

## TEQUILA! SOCIAL CONTROL OF GUEST MOVEMENT BY LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE ON CRUISE SHIPS

DAVID CASHMAN

School of Education and the Arts, Central Queensland University, Mackay, Australia

---

Live musical performance forms the core of the cruise ship entertainment product, contributing to the constructed cruise experience. However, unlike much of the cruise experience, musical performance does not directly generate income. Such performances instead act as semiotic guides informing them, for example, that the afternoon may be spent lazing by the pool, or that evenings are constructed as high-class theatrical events, or as party time in the disco. Further, such musical performances encourage guests to attend spaces that generate income (such as bars, lido deck, and casinos) and dissuade them from attending spaces where income is unlikely to be generated (such as their cabin). This research considers the implementation of musical performances on cruise ships using two data sources. Qualitative data is drawn from ship programs describing the actual placement of music. Quantitative data is drawn from interviews with industry personnel describing the intentions of music placement. It finds that periods when guests are on board, such as evenings and sea days, engenders most of the musical performance. This produces revenue that reverts to the ship. Certain genres occur at different times on different days, such as Caribbean/Latin American-themed music occurring on sea days, or cocktail piano occurring in the evening, further acting as semiotic guides. This constructed artistic product attracts people to undertake a cruise, makes a cruise memorable, and informs their experience of the cruise ship tourism product.

**Key words:** Live music; Cruise; Consumption

---

### Introduction

Strolling around a cruise ship in the evening, a guest cannot help but be struck by the amount of musical performances. On Lido deck, a Caribbean-themed band may be winding down its afternoon gig for the benefit of the last (possibly inebriated) sun worshippers. In the bar, a cocktail pianist

entices guests to take a seat and a drink. A string trio plays Pachelbel's Canon in the atrium, contributing a touch of class amid the casually dressed crowd. As the evening progresses, the production cast prepare to throw themselves into a postdinner high-energy production show themed around a generic concept such as "rock music" or "movie musicals." Later, the disco will start pumping out dance music

Address correspondence to David Cashman, School of Education and the Arts, Central Queensland University, Mackay, Australia.  
E-mail: [d.w.cashman@cqu.edu.au](mailto:d.w.cashman@cqu.edu.au)

Delivered by Ingenta

IP: 165.215.209.15 On: Wed, 11 Jan 2023 21:47:08

Article(s) and/or figure(s) cannot be used for resale. Please use proper citation format when citing this article including the DOI, publisher reference, volume number and page location.

encouraging guests to join in until the early hours of the morning. A jazz band may perform a late-night set in a smoky and dimly lit facsimile of a city jazz club. On the open deck, a Latin-themed band may embolden guests to salsa in the tropical night. Guests move from one location to the next as one band finishes and another starts. It is an exciting time to be aboard.

Music on a cruise ship is not organized by random chance. Musicians are purposefully placed around the ship to guide guests to certain spaces. As one cruise director put it, “you put musicians there so that people will go to see somebody, or you put musicians somewhere because you know that’s where people are going to go, therefore you want to attract them to stay out and buy a drink at the bar.” Behind the curtain is the man to whom we must pay no attention, who uses music to control guest motion around the ship, placing them at points where money moves from the pockets of guests into the coffers of the cruise ship.

Despite being a seemingly natural fit, tourism and music do not always coexist easily. Music can signify many concepts useful to the tourism operator, including culture and place (Atkinson, 1997; Gibson & Connell, 2003, 2005; Hudson, 2006) sophistication (Cashman, 2013), unrestrained exuberance, and hedonism (Brown & Geddes, 2007; Franklin, 2003). The tourism industry forms a potentially lucrative market for musicians (Gibson & Connell, 2005; Hughes, 2000; Kubacki, 2008; Minor, Wagner, Brewerton, & Hausman, 2004). However, tourism and music often work poorly together because of misunderstandings and poor practice. Tourism has a tendency to fall back on the personal musical tastes of managers rather than relying on the input of musicians for programming assistance. Musicians, on the other hand, can fail to understand or resent the commodification of their musical performance and its incorporation into a tourism product (Kubacki, 2008). Further, more tourism research considers recorded music (Hertan, 2010; Jones, 2009; Lin, 2009; Liu & Mao, 2006; Magnini & Parker, 2009) rather than live (Minor et al., 2004; Ng, 2005; Parker & Kent, 1986).

Although the cruise industry is not immune from such issues, music is generally integrated more closely and efficiently onboard cruise ships, partly as the result of the long history of music on

passenger shipping (Cashman, 2014). Over the last half century, the relationship between cruise lines and musicians has been honed and refined into an efficient, nearly Fordist, and extremely profitable model of providing standardized musical entertainment to a large number of guests. Musical performance on cruise shipping has become a commodified and controlled artistic product implemented with the express intention of maximizing cruise ship revenues.

### Existing Research

Two areas in particular inform and contextualize the role of music on cruise ships: the influence of music on purchasing behavior, and the nature of tourism experience. The former has a reasonable corpus within retail and tourism studies. Music has been found to significantly influence consumer behavior in retail, service, and experience environments. The other area, research into the nature of tourism experience, also has a reasonable body of work. Most tourist experiences are immobile, occurring in a single geographic place. However, some—including cruises—are mobile and encapsulated experiential cocoons. Several areas—including the performing arts—contribute toward the construction of this social and cultural bubble, effectively enclosing tourists in an environment fabricated for their diversion and encapsulation.

Music draws consumers to and retains them within spaces where they can partake in an experience. Music significantly it affects purchasing behavior within traditional physical (nononline) purchasing spaces. It is for this reason that music is played in restaurants, in shopping centers, and in spaces dedicated to commercial enterprise. Music has been found to affect the duration of dining/drinking (Milliman, 1986), shopping (Milliman, 1982), repeat business (Ryu & Han, 2011), and spend amount (Areni & Kim, 1993). Such behaviors are desirable to service and experience industries, such as tourism operators.

Any commercial advantage is eagerly seized by cruise lines that are keen to maintain high profitability in the face of increasing costs. Cruise line profits are not generated by the ticket price of a cruise, which barely covers operating costs (Vogel, 2009). Profits are generated by onboard revenue.

David Stanley, vice president for onboard revenue for Royal Caribbean, notes that “the single largest profit centre on our ships and most ships is gaming, closely followed by our bar operation” (Becker, 2006, p. 17). Music, in traditional purchasing spaces, draws guests to and retains guests in spaces where purchasing behavior occurs, and increases spend. This necessitates turning guests’ attention inward towards the ship rather than outward towards the destination, and musical performance is an ideal manner in which to do this.

The cruise vacation is an experiential, cultural, and economic tourist event occurring at a specific time within a mobile constructed environment, which forms the primary marketed destination. Pine and Gilmore’s (1999, 2011) economic model of the “experience” as a motivating force in touristic exchanges is an apt model for consideration of the cruise vacation. Customers are charged an “entrance fee” for time spent within the “experience,” comprised of individual events and activities that can be graphed on two axes: whether activities are passive or active and whether activities absorb or immerse participants. This results in four categories of event: educating events, entertaining events, aesthetic events, and escapist events (Fig. 1). In the center is the “sweet spot,” the target for an experience, where all considerations are equally implemented and consumed by guests.

The musical experience of cruise ships falls into Pine and Gilmore’s category of “entertainment,” yet musical performance can also be “escapist”

(when accompanying dance or live karaoke), “educational” (when providing commodified introductions to culture in the form of local shows), or “aesthetic” (when a themed performance caters to the attendance of certain guests, such as a jazz or classical performance). The centrality of music to the cruise product necessitates its flexibility.

### Method and Sample

This article draws on two datasets. One dataset is quantitative involving interviews with industry personnel. The other is quantitative comprising data on performance times, genres, and general performance data on 1,601 performances on cruise ships. These data sets complement each other and give a broader understanding of the phenomenon of shipboard music. Additionally, I was employed as a ship orchestral pianist between 2004 and 2007 before conducting academic research into music on cruise ships. This period of participant observation helps inform this research project.

Over several years, a series of 16 interviews were undertaken with cruise directors, musical directors, shore-side personnel, and musicians (as requested by some of the informants, anonymity is provided by identifying sources by their position and a number, for example, “Cruise Director 1”) on the nature of music on cruise ships. These interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a grounded-theory approach to identify themes within musical performance on cruise ships. Such data give

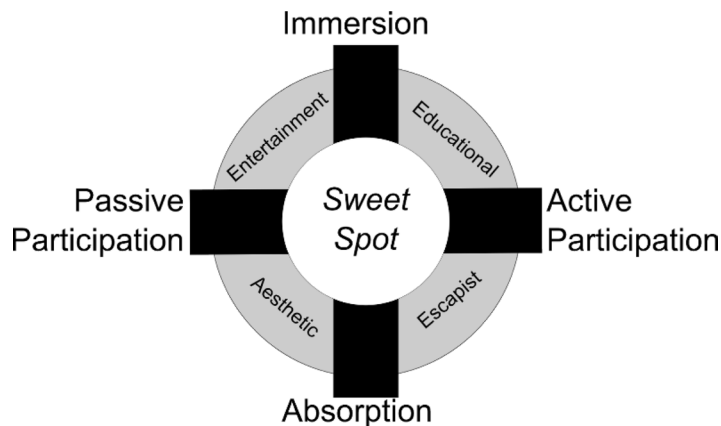


Figure 1. Pine and Gilmore’s (2011) model of the experience.

valuable insights into the rationale for practices. These interviews were considered from a content analysis stance. As some of these interviews were 2 or 3 years old, in order to maintain a fresh approach to the data, all interviews new and old were uniformly and freshly recoded and examined for data trends using qualitative data software. The resulting analysis was considered for its implications.

Augmenting this is an additional quantitative data set comprising the musical performance times from 30 cruise ships from 14 different lines comprising in total 91 days at sea. The 1,601 performances contained in these programs range across the gamut of cruise ship musical performances including guest entertainer shows, lido-deck performances by Caribbean- or Latin-themed bands, cocktail pianists, classical performances, and many others. The type, time, duration, and location of these performances form the quantitative data for this study.

### Music on Cruise Ships

Musical performance on cruise ships occurs in specific ways and at specific times according to a number of variables so as to produce the most efficient implementation of music. These variables include *temporal variables* (the type of day such as sea day, port day, overnight, and turnaround, and the time of day: morning, afternoon, evening, nighttime); *geographic variables* (where the performance is located on the ship); *genre variables* (the genre of music performed); and *demographic variables* (the type of cruise line and the demographic attracted by the cruise line).

#### *Temporal Variables*

Time during a cruise is accorded greater or lesser significance based upon the expected interaction of guests with the cruise environment. As an example, the “formal night” of a cruise invariably falls on a night at sea, when guests interact exclusively with the ship (as opposed to the distractions of the port), all money spent reverts to the ship, and high onboard revenue is expected. Cruise lines encourage guest adoption of high-status clothing such as tuxedos or evening dresses (and mandate it for crew), and special performances may be organized<sup>1</sup>. This period is

marked by high levels of musical performance. By way of comparison, cruise ships provide less musical performance and entertainment on the morning of port days. Some guests will stay on the ship and enjoy what there is, but others will go on a tour, or enjoy the amenities in port<sup>2</sup>. Music is thus planned according to the likelihood of guest participation and consequent spend.

*Different Types of Cruise Days.* A cruise vacation will encompass different types of “days” depending on the geographical location of and activities the ship. These include:

1. A sea day: a day spent entirely at sea.
2. A port day when the ship is in port during the day, and commonly leaves at night.
3. An embarkation day: the first night of the cruise, where a ship departs its homeport in the afternoon.
4. An overnight stay in port: a rare day where the ship remains in port overnight.

The approach to music varies by the type of day because of the differing possibilities of encouraging onboard consumption, and thus attracts unique performance schedules and amounts of performance (Fig. 2). Generally, the more opportunity there is for a cruise ship to create revenue, the stronger the reason for scheduling musical performances. Days when guests generate onboard revenue may be accorded special significance, as may certain times of the day. Cruise Director 4 describes their approach:

So on a port day I would do very few things onboard. . . . We'd do an afternoon trivia or maybe like a sport event on deck or a ping pong competition or something like that . . . it's going to be just a fun little thing; it's not going to be a big event. The turnaround day is where the ship goes into port . . . not everyone's there yet, so you won't ever really do anything until the sail away party kicks off, which is obviously when we start sailing. And then on an overnight, we would do some fun things on deck and do deck parties. But on an overnight, depending on the port, we often would have restrictions about noise. We couldn't go past ten or eleven o'clock in a certain port because the port authorities wouldn't allow it. I wouldn't do anything inside, all of my entertainment was outside. I'd do deck parties and big, fun events where everyone comes

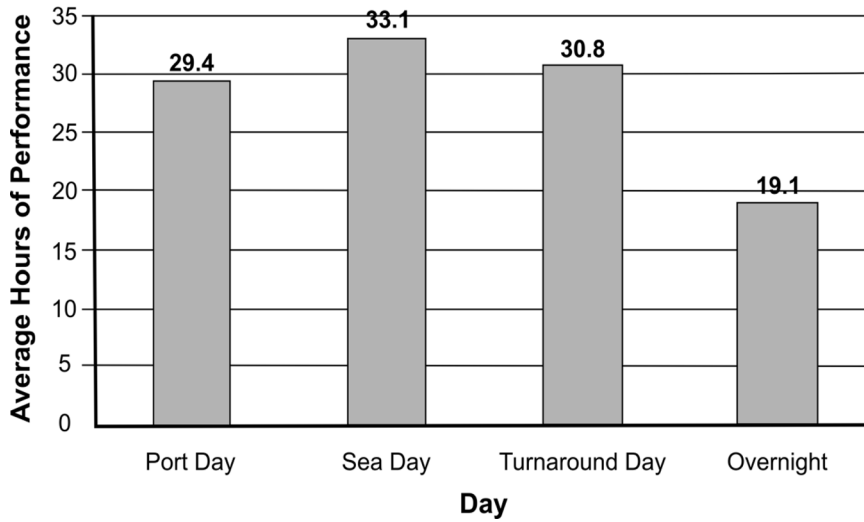


Figure 2. Average performance hours (entire sample, by day).

together and you dance on deck. . . . And then on a sea day, I think that straight after breakfast you've got like an 1.5/2 hours before lunch that there is like morning activities, afternoon I always did stuff by the pool, and it's ball games and events, and then, wine tasting sessions and also we tried some like interesting seminars and lecture stuff about a ship or about maritime.

The greatest amount of performance across the sample occurs on a sea day (33.1 hours scheduled on that day), when all entertainment occurs onboard and associated generation of onboard revenue reverts to the shipping line. This is an important day and is accorded a high status.

A turnaround day generates large amounts of performance (30.8 hours). When guests join the ship, they commonly enter in the ship's atrium. In order to maximize the impact of this entrance, cruise directors often schedule musical performance in the atrium while people are waiting to be shown to their cabins. In 13 of the 15 sampled turnarounds, a music performance took place at some stage during the embarkation process usually occurring in high-visibility areas such as the promenade, poolside, or the atrium. In 12 cases more than 2 hours of music was scheduled. After they board, guests are not permitted to disembark the ship, so performances occur around the vessel drawing guests to the open deck to hear the Caribbean-themed band or to the bars to listen to cocktail pianists.

Port days implement the third highest amount of music (29.4 hours), scheduling slightly less than turnaround days. Compared to sea days and turnarounds, guests spend less time onboard the ship and their fidelity in purchasing choice can be assured only after sailaway. Guests may be tired after being on tours or wandering around the port area, and are more inclined to retire in the evening. It is therefore important for cruise ship music to keep patrons in public areas in the evening by providing larger amounts of performance in a relatively short period of time. In fact, the three highest amounts of performance are from port days, including 63.25 hours of performance on a Costa ship and 53.25 on a MSC ship and 51 hours of performance on a Princess ship.

Overnight stays are rare due to the increased costs of berthing, as well as the consideration of reaching other ports in time (O'Neill, 2011). Such a stay also offers the ship no monopoly on income as guests may choose to spend their evenings in the port. For this reason, overnights are customary only on long cruises (such as world cruises) and in exotic ports. The majority of the cruise market, implementing a fast-tourism model of short and rapid cruises, rarely do overnights. Consequently, the sample contains only two overnights, too low to draw conclusions. However, both these cruises perform relatively low hours (19.3 and 19, respectively), numbers that accord with the thesis of this article. In the author's

experience, guests may return at some stage in the evening, but they will be tired from a longer than usual visit in the port and are more likely to retire quickly. In this case, there is little point in scheduling large amounts of music on a day when the ship may be all but deserted.

*The Time of Day.* As well as performances differing on different days, different times of the same day also attract different levels and genres of musical performance. Mornings, for example, will attract less performance than afternoons, simply because guests are waking up and breakfasting. The evenings attract the greatest performance because this is the time people are out and about, drinking and partaking in the ship offerings. Figure 3 graphs how many hours of performance are scheduled for each temporal hour in the sample on different days. The general trend is for small amounts of music to be scheduled from around 11 a.m., increasing from 5 p.m., and climaxing between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. before quickly declining to negligible levels after 1 a.m.

There are two notable deviations from this trend:

1. Turnaround days have slightly larger amounts of music scheduled between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m., the times when many passengers are embarking the ship. This declines after lunch and the boat drill (usually scheduled at around 4 p.m.) before increasing again after the 5 p.m. sailaway parties.

2. A greater number of afternoon performances are also scheduled on the sea day compared to the port day. This trend is in recognition of the greater numbers of guests that have to be entertained and guided on this day.

### *Geographic Variables*

Land-based performance spaces exist within urban (and sometimes rural) geography (Cohen, 2012; Kronenburg, 2011, 2012). However, cruise ships are mobile geographies that exist in the humanly uninhabitable ocean and performance spaces relate to the ship and not the physical environment of the ship. Such performance spaces are hyperreal and constructed social space, more akin to Augé's (1992) concepts of nonspace than regular performance space. Thus, considerations of geography are within the cocoon of the ship rather than the space inhabited by the ship.

Shipboard musical performance spaces exist to generate revenue from onboard revenue streams. Cruise Director 3 notes "music is used to push revenue. All that we do on ships is geared towards that." A story recounted by Cruise Director 1 brings this rationale into sharp focus.

There's another fantastic cruise director who I worked for for a year [as an assistant cruise director]. We were talking about another flyon act [this is an industry term for a guest entertainer], who was bitching and moaning about doing his show. And the three of us got together. The flyon act was moaning,

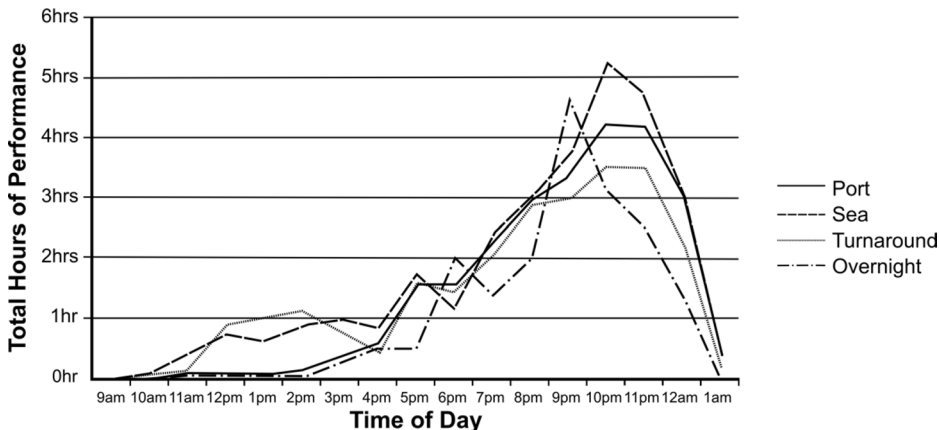


Figure 3. Hours of performance (entire sample, by day).



and [the cruise director] turned to the flyon act and asked “You do know why you’re here?” And the flyon act replied “No,” and the cruise director says “The reason you’re here to do this show is so that I can sell bingo cards before. And that’s it.” The flyon act was very put out by that.

Most regular performance spaces, including theaters and bars, the casino, lido deck, and specialty restaurants, generate high revenues. Standard dining rooms do not generate much consumption and employ less musical performance. Limited amounts of wine and alcohol may be consumed there, but food consumed is included in the “experience” and does not generate further revenue. Above all else, guests must be kept out of areas that do not generate consumption. Guests must, for example, be encouraged to stay out as late as possible, and discouraged from returning to their cabins, which are included in the “experience” and contribute only marginal revenue.

Due to standardized practice of maritime architecture combined with common music scheduling techniques, the purposes, structures, and sometimes even names of some these spaces are the same from ship to ship. All surveyed vessels contain a lido, a casino, an atrium, bars, a main theater, and a dance space. Many have a secondary theater, a dedicated piano bar, and a rock venue. Some have more specialized spaces, such as the “Queens Room” ballroom of Cunard Line vessels, the skating rink and aquatheater of Royal Caribbean ships, and the blues bars of Norwegian Cruise Line vessels.

The majority of live music occurs in four set areas on the ship: on the lido deck, in the main theater, on the promenade deck, and in the atrium void (usually a large multilevel void often going from a lower deck to the top of the ship). All surveyed ships have a main theater, which typically mounts performances at 8:30 p.m. and at 10:30 p.m. that form the focus of an evening’s entertainment. These performances are of two types:

1. High-energy, typically themed, song and dance performances known as “production shows” mounted by the onboard cast of singers and dancers.
2. Cabaret and variety performances by guest artists flown on for part of a cruise known as “guest entertainers.” These may be musical acts (singers or instrumentalists) or nonmusical

(typically comedians, ventriloquists, jugglers, and acrobats).

Such performances are atypical amid cruise music. Despite their dominance of onboard entertainment, theaters are, in practice, areas of middling consumption. As Cruise Director 4 noted “They do sell drinks during production shows and the cabaret shows, but drink service is kept to a minimum.” However, theater performances are important to the musical operation of a cruise ship. The theater attracts large numbers of guests who go there after dinner, at a time when they may otherwise retire for the evening, particularly if they are tired after a day in port. Cruise lines and cruise directors intend guests to leave the theater feeling uplifted and energized, ready to consume in other parts of the ship, and production shows and guest entertainer performances are consequently high energy and upbeat. Often the theater is close to the atrium. Onboard *Carnival Paradise*, for example, the atrium floor is located on Empress Deck 7 while the Normandie Theatre is just forward on Atlantic Deck 8 and Promenade Deck 9. Assuming the cruise director is scheduling appropriately, after the featured show (usually at 9:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.) guests emerge from the show on Atlantic Deck, walk past the Fun Shops (where they may linger to buy a Carnival “Ports of Call” mug), and emerge into the atrium. There they will see a lively performance taking place below them and will hear music from the piano lounge across the atrium. Guests accosted by such performances will consider staying up, perhaps placing a few bets at the casino or dancing in the disco—with associated consumption of beverages—before retiring for the night. To do this, they move along promenade deck to and the various bars and the casino. If they actually move to the atrium bar, they are a step closer to bed so the music must be lively. Cruise Director 1 asked:

Did we want musicians in the lobby at 9:45 [after the second production show] with a thousand people walking past them playing When I Fall in Love? Or, did we want them creating an atmosphere which kept people staying out, so an upbeat fun song. . . . We wanted upbeat, fun music so that when people were walking around, they wanted to stop out.

Thus, it is important that musical performances at such venues be exciting to attract the interest of guests and encourage them to move onward.

In other venues where consumption is key, performances must be engaging and interactive, ensuring that guests are retained in the location. Shoreside Manager 1 noted:

What we wanted to do was to continue to hire the most impactful lounge bands for our lounge, the most impactful string quartets for our piazzas and places we could take advantage of those, the most impactful elements for each venue that we were going to put them in and also then utilize our show bands and hire for that purpose specifically.

The distance between audience members and performers is minimized and performers selected for their upbeat music. Repertoire (which particularly emphasizes popular music of the youth of the cruise line demographic) is chosen particularly for its familiarity, safety, and accessibility.

#### *Genre Variables*

Certain genres are performed in certain shipboard locations for particular reasons. For example, the physical proximity of the atrium to the main theater is a significant tool in discouraging guests from retiring in the evening, but genre also plays a role in movement of guests. It would make little sense to schedule a cocktail piano set at 9 a.m., which would be too laid back. Cruise Director 4 described the range of genres and their intent:

So we had a string quartet. There was a really nice bar there that they would serve like some liquor coffees and cognacs and some cheese and things like that. They would play there because that was a classy thing where people want to get away from the bands and the noise and the partying. If we cruise in the Caribbean, obviously like a steel drum player or a Caribbean calypso kind of band. So they would do a lot of daytime on big stuff and then obviously the deck party. There used to be a four- or five-piece band where they would do like the dance steps and the standards, the waltzes and the cha-chas and the foxtrot and all that. And then we always had some guest singers and stuff that the showband could also cover and used to accompany them.

Of the 23 identified performance genres performed on a sea day in the sample, the top 10 accounted for 93% of all performances (Table 1, Fig. 4). Some repertoire in these genres overlap (e.g., Rock may appear in numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 shown in the table; Jazz may appear in 1, 4, and 6) and these genres may be considered performance genres defined by performance mode rather than being defined by repertoire.

A typical sea day on a cruise ship begins with the guests' breakfast. A sea day is usually preceded by a port day, and guests tend to rise late. Limited amounts of performance occur until around 11 a.m. when Caribbean-themed bands start playing on the lido deck encouraging guests to enjoy the recreational facilities of the pools and jacuzzis as well as the consumption opportunities at this location. Being music associated with island culture, Caribbean-themed music draws guests who may wish to lounge around the pool consuming rum-based beverages. There is a lull between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. as guests go for lunch, after which performance returns to previous levels, declining as the sun goes down. Latin-themed music, by contrast, receives little performance in the afternoon. However, both genres are performed at night as open-deck dance parties are held.

Considerations of performance by genre across the day brings a sense of the implementation of music in action on ships. Some prelunchtime piano sets occur in bars drawing those who may like to sit and watch the sea or scenery. As the Caribbean-

Table 1  
Top Ten Genres Performed on Sea Days (Entire Sample)

Genre	$n_{(\text{genre})}$	Total Performances (by Number)
1. Solo piano or guitar	389	24.36%
2. Live popular music	245	15.34%
3. Recorded popular music	164	10.27%
4. Evening show	154	9.64%
5. Classical performances	134	8.39%
6. Ensemble jazz	104	6.51%
7. Instrumentalist/vocalist	93	5.82%
8. Caribbean themed	80	5.01%
9. Latin themed	68	4.26%
10. Ballroom dance	55	3.44%
Total	1486	93.05%



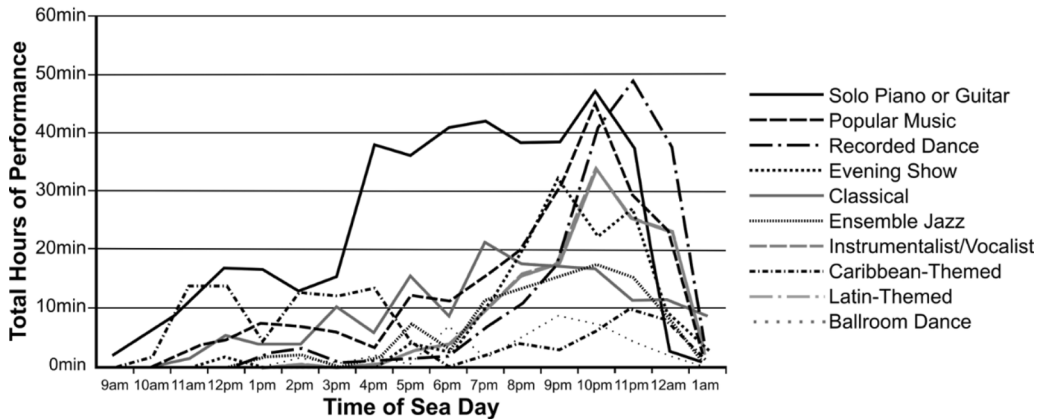


Figure 4. Hours of performance on a sea day (by genre).

themed performances decline, the number of cocktail sets increases, drawing guests to the bars for late-afternoon drinks. The dominant solo piano or guitar genre (the piano manifestation of which is regularly described in the daily programs as “cocktail” piano) becomes the dominant genre around the ship outstripping every other genre until late evening. This genre is easy to set up requiring only a piano (of which cruise ships have many) or guitar/amplifier and a single performer. It may be accompanied by backing tracks approximating the sound of an ensemble. A similar genre is the instrumentalist/vocalist in which a performer plays piano and sings often to backing track accompaniment. In contrast, this is exclusively an evening performance peaking between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. Most of these performances occur in the various bars of the ship (79.1%). Other venues include the atrium (12.2%), the café (3.3%), and the casino (2.7%). At around 8 p.m. and again at 10 p.m., performances of the evening show peak as these performances entice the by now possibly slightly inebriated guests to stay out. Popular music, both recorded and live, have relatively small amounts of performance increasing in significance after the evening show. Live rock performances increase from 6 p.m. peaking between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. Recorded dance music follows the same pattern as live performances an hour later. In the sample, 63% of recorded dance music occurs in the disco. Other locations include bars (21.5%) and lido deck (11%). By midnight, many genres are declining as guests finally retire. Sea days are usually

followed by port days and guests tend to retire earlier. Resultantly, ships are unlikely to schedule loudly amplified music. By 1 a.m., classical music is the dominant genre, the occasional string quartet, harpist, or pianist serenading the last guests as they retire for the evening. As musical performance declines in one location, it increases in another. By advertising the various performances, guests are encouraged to move from one location to the next as opportunities to consume increase and decrease.

#### Demographic Variables

The cruise industry is broken up into different sectors generally considered mass market “contemporary” cruising (such as Carnival Cruise Lines and Royal Caribbean International), “premium” cruising (such as Princess Cruises and Celebrity Cruises), and “luxury cruising” (such as Crystal and Silversea). Each attracts a different demographic and cruise lines are at great pains to cater to their own demographic. A passenger on a noisy and fun 3-day cruise to nowhere on Carnival will probably not enjoy a serene 10-day Alaskan voyage on Crystal and vice versa. Thus, the music must cater to a particular demographic.

At a certain level, music within these different sectors is implemented in a similar fashion: all have showbands, performance spaces, stages, production shows, bands, and so forth. A variation is in the amount of music created. Premium-sector ships produce the largest amount of music averaging

36.0 hours of entertainment per day in an average of 19.4 scheduled performances. The comparatively larger ships of the contemporary sector, capable of accommodating greater numbers of passengers and musicians, implement the comparatively lower 32.0 hours per day in 17.4 performances. The small ships of the luxury sector, unsurprisingly, implement 16.4 hours a day in 11.5 average performances. This market has far fewer musicians than the other sectors due to ship size. They consequently have fewer hours of performance.

Other variations in musical performance for the benefit of attracting a particular demographic are implemented by the cruise line rather than the sector. Cunard Line attracts ballroom dancers by its popular ballroom dance program in the Queens Room. Royal Caribbean International performs cut-down musicals. Holland America Line has its versatile showband the “HALCats,” which also performs as a dance band.

### Implications

What is remarkable about the musical product within the large and varied cruise market is not that it is different, but that it is so uniform across the industry. Moreover, it has remained so uniform for so long. The described live music on cruise ships has been utilized by many cruise lines since the 1960s.

When I have written or spoken on the music cruise product, I have sometimes felt like an apologist for the industry saying “look, this music product might be sometimes dated and cheesy, but it does work. It guides guests to places, gives them music to engage with, and employs musicians. It *has* worked well.” However, the industry is currently considering the cruise music product, and questioning how it can be improved. Carnival Cruise Lines, for instance, now has 30-minute rather than 50-minute production shows, to minimize the time guests are in a location where they can only buy one drink. They considered designing their newest class of ship, the Dream Class, entirely without a theater and putting in extra passenger cabins to increase revenue. According to Cruise Director 4, the cruise industry entertainment product

Is going through some changes now. . . . [Line redacted] is taking away the sports bar and piano

bar, they’re refurbishing that and opening it up to a dueling piano bar and it’s going to be called Billboard Live. They’ll have two dueling piano guys playing there. It’s actually endorsed by Billboard Magazine and on plasma screens all over, they’re going to have music trivia and things like that. They’re also renovating the sports lounge, that is going to be called Lincoln Center Stage after the Lincoln Center in New York, and they’re going to have legitimate [music] from New York City. . . . So the quality has like doubled. They’re getting . . . and I hate to say this in the end . . . real legit musicians that are not college students. They’re getting established ensembles. And the really key thing, it’s working really well for them.

### Music Director 2 notes:

They’re trying to really gear [music] towards younger guests. . . . Your job as MD is really not to create a vision for the company, your job is to listen to the people wanting to do it. It’s a tricky balance because it works for some itineraries, but it’s a fleet-wide change. The key is making the formula so it will work. And I guess they’re rationalizing it as, now look, our clientele is dying off, you’ve got to attract the younger clientele and so forth.

Despite the shakeup these changes will cause, some things will not change. Cruise Director 2 estimates that the current cruise ship showband format has perhaps 10 more years to run. The mainstay of the industry, the Filipino cover band, will almost certainly disappear if it has not already. However, these changes will not shake live music’s centrality to the cruise product, nor its capacity—as argued by this article—to draw guests to a certain location on the ship.

### Conclusions

The implementation of music on cruise ships is slick and efficient. Despite the occasional dull band, or poor band member, the model described has worked since the dawn of the modern cruise industry. In a cruise vacation, the cruise ship is considered the primary destination and passengers are retained onboard wherever possible. Music acts as the magnet both initially attracting guests to the ship and retaining them onboard during the cruise. In the first instance, music in advertising (some of it designed to replicate onboard music) promotes the cruise vacation as does popular cultural references to music and

the general expectation of music on a cruise. In the second instance, live music guides guests to locations of high consumption. This is most obvious on port days when small amounts of music are scheduled in the afternoon even though the ship is in port and guests have the option to be in port. The selection of music corresponds with the signs the cruise ship wishes to portray including Caribbean-themed music when the ship wants guests to relax in the sun, sophisticated cocktail piano when guests should be relaxing with a drink in the evening, and high-energy production shows to excite guests and keep them out and consuming in the evening.

There are, of course, critics of cruise ship music. Musicians may object to the excessive commercialization of their art (Cashman, 2012). Cruise line critics fairly object to industry working practices (Garin, 2006; Klein, 2002, 2005; Torres, 2010; Wood, 2000). However, as a commodified artistic product, cruise ship music is implemented efficiently, effectively, and in an integrated fashion. It encourages guests to consume, contributing to the profits of the cruise industry. It speaks to a broad cross-section of the cruise line demographic and effectively manages their engagement with the music and the cruise experience. Other areas of the tourism industry that deal with the “aural tourist” may consider this as a model of highly-effective management and implementation of a musical product within a touristic setting.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>It is worthwhile noting that in the last couple of years, some cruise lines, such as Azamara and Carnival, have begun to dispense with “formal nights,” replacing them with “smart casual.” Formal nights have always been something of a hard sell on Carnival. In the author’s experience of working on this line in 2004, some guests wore t-shirts printed with a tuxedo rather than the actual suit.

<sup>2</sup>Cruise lines would, of course, like to have all guests spend all their holiday cash on board the ship; however, for many it is the perception of a cruise vacation as “exotic” that draws them to the ship (Hung & Petrick, 2011), and it is the ports that create the exoticism.

#### References

- Areni, C. S., & Kim, D. (1993). The influence of background music on shopping behavior: Classical versus top-forty music in a wine store. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 20(1), 336–40.
- Atkinson, C. Z. (1997). Whose New Orleans? Music’s place in the packaging of New Orleans for tourism. In S. Abram, J. Waldren, & D. V. L. Macleod (Eds.), *Tourists and tourism: Identifying people with place* (pp. 91–106). Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Augé, M. (1992). *Non-lieux: Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*. Paris: Seuil.
- Becker, B. (2006). Onboard revenue takes centre stage. *International Cruise & Ferry Review*, 17–18.
- Brown, K. G., & Geddes, R. (2007). Resorts, culture, and music: The Cape Breton tourism cluster. *Tourism Economics*, 13(1), 129–141.
- Cashman, D. (2012). *Musicology and cruisicology: Music and cruise ship tourism 2003–2011*. Ph.D. Thesis, Southern Cross University, Lismore, Australia. Retrieved from <http://epubs.scu.edu.au/theses/298/>
- Cashman, D. (2013). Fabricating space: Postmodern popular music performance venues on cruise ships. *Popular Entertainment Studies*, 4(2), 92–110.
- Cashman, D. (2014). Brass bands, icebergs and jazz: Music on passenger shipping 1880–1939. *Journal of Tourism History*, 6(1), 1–15.
- Cohen, S. (2012). Live music and urban landscape: Mapping the beat in Liverpool. *Social Semiotics*, 22(5), 587–603.
- Franklin, A. (2003). *Tourism: An introduction*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Garin, K. A. (2006). *Devils on the deep blue sea: The dreams, schemes, and showdowns that built America’s cruise-ship empires*. New York: Plume.
- Gibson, C., & Connell, J. (2003). “Bongo fury”: Tourism, music and cultural economy at Byron Bay, Australia. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 94(2), 164–187.
- Gibson, C., & Connell, J. (2005). *Music and tourism: On the road again*. Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications.
- Hertan, R. R. (2010). *An analysis of the placement of music in Miami Beach hotels*. Retrieved from <http://digital.scholarship.unlv.edu/thesess dissertations/484/>
- Hudson, R. (2006). Regions and place: Music, identity and place. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30(5), 626–634.
- Hughes, H. (2000). *Arts, entertainment and tourism*. Oxford, UK: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Hung, K., & Petrick J. F. (2011). Why do you cruise? Exploring the motivations for taking cruise holidays, and the construction of a cruising motivation scale. *Tourism Management*, 32(2), 386–393.
- Jones, P. (2009). A “sound strategy” for intercontinental hotels. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 9(3), 271–276.
- Klein, R. A. (2002). *Cruise ship blues: The underside of the cruise ship industry*. Gabriola, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Klein, R. A. (2005). *Cruise ship squeeze: The new pirates of the seven seas*. Gabriola, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Kronenburg, R. (2011). Typological trends in contemporary popular music performance venues. *Arts Marketing: An International Journal*, 1(2), 136–144.
- Kronenburg, R. (2012). *Live architecture: Venues, stages and arenas for popular music*. London: Routledge.
- Kubacki, K. (2008). Jazz musicians: Creating service experience in live performance. *International*

- Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 20(4), 303–313.
- Lin, I. Y. (2009). The combined effect of color and music on customer satisfaction in hotel bars. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 19(1), 22–37.
- Liu, Z., & Mao, X. (2006). On the setting of the tourist hotels' background music. *Journal of Huangshan University*, 52–54.
- Magnini, V. P., & Parker, E. E. (2009). The psychological effects of music: Implications for hotel firms. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 15(1), 53–62.
- Milliman, R. E. (1982). Using background music to affect the behavior of supermarket shoppers. *The Journal of Marketing*, 46(3), 86–91.
- Milliman, R. E. (1986). The influence of background music on the behavior of restaurant patrons. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(2), 286–289.
- Minor, M. S., Wagner, T., Brewerton, F. J., & Hausman, A. (2004). Rock on! An elementary model of customer satisfaction with musical performances. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 18(1), 7–18.
- Ng, S. (2005). Performing the “Filipino” at the crossroads: Filipino bands in five-star hotels throughout Asia. *Modern Drama: World Drama from 1850 to the Present*, 48(2), 272–296.
- O'Neill, S. (2011, June 13). *Why cruise ships almost never stay in port overnight*. Retrieved from <http://www.budgettravel.com/blog/why-cruise-ships-almost-never-stay-in-port-overnight,11855/>
- Parker, G. A., & Kent, W. E. (1986). Utilizing live entertainment in hotels, restaurants and clubs. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 5(1), 13–22.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The experience economy: Work is theatre & every business a stage*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (2011). *The experience economy*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Ryu, K., & Han, H. (2011). New or repeat customers: How does physical environment influence their restaurant experience? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(3), 599–611.
- Torres, J. A. (2010, March). Immigrants are dominant work force on cruise ships. *Florida Today*, T2.
- Vogel, M. P. (2009). Onboard revenue: The secret of the cruise industry's success? In A. Papathanassis (Ed.), *Cruise sector growth: Managing emerging markets, human resources, processes and systems* (pp. 3–15). Wiesbaden, Germany: Gabler.
- Wood, R. E. (2000). Caribbean cruise tourism: Globalization at sea. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2), 345–370.

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.