
Robert Kronenburg
THIS MUST BE THE PLACE
An Architectural History of Popular Music Performance Venues
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PREFACE

In 1966 I was twelve years old. Labour had just won a second general election in two years, the football World Cup was about to start in England and London Zoo's panda Chi-Chi had been flown to Moscow to meet An-An for a close quarters attempt at some cultural detente. At my home in Liverpool, my Dutch auntie was visiting her brother, my father. She was his younger sister and mad about The Beatles (even though she was a married woman with children of her own). My father wasn't really a music fan (and certainly not pop music), but he agreed to take my auntie to the Cavern Club, so she could see where her favourite group had first made their claim for fame. It was decided I would go too; however, my elder sister, who was a Cavern regular, realized that I would never get in, as I was too young. So, it was decided that I would be Dutch too. Under strict orders not to speak, the deception was carried out and the family descended the eighteen steep steps into the cellar on Mathew Street during a lunchtime session. The room felt damp, warm, dark and as noisy a place as I had ever been. It was the archetypal underground music venue – exciting, mysterious, slightly frightening. I don't remember who was playing but I remember the feel and sound of the place clearly. The Cavern wasn't my club (that was Eric's, a decade later but only a few steps away on the other side of Matthew Street) but it was my very first introduction to the cocktail of ingredients that make up a successful popular music venue.

Later that year on 29 August, The Beatles would play their very last ticketed show at Candlestick Park, San Francisco. Their first concert at New York's Shea Stadium on 15 August 1965 is often cited as pivotal in the history of live popular music performance, indicating the medium's new commercial and cultural power. And it was – the stadium had only been open since April the previous year, and although sports arenas had been used for concerts before (including The Beatles, who on their first visit to the United States in April 1964 had appeared at the Washington Coliseum before 8,000 fans), this was the first time that an outdoor venue as large as this had been used for a popular music performance. However, the 1966 concert is also important in that the most admired band in the world had decided that they need never perform live again and would henceforth become recording artists only. This was a decision that questioned the necessity of live performance in popular music – perhaps recording sales, radio, television,

FIGURE 1 *The Cavern Club, Matthew Street, Liverpool in 1962. Source: Steve Hale. Courtesy of Dave Jones.*

film and merchandise were enough, and seeing the band live was simply not that important anymore. There were other seminal acts who would give up touring in the years following such as Kate Bush in 1979, Leonard Cohen in 1993 and Michael Jackson in 1999. However, all would return (or intended to return in the case of Jackson) to live concerts eventually, although for different reasons, financial and artistic. Live popular music performance has therefore persisted and, because of changes in the music industry, is actually stronger today than it has ever been. The shift away from recorded music as the principal income of major artists (led by file sharing and downloads) and changing audience demands (due to the appetite for new leisure experiences) have led to a resurgence in the commercial importance of concert tours, which has in turn led to the creation in the last decade of new dramatic buildings designed specially to cater to this trend. The most publicized are large venues such as the O2 Arena, London (20,000 capacity, 2007); however, mid-sized and smaller buildings are also regularly filled to capacity. In addition, mobile staging for touring acts and festival events, such as the $60 million U2 360 degrees tour set, has reached an unprecedented level of sophistication, with new audio and video technology revolutionizing the way that popular music is presented.

The aim of this book is to be the first architectural history of popular music performance space, describing its beginning, its different typologies

and its development into a distinctive genre of building design. Popular music architecture has been developed in ad hoc ways by a variety of non-professionals such as building owners, promoters and the musicians themselves. Professionals such as architects, designers and construction specialists have also had impact, but only in particular venue typologies, usually those that are large capacity. The story told in this book is therefore very different from that found in most other architectural histories (including classical music performance space). Performance venues have an important impact not only on the development of popular music itself, but also on many other aspects of urban life, influencing how a city may be perceived by its inhabitants and visitors. Like architecture, popular music itself is not static or standardized; it continuously develops and has multiple strands. The venue is a building type that is an essential component in the success of this immensely popular and culturally significant phenomenon that describes so clearly (and with, of course, so many apparent contradictions) what people think about their way of life and place in society. The aim of the book is to follow some of these strands in order to determine how music venue architecture has developed. However, this single volume is not an encyclopaedia, and because of the vast range and variety of popular music genres, it would be impossible to look at all the examples of where it is performed. Neither does it include in great depth the many technical issues regarding the equipment essential to the presentation of live popular music performance today as the detailed case studies of selected key venues featured in my earlier book, *Live Architecture: Popular Music Venues, Stages and Arenas* (2012), examined this aspect of their design. Instead, a narrative path has been charted that examines the main building typologies that have hosted some of the key movements in Western popular music. By examining both famous and less-well-known examples from the smallest barroom to the largest arena, the ambition is to chart how the buildings and spaces of live popular music performance have advanced from their beginnings into the sophisticated and diverse venues we see today, and to tell the story of popular music through the architecture that has supported its development.

I am highly conscious that there are many omissions in this book, in terms of not only specific music genres but also places where popular music is played. An example of the former is musical theatre, and of the latter, rehearsal and recording studios. I can argue that for the former, although it is a live event, it is more about the scripted theatrical process of storytelling than spontaneous live performance, and for the latter, the rehearsal and recording process is a very different one from performing and communicating live in front of an audience. Nevertheless, I wish there had been space in this volume to include some aspects of these performance types, as well as more selections from the countless live music scenes and venue typologies that can be found around the world. The book focuses on venues in Europe and North America with excursions to Australia, the Far

East and South America, not because there are a lack of fascinating venues in other parts of the world but because in a volume of this size the scope has to be limited in some way. If this book has a life beyond this edition, I hope I will be able to travel to these places, do the (enjoyable) research and fill these narrative gaps in the future. In the mean time, I hope the reader can appreciate the examples described here as just a sample from the hundreds of thousands of venues that exist, and hopefully some will have attributes that remind you of your favourite place. Please do not chastise me too much for not including them … the fact you value them signifies their relevance in this story.

Although based on a lifetime's experience as a music fan and part-time musician, architect and academic, the comparatively recent research that is the basis of this book would not have been possible without the support of a number of institutions and individuals. The School of the Arts at the University of Liverpool provided vital research support funds to enable visits to venues, archives and research contacts in the UK and the United States and also supported the granting of picture licences. The Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig, Ireland, provided a pivotal research retreat during two vital stages of the book's gestation. I would also like to thank the following for giving their time and sharing their knowledge during the interviews and visits that informed this book: Dave Backhouse architect, John Barrow (Populous), Mark Fisher (Stufish), Dave Jones (Cavern Club), Julia Jones (Found in Music), Jeff Horton (100 Club), Susan Lees (Liverpool Events Office), Bruce Raeburn (Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University), Jim Ritts (Paramount Theatre), Shane Shapiro (Sound Diplomacy), Jon Perring (The Tote), Dave Pichilingi (Sound City), Dick Vernon/Phil Miller/Jackie Slade (Glastonbury), James White and Carole Zeidman (Wilton's Music Hall). Thanks also go to all at Bloomsbury for supporting its production, including Leah Babb-Rosenfeld, Katherine de Chant, Ally Jane Grossan and Amy Martin. Finally, once again, it is impossible to understate the continuous backing, practical, emotional and intellectual, provided by my wife Lisa.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Popular Music, Architecture and the Home

Music has always been important to human beings. As the musician, music producer and psychologist Daniel Levitin states, it is 'unusual among all human activities for both its *ubiquity* and its *antiquity*. No known human culture now or anytime in the recorded past lacked music … Throughout most of the world and for most of human history, music making was as natural an activity as breathing and walking, and everyone participated.'[1] However, although an all-pervading activity, there are surprising areas of conflict in terms of its understanding. In industrialized cultures, there is a distinct split between performer and audience (the skilled and talented versus those who are supposedly not) and between classical and popular music (music of value and music of commerce). These splits occurred comparatively recently in the history of human development, within the last few hundred years, and, it can be argued, are paralleled alongside the development of specific buildings for music performance such as concert halls, which have elevated both performer and specific music types into places of higher status. The idea that classical music is serious and has greater merit compared to popular music is because of its history of control and patronage by the social elite. Although also used for popular music dissemination, it is also, at least in part, due to the development of musical notation that enabled its detailed recording by those with formal education.[2] A similar situation occurs in terms of the places of classical music performance – these are the celebrated buildings of the city, erected by those with power and resources at great expense and designed by the most well-known architects. A prime reason for undertaking this study was the fact that the architectural history of classical concert halls is well recorded (in books), but the architecture of popular music is not.

The debate regarding what can be defined as popular music is entangled with this demarcation between experience and type, engaging history, society, geography, technology and commerce. Musical styles are therefore best identified within discourses rather than types, as this accommodates the complex interactions that take place across boundaries between composers, musicians and audiences.[3] Sociologist Simon Frith has proposed that these discourses can be classified as folk, drawing from social function and tradition; art, deriving from an elitist stance where appreciation is formally taught; and pop, where musical experience becomes a commodity.[4] For this study, popular music is characterized as that which appeals to a wide range of people, encompassing a large variety of musical genres that has been disseminated via the media as a commodity through publication, recording and broadcasting. However, although the philosopher Theodore Adorno (1903–69) viewed the products of popular culture as a means to distract people from important social issues by the provision of pleasure, it is now recognized as a sphere of activity in which the public is actively involved in its critical appreciation, sponsorship and creation and is an art form that has real meaning in their lives.[5]

Girouard has pointed out that medieval cities were on the whole hard-working places, and for the vast majority, entertainment happened on the rare religious and civic holidays and as part of events such as fairs. Although music for pleasure might be performed at these times, a dedicated building was not required.[6] The focus of this study therefore begins in earnest in the eighteenth century when the first dedicated popular music entertainment buildings appeared, as did the availability of inexpensive sheet music tied into popular performers and songs. This research will not be restricted to specific music genres, for example folk, jazz, pop, rock 'n' roll, soul, rock or hip-hop, as there are many crossovers between musical movements that often, consecutively and simultaneously, occupy the same venue; however, the gestation of specific music scenes will be a part of the study as the character of the space and place they occupy is frequently part of the sphere of influence that has generated the building form. Music scenes are the subcultures or communities around which a particular cluster of musicians, audiences and other people active in music practice and the industry socialize and operate.[7] As a performance art, popular music necessitates places for events to occur and scenes to develop: 'Every artwork has to be someplace. Physical works, like paintings and sculptures, have to be housed someplace: a museum, a gallery, a home, a public square. Music and dance and theatre have to be performed someplace: a court, a theatre or concert hall, a private home, a public square or street.'[8] Popular music may begin in informal spaces, for example in the home or on the street, but its eventual success and widespread popularity depend on its migration to recognizable venues. This is because its popularity also leads inevitably to the commercial need to formalize a revenue process (initially to pay performers and composers, but

as audiences grow, the many others engaged in enabling the performance), such as ticket sales for admission to the event.

As popular music performance became more formalized through the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, small venues in drinking and eating houses became identified as concert rooms and nightclubs and larger buildings included music halls, variety and vaudeville theatres, ballrooms and dance halls. However, the buildings in which popular music performance has taken place are diverse. Many venues were created in spaces originally built for other uses, sometimes hastily converted by non-building industry professionals including the musicians and venue operators themselves. Despite their ad hoc creation, they may nevertheless be important in cultural terms, if not for their architectural qualities, then for the sometimes-unique activities and events that have taken place there. External spaces such as pleasure gardens and parks featured bandstands and amphitheatres, but also made use of more peripatetic facilities with floating and rolling stages. The large-scale touring arena and stadium stage set of today is a continuation of this development. Popular music also inspired famous festivals such as Monterey (1967), Woodstock (1969) and Isle of Wight (1970) that have a historical and developmental importance that is at least as relevant as permanent buildings. These events were powerful vehicles for communicating non-commercial ideals, demonstrating that popular music artists and audiences are not homogenous and are frequently fractured and rebellious, instinctively resisting rather than accommodating big business ambitions. There is a cultural and political commentary that invests the manifestation of popular music architecture that is expressive of important changes that have taken place in society, particularly since the end of the Second World War: 'It has always been through the live – public – experience of making and listening to music that it has been most deeply embedded in people's everyday lives and their understanding of their personal and social identities.'[9]

Live popular music performance can best be described as an *authentic* experience: every gig is unique; every individual's experience of it is personal, as musician David Byrne states: 'Music resonates in so many parts of the brain that we can't conceive of it being an isolated thing. It's whom you were with, how old you were, and what was happening that day.'[10] Music performance is an art form that is both experiential and transient. Memories that individuals have of attending a particular performance can be incredibly powerful, and there is a special kudos that individuals gain from having 'been there' when it took place. The power of the experience extends beyond the actual musicians' performance to the circumstances of the event, about which the most important factor is often the venue or location. The recorded memories of those who experienced them are especially valuable (made much more accessible in recent years via online forums and reviews), not only in describing the physical presence of the place but also the ambience

that was created during the event.[11] Such reminiscences have been crucial for a study like this where so many of the buildings examined no longer exist or have been changed dramatically.

Popular music's relationship to architecture

The design and creation of venues are driven by both functional and non-functional requirements. Their character and form profoundly influence the performances they host and consequently how these performances are received by audiences, obviously because of the acoustics and view but also because of other environmental factors that shape human experience, such as air quality, temperature and smell. Venues are also part of the physical and cultural image of their settings – usually urban – from the street to the neighbourhood, city and region, and so these buildings fit into a city's urban morphology and influence its character and image. Venue activity is an important component in the creation of a scene, representing a coming together of people within specific social groups as well as differentiation from others. In her autobiographical book *Just Kids*, Patti Smith describes the importance of the New York Bowery venue CBGB: 'CBGB was the ideal place to sound a clarion call. It was a club in the street of the downtrodden that drew a strange breed who welcomed artists yet unsung. The only thing Hilly Krystal required from those who played there was to be new.'[12] Such venues are an embodiment of the diversity of the city and encompass all walks of life: social, economic and cultural. The number of venues varies over time, signifying economic and cultural changes, and although they are not immune to national or international influence, for the vast majority their impact is local. This is not to say that there aren't buildings whose influence in musical and cultural terms has not been wide and profound. Venues like the Cavern in Liverpool, UK, to the Apollo Theater in New York, USA, are internationally known for the crucial part they have played in the history of popular music development. It is important that venues like these are examined in this book, but there is also a place for lesser-known places, which may be important locally or archetypal in their design.

Why is this book needed now? Because the economics of live popular music are in transition, with large international promoters like AEG Live and Live Nation Entertainment (which merged with Ticketmaster in 2010) taking a much greater share of the business at all levels. On the positive side this has led to greater investment in higher-quality buildings (e.g. AEG owns and operates over ninety arenas globally, including the O2, Greenwich, London), but on the negative side this has had a significant adverse effect on independent spaces, now not only in competition with these 'branded' chains, but also frequently unable to book the most popular artists, who regularly sign exclusive deals with the promoter for both venues and

ticketing. Recent studies have shown that grassroots venues are under threat from increased legislative and economic pressures: 'facing a "perfect storm" of issues which is affecting their long-term viability and sustainability'.[13] Although there have been positive signs that local and national governments are realizing the commercial and cultural value that live music brings to cities (sometimes called the night-time economy), historic venues are frequently still threatened with closure, and unless things change, it may soon be too late to save this disappearing legacy as a working, active musical scene that still supports the influential musicians of tomorrow.

Popular music in the home

Although this book is about live popular music performance venues – those buildings and spaces that have usually been designed or adapted for live music to be performed – there are other settings that have significant cultural and social influence on popular music's development. This happens even though it is perhaps only infrequently that live music performance before an audience occurs in them, for example clubs and events where the music played is from recorded sources (see Chapter 11). Perhaps the root from which all public performance begins is one of these non-venue places – the home – and as a primer to how the architecture of the space is an important element in the development of the music that takes place there, it is useful to examine it in this general introduction. Before radio or recorded music became commercially available, if people wanted to experience music at home they generally had to make it themselves, and amateur musicianship was seen not only as a mode of entertainment but also as an enjoyable pastime and a worthwhile, self-improving accomplishment. Middle-class families would gather around the parlour piano to sing, children would learn an instrument and entertain their parents at parties and groups of relatives and neighbours would form ensembles for their own pleasure. Individuals would be known for their skills and be persuaded to perform in and outside the home at celebrations and gatherings for entertainment or to accompany dancing. Music making in the home has 'played a significant but relatively unacknowledged part in the development of musicianship and local music cultures and communities'.[14]

Home-made music was encouraged and commercially exploited by the manufacture and sale of affordable instruments and sheet music. In the nineteenth-century music hall, variety and vaudeville stars sponsored particular songs during their tours, their names and pictures featuring prominently on the front of the sheet music, which made its way into the homes of thousands of amateur musicians. The advent of radio broadcasting in the 1920s enhanced home performance, providing the opportunity for listeners to hear particular stars more often and thereby enabling them to

copy what they heard rather than having to read music. For example the first radio stations in the United States (such as WSB Atlanta, which first broadcast on 16 March 1922): 'More than phonograph records or movies … showcased country music to millions of listeners and provided hundreds of performers the chance to make a living from playing it. In the process radio profoundly shaped country music.'[15] Cheaper, easier-to-learn instruments such as the banjo and guitar accentuated the notion that anyone could become a performer, and even perhaps emulate the artists they heard on the radio by also becoming a professional musician. Technological developments have changed the format upon which people listen: the Dansette Bermuda record player in the 1960s, the Sony Walkman in the 1980s, the MP3 player at the beginning of the twenty-first century and streamed music and videos via Spotify and YouTube today: but young people still make music in their bedroom, be it rapping along to a beat box, strumming a guitar with a few newly learnt chords or manipulating a software program on a laptop. This may be a familiar trope, but it is a real activity that many well-known artists have practised on their road to success.

However, the home can also be a place for public performance, something that has been enhanced in the twenty-first century through the internet and social media, and elsewhere in this book the way that domestic rooms used for social gatherings evolved into public places for performance is examined: rent parties spawning blues clubs (Chapter 3) and ballrooms inspiring dance halls (Chapter 6). The informal parties in homes sometimes led to parts of houses being converted to a readily available party space so that events could be held instantaneously, it being only a step away from becoming a formal, semi-commercial gathering place. One of the most famous of these is the Casbah in Liverpool, created in the basement of a Victorian villa at 8 Haymans Green, West Derby, Liverpool, by Mona Best, the mother of The Beatles' first drummer.

Created below the family home, the Casbah was inspired by the 2i's coffee bar in London with which the early British rock 'n' roll groups like Cliff Richards and the Shadows were associated (see Chapter 10). This unpromising space was just five narrow, mostly windowless rooms with bare brick walls and some plywood panelling, entered from the rear garden. Opening on 29 August 1959, Mona intended the place to be a safe, local hangout for the young friends of her son, although it was also a commercial enterprise from the start with membership cards and soft drinks for sale. The opening night saw a performance by the early Beatles incarnation, The Quarrymen (featuring John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ken Brown – Pete had not yet joined, and Ringo was years away). Paul, George, and John and his girlfriend Cynthia (later his wife) had helped decorate the space, painting stars, a spider's web and a silhouette of John playing a guitar on the walls. The entrance room was where the tickets were sold and visitors left their coats, and inside, one of the rooms had an opening

FIGURE 1.1 *Location of the Casbah, which occupies the basement of a suburban house at No. 8 Haymans Green, West Derby, Liverpool. The entrance is at the rear – the door to the right in this photo. Source: Robert Kronenburg.*

through which the soft drinks and snacks were sold. The band would play here throughout their time in Liverpool, including the last night it was open on 24 June 1962. Since 2009, the Casbah has reopened as a heritage venue for visitors and occasional performances, the interior still largely as it was when used in the 1960s.

Home spaces are also used as temporary venues by artists who want to perform but have no venue, instigating 'house concerts'. The 1950s–60s folk music scene was primarily based around informal gatherings at small venues, often organized peripatetically, moving from place to place as somewhere suitable became available. Home concerts were an important part of developing a regular audience, both for the folk genre and for particular artists. Jacqueline McDonald and Bridget O'Donnell in (Jacqui and Bridie) were the first British professional female folk duo, and they founded their own folk club in 1961 in an early nineteenth-century coach house in St Michael's in the Hamlet, Liverpool, which was also their own home. Running their own club gave them the freedom to perform: 'In those days, as a woman on your own, you couldn't just go and sit in a pub … You could do bits here

and there, but we weren't welcome in a lot of the clubs. They were for the men, and women weren't expected to get involved' (Jacqueline McDonald as quoted in Wright, *Liverpool Echo*, 19 January 2011). On a Monday night, up to 100 people would cram into the Coach House Folk Club, until after three years its popularity outgrew the small room and it moved to a church hall. The duo later toured North America and Europe, performed before the Queen and regularly filled the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. Persisting for more than fifty years at numerous venues until 2011, the Coach House Folk Club featured sessions from famous artists including Ralph McTell, Tom Paxton, Christy Moore, Peggy Seeger and Ewan McColl, as well as other local musicians besides Jacqui and Bridie.

House concerts can also be created specifically as 'insider' events performed primarily to friends and fans, although they are also intended to create a buzz of excitement around the artist indicating that something special is happening, and the desire among those not involved to be a part of this evolving scene. Events like this have an authentic aspect to them that stands apart from the conventional commercial activity put on in normal venues with its attendant advertising, ticketing, queuing, fighting for the bar and the toilets. One group of musicians whose reputation grew substantially via such guerrilla gigs was the London-based band, The Libertines. In 2002–3, they would send out a text to everyone they knew to meet at a specific location and those who arrived first would be taken off to the gig location, often the Bethnal Green flat of band members Pete Doherty and Carl Barat.[16] Although without many of the trappings of normal gigs (and perhaps because of this), these events feel special and unique. Undoubtedly those who attend want to pass on the experience they have had, thereby creating a mythology about what happened on the night. These non-venue events have developed further with support systems such as the 'Helpyourself Manchester' network, which developed in that city in the early 2000s putting together a list of unconventional places for emerging acts to play. The internet has made exchange of useful experience and information easier with forums that trade tips on licencing and operation for unconventional gigs and home gig advertising.

Sofarsounds.com (short for 'songs from a room') started in London in 2009 when the start-up instigators Rafe Offer, Rocky Start and Dave Alexander went to a local performance and were annoyed by noise from the bar and impolite audience members. They decided to hold a quiet, informal gig in their North London flat with just a few friends listening to Alexander perform. More gigs were organized, advertised by word of mouth initially, and took place with the concept of two or three artists performing at each event; no headliner; bring your own drinks; supported by a modest fee (sometimes on a pay-what-you-want basis), most of which went to the performer. This strategy developed into a global online business with over 500 gigs performed every month in more than 300 cities around the world.

Most of the performances are in volunteer hosts' homes or non-venue-type premises such as shops and gardens. Sometimes thousands of people may request online for access; however, the shows are always small and intimate, usually maximum around fifty people, and this creates a special experience for the audience, artist and host. Speaking of a performance by Canadian artist Jane Siberry in her London Home, host Kate Godleman said: 'It was amazing, it was one of the most exciting things having her in my front room, with a guitar and a keyboard, and my mates and a few people who were fans of hers too. It felt more like a party than a gig.'[17] The value of the domestic popular music performance experience is that it not only predates the creation of dedicated venues but also provides a contemporary alternative.

The domestic setting has undoubtedly influenced the ambience of the popular music venue, particularly those that are the natural staging post to that first public performance. The practical experience of comfort and intimacy that most people seek in their home environment is a key element that is often generated in small venues such as pubs, bars and coffee shops, even to the inclusion of certain sorts of furniture (sofas and armchairs) and accessories (e.g. books and bookcases, real or artificial). There are also numerous venues that have been named for their association with domestic life (The Living Room, The Kitchen etc.). Also, a common way of identifying a venue is with the name of a person (e.g. Eric's in Liverpool, UK, and Stubb's in Austin, Texas), thereby implying that when you attend that place, you are visiting someone you know, someone who will host you and look after you. This references the fact that the design of popular music venues, unlike many other architectural fields, is not primarily driven by functional necessity, but by the need to create an ambience that reflects the character of the people who visit them – both audiences and musicians. The fundamental starting point of all architecture is shelter – the house, the home – a venue is a home for music. However, the diverse types of music and the different ways in which it is shaped by other cultural and economic influences have led to a wide variety of architectural forms. Some of these have stayed fundamentally the same since their inception (e.g. the home) and some have changed dramatically and continue to do so today. In order to tell this story as logically as possible, it has therefore been important to make some decisions about how to organize the research.

A methodology for examining popular music architecture

In telling the story of the popular music live performance venue, there is an unavoidable structural conflict between the desire to recount a chronological

narrative and the need to examine it in terms of its typological development. A story is best understood if a clear path can be established that starts at the beginning (the middle of the eighteenth century has been chosen here) and ends in the present day. And yet building design development does not always work in this way – some typologies (e.g. the British public house), although they may differ in material construction, are very close today to when they were first created hundreds of years ago. Others (e.g. the arena concert venue) are dramatically different, first emerging in the late twentieth century, made possible by new technologies in both building construction and live performance equipment. The problem of developing a consistent chronological narrative is exacerbated further when the multiple strands of musical genres are involved as popular music scenes overlap continuously, emerging, prospering then declining at different times in different geographic locations (Plate 1). A decision was made that the clearest way in which to tackle such a complex, interwoven story was to look at the sorts of venues as they appeared and developed in different parts of the world, often in response to specific types of musical performance and entertainment – a primarily typological methodology.

Nevertheless, the structure of this book also does follow a discernible timeline, beginning with the design of early, dedicated music venues and ending with current and future developments. After this background introduction to popular music's relationship with architecture and the home, dedicated popular music venues primarily from the 1700s and 1800s are examined in Chapter 2: the smaller theatres used for music hall, variety and vaudeville in Great Britain, France and the United States. Chapter 3 looks at considerably humbler, but no less important buildings: the North American juke joints, honky-tonks and blues bars from the 1900s. The initial focus of Chapter 4 is 1900s New Orleans, investigating the street music, clubs and riverboats that subsequently influenced the jazz clubs that now exist around the world. The jazz story continues in Chapter 5, which explores the development of supper clubs, cabaret clubs and speakeasies beginning in the 1920s, continuing with examples in the United States, Great Britain, China, Paris and Berlin. The development of venues designed where social dancing is held is explored in Chapter 6: pleasure pavilions, ballrooms and dance halls from the 1700s to the 1950s. Chapter 7 examines the most common venue of the twentieth century, the public barroom, looking at examples in Australia, Ireland, the UK and the United States. The coffee bar as a venue for folk music, skiffle and early rock 'n' roll is also explored. While the history of theatre design is examined in Chapter 2, larger halls and auditoriums adopted as live music venues in the 1960s and '70s are explored in Chapter 8. The tours that made use of these theatres from the 1950s and the subsequent much larger travelling stages used in stadiums and festivals are examined in Chapter 9. Chapters 10 and 11 explore two recent developments in venue design: the late twentieth-century creation of

giant arenas for spectacular live music shows and the history of recorded music scenes that has led to the phenomenon of the 'superclub'. Chapter 12 concludes with an investigation of the significance and value of the popular music venue and a further examination of its typologies, focused around the examination of three archetypal clubs, one that is lost – CBGB, New York; one that has persisted largely unchanged – the 100 Club, London; and one that has been rebuilt and reinvented – the Cavern, Liverpool. Hopefully, the reader will be able to navigate the time slips that have occurred between the chapters, by-products of the necessity to mark crucial developments as they have occurred in different types of performance and the venues in which they took place.

Wherever possible I have tried to find examples of buildings that are still in use today, both for my own first-hand experience and for the reader who is interested enough to go and have a look themselves. Where this is not possible, the descriptions of music venues in this book have utilized contemporary drawings and photographs; however, as stated earlier, the popular music venue is not like most architecture – much of it has not been chronicled in this way. It is not like the polite architecture of the classical music performance venue designed by professionals and recorded in architecture and construction journals and books. It has therefore been necessary to look in the contemporary popular press, in fan media and music papers, in films and videos, blogs and fan forums. Years of asking friends and acquaintances 'what is your favourite venue?' and 'what was the most memorable performance you saw there?' have also played a role in this study. Descriptions drawn from first-hand experience have ultimately played a large part in conveying the qualities of the venues: my own as a passionate music fan for more than forty years, or from others who were there at the time. The reader may therefore detect a larger proportion of Liverpool venues than might have been found in a book written by another author; however, as a cosmopolitan port city with a long and rich musical history, which is also a UNESCO City of Music, I make no apology for its availability as a rich source of good examples of popular music architecture.

Everyone who enjoys live music has felt that thrill of arriving at a venue in anticipation of a performance, either by a favourite artist or to see something new. Audiences and musicians engage with venues in this very specific way – we are there for an event, be it good, be it bad, be it memorable or best forgotten. In his book *How Music Works* (2012), musician David Byrne expresses the special nature of the artist/audience/venue synergy that this book attempts to investigate:

> There's something special about the communal nature of an audience at a live performance, the shared experience with other bodies in a room going through the same thing at the same time, that isn't analogous to music heard through headphones. Often the fact of a massive assembly

> of fans defines the experience as much as whatever it is they have come to see. It's a social event, an affirmation of a community, and it's also, in some small way, the surrender of the isolated individual to the feeling of belonging to a larger tribe.[18]

Byrne figures (involuntarily) in the story about why this book's title was chosen: of CBGB, Talking Heads, and a close encounter at this important venue is told towards its end (at the beginning of Chapter 12). However, it also is meant to recall that impression which appears in every fan's mind as he or she crosses that threshold into a place of live music performance with anticipation and excitement … in these circumstances, we all might think that *This Must Be The Place*. Hopefully, this book will also add to the continuously developing narrative on how the many 'places' around the world came to be.

CHAPTER TWO

Music Halls, Variety and Vaudeville

Down a narrow street in a busy part of London there is a lane of old houses spared by the destruction of the Blitz and by the subsequent commercial redevelopment of the last sixty years. Although all around new buildings, roads and railway lines are crammed in, the visitor gets a feel of what the area was like 200 years ago. The houses are tall terraces, warm red brick and wooden sash windows, with stone and stucco detailing on the ground floor, indicating the buildings' fluctuating history from residences to commercial premises. The cast-iron bollards of this lane, which is called Graces Alley, block the path to all but bicycles and pedestrians and the old sandstone flags pave your way.

You enter the place of entertainment that is situated there not through some grand formal hallway but via a public house, pushing past punters having a drink or two before the show begins. With your ticket in hand, you walk up a cast-iron staircase and into the auditorium. It is a small, intimate space, perfectly shaped with the small stage to your right, the entrance placed on one of the sides of the U-shaped seating area. Barley sugar columns hold up a balcony that continues around the edge of the room, broken only by the stage. The arched ceiling is decorated with plaster fittings, once illuminated by 500 gas burners and a spectacular 'sunburner'. Faded decorations fill all the walls; they seem ancient but are in fact left over from a recent film shoot when the building was dressed to recreate its original purpose, a music hall.

Once the bell is rung, it doesn't take long for the audience to fill the rows of chairs set out for that night's show. The lights dim and a strangely dressed figure in a ragged men's suit works her way around the side of the floor, talking loudly to those she passes, passing the time of day, cheeky comments that raise bursts of laughter from those nearby. Climbing the steps at the

FIGURE 2.1 *Wilton's Music Hall, Graces Alley, London (1858). Source: Robert Kronenburg.*