesis. However, for many, drinking alcohol and watching music live are two things that belong together. What this section of the thesis seeks to do, among understanding the social relationship between music and alcohol, is to try to explain why it has become a habit for many.

### **Monkey see, monkey do - observational learning and social conformity**

Arguably one of the most important reasons why people drink at concerts is simply due to the fact that other people around us do it. Peer pressure is powerful in many aspects; though it does not necessarily mean pressure in a negative aspect; rather being consciously or subconsciously affected by the people around you. In a live music setting, this is evident in many different respects; if one audience member starts clapping, it will often set off people around, and will spread throughout the venue. If a group of people start dancing, other people are arguably more likely to

start dancing. Cox and Klinger also write that “young people are strongly influenced by the drinking habits of their peers” (Cox & Klinger, 2022, p.2). This does not necessarily mean that young peers pressure each other in a negative and overly obvious way, but more importantly that the simple act of seeing peers drink, can influence alcohol consumption - which is arguably based on two concepts: observational learning (also called modeling) and social conformity.

On observational learning, Mitch Fryling, Cristin Johnston and Linda Hayes write that “in the 1960s and 70s Albert Bandura and his colleagues became well known for their social psychology research in the area of observational learning” (Fryling et.al, 2011, p.191). Hodges et.al write that “It is assumed that the action performed by an observer is a direct result of the observation process and is believed to be due to the perception and use of action-related features picked up from viewing the model” (Hodges et.al, 2007, p.531). Simple examples of observational learning are a child observing their parental figures put things away in the dishwasher, and understanding how to do it without necessarily being shown how, or a child observing their friend getting in trouble for hitting another person. Again, observational learning is about learning by observation, not being told what is right or wrong.

Further, Fryling et.al write that after several experiments, “Bandura theorized that observational learning was an integral part of human development” (Fryling et.al, 2011, p.194). Some of these experiments included having groups of children perform tasks in different settings, and using reinforcements, consequences and no stimuli to study the potential growth of the children's behavior. What was interesting about the studies were that all the different experiments showed that having some sort of response to the behavior or task was the only stimuli that yielded results, whereas when the participants did not observe any consequence or reward stimuli, there was no growth in the further testing. Even more interestingly, the reward or consequence did not have to necessarily affect the individual, it was enough for the participants to observe what was happening to a model participant.

Although observational learning is often used to explain children's behavior, it is possible to argue that we learn through observation throughout life, in other words:

observational learning is not only important for human development in early development. “In adulthood, motor skill learning is most commonly observed in the context of sport, where demonstrations are the most frequent method of conveying information to learners” (Hodges et.al, 2007, p.531). However, when it comes to observational learning as it is seen in children, there is little evidence that young adults do not learn in the same way. Charlotte Nickerson writes that “observational learning pervades how children, as well as adults, learn to interact with and behave in the world” (Nickerson, 2023), and provides examples of young adults using observational learning, such as “a student may learn not to cheat by watching another student be punished for doing so” (ibid.) When it comes to the formative years of drinking, it is in some ways easy to see how observational learning influences alcohol consumption.

Looking at the theory of reinforcement, and how that affects observational learning, one could argue that there are two factors in the situation of alcohol consumption among young adults; 1) drinking in itself can be experienced as a reward, and 2) the reinforcement and encouragement from peers might be a factor in further alcohol consumption. However, as this is focused on the social, it is the latter factor that will be explored somewhat.

In relation to observational learning in young adults, studies have found that during this age, it is often peers that teach us how to drink, and often it is with people your own age that you start consuming alcohol. On peer relations, Brown and Larson write that:

Peer relations become more salient in adolescence. The transition from childhood to adolescence engenders changes in the individual, social context, and social norms that serve to elevate the importance of peers. Young people become likely to spend more time with age mates, often with reduced oversight by adults, and they put greater stock in the expectations and opinions of peers. (Brown and Larson, 2009, p.75)

Further, Bartel, Sherry and Stewart write, in a study on the social effects on alcohol consumption, that:

In a cross-sectional study of classmates, Kuntsche and Stewart (2009) found an indirect effect of classmates' drinking motives on adolescents' alcohol use via the adolescents' own drinking motives. The coping, conformity, social, and enhancement drinking motives of classmates influenced the adolescents' own matching drinking motives, which then went on to influence their own alcohol use. (Bartel, Sherry and Stewart, 2022, p.1932)

This proves that when young adults start engaging in alcohol consumption, it is in many ways by observing their peers doing so. The motives for drinking become heavily influenced by observing friends or other people our age consuming alcohol. Not only do we observe what other people do, there is often also a need to conform to the group, in order to fit in and be liked. Therefore, it is obvious why peer alcohol consumption is a strong factor in the beginning years of drinking. Looking at this in a concert setting, conforming exists in two ways; conformity in the sense that 'the group' is all watching the same concert, and confirming by engaging in the same behavior.

Here however, it is also important to remember the musicians present on stage, and how that might also affect the drinking habits of the audience. It is not uncommon for musicians to have a drink on stage, which in many ways is its own chapter in the book on music and alcohol. Seeing an artist or musician drink on stage could be its own influencer, sometimes also because if the audience is seeing someone they look up to engaging in alcohol consumption, it is easy to learn, from early concert experiences, that consuming alcohol is the norm. Thus, from a younger age, observing musicians consuming alcohol could be a factor in the forming of alcohol consumption as a habit in live music settings.

It is important here to remember that learned behavior does not only come from parental figures or family. It also comes from peers, and people we look up to. A good indicator of this is to look at advertising and marketing agencies using famous persons to sell more of a product; i.e influencing people by showing them that the people they look up to also use or utilize said product or services. If this was not a good marketing strategy, and using celebrities to sell more of a product did not work,



this would not be as popular as it is. Although this is not to say that it is the same concept as being influenced in real life, it is arguably evidence of a similar concept. This will be discussed more later in this chapter.

The concept of doing what those around you do is also tied closely with social conformity; Ray Crozier writes, in *The Social Psychology of Music*, that;

The dominant theoretical framework for explaining conformity has emphasized two kinds of dependence process; compliance and informational influence. Individuals depend on the group for social approval and acceptance, and they comply with the group because they anticipate being rewarded for doing so or punished for not doing so. In the second kind of process, individuals modify their position in the process of trying to understand the world by comparing their view of reality with that of the group. Compliance is more likely the greater the individual's dependence upon the group and the more public his or her response. Informational influence is greater when the situation is ambiguous and the individual is uncertain of his or her judgment (Crozier, 1997, p.68)

Looking at what he writes here, there are several things to look at in relation to alcohol consumption in concert. It is possible to argue that both processes are clearly present in this setting. Starting with compliance, this is supported by the previous theories on how peer relationships become more important as people grow out of childhood, and complying in behavior such as alcohol consumption, that also often starts in young adulthood, can be an important aspect in belonging. The idea of anticipating a reward or punishment in a setting such as alcohol consumption can mean feelings included by the group 'cheersing' and experiencing the effects of alcohol together. The 'punishment' here can be feelings of being left out, and also being in a different emotional place than those in the group who have consumed alcohol.

Compliance and a longing for social approval does not necessarily stop after young adulthood, which means that the process of compliance can also be important for people older as well. It is important to note that compliance does not mean

forcefulness or a negative drinking pressure, but rather a subconscious want or need to do what the majority of the group wants to do, meaning that if the whole group is engaging in alcohol consumption, although it is definitely a choice, becomes heavily influenced by the need to comply with the group needs.

The same can be said for modifying or informational influence. The want to comply and conform to the group could lead to the individual modifying their opinion on alcohol consumption; like in the instance of purchasing another alcoholic beverage. Even though an individual could to themselves think that they do not want another one, it is easy for this thought to be modified if the group consensus is to purchase more alcohol, again due to a sense of belonging. It could arguably be even more influential in a live music setting, where the sense of belonging has potentially already been triggered by being in a room of people who presumably all want to listen to the same band or artist. This could then mean that alcohol consumption and live music become one and the same setting of showing belonging to the group you are in.

On the argument that alcohol consumption in concert becomes a habit, Daniel Garrido writes that “the perception of a recurrent behaviour produces in the observer the unconscious repetition of that behaviour. In other words, the perception-behaviour link shows that we imitate other people’s behaviour as we perceive it” (Garrido, 2020, p.87). This means that observational learning, or imitation, can provide valuable insight in the forming of alcohol consumption as a habit. If one repetitively imitates the drinking habits of peers, it does not become a question of whether or not one should drink at a concert, but a subconscious idea that exists and takes form whenever one is at a live music event.

## **Legality and availability**

Another important reason why people drink at concerts and other live music settings is, simply put, because it is available to us, legally, at venues and festivals. Although the laws around the Western world are different; in Norway, the ability to sell alcohol in venues is down to having an alcohol license, which is true for most countries in the

Western world. However, what is more important than how the laws function, is how this affects the perception of alcohol.

Not only are you allowed to drink at most concerts, and in most venues around Oslo, but the bars where you buy the alcohol are very much in plain sight. Further looking at at Sentrum scene in Oslo, there are several bars available to those attending concerts, and it is often available throughout the majority of the concert, something that will be discussed further on later in the thesis. The same goes for several festivals such as Øyafestivalen in Norway and Roskilde in Denmark. Interestingly enough, this is not often the case if you are to attend a classical concert. On their Website, Oslo Konserthus, which often houses the Oslo philharmonic, they specify that they have a bar, but that it is not open throughout a performance, which it often is in other venues around Oslo. Though this is speculation, it could be possible to argue that this is to avoid people getting drunk throughout the performance, because classical concerts are in many ways often seen as more high class or sophisticated than for instance a rock concert. Not having the bar open throughout a performance also, quite obviously, eliminates some of the issue of people moving around in the venue; and as classical concerts are often seated, this would pose a bigger issue than a standing concert. Discussing social etiquette in regards to genre will be done further on in this thesis.

Arguing that alcohol being legal is a reason for alcohol consumption might seem trivial, or too obvious, but it still is an important facilitator of alcohol consumption. It in many ways symbolizes, most likely subconsciously to people, that our governments and those 'in charge' believe that alcohol consumption is acceptable. Here it is also important to mention that there can obviously be illegal drugs used at live music events as well; Joseph Palamar, for instance, points to dance festivals being a "high-risk event for use of drugs such as ecstasy/MDMA" (Palamar, 2022). However, most statistics still show that alcohol is amongst the most popular substance amongst concert and festival goers - a study conducted by the American Addiction Centers which surveyed 970 festival goers found that of those who consumed substances, 93,4% of people consumed alcohol, with marijuana being the second most popular substance at 39,4% (American Addiction Centers, 2022). Here, it is in some ways possible to make a speculative argument; if marijuana was readily and

legally sold at the festival, it could lead to higher consumption levels. Alcohol at live music settings, due to its legality and other factors, becomes the easier and less risky alternative.

In an article explaining the individual reasons people follow laws, Michael Ilg writes that one of the key reasons is 'persuasion'. He writes that persuasion "involves social norms and individual reputation" (Ilg, 2017, p.276). Further, he writes that in this layer, "individuals adhere to a rule not because of the threat of government sanction or reward, but rather because of intangible concerns for reputation and social status" (ibid., p.277). Although it is doubtful that individuals consciously think about the law while consuming alcohol, it still speaks to the importance of how legality can create social norms. This further means that the fact that alcohol is legal is a part of why it has become a part of people's social life, and thus also a part of the live music scene.

Another important aspect of concerts and alcohol is the fact that they both facilitate each other. Ray Crozier writes that:

This role [of the social psychology of music] can be studied in two ways. One approach is to examine how responses to music are influenced by group processes. A second approach is to investigate how group processes are influenced by music and, more specifically, to consider what properties of music have what kinds of influence. (Ray Crozier, 1997, p.67-68)

Applying this to the topic of music and alcohol, it provides an insight into how music will always be affected by social norms and cues, and thus the experience of live music will likewise be affected. This means that because alcohol is not only accessible, but normalized, in live music settings, venues and the concert experience as a whole will undoubtedly cater towards the need for alcohol sales. This is evident in several aspects of a concert experience; the venue often opens its doors around an hour before the concert starts. Although this is undoubtedly to account for the amount of people that are going to enter the doors of the venue, it is hard to argue that this is not also affected by the fact that people want a drink before they get into position to watch the concert.

As mentioned in the history section, alcohol consumption has also been an important financial facilitator for live music venues. Hugh Nichols writes that:

liquor licensing plays a significant role in enabling or inhibiting programming live music in licensed venues. Most live music and performance venues could not exist without revenue from the sale of food and beverage. They rely heavily on alcohol sales as a primary source of income, as the net income derived from ticket sales will in most cases be significantly less than the income derived from the bar or kitchen (Nichols, p.5)

Overall, alcohol consumption in live music settings are often easily accessible for two main reasons; the venues rely heavily on alcohol sales in order to keep business running, so keeping it accessible is also to promote further sales. Secondly, because audiences are expecting accessibility to alcohol at a concert, this also makes it. In other words; demand creates supply. Due to factors such as the fact that alcohol consumption at concerts has become somewhat of a cultural habit, this also affects laws and regulations.

## **Social priming and implicit memories**

One other very important aspect of the social world is the concept of social priming. Social priming is essentially about how people can be affected or primed by certain incentives, and those incentives can affect future choices, thoughts or actions. Molden writes that “priming effects in social psychology all involve some stimulation of people’s mental representations of social targets, events, or situations that then influences subsequent evaluations, judgments, or actions” (Molden, 2014, p.4) and further that “it is now virtually axiomatic among social psychologists that the mere exposure to socially relevant stimuli can facilitate, or prime, a host of impressions, judgments, goals, and actions, often even outside of people’s intention or awareness” (Molden, 2014, p.1). Priming is in other words ‘invisible’ stimuli that can affect the choices we make later on. One example of an experiment done with social priming, was conducted by Bargh, Chen and Burrows in 1996, proving that if they

primed people to think about old age, they walked slower (Bargh, Chen and Burrows, p.240, 1996).

It is necessary to state that social priming as a concept has been somewhat criticized, with some social psychologists being cautious of the evidence for social priming, including “the priming effects we should trust versus the social priming effects we should doubt” (Molden, 2014, p.2). Social priming has also been heavily attacked because the experiments that followed the rise of social priming as a concept were, according to Jeffrey Sherman and Andrew Rivers, are neither “social in nature” or “other robust priming effects that are clearly social in nature do not count as social priming” (Sherman and Rivers, 2021, p.1). However, as a general thought, “few doubts seem to exist about whether incidental exposure to certain information can generally prime subsequent responses in ways that are not fully intended” (Molden, 2014, p.2). For the sake of this thesis, these types of responses will be called social priming, with the awareness that there might be other names for it, or even other ways to describe it.

What is important about social priming is that it is not necessarily a direct response to a type of stimuli, but rather something that can happen over time. Social priming has been used to explore feelings of being included vs excluded, low in power or high in power, by using different stimuli like verbal cues to entice a reaction or feeling. There are also different aspects within social priming, but for this thesis, we will focus mostly on implicit memories. Priming is a type of implicit memory, and Cubelli and Sala write that “a memory is defined implicit when the learned information is retrieved and used without awareness of remembering it and with no reference to the learning phase” (Cubelli and Sala, 2020, p.345). Further, Kathleen McDermott defines it as “the change in performance as a result of prior experience in the absence of intention to remember the prior event. Implicit memory is often facilitative, although it can cause interference” (McDermott, 2002, p.773)

Implicit memories appear in many different forms, like tying shoes, bicycling or swimming, and it is also an important part of dementia research. On the topic of where priming and implicit memories tie together, McDermott writes that:

Psychologists generally do not use the term 'remembering' when discussing implicit memory; instead, they refer to 'priming.' If you recently heard an unusual word such as 'perspicacious,' you are more likely to use that word in conversation than you otherwise would be; You are 'primed' to use the word. This is an everyday example of implicit memory (McDermott, 2002, p.773)

Moreover, Olson and Fazio also write that individuals "show evidence of having learned a rule or association implicitly, even though they are unable to articulate any explicit, conscious knowledge of the relevant information" (Olson and Fazio, 2001, p.414). Applying this to alcohol consumption in concert, one can look at how alcohol is perceived in that setting. Arguably, for many, alcohol consumption is a natural part of the concert experience, which means that the majority of society will arguably view it as a positive, which again can lead to implicit memories of connoting live music with alcohol, meaning that the idea of going to a concert can lead to thoughts of alcohol consumption.

Further on as well, this could arguably be one of the reasons why alcohol consumption in concert seems to turn into a habit. Take an example of implicit memory such as tying your shoes; the task arguably becomes an implicit memory when an individual has done it enough times, and it has turned into a habit in their mind. The behavior is no longer a conscious one, but rather a pattern or routine. The same can arguably then be said for alcohol consumption in concert. The more an individual attends concerts, and presumably consumes alcohol, the more the brain will make that mental connection. Additionally, when one adds on the layer of socialization to this, and presume that most people attending (who do in fact consume alcohol) have the same connection, this leads to forming a habit that becomes almost completely unconscious, and alcohol consumption becomes simply 'something you do'. Implicit memories are also affected by social conventions, something that will be discussed further on in this chapter.

Another part of implicit memories in live music settings comes from alcohol sponsorships and advertisements at music settings like festivals. In for instance the US, where alcohol sponsorship is legal, "companies like Heineken run six-month social media campaigns around their Coachella sponsorships, priming consumers

months in advance to expect and even them out once they get through security and ID check” (TrendSource, 2020). Alcohol advertisements in relation to a festival can include their own advertisement, influencer and celebrity endorsement and advertising within the festival grounds themselves. What the advertisement before the event will do, is make the participants of the festivals connote that type of beverage with the festival, which is obviously the goal of these companies. Further, on implicit memory and brand placement, Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen write that “the fact that implicit memory is not driven by whether information is semantically processed suggests that implicit memory tests may reveal advertising effects that are related to incidental brand exposure” (Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007, p.474). This means that the individual is not necessarily aware that they are being influenced by the product, and promoting alcohol consumption in live music settings becomes a subconscious process that can potentially be a reason why people consume alcohol.

It is also worth noting that even though alcohol advertisements are not legal in Norway, Ringnes, Norway’s largest brewery, is one of the sponsors of Øyafestivalen in Oslo. The presence of the beer brand Ringnes at the festival can also potentially create implicit memories of that particular beer being part of the live music experience, and overall create an unconscious mental connection between alcohol consumption and live music.

On alcohol sponsorship at the Glasgow Jazz festival, which has been running since 1987, has since its conception been sponsored by alcohol brands, and Eales writes that especially since the 90s, “the Jazz Festival was able to attract substantial support from the private sector, with drinks brands including Guinness, Tennents, McEwans and the Famous Grouse proving to be among the most reliable and well-matched of their partners” (Eales, 2016, p.242). Alcohol sponsorships were and are also specifically used to draw certain kinds of audiences. In 1999, the festival wanted to market more towards younger people, and wanted to use lagers and ale to do so: “All lagers seem to be geared towards youth market and see Jazz festival as ‘too old’ (quote!). Better chance of getting ‘Festival Ale/Beer’ if we have already secured a spirit brand” (Boyd, 1999 in Eales, 2016, p.240). Essentially, they were trying to secure a Glenmorangie sponsorship, and one of the reasons for this was to be able to get a beer sponsorship that would cater more to the younger generation.



An important part of alcohol sponsorships is also that because the companies are looking to make money, they will also use tactics to entice people to consume alcohol. This can include giving out free samples, having merch, special deals on alcoholic beverages or slogans like 'no festival is complete without [brand]'. It is important to note that this can look different in different countries depending on the alcohol laws. However, this can further facilitate and accommodate alcohol consumption in concert, and it becomes a natural part of the festival.

Further, examining alcohol sponsorships in relation to implicit memories, Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen write that implicit memories can also lead to implicit behavior: "Recent research regarding implicit attitudes suggests that attitudes can be primed without explicit memory of previous exposure to the attitude object, and implicit attitudes have been demonstrated to be a good predictor of related behavior" (Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007, p.475). This could potentially mean that a first-time festival goer could still have, due to implicit memories of seeing peers or influencers consume alcohol at a festival, lead to engaging in the same behavior, due to the mental connection between the two.

Finally, when it comes to priming, there are also "priming effects in social psychology therefore encompass a highly diverse set of phenomena and processes whose boundaries are still being explored" (Molden, p.4, 2014). It is also important to remember that in discussing all these different kinds of social concepts, their effects are individual, and perhaps especially when it comes to social priming. Wilson writes that in doing experiments on social priming, "the people are different and there's just no way to make sure they are all experiencing the same social stimulus, the same information" (Wilson, 2013). Just like many of the other aspects in this thesis, it is important to remember that implicit memories for alcohol consumption in a live music setting will only function if the individual has a want to consume alcohol in the first place.

## **Social conditioning and social norms**

Another concept that ties closely to social priming, and can in some ways be seen as more monumental in relation to alcohol consumption in concerts is social conditioning. One possible definition of social conditioning is:

The sociological process of training individuals in a society to act or respond in a manner generally approved by the society in general and peer groups within society. The concept is stronger than that of socialization, which refers to the process of inheriting norms, customs and ideologies. (ESCWA, 2020)

Social conditioning as a concept in people's lives appears already from a young age. Parents telling their children to behave at restaurants, or even more basic things such as teaching children how to use cutlery or the toilet. These processes can look different in different cultures, as there are different social processes in different cultures; like for instance how we eat. For example, in some cultures, forks and knives are the 'normal' utensils to use for eating, whereas in other cultures it might be eating with your hands or with other types of utensils such as chopsticks.

Social conditioning is closely tied with social norms. One definition of social norms is "the informal rules that govern behavior in groups and societies" (Bicchieri, Muldoon, and Sontuoso, 2018) and another is "what people in some group believe to be normal in the group, that is, believed to be a typical action, an appropriate action or both" (Mackie et.al, 2012, p.7). Social norms can be different in different cultures and groups. Some examples of differences can be in how we greet each other, how we consume food and how we act in public. Social norms also exist within smaller groups of the same society; even in a friend group, there can be differences in what the 'norm' is. In one friend group, for instance, it can be viewed as acceptable to smoke cigarettes, whereas in another group, an individual might feel somewhat ostracized if they smoke cigarettes. This is not to say that the individual might stop doing so because it is against the social norm of that group, but would arguably affect the individual's choice, due to a longing for belonging and being accepted.

It is then possible to argue that social conditioning is set by social norms. In other words, if the informal rule, the social norm, is that we need to protect the environment, social conditioning will aid in making sure that is upheld, in for instance showing that governments say that they are working on green energy, making laws to protect the environment, and running advertisements on how to cut down on energy use, to name a few. When it comes to social norms within a concert setting, it is possible to observe it in many ways; for instance, when a song is over at a concert, the audience clap. The venue also affects the audience; in a concert hall, watching an orchestra, the audience is unlikely to make too much noise, whereas in a rock concert, it is not unlikely that you will find some people chatting during songs; although it is arguably not what you should do, it still happens. This is arguably due to social conditioning; a child would not know that clapping throughout a classical concert is not deemed appropriate, unless told so by a parental figure. Looking at this in relation to social conditioning, one can say that the social norms around applause at a concert leads to the audience being trained, or socially conditioned, to understand where it is appropriate to clap.

Further, there are arguably several social aspects that *condition* the audience to drink, some of which have already been discussed here. However, imagine walking into a concert venue - for this example we will take a look at Sentrum scene in Oslo. Walking into the venue, after tickets have been checked, there is a bar almost immediately in front of you, even before you get into the concert space. This means that, obviously assuming that the individual does consume alcohol, the fact that it is one of the first things you see, can subconsciously condition concert attendees to think that the first thing one does when arriving at a concert is to get an alcoholic beverage. There is no pressure in this setting, it is easy to walk past the bar and not get a drink, for most people, but it is nonetheless telling the audience that drinking is acceptable and in some ways also encouraged. In other words; Society in many countries conditions alcohol consumption to be a part of the musical scene, making it not only accessible but shown as something justifiable and as a natural part of a concert.

On social conditioning, Garrido writes that “conditioning is, thus, reinforced by ‘ready-made’ social situations. That is, in social situations, the expected behaviour is

encrypted in patterns and schema. Social situations impose patterns to follow” (Garrido, 2020, p.96). This means that if the conditions, like those mentioned previously in the example of Sentrum scene in Oslo, for alcohol consumption in live music settings did not exist, neither would the habit of alcohol consumption in concert. In other words, if alcohol consumption in concert was not in many ways seen as the ‘norm’, it would not exist in the same way. Because of concepts such as social conditioning, alcohol consumption in concert becomes a habit rather than a rare occurrence.

Another aspect of social norms and social conditioning in the digital age is social media. Liu, Gao and Agarwa write that “digital platforms today make it virtually effortless for users to learn about each other’s actions, such as liking a campaign, writing a review, or posting a picture” (Liu, Gao, and Agarwa, 2019, p.1273). They conducted an experiment in which they used a social platform to try to understand how social norms and conditioning work without people being physically social. They created a platform in which 7000 people could sign up to set a running goal, and tested the effectiveness of using a social norm code in one of the groups (here called group 1), and the other would only get a standardized message (here called group 2). For the people in group 2, they got this message: “goals help you form a habit of running; the statistics show runners who set up a goal can increase the number of times they run in a month by 17%. Please set up a goal” (ibid, p.1278) whereas in the social norms treatment (group 1), the message read: Goals help you form a habit of running; the statistics show runners who set up a goal can increase the number of times they run in a month by 17%. Last month, [Number] runners set up a goal. Please set up a goal” (ibid).

What they found was that the participants in group 1 set a significantly higher running goal than those in group two, which in turn made the participants perform worse with their running results. Liu, Gao and Agarwa write that “in an attempt to portray an “idealized” self to impress their peers and set a high goal, they may overlook the fact that their goals may be too challenging to be feasible” (ibid, p.1288) and previously pointed out that “because people care that others observe their actions and care about the impression others have of them, connectivity is also correlated with individuals’ own decisions” (ibid, p.1274). This research shows how

much social norms, in this case perceived social norms, affect people. The idea that the social norm was to set a goal for running affected the participants, even through a screen, and not necessarily because all of their friends or acquaintances started running.

Looking at this in relation to alcohol consumption in concert, it is important to not ignore social media's influence on the matter. Seeing peers or audience members consume alcohol at concerts can be a strong indicator that consuming alcohol is the norm, which again can affect the normalization of the matter. This means that watching people engage in alcohol consumption on different forms of social media, can make one expect alcohol to be part of the concert experience, exactly because it feels like the norm, and, like mentioned before, can trigger implicit memories.

Another argument for the effectiveness of advertising a type of behavior on social media, is that in Norway, it is illegal to advertise for alcohol, including on social media. This also means, strictly speaking, that bars and restaurants are not allowed to post photographs of alcohol (Helsedirektoratet, 2016). If social media had no effect on alcohol consumption, there would be no need for a law that prohibits it. However, there is no law that prohibits a private individual from doing so. This means that it is easy to argue that observing people partake in alcohol consumption in concert means that it can lead to that being perceived as the social norm.

Social norms and social conditioning in all forms, are important reasons as to why audiences consume alcohol in concert. If we imagine that Western society worked in a different way, where alcohol was highly frowned upon, and consuming alcohol was overall seen as reserved for a smaller group in society rather than the majority, the likelihood is that alcohol consumption in a live music setting would not exist at all. Garrido writes that “we turn social conditioning (perceived actions) into the motives for our actions in terms of the way of being and acting with which we pre-reflectively identify.” (Garrido, 2020, p.100). This means that society's social norms and conditions are thus strong forces when it comes to the choices that we make as individuals. Interestingly, social norms also function in digital ways, with social media being a part of creating and enforcing what the social norms are.

## **Social conventions/norms and genre**

Like mentioned before, it is worth taking a look at how genre might potentially be a factor in audience alcohol consumption, as this is arguably also tied strongly to some social aspects such as social conventions and norms. Although genre is not the focus of this thesis, it can aid in further illustrating the social implications around alcohol and live music settings. As has been mentioned before, even in the history part of this thesis, is that in classical music concerts, it seems as though audiences are less likely to over-indulge in alcohol consumption. One of the possible reasons why it is less likely to see highly intoxicated audience members at classical concerts, is how classical music is viewed socially.

On the stereotypes of classical music in society, Peter Rentfrow writes that “fans of classical music are believed to be White, wealthy, hardworking, introverted, physically unattractive, intelligent and artistic” (Rentfrow, 2012, p.410), and further, Julian Johnson writes that “while its apparent lack of modernity puts many people off, it is occasionally welcomed for the touch of solemnity and historical gravity it brings to public spaces” (Johnson, 2002, p.7). This can arguably shed some light on the position that classical music has in society, which further means that classical music in many ways is seen as a more dignified and ceremonious affair that can lead to lower levels of alcohol consumption. Further, in the *Social Psychology of music*, Jane Davidson writes that:

there are certain behaviors performers expect of audiences [...]: to applaud as the performers walk on stage, to sit in silence during a performance, to applaud after the performance [...]. In other performance traditions, even within the framework of Western culture, different rules apply [...] It is acceptable for audience members [Davidson mentions pop, jazz, and folk] to dress in exactly the same manners as the performers [jeans and T-shirts], sing, dance, drink and chat. (Davidson, 1997, p.2013)

There is also something to be said for certain kinds of music creating an atmosphere. If one imagines coming to someone’s house for a gathering, and walking through the doors, and for instance hip hop or pop music playing on the

speakers (i.e high tempo, major mode music for instance), it can quickly feel like a party or celebratory event. Then, if we further imagine what behaviors this music can influence, like for instance dancing and singing, moving around, this adds to the happy environment. Like DeNora writes; “when the music ‘hops’ and ‘skips’, so too bodies may feel motivated to move, as it were, like the music” (2000, p.124). In contrast, if we imagine the same gathering, but ambient or classical music being played, this could potentially have the opposite effect; people sitting down and talking in a lower volume, which is a very different environment, and all of these things are directly influenced by music.

Tia DeNora writes that “music is thus part of the cultural material through which ‘scenes’ are constructed, scenes that afford different kinds of agency, different sorts of pleasure and ways of being” (DeNora, 2000, p.123). Thus, alcohol consumption in concert can be affected by the music creating an environment, like for instance high tempo pop music creating an environment that feels like a celebration, and that in turn can potentially lead to higher levels of alcohol consumption. It is important to note that this ‘environment’ is again heavily influenced by the societal decisions of what certain types of music mean.

However, it is also important to note that when it comes to social conventions or norms and genre theory, there are several other aspects to look at than just the genre of the music. Other things that play a major role in people's behavior at live music events are things such as venues and all the social norms that surround the event. This means that taking the context of a classical music event out means that it does not necessarily have the same effect, i.e the hypothesis that audiences consume less alcohol at a classical music concert, in a concert hall. This is supported by Engels et.al, who conducted a lab experiment on different genres, and exploring how that affected alcohol consumption. They found, surprisingly, that classical music led to a higher level of alcohol consumption, opposite from what they had theorized. However, they explained their findings as such:

Perhaps the unforeseen confrontation with classical music leads to an explicit mind setting and changes in mood that resulted in drinking patterns that deviate from what normally is performed by people. Listening to classical

music may, for instance, lead to feelings of boredom or frustration, and subsequently to enhanced levels of alcohol use. This idea of altered mind setting is highlighted by the fact that the association between what people normally drink (self-reported weekly alcohol consumption) and consumption in the bar lab was lowest for those who were exposed to classical music. Therefore, people might deviate more from what their habitual drinking is in a bar when they are exposed to atypical music for that context (Engels et.al, 2012, p.185).

The important thing to note here is that although genres and alcohol consumption can in some ways be generalized, there are still individual and group differences in how genres affect behavior. In the instance of the aforementioned study, the college students might not normally listen to classical music, which could then have the opposite effect to audiences at a classical music concert. Further, at a classical music concert, there are several other factors that affect the view on the event, such as venue and mood. Though, to look at this from an opposite lens, this to a certain extent further proves that it is socially acceptable and encouraged to drink at many types and genres of concerts, which, as discussed before, is also closely linked to how the venue is set up and the social norms that are made and are around the concert.

To further explore this, one can take a look at a study conducted by Ann Hamilton, who researched the relationship between alcohol consumption and genres in New Orleans. She found that “the study supported the hypothesis that drinking would be heavier at live Rock concerts than at other genres of music” (Hamilton, 2001), and further that “the social aspect of the live music concert has a great influence on alcohol consumption, but the results found in this study lead to the possibility that some genres of music when performed live, greatly affect the amount of alcohol one consumes” (ibid.). She also writes that “this study showed that live music concerts do promote the behavior of heavy social drinking. In fact, more than three drinks (mean= 3.4732) was the average amount of alcohol consumed by a patron at a live music concert” (ibid.). Looking at her findings in relation to the conditioning of alcohol consumption in live music settings, her findings support the idea that concert venues facilitate alcohol consumption in different ways.



Further, a part of social conditioning is social structure. On social structure in music and musical types, Phillip Russell writes, in the book *The social psychology of music*, that:

The differentiation of music into different types, which forms the basis for the existence of different taste cultures, is probably, at least in part, a response to the differing needs of different social groups. But, at the same time, the differences in musical tastes between these social groups almost certainly serve to amplify and reinforce the distinctions between the groups, and so represent one of the ways in which groups 'construct' themselves. (Russell, 1997, p.149)

What this can in part explain, is how fans of different musical styles view themselves. This can further affect behavior at concerts, attire and general behavior. If one imagines a metal rock concert, for instance, mosh pitting is often a natural part of the concert. This would be less likely at a country concert or a folk concert. It is then not impossible to imagine that alcohol consumption can be a part of this musical structure, meaning that part of how the 'group' views themselves also includes drinking culture.

Overall, there is little doubt that different genres do affect alcohol consumption. This is due to a host of different reasons, some of which have not been talked about here; such as high tempo music potentially leading to higher levels of alcohol consumption, or even looking at neurological aspects such as heartbeat and arousal, which some researchers have looked at in relation to alcohol consumption. Though, the social aspects of alcohol consumption also become important - because the social norms surrounding different genres dictate audiences' behaviors. At a classical concert, for instance, being clearly intoxicated is not seen as the social norm, whereas in a rock concert setting, this can be seen as more acceptable.

## **Social identity and live music**

Another important aspect of understanding why we start drinking at concerts, are how music and alcohol are two aspects of teen and early adulthood that people often use to form their identities, and often rebel against the identities that are formed by parental figures and families. Maggs and Shulenberg write in the book *Alcohol problems in Adolescence and Young Adults* that “The adolescent years are characterized by an increased willingness to engage in behaviors considered by society to be risky, harmful, or even anti- social” (Maggs and Schulenberg, 2005, p.29) and further that “for the majority of individuals, the likelihood of engaging in many forms of misbehavior, including alcohol and other drug use, reaches its lifetime peak roughly during the decade following the start of high school” (ibid.) This does not necessarily mean that all young adults rebel in the way of drinking alcohol, but it is not uncommon. As discussed previously, one of the reasons why young adults drink is the idea of observational learning, and seeing both adults and peers participate in alcohol consumption.

Looking at this in relation to music, music is often also one of the ways in which adolescence and young adults find their own identities. Not only is it a way in which they find their identities individually, but also in social settings. Russell writes that: “people’s musical tastes may reflect a tendency to listen to, and to enjoy, the same music as is listened to by other people they like, or with whom they seek to identify” (Russell, 1997, p.150) and further that:

Perhaps the most remarked example of the role of music in group identification and cohesion concerns young people. The distinctive musical tastes of the young serve to separate them from their parents and older people generally (the ‘generation gap’ and also act as a framework for a set of socially shared meanings and common states of awareness through which individuals identify with others in their peer group (Russell, 1997, p.150)

This means that, as mentioned, both music and alcohol serve as important ways in which young adults find their own identities, and also their social identities. Becoming an adult in many ways means to find who you are. Thus, it is possible to argue that the scene of a concert combines both ways of creating an identity. The ability to be away from parental figures to listen to the music of your own choice, often with peers your own age, is arguably an important step in growing up. Additionally, it is possible to argue that consuming alcohol is for many of the same reasons, and concert going has both. Consequently, when it comes to social identities and starting to consume alcohol at concerts, it is about a feeling of freedom. Whether or not that is the reason some continue drinking at concerts is not necessarily clear, but it does give an insight into why, what can clearly be called a habit, develops.

### **Social influence, by the influencers**

As much as this thesis is not necessarily concerned with musicians and alcohol consumption, there is an important point to be made about it; because musicians are people that individuals look up to, their alcohol consumption can without a doubt influence audiences' alcohol consumption. Hoffman et.al write that “celebrities can have a tremendous influence on the knowledge we retain, the attitudes we adopt, and the decisions we make, including those that affect our health” (Hoffman et.al, 2017, p.1) and further that:

The review of psychology literature showed that people are conditioned to react positively to celebrity advice and that are subconsciously pushed to follow it to avoid cognitive dissonance and to become more like those celebrities they admire. Finally, the sociology literature explained how the spread of celebrity advice through social networks increases its influence and that people follow this advice to acquire celebrities' social capital (ibid, p.2)

This can affect several things; such as purchase decisions and behaviors. Exploring this in relation to musicians and alcohol consumption, it is possible to argue that

when certain musicians create a personae where alcohol consumption is acceptable and perhaps in some ways part of who they are, this can affect fans of those musicians to consume more alcohol. In other words; fans of musicians will mimic the musicians' behavior, and when that behavior is alcohol consumption, that too can to a certain extent be mimicked. Thus, when musicians speak openly about drinking, post pictures of them drinking online or talking about enjoying alcohol in interviews, this can arguably affect fans of the musician by seeing that the person or people they look up to engage in alcohol consumption. This is also in part based on many people wanting to live the same life as the musician they look up to. Oftentimes, celebrity lifestyles are seen as glamorous and a lifestyle to envy, and that can mean subconsciously glorifying alcohol consumption as well. This is not to say that musicians and celebrities are the main reason people consume alcohol or that they are to blame, but can arguably aid in solidifying the bond between music and alcohol.

It is also not uncommon for musicians to consume alcohol while on stage. Looking at an artist such as Post Malone, for instance, has been known for consuming beer in red cups while being on stage, and many articles are written about his alcohol consumption while on stage. One article cites: 'Post Malone drinks beer from fan's shoe' (Coleman, 2023) while another has the headline 'Post Malone falls, cracks three ribs, drinks a beer, finishes show' (Reigle, 2022). It is in many ways possible to argue that beer consumption became part of Post Malone's personae. This further adds to normalizing alcohol consumption during live music settings, and it further becomes part of the norm to engage in alcohol consumption while in a live music setting.

In a rapport on alcohol consumption in live music venues in Australia, Hugh Nichols writes that:

There is evidence to suggest that entertainers – whether musicians, DJs or other performing artists – themselves play a significant and under-researched role in rates of alcohol consumption. In particular, their ability to retain patrons of a certain type, or discourage patrons outside the venue's target demographic. More specifically, a range of actions and techniques have been

cited as able to be employed by musicians to influence the amount and type of alcohol being consumed, including: 1) directly telling patrons to go to the bar 2) modelling behaviour by drinking on-stage themselves 3) playing particular types of music or tempos 4) including sufficiently regular and long breaks between songs or sets and 5) including less attention-focusing material in their set (Nichols, pp.10-11)

This also means that musicians themselves, whether in direct influence such as telling the audience to go to the bar, or indirectly by consuming alcohol themselves. There are several elements to this, such as the musicians being aware that the audience want alcohol at the event, and the aspect that concerts are often seen as a celebration, so the musician wants to enhance the mood by encouraging further celebration.

Another important aspect of being socially influenced by musicians in a live music setting, is the social bond that artists often create with audiences. In an article on social bonding in music, Savage et.al write that “music can facilitate bonding via passive (including digital) participation. This enables music to help construct social identities even among massive ‘imagined communities’ whose members may never physically interact with one another” (Savage et.al, 2021, p.6). This means that in a concert setting, the audience members can feel a sense of bonding both with each other, and also with the artist.

Additionally, in a case study on live music, and on the duo Sussi and Leo, who had a five year residency at café Skansen in Denmark, they remark that:

the musicians were part of a larger 'affinity group', a 'charmed circle of like-minded' makers of an activity in which the music-making was the foremost public facet, but only one of several essential components. In this activity, the manner of perpetuation and nightly widening of the affinity group in itself appears to be one of the most important constituents. The project of including

the guests in the bonding, or in a convincing appearance of bonding, thus appears as one of the basic conditions and functions also of the making of music (Björnberg and Stockfelt, 1996, p.142)

Their observations at Skansen in Denmark perfectly illustrate the important relationship between audiences and musicians. In the same study, they explain how the musicians would include drinking songs in their set, which is a big part of Danish drinking culture.

Further, “culture can foster social bonding and inclusivity. People meet each other at cultural organisations such as a music venue, work together as volunteers and through music they learn about each other’s culture” (Van Vugt, 2018, p.32). Social bonding can arguably be an important reason for alcohol consumption, as part of social bonding also means wanting to conform to the group. Taking this further, it is not uncommon for those musicians who consume alcohol on stage to include the audience in a cheer. This concept of bonding also goes back to mimicking people who are considered as role models. With the added layer of social bonding and feeling a sense of belonging, this can explain how an individual might be influenced to consume alcohol by the people on stage.

## **Some concluding thoughts**

One of the things that have hopefully become clear in this theoretical section as well, is that many of these, arguably all of these social - and social psychology concepts are very closely tied together, and thus the possible reasons for drinking within these concepts are also quite similar and the differences can seem subtle. However, looking at the concepts individually hopefully creates a somewhat complete picture of how the social world around us has created a bond between music and alcohol that is largely based on how we interact with the people and the world around us.

Many of the concepts are closely tied with the beginning of our relationship with alcohol, which is arguably when many start going to concerts as well. This also has to do with the fact that in many places, concerts are age restricted exactly because there is alcohol present. To reiterate; one of the reasons adolescence and young

adulthood has been mentioned several times is because this is often when one starts forming habits and making independent choices, and one of the major arguments about alcohol consumption in concert is that it becomes just that, habit. Thus, exploring the social concepts around that age further explains how that habit forms, and more importantly why.

Some of the other concepts such as social conditioning is in some ways more concerned with why we *keep* drinking. This includes, as mentioned, invisible effects such as the fact that it feels so acceptable and almost encouraged by bars being available, and simply, because it can feel like everyone else around you in a concert is participating in alcohol consumption. The fascinating aspect of this is that alcohol consumption at a concert is so normalized that most people seem to not really reflect over why they in some ways belong together.

Overall, there is little doubt that these social concepts are a big reason as to why we consume alcohol at concerts. Not only does how individuals interact with each other have a massive impact on alcohol consumption, so does how individuals' relationships and interactions with the social world as a whole. There are also aspects of the social world that facilitate alcohol consumption; that it is legal and widely available at concert venues, and that alcohol is so ingrained into the social sphere; not only in live music settings, but in bars and restaurants. It is part of how people interact with each other socially, and is an important part of the live music scene. Although there are some differences in genres and alcohol consumption, it is clear that alcohol consumption exists throughout almost all different genres of music. The difference in alcohol consumption in different genres is also based on social norms and conventions, which again shows just how important it is to understand music and alcohol's relationship through understanding the social aspects mentioned in this thesis.

### **3: Method**

To further explore the relationship between audiences and alcohol in concert, I chose to do a self-report questionnaire. Although self-reporting has been criticized, like in Delroy Paulhus and Simine Vazire, who write that in self-reporting questionnaires, it can be hard to trust the participants, there can be false reports based on “self-enhancement” (Paulhus and Vazire, 2007, p.228). This can especially be true when the theme is alcohol, and many tend to underreport how much they actually drink. However, the same authors write that:

many researchers take for granted that self-reports are the ultimate measure of personality. Although alternative methods have an equally long history, self-reports ; remain the most popular choice. Their popularity appears to be based on a number of persuasive advantages: These include easy interpretability, richness of information, motivation to report, causal force, and sheer practicality (ibid, p.227)

Like mentioned, alcohol can be a tricky subject to talk about, and although the questions in the questionnaire are not overly personal or evasive, if the participants were asked face-to-face, they may have felt some pressure to present themselves in a certain way. Additionally, the advantage of a self-report method online is that people can take their time to answer the questions without the issue of time pressure, and “the notion that people are the best-qualified witnesses to their own personalities is supported by the indisputable fact that no one else has access to more information” (ibid, p.224). With that fact, and not having the stress of a time limit or someone sitting face-to-face expecting an answer, an online self-reporting questionnaire made, to me, the most sense for the thesis.

#### **3.1 Questionnaire choice rationale**

For my method, I chose to use the University of Oslo’s own questionnaire tool called Nettskjema. One of the main weaknesses I struggled with when it comes to Nettskjema was that you only have a single option of what kind of answers you want, i.e radio buttons (one answer only), or multiple choice questions, you cannot have a mix of both, meaning that if you want the participants to be able to write their own



answer in addition to the ones provided, this is not possible to do in a straightforward way, whereas in for instance Google forms, there are options to mix different forms of answers for each questions.

Another weakness of the Nettskjema is that in multiple choice questions, you could not tick off all the answers, meaning that if someone felt that all the answers applied to them, they could not choose all of them. To somewhat fix this issue and the issue mentioned above, I added an “Other - please specify” button, so that participants could have an optional response to what my chosen options were. Although this did not mean that they could choose all options, and also opened up a whole new issue of people being able to freely write, it still meant that if the options posed to the participants either did not fit or they were frustrated that they could not choose all the options, there was still an opportunity to have other options than those presumed by me. This could however, in hindsight, have provided the participants with pressure of having to answer something else than those options provided.

Still, the main reason I chose to use Nettskjema is that it is completely anonymous, which is good for several reasons. First of all, because I did not choose to use any personal information, not even name or gender, it did not necessarily make any sense for me to go through the process of getting a NSD form, which using something like Google forms would have as Google saves IP addresses. Additionally and more importantly, although this questionnaire is not about alcohol issues or addiction, it can still be a somewhat touchy subject as talking about how much you drink can feel like a very personal topic. Thus, it was important for me to find a form where the participants were completely safe in the knowledge that I as the researcher had absolutely no knowledge about who they were.

The questionnaire also included several control questions, in asking the same question twice but in positive/negative ways. An example of this is “what would make you purchase another alcoholic beverage at a concert?” and “what would make you NOT drink at a concert?”. In addition to these two questions being opposite of each other, they also were an important distinction to each other; does not drinking at a concert and purchasing more alcoholic beverages have a relationship, and if that furthers the understanding of why alcohol is such a big part of concerts.

## **Recruiting participants**

In order to ensure the highest number of participants, the survey was shared on different social media platforms, with a focus on Facebook. It was shared by me and some of my family and friends on their Facebook pages. Additionally, it was specifically shared in different music groups on Facebook. This was to ensure that the participants were not only my own social circle, and the hope was that it would also lead to some international participation. All of the posts about the surveys included this text:

In relation to my masters thesis, I am exploring the relationship between music and alcohol; specifically the relationship audiences have with alcohol consumption at concerts. This questionnaire is anonymous, and no personal information about you will be used in the thesis. It is also important to note that this is an alcohol neutral project, and is rather an exploration in the long intertwined history between music and alcohol.

It would be an immense help to my research if you have five minutes to fill out the questionnaire below, and if you can, please share it as well. Thank you in advance!

It was important to point out that the questionnaire was anonymous, as it was shared among my own Facebook friends, and friends of friends, and informing them that what they shared in the survey could not be traced back to them. Additionally, it felt important to note that the project is alcohol-neutral. This is due to the fact that the participants should know that the goal is not to use their answers in order to either shame or paint their alcohol consumption habits in a bad light. The importance of anonymity and the fact that it was specified in the information is also the reason the survey will not be included as an appendix of this thesis; due to some participants sharing some personal information of where they are from.

## **3.2 Questions and hypothesis**

Making the questionnaire included several amendments, to ensure that the questionnaire did not seem too long or complicated. As I have not made a questionnaire before, it was important to do research to ensure the best possible

outcome. The first thing I ended up amending on the questionnaire was the number of questions, which was simply due to the observation that some of the questions were essentially the same questions over again. The initial idea was also to base the questionnaire on an agree-disagree scale, but as Wright writes; “Agree-disagree response options may introduce acquiescence bias, which is the tendency to agree with an item regardless of its content” (Wright, 1975, p.220).

The first question of the questionnaire was “when drinking, what is usually your alcohol of choice?”. There are several reasons for this being the first question. First of all, I wanted to map what the most popular drink was for people in general, and see if this changed when attending concerts. My hypothesis was that the most popular answer both in concert and in general would be beer, for several reasons; it’s almost always available, often the cheapest option and easy to hold onto while watching a concert. Additionally, beer is the most popular alcoholic beverage worldwide (Alcohol Rehab Guide, 2023).

The second question, after eliminating those participants who do not drink alcohol, was “How many times a month do you attend concerts? (Including jam sessions)” One of the main reasons that this question and the question about alcohol were my first two questions was obviously to collect some data, but also to put people in the right headspace of thinking about both music and alcohol in the same realm. As Pew research center writes:

Surveyors must be attentive to how questions early in a questionnaire may have unintended effects on how respondents answer subsequent questions. Researchers have demonstrated that the order in which questions are asked can influence how people respond; earlier questions can unintentionally provide context for the questions that follow (these effects are called “order effects”) (Pew Research Center)

In this instance, it was purposeful to affect the participants early, by trying to get them in the right mindset to answer the subsequent questions. Had the first question been: “What would make you NOT drink at a concert?”, it is possible that the participants had not had enough time to think through their own experience with music and

alcohol, and so the first two questions were purposefully designed to ensure that the participants had some time to reflect on both their concert attending and their drinking experience.

The reason I chose to include jam sessions in this specifically, is because although the questionnaire was anonymous, my prediction was that a larger portion of the people answering the questionnaire would be people in the musical sphere, including fellow music students. Thus, including a space that I feel is a very natural space for musicians and those who are in the music scene only felt natural to me.

The following questions were: “How many drinks on average do you consume at a concert?” which was a multiple-choice question with only one answer allowed, followed by “What are some of the reasons you choose your alcohol of choice at concerts?”, which was also a multiple-choice question, but with the option to choose all answers that applied. The first question was to map how much people tend to drink at a concert, whereas the second question was designed to see if people choose alcoholic beverages more based on taste or on availability. Following, there was also an option to answer that question in writing. My hypothesis here was that the genre/vibe of the concert and preference would be the most popular answers.

The following question was “Does drinking alcohol at a concert affect your overall experience?” This was one of the questions I struggled the most with, because the initial thought was to ask if drinking alcohol affects the concert experience positively or negatively. However, this seems like a too broad question, and was too biased based on what my own personal thoughts on that question was. Asking if alcohol affects something positively or negatively is too narrow, and would not show the whole picture or give the participants the opportunity to elaborate. Rather, the want to drink alcohol and how it affects the concert experience became clear in other answers to other questions.

The next question was: “Does musical genre affect how many alcoholic beverages you consume at a concert?” This question will be discussed further on, but the general hypothesis on the answers was that most participants would answer yes, that genre affects alcohol consumption. This hypothesis was based on observations

and theories on genre; it is for instance less likely for someone to be intoxicated at a classical concert due to the circumstances surrounding it; for instance sitting down, being quiet, and the fact that classical music is seen slightly more as high culture, meaning that (regardless of whether this is right or wrong) it is seen as more disrespectful to be openly intoxicated at a classical concert.

Following this was “Of these options, what would make you more likely to purchase another alcoholic beverage at a concert (choose all those that apply)?” This was first asked as a multiple choice question with several answers allowed, and then as an open question with a written answer. The reason I chose to ask this question both as a multiple choice question and as an open question was that I, throughout making the questionnaire, observed that it was easy for the answers on the multiple choice questions to reflect my own personal bias on what I perhaps thought the answers would be. Although the answers I provided were based in theory and observation of alcohol consumption in concert, it was still essential to give the participants the opportunity to answer some of the questions freely.

“Do you ever feel pressured to drink at concerts?” was the next question of the questionnaire. This felt like an important question to ask, because although it has not been a big part of the theory in this thesis, I wanted to see how participants would answer a question about drinking pressure. In hindsight this could potentially have been a set of more questions, as it could be interesting to further look into what potentially could make people feel pressured, or have a more well-rounded view of it, rather than just a simple yes or no. However, as is written about previously in this thesis, it is not necessarily peer *pressure* that leads to higher levels of alcohol consumption, but rather a subconscious effect seeing both people around you and the people you are with at a concert that can be a factor in consuming more alcoholic beverages. My hypothesis for this question was that a majority of the participants would answer no to this question, again because the theory shows that the “pressure” is more subconscious.

Following this the participants were asked “What would make you NOT drink at a concert?”, again asked both as a multiple choice question and as an open question. This also felt like an important question to ask, as understanding the opposite side of

the equation, i.e. what would influence people to not consume alcohol can aid in understanding why people do drink at concerts. The options on the multiple-choice question were 1) if those you were with at the concert did not drink, 2) day of the week, 3) type/genre of the concert, 4) other: answer below. The reason for giving the participants an opportunity to write their own answer to the question was the same as for the others; I wanted to ensure that they had an opportunity to word their own answers, and not only rely on my pre-made answers.

The final question of the questionnaire was simply “why do you drink at concerts?”. Although this might seem very direct, the idea was that asking the main research question straight forward could give me some valuable insight into what the participants’ own ideas and thoughts are. Additionally, although I have research and theories to understand why audience members drink at concerts, it still remains a social and individual choice, and thus it is important to see their individual answers. Additionally, I chose to ask this as the final question, due to the participants at this point (hopefully) having had some reflection on their alcohol consumption in concert. This means that asking the question directly could potentially yield some very insightful and interesting answers.

My overall hypotheses for the questionnaire were that the answers would at least somewhat fit the theories that have already been discussed in this thesis. This includes the answers mirroring the very social element of consuming alcohol at a concert. For instance, I theorized that on the question ‘What would make you more likely to purchase another alcoholic beverage at a concert?’, the most popular answer would be ‘friends grabbing another drink’. This is due to concepts such as social conformity and belonging, something discussed previously in this thesis. In general, the prediction for the open questions were that they too would reflect some of the theory discussed, such as the last question, ‘why do you drink at concerts?’; I predicted that some of the answers would have to do with the social aspect of alcohol consumption. I also thought that some of the answers would reflect an idea of music and alcohol in some ways belonging together, and that it feels right to drink at concerts.

### **3.3 Weaknesses of the questionnaire**

#### **Open questions**

One of the first weaknesses I observed in my own questionnaire were the open questions. Although some of the answers provided me with valuable insight, there were also other answers that appeared a bit vague - which makes it difficult for me as the researcher, as I could not necessarily guess what the participants meant to say in their answers. One such answer was on the question of why the participants choose the alcohol they choose at concerts, and the answer was: "taste", which could be in relation to preference or taste of the beverage. I could however presume that it was the taste of the beverage, due to one of the answers being "preference" in the above, non-open-ended question.

There was also a question that seemed to be somewhat misunderstood; "Does musical genre affect how many alcoholic beverages you consume at a concert?" The additional information on that question was; "i.e would you consume the same amount of alcoholic beverages at a classical concert and a rock concert?". Although the answers arguably fit the hypothesis, some participants who are known to me personally pointed out that it became a confusing question, as it appeared to be two questions in one, which made them unsure about which question to answer; because, for instance, the answer would be yes for the top question but no to the additional information/question. However, the reason I chose to not change the question was that I at that point had around 50 answers, and it felt unethical to change the question; I also would not know which answers came from after the edit and before. Additionally, the percentage of people answered yes, which also fits my hypothesis.

#### **Anonymity**

One of the main limitations of my questionnaire, although it was a conscious choice, was the fact that it was anonymous. This limited me because I was not able to make categorical conclusions such as: 'women drink more than men at concerts', or 'people over 50 drink more beer than those under 50'. In hindsight, keeping the questionnaire as anonymous as it was has made it harder for me to present proper findings. Although it will become clear that I got some good insight into why people

drink at concerts, it would have helped with some additional information in order to understand the research question from a more categorical point, which I believe would have helped the thesis massively. Arguably there was no need for many personal details, but gender and age would have given more than enough insight. An addition to this would be which country the participant was from, although that has not been the focus of this thesis.

However, keeping the questionnaire as anonymous as it was makes the participant group so wide that I do not even know where in the world the participants were from unless they chose to include that in the open answers. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, I have purposefully chosen to focus on the Western culture. As this questionnaire was so anonymous, I could have gotten answers from participants who are from cultures with a very different drinking culture than that of the Western culture. However, it would also seem unethical to exclude those from non-Western cultures. It is also possible to argue that it is likely that most participants were from the Western culture, as the method of getting participants most likely reached those in the Western hemisphere.

The open question “What are some of the reasons you choose your alcohol of choice at a concert?” should also have been phrased differently. This was an open question that directly followed the same questions, but the first time the question was asked it was with set answers, which were as follows; 1) other; answer below, 2) mood of the concert, 3) price, 4) preference. My hypothesis on the answers on the open question was that I would get a further insight into what makes people choose their alcohol of choice at a concert, and I was specifically interested in whether it was just preference, or if genre/mood at a concert has more of an effect. What ended up happening however, was that although they gave me a more nuanced look at why people choose their preferred alcohol, people did not specify what their specific alcohol of choice was. I would thus end up with answers such as: “Price, that it is easy to get/hold/carry and party that it fits the mood/what everyone else is drinking” or “convenience”, which does not give me a well rounded view. Although it is possible to argue that it is likely that they are talking about beer based on the other answers in the questionnaire; beer was the most popular choice and is very often available, thus convenient.



## **Primacy effect**

Another interesting aspect that would be worth considering is that of the primacy effect: “Research suggests that in telephone surveys respondents more frequently choose items heard later in a list (a “recency effect”), and in self-administered surveys, they tend to choose items at the top of the list (a “primacy” effect).” (Pew Research Center). Although it is possible to argue that the primacy effect is not necessarily too important in this questionnaire due to the questionnaire not necessarily being opinion based, as in asking for political or societal views, but rather self-reporting somewhat fact based. Though, it would be interesting for further research to see if randomizing the answers would yield a slightly different result, although there is doubt that it would change the overall answers.

## **Pilot study**

Another important lesson I learned that I will take with me in further research is to always do a pilot study before doing the actual questionnaire. Had I done a smaller pilot study with the same questions as there are in the final questionnaire, I could potentially have detected several of the issues presented here. It would make it possible for me to rephrase the open questions that ended up being either confusing for the participants or gave answers that did not necessarily give me too much insight - which is fully my responsibility. A pilot study would also have given me the opportunity to see that keeping the questionnaire fully anonymous was not in the best interest for the thesis. This is supported by what Pew Research Center writes about questionnaires:

Surveyors may conduct pilot tests or focus groups in the early stages of questionnaire development in order to better understand how people think about an issue or comprehend a question. Pretesting a survey is an essential step in the questionnaire design process to evaluate how people respond to the overall questionnaire and specific questions, especially when questions are being introduced for the first time (Pew Research Center)

Although there is a definite understanding for the importance of pilot studies, the main reason it did not happen was due to timing issues. Doing the questionnaire was not decided right as I started with this thesis, as I had other ideas mentioned earlier, which meant that I did not have time to conduct a pilot study. Additionally, due to the fact that I was more preoccupied with a high volume of answers rather than in-depth answers, it was more important for me to have more time for the questionnaire to be open, which is also why I did not prioritize a pilot study. Nevertheless, for future reference, doing a pilot study will be essential for my research.

### **3.4 Answers and discussion**

In total, 133 participants voluntarily answered the questionnaire. As mentioned, there is no information on genre, age or location, although it is possible to argue that the likelihood is that most of the people answering were from the Western hemisphere. This is due to where the questionnaire was shared. There were several interesting thoughts and patterns that appeared in the answers of the questionnaire, and this section will focus on the main patterns that were observed. This means that this section of the thesis will only focus on some of the answers, and will not necessarily focus on answers that were not repeated by other participants. This is because single answers do not show patterns, and although all the answers are valuable in their own way, the focus is to see what the general consensus is on the different aspects of the questionnaire.

On the hypothesis that most participants would drink beer, that was overall correct. 59,8% of participants answered that beer was their alcohol of choice, also in concert. However, what was more noteworthy was that the choice of beer seemed to also be influenced by some social conventions and reasoning. Although a considerable number of participants indicated that their choice was based on preference, which mirrors the multiple choice question where 55,1% answered that preference was why they chose their type of alcohol at a concert, multiple answers were also linked to something social. On the open question of “what are some of the reasons you choose your alcohol of choice at a concert?” there were several answers that indicated, once again, that peers and friends are some of the biggest driving forces in alcohol consumption in live music settings. One participant wrote that “I think in

Norway beer is what most people drink, and then it becomes easier to just order what everybody else orders”, and another wrote that the reason for their choice was, among other aspects, “what everyone else is drinking”.

Although these answers are arguably also based on convenience, as other participants also indicated that the reason they chose beer was because it is convenient in many ways; easier to hold and access to mention a couple, answers from other questions strengthen the theory that social aspects are still a very important argument.

One interesting pattern that emerged from the questionnaire was to the open question: “What would make you NOT drink at a concert?” Although some of the answers were expected, and also mirrored the multiple choice question asked previously, the two most popular answers were: 1) driving, designated driver and other similar answers and 2) work the next day. What is interesting about this answer is that it first of all highlights the fact that the reason people would not consume alcohol at a concert is if they are actually physically unable to. Very few answers to the open question reflected an unwillingness to drink or feeling like drinking did not belong in concert. One answer even reflected that although they would drink less at a classical concert, they would purchase alcohol in the intermission if possible. In many ways, this furthers the idea that for many people, alcohol and concerts belong together almost as one entity.

To further this point, another pattern that emerged was in two of the questions; when the participants were asked ‘Of these options, what would make you more likely to purchase another alcoholic beverage?’. 62,5% chose the option ‘Friends grabbing another drink’, with ‘Day of the week’ being the second most popular option with 53,9% of the answers (note that participants could choose all answers that they felt applied). Furthermore, this notion was mirrored somewhat in the answers to the question ‘what would make you NOT drink at a concert?’, with 36,8% of participants choosing ‘if those you were with at the concert did not drink’ as one of their options. Some of the answers on the open-ended question also supports this:

On what would make the participant not drink: “[f] my friends aren't drinking or are sober, I don't drink and have just as good a time. So I guess I am usually conforming to a social situation.”

On what would make the participant more likely to purchase another alcoholic beverage: “Friend group getting another round”

This fits well with much of the aforementioned theories on alcohol consumption being affected by other people. This has especially been discussed in relation to adolescents and young adults. Further on this topic, Crozier writes that:

The distinctions between attitudes that are privately held and those that are publicly expressed is an important one for understanding social influence. It is often easier from the point of view of sustaining the group and one's position in it to remain silent, to 'pay lip service', or to appear neutral concerning a majority view counter to one's own position, and to reserve one's true position for another occasion. Similarly, although one's attitude might be changed by a persuasive minorities argument, one might be reluctant to admit to this in the presence of the majority (Crozier, 1997, p.71)

However, it is important to note that the majority of participants, 84,2%, answered that they do not feel pressured to drink at concerts. Thus, it is possible to argue that in the context of consuming alcohol at a concert, it is not a fear of speaking out against drinking that affects consumption. It is rather being influenced by others, and if someone suggests another alcoholic beverage, it is easy to be persuaded. What is also interesting from the answers of the questionnaire is that it seems that people are more likely to be influenced to purchase more alcohol at a concert from the people around them than they are likely to be influenced to not drink at all.

Additionally, 84,2% of the participants answered that they did not feel pressured to drink at concerts. This is further supported by theories such as social conformity and social bonding. In live music settings, it is not necessarily peer pressure that leads to alcohol consumption. Rather, it is 'invisible' aspects such as wanting to conform to the group that can lead to higher alcohol consumption. Further, being with

like-minded people in a concert can amplify the feeling of wanting to conform to the group mindset.

Another important aspect of the questionnaire was that 68% of the participants answered that consuming alcohol does affect their overall concert experience. However, due to limitations on this question, it is hard to argue whether this 68% meant that consuming alcohol affects their experience positively or negatively. However, when taking a look at the answers on the final question, it gives a slight insight. Many of the answers to the open question 'why do you drink at concerts?' were about alcohol making the participants feel more in tune with the music, or making them feel less anxious about dancing or enjoying the music. Some examples were:

"Crowds and loud noise can sometimes make me anxious and drinking removes that and allows me to fully enjoy the experience"

"It relaxes and gives a good mood"

"I think because of the feel of it. It's nice to get more excited and feel more free and relaxed, so that one opens up more to the rhythm and the vibe of the concert. But I also believe that it has become a habit, and sort of a ritual when going to concerts."

"Sometimes can lift ur mood, other times u may feel obliged to be sociable"

There were several other examples of answers with the same type of wording, or with the same type of meaning. This leads me to believe that overall, the general consensus is that alcohol affects concert experiences positively. There are a multitude of reasons why alcohol can be experienced as a positive addition to live music experiences, but some of these answers tie to the theory of using alcohol as a way to alleviate some social anxiety and feel less self-aware. It is important again to note that although social anxiety is a serious disorder, it is possible to argue that it is not uncommon to feel at least some sort of stress when in a room full of other people. Additionally, as some of the participants mentioned as well, it can feel like it is easier to 'let go' and feel more in tune with the music. One concept that can

explain this is *Tension Hypothesis*. Sarah Book and Carrie Landall write that the hypothesis:

implies that alcohol acts as a negative reinforcer to reduce stress and anxiety. A negative reinforcer is something that eliminates an unpleasant experience. In this case, anxiety or stress is the unpleasant experience and alcohol consumption, which reduces these feelings, would be considered the negative reinforcer. (Book and Landall, 2002)

Although this is specifically talking about social anxiety, this is still arguably an important reason for those who want to feel slightly 'looser' or more relaxed. There is also evidence that the tension hypothesis is not only true for people who suffer from a diagnosed anxiety disorder. One study conducted by de Boer, Schippers and van der Staak found that among a group of 72 female college students, those who believed that alcohol would be a tension relief self-reported lower levels of social anxiety while drinking (de Boer et.al, 1994, pp.519-520). None of these students had a diagnosed anxiety disorder. When it comes to concerts, and especially moving and dancing to music, it seems as though this is why many people choose to drink in concert; they become less tense and more likely to move freely to the music, without being too self-aware. The topic of dancing while in concert is also an important facilitator for social bonding. Savage et.al write that "dancing in synchrony increases participants' feelings of connectedness to the group with which they are dancing, as well as their liking and assessment of similarity with co-dancers" (Savage et.al, 2021, p.9). This means that when the audience feels comfortable dancing, this can further the bond they have with each other.

There were also answers that reflected that consuming alcohol made it easier to socialize. On alcohol consumption and anxiety and stress, Christine Moberg and John Curtin write that "'stress response dampening' is one of the most common expectations that people, social and problem drinkers alike, report regarding the acute effects of alcohol use" (Moberg and Curtin, 2009, p.2). This article is primarily about alcohol consumption temporarily alleviating stress and anxiety. However, social anxiety and stress as concepts are something most people experience, not as a disorder, but in being slightly anxious in several settings, such as being nervous to

meet new people, without that affecting the individual's overall health. Thus, in live music settings, alcohol can be used to alleviate some of the nervousness around socialization, which these answers supported, in response to why the participants consume alcohol at concerts:

"I find that it enhances the experience, making both the show and the social interactions surrounding it, more engaging and more enjoyable."

"Probably to relax and be more sociable"

The notion of using alcohol in order to find it easier to socialize can also further the social bond between audience members. If they are able to socialize more freely, this also means that their bond could potentially form quicker. As mentioned before, music and musical events can be an important facilitator to social bonding. On the importance of social bonding in musical settings, "musical behavior is not only associated with, but may causally support, social bonding" (Savage et.al, 2021, p.9). This means that while musical experiences in and of itself can aid social bonding, alcohol can further enhance this feeling, perhaps making the audience feel even more bonded.

Although the questionnaire for this thesis did not focus specifically on genres, some of the answers did hint at genres as a reason for alcohol consumption. Genres affecting alcohol consumption is also supported by another survey conducted by American Addiction Centers, that has been mentioned before in this thesis. It is important to note that this survey included both alcohol and other substances, but as mentioned before, the same survey found that alcohol was the most prevalent substance by far, and surveyed different aspects of substance use at live music events, such as when the participants started using substances. However, when it came to reasons for substance use, they found that among R&B/Soul listeners, 84% used substances to relax, and for country listeners, that number was 77%. 41% of heavy metal and 40% of indie rock listeners answered that their reason for alcohol or drug use was to reduce social anxiety (American Addiction Centers, 2022)., as for instance in these examples:

“It adds to the vibe <3 It helps the mind and body to let go and just enjoy the music, and maybe join the moshpit without worrying too much about the consequences . You can shamelessly dance, sing loudly, and feel a kinship to the other concert attendees where you are all in the flow-zone (you can of course also do this sober, but I guess alcohol helps you loose a kind of initial "edge")”

“When at a concert, its almost everytime a fun thing around the whole concert. Drinks or before party before, and drinks make people more comfortable to sing and dance”

Including ‘moshpitting’ and ‘shamelessly dancing’ does lead to some speculation of what type(s) of genre(s) it could be, and in many ways this supports the fact that different genres does affect alcohol consumption. This was also evident in what participants answered would *not* make them drink; some mentioned classical music as a reason to not drink too much, others said that they would not drink as much if it was a more “mellow concert”. Importantly though, neither of those answers, as briefly mentioned before, indicated that they would not consume alcohol at all.

Additionally, other answers also led to the speculation that participants do consider genre when thinking about either what alcohol they consume, or how much they consume:

“I only take shots because it’s fast and efficient. I don’t want to hold a drink while I’m dancing so I go to the bar, take my shot, and immediately I can go back to dancing.”

“Beer is usually a nice choice if you want control over you intake, and it kind of feels right at a rock concert. If I’d go to the opera I’d might drink wine instead”

“I think I’m less likely to drink at a classical concert, but I think that might be because of my social circle and the fact that I really go to classical concerts, so when I do it’s more of a special occasion.”



On what would make the participants not consume alcohol at a concert: “Mood of the concert: a punk show makes me crave a beer, a singer-songwriter show doesn’t really”

What is interesting about these answers is that the audience is subconsciously aware that there are differences in alcohol consumption at different types and genres of concerts. This is supported by previous theory on social conventions and norms, and that these unwritten rules are somewhat invisible to us, but still affect behaviors. On the other end of this, is also the research that music can affect our alcohol habits subconsciously. In a previously mentioned study on the effects of genres and alcohol consumption conducted by Engels and colleagues, they found that in the classical music condition, the participants consumed the highest level of wine (Engels et.al, 2012, p.185). Although music will most likely not make someone who does not usually consume wine drink wine, it can still be a factor in choosing the type of alcoholic beverage one consumes.

On the topic of alcohol consumption in concerts becoming a habit, there were several answers that supported that as well, one of which have already been included; “I also believe that it has become a habit, and sort of a ritual when going to concerts”. Other answers also reflected the same sentiment, including:

“It is part of the package for me”

“It’s an occasion to have a glass of wine and partly because that’s what you kind of do”

“Habit, feeling drink and concerts belong together”

These answers reflect the idea that consuming alcohol at a concert is seen as more of a habit. This means that as discussed before, alcohol consumption arguably becomes part of implicit memories, and thus the answer to why you drink at a concert is along the lines of that it is part of the experience. On this, Jacoby and Witherspoon write that “the hallmark of situations showing remembering without awareness [implicit memories] is that the instructions stress some perceptual or

motor task rather than the remembering of a prior experience” (Jacoby and Witherspoon, 1982, p.301). Like mentioned before, this means in a concert setting that the individual is not consciously remembering drinking at previous concerts, and purchasing an alcoholic beverage is ‘part of the package’ of attending a concert.

## **Concluding thoughts**

Conducting this questionnaire without a doubt aided the research, as it gave a good insight into what audiences themselves thought about their alcohol consumption in live music settings. The answers overall do mirror a lot of the social and psychological elements discussed in the previous theoretical chapter, highlighting the importance of socially psychological aspects as an answer to why audiences consume alcohol in live music settings. The reasons people consume alcohol at concerts are many, however many participants echoed each other’s answers, proving that there are definite systems and thoughts shared across audience members. Many of the answers were about alcohol enhancing the experience in different ways; such as alleviating social anxiety, feeling more in tune with the music, making it easier to feel bonded with the other audience members and the experience as a whole.

On the topic of being influenced by the artist’s either persona or alcohol consumption on stage, no answers directly references this as a reason for their own consumption. This does not mean that it is not a factor at all. One hypothesis as to why this was not reflected in the answers is that the questionnaire was set up in a way where musicians were not mentioned at all, which further can mean that this was not a factor the participants were reflecting over while answering the questionnaire. Another hypothesis is that the awareness that an individual is being affected by musicians and artists is so subconscious that unless it is pointed out to them, they are not aware of this as a factor. Finally, not all musicians consume alcohol on stage, so that might not be the first thing an individual thinks of when reflecting over a live music experience.

Although the questionnaire had some flaws and could have been conducted slightly differently, it still was a valuable tool in understanding the theoretical aspects of the

topic from a real life setting. In further research, it would be important to pose the questions in a perhaps slightly clearer way, and further have a clearer view on what answers the researcher is trying to get, as this questionnaire might have been too broad. It could also be beneficial to run a longer questionnaire over a longer period of time, and additionally not have it be anonymised.

## 4. Future research

What has been mentioned several times in this thesis is the fact that there is very little direct research on alcohol consumption in concert. This means that, as observed, it is necessary to use research in other related topics in order to begin to understand the reasons people consume alcohol at concerts. However, in this part of the thesis, I would like to propose where this research could potentially go in the future. As has hopefully become clear, the relationship between music and alcohol, here specifically the relationship between audience alcohol consumption and live music, is a relevant and important topic. It has in many ways, as explained before, become such a habit and so natural, that few think through why we actually do it.

In a report on the effects of alcohol consumption in live music venues in Sydney, Nichols writes that:

It is broadly accepted that the presence of music has an effect on alcohol consumption. Most research has focused on the effect of music on alcohol consumption through quasi-experimental lab-bar studies, observational studies or qualitative research involving industry participants, such as musicians. Little research has been undertaken specifically around the impact of live music on alcohol consumption and general behaviour (Nichols, p.10)

This further speaks to the importance of further research and experimentation, and to the fact that as much as valuable research has already been done, it is important to further this with a focus on why we drink and the behavioral reasons that music and alcohol are so entwined. This is also why I would like to propose a few ways of further research that could be of interest or be beneficial in further understanding this topic.

There are also other possible routes I could have taken with this thesis. Although there are still strong arguments to be made for the social aspects of both music and alcohol being one of the most significant driving forces in their relationship, it would

still absolutely be beneficial to research other aspects. One of the other interesting aspects to look at in relation to this topic is the neurological consequences of both alcohol and music. One of the things that could be possible to look at, is the relationship between the release of dopamine and other 'happy' hormones, that exist in both music listening and alcohol consumption.

Although as mentioned, the questionnaire that was run in relation to this thesis had some issues, there is still ground for arguing that conducting additional surveys on the topic could give valuable insight in the thoughts of audience members. There are however several features that would be important to remember in conducting another questionnaire. First of all, it would be of great interest to run a longer study with more concise and precise questions. This would mean being in some ways more clear about exactly what the goal of the questionnaire was before forming the questions.

It would be possible to combine a general questionnaire with interviewing audience members who have just left a concert. The advantage of this would be that as they are leaving the concert, they could potentially be more aware of their alcohol consumption. However, there is a certain ethical issue with interviewing audience members who might be intoxicated. Thus, another solution would be to for instance email audience members from a concert the day after the event, and ask them about their alcohol consumption then. The advantage of this would be that the concert experience would still be fresh in their minds, and reflecting on recent alcohol consumption might yield more accurate results than sending out a general questionnaire at a seemingly 'random' time.

Another important option that is worth exploring is doing structured in-depth interviews, maybe in addition to an online survey. Although the data on this might be scattered because there are so many reasons why people consume alcohol at concerts, it is possible to recruit the participants and put them in groups, for instance based on what types of music they usually listen to, and ask them questions based on what genre music concerts they typically go to. This would give researchers both an opportunity to look at overall alcohol consumption and their potential reasons, and also be able to find valuable data in gender, age and genre. In-depth interviews can

have several advantages, and Raymond Opdenakker writes that: “an advantage of this synchronous communication is that the answer of the interviewee is more spontaneous, without an extended reflection” (Opdenakker, 2006, p.3). This could be an advantage in interviewing about alcohol consumption habits, due to the fact that it can be experienced as a somewhat sensitive subject, and getting immediate responses could eliminate that the participants manipulate or change their answers somewhat with more time to reflect.

What is however somewhat difficult in both survey/questionnaires and interviews is that as described and experienced in the theory section, and further in the answers from the questionnaire, most people are somewhat unaware of the social and psychological reasons for why they consume alcohol, as most of the social and psychological ‘systems’ that surround us are somewhat invisible. Thus, asking questions about why people consume alcohol at live music events is somewhat, at least from experience, reliant on asking direct questions about the different reasons people drink. I hypothesize that if the participants of the questionnaire from this thesis had been directly asked why they drink at concerts, without any additional information or context, this would lead to very different answers from the ones received.

Thus, additionally, I propose that further research on this topic includes a set of different experiments. To further understand the social implications on alcohol consumption, it is essential to set up an experiment in which researchers look at aspects such as being in a group in a live music setting, and how that might affect alcohol consumption. One way in which to do this would be to set up a live music event in a lab setting. Suggestively, researchers could invite different types of groups and individuals to concerts, with the same artist, to observe how alcohol consumption functions in different social settings. This means looking at who is arriving in groups, who is arriving by themselves etcetera, and looking at what each social situation does to alcohol consumption.

One way the researchers could achieve this would be to give the participants a number on their chest or t-shirt, preferably as subtle as possible. This would, with a set up lab bar, give the researchers an opportunity to observe how many drinks the

participants consume. Additionally, an advantage of subtlety in this setting, if it is possible, would be that it eliminates the audience members feeling overly observed , and it would keep the I propose that the participants would have to use their own money, or at least mimic them using their own money. Although this might lower the number of people who would voluntarily participate in the experiment, it is still important to keep every experiment on this as life-like as possible. It is also important to note that when speaking about a lab setting, I am still referring to having it in a concert venue. This is because setting up a 'false' stage and a 'false' bar would not mimic the live music setting enough to yield true and life-like results.

Giving the participants a number on their chest as opposed to a number they have to say out loud, or a bracelet with a number on could potentially eliminate some of the potential feeling of not being in a real life setting, in other words, it could ensure a higher ecological validity. However, it would be impossible to ensure a full immersion into the experiment, much because isolating drinking habits and social aspects would be difficult. This is much due to what has been discussed in this thesis; the social aspects of drinking in live music are often invisible factors, and fully understanding would require a certain manipulation of the setting to isolate the two factors as accurately as possible.

One study done on the effects of social norms on alcohol consumption by Andrew Halim, Penelope Hasking and Felicity Allen, found through a participatory questionnaire that "as the perceived prevalence of peer drinking behaviour increased, so did individual drinking. This finding can be explained by the individual's perceived need to conform to or match normative behaviour" (Halim, Hasking and Allen, 2012, p.1338). The overall results from their questionnaire were that social norms and the perceived alcohol consumption of those around them did affect the participants' alcohol consumption. What is important about this study is that in general, testing social norms and conventions seems to get the most accurate results when doing a questionnaire or survey.

Although it is difficult to argue that doing a real-life or lab study on for instance social norms and alcohol consumption would be completely undoable, it still highlights that any further studies still has to heavily rely on theory, and that researchers might

encounter difficulties in observing how the social and psychological concepts function in a live music setting. Even if a researcher is attempting to do an observational study, this would pose issues, because the researcher's own bias could potentially get in the way. This is because observing how much alcohol someone has consumed is difficult, and keeping track of which audience members have arrived together and how they influence each other's alcohol consumption would arguably be problematic to the researcher. This could however be a valuable asset if the goal is to observe overall audience behavior at a concert.

There is also something to be said for further genre experimentation, i.e. how different genres affect alcohol consumption. A way in which this could be researched would be to look at alcohol sales in a venue after a concert. One example of a somewhat similar study was mentioned briefly in the intro of this thesis, and was conducted by Ronald Williman and looked at the relation between different tempos of music and purchasing habits. The study found that while grocery shopping, if there was high tempo techno music playing, grocery shoppers spent a shorter amount of time in the store and spent less money. However, if ambient music was played, the shoppers spent longer time in the store, and additionally spent more money (Williman, 1982, pp.89-90).

A related study could potentially be conducted in a concert setting. One possibility would be to study the sales of alcohol in a particular venue where different genres of live music exist. To ensure the most accurate results, the different studies would have to be conducted on the same day of the week. This is to eliminate the day of the week affecting the study, as most alcohol consumers drink more on the weekend than on weekdays, which also became clear in the questionnaire. If the researchers then look at how much alcohol is sold per person, this could potentially, if the hypothesis of genre affecting alcohol consumption is true, illustrate *how* it does. It is possible to also look at what types of alcohol is sold at different concerts as well; for instance looking at whether or not audiences buy more wine at a folk concert rather than a rock concert, to mention one possible hypothesis.

However, it is important to note that this might not yield the same results, due to the fact that in the Williman study, the music is used as background noise rather than the



main focus of the participant. Though, there are still arguments to be made for this type of study being efficient. Although this would not necessarily account for individual differences such as age and gender, it still would aid in seeing how much genre affects alcohol consumption, something that could lead to even more research questions such as; does BPM (beats per minute) affect alcohol consumption in a live music setting? Does volume affect alcohol consumption in a live music setting? Additionally, a study like this would eliminate some of the issues with a lab setting; such as participants being overly aware of their own alcohol consumption.

One study that explored the relationship between genres and alcohol consumption was conducted by Ann M. Hamilton in 2001. She explored overall alcohol consumption at eleven different concerts, in two different venues; four Rock concerts, three Country concerts, two Hip-Hop/rap concerts and two Reggae/Ska concerts. She writes that: "Because the concert attendees were unaware of the study, they were not recruited. Permission was obtained from the owner and the manager of the venues to gather all information for the study" (Hamilton, 2001). The results of this study was discussed earlier on in this thesis.

What she does highlight however, are some of the possible issues with the study. First of all, the concerts were not on the same day of the week which most likely affected the results. Secondly, the study took place during Mardi Gras, which is a big holiday in New Orleans, and is often attached to higher levels of alcohol consumption, and she writes that: "it is felt that drinking rates could have been more influenced by the holiday than the music being performed" (ibid.). Lastly, she writes that, on the difference between the two venues: "one venue charges more for alcoholic beverages and for tickets to the concert than the other venue. This may influence how much a patron drinks at the venue, though there were no significant differences found in this data between the two venues" (ibid.). What this study highlights is first of all that there are definite important findings that can come from conducting experiments in a live music setting. Secondly, it also illustrates the importance of being exact and careful in the parameters of such a study. It becomes crucial to ensure that the context of each concert is as similar as possible. As mentioned before, day of the week is one important parameter. One could also argue

that it could be beneficial to keep the study to one live music venue, or, run the study in many different venues to compare overall results.

All of these proposed experiments are different and potentially difficult to conduct, and the proposals are experimental in design. Further, it is difficult, without proper testing, to understand how well any of these experiments would work in real life. One of the reasons for this is that alcohol consumption is not a static thing. As observed, alcohol consumption is reliant on many different aspects, meaning that getting exact results in an experiment on the topic would require thinking about the experiments differently. There is also an important point to be made when conducting experiments on a social issue that in some ways is underexplored. As Marchalek et.al writes:

As persistent problems require openness, and thus present unclear structures and blurred boundaries, as well as a strong system dynamics, more experimental forms of stakeholder participation may deliver iterative and agile models of experimentation with different actions to address societal challenges. (Marchalek et.al, 2022)

However, what has hopefully become clear, it is important to acknowledge that researching this topic is difficult, and this is also something that I have tried to demonstrate in this part of the thesis. The reasons for why people drink in the first place are vast and extremely varied. Likewise, the reasons people enjoy concerts, and why they choose the genres they do, is also worth its own thesis (maybe even more!). Alcohol in the music industry is not new, and drinking at concerts, or live music events, are, as mentioned, also not a new concept. It is however multifaceted and complicated, and understanding each of the aspects takes careful and extensive research. Thus, conducting experiments on this topic, as difficult as it might be, is arguably worth the time and research it would take. For further research, to understand this issue, it would arguably take looking at the topic in different aspects, conducting different experiments (and purposefully looking for different conclusions), and understanding that the intertwined relationship between alcohol consumption and live music settings is going to take a lot more research than the resources I have been able to reach in this thesis.

## 5. Conclusion

This thesis has been concerned with people who do consume alcohol at concerts, and has been quite general about alcohol consumption, little has been mentioned about the individual differences in how much people do consume at concerts. It is also very important to note that there are copious reasons why people consume alcohol, and equally, why people listen to music and how music affects the individual. Tia DeNora writes in her book *Music in Everyday Life*, that:

Certainly, no music will reliably move all listeners. But for particular listeners and perhaps types of listeners, certain musical figures, devices, genres, forms or works may serve as triggers or latches that draw music's recipients into the process of entrainment and hence into particular modes of agency. (DeNora, 2009, p.161)

This could in many ways be seen as a good representation of the individuality in people, both when it comes to music listening, but also alcohol consumption. Some music will make people drink more or less, and different genres and types of music affect people individually. Although this is a very important part of researching both alcohol consumption and music, this thesis focused more on live music as a general concept rather than looking too much into which genres are significant for alcohol consumption. This is in many ways because, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, audience alcohol consumption in concert is an underexplored area.

However, this thesis has tried to understand the social standing of both music and alcohol somewhat separately, but more importantly why alcohol and music both have such a big place in people's social life. Attending concerts is inherently social, and as observed, consuming alcohol is almost equally social. Looking at concepts such as social priming and implicit memories has given an idea as to the intricate 'behind the scenes' aspects that facilitate alcohol consumption as a part of live music. Social conditioning and social norms also aid in understanding the same aspect, but also gives an insight into how being social and part of a group affects our behaviors. The proposed habit forming of alcohol consumption in live music arguably comes from

several of the aspects discussed, such as implicit memories and social conditioning. Additionally, these habits are arguably formed during young adulthood, when individuals are more likely to be influenced as well.

Further, in order to explore and research this topic, it becomes necessary to look at music in society as a whole, and more importantly look at social aspects that affect people's behavior. This is because little has been written specifically about the topic. Jon Cruz writes that "the gap between studies of alcohol and popular culture is perhaps the result of trained oversight, omission, and in some cases reluctance to address the "banal" and "mundane" dimensions of social life which make up the "stuff" of popular culture" (1988, p.152). However, understanding the topic through other aspects can potentially give a broader picture of how many different aspects go into understanding alcohol consumption in live music settings.

Although this thesis has attempted to create a somewhat complete picture of why alcohol and live music are so intertwined from a social and somewhat historical context, there are still many aspects within this field that are worth researching. As mentioned several times, this thesis has been focusing on the social, as that is two extremely important aspects of both music and alcohol. This is not to say that other aspects of music and alcohol consumption are less important, and deserve equal time and research. It is however a solid foundation, as it aids in finding other research questions on the topic. If one understands music and alcohol as socially intertwined concepts, it begs bigger questions of how they function overall in the world, both together, like explored in this thesis, but also separately. However, trying to understand this topic as a whole means exploring many different aspects, and continuing to understand how both music and alcohol function in social life. Although this thesis has taken a look at some social psychology aspects, it is important to remember that "the social world is more variegated, more complex and contradictory than at any time in the past" (DeNora, 2009, p.148). This means that it is probable that there are other aspects than those discussed here that are also worth exploring.

Additionally, much of the research done on music and alcohol is concerned with *how* we drink, like the research done on genres and alcohol consumption, or the many research papers done on what alcohol can potentially lead to, like Forsyth and

Cloonan (2008), whose paper detailed the issue of pub related violence in Glasgow. As much as all this research is undeniably valuable, I also propose that the focus should be on *why*. Arguably, this is in part because the consequences of alcohol consumption can seem more important to for instance public health and understanding society's relationship with alcohol, often seen in a negative way; as reasons for violence, death and mental health issues. Additionally, much of the research on why we drink is primarily focused on why individuals start in the first place, like Brown and Larson (2009) and Bartel, Sherry and Stewart (2022). Arguably, more research should be done into the social and psychological concepts and systems for alcohol consumption provides valuable insight into the position they both hold in society. Both from an alcohol negative and an alcohol positive or neutral position, understanding music's role in alcohol consumption and vice versa is essential.

What has hopefully become clear is that the live music scene and alcohol has had a close relationship since music became part of the tavern scene. Alcohol is important for the live music scene in many different ways, including financially. As mentioned before, the local live music culture might not have been alive had it not been for alcohol sales. Live music is used to entice people to attend their venue, to keep people there and to invoke higher alcohol consumption. Different genres will have different effects on an individual's alcohol consumption, both as background music and in a concert setting where the audience's focus is the music itself. Many of the concepts discussed in this thesis are psychologically, socially and historically relevant, and further research is needed to understand all the distinct facets of this ever-evolving relationship.

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