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"Fueled by liquor": How musicians talk about alcohol and bars

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"FUELED BY LIQUOR": HOW MUSICIANS TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL AND BARS

by

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF ARTS WITH HONOURS DEGREE IN APPLIED CRIMINOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the complex relationship between alcohol use and occupational identity among musicians working within nightlife venues in Vancouver, British Columbia. While prior research has examined alcohol consumption in the hospitality sector, little attention has been paid to musicians as a distinct labor group operating within similarly permissive and criminogenic environments. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with active musicians, this research investigates how alcohol functions within the music industry, as a social lubricant, coping mechanism, reputational tool, and workplace expectation. The study applies Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model to understand how musicians perform identity in alcohol-saturated spaces, and Sampson and Laub's (1993) life course theory to examine patterns of desistance over time. Findings reveal that alcohol use is deeply embedded in the professional and cultural expectations surrounding live performance, with drinking often seen as integral to networking, performance energy, and audience engagement. However, many participants also expressed increasing awareness of the long-term personal and professional consequences of sustained alcohol use, leading some to reject or renegotiate their relationship with alcohol. By situating musicians within broader criminological frameworks, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how occupational contexts shape behavior and identity in high-risk cultural industries.

Key words: Musicians, alcohol, life course theory, dramaturgical approach, permissive environs, criminogenic environs, substance use, workplace drinking, music

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INTRODUCTION

Alcohol consumption has long been culturally and economically tethered to the music industry (Bellis et al., 2007; Commons, 2014; Dobson, 2011; Forsyth, Lennox, & Cloonan, 2016; Lucijanic et al., 2010), particularly within live performance spaces such as bars, clubs, and music festivals (Bennett & Cottrell, 2024; Douglass, 2022; Feltmann & Elgan, 2019; Hutton & Jaensch, 2015). These venues operate not only as entertainment sites but also as structured social environments where excessive drinking is both normalized and incentivized. Musicians working in such settings face unique occupational pressures: they are not only performers and artists, but also indirect agents of alcohol promotion for venues (Lennox & Forsyth, 2015). While previous research has examined high rates of alcohol consumption among hospitality workers, such as bartenders and other service staff (Bell & Hadjiefthyvoulou, 2022; Buvik & Scheffels, 2020; Thern et al., 2024) , comparatively little attention has been paid to how musicians, who also operate within nightlife economies, experience and respond to the embedded culture of drinking that defines their workplaces.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the lived experiences of musicians based in Vancouver, British Columbia, with specific attention to how alcohol functions as both a workplace tool and a symbolic element of performance identity. Drawing from qualitative interviews, the research examines how musicians navigate the expectations of audiences, promoters, and venue managers, manage their reputations within local music scenes, and contend with the persistent presence of alcohol in their professional and social lives. Erving Goffman's (1959) theory of presentation of self provides a lens to understand how musicians perform and manage self in highly public, alcohol-saturated settings, while Sampson and Laub's (1993) life course theory offers insight into how individual trajectories of alcohol use and desistance shift

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over time.

Framed within broader criminological concerns, this study engages with concepts such as criminogenic environments, alcohol consumption, and the cultural normalization of deviance. Bars and music venues emerge as permissive environments that blur boundaries between work and leisure, responsibility and intoxication, agency and expectation. In doing so, this research contributes to the expanding field of cultural criminology by highlighting how occupational identities are shaped by risky environments and how desistance can be influenced not only by formal turning points, but by shifts in values, performance demands, and social reputation. This paper ultimately provides an entry point for considering musicians as a unique labor group within criminological inquiry—one that bridges symbolic interactionist and structural analyses of deviance, conformity, and identity transformation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Alcohol in the entertainment industry

There has been a substantial amount of research on the prevalence of alcohol consumption in the entertainment industry (Bellis et al., 2007; Bellis et al., 2012; Brody et al., 2020; Butkovic & Rancic Dopudj, 2017; Buvik & Scheffels, 2020; Commons et al., 2014; Dobson, 2011; Forsyth, Lennox, & Cloonan, 2016; Forsyth, Lennox, & Emslie, 2016; Gronnerod, 2002; Lebrun & Strong, 2015; Lennox & Forsyth, 2015; Lucijanic et al., 2010; Miller & Quigley, 2012; Oksanen, 2013a; Oksanen, 2013b; Parker & Harford, 1992; Saltychev et al., 2016; Schroeder et al., 2007; Thern et al., 2024) . A recent study conducted in Sweden analyzed alcohol use across various occupational sectors and found that workers in the arts, entertainment, and recreation industries ranked among the industries with the highest prevalence of hazardous alcohol consumption (Thern et al., 2024). These findings are consistent with earlier research showing elevated rates of alcohol use in the entertainment sector. For instance, Parker and Harford (1992) examined alcohol consumption across occupational categories in the United States and found that the highest average daily alcohol intake occurred in the service industry, with bartenders reporting the most significant consumption levels. Subsequent studies have reinforced these patterns, consistently documenting higher alcohol consumption among service industry workers compared to other sectors (Jarman, Naimi, Pickard, Daley, & De, 2007). Musicians are another group under the entertainment industry that are heavily involved with alcohol (Bell et al., 2007; Dobson, 2011; Forsythe, Lennox, & Cloonan, 2016; Forsythe, Lennox, & Emslie, 2016).

Hospitality staff within the entertainment industry have been a frequent focus of research into alcohol use and misuse. Bell and Hadjiefthyvoulou (2022) confirmed these patterns,

showing that bartenders reported high levels of alcohol consumption, with extended work hours playing a significant role. Similarly, a qualitative study by Buvik and Scheffels (2020) identified three main rationales for bartenders' heavy drinking: easy access to alcohol, using it as a coping mechanism for work-related stress, and fostering social connections with colleagues. While bartenders and other hospitality workers have received significant attention, musicians, who work in similarly immersive environment in nightlife settings, have also been extensively studied to understand their unique relationship with alcohol.

Mythology of musicians and substance use

Famous pop and rock musicians are frequently portrayed in the media as embodying lavish and chaotic lifestyles (Bellis et al., 2007; Lucijanic et al., 2010). The cultural narrative of "live fast, die young" has become associated with the mythology of stardom, glamorizing risk-taking behaviors such as heavy alcohol and drug use (Bellis et al., 2007). This mythology not only influences public perception but also appears to impact youth, promoting ideals of fame, excess, and recklessness (Lucijanic et al., 2010). Commons et al. (2014) highlighted the early deaths of many of these stars, noting how fame often precedes a "crash" into addiction, health problems, or premature death. The clustering of celebrity musician deaths around the age of 27, which is referred to as "Club 27", has contributed to the cultural mythology of rock and substance abuse (Lucijanic et al., 2010).

The influence of these musicians extends beyond their personal lives and into the behaviors of their fans. Bellis et al. (2007) found that specific music genres such as house, hard rock, and heavy metal were associated with higher levels of substance use, while genres like rap were linked to violence and sexual behavior. Similarly, Oberle and Garcia (2015) found that genre preference significantly influenced substance use: pop, country, and religious music

negatively correlated with alcohol and drug use, while rap/hip-hop, soul/funk, and dance music showed positive correlations. These findings suggest that musical culture can act as a vector for lifestyle norms, with alcohol and drug use embedded in both lyrical content and broader fan practices.

Music festivals and venues as risk environments

Music festivals are often the site where these cultural dynamics are intensified. Attended by millions globally, festivals are widely recognized as high-risk environments for alcohol and drug use (Douglass et al., 2022; Geuens et al., 2022; Bennett & Cottrell, 2024; Hutton & Jaensh, 2015; Feltmann et al., 2019). Feltmann et al. (2019) found that, at a Swedish EDM event, 94% of participants reported drinking alcohol with an average BAC of 0.10%. A similar pattern was observed at a large EDM festival in Miami, where 40% of blood samples tested positive for alcohol. Factors contributing to excessive alcohol use at these events include normalization of intoxication, pre-loading, weekend scheduling, and the perceived importance of "partying hard" as part of the music festival experience (Hutton & Jaensh, 2015). Moreover, music stars themselves often promote heavy drinking as a part of their brand, reinforcing these expectations for festivalgoers.

Workplace drinking and performance

Interestingly, comparisons between musicians and other nightlife workers reveal that musicians may be at greater risk of alcohol misuse due to the expectation that they consume alcohol during performances. Forsyth, Lennox, and Emslie (2016) found that entertainers were more likely than bartenders to drink while working, with alcohol embedded in performance rituals. Similarly, Dobson (2011), in their study of jazz and classical musicians, found that participants consumed alcohol to manage performance anxiety, take advantage of its availability,

and facilitate networking opportunities. Grønnerød (2002), studying non-professional rock bands in Finland, echoed these findings and added that alcohol use was often linked to audience expectations, group bonding, and even as a form of "self-deception" through intoxication to experience poor performances more positively.

Beyond occupational drinking, musicians have also reported using alcohol and other substances for creative purposes. Iszaj et al. (2018), interviewing artists in Hungary, found that alcohol and marijuana were frequently used as tools to enhance creativity, loosen cognitive constraints, or enter altered mental states conducive to artistic expression. Singer and Mirhej (2006) further explored this theme in the context of jazz music, where drugs like marijuana, cocaine, and heroin were viewed by participants as integral to the creative process.

Despite the extensive research on musicians' alcohol use, gaps remain in the literature. Much of the existing research is concentrated in Europe, and there is little attention paid to Canadian contexts. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on musicians in Vancouver, British Columbia. Second, while many studies have explored that musicians drink, very few have examined why musicians drink or if and why they stop drinking. Notably, Oksanen (2013a, 2013b), published two articles where they observed the autobiographies of famous musicians and found "many of the books devote most of their content to detailed descriptions of the descent into addiction and survival after hardships" (Oksanen, 2013a, p. 57), and that rehabilitation and storytelling varies between genders (Oksanen, 2013b). Building on this foundation, the present study will explore whether participants currently consume alcohol, the reasons they drink, their relationship with alcohol, and the way that musicians' relationship to alcohol changes over time.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Presentations of Self

Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective offers a compelling framework for understanding how individuals manage identity and presentation in performance-driven environments such as the music industry. In The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Goffman draws an analogy between social interaction and theatrical performance. He suggests that individuals engage in impression management by performing roles in front of an "audience," utilizing settings, props, and scripts to shape how they are perceived by others.

For musicians, this metaphor becomes especially relevant. The stage functions as both a literal and symbolic space where performers present a curated version of themselves. In many performance contexts such as bars, clubs, and festivals, alcohol is not only available but also symbolically tied to notions of authenticity, charisma, and social connection (Bellis et al., 2007; Lucijanic et al., 2010). The consumption of alcohol becomes part of the front stage performance, used to construct an image aligned with audience expectations and subcultural norms (Forsyth, Lennox, & Emslie, 2016). Musicians may drink to appear relaxed, confident, or relatable, reinforcing the persona they aim to project.

The front stage, according to Goffman, is where individuals are highly conscious of their behavior and focused on maintaining a consistent performance. Musicians, especially those working in nightlife settings, must navigate the expectation that they not only deliver a musical performance but also embody a lifestyle (Bellis et al., 2007; Lucijanic et al., 2010). This expectation has been explored in the work of Dobson (2011), who found that young freelance musicians often felt pressure to drink in order to manage nerves, fit into their professional circles, or meet social expectations embedded within the culture of live music.

By contrast, the back-stage is where individuals can step out of their public role and behave in ways that are inconsistent with their front stage persona. For musicians, this might be found in moments off-stage, in rehearsal spaces, or during private reflection. However, Goffman emphasizes that the boundary between front and back stages is often blurred. In the case of musicians, the demands of maintaining a consistent persona can bleed into their private lives, especially when alcohol becomes both a professional prop and a personal habit. Grønnerød (2002) discusses this in their study of alcohol use among non-professional rock musicians in Finland, finding that it served both as a performative prop and also as a way to build group networks amongst themselves, or even be used as a form of 'self-deception' to mask a poor performance.

Goffman's dramaturgical framework is thus well-suited to analyzing alcohol use among musicians. It highlights how drinking can serve as a strategic part of a performance, a tool for impression management, and a ritualized component of professional identity. This perspective is particularly useful for exploring not just why musicians drink, but how those drinking behaviors are performed, reinforced, and sustained through the unique social dynamics of musical performance environments.

Bars as leisure places

Nightlife environments such as bars, pubs, and entertainment precincts offer unique social settings where conventional norms may be relaxed, resulting in permissive or even criminogenic atmospheres. Across the literature, these venues are shown to foster behaviors that are socially risky and often tolerated in ways that would be considered unacceptable in other settings. Thurnell-Read (2021) emphasizes the central role of the pub in fostering sociability and bonding, particularly among men. His ethnographic work illustrates how pubs function as

informal institutions where relationships are formed and rituals of leisure are maintained—spaces where social drinking becomes normalized and excessive consumption is often reinforced.

This environment of permissiveness is reflected in experimental and survey-based research. Johnson (2012), for example, tested social norms theory in a naturalistic bar setting and found that perceived peer approval of heavy drinking significantly influenced individual alcohol consumption. This supports the idea that bar environments actively shape individual behavior through local and informal norms. Similarly, Boyle, Merrill, and Carey (2020) found that location-specific social norms—such as those particular to bars, clubs, or restaurants—were strongly associated with college students' alcohol use. Their findings suggest that certain venues operate as socially constructed zones of exception, where heavy drinking is not only more accepted but expected.

The structure and progression of a night out also play a role in escalating risk. Zahnow et al. (2022) analyzed how individuals move between venues during nights out and found that exposure to violence became more likely as people transitioned between locations, especially later in the evening. Their work demonstrates how nightlife districts themselves, in combination with alcohol availability and crowd behavior, contribute to environments where aggression is more probable. In line with these findings, Usdan et al. (2005) identified bars and parties as common drinking locations prior to impaired driving incidents among college students. Their results indicate that these venues often serve as starting points for high-risk behaviors, further positioning them as permissive environments with limited oversight or intervention.

Collectively, these studies reinforce the notion that bars and similar nightlife settings are not only leisure spaces but also social and physical environments that shape, enable, and

sometimes encourage deviant or risky behaviors. Through weak enforcement of broader norms, high alcohol availability, and context-specific social expectations, these venues function as permissive—and occasionally criminogenic—settings within the urban landscape.

However, despite the leisure and encouraging of deviant behaviour environments that bars, pubs, and clubs are, there is a separate population to the public that attend these environments, and that is the population that must serve and entertain the audience. As presented earlier in this literature, research has been done to analyze the habits of those who work in these environments and have repeatedly found higher consumption of alcohol and other substances (Bell & Hadjiefthyvoulou, 2022; Parker & Harford, 1992; Thern et al., 2024), it has rarely analyzed the phenomenon as a result of the space that these employees work in, and the effects the environment has on their workplace decisions.

Life course theory/perspective

Sampson and Laub's (1993) Crime in the Making marked a pivotal moment in criminological theory by extending Hirschi's (1969) concept of social bonds into a dynamic, longitudinal framework. Drawing on data originally collected by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, they proposed that the redirection of criminal behavior is significantly influenced by key turning points throughout the life course. These turning points include: (1) marriage, which fosters attachment to conventional others and strengthens informal social control; (2) stable employment, which provides routine, responsibility, and structured social integration; and (3) military service, which historically served as a rehabilitative institution that facilitated personal transformation and reintegration into prosocial environments (Sampson & Laub, 1993).

Over the past 30 years, this perspective has been both expanded and refined. Researchers have emphasized that turning points are not universally experienced, and their impact may be

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shaped by social location factors such as gender, race, class, and sexuality. Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph (2002) introduced the concept of cognitive transformation, highlighting that desistance also depends on internal changes in identity and motivation, not just external life events. Other scholars have proposed a wider array of meaningful turning points, including rehabilitative programs, peer mentorship, religious or spiritual conversion, and community-based support systems (Maruna, 2001; Kazemian, 2007). These expansions reflect a growing recognition that desistance is a complex and individualized process, often shaped by both structural opportunities and personal agency over time.

Studies on alcohol consumption have often used life course theory to show a change in the consumption levels of teenagers as they grow up. This phenomenon of "maturing out of drinking", which occurs in the early twenties (Jarvinen & Bom, 2019), follows Sampson and Laub's ideas that excessive alcohol consumption has negative impacts on social bonds such as marriage and employment (Sampson & Laub, 1993). This is supported by Bamberger and colleagues (2018) study that found that college drinking patterns can negatively impact employment outcomes at a compounded scale. Järvinen and Bom (2019) show that "maturing out" is not only a behavioral process but also a socially constructed expectation. Their interviews with young adult drinkers revealed that individuals often frame reductions in alcohol consumption as something expected of a responsible adult. Participants often cited employment, long-term relationships, and family formation as reasons for cutting back, reflecting the importance of social bonds in reshaping behavior.

Liu and colleagues (2023) provide another relevant study through a longitudinal study of the college-to-work transition, finding that many individuals reduce their alcohol intake after entering the workforce, however, not all individuals did. The responses where a decrease was not

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reported was most common among individuals with high levels of alcohol use during college, which may suggest that the strength of a pattern may be more difficult to disrupt by turning points.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is exploratory and takes a participatory, methodological stance where conclusions are drawn from what the data presents, rather than the data being used to support a hypothesis, to understand phenomenon (Hathaway, 1995). Qualitative research differs from quantitative research through the sample that is used, the form of data collection, and analysis of that data.

Other research around qualitative methods have led to the development of criteria of good qualitative work, presented by Tracy (2010), who described eight ways to ensure that qualitative work is well done. As I state these eight criteria, I will also explain how this study achieved each one.

- *Worthy Topic*: This topic is very relevant as it addresses a gap in current research, it explains a gap in life course theory application and alcohol use to those who work in the music industry.

- *Rich Rigor*: This study involved conducting several interviews in the field.

- *Sincerity*: This study will explain both my stance as a student creating a project on a timeline and clearly states the methodology I conducted to develop the results of the study.

- *Credibility*: This study is credible. All my methodology is shown and explained.

- *Resonance*: This study has potential to be used to generalize to other workplaces where alcohol consumption is high. Music is one of several industries where excessive alcohol consumption is not seen in a negative light. The application for future research acknowledging gaps in current theory can be applied to other careers.

- *Significant Contribution*: This study addresses gaps in current research, a major gap in theory application to an overlooked theme in musician's lives: the desistance of alcohol consumption. This major gap needs to be further researched not just in the music industry but all industries where there is an increased rate of excessive alcohol consumption.

- *Ethical*: This study went through the proper ethics channels to be approved. This research met the standards of Douglas College's Research and Ethics Board on December 12, 2024.

- *Meaningful Coherence*: This study achieved what it set out to do, used appropriate qualitative research methods, and effectively stations my research into the current body of literature on musicians and alcohol.

Interviews

Qualitative interviews are a well-established method for exploring individuals' experiences, beliefs, and meaning-making processes, particularly in social research contexts where depth and nuance are critical. Semi-structured interviews, in particular, offer a balance between consistency and flexibility, allowing researchers to address key topics while also enabling participants to guide the direction of the conversation based on their own experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; King & Horrocks, 2010). This approach is especially effective when the aim is to gain insight into complex or sensitive topics that cannot be adequately captured through standardized instruments (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). As DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) explain, qualitative interviews allow for the co-construction of meaning between researcher and participant, yielding rich, detailed data that is both context-sensitive and interpretively robust. The method has also been widely recognized for its capacity to uncover the

interplay between individual experiences and broader social or institutional structures (Brinkmann, 2013; Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). In addition, semi-structured interviews are particularly suited to studies that prioritize the participant's voice and perspective, as they allow for follow-up questions and probes that clarify or expand upon responses (Gill et al., 2008). Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) concept of the active interview drove the interview style for this project. They state that interviews are a co-created space and the active interview involves creating meaning through dynamic conversation. This means that as the active interviewer, I need to be open to expanding on relevant topics, unique perspectives and thought connections (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Drawing from this body of methodological literature, the present study employs semi-structured interviews as an appropriate and rigorous tool for generating in-depth qualitative data.

Sampling

This study employed a combination of purposive sampling (six participants) and snowball sampling (one participant) to recruit participants. Purposive sampling is a widely used non-probability sampling technique in qualitative research that involves deliberately selecting participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research question (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). This method ensures that the sample includes individuals who possess the knowledge, experience, or perspectives necessary to provide rich and meaningful data. In the context of this study, purposive sampling was used to identify participants who were active musicians with varying experiences related to performance and nightlife environments.

In addition to purposive sampling, snowball sampling was used to expand the participant pool by leveraging the social networks of initial respondents. Snowball sampling is particularly effective when studying populations that are small, dispersed, or difficult to access, and when trust or rapport is essential for participation (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Noy, 2008). After initial

participants were recruited purposively, they were invited to refer others who met the study's inclusion criteria. This method facilitated access to participants who may not have been reachable through more formal recruitment channels and was instrumental in gaining insight into shared experiences within musical subcultures and social networks.

The combination of purposive and snowball sampling ensured that the sample was both intentional and organically expanded, maximizing the likelihood of capturing diverse and nuanced perspectives while remaining aligned with the study's qualitative and exploratory aims.

Coding and Grounded Theory

Coding

Coding is a foundational process in qualitative research that involves organizing and interpreting textual data to identify patterns, categories, and emerging themes (Saldaña, 2021). In this study, coding was used to systematically analyze interview transcripts in a way that allowed for both descriptive and interpretive insight. Initially, open coding was applied to fragment the data into discrete segments, which were then labeled according to the ideas and concepts they represented (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This allowed for the identification of recurring words, actions, and sentiments related to alcohol use, performance culture, and occupational identity among musicians. Importantly, codes were not treated as static labels but as conceptual tools that evolved as theoretical understanding deepened. This approach aligns with Saldaña's (2021) emphasis on coding as a dynamic and reflexive act that requires researcher interpretation, rather than mechanical data sorting.

Grounded Theory

This study was informed by the principles of grounded theory, a methodological approach originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to generate theory directly from

empirical data. Grounded theory is particularly useful in under-researched areas because it allows for theoretical insight to emerge inductively, rather than being imposed from the outset. The emphasis is placed on developing substantive theory that is "grounded" in participants' lived experiences and language.

In this project, grounded theory principles were used to guide both the collection and analysis of interview data. As coding progressed, theoretical concepts began to emerge from the data—such as the performative function of alcohol or the shifting occupational identity of aging musicians. These emerging concepts were constantly compared across cases using the constant comparative method, a central feature of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Through this process, thematic saturation was reached when no new concepts were identified, and categories became theoretically dense.

Rather than seeking to produce a grand theory, this study aligns more closely with constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), which recognizes the co-construction of meaning between researcher and participant. This perspective is particularly relevant to studies of symbolic and identity-laden experiences, such as those of musicians operating in nightlife settings. Constructivist grounded theory also accommodates the researcher's reflexivity and prior knowledge (Charmaz, 2014), both of which were acknowledged throughout the project as part of the analytical process.

Reflexivity & Ethics

Ethics

This study adhered to the ethical guidelines set forth in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2, 2018). Ethical approval was obtained from the Douglas College Research and Ethics Board in December 2024. The TCPS 2 enforces

key concepts for research involving humans which include informed consent, minimal risk, privacy & confidentiality, vulnerable populations, and community based and Indigenous research. Below will discuss how I maintained ethical considerations in my research.

Prior to participating, individuals were provided with a detailed informed consent form, outlining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the option to withdraw at any time without penalty, and how their information will be protected. Consent was obtained in writing or online signature, and verbally confirmed after reading through the form. All interviews were conducted either in person, via Zoom, or on the phone, depending on participant preference and availability.

To protect privacy and confidentiality, all data was stored securely on password-protected, encrypted devices, or in the case of the physical consent forms, in a locked cabinet in my office. Only I had access to the data. Participants were informed of the measures taken to ensure confidentiality, and they were given the right to review or withdraw their data until I had completed their transcription. The process of creating transcriptions of the interviews removed all identifying information from the interview including names of friends, family, bands, and venues, removed specific living areas of the participants, and removed the participant's name.

Given the central role that alcohol plays in the music industry, the study posed minimal risk beyond what they might encounter talking about their job in their everyday lives. Although there was the chance that discussing personal experiences may lead to mild discomfort, participants were informed that they were able to skip any question, or end the interview, at any time. I did not inform any participants that I was offering compensation, although for all in-person interviews, I offered to purchase the participant a drink at the interview location, which was either at a café or a bar. Participants were thanked for their time and their contribution to the

research.

Reflexivity

The original plan for this project was to complete several interviews with participants gathered through purposive sampling, and then rely on snowball sampling from those participants in order to access more participants. Interviews were difficult to schedule because the participants typically had rehearsals or shows in the evening, and I was working full-time into the early afternoon during this research project. It was hard to find a time that both the participants and myself were free to meet. Moreover, due to the time limit on this project, there was very little time to build rapport with any participants, and therefore my opportunities to snowball sample through my participants was weakened. This resulted in despite having six participants collected through purposive sampling, only one participant snowballed me into another participant. As well, after completing the seven total interviews, the timing to complete the project was approaching and the data collected was sufficient to capture some variation and some saturation in several topics, so I decided to stop focusing on finding more participants and to focus on completing the project with the current data.

When I first made contact with participants, I introduced myself, explained that I was a student at Douglas College, and I was conducting research for an Honours project. I also explained how I got their contact information. When I met participants in person, I offered to buy them a coffee or an alcoholic beverage of their choice. I always got a drink, either a coffee or a beer, depending on the location we met. Before the interviews began, I had some small talk with participants to help build rapport, since there was very little opportunity to build rapport beforehand. During the interview, I introduced the topic slowly through questions, first asking about how they got interested in music in the first place, and slowly moving towards the main

content, their relationship with alcohol, and any stories they were willing to share with me. If I asked a question, and they barely answered or trailed off during their answer, I would remain quiet and they would usually pick things up again, or if they did not appear to have anything else to say, I would ask a probing question or move on to a different topic. I acknowledged everything that they said, usually through nodding, other forms of positive body language, or exclamations of "yeah" and "right", except for when I asked probing or clarifying questions. As an outsider to the music industry, when there was a term brought up that I was unfamiliar with, I asked the participant to explain the term. For example, when I first heard about Straight Edge in an interview, it was explained to me as a "super hardcore" (P1) mentality, however, when the same term was brought up in two other interviews, those participants acknowledged that there are some people who are hardcore about the mentality, but that for the most part it is rather tame. I matched my vocabulary to the words they used when asking probing questions. Two interviews were not able to be done in-person. The first one was done over the phone because the participant was away, and the second one the participant was ill, but still wanted to conduct the interview so it was rescheduled to be over Zoom a few days later. In these cases, I did not purchase myself or the participant a drink, although still thanked them for their participation.

RESULTS

Bottoms up: How bands sell booze

Participants in this study consistently emphasized that working musicians are embedded in the business side of selling alcohol, where success is often measured not only by musical talent but by the ability to contribute to a venue's profitability. All participants were aware that their performances served the dual purpose of entertainment and alcohol promotion. P1 shared that acknowledging the goal of the audience, which is "90% of people are there to: 'Booze!' Get out, go out for a night, right? It's their night out" (P1), to have fun on a night out, your show has to help support that energy and excitement for both the purpose of the audience and the venue.

Participants perspectives on advertising drinking varied slightly. One participant really put emphasis on the importance of selling alcohol by saying explaining "I would describe alcohol as the chemistry of live music of only in the sense in that if you aren't bringing people into the door to buy booze, you are not meeting the standard of the venue" (P2). The same participant offered examples of when booking a show being denied if you have played too recently because "If you flood the market … venues will pay you less or just not book you because you can't sell their alcohol" (P2). Another participant downplayed the pressure to sell alcohol and focused on just having fun on stage knowing that that will in turn help him sell alcohol, he mentions "one of my favorite things is just like, I play music for me … [the audience is] there truly enjoying the music. I get into it, they're getting into it, like if I'm not into it, why would they get into it" (P3). Regardless of how they presented the task of selling alcohol, all participants were aware that it played a large part of the venues' goals when hosting a show.

Musicians also recognized that fostering a vibrant, energetic atmosphere could indirectly support alcohol sales. When asked what energy P4's band brings, he explained

"We're a party band. We are the party … fun as it is to sit down and play and touchy-feely music with nobody dances, most of what I've fallen into is: we like to make a good ruckus dance party. Which is a kind of like an easy tell like, were they a good band by was the dance floor full? And then you get people to like dance their ass off, and then they're tired and thirsty, and they go to the bar and they drink, they get drunk, they head back to the dance floor."

This quote clearly explains the embedded nature of selling alcohol. P4 shares that the most fun happens when they "make a good ruckus dance party", and seamlessly transitioned the success and fun factors into the audience going to buy drinks, only to come back drunker and keep dancing.

Beyond the commercial realities tied to alcohol sales, participants also discussed the challenges of securing and maintaining performance opportunities through networking and reputation management. When asked about how they typically obtained shows, participants described a process heavily reliant on personal connections more than skill and talent. As P3 explained,

"There's a lot of shmoozing and like I'll play one show and then you, or you get offered to play a show, but like you, you wanna play at like a certain venues or with a certain promoters, uh or get into a certain circle of like shows playing, you have to yeah, basically schmooze your way in there and like be friendly or like, have something to offer" (P3).

P4 similarly noted, "A lot of it is totally who you know, and then it's paired with how good you are. Like if you know some people … they'll throw you some bones". Although both factors matter, the difficulty in actually starting up, and then getting new shows from the show you have played, are reliant on being able to "schmooze" (P3) and network effectively.

Once getting started in the industry, the next most important role was to maintain a good reputation. P1 put all of the emphasis on being able to be social by explaining that "reputation is huge in music. Networking is huge in music. It's the only way to make it in music is through networking and reputation" (P1). Participants frequently expressed that in the live music scene, the phrase "you're only as good as your last gig" (P1, P4, P5) was the truth. A poor performance

could lead to lost future opportunities if promoters from other venues are attending, damaged

professional relationships if you had been built up or given a chance and then blew it, and

diminished access to the venue depending on the severity of the poor show. Reputation was seen

as critical not only for individual career sustainability but also for building collective credibility

within local music networks.

Networking, beyond being required to start out in the industry, remained an important

focus for the participants in order to help their band grow. Even if you have started to make a

name, P3 still shares that "it's contacts, but then you gotta, they're not just gonna like put

somebody on that they have no clue" (P3). Although the participants never shared a bad

experience while networking with other bands, it was always discussed with somewhat bore and

a lack of enthusiasm as just something that you had to do. P2 summarized it by stating "it's all

about getting into the trenches and doing the hard work and networking", and the other

participants seemed to have similar opinions. When it comes to the ways that participants

networked and built themselves up socially, we fall into the next theme.

On tap and on stage: Alcohol presence and use in the music industry

Consistent with previous literature, there is ample amounts of alcohol consumed in the

industry (Bellis et al,. 2007; Butkovic & Rancic, 2017; Gronnerod, 2002; Iszaj et al., 2018;

Lennox & Forsythe, 2015; Lucijanic et al., 2010; Oksanen, 2013a; Oksanen, 2013b; Saltychev et

al., 2016; Thern et al., 2024). The participants shared three main reasons that they choose to

drink: availability, networking and reputation, and pressure. Towards the end of the interviews,

participants were also asked their opinion on the how the music industry is intertwined with

alcohol.

Availability

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Previous research has looked at all parts of the entertainment district staff and the unique access to alcohol they have working so closely with it, and spending so much time around it (Forsythe, Lennox, & Cloonan, 2016). The amount of alcohol made available to bands has very few limits. Drink tickets have ranged for bands from getting one for each member, to nine for each member, or just having open bar. These tickets are seen as "a perk" (P5), and " it sweetens the deal for most people. I guess it just makes you feel like you're I don't know, part of something?" (P6). Beyond drink tickets, participants spoke to grabbing a drink "because you're there" (P2). If you have time between set-up and a show, you don't want to leave your gear alone so it helps pass the time. In a similar vein, one participant discussed the difficulty of touring and being in an unfamiliar location, and after getting set up for the gig that night, they had nowhere to go except to a table for a drink. As they stated:

> "if you're in another city, you don't really know where anything is, and then you have to like be there for like waiting for the sound guy or and then that'll go on if you do the sound, you're waiting for your turn and 'blahh' like, you just kind of get trapped in the bar. And so, … yeah, it's pretty easy to just always have a beer in your hand." (P7).

Some participants played in wedding venues and the alcohol available to them was often open-bar. P4 spoke to the ignorance of time-specific drinking by sharing that they "got there at 9:30am, we're immediately handed a shot of brandy, and then it's like, take a shot and start playing" (P4). Moreover, at several wedding venues, P4 had to warn his bandmates that there was a "ceremonial cask that will get passed around … it will probably come to you" (P4).

Other ways that musicians constantly have access to drinks is through their fans. The audience will sometimes purchase drinks for the band which serves as another free way to access alcohol. Beyond being at a show, there is also high availability of alcohol outside of venues at recording studios. At one participant's recording studio, "the fridge never didn't have beer in it, in the way in people would be drinking at 9am in the morning and people have Kokanees in their

hand" (P2), the same participant recognized that when his band first started, they were constantly

surrounded by alcohol, and that he laughed as he recalled the memory. "All of us in the five-

person band were pretty much functional alcoholics based on all the booze that was around"

(P2). One participant discussed a time where they did not have any gigs lined up, but they still

wanted to go out and drink for free, so they shared that

> "if you ever need something to put in your face, everywhere in North America, in the
> middle of a city, there's a divey blues bar that if you could play like Mustang Sally and
> Soulman or something, on any instrument, you can get a free pilsner, or whatever cheap
> beer they have there" (P7).

There was never any shortage of alcohol access for the participants, and often they admitted that

because of how easy it was to get, it was the best way to pass the time.

Networking & Reputation

Networking, as discussed in the first theme, is a crucial component of the business side of

the music industry. Since the vast majority of the networking done by my participants happened

either in the venues where they played or at an afterparty afterwards, alcohol was a common tool

used to facilitate the networking task. Alcohol was described as a "social lubricant" (P2, P6) that

could help with social situations. When asked how they would approach talking to another

musician they did not know, P2 explained that "alcohol is a social lubricant and what better way

to get talking then to have a beer with them and relax … what better way to socialize with people

then to step outside and hack a dart" (P2). Although both alcohol and cigarettes and marijuana

was used to socialize, alcohol was the primary 'tool' used by the participants.

The reputation that a band inhabits is also an indication to their alcohol consumption.

Partying is how some bands identify themselves in the industry. Sometimes being good at

partying would make up for a poor performance on stage. As one participant mentioned, "I've

had bands where like where music is terrible if you actually listen to it. But the party that comes

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along with it is like something to experience" (P3). P4 mirrored this sentiment sharing that "the other like small third thing on like how to get gigs is, are you fun to party with afterwards" (P4). P2 admitted that the first band he joined was "full party mode all the way through" (P2). P6 described his band by sharing stories of parties, "we'd be playing, uh, like a festival and then partying after with some other bands and, like people are doing lines, and drinking a ton, like that you know, maybe that's just the culture that that band is" (P6). Alcohol, among other substances, was an important asset that helped the bands maintain their identity as a 'party band' and it also helped them make the night more fun. When discussing some less-than-ideal gigs, P3 shared his method of making sure he still had fun.

> "Especially if nobody comes, you know, you're on tour, you're playing on a weekday, and there's only like 20 people, you gotta pay the sound guy, so every band is making like no money and all you got was like two free pitchers. And like that's now they don't even give free beers, in most places. Not that I care, but but that's like in those instances, I'd be like, 'give me the two pitchers right now' and slam them both and then go on stage, because I'm like, this sucks, so I'm gonna make it awesome." (P3).

Other participants mirrored the sentiment that alcohol was appreciated and for most of them expected. P6 discussed the drink vouchers helping them have more fun. He said "they'll give you two drink tickets each … I guess it sweetens the deal for most people. I guess it just makes you feel like you're I don't know, part of something" (P6). Drink tickets were widely regarded as a perk, and only one participant (P1) said that they never expected them.

Pressures

Pressures that participants faced that led to drinking consisted of stress, and impression management in front of venue managers, promoters, and fans. The second most common reason for musicians to drink alcohol was to get rid of nerves. Playing a show in front of a crowd is always a nerve-wracking experience and alcohol was easily available for participants to help calm themselves down. While you are waiting to perform and there is nothing to do except

mentally prepare for a show, many participants dealt with the stress by having a drink. One participant it was a theme where his band would be "going to play the show and 'you guys want to go grab a beer real quick?', well, you know, to kind of either take the edge off or because you're there" (P1). Another participant explained his routine to prepare for a show by saying they "used to necessitate like having at least one or two drinks, just sort of like to ease the nerves" (P5).

When expanding upon this topic in the interview, a few participants acknowledged the oddness of drinking while working. "We are working and you are just handing me alcohol then we're gonna go on stage at work and you are gonna continue to give us alcohol. And then once we are done, there's a good chance you're gonna encourage even more alcohol drinking … This is us being professional, on the job, focused and drinking" (P4). The discussion of an 'expectation' to drink came up and participants started sharing their ways that they would try to pretend to drink to avoid any awkward moments while still falling within the expectations of others. One participant recounted being passed a ceremonial cask at a venue, and explaining to their band that "if you don't want to drink, at least just put it to your lips, make it look like you had a drink and just pass it on. It's easier to pretend you drink than to decline and deal with that kind of hassle" (P4). The same participant then shared that sometimes a situation comes up where it is difficult to pretend, and you have to make a quick decision as to what to do when "[you get passed] a double shot of brandy we're like, well there's no faking this one" (P4).

Returning to the networking aspect of the business, there was also a large focus on alcohol being a core part of networking with venue managers, promoters, or bar owners. Another participant shared a story of being pulled by his bandmate to a table to take a shot with the venue promoter. The bandmate told the participant that "the promoter is next to us. We got to drink

with him" (P1). Networking was not only focused on alcohol being a social lubricant to talk with other bands and to connect with like-minded musicians, but it was also used to show an ability and willingness to promote drinking when talking with the venue managers or promoters.

In the cases where fans are buying drinks for a band member, it is considered rude to deny a drink if you are drinking, and if you are not drinking it becomes a hassle to explain. As a participant shared, "yeah they hate it, uh they hate knowing that I don't drink. I usually just like let them pour it and I'll just be like whatever" (P6). The same participant shared how a usual conversation went, explaining,

> Well what usually happens is they'll ask like, 'can I buy you a drink' or whatever, and I'll just say, like, 'no, I don't drink. Don't worry about it'. And then they usually insist this is a thing that I've noticed, and then I'll just be like, 'oh, I'll just get like [bandmate] a drink'. You know, like get him. uh. But yeah, that does happen. a fair bit, for sure. (P6).

When I asked another participant if there was pressure or an expectation to drink and they laughed and said "expectation? To drink? Hell no. There's never an expectation to drink" (P5). When I rephrased the question to talk about being given or offered drinks by venues or fans and refusing, was there ever a negative response, they shared their attitude towards anyone being upset that they would not drink saying "if you say no that's like, really it's their problem if they have a problem with it. Really, like, what should I do about it, you know? (light laugh) … but I've never refused, you know?" (P5). This attitude best shows the unconscious decisions that are made while at a show. Despite P5 not caring what the response to refusing a drink would be, stating that "it's their problem if they have a problem with it", he also stated that he had never refused to take a drink.

A culture of co-dependency

Throughout the interviews there was a clear connection between the music industry and the alcohol industry, be it from drinking, working in a drinking environment, advertising for

drinks, or encouraging drinking behaviours. When I asked the participants about the inherent

connection between the two, and if the industries could ever separate, there were varying

answers, the following are statements that doubt the industries could separate.

> "[alcohol is] the profit river that goes all through it, how are things funded how is it and the number one currency beyond payola [cash] is alcohol. The culture is inseparable of drinking. And when it comes to [weed] what better way to socialize with people then to step outside and hack a dart." (P2)
> "I don't think it will [separate]. So many people like to drink while they dance and socialize … like in the big cities, I can't see that ever getting separated. In the smaller cities, I've seen it. Because in the smaller cities we're like, yeah, here's a band that's coming through .. they have live bands, even less regularly, like, don't know, maybe once a month or two times a month, if somebody comes to the hall and that's like the only time there's any sort of live entertainment like that, that which were like, you know, like whether there's drinking or not, do you want to go see this live music? ... Because those are also usually the less exposed to music, they're also probably less exposed to alcohol, um and yeah, they don't always like need the alcohol to socialize … But yeah, it's really hard to visualize the entertainment industry without alcohol … it's got some cultural aspects to it as well" (P4).

> "It's clearly tied together in, like we just said … The best shows are at like pubs and whatnot. I don't think so. No. I don't think it would ever separate. Yeah. Like people are just too uptight to, like, enjoy stuff without having [*looking for a word*] R: Social lubricant? P: Exactly. I think that's what it is, yeah" (P6).

> "I don't know. Actually, I *don't* know. I don't know if we will. I don't know if it's necessary. I mean, for some people I think it is. but in some ways I think I mean, it doesn't have to be alcohol. I think whatever gets whoever in the vibe, like, I mean it can be, people can be into their different things, but whatever they wanna take to feel good … if everything was maybe more socially acceptable, it wouldn't be any one thing being pushed, perhaps. I don't know … it's weird that [alcohol's] become this thing like that's the one thing that is acceptable. To sell to people … Yeah, I think it shouldn't have to be or not have to be like everybody should just uh make it the vibe for them that works and then they're their best person for the party.. Yeah, I don't like to pigeon hole anyone, man. do what you do, you wanna do a line over there, you do that. You know, you smoke a cigarette over there, you do that. Take a joint out there. I don't care, yeah I don't care. As long as everybody's happy and having a good time. We all wanna go home, get a good sleep, come back tomorrow" (P7).

These four statements from the participants focus in on the social help that alcohol is in helping

nightlife attendees let loose and celebrate. It is the socialization of alcohol that is so embedded in

our society that makes it unable to be removed from the music industry. Either there being no

chance of alcohol being separated as it is the main source of profit, "the profit river" (P2), or is used as payment method, or people are "too uptight" (P6) without the so-called 'social lubricant'. P4's opinion was interesting because he acknowledged that there are some places where alcohol is not used in the same way it would be at a bar in the city, such as in smaller towns where everyone knows each other. P7 was more interested in the fact that alcohol has been the only accepted substance for so long, and did not care for the removal of substances from the music industry, but rather supported the acceptance of other substances to share the limelight with alcohol.

The only contrasting opinion was given by P5, who expresses:

> "I believe so, yes, because I've read lots about how younger generations really aren't drinking at concerts anymore, you know, and like, I've even seen it with my own eyes, even as a spectator at events. Like you know, like they're not really there's like alcohol is kind of losing it's luster in a way … what I'm seeing that there's an increasing trend moving away from it, right? Like even on social media, like a lot of people talking about alcoholism and like how you know, like all these sort of like it's getting a lot of negative framing in a way that it never had before. So that's in my mind that's like leaning towards that kind of perception" (P5).

P5 refused the idea that people are too uptight to be social with each other, and seems to acknowledge that you do not need alcohol to socialize, much like what P4 saw in smaller towns. P5's answer differs from P7 because he does not offer any information on other substances to be used as replacements at all, but rather believes that as alcohol "loses it's luster" (P5), socialization with others will be improved upon by people who do not need to drink to socialize.

Can I buy you a drink?: Fan Interactions

Participants consistently spoke positively about engaging with audiences, often raising the topic when recounting memorable shows. Some emphasized that maintaining a good relationship with your fans was also important to sustaining good relationships with promoters and venues. As bands grew in popularity and the opportunities for partying and alcohol

consumption increased, one participant cautioned about the potential risks if you change your

relationships with your fans by explaining "you can lose fans … if that gets too much … you

start bringing in like alcohol and like drinking and partying, like too much... You don't wanna

have that reputation all the time, you start losing fans" (P3).

Despite mostly positive reflections, participants also recounted instances where fan

behavior caused disruptions during performances. For example, P1 discussed the dangers of

rowdy crowd activity: "there's been times where you know, you have a dick in the pit and

somebody's drunk or somebody has had a little too much to drink and they are throwing

concussions, and they are throwing spin kicks and kicks." One of P1's band members suffered a

concussion from being struck by a drunken fan during a mosh pit. This behavior was noted to

contradict the intended spirit of moshing, as P1 explained, "in hardcore and everything like

there's a lot of consequences to because you know, you're intoxicated, throwing in already in

hardcore … you're not supposed to leave that seriously hurt." P7 also shared an incident

involving a disruptive fan: "this really drunk girl went over and she fell on the soundboard,

pushed all the levels right up, so feedbacks everywhere, everything just feedback went crazy."

Despite sharing some negative experiences with the audience members, mostly because of a

audience member drinking too much, the vast majority of experiences were positive and the

participants loved the fan base and audiences they played to.

One specific interaction between fans and performers is when the participants would

share accounts of being flirted with by fans. Most participants had had experience being hit on

by fans, but explained that rather than it being something they looked for, it was more just an

interaction that happened. One participant shared their perspectives on focusing too much on

girls.

"I'm not playing music to pick up girls. I'm playing music to play music because I love playing music. I'm there to entertain and, you know, in my early days, you'd catch yourself like paying too much attention to the girls and all that, and then it distracts you from like everything else" (P3).

Regardless of the intention of the participant, P3 admitted they "would get hit on a lot because … I don't know if it's being up on stage or whatnot" (P3). However, the focus was on the performance rather than taking advantage of getting attention. As P7 explained, although he "[has] been hit on while playing," the demands of performing did not leave much time or care to reciprocate: "you're so busy when you're playing a set you never really get to, like some guys I guess pull it off, but like you never really get laid." Many participants noted that they often did not even realize they were being hit on until later, by which point the audience member had already moved on. P7 captured this fleeting nature of fan interactions, describing them as a "flash in the pan" and emphasizing how rare it was to make a meaningful connection: "it's like for the part that I am the star of the show … [it is] rare that you actually make any sort of connection with it" (P7).

Buying drinks was cited as a typical way fans attempted to initiate interaction. P4 noted that it was particularly common for female band members but occurred among male members as well: "Oh it is. Much more often for our female band members, but it definitely happens to me [a man] sometimes". Some participants tried to avoid getting hit on. P5, who was married at the time of the interview, reflected on past experiences, stating, "that was something that happened maybe before, but not anymore (laughs) … I'm not making myself look too available. Um, yeah it occasionally happens, wouldn't say a lot though, so occasionally". P3 also tried to avoid getting unwanted sexual attention from fans, but instead of presenting himself differently, he chose to try and avoid the situation entirely.

I used to hide in the green room a lot, because I'm like I'm not dealing with that. Like it'd be people I'd generally don't want to hit on me. And I'm a telling person and I don't like to

hurt people's feelings so like if I could just avoid the whole situation, I would like to. Rather then like, 'yeah, please go away', like I don't wanna be rude. Like, you know, I do care about people's feelings, even though I don't want to talk to them (P3).

Regardless of some participants trying to avoid being hit on by either presenting yourself differently (P5), or hiding to avoid the situation altogether (P3), they knew it still happened and other participants shared that the overall goal of playing was to play the show and to focus on the overall enjoyment of fans.

High notes and hangovers: The "rollercoaster" of musician life

This section addresses the complex reality of working as a musician, revealing both the hardship and the passion inherent in the profession. While popular media often portrays musicians through the lens of 'sex, drugs, and rock and roll' (Bellis et al., 2007), participants in this study emphasized that such depictions are at best misleading, and at worst, just flat-out wrong.

Behind the glamour and partying, participants made it clear that a career in music demands significant personal sacrifice and resilience. As one participant noted, "bands are 100% labours of love … you need to A) commit yourself to the starving artist lifestyle, B) get lucky, C) never, ever stop working, and D) sacrifice your basic needs to live the life of a touring musician" (P2). Another participant illustrated the toll of the lifestyle by sharing,

> "And learning to play the right way never got me anywhere, so I went on the road and I was playing and I was hurting myself, but I was just invincible. Like I could just play all night every night … one night … I was in my hotel room, cutting scar tissue off the inside of my lip with scissors. And I realized that's a Louis Armstrong story. He used to have to do that because he'd be playing so hard and I was like, 'wow. Guess I'm living the dream here'" (P7).

The long-term effects of constant performing were also evident, as P7 added, "Yeah, I'm sure I can barely hear now … I think there's parts of my hearing that are pretty, pretty gone. It's risky, but it's okay". Regardless of many steps musicians take to care for themselves, a long enough career will be full of health issues that are not realized by other professions.

The difficulty of sustaining a full-time career in music emerged as a common theme. While two participants, P4 and P7, had previously worked as full-time musicians, they both eventually sought more stable employment. P4, who once played in 12 different bands, explained, "you don't always think of it as a non-musician, but like if that's all you do … you have so much more time to try and find your Monday gigs or Tuesday gigs," but ultimately cited financial instability as the reason for leaving full-time performance. Since securing a more stable job, P4 says he "make[s] way more money and I'm not going back to being a full-time musician." P7 credited his ability to tour full-time to luck and having a supportive roommate who could cover rent during his absences. But currently P7 also works a second job and now he has ""gotten so used to pulling in like decent money, and having the comforts and I'm older now, right" (P7). Other participants never believed that making a living solely through gigging was possible. As P2 stated, "You're looking at a profession where you have to accept your life is not going to look like any dreamed up life, like any 9-5. You can't survive purely as a gigging musician." P4 reinforced this reality, saying, "I don't know if I'm going to make $800 this month or if we're going to make $4k you can't guess what gigs you've got coming in". Some, like P5, considered alternative routes such as having multiple positions in the music industry to work full time. He stated that if he "was really gonna go that route, [he] was thinking more to teach and then always like perform kind of part time" (P5).

Relationship difficulties were another consequence of the musician lifestyle. The demands of late nights, inconsistent schedules, and touring strained romantic relationships and friendships. One participant recalled, "toured with a troupe for a while and my ex didn't like it and stopped trusting me and would start to like come out to whatever event I was at every week, and even if it was like a 13-hour drive" (P4). Relationships within bands could also become

complicated, as noted by P7: "it's nice if you can find somebody to hang out with it, who can be in the band … but it's also dangerous, because then if things don't work out, then you're working together in an intimate setting with somebody … you got odds with." P4 shared several accounts of band conflicts following romantic breakups among members, recognizing that interpersonal tensions could deeply affect group dynamics.

Not all participants thought of relationships as difficult though. Have a partner that you can share stories with and spend time with, even when you are separated on tour, could help some musicians. As P3 shared their experience, "I've always had a girlfriend most of the time, … and it just keeps me focused because you can get into lots of trouble. It's fun trouble, but like again, it's like why and what you're there to do" (P3). Another participant just shared how their partner was always there to support their work. P5 shared that their wife is "a big supporter. And she brings a lot of friends and they buy a lot of tickets and yeah she a big supporter … She is a very supportive partner" (P5). The opinions on relationships varied from participant to participant, but it seemed that as long as you could find a supportive partner, and ideally outside of your own band, things could work out pretty well.

Although mental health was not a primary focus of this study, it emerged organically during interviews. Participants noted that many musicians faced emotional and psychological challenges. However, it was also acknowledged that because of the unique appeal of the music industry, it may attract different groups of potential workers than other industries. As P4 explained, "we're pretty sure everyone in [band] is neurodivergent. Which usually like, not all of us have a diagnosis, but like, we're all *pretty sure* we're all on the spectrum." P6 followed the same idea when prompted about the party lifestyle.

"Everyone is so damaged… everyone's got, like tons of baggage and like [laughs], like, I think that's what makes uh, like artists good. Just like how fucked up their lives are,

right? … and like, maybe the drugs and alcohol are like self medication." (P6). The understanding and acceptance that there may be a higher prevalence of individuals who have had a difficult upbringing or who are neurodivergent in the music industry was a significant acknowledgement to hear brought up so casually with the participants.

P7 brought particular attention to the seriousness of mental health struggles, recounting, "lost two drummers to hanging themselves in one year." He explained the emotional crash that can follow a successful show:

> "But like how many musicians get really depressed? Like there's a lot of suicide in hotel rooms after shows. Especially in the rock world, but I get it like, if you got 500 people like dancing their asses off and just loving you and everyone's like, 'yeah, dude, you're the best'. And half an hour later, you're in your hotel room and you don't have anybody in town to talk to you, everybody else wants to go crash and you just sit there and be like (looks around helpless and puts his head in his hands) … Because we just yeah, we were just literally stars. Like we were rock stars, for that little moment in time, and no one's gonna think about it right now. Everybody's gonna leave and do their own thing, say 'that was a great show' and you're gonna be by yourself going, 'why am I by myself'? Yeah, like, how is this fair to me? Like I get to have this for a second and it's all taken away and I'm sitting here like lonely and depressed. That's not fair. I worked hard for that." (P7)

Given its prevalence across interviews, mental health emerged as an important, though unplanned, consideration in understanding the realities of working musicians.

In contrast to the hardships, participants were equally passionate about the enjoyment they derived from their work. Despite the difficulties, they consistently described playing music as fun and rewarding. As P1 summarized, "Performing on stage, you get to have fun with your friends essentially looking around at them and enjoying them and making." Even after exhausting nights, the fulfillment was undeniable, with P2 remarking, "some shows they come home at 2/3 AM and you think what the fuck was I thinking and okay we're never doing that again, and then times where it's like 'oh yeah, that's why I do it'," and P7 simply stating, "we're just having fun making sounds, playing with sound."

Participants described moments of pride and accomplishment, particularly when

reflecting on their progress as musicians. P1 spoke to the exhilaration of performing a solo, describing "getting the solo and having that 30-seconds of, you know, I guess 'glory' as people say, you know, getting in there and just doing a cool solo and how people like, like what you do." P2 shared the excitement of touring, explaining the energy he felt when he would "drive into a town and to see a lineup outside of a venue of a show that you're gonna be playing is the shit. That is cool." Several participants also discussed their sense of achievement when joining bands they had admired. P6 reflected, "yeah it was, pretty fucking cool. And for [this band], like when I was in high school, I went to their shows … they were huge and then, I joined the band, because I I knew the sax player at that point."

The social and party elements of the lifestyle were also seen as part of the fun. P7 described the addictive nature of these experiences: "people going off … just throwing a big party together that's just phenomenal. Yeah, I got addicted to that to very much so." Participants recounted spontaneous experiences such as playing informal shows at house parties or university dorms. As P3 recalled playing on a university campus at a boring gig, "But then through that we would meet a couple of people and it was like, 'Yo, bud, come play the dorms later at night' and … the next thing you know, we're at like a house party or a dorm." Even when formal gigs were cancelled, participants found ways to continue playing and socializing. P2 described how, after a venue shut down live acts for the night because of an issue, they "went back to a friends' house to enjoy the rest of the night, and they decide to start playing. And there was 40 people in the basement and it was basically a house party".

While the realities of a music career include financial instability, emotional tolls, and personal sacrifices, participants also emphasized the deep joy and fulfillment that come from making music, connecting with audiences, and living creatively. Their experiences reveal the

complicated, bittersweet nature of life as a working musician, full of highs and lows, but ultimately rooted in passion.

From party to performance : Evolution of a band

Part of the interview list involved seeing how participants got interested in making music their career. For some participants, early musical inspiration stemmed from exposure to idols, ideas and tv shows as a child. One participant explained their early motivation: "I grew up watching Drake and Josh … Drake was always with the guitar and everything and I thought that was super cool and he was like the cool guy in the show, so I was like maybe I'll be cool" (P1). As P1 grew older, he would watch MTV which helped encourage his interest in music and he recognized the moment he decided to commit to music: "the moment where Slash plays the first solo … it was like the heavens parted for me. And I was like, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life" (P1). Another participant, P7, shared that their parents had a musical background: "parents had like a band when I was a kid. … it was so cool" (P7). P7 recalled being drawn to music at an early age by "[sitting on] the drums and like maybe tap a little bit, you know, like not playing anything, but just like getting to sit there and pretend I'm a drummer whatever." Despite acknowledging that "most of [his] heroes were drug addicts" (P7), these early role models remained important sources of inspiration, if they were able to overlook the substance use as kids. Other participants did not share specific starting points, but they all recognized that they liked music for the majority of their lives. P3 "loved listening to music and then to the point where it's like 'I wanna play music'", and P4 shared that his interest started in grade school and just kept going through high school and beyond. Participant's experiences getting into the music industry started in either late middle school or in high school. They all began their first band with a group of friends and took it from there. None of the participants still had their high school band

active, but they all still had connections from their first band.

Throughout the interviews and stories told, there appeared to be two distinct phases that the participants went through as their career in music unfolded, an early stage, where things were more focused on partying, drinking, and having fun, and a later stage, where after enough time in the industry, there was much less of a focus on drinking and more of a focus on the actual performance aspect of the job.

In the early years, participants described a carefree, heavily social phase characterized by excitement, partying, and frequent and excessive alcohol consumption. P2 reflected on this stage of a band by explaining that most of them are "riding off highs, just out of high school", and that leaving high school and having that freedom was what started a "pretty wild chapter of [his] life that alcohol played a big role in" (P2). When probed further about the mentality of a young band full of energy, P2 recognized that he knew a lot of bands drank lots and did not care for the actual business but rather partying. When he joined his first band, everyone had agreed to "be dead serious about it" (P2); however, despite the goal, P2 shared that right after agreeing to be serious, his band was "drinking at 9am, so there's a dissonance as to what reality is vs. what you want things to look like in your head" (P2). The next participant also shared when he was first starting out, "those house parties were off the hook" (P3), and he recognized that that period of wild parties was time-sensitive because in your 20s "it's easier to get people out, not people like in their 30s and 40s, or even 50s" (P3). This phase was marked by a strong focus on social life, alcohol use, and the sense of excitement that accompanied early musical pursuits, often without much attention to the professional or health implications of their lifestyle.

As participants got older, there was a marked shift away from heavy drinking and a greater focus on health, performance quality, and changing lifestyles. For at least one participant,

health was the major reason they stopped drinking.

> "[my friends] drink a lot, but surprisingly, a lot of them, like me, have had some a lot of medical issues, which have forced us all to stop drinking. So everybody's got different ones, but it's, it's we're all getting into that age where it's like, 'whoa, we were going pretty hard there for a while'. And, like you gotta, you gotta check yourself. like, if you want to play music or do you wanna have cirrhosis of the liver? Like, and like die" (P3).

Major health concerns aside, this participant also shared about not recovering as quickly from a big night out or a hangover the following day, explaining that after partying the night before his flight back home, he experienced the "worst flight home ever" (P3), and then had to have a check in with himself and realized that "after like, so many of those worst flights home, … you stop wanting to do that … like all right, we got war stories, how many war stories are we gonna complete before … you can't do it anymore?" (P3).

Performance quality was another reason participants reported reducing their alcohol consumption. P3 explained that he had stopped drinking during shows "just, to bring it back to like why I play music because I enjoyed playing music and I want perform." P4 similarly recounted an incident that led to a reassessment of substance use before performances:

> "There was a time I don't know, maybe six, six or seven years ago, me and my friend, the same one that likes to party, we were like, let's have some mushrooms before this gig … I could tell the exact moment that the mushrooms hit him and that's when like, 'we can't really play the trumpet much at all for the next song or two'. And it was very much like, after that it was like, I just have no interest in any sort of inebriation on stage" (P4).

P4 had previously joked about the perception that drinking improved their performance, but acknowledged the reality that "the gigs where we drink, we have more fun, we think we play better. And [bandmate] would be like 'as your control, your sober control, I can tell you you don't actually play better when you're drunk'". Sometimes there would be issues if some members of the band were slower to switch focus than others, or who had not watched themselves closely enough while drinking during a show. P5 shared his experience handling this situation.

"Sometimes you have to have a talk with somebody … and I've had that talk with me, right, you know, definitely got too like, carried away and then tried to go on stage. And I don't think that it was like even too embarrassing for me but for the band, you know, I've had to, I had to have the talking too, and I've had to have the talk with somebody else like, you know, like 'pump the break's a little bit', you know, because it does affect the music in that way. Like yeah sure it's nice to have a little, well they call it liquid courage, like to ease the nerves, but then it's really easy to get carried away and then that really affects the performance, usually negatively."

P2, P3, and P5 all directly discussed age being involved in the changing focus. There was the thoughts that once you hit a certain age, drinking excessively looks increasingly immature. P3 stated, "You, you know, moving around, you can have some drinks, but like you're sitting there playing like, all the styles, and as you get older too, it's like, you know, like who, who you foolin?" Participants P4 and P6 agreed that age might play a role, stating, "I don't know. It might be partially getting older, it might not" (P4) and "could be … like that would have been like late, like the end of everyone's 20s and 30, that's I guess it's maybe it is just an age thing" (P6). P6 reflected on the broader transition within his band, noting,

"I think [party band] lifestyle just kind of ebbs and flows with everyone … [band] is a pretty grown up band … there was a time … 5,6 years ago where like, everyone did a lot of coke, a lot of acid, … everyone was drinking. But that kind of stopped now … everyone kind of goes through a period maybe" (P6).

One participant, P7, did not acknowledge much of any shift in his outlook of drinking and partying, and when asked about any shifts in attitudes towards alcohol, he focused on the culture difference between pre-1989 live music and the current state of the live music industry. P7 explained that after 1989, "[the music industry] went way downhill, and now it's way downhill" in terms of the wild parties that musicians get to engage in.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to further understand the lived experiences of musicians in the music industry, with a focus on the presence of alcohol in the industry. The results from the research showcased not only how the participants managed the business relationships required in the industry, but had a large focus on the presence of alcohol in the workplace, and how bands operated after years of being in the field. The musicians' experiences dealing with venues in a professional manner and putting on shows for fans and audiences, combined with their experiences with alcohol open up several theoretical avenues to observe the behaviour. Goffman's (1959) theory of presentation of self is a useful application to analyze the performative dimensions of a musician's life, and Sampson and Laub's (1993) life course perspective can acknowledge the developmental dimensions of musicians, their bands, and their lives. Together, these theories contextualize how alcohol functions not just as a substance, but as a social tool, a symbol, and eventually, a constraint on job sustainability.

Front Stage and Back Stage: Literally

Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the social world of working musicians, particularly in relation to alcohol use. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman theorizes that individuals manage their social identities through performances, distinguishing between a front-stage, where they interact with others in structured, socially appropriate ways, and a back-stage, where the individual can relax, drop the performance, and be their true self. In the case of musicians, the front stage encompasses not only the literal performance of music but also the extended social interactions before, during, and after a show—spaces that are heavily influenced by industry expectations and alcohol use.

Participants in this study described a pervasive need to perform beyond the music itself.

They emphasized the importance of embodying particular traits such as sociability, charisma, and high energy, characteristics that aligned with audience expectations (Bellis et al., 2007), and also to be able to essentially advertise and encourage drinking alcohol to the venue's profit. Alcohol often played a crucial role in enabling and sustaining this persona. As P4 observed, "We are the party. I like to play in party bands". Similarly, P3 commented on shows when there is a bad turnout that "Not that I care, but that's like in those instances, I'd be like, 'give me the two pitchers right now' and slam them both and then go on stage, because I'm like, this sucks, so I'm gonna make it awesome". These quotes reflect how musicians draw on alcohol and performance energy to construct an engaging and marketable public identity.

Goffman's (1959) concept of impression management is also evident in participants' accounts of networking and reputation-building. Success in the music scene was often contingent on being visible, professional, and nice in the right social circles. As P2 described, "It's all about getting into the trenches and doing the hard work and networking". This involves sustaining a carefully curated front stage presentation in a highly social and evaluative environment (Manning, 1992). P4 further remarked on the importance of impression, "the other like small third thing on like how to get gigs is are you fun to party with afterwards", further reinforcing the need to maintain a sociable, likeable persona even off-stage.

The interviews further reveal the difficulty of maintaining a distinct back stage. For many musicians, the performance extended into all aspects of the night, including interactions with fans, venue managers, and promoters. Even declining a drink required its own form of impression management to avoid breaching social norms. P6 recounts his experiences while not drinking by explaining "Yeah they hate it, uh they hate knowing that I don't drink. I usually just like let them pour it and I'll just be like whatever. They don't understand anyone who wouldn't

want to". Some other participants have other ways of hiding their refusal to drink. P4 explains instances where pretending to drink was preferable to explaining their refusal: "If you don't want to drink, at least just put it to your lips, make it look like you had a drink and just pass it on. It's easier to pretend you drink than to decline and deal with that kind of hassle". This act exemplifies what Goffman (1959) would call "defensive practices" used to maintain face and avoid disruption to the performance.

Fan interactions further complicate the performance dynamic. Many participants shared experiences where fans would buy them drinks or flirt with them. This complicated the environment even further for participants, as P3 noted, "I'm not playing music to pick up girls. I'm playing music to play music because I love playing music... in my early days, you'd catch yourself like paying too much attention to the girls... it distracts you from like everything else." Similarly, P7 reflected on being hit on while playing, adding, "But the thing is you're so busy when you're playing a set you never really get to... you never really get laid". Furthermore, when fans wanted to buy participants drinks, they would have to manage their impressions both for the expectation of alcohol consumption, but also not to insult a fan. In somewhat of an P5 shared, rather passionately, that he did not care about expectation to drink, stating "it's their problem if they have a problem with it", but when he was actually on stage in the situation, "[He's] never refused, you know". These remarks reveal how the performance of the musician role involves managing not only the audience's gaze but also emotional, sexual, and drinking expectations, adding further complexity to the front stage.

The emotional consequences of this sustained performance were also apparent. P7 described a moment of intense post-show isolation: "We were just literally stars… for that little moment in time, and no one's gonna think about it right now. Everybody's gonna leave... and

you're gonna be by yourself going, 'why am I by myself?'" This sense of disjuncture between front-stage euphoria and back-stage emptiness aligns with Goffman's notion of the fatigue and disillusionment that can accompany prolonged impression management (Goffman, 1959). This struggle is further emphasized by P7 as he talks about mental health in the industry, sharing "it's really hard to ride that rollercoaster ... I think it's not enough recognized ... I lost two drummers to hanging themselves in one year". There have been times where P7 has had to "beg and plead people to sometimes come and be like 'have some decompression time'" to help manage the rapid and drastic shift. This pressure of performance and the fatigue that follows has major impacts on musicians health as they change from front-stage to back-stage.

Ultimately, the musicians' experiences highlight the social labor embedded in their roles—labor that includes not just performance of music but the performance of a self that is always "on." Goffman's dramaturgical perspective thus reveals how alcohol becomes part of the costume, a prop that supports the illusion of spontaneity and celebration, even when it is burdensome or unwanted. This interpretive lens underscores the complex navigation of authenticity, professionalism, and pleasure within the nightlife economy.

Life Course Theory

Where Goffman provides an analysis of social roles and identity management, Sampson and Laub's (1993) life course perspective adds a temporal dimension, helping to explain how musicians' relationships with alcohol evolves over time. Central to this perspective are the ideas of turning points, trajectories, and the influence of social bonds in promoting or inhibiting behavioral change. While not all participants explicitly stated events that directly led to a desistance of excessive alcohol use, many described gradual realizations shaped by age, health, and occupational fatigue.

This aligns with Jarvinen and Bom's (2019) concept of "maturing out," in which individuals age out of high-risk behaviors not necessarily due to formal interventions but through accumulated experience and shifting priorities. For example, P3 reflected on years of drinking and concluded, "You gotta check yourself. Like, if you want to play music or do you wanna have cirrhosis of the liver? Like, and like die". This sentiment was echoed by other particpants, like P2, who stated "the endurance, the toll that the lifestyle takes on your body can only go on for so long". The endurance and ability to handle the wild nights and stressful schedules, combined with hangovers, poor performances, or health scares began to make participants limit their alcohol intake to preserve their careers and well-being.

Importantly, these turning points often coincided with changes in social context. Several participants left full-time music careers for more stable employment, a pattern that Sampson and Laub identify as conducive to desistance. P4 noted that after years of playing in twelve bands, he now worked a day job and played in five: "I make way more money and I'm not going back to being a full-time musician". P7 also made the same shift from full-time music and touring into a regular full-time job and does music part-time, stating "now I've gotten so used to pulling in like decent money, and having the comforts and I'm older now, right". This shift mirrors Sampson and Laub's emphasis on the role of structured routines and conventional bonds in redirecting life trajectories.

However, the process is not uniform. P7, although now is working full-time in stable employment, continues to embrace the nightlife, resisting the narrative of desistance. As Liu et al. (2023) suggest, desistance is not a linear or universal process; it is mediated by individual circumstances, subcultural identities, and perceived rewards. For P7, the fleeting highs of performance and the normalization of substance use seemed to outweigh the potential benefits of

behavioral change. His reflections underscore the variability in how musicians navigate their careers, with some internalizing mainstream markers of maturity and others remaining embedded in subcultural lifestyles.

The intersection of these theories underscores a key tension: musicians operate in a field that both rewards and punishes alcohol use. Early in their careers, heavy drinking may enhance social capital, facilitate networking, and align with audience expectations. However, over time, the very behaviors that once supported career progression can undermine physical health, emotional well-being, and professional performance. This paradox helps explain the arc observed in the data: from enthusiastic participation in nightlife culture to cautious disengagement from its more harmful elements.

Together, Goffman's dramaturgical model and the life course perspective offer a comprehensive understanding of musicians' alcohol use as both situationally constructed and temporally evolving. Goffman reveals how musicians manage their social identities in alcohol-saturated environments, while Sampson and Laub explain how those identities and behaviors are reshaped by time, aging, and structural change. Future research should further investigate how these processes differ across genres, genders, and levels of fame, as well as the role of broader industry structures in shaping both performance and desistance.

In sum, the findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of how musicians navigate the permissive, and at times pressurized, environment of the music industry. Alcohol is not merely a byproduct of the nightlife setting; it is embedded in the identity work, social rituals, and occupational structures that define the musician's world. By applying Goffman and Sampson and Laub in tandem, this research highlights both the performative demands and developmental consequences of working in an alcohol-centered industry.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals the complex and often contradictory role of alcohol in the professional lives of musicians. For many participants, alcohol was not merely available, it was embedded in performance rituals, audience expectations, and professional networking strategies. Through the lens of Goffman's (1959) theory of presentations of self, drinking was often deployed as a prop in the performance of self, part of the front-stage persona expected by fans, promoters, and peers. Simultaneously, the backstage, where performers might typically be able to relax, offered little escape from these expectations, revealing how impression management extended beyond the stage and into every corner of the nightlife economy.

The findings also align with Sampson and Laub's (1993) life course perspective, illustrating how age, health concerns, and changing occupational roles function as turning points that inform reductions in alcohol use. Many participants expressed that their earlier drinking behaviors, tied to networking, partying, and high-energy lifestyles, eventually became impediments to performance quality and well-being. Some "matured out" of excessive drinking (Järvinen & Bom, 2019), while others continued to embrace nightlife culture despite its costs, reflecting the non-linear and individualistic nature of desistance processes (Liu et al., 2023).

In the criminology field, this research further demonstrates how music venues function as criminogenic environments, spaces where normative boundaries are relaxed, risk-taking is encouraged, and informal controls are weak. It contributes to the literature on workplace deviance, occupational identity, and the symbolic roles of alcohol in service and entertainment industries. Furthermore, it invites a rethinking of desistance beyond crime alone, positioning alcohol reduction as a meaningful and identity-laden shift for workers embedded in high-risk cultural industries.

Ultimately, this study advocates for more inclusive research that considers how subcultural norms, professional roles, and environmental conditions interact to shape behavior. Musicians are not only artists but also workers in an industry that both rewards and punishes alcohol use. Recognizing this duality opens the door for future research into how creative professionals navigate risky environments, and how structural changes might support healthier, more sustainable careers in the entertainment sector.

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APPENDIX A: Codebook

Selling Alcohol	The business side of a band	Drinking to relieve stress	Long term physical damage	Long term mental damage
Reputation with venues/managers	Alcohol vouchers	Alcohol perks	Straight Edge	Network with other bands/artists
Role models	It's cool	Emotional Outlet	Playing is fun	Create good energy
Audience is there to drink	Mental health	Problems with the audience	Drinking at work	Negative results of drinking
Pressure to drink	Partying	Lack of mentorship	It's a phase	Times change
Venues (Negative)	Venues operating illegally	Alcohol availability	Alcoholism	Purpose of the band
Reputation of a venue	Touring	Hard work	Full time music	Part time music
Lack of standards	Drinking alcohol	Safety	Reputation among fans	Getting hit on
After parties	Sharing drinks	Relationships with SOs	Deviance/Illegal activity & police interaction	Song names
Differences with genres	Stereotype artist	Living the dream	Real-life issues in the industry	Can the industries be separated?

Bottoms up: How bands sell booze	**On tap and on stage: Alcohol presence and use in the music industry**
High notes and hangovers: The "rollercoaster" of musician life	**"Can I buy you a drink?": Fan interactions**
From party to performance: Evolution of a band	

APPENDIX C: Information and Consent Form

Informed Consent Form
Project Title
"Fueled by liquor": How musicians talk about alcohol and bars.
Study Investigators
Primary Investigator: Dr. Alicia Horton, Faculty of Criminology Department, Douglas College; email: hortona1@douglascollege.ca
Co-investigator: Colton Dubé, Honours student (Criminology), Douglas College; phone: 604-367-0342, email: dubec@student.douglascollege.ca
Invitation to participate
You are being invited to participate in a research study. Choosing whether or not to participate is entirely your choice. If you decide not to participate, there will be no negative impacts on your relationship with the researcher. The information provided in this form tells you about what is involved in the research, what you will be asked to do, and any potential risks or benefits. Please read this form carefully, take all the time you need, and ask any questions you may have. Consent is an ongoing process. During the research study, we will tell you about any significant finding that could affect your willingness to continue to participate in this study.
Purpose of the research study
There is a plethora of research looking into the music industry and the references to alcohol in music, music videos, lyrics, and live shows. The "sex, drugs, and rock & roll" expression is a classic example of mixing drugs with music. However, very little research has looked at the industry from a member of the industry's perspective. This study's purpose is to understand musician's perspectives of alcohol because of the industry they work in.
What you will be asked to do
If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to participate in one semi-structured interview with co-investigator Colton Dubé at a location of your choosing. This interview will take approximately 1-2 hours, and will involve a discussion about your perspectives of alcohol due to the industry that you work in. With your permission the interview will be recorded and then transcribed to accurately record the information gained from the interview. If you would prefer the interview to not be recorded, only written notes will be taken.
Who can take part in the research study?
To be involved in this study you must be a self-identified musician and be over the age of 18.
Possible risk and benefit
Risk: There are no anticipated risks beyond what you can expect talking about your work in your everyday lives.
Benefit: There is no guarantee that you will benefit directly from participating in this study. However, this interview will allow you to voice your opinions, concerns, content, or indifference about alcohol which can help shape the future of interactions in the industry.
Privacy and confidentiality
All hard copies of documents and recordings will be identified by a code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. I will remove all identifying information during the transcription of the interviews. Hard copies of all notes and transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the Principal Investigator and electronic copies will be kept on the local hard drives of team members' computers – all of which are password protected. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

Withdrawing from the study

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are under no obligation to participate. If you decide to participate but change your mind later on, you are free to withdraw at any time up to the end of the day of your interview. Beyond that point your information will be anonymized, and I will not be able to remove it from the data. Your decision to withdraw will not influence your relationship with the researcher in any way.

Conflicts of interest

None of the researchers have any conflicts of interest in this study.

Questions and contact information

If you have any questions about the study or would like more information, please contact:

Colton Dubé   604-367-0342 dubec@student.douglascollege.ca

Questions about ethics or any ethical concerns

Please contact the Research Ethics Board at Douglas College: reb@douglascollege.ca

Support

If in the course of participating in this research, you decide that you would like to find some support networks or counselling that specialize in alcohol and other substance use, here are some free supports available in British Columbia:

- The Alcohol & Drug Information Referral Servis (ADIRS): 1-800-663-1441
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): https://www.aa.org/find-aa
- HealthLink BC: https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/ ; 8-1-1.

Signature Page

Project title: "Bars and clubs and music, oh my!": How musicians talk about alcohol.
Lead researcher: Dr. Alicia Horton
Statement of consent
By signing this form, I agree that:
- The study has been explained to me
- All my questions have been answered
- Possible harm and discomforts and possible benefits (if any) of this study have been explained to me
- I have been told that my personal information will be kept confidential

In addition, I understand that:
- I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time
- I may refuse to participate without consequence
- I have a choice of not answering specific questions
- I am free now, and in the future, to ask any questions about the study
- No information that would identify me will be released or printed without asking me first
- I will receive a signed copy of this consent form

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded   ☐Yes   ☐No

_____   _____   _____
Name   Signature   Date

Signature of the person obtaining consent
By signing this form, I attest that:
- I have explained the study to the prospective participant
- I answered all of their questions
- I provided a copy of this consent form to the participant
- The participant seemed to understand the consent form and agreed to participate

_____   _____   _____
Name   Signature   Date

VITA AUCTORIS

Colton Dubé was born in 2001 in British Columbia, Canada. After graduating from Dr. Charles Best Secondary School, he decided to study criminology and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Applied Criminology (Honours) at Douglas College and plans on graduating in June 2025. In the future, Colton intends to use the knowledge and skills he has developed over the course of his degree at Douglas College to his advantage when pursuing a career.