



FIGURE 1

A SENSE OF TOGETHERNESS

THE D.I.Y. MUSIC COMMUNITY IN GLASGOW

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Glasgow was recently announced as a UNESCO City of Music, with its music scene generating for the local economy £75 million a year. However, the city's musical landscape has remained largely unexplored, while the sporadic, non-ethnographic literature has been mainly preoccupied with local music history, rather than the vast array of contemporary, everyday music practices that provide the bedrock of Glasgow's prolific music scene. My fieldwork focused upon musicians in the margins of the industry and specifically upon the so-called 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) music practices in order to examine the politics of grassroots music participation and the local knowledge

that informs creativity. My thesis is an account of the explicit music practices, the conventions and constraints relevant to the experience of music-making, as well as the meaning of music as collective action. By employing three case studies - a band, a music promoter and a music collective/record label - I seek to demonstrate that DIY music-making emerged as a socially meaningful practice and process. Furthermore, these examples were indicative of the wider practical considerations and moral implications pertinent to the DIY mode of conduct, but also illustrated the fluid and contested nature of local perspectives on 'ethical' music-making. ♦



FIGURE 2

Several local bands occasionally employed stage clothing. Wearing specific clothes or costumes, makeup or body paint, highlighted music performance as a form of spectacle. Despite that in most DIY events musicians were plainly dressed, there were instances where either ready-made masks were used, or considerable effort had been put by bands into preparing hand-made costumes and applying elaborate makeup. This was especially the case with ‘themed’ gigs or events.

The resulting metamorphoses often bordered on the parodic and the grotesque (Figures 1, 2 & 3), but this deliberate theatricality had also the effect of fostering a different kind of atmosphere amongst audience members: one of my informants noted that people in the audience expected something ‘different’ if the band was dressed up, thus stressing the importance of the onstage performance rather than the actual music played. At other times, it served a practical function, such as holding a microphone in place (Figure 4).



FIGURE 3

The fact that some of the individuals engaging in this practice were Art students or graduates, might explain the inclination to produce such materials in order to enhance their onstage performance repertoire. Although it would be difficult to claim that these specific music events represented particular kinds of socially-productive rituals, the creative synthesis and presentation of these artefacts was nevertheless an effective form of communication with the audience, as well as an expression of the widely held view amongst the local DIY network that a music event was first and foremost a social occasion.



**“WEARING SPECIFIC CLOTHES OR COSTUMES,
MAKEUP OR BODY PAINT, HIGHLIGHTED
MUSIC PERFORMANCE AS A FORM
OF SPECTACLE.”**



FIGURE 4