

# **POPULAR MUSIC VENUES ON CRUISE SHIPS AS TOURISTIC SPACES OF ENGAGEMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Musical venues encapsulate highly intense and memorable encounters for tourists, yet have received relatively little academic attention. Tourists often visit a location specifically to engage in music such as a Broadway musical, an opera or rock performance or simply to visit places associated with music. In contrast to such land-based locations, cruise ships, marketed as the main destination of a cruise vacation, are entirely constructed geographies specifically designed to immerse visitors in a touristic experience which includes live musical performance. Venues for ship borne musical performances are physically constructed to encourage engagement between tourists and the 'local' cruise ship staff, directing the tourist gaze and creating memorable and 'impactful' performances. This study examines and categorises cruise ship musical venues on a range of cruise ships by physical layout, purpose and methods of ensuring tourist engagement. Each of the four designs used have different manners of encouraging interaction between performer and tourist. Such focus on designing musical spaces for tourism engagement can be applied to other constructed spaces for tourism experience.

## **KEY WORDS**

popular music, cruise ship, live performance, tourism, venue

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourists travel for many reasons: to encounter new ways of doing, seeing or being (Larsen & Urry, 2011; Scarles, 2009; Urry, 1990), to pursue their own passions (Franklin 2003), for business (Davidson, 1994; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001), or simply to fulfil a need to get away from their lives. Common to all tourism however, is some form of tourist interaction in designed physical spaces (Bærenholdt, 2004). Tourist interaction is defined as the sum of the tourist actions that take place at a particular location (Yarnal & Kerstetter, 2005, p. 369). For many tourists, this destination will be specifically marketed and packaged for consumption by tourists. It may involve a constructed landscape. Theme parks such as Disneyland, for example, have been referenced many times as constructed tourist environments (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2012; Xie,

2010, p. 212–218; Nooshin, 2004; Shaw & Williams, 2004, p. 244–248). Las Vegas, with its lights and constructed oasis-in-a-desert complete with recreations of Venice is another constructed tourist experience (Shaw & Williams, 2004, pp. 248-251). Eco (1990) describes such attractions as ‘hyperrealities’.

Cruise ships are also constructed touristic environments. Designed to be the main destination of a cruise vacation, cruise ships encapsulate guests in a social, cultural, and physical cocoon for the purposes of revenue generation (Weaver, 2005). Significantly, they are designed as an unspecifically westernised environment, often in sharp contrast to their actual location in the world. Within this capsule, a dazzling array of possibilities is proffered to guests. Should they eat now at the buffet, or in an hour at the formal dinnertime? Should they go and lie by the pool or have a hot stones massage in the spa? Should they go and see the evening production show or have a cocktail in the piano lounge? Each of these experiences happen in a physical environment designed to enhance the tourism experience. This is particularly so in venues designed for musical performance that are designed to direct the tourist gaze thus encouraging impact and creating a memorable vacation experience. The physical makeup of these venues also signify concepts associated with cruise ship holidays such as the open water, sky and relaxation on the open lido deck, the opulent sophistication of sitting in a luxurious lounge and listening to a jazz trio or cocktail pianist, and the large theatrical space associated with a Vegas-style production show. Each venue has its own identity, purpose and method of encapsulating musical performance.

A shipboard design can be considered successful when it encapsulates a positive touristic encounter. For guests, a successful musical encounter occurs when they enjoy the music and the experience makes an impact that is memorable. For the cruise line, a successful musical encounter occurs when a shipboard music venue has a high turnover. Venues are physically, culturally and socially designed to encourage the success of both these outcomes.

This study draws on the layout and design of the public musical spaces of sixteen cruise ships from twelve lines (see Table 1). The sample was chosen to sit across a range of categories of cruise ship, customarily designated ‘Modern’, ‘Premium’ and ‘Luxury’ and defined by demographic attracted by the line, the cost of the tickets and the amount of luxury provided. Additional information is derived from a musical ethnography undertaken in 2011 including interviews with shipboard and head office staff. Four major layouts are outlined with variations. All such venues are designed to reinforce the type of music performed in the venue and to increase the impact of and accessibility of the musical performance by focussing guests’ attention and physically encouraging and directing performance relationships between the musicians and audiences. These venues are considered first as containers for a musical experience, then as containers for a tourist experience.

Table 1: Sampled Cruise Ships

Ship and Year Launched	Cruise Line	Category	Class	Number in Class
M.V. <i>Carnival Ecstasy</i> (1991)	Carnival Cruise Lines	Modern	Fantasy	8
M.V. <i>Carnival Paradise</i> (1998)	Carnival Cruise Lines	Modern	Fantasy	8
M.V. <i>Carnival Triumph</i> (1999)	Carnival Cruise Lines	Modern	Destiny	5
M.V. <i>Celebrity Constellation</i> (2007)	Celebrity Cruises	Modern	Millennium	4
M.V. <i>Freedom of the Seas</i> (2006)	Royal Caribbean International	Modern	Freedom	3
M.V. <i>Norwegian Epic</i> (2010)	Norwegian Cruise Line	Modern	F3	1
M.V. <i>Voyager of the Seas</i> (1999)	Royal Caribbean International	Modern	Voyager	5
M.V. <i>Costa Serena</i> (2006)	Costa Crociere	Premium	Concordia	4
M.V. <i>Golden Princess</i> (2001)	Princess Cruises	Premium	Grand	11
M.V. <i>Noordam</i> (2006)	Holland America Line	Premium	Vista	11
R.M.S. <i>Queen Elizabeth 2</i> (1969)	Cunard Line	Premium	-	1
R.M.S. <i>Queen Mary 2</i> (2004)	Cunard Line	Premium	-	1
M.V. <i>Crystal Symphony</i> (1995)	Crystal Cruises	Luxury	-	1
M.V. <i>Seabourn Spirit</i>	Seabourn Cruise Line	Luxury	-	3
M.V. <i>Seven Seas Navigator</i> (1999)	Regent Seven Seas Cruises	Luxury	-	1
M.V. <i>Silver Shadow</i> (2000)	Silversea Cruises	Luxury	-	1

### MUSICAL ENCOUNTERS AS TOURISM PRODUCTS

Cruise ships exist to create profits for the parent company, and few aspects of the shipboard experience that do not produce revenue are permitted. Ticket prices of cruise ships barely cover the cost of running the ship, and on-board revenue streams are key to maintaining profitability (Vogel 2009). Musical performances do not directly contribute to this stream, being part of the touristic experience that is covered by payment of what Pine & Gilmore (2011) call the ‘entrance fee’—the price of the ticket—and is available freely on-board once this payment is made. It is part of the experience, not part of the many paid-for ‘experience enhancements’ and does not directly contribute to on-board revenue. Such performances must then contribute indirectly to the profitability of the ship while remaining running as cost-effectively as possible. The most effective and profitable musical performance on cruise ships requires that musicians are engaging and entertaining. A cruise director notes that a horn-based funk band employed on his ship, would:

dance with everyone, they just broke the fourth wall. When they played their sax they were walking through the crowds. The crowds were like ... it was like a rock concert. They were playing jazz funk which [appealed to] the demographic [...] but I think they could have been playing classical music and they still would have had that crowd, because whatever they gave was them, their personalities. [In] piano

bars back before karaoke kicked off, [...] in the early 2000s ... I witnessed some amazing people who would have the place packed. And on a formal night everyone would finish the shows and go to the piano bar. That was the place to go. So I witnessed lots and lots of people in the piano bar (J. Smith, Personal Communication, 16 October 2011).

Instead of music acting as a general attraction, such performances directly draw guests to certain venues. Such performances contribute to the generation of extremely high bar revenues. Performers interact with the audience directly, encouraging them to stay and consume. It is acceptable in these performances to have high, demanding musical volumes compared to other sets around the ship. These are less common performances on premium and luxury lines devoted to quieter music, but popular on megacruiser ships, which must generate high bar revenues to make a profit and attract a demographic that may expect louder and more rambunctious music.

Pine and Gilmore's (2001) work on the experience economy is particularly relevant in considering shipboard musical performance. The ship experience must involve the four 'realms' of an experience (entertainment, educational, escapist and 'esthetic') to attain the 'sweet spot' of the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011, pp. 45–56). This involvement must be variously passive or active and absorbed or immersive. Musical performance is inherently entertaining, but at varying times can also be educational (for example, when a 'local show' presents commodified versions of local music), escapist and aesthetic. In doing so, it forms a central part of a touristic experience. In a land-based venue if patrons do not enjoy the music of a venue, they may simply leave and go down the street to find music more suited to their tastes. While the venue has lost the client's patronage (and potential income), it is possible to build a niche market which will attract clientele who visit specifically to see acts, such as a jazz venue, a blues venue or a classical venue. However, on a cruise ship, there is nowhere else to go except to another part of the ship so music must be widely themed. Regularly, cruise ships will have a classical ensemble, a jazz ensemble, a rock ensemble, several different soloists, a showband that can play in a variety of styles as well as production shows ranging in style from musical theatre to rock to 1920s swing. As well as thematically varied, the music performed in these venues must be accessible to guests. Shipboard jazz bassist Stephen Riddle explains:

I suppose, on Holland America, I'm slightly toning it down, I'm not playing as I would do in the jazz trio because it's not a jazz gig. [...] You can't let rip. You've got to keep it respectable and polite. The average cruise ship passenger is not a hardened jazz fan [...] if you're playing in a jazz venue on land, people are coming to hear jazz. If you've booked on a passenger on a cruise ship, you've not booked to go hear jazz unless it's a jazz cruise. You're doing a lot of things. [Music is] incidental (S. Riddle, Personal Communication, 17 October 2011).

A problem with music and venues as a tourism product occurs when they appear to be fake. The components of a Disney experience—music included—may appear to be *fabricated* but never *fake* (Pine & Gilmore, 2011, p. 56). In Disney theme parks, guests do not see the actor playing Mickey Mouse without their costume, nor any of the backstage areas. Observers understand that the marching band on Main Street is a facsimile of a marching band rather than a real marching band, but it *seems* real. Cruise ship music has a (somewhat undeserved) reputation for

'cheesiness'. Yet the venues in which these encounters occur are usually well designed and seemingly opulent. As music forms an aural environment reassuring guests that they are safe in a westernised environment, so too, the physical environments of the cruise ship spaces are opulent, well-designed usually attractive, focus the attention of guests and are designed with the cruise line demographic in mind.

### **MUSICALLY DIRECTING THE TOURIST GAZE**

The tourist gaze has a reasonable history of study within tourist literature. In the 1990s, tourism studies began to examine the implications of the simulacrum when considering the semiotics of tourist sights. British tourism scholar John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* (1990) (recently republished as *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (Larsen & Urry, 2011) built upon Foucault's work on panopticism (1977), extending the metaphor of ordering human society through the implementation of the all-seeing eye and the primacy of the visual. Urry introduced to tourism the concept of the command and use of vision as a key method for the reconstruction of modernity. His work investigates the way tourists look at touristic objects, and how such objects are presented for their visual consumption. In doing so, Urry shifted the focus from that of modern tourism (emphasis on the viewed, or the *signified*) to the postmodern (emphasis on the viewer, or the *signifree*), enabling him to re-evaluate the processes of the tourism industry and what was happening in tourist spaces.

In live musical performance, vision is as important as sound. Patrons go to 'see' a band, not to 'hear' them, and how the venue controls and directs that gaze directly contributes to the enjoyment of the performance. As tourism providers the gaze aboard cruise ships is touristic, undertaken by people who are on holiday. Venues aboard cruise ships are thus designed to control and direct this gaze for maximum impact. Minor et al. (2004) note "The spatial layout and functionality aspects [of performance venues] are of high importance for the service encounter due to the purposeful nature of the service encounter" (2004, p. 10). It is important to consider such matters in the cruise ship design stage as drydocks are rare, and significant structural remodelling of shipboard architecture can be not only prohibitively expensive, but can affect structural integrity and buoyancy of the ship.

Kwortnik (2008, p. 305) finds that three factors about shipboard public venues are significant to cruise ship guests:

- Ambient factors (eg. scents, cleanliness, lighting, piped music)
- Design factors (eg. décor, colour, furnishings, layout, size, entertainment architecture)
- Social factors (crowding, queues, cruiser cues)

Each of these factors is significant to cruise ship music venues. Ambiance and architecture is constructed to place guests at ease in an unspecifically western environment, relaxed and ready to consume music and alcohol. Social factors often depend upon the category of cruise line. In the 'modern' cruising market, cabins are small, and public areas are crowded, but this can add to the designed excitement of a venue. Aboard a 'luxury' cruise ship, there may be more space and opulence of design and musical performances are perceived as more 'sophisticated' (Wright & Wright, 2010).

Musical performance can occur in nearly any public area aboard a cruise ship. Instruments are portable and keyboards, ubiquitous on cruise ships, can substitute for pianos. However, musical performances occur most frequently in locations formalised for public performance of music. Such locations are designated by a stage area, often a piano, and an area where consumption can be undertaken.

#### **Cruise Ship Venues as Design for Music**

Venues for musical performance are often poorly designed. The Sydney Opera House, one of the most beautiful and famous musical performance venues in the world, has issues with poor acoustics and very uncomfortable musician accommodation. Other venues, that may not have originally began as performance spaces but have been adapted, have their own issues and concerns.

Minor et al. (2004) propose four fundamental aspects for the design of musical performance venues. In doing this, they overlap the purposes of venue design for music and venue design for experience:

1. Seating facilities.
2. View of the performance.
3. Venue size.
4. Parking.

While this last is not a consideration in the design of cruise ship music venues; however a related concept is the proximity of venues to passenger flow. This, however, relates to the concept of cruise ship music venues as the containers of experiences. Further, cruise ships add another design consideration for performance venues:

5. Buoyancy.

Other considerations that should be added to Minor et al.'s list above include:

6. Sight-lines between performers.
7. Comfort of performers.

Theatres and performance spaces on cruise ships are designed with care and consideration for points one and three. Seats in theatres are usually comfortable and venue sizes appropriate to traffic and audience sizes ranging from live venues seating a hundred to large-scale theatres seating more than a thousand. Maritime architects also consider the view of the performance with little distance between audience and performer in small establishments and severely raked seating in larger venues.

Such venues, however, are not on land, and other considerations must be made. For example, while seating is comfortable and luxurious, due to the ever-present possibility of sudden and violent movement on cruise ships, chairs in theatres and many performance venues are usually immobile, unable to be moved at a passenger's whim. From a safety and a venue management viewpoint, a sudden list of the ship cannot be permitted to scatter chairs. There are railings at many points in such venues to provide support for passengers in case of sudden movement. Further, the physical structure of the ship must also be considered in designing spaces. These venues are not immobile, but on large moving structures and large internal spaces without

support weaken the physical structure of the ship. Thus, in theatres, large support columns must run from the ceiling to the floor supporting the weight of the upper decks. Such columns can create sightline issues and large venues must be carefully designed to allow the areas behind these columns to be free of seats.

All spaces on ships, including performance venues, must be designed with consideration for the ship's buoyancy. Former Carnival CEO Bob Dickinson and journalist Andy Vladimir write "you can't necessarily just put lights and speakers where they logically ought to go; if you do [as] it may affect the stability of the ship" (2008, p. 54). Regulations for ships are substantially different for land-based performance venues, and require additional planning and practices. Land-based equipment is often unsuitable to shipboard installation due to constant vibration as well as varying gravity due to movement of the ship, which may be three times that of land-based installations (Lindauer, 2002, p. 26). Lifting motors need to be bigger and more robust. Technical crew need to be very careful when rigging and attach themselves at all times (Lampert-Gréaux, 2003, p. 22). Spare parts can also cause problems. David Gargenti, project manager for Sharff Weisberg, who installed the audio and lighting rigs on Holland America's *MV Zuiderdam* notes "In preparing to do the installation, you have to think of everything. There's no Radio Shack around the corner to get spare parts" (Lampert-Gréaux, 2003, p. 21). Alan Edwards, principle audio designer of Nautilus Entertainment (2004, p. 8) notes that turnover of technical crew every four months and consequent inconsistent job performance by allowed for. Lastly, greater power consumption for lighting rigs and sound systems means more cabling, adding significant weight to a ship's design and reducing her speed. All such considerations must be taken into account in the design of lighting and sound onboard.

Land-based and shipboard theatrical designers do not always consider the comfort of or sight-lines between performers when designing performance spaces. The orchestral pit in the opera theatre of Sydney Opera House, for example, is notoriously awkward for musicians due to cramped space, sometimes resulting in musicians performing in the corridor. In 2007, Regent Seven Seas Cruises redesigned the stage of their small vessel, *MV Navigator*. The bandstand looked wonderful with a high drum riser in the middle, steel bars arching in front of the band and "Regent Signature Orchestra" in the middle. However, the high drum riser made it impossible for the rhythm section on stage right to communicate with the horns on stage left. Further, as the stage was relatively small for the nine-piece band, the space left for horns was insufficient to allow musician, instrument and music stand to sit comfortably. This resulted in all horns sitting side-on to the audience. In such a situation the creation of music is very difficult.

#### **CRUISE SHIP VENUES DESIGN FOR AN EXPERIENCE**

The design of cruise ships is a specialised area. Joe Farcus, the interior architect for Carnival Cruise Lines refers to "entertainment architecture". Shirley LaFollette, president of Seattle-based Interior Design International, says "[Farcus] is a mastermind at creating themed spaces [...] He creates them as a stage, which is needed. This is theater we're in." (Henderson 1997, p. 50) Theatre is a significant concept in tourism design. Disneyland, by comparison, has its own theatrical 'Disney-speak' where employees are 'cast members', public areas are 'onstage' a job is a 'role' and a uniform is a 'costume' (Bryman, 2004, p. 10–11). While cruise lines do not use a performance model of tourist interaction as all encompassing, they certainly use a theatrical

model in designing touristic encounters, particularly with music. The container for a musical encounter must be designed and prepared before the encounter takes place.

If shipboard musical venues are to function as the container for a tourist musical experience, as well as a performance venue, other considerations also need to be made. In examining cruise ship musical performance spaces, several considerations recur:

1. Focus/relationships of performance
2. Distance between performer and audience
3. Architectural design of venues
4. Lighting/Sound
5. Proximity to flows of guests
6. Physical theming

A musical performance involves at least one and sometimes two relationships: between the musicians and audience, and sometimes also between musicians and dancers. Sometimes such a focus is very narrow concentrated on a featured performer or singer. Sometimes it is broader with an entire stage of dancers and three or four singers vying for the audience's attention. Sometimes it is broader still when a dance floor is full of dancers, and multiple focuses between band and a floor full of dancers tug at the audience's attention. These relationships are significant in retaining guests at a venue and generating revenue. Without the fundamental human relationships between performers and audience, a cruise ship may as well play a CD. Different venues must design their space to enable tight or wide focus depending on the differing functions of venues

Related to this relationship is the distance between audience and performer. Some venues are designed to have the performers "up close and personal with the drum kit" (J. Smith, Personal Communication, 16 October 2011). The performance area may be designated by a small raised stage, or simply by the presence of a piano, and guests may interact relatively freely with performers. Some guests take this interaction to extremes, attempting a conversation with soloists while playing requiring performers to either concentrate on performing while talking, or stop performing to talk. Performers may even enter into the audience's space. Other venues are more formal and, while physical distance is not as great as in traditionally designed concert halls, such venues have raised stages, often an orchestra pit and a thrust stage with a proscenium arch toward the rear.

Minor et al.'s point four, 'parking', is not relevant on cruise ships, all parking having been taken care of at the terminal prior to departure; however, ease of access is certainly a consideration. The venue's proximity to the flow of guests is a decision about the venue as a shipboard destination. Most shipboard venues are carefully positioned to allow access on the main ship's thoroughfare, often the 'promenade' deck, catering to strolling guests while the ship is at sea. However, some venues, such as the popular piano bar, the Commodore Club on the RMS *Queen Mary 2* is located on deck 9 forward overlooking the bow, far from the main thoroughfares. The only public space on this otherwise passenger accommodation deck, guests must choose this as a destination, making the long walk to the forward elevators. By contrast, many performance venues, such as the Royal Court Theatre, Chart Room, Golden Lion Pub and Grand Atrium, are located on Deck 2 or 3 amidships, where their music can spill over and entice passing guests.

Venues may be architecturally themed to the performed style of music. For example, the MV *Norwegian Epic* employs a resident blues band, which performs in a venue themed to this style of music. The RMS *Queen Mary 2's* Queen's Room is themed as a large-scale ballroom with large dance floor, an old-style band shell and double-height ceilings. Such theming reinforces the type of music performed in these venues.

### **The Layout of Performance Spaces**

In modern cruise ship entertainment practice, other elements must be taken into account. Cruise lines design their entertainment to be inclusive and powerful. An interviewed cruise director noted that distance between guest and musician must be kept to a minimum. The guests, he says must be "up close and personal with the drum kit" (J. Smith, Personal Communication, 16 October 2011). Modern venues are designed with little space between the performer and the audience. For this reason, modern cruise ship venues are usually thrust rather than proscenium arch stages and are wider than they are long. Such a layout also provides a close view of the performer for much the audience. Figure 1 tabulates the four basic layouts for performance venue aboard cruise ships including the direction of the tourist gazes. Each of these layouts was brought about by different functions, requirements and stages of development of seaborne tourism.

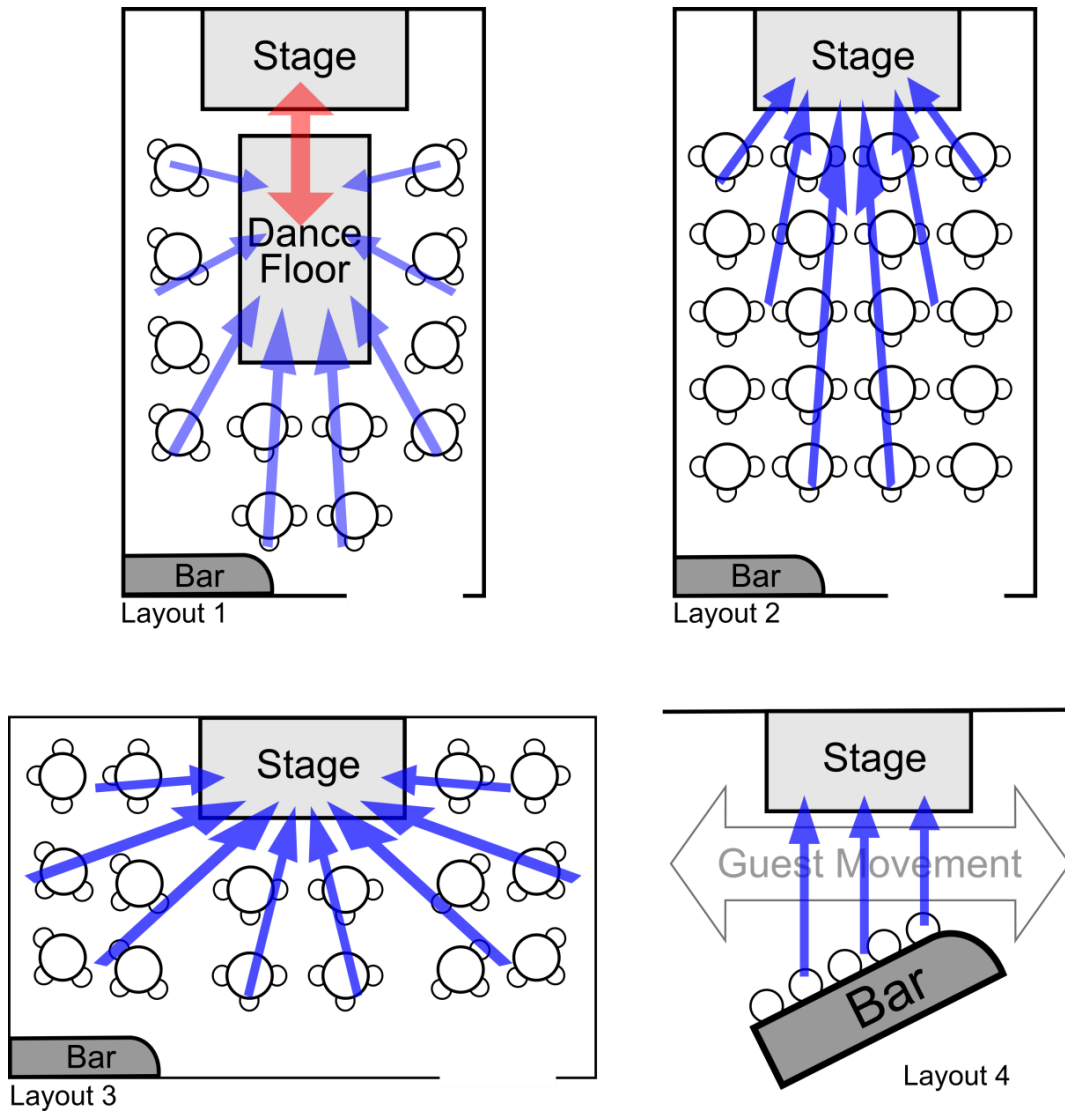
Many of the rooms discussed are on Carnival vessels designed by (recently retired) Carnival interior designer Joe Farcus with design intentions so clear that the design aesthetic has become known in the industry as "Farcitecture" (Sloan, 2010) and the distinctive red funnel on Carnival ships is known as the "Farcus Funnel" (Henderson, 1997, p. 50). Other lines sometimes dilute or alter Farcus' original intentions because of the spaces on other ships being multi-purpose.

### **Layout One: Formal Dance Venues**

Formal dance has occurred on cruise ships since the early days of steam passenger shipping (Cashman 2012b). Steamships in the first decades of the twentieth century, such as RMS *Mauretania* (1906) and RMS *Titanic* (1912), did not have formal dance spaces, despite providing specialised musicians, a fairly recent innovation for the time. Such dancing as occurred happened on deck. Such a situation is far from ideal as this area is high above the ocean and the consequent rolling of pre-stabiliser vessels often prohibited elegant dance. Further, in order to permit the space to dance, this occurred toward the front or rear of the ship, where pitching of the ship further exacerbated ship movement. However, in 1912, the German HABAG line constructed the grand SS *Imperator*, which famously included the first ballroom at sea ("Craze for Luxury", 1913). Images of dancing on ships have become part of the popular images associated with cruise ships, in movies such as *An Affair to Remember* (1957), *Ghost Ship* (2002) and in television's *Love Boat*. Advertisements for cruise lines often include such images in their campaigns.

Modern dance venues such as the Queen's Room on Cunard Line vessels and Neptune's Lounge on Holland America Line maintain similar designs to earlier vessels. The RMS *Queen Mary's* Queen's Room, for example, is a purpose-built ballroom. The stage area contains a seven-piece-plus-singer band, and the dance floor, the largest at sea at just over 90m<sup>2</sup>, is located in front of this. Surrounding this are tables and chairs where audience members can watch the dancers and band, waited on by drinks waiters.

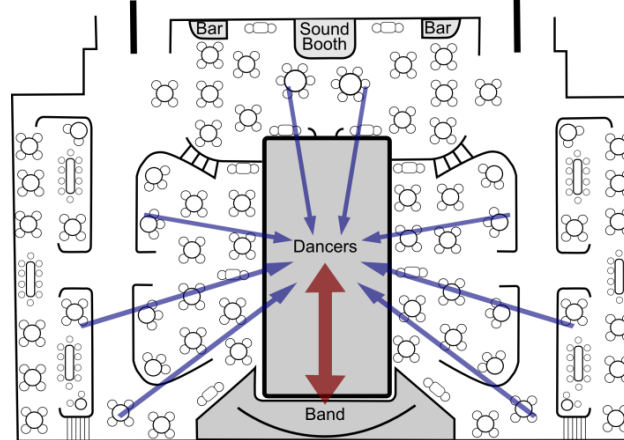
Figure 1: Four regularly occurring layouts of performance spaces on cruise ships



Most venues have a single performance relationship between the performers and the audience. The performers attempt to engage the audience and the audience responds (or not). Formal dance venues are different in that there are two sets of relationships. Dancers have a double-directional relationship with the orchestra. Musicians engage the dancers by providing appropriate dance music (the red arrow in Figure 2). Dancers engage the musicians by requesting songs or styles of dance. The bandleader must observe the dancers to ensure they are not tiring from too many fast dances, that they are happy with the tempos and selections, and so forth.

Yet, it is the dancers that form the central focus of the performance. It is the dance floor, not the bandstand, that is visible from every point in the room. Chairs point towards it and the lighting is brighter here than at other locations in the space. This creates impact and focuses and engages the audience (the blue arrows in Figure 2) who may or may not participate in dance themselves. If no-one is dancing—the Achilles' heel for such a venue—the shipboard dance instructors dance, or the employed 'gentleman hosts' (staff members who are employed to dance with older female passengers) offer their services to unattached female guests.

Figure 2: The Queen's Room on Cunard Line's RMS *Queen Mary 2* showing performance relationships/gazes



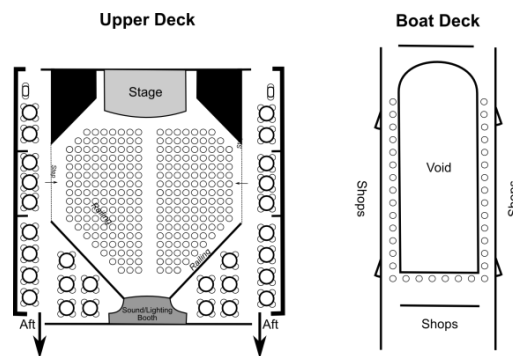
The few spaces that are still constructed in this layout are decorated to be opulent, increasing the prestige of the space and referencing the halcyon days of cruise shipping when large ships such as the original *SS Queen Mary* and *SS France* steamed from Europe to America carrying wealthy guests. Further, aboard a cruise ship, space is at a premium and these double-height venues are unusual. The floor-to-ceiling curtain and old-fashioned band shell highlight the large and impressive band dressed well and playing jazz—an increasingly high-art genre—on shiny and aesthetically beautiful instruments.

#### Layout Two: Traditional Theatre Spaces

When performance spaces were built on transatlantic steamships many of the designs of nineteenth-century concert-hall design (Forsyth 1985), often long rectangular buildings with the stage at the short end, were used. While these were hardly suited to interactive performances, they were decorated to emphasise the opulence and eliteness of first-class passage on steamers. They also permitted these much smaller ships to maintain buoyancy by having heavy objects on the spine of the ship rather than to one side. Early cruise ships refitted these ocean liners or ferries and these traditional spaces—often converted ballrooms or existing theatres—were redesigned. It was not possible to install heavy stage equipment on one side of the ship without affecting the ship's buoyancy, so such ships were limited to Layout Two, the 'traditional layout' rarely seen on modern cruise ships. Used for formal theatrical presentations, this layout has a stage, usually a traditional proscenium arch. This type of venue is not often used due to the lack of possible interactivity, the narrow focus of the performers, and the distance from the stage to

the back of the venue. When a musical guest entertainer is performing, the orchestra may be brought forward, or be placed towards the back of the stage for a production show or non-musical guest entertainer. This format, however, causes several problems. On cruise ships, several problems were encountered in construction, such as the requirement to have columns at regular intervals to ensure the structural stability of ships, which cause sight-line problems. Further, the audience is at a distance from the performer, and the focus of the performer is usually very narrow, neither of which allows for high degrees of interaction and impact. However, the early cruise industry in the 1970s existed on pre-purchased ships (Garin, 2006) and little could be done to alter the actual structure of such venues

Figure 3: The Grand Lounge about the Cunard RMS *Queen Elizabeth 2* showing both decks



An example of this type of venue was the Grand Lounge on the now-retired RMS *Queen Elizabeth 2* (Figure 3). The QE2 was built in 1969 in the tradition of Cunard vessels such as RMS *Queen Mary* and RMS *Queen Elizabeth*. The room that became the Grand Lounge was originally the first-class ballroom named the Double Down Room, used for dancing in pre-theatrical cruising. As such, the room had to be adapted to her new role as a theatre. In 1994 the double-staircases wrapping around the bandstand were removed and a proscenium built in its place. This was the second design of the room. Until 1987, a large spiral staircase had existed at the aft end of the room. While aesthetically beautiful, this performance space lacked a focus (which was the original intention). During performances, extra chairs were placed on the Boat Deck level allowing additional guests to view the show. The result was a fairly unattractive theatre with poor sightlines, difficult acoustics and a considerable distance from the stage to the back of the theatre making interactive performance difficult.

### Layout Three: Modern Performance Spaces

With the advent of purpose-built cruise ships in the early 1980s, the cruise industry, which had had fifteen years of experience in implementing musical performance, finally gained the ability to customise ship architecture and geography to their own requirements. The resulting layouts were differently focussed and designed and are designated as Layout Three. This is now the most common layout on modern cruise ships and has at its heart as broad a physical focus as possible. The stage is placed on the long end of an oblong-shaped room, so the performance may focus on as wide a number of people as possible. Additionally, there is less distance from the back row to

the stage. There are three variants on modern cruise ships. Variant A is a modern theatre where production shows and guest entertainer performances occur. Variant B is designed for a standard ensemble or soloist room on cruise ships. Variant C is a purpose-built piano bar, such as those on Carnival.

**Variant A: Main Theatres**

The main theatre, often the largest and most impressive onboard space is designed for impact. Opulent and tasteful, these spaces focus the audience's attention intensely on the performer's location by sightlines, lighting and physical design. In contrast to Layout Two, the performer's attention is very wide—more than 180° in the case of the Symphony Theatre aboard the MV *Crystal Symphony* (Figure 4). The performer is consequently nearer to the audience, despite the physical and psychological barrier of the stage. Thus, the performer is at once accessible (due to their proximity) but special (due to the barrier of the stage).

A great deal of thought goes into designing the main theatres as venues for musical performance. Specialist lighting and sound technicians are employed to run highly complex and innovative lighting and sound installations. Musicians are placed in a pit at the front of the stage, to one side or at the rear of the stage. Because of the limited space available in some layouts, sightlines or musician comfort may be considered second to appearance or the logistics of organising performers.

The main theatre is the focus of an evening's shipboard entertainment and is prominently positioned usually towards the bow of the ship. Featured advertisements in the shipboard daily program and regular shipwide announcements by the cruise director emphasis its centrality. The space is opulent and formal and the performers distant from the audience. Despite this focus, the main theatre is not a venue of high consumption. Because of the formality of the performance and space, once the show has started, drinks can no longer be ordered, and revenue plummets. Performances are thus traditionally kept to no longer than an hour in total, though Carnival Cruise Lines moved to 30-minute shows in 2012. This location then is the source of the stream of guests that twice a night flow from here to other locations on the ship and the theatre is positioned close to other venues. The development of multi-level atriums means that once leaving the theatre guests emerge into a single aural space. Canny cruise directors place high-energy performers outside the theatre at these times to draw guests onward and encourage them to spend in locations of high consumption.

**Variant B: Bars and Lounges**

The majority of cruise ship performances occur in bars, lounges, on lido deck and in themed music venues. Compared to the main theatre, performers in a bar are much closer to the audience. There is no formal and high stage, and guests are encouraged to stay and interact with the band or soloists between songs.

Figure 4: The main theatre (Symphony Theatre) aboard the *MV Crystal Symphony*

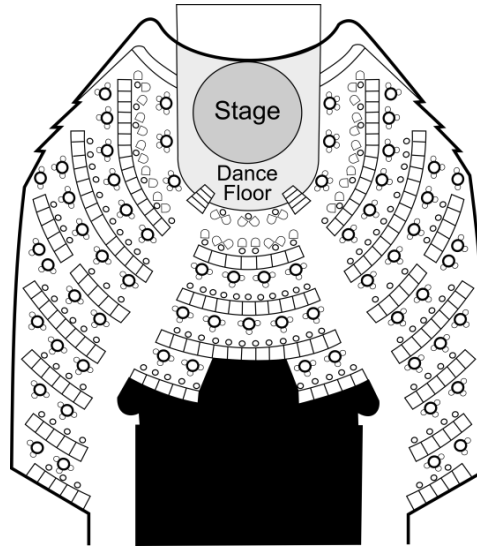
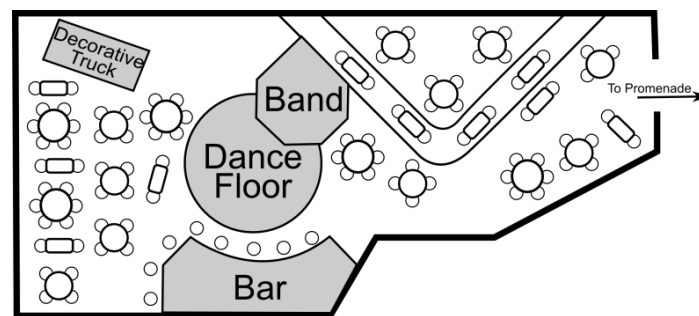


Figure 5 shows an example of a band lounge, the Chinatown Lounge on the *MV Carnival Ecstasy*, home to the onboard classic rock band, which specialises in rock of the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. This American-Chinese themed venue places the band, if not absolutely in the centre of the room, at least more in the audience than a formal theatre. There is a dance floor in front of the band, tables and a bar around it, and behind and to the stage left, a raised area where people may simply sit and enjoy the music.

Figure 5: The Chinatown Lounge on the *MV Carnival Ecstasy*



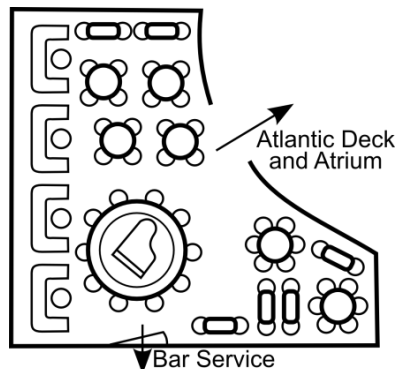
Unlike the main theatre, the Chinatown Lounge is a more casual venue. Patrons may come to primarily interact with each other. With the stage and dance floor in the centre of the space, patrons may choose to be close to the band and dance floor, close to the band only (behind the railings behind the ensemble, or some distance from the band). Performance relationships are consequently less defined and more casual. Because there is no large psychological stage barrier (the stage being a foot or so high), audience are more inclined to interact with the performers.

Similar to this in format, performances on lido deck occur during the day, most commonly on sea days beside the pool usually using a Caribbean band. By performing music associated with island culture, such performances seek to create an ambiance of relaxation, good times and exoticism. This is reinforced by the location (near the water in the swimming pool) by being outdoors in the sun and by being offered rum-based fruity beverages by casually dressed waiters. Like the example of the Chinatown Lounge, performances are secondary to other pursuits, in this case, relaxing by the pool, social interaction and consumption.

### Variant C: Piano Bars

Piano entertainers are employed aboard cruise ships to interact with guests and perform songs that the guests know and to which they may sing along. Many such performances take place in general bars that can be adapted to other purposes, but on some ships, mostly in the Carnival fleet, piano entertainers have their own space. As Figure 6, the Rhapsody in Blue Piano Bar on the MV *Carnival Inspiration* shows, the piano is located in the middle of the room behind a round bar. Guests may sit at the piano and interact with the performer, or may sit at tables to enjoy the music. Bar staff attend the guests, getting ordered drinks from the adjacent Mardi Gras Dining Room.

Figure 6: The Rhapsody in Blue Piano Bar on board the MV *Carnival Inspiration*



This variant is different to the other types of Layout Four in that the focus has moved from a formally defined stage area (in variant A) to a more loosely defined stage area (in variant B) to right in the middle of the audience. Audience surrounds the performer, who forms the centre of attention. The distance between performer and audience is minimal, and interaction, whether by singing or by requesting songs, is encouraged. Successful piano-entertainers have high impact and are memorable to audiences.

The concept of piano entertainment is built into this space. From the name (George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is a work for solo piano and jazz orchestra) to the bar with its repeating surface of piano keys, the bar is themed as a piano bar. While, on Atlantic deck, it is between the high-traffic Promenade and Empress decks, its location facing onto the Atrium means that music spills from the bar into the six-deck-high void that forms the atrium.

#### **Layout Four: High Traffic Performance Space**

The fourth layout, the 'high traffic layout' does not exist on every ship, but are on enough to be worthy of mention. These performance spaces are designed to keep guests moving rather than attract them to a specific performance. The music creates an exciting atmosphere, but draws guests out and onward to another venue where guests can consume. Some guests may sit at the bar associated with the venue to enjoy the music, but this is not the main purpose of the performance. Such venues are set in high-traffic areas, in such as the atrium or on promenade deck. Variant A is a common design for the atrium. Performers play on a raised stage behind or to the side of the bar. Bar staff are often between the audience and performers, emphasising the importance of consumption in these performances. In variant B, often on the Promenade Deck, there is no real focus for the performance, except across to the bar where patrons must pass between the audience and performers.

#### **Variant A: The Atrium**

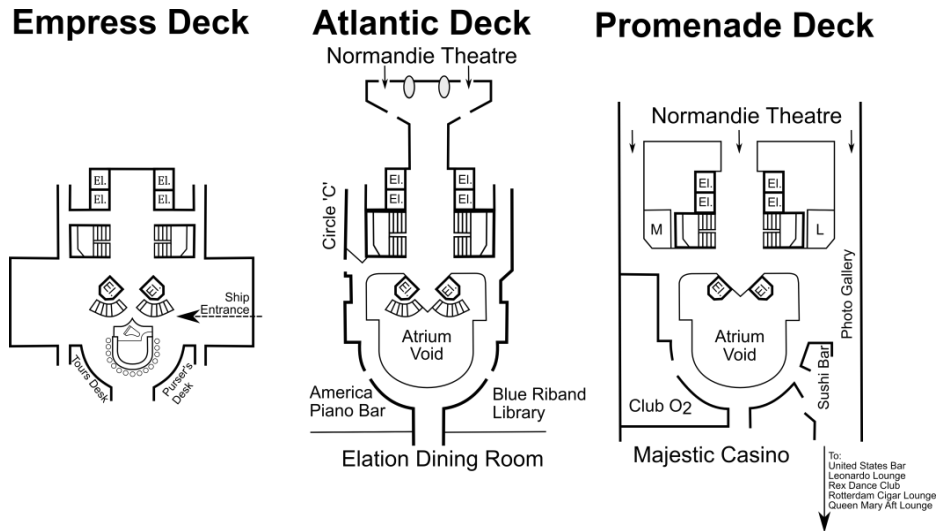
The Atrium is an aural space several decks high. On the ground floor, the purser's desk, where guests take care of shipboard administration, is often located. Often, too, the tours desk, where guests can book a ship's tour is positioned here. The atrium void customarily rises several decks, in the case of the MV *Carnival Paradise* (Figure 7), between Decks Empress Deck 7 and Sports Deck 14, where the skylight is located. The main theatre is located forward of the atrium on decks 8 and 9. Twice a night, this space disgorges guests who must move forward to the staircase just forward of the atrium, or into the actual atrium. This brings them into the aural space of the atrium. In this position, lively music draws guests onward and past the elevators and stairs leading to their cabins and toward spaces of high consumption within the Atrium itself (the Atrium bar or the America Piano Bar) or beyond (the United States Bar, the Majestic Casino, the live dance venue of the Leonardo Lounge, the Rex disco, the Rotterdam Cigar Lounge or the Queen Mary Aft Lounge). Thus, while the Atrium bar can function as a venue itself, its main purpose is to draw guests onward, away from their cabins and keep them out consuming. Its sightlines are across the bar and bar staff may come between the guests and the performer.

The Atrium also has a secondary purpose as the first performance space guests see when embarking the ship. The embarkation doors open onto this deck, thus this space is used during embarkation day when guests may be kept waiting in this space before being shown to their cabins.

#### **Variant B: The Thoroughfare**

Like the atrium, this venue is not designed to be a performance space per se, but rather to keep guests moving. Music enlivens and excites a space and moves passengers onto other spaces past the stage. Passengers are kept moving by limited and awkwardly positioned seating, which may present the audience's back to the band.

Figure 7: Empress, Atlantic and Promenade decks aboard the MV *Carnival Fantasy* Centred on the Atrium



### Other Venues

Although music may be associated with dining in land-based restaurants, musical performances occasionally take place in restaurants on cruise ships. Food is included in the cost of the cruise. There is no point, from the cruise lines' perspective, in encouraging people to stay in the dining room, as it will provide no extra income. However, if they finish their dining experience quickly and go to a bar where music is being performed, revenue and profit increases. Several cruise lines now have speciality restaurants that incur an extra fee and music is incorporated into these venues, sometimes via performance in the restaurants, sometimes in musical promotion of the venues.

Carnival cruise ships can schedule music in the casino. Despite this being a high performance area for Carnival Cruise Lines, this is atypical of cruise industry practice. The casino is the highest revenue-generating activity on a cruise ship (Becker, 2006, p. 17) and patrons are unlikely to wish to be disturbed.

### CONCLUSIONS

Music aboard a cruise ship (and in much of the tourism industry) is a product to be sold and a tool to be used rather than an art form. It is a negotiated and constructed touristic exchange within highly specialised and clearly designed spaces of engagement. These spaces may be historical remnants of different times (Layout 1), or may be modern reinterpretations of historical designs (Layout 2). They may be efficiently designed spaces for touristic exchange to occur (Layout 3), or may be interim spaces (Layout 4) designed to draw guests onward rather than functioning as final destinations within themselves.

Such spaces make several requirements upon designers. Firstly, the space must be clearly designated as a space for performance. When the space is encapsulated in a room, this is a case

of homogenous theming, the construction of a stage area (accommodating the musicians comfortably), dance space and bar, and designating passenger seating so that the majority of guests can comfortably see the performances. If, however, a performance space is located where other activities occur simultaneously (eg. a casino bar, restaurant, the atrium bar or a promenade stage) these spaces must be otherwise designated. One consistent feature is the inclusion of a grand piano. Often these instruments are not even played, the spaces used by guitarist/singers; however the placing of a piano, as well as being a beautiful piece of physical art in itself, suggests that the piano will be played and thus that the area has the *potential* to be a performance space.

Venues must also be appropriately themed. A jazz venue is themed very differently to a classical venue, the main theatre, or the piano lounge. This is an easy task if the venue is used for only one type of performance such as the *Norwegian Epic's* Fat Cats Jazz and Blues Club or Carnival's various piano bars; however many venues are used for different performances as cruise ships try to cater for their wide demographic. Thus, the *Queen Mary 2's* Golden Lion Pub is home to small-to-mid-ensemble jazz, cocktail piano and piano/vocalists, and main theatres may have any music performed there from musical theatre to rock, from classical to country. In some cases, these venues are themed in a different direction than musical; for example, a main theatre is themed for opulence and the Golden Lion Pub is themed as a traditional British pub rather than a genre of music.

Thought must be given to the physical location of the venue aboard the ship. If a venue is designed to be high-consumption, it must be placed close to the flow of traffic. A performance venue located out of the main thoroughfare must generate a strong desire to attend (such as the luxury of smoking in the *Queen Mary 2's* Churchill's Cigar Lounge) or they will not produce the desired revenue. Spaces must physically work. Instruments must be maintained, sound equipment and lighting work efficiently, pyrotechnics must be safe, chairs must not move with the ship and rails must be planted liberally among the audience. In order to achieve this, cruise ships employ large numbers of technical personnel amid the entertainers. Ships are drydocked every few years and repairs made. Pianos, wrecked by pianist and guest misuse, are replaced, technical equipment updated and general maintenance performed.

Venues must be ambiguously westernised, which provides reassurances of safety and security to guests, who may be in parts of the world where they feel uncomfortable. The physical theming of the venue as well as the music performed in it must consequently be familiar and relaxing to cruise ship tourists, not confronting.

Finally the direction in which guests must look to view the performance must be clear. This can be effected by lighting the performers rather than the audience, by physically designing the venue so that the distance between the audience and performer is negligible, or by physically placing the performer in the centre of the venue. The space must be designed to facilitate interaction between the performer and audience leading to increased engagement, more time spent in the venue and ultimately, more revenue generated.

From the location on the ship to the structural design of the venue, theming and physical implementation, cruise ship musical venues are spaces of high impact which control the direction of the tourist gaze and create a memorable touristic experience. Some spaces do this by

encouraging high degrees of interaction between the performer and audience, such as a piano bar. Some do this by the provision of a dance floor, allowing guests to temporarily become performers. Others do this by removing the central performer from much interaction with guests at all, placing them on a high stage in a luxurious theatre, and focussing the attention of hundreds of guests on them at once. These musical touristic exchanges happen, not in the physical locations of the ship—in the Caribbean or in Europe or wherever the ship happens to be—but in the constructed, mediated and westernised performance spaces of the cruise ship. This is the real 'destination' of a cruise-ship holiday.

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