

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Glasgow
Unit of Assessment: 35 – Music
Title of case study: Campaigning for music and musicians
1. Summary of the impact

Music reflects and frequently empowers its listeners. Freedom of artistic expression is a right enshrined in international conventions which is under threat in many countries across the world. Research undertaken at the University of Glasgow (UoG) by Martin Cloonan in the censorship, regulation and legislation of music has informed and had a direct impact on a number of different anti-censorship campaigns at both national and international levels. In the UK his work has informed policy changes, specifically in relation to the licensing of smaller live venues; and, internationally his expertise has supported the establishment of key bodies such as Freemuse, the World Forum on Music and Censorship, which lobbies against the imprisonment and censorship of musicians.

2. Underpinning research

Cloonan's research and his sustained, direct engagement with the music industries and musicians are mutually reinforcing. Throughout his research career he has concentrated on issues of empowerment and regulation. His pioneering PhD on music and censorship ('Banned: Censorship of Popular music in Britain, 1967-1992' (1993)) is the first major work in this area. Since then he has been interested in researching, and seeking to impact upon, the power dynamics within the music industries – musicians, music policy, recording companies and live venues.

His most recent work has concentrated on the live music industry – in terms of regulation (policy) as well as its cultural and economic benefits. His research has, therefore, long been inter-twined with processes of knowledge exchange and public engagement: for example –

- As a result of this long term engagement and his commitment to empowerment and regulation issues, Cloonan played a key role in the foundation of [Freemuse](#), an independent international organisation advocating freedom of expression for musicians and composers, and acts as Executive Committee Chair of the organisation.
- He has also been directly involved in campaigning against the UK Licensing Act in 2003 which increased levels of control over live music, requiring licences for most public and many private performances. After almost 10 years of campaigning for new legislation and contributing to the public debate surrounding the issues of small venues, Cloonan and colleagues saw the Live Music Act passed in March 2012. This Act removed the need for a licence to play live music in most small venues, such as pubs and community halls. This was a key intervention in music policy and legislation and was seen as victory for performers and small venues.

Evidence of the significance of Cloonan's research in relation to his key areas of impact – policy, regulation and live music – includes his support from funders:

- AHRC, *The Musicians Union: a social history* (PI: Cloonan; 2011; £556,910)
- Royal Society of Edinburgh, *Music Research and Music Policy* (PI: Cloonan; with Co-I Simon Frith, Edinburgh; 2009; £5,500)
- AHRC, *The Promotion of Live Music* (Co-I: Cloonan; with PI Simon Frith, Edinburgh; 2008: £308,000). Dissemination of findings will be via three major publications including Martin Cloonan, Simon Frith, Matt Brennan and Emma Webster, *The History of Live Music in the UK: Volume 1: From The Dance Hall to the 100 Club* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013) (REF 2 Selection).

Cloonan's work has frequently returned to the question of cultural policy and music and has involved engagement with a number of key stakeholders – including Creative Scotland, the Scottish Music Industry Association and the Musician's Union. In addition to outputs listed below, publications relating to this engagement include: Martin Cloonan, 'Steering a review: some reflections on a gig', *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 19.3 (2013), pp.318-332, [doi: 10.1080/10286632.2013.788163](https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2013.788163)

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3. References to the research

- Martin Cloonan and R Garofalo, eds, *Policing Pop* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003). ISBN 1566399904. (Available from HEI)
- Martin Cloonan and M Drewett, eds, *Popular Music Censorship in Africa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). ISBN 9780754652915. (Available from HEI)
- Martin Cloonan, *Popular Music and the State in the UK: Culture, Trade or Industry?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). ISBN 9780754653738. (Available from HEI)
- Martin Cloonan and John Williamson, 'Rethinking the music industry', *Popular Music* 26.2 (2007), pp.305-3, [doi:10.1017/S0261143007001262](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143007001262)
- Martin Cloonan, John Williamson and Simon Frith, 'Having an Impact? Academics, the music industries and the problem of knowledge', *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 17.5 (2011), pp.459-474, [doi 10.1080/10286632.2010.550682](https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2010.550682) (REF2 Selection)
- Martin Cloonan, Simon Frith, Matt Brennan and Emma Webster, *The History of Live Music in the UK: Volume 1: From The Dance Hall to the 100 Club* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013). ISBN 9781409422808. (REF 2 Selection)

4. Details of the impact

Cloonan's research has achieved impact both **internationally** -- campaigning for artistic freedom for musicians via Freemuse; and **in the UK** – assisting the campaign for Licensing Act reform, which led to the Live Music Act 2012.

International impact – artistic freedom and censorship – The right to freedom of artistic expression is enshrined in, among several international treaties, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1966. Cloonan is currently Executive Committee Chair of Freemuse, the World Forum on Music and Censorship, which he helped to found in 1998. Freemuse – see <http://freemuse.org> – is dedicated to documenting and publicising censorship and human rights violations involving musicians worldwide, and regularly reports on ill-treated or imprisoned musicians. It has received funding from, among others: the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; Roskilde Festival Charity Society; Postcode Lottery Culture Foundation; SafeMuse; Björn Afzelius International Culture Foundation; the Swedish Special Initiative for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression; and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Freemuse has had Special Consultative Status with the United Nation's Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC, since 2012.

Cloonan's involvement stems from his leading role in its foundation – at the 1st World Conference on Music and Censorship in Copenhagen in 1998. Since he has been chair of its Executive Committee, providing strategic direction to the organisation's Copenhagen-based Secretariat. During its history Freemuse has published many reports on international music censorship and a right-based agenda for artists, as well as establishing a portal promoting and highlighting different national and international campaigns. Cloonan authored and acted as a key advisor on many of Freemuse's publications by identifying key issues, supporting and developing the commissioning of reports as well as assessing the credentials of likely writers and commenting on drafts of the reports. Freemuse reports are sent to the UN, international NGOs interested in issues of freedom of expression and various media outlets including the *NME*. Among its reports is: *Headbanging against repressive regimes: Censorship of heavy metal in the Middle East, North Africa, Southeast Asia and China* (Report 9, Freemuse, Copenhagen, 2010); ISSN: 1601-2127. ISBN 978-87-988163-3-1.104 pages; Cloonan acknowledgement pg 8) – available online at <http://freemuse.org>.

In December 2012 the programme manager of Freemuse, launched a new consultation with all UN General Assembly member states on cultural rights with these words:

The protection of artistic expression is just as important for the development of democracy as the protection of media workers. It is frequently artists who – through music, visual arts or films – put the 'needle in the eye' and strike a chord with millions of people, some of them unable to read and with no access to express themselves.

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The establishment of Freemuse, and its maturing as a trusted advocacy group with international reach, marked a major step forward in the recognition of musicians as having the same rights to freedom of expression as authors and other creators. Its work in recording, monitoring and lobbying on infringements of these rights has resulted in Freemuse's recognition as the leading NGO with expertise in issues of freedom of expression relating to musicians. Since its establishment Freemuse has recorded and publicised incidents of censorship and oppression of musicians internationally, published annual and country reports on freedom of music expression and lobbied against censorship. Recent Freemuse publicity (in June 2013) has focused on a Tunisian rapper sentenced to two years in prison, two Tibetan singers sentenced in China, and a Vietnamese musician fined for publishing 'content that goes against the policies and laws of the Party and the State'.

In July 2012, the Chief of UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs (ECOSOC) NGO Branch, formally conferred 'special consultative status' on Freemuse, stating:

We welcome the opportunity to work with you and will be happy to facilitate your participation in the work of the United Nations, in particular ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies.

UK: supporting live performance of music – The UK Licensing Act introduced in 2003 significantly increased levels of control over live music, requiring licences for most public and many private performances. The Act proved controversial and campaigners argued that the impact on small venues including pubs, community halls, schools etc was hugely detrimental as previously performances in such places involving one or two artists had been exempt from licensing requirements. There was sustained campaigning from groups such as the Live Music Forum – see www.livemusicforum.co.uk – established by independent live music campaigners, and other individuals supporting live music. The campaigning took a higher profile approach when the Department for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) released a 2010 report concluding that the live music sector in the UK was 'thriving'. Due to Cloonan's research expertise in live music and its regulation, he was one of three academics – the others being Alison Macfarlane, statistician at City University London and Cloonan's frequent collaborator Simon Frith, Edinburgh – cited by the Live Music Forum in a protest against what it saw as misleading claims by the DCMS that were intended to support the stringent licensing requirements. Cloonan, Macfarlane and Frith also signed a letter (18 June 2010) alongside the Live Music Forum to the UK Statistics Authority – see www.livemusicforum.co.uk/text/hbulletin310.htm – protesting misrepresentations by DCMS. Their position was that the sector was not 'thriving' and that this view had been used by the Local Government Association and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health to reject the idea of exempting smaller premises and events from licence requirements, as had previously been the case before.

The campaign was supported by Lord Tim Clement-Jones, the Liberal Democrats' cultural spokesperson, whose adviser on the issue was the head of the Live Music Forum. In March 2012 the Live Music Act proposed by Clement-Jones was passed by the UK Parliament, removing the need for a licence to play live music in most small venues, such as pubs and community halls.

Public and industry sector awareness of issues around live music in the UK has been enhanced by the presence of the industry information website Live Music Exchange – see livemusicexchange.org – co-founded by Cloonan and Frith. Live Music Exchange is an information hub for the live music industry. It provides blogs, newsletters, news digests, training, consultancy and mediation. It was initially funded by the AHRC as a follow-up project to *The Promotion of Live Music Project*.

A distinguishing aspect of Cloonan's research is its emphasis on collaboration. It is clear, however, that his unique expertise and long standing authority in relation to music policy and regulation has made a fundamental contribution to initiatives, campaigning bodies and public facing resources that have impacted on diverse user groups nationally and internationally – musicians experiencing censorship; the music industry in terms of both recording and live venues; and the general public

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interested and concerned in the powerful role that popular music plays both in their own lives and within the wider culture.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Testimonials from the following are available from the HEI:

- **International Campaigning**
 - Executive Director, Freemuse (statement available/contact details provided)
 - Independent live music campaigner (head of Live Music Forum) (contact details provided)
- **Industry stakeholders**
 - Policy Advisor, UK Music (contact details provided)
 - Chair, Scottish Music Industry Association; and, Director, Chemikal Underground records (contact details provided)
- **Impact on UK Policy**
 - Liberal Democrats' cultural spokesperson – on the value of Live Music Exchange (contact details provided)

Other evidence:

- The Live Music Forum Bulletin (1 July 2010) – [experts reject DCMS live music claims](#).
- The Live Music Forum – including a [letter to the UK Statistics Authority](#) by Cloonan et al asking that they investigate repeated use of inaccurate statistics by DCMS