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Chapter 9

Noise, Power Electronics, and the No-Audience Underground: Place, Performance and Discourse in Leeds' Experimental Music Scene

Theo Gowans, Phil Legard and Dave Procter

Introduction

Four men in pig masks stalk the dark cellar of the Royal Park pub. Harsh electronic tones and churning high-volume feedback fill the small space. One pig shrieks the refrain 'DO YOU LIKE THE FILM BILLY ELLIOT?' The delivery is both absurd and menacing. A genuine pig's head is pulled from a plastic bag. One of the man-pigs clumsily rolls over it. The others attempt to smash it with a sledgehammer and ignite it with lighter fluid. Eventually the snout combusts, and the noise churns on. Moments after the performance ends the landlord storms in: 'Alright everybody, you've got about 30 seconds to get out me pub - I'm not having this shit in here!'

This appearance by the group Smell & Quim notoriously opened and closed the Termite Club's 2007 'Deaf Forever' festival within ten minutes of the event beginning. This was a performance of 'noise'. Tracing a lineage from the Italian Futurists through to the industrial music of the 1970s (Taylor 2016), noise describes a genre of music usually with no conventional instrumentation, structure, rhythm, or tonality, which instead relies on sheer volume and visceral confrontation to make its impact. From the mid-1990s to early 2000s, noise – and its even more aggressive sub-genre 'power electronics' – became synonymous with the types of uncompromising music promoted by Leeds' Termite Club, which served as an influential promoter of experimental music between 1983 and 2010.

This chapter presents two practitioner accounts by co-authors Theo Gowans and Dave Procter concerning place - real and virtual - and the contemporary Leeds noise scene. These accounts are prefaced by an analysis of the present scene's heritage from The Termite Club:

particular attention is paid to how discourses around the ethos of noise in Leeds have shifted since the Termite Club ceased its activities, primarily as a consequence of the venues in which these performances now take place.

No Bigots: Shifting Venues and Shifting Discourse

Leeds has a long-standing reputation as the home of a vibrant experimental and improvised music scene owing to the historic influence of The Termite Club. Founded in 1983 by guitarist Paul Buckton and saxophonist Alan Wilkinson, 'the Termite' began as an eclectic promoter of left-field music, filling bills with indie bands and more experimental fare, before dedicating itself to the promotion of free-jazz, improvisation and other self-described 'difficult' musics (Graham 2016: 18, see also Atton 2012, Foist 2016). Although many Termite gigs of the 1980s took place upstairs at the Adelphi Hotel, the Termite never had a permanent home in Leeds, describing itself as a 'moveable feast of improvised and related musics' (Termite Club 2001). Despite the music being self-described as niche, the Termite Club found a healthy audience particularly with Leeds' student population, drawn from two universities and the music and arts colleges, with events regularly promoted and reviewed in the *Leeds Student* paper throughout the 80s and 90s.

Amongst the music promoted by the early Termite Club were occasional representatives of the UK's underground noise scene, including Mike Dando, *alias* Con-Dom. In 1992, Dando relocated from the midlands to Leeds, becoming a prominent organiser for the Termite from 1995 (Foist 2016). Although the Club had promoted occasional noise gigs during the 1980s, the idea of the Termite as Leeds' *de facto* home of noise became firmly embedded over the decade in which Dando headed the committee, owing to his own associations with the global noise scene.

Foist (2016) has provided a detailed overview of the Termite Club and its place in the development of the British underground noise scene between 1983 and 2010, which is

supported by significant oral testimony from organisers and participants. As a corollary to Foist's work, this section focuses on the discourses surrounding noise in Leeds and their transformations from the mid-2000s to present.

Combining harsh electronic timbres, punishing feedback and confrontational performances, noise and its sub-genre power electronics took the abrasive sound, and the oppositional and antinomian stances of prior industrial music to new extremes. Although 40 years has elapsed since Philip Best of power electronics group Whitehouse released the seminal compilation *White Power*, debate continues around the meanings and motivations of noise and power electronics symbolism whose use of visual and lyrical imagery relating to serial killers, death-camps, sexual abuse, fascism, torture, racism, misogyny, deformity and abjection are well chronicled – as are attempts to rationalise or justify it (Bailey 2013). The concept of the noise artist 'holding a mirror up to the sickness of society' has often been invoked (Blenkarn 2019: 120, see also Stevenson 2016, Candey 2016), while Throbbing Gristle's assertion that taboo images could be utilised as part of an agenda for cultural deprogramming also persisted in noise subcultures (Bailey 2013: 52). Dando himself echoed this latter position:

Confrontation is the chosen method of education. Con-Dom generates brutality, pain, fear, hate (the instruments of control), *so that the existence of the forces of control may be acutely felt, experienced and recognised*. The aim is to provoke resentment / confusion / ambivalence, to upset and challenge conditioned expectation, to shatter preconceptions. [...] *The creation of blankness may be a necessary step towards enlightenment*. (Dando in Taylor 1992, italics added for emphasis)

Other Termite regulars did not necessarily adopt justifications as cerebral as those of Dando. Davy Walklett of Smell & Quim considers the adolescent shock value of power electronics to be thoroughly tongue-in-cheek: 'It's so important to realise and enjoy the

ludicrous absurdity of guys screaming filth and hate-speak over washes of electronic shite' (Walklett, in Grady 2016: n.pag). Whether apologists for power electronics invoke appeals to enlightenment or absurdity, we can bracket such defences of the indefensible with Keith Khan-Harris' concept of reflexive anti-reflexivity (2007: 151), which describes how members of subcultural scenes knowingly use offensive discourses, while simultaneously distancing themselves from their wider cultural and social implications.

Of his time as the coordinator of the Termite Club Dando said: 'We were there to provide a platform for anything extreme [...] I don't care if people pillory me for that' (quoted in Foist 2016: n.pag.). The anti-reflexive creed of 'anything extreme' was explicit during the 2004 Termite Festival held at East Street Arts: a studio space situated in an old mill building on the outskirts of the city centre. The extreme ends of the political spectrum were represented by Nocturne, a French martial-industrial project whose performance incorporated recordings of Nazi speeches and footage from concentration camps, and Militia: a group of eco-anarchists from Belgium who used junk percussion and footage sourced from animal liberation activists. Bradford zine *Idwal Fisher* recalled Nocturne's humourless performance as underwhelming to those who sought an absurd spectacle in their extreme music:

[...] a French bloke called Nocturne who played for an hour in a beret to a totally bored and uninterested audience. A drunk Walklett shouts in his ear "You're dying a fucking death mate" which has absolutely no effect on him whatsoever. (*Idwal Fisher* 2014: n.pag.)

Dando retired from organising gigs in the wake of the 2006 Termite Festival, which failed to secure Arts Council funding and swallowed the Club's finances. Experimental musician Melanie Ó Dubhshláine assumed the role as head of the committee, organising shows for the subsequent three years and marking a shift in the Club's discourse around 'extreme' music.

The 2007 Deaf Forever festival at Royal Park Cellars was indicative of a shift in the types of noise presented by the Termite Club: acts using explicitly right-wing aesthetics were absent, although visceral performers were still present, such as Justice Yeldham who performed using amplified broken glass placed in his mouth. Performers combining noise and absurdity were also represented, such as Filthy Turd, Kylie Minoise, Puke Brigade, The Jim Morrisons and Dogliveroil. Although the opening performance by Smell & Quim resulted in the swift cancellation of the festival at its original venue, Deaf Forever resumed hours later at The Common Place: a collective-run social centre associated with Leeds Action for Radical Change, situated on the edge of the city centre in what was once a pork pie factory.

In early 2011 Common Place collective member Lynn Watson was identified as an undercover police officer, tasked with infiltrating environmental justice campaigns (Lewis, Evans and Wainwright 2011). This led to the venue closing and re-launching as Wharf Chambers toward the end of the same year. While only a few Termite events had taken place at the Common Place, Wharf Chambers would become a significant venue for the post-Termite Leeds noise scene.

Despite attempts to raise the Termite's public profile through collaborations with Leeds Ladyfest and Light Night events in 2007, the Club's Arts Council funding applications were consistently rejected and Ó Dubhshláine declared the Termite Club 'mothballed' in a November 2010 letter to *The Wire*. Although this instigated a fallow period for the Leeds experimental music scene, a generation of younger performers such as Feghoots (Pete Cann), Guttersnipe and Territorial Gobbing (Theo Gowans) began regularly organising gigs and one-day festivals from 2013. These events were held at Wharf Chambers and the collectively run rehearsal space Chunk in Woodhouse, which became the primary venues for post-Termite experimental music in the city.

Both Wharf Chambers and Chunk follow safer spaces agreements. Hill and Megson (2020) have highlighted the proliferation of these policies in feminist, DIY and punk spaces over the last decade, and cite the policies of both Wharf Chambers and Chunk in their research. While Wharf Chambers' policy concentrates on how to tackle occurrences of violence, prejudice and harassment, Chunk explicitly enacts an exclusive policy, summed up by the inclusion of the words 'no bigots' on many of their event posters (see Figure 9.1):

We will also try to ensure that groups with harmful political positions will not be asked to participate in our events [...] essentially this means no bigots. If you feel that something has slipped through the net, please let us know. (Chunk, quoted in Hill and Megson 2020: 68-69, italics added for emphasis)



Figure 9.1. Poster for an experimental music event at Chunk, 14 November 2019. Courtesy of Theo Gowans.

A consequence of the association between the post-Termite experimental scene and venues with safer spaces policies is that the demographics for both performers and audience have diversified with a significant number of prominent female performers (both cis- and transgender) in what was previously a male dominated environment. The use of reflexive anti-reflexivity to justify promoting groups with problematic political stances and imagery has also been deprecated as a result. In fact, many performers are vocally opposed to earlier power electronics discourse and its potential for harm. In *The Wire*, Urocerus Gigas of Guttersnipe, described a moment when she confronted the use of fascist imagery beyond the Leeds scene:

[The Adolf Hitler World Tour T-shirt man] was just another clueless privileged noise bro who thought it would be funny to shock people. I told him that [...] he was either a fucking idiot, or a fucking asshole, or both.

Several women from the audience, one of whom was Asian, came up to me afterwards to tell me they had also taken serious offence [...] it is terrifying, engaging in a confrontation with some dude [...] who, for all you know, might follow you out of the venue and assault you. (Gigas, in Guttersnipe 2018: 32)

The diversification of performers and audience within the Leeds noise scene, and its tacit adherence to the ethos of safer space agreements does occasionally encounter opposition from representatives of the wider UK noise and power electronics scene who still follow the anti-reflexive ethos. The controversies surrounding Matthew Bower, a Yorkshire-based noise-rock guitarist who regularly played Termite gigs between the mid-90s and early-2000s are illustrative of this. In 2019 Bower provoked controversy when his band Skullflower shared a bill with Bizarre Uproar at Leeds venue Temple of Boom. Bizarre Uproar is the project of Finnish noise artist Pasi Markkula, who also performs as the explicitly racist and

misogynistic Xenophobic Ejaculation. The gig, organised by Scottish noise musician William Watts, was also intended to include Hal Hutchinson's Zyklon SS project, although the presence of Markkula alone caused a significant response. Rob Hayler, a former Termite Club organiser and performer, tweeted:

Oh FFS! Just somehow lost a 14 tweet draft thread about Bower, that Bizarre Uproar show [...] etc. In summary: 1. Skullflower review deleted from radiofreemidwich, 2. NAZI PUNKS FUCK OFF. (Hayler 2019: n.pag)

Controversy surrounding Bower also emerged the following month when the London-based Raw Power festival cancelled his appearance after attention was drawn to imagery associated with Nazism on Bower's personal blog (Miller 2019), prompting discussions that echoed wider societal discourses on the so-called Culture War. The following exchange is illustrative:

Commenter: This scene seems to have been infiltrated by very "safe" people when it should always fly in the face of it - the world isn't utopian and we are lucky to be involved in a broad mix of sounds and people who understand this.

Respondent: Safe people? Or people who feel the need to challenge right wing etc views? Is it still considered edgy - or the opposite of safe - to trade in the same old tropes: totalitarianism, nativism, yadda yadda yadda? (Anon. 2019: n.pag.)

A recurrent suggestion that 'safe' people have infiltrated a scene implies that for many the anti-reflexive discourse of power electronics persists beyond the tight-knit Leeds noise scene, evoking a nostalgia for an antinomian imaginary that posited extreme musics as 'dangerous', despite their performance to a homogenous audience where any implied

resistance was itself performative. The shift in discourse within the Leeds scene itself, variously enacted through the policies of the venues central to the scene, Ó Dubhshláine's tenure with the Termite Club and shifting cultural values in the present generation of noise musicians, indicates that performers leveraging an anti-reflexive ethos to justify the language and imagery of hate are currently unlikely to find a platform within the spaces that host the majority of experimental music events in the city.

Beyond Venues: Noise Walks and Public Space

While Wharf Chambers and Chunk provide a stable home for the post-Termite noise and experimental music scene, unconventional music has a tradition of escaping into public spaces, for example Lol Coxhill's 2004 tour conducted from a skip, or Sophie Cooper's 2017 'Dial-a-bone' performances from an old phone box (Bath 2017).

Leeds-based noise musician Dave Procter had his first encounter with noise at the Termite's 2007 Deaf Forever festival. Subsequently he became active in the post-Termite noise scene through his own project (Legion of Swine), regular 'difficult music' shows (Hogwash), occasional festivals (Swinefest) and collective events beyond gig spaces, known as noise walks. This section presents Dave Procter's account of these noise walks, and the artistic, social and political implications of noise music displaced from private spaces (e.g. performance venues) into what are ostensibly public spaces:

During the 2010s, my own performance practice was developing and I wanted to test ideas in non-traditional spaces: specifically spaces that were outdoors. Noise and experimental music shows usually take place in squats, venues, houses – the same places other types of music are performed in. Inspired by the Hamburg noise collective Kommerzbow, I wanted to try other approaches. Kommerzbow had subverted the idea of "sound walks", where people follow a specific route and discover or rediscover the urban soundscape. Their idea was to add their own voices

to that soundscape via the use of noise-making gadgets, human and non-human, as part of a mobile intervention into Hamburg's audio panorama.

Hayler (2015: n.pag.) has described post-Termite Club Leeds and similar experimental micro-scenes around the UK as comprising what he calls a No-Audience Underground: a term that describes a DIY ethos in which the audience is highly likely to be comprised of fellow musicians. My Leeds Noise Walks took the concept of the No-Audience Underground above ground - inviting anyone to play, and any observer to cross over from audience to performer. I wanted to try three different parks on weekday evenings in August 2015 and advertised for willing collaborators on social media with two rules only – '(1) if you turn up, you can perform (2) if you don't perform, you audio/video record and review'.

My decision was to perform as my noise act Legion of Swine with whoever showed up to participate. Legion of Swine is a playful, non-verbal communicative pig-man hybrid, who encourages collaboration by hand signals and squeals/grunts. It was important to create something visually appealing and absurd to attract people: a pig-man hybrid consisting of latex pig-head-on-lab-coat-clad-human seemed a possible way to at least stir curiosity, and an echo of Smell & Quim's notorious performance – minus the implied malevolent threat of violence (see Figure 9.2).

What was the point in these noise walks? Was it to provoke spontaneity in art production, dissemination and participation? Was it a mechanism to stretch performance creativity to new areas? Both of these are valid questions to an extent. My main intention was to repurpose and reclaim public space for spontaneous artistic performances. Public space in many so-called democracies is being slowly but surely sectioned off, commercialised and privatised. My ambition was to create something that fought back against the passivity offered by the market: to create

something that costs nothing and encourages active participation and imaginative use of public space. If we put it on, (maybe) they will come.

The first noise walk took place in Burley Park, starting and ending at the bandstand – we will return to this place later in the text. Legion of Swine was joined by one collaborator, who also filmed the process. 30 or so joggers seemed unconcerned that this was a “noise walk and there was no need to run” and limited their interaction. Several dogs showed a passing interest in the pig as he completed a circuit around the park and tennis players asked ‘Mr Pig’ where he was going. The performance finished after around 15 minutes and we left the park to reflect.

The second noise walk took place a week later on Woodhouse Moor (Hyde Park) with a different collaborator in tow. The duo performed both on the move and statically. An interesting interaction occurred when the pair were approached by two members of a religious order who were intrigued by what was taking place. We explained our ideas and processes and our wish to create art spontaneously and to encourage others to join in and interact. Our visitors used some of the equipment we had for a while and went on their way. At the end of the performance it became clear that there is potential for participation if something is taking place. People (maybe) want to join in and be involved, even in an art form that they may not have previously known about or appreciated.

We would test this idea the next day on the final Leeds leg in Meanwood Park. This time with another new collaborator and a lot of homemade electronic noise making devices. Meanwood Park was fairly busy that day, especially with people walking dogs. Our noise making activities alerted the hounds and they pulled their owners towards our party. The dogs seemed really enthusiastic about the sound and the performance, but their owners definitely weren't. These humans would not be asking questions on contact microphones, 3W amps and feedback loops. It struck me

at this point that this was the one occasion on the three walks where there seemed to be actual animosity towards what we were doing. Nothing was said, but the speed and intensity of trying to withdraw their animals and their facial expressions told a story – that we should not be doing this in a park, or near/in ‘their’ space.



Figure 9.2. Meanwood Park Noise Walk. Courtesy of Dave Procter.

Whilst Leeds has many great areas of green, natural space, it is also a city dogged by traffic pollution and the lack of any properly integrated public transport system, with the local bus service provided by FirstBus being nicknamed ‘WorstBus’ by many long-suffering residents. Becoming bored with the lack of punctual services and annoyed at the perpetually increasing price of a single ticket to town I started walking the 3.5 kms or so from my home at Burley Hill to the city centre, but found following the same route uninspiring and unhealthy because of the roads. I began walking along the Leeds-Liverpool canal instead, which took longer, but seemed healthier and

pleasant on the eye, especially after the work on restoring the towpaths and cleaning the canal area over the prior decade. There is an impressive collection of different types of bridges and viaducts crossing the canal between Armley Ridge Road, where I joined the towpath, and the [Leeds] railway station, which is more or less the terminus of the canal.

This gave rise to an idea for public performance using the acoustic properties of the bridges and viaducts as part of the creative process. *Canal Bridges of Noise* took place over May and June 2016. Again, collaborators were requested on social media and suitable spaces were chosen for performances. A few gatherings took place with different performers attending each time. A favourite recording space was bridge 225H just outside Leeds railway station. This bridge has many rail tracks running over it, reverberating sound through the concrete and steel and contributing to any sound being created by performers beneath. Many people stopped to listen and to ask questions about the performances. The second event at midsummer by the stone bridge 221A near Kirkstall Bridge attracted several passers-by to watch. Further events were planned, but these quickly developed into the next project, which responded to tumultuous political events.

After the Brexit vote in summer 2016, I spent some time wondering what would happen next, both for myself and the wider country. The split in the Leave/Remain vote was almost reflected in Leeds, but in the opposite direction. There were, and still are, divisions in UK society widened by the flag-waving nihilism of the current government. Buoyed by ongoing opposition to Brexit and responses to the austerity politics of the Right, I wanted to create something regular and that would bring people together: collective live performance in public, free of market considerations with all welcome to watch and perform. This led to the equinox and solstice set of concerts starting with *Drone for the Spring* in March 2017 at the bandstand in Burley Park. These are still taking place now in Leeds (reinstated under Covid conditions in

midsummer 2021 by Theo Gowans and others) and with my SEMF (Svenska Experimentell Musik och Film) collective in Värmland, Sweden in autumn 2021 in the park near the flat where I recently relocated.

Noise disrupts, but can also be welcoming. These projects have similar underlying ideals: encouraging collaboration, creativity, participation, nonsensical practice and performance and unusual experimentation. Earlier noise musicians often put their lack of conventional musicality at the service of opposing hegemonic morality through anti-reflexive positioning. The contemporary No-Audience Underground perspective simply asks a willingness to have a go, make noise and participate with no bar to entry, providing an alternative and potentially liberating experience.

Beyond Physical Space: Stream It Yourself

Dave Procter imagined the potential for noise and the No-Audience Underground to enact a surreal, utopic vision of a liberated anti-capitalist space. Utopia, of course, can be literally rendered as 'no place', which could equally apply to the virtual spaces that the micro-scenes associated with the No-Audience Underground found themselves in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most musicians in DIY scenes do not rely on revenue from performances and music royalties for their primary income, usually producing cultural goods for little or no remuneration (Threadgold 2018), with ticket profits for gigs usually being passed to any touring performers (Bealle 2013). Although the financial stakes of participants in the No-Audience Underground may be lower than those of performers whose primary income depends on paid performances, the scene still runs in a state of terminal financial precarity as a consequence of its DIY ethos. While the COVID-19 lockdown measures of 2020 had a multitude of implications for live music in general, the Leeds noise underground was able to sustain itself despite the limited assets of its participants. Here, Theo Gowans gives an

account of his experience translating gigs at Wharf Chambers and Chunk into virtual spaces as a consequence of lockdown:

The switch to virtual gigs was almost immediate once lockdown had been introduced in the UK. While I'd been organising noise and weird music gigs in Leeds for the last few years, the transition of No-Audience Underground logic to online gigs was a chaotic and slightly awkward one. As far as I'm aware I was one of the first promoters in the UK to organise an online virtual gig once Covid measures were introduced. I had arranged a gig for David Liebe Hart (a US musician and comedian who was touring the UK) on the 18th of March. However, with lockdown introduced we had to organise an alternative. David had his entire UK tour cancelled and I'd refunded all the pre-ordered tickets. I was symptomatic at the time, but, between myself and a team of friends, sets by each of the acts were filmed either at Wharf Chambers or from their houses. These were then streamed the next evening and people were encouraged to donate online to cover David's losses from the other cancelled shows. Twitch.tv, a website predominantly for streaming games enabled us to show these videos, along with a set by Petronn Sphene filmed at home (to replace their planned Guttersnipe set at the gig), and a live chat where anyone with a Twitch account could comment. Overall we had 810 people attend the gig. This figure was a tenfold increase on those who would have attended the gig in person, and people both across the UK and globally were able to watch. David Liebe Hart is certainly a better-known figure than most noise musicians but it's a clear example of the possible reach granted through streaming, compared to the 50 to 100 people I was expecting based on ticket sales.

Having our hand forced and streaming a gig through necessity showed that it was a more rewarding experience than I would have presumed. Of course this wasn't isolated to Leeds: within the same week fellow noise artists and organisers were hosting similar events of their own, such as Isolated Mass hosted by Kerry

Hindmarch in Sheffield and the TOPH Housebound series by The Old Police House in Newcastle. After the success of the David Liebe Hart stream I decided to continue using this arrangement with a series of virtual gigs called *Heinous Whinings* as a way to replace other booked gigs throughout the spring and summer which I'd had to cancel. This involved asking artists to produce pre-recorded video sets that I would then stream on Twitch every Saturday night.

I hosted 13 of these gigs initially running from 28th March to 11th July 2020. Pre-recording allowed flexibility for people to prepare and produce their sets while avoiding the logistics and demands of live streaming. It expanded the possibility of participating acts from anywhere in the world without time zone or accessibility issues, although most acts were UK and Europe based, with many being regulars at Leeds noise shows specifically. Additionally *Heinous Whining* was able to host sets from acts in Mexico, New Zealand, the USA, Canada & Australia, such as Arboles Mentirosos, The Doll, Crank Sturgeon, Brian Ruryk and Justice Yeldham. In many ways the organisational demands of virtual gigs were similar to what had come before, though the event's requirements had dramatically changed.

Audiences fluctuated but we had between 30 and 90 viewers at a time, with viewers from all over the world on both the initial streams and the archives on YouTube. This immediately felt distinct from the experience of gigs prior: though it's hard to state statistics as a whole, in my experience of promoting and touring both the UK and Europe turnout for DIY noise shows would normally be between five and thirty punters, or for all-dayers and more well-known acts, maybe 50, though these were notable exceptions rather than the norm (Hayler, 2015). This was probably the most immediate notable difference, though an obvious consequence of the untethering of the event from a specific place. The momentum for virtual gigs within the noise community persisted and through the spring and even writing now, in October 2021, virtual gigs are still happening and some spaces (such as Wharf Chambers) offer

hybrid livestreaming gigs from the venue on their own Twitch channel. Many of the in-person noise gigs I've organised or played since lockdown restrictions lifted have been streamed simultaneously, with viewers internationally being able to engage with what is happening in Leeds.

In general the No-Audience approach to music integrates with virtual platforms pretty seamlessly. The community aspect to participation in the No-Audience Underground was demonstrated to be of more importance than any sense of professionalism within the content itself. Videos varied between edited green screen footage and animation, to unedited sets filmed straight onto people's phones. Most viewers of these streams were themselves contributors to other streams or at least creatively involved within the 'scene'. Of course the immediacy and indeterminacy of performance within a physical space disappears due to the temporal and physical divide between the pre-recorded videos and the live streamed engagement, but this did little to hinder what makes the No-Audience Underground a self-sustaining community.

Conclusion

Although noise and power electronics was not the sole domain in which the Termite Club operated, the persistence of the underground noise scene is the most visible legacy of Dando and Ó Dubhshláine's efforts to establish Leeds as a hub for 'difficult' music. The subsequent concentration of the noise scene from a wide variety of venues during the Termite Club's heyday, to a smaller number of venues with explicit safer spaces policies does not necessarily mean that noise in Leeds itself has become 'safe' in a pejorative sense. Aspects of anti-reflexive practice are still present, for example in the use of pornography by acts like Filthy Turd (Mooney and Wilson 2013), or Pete Cann's work as Half an Abortion. The lower-hanging fruits of Nazism, violent misogyny and racial hatred may be shunned, but the volume and intensity of the performances remains unchanged.

Dave Procter's noise walks and the embrace of gigs in online spaces during the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 query what constitutes performance space beyond established venues. Theo Gowans' decision to move to hybrid livestreaming gigs can also be read in accord with the safer spaces and accessibility concerns of the venues like Wharf Chambers who host the performances. The continuing opportunities to attend Leeds noise gigs both physically and online through platforms such as Twitch also echoes the conclusion of Harris (2021) that lockdown measures assisted the enculturation and legitimisation of the 'online stage'. However, the use of platforms such as Twitch, and the wider underground scene's reliance on Bandcamp to distribute and sell music suggest that contemporary DIY has an entangled relationship with the corporate technological sphere: one which may be beneficial in terms of increased accessibility, while the reliance to which may antagonise the DIY ethos. Looking beyond this brief chapter, the question of how these tensions will manifest in the discourses surrounding the noise scene suggests an interesting avenue for further research.

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