A Thousand Gigs

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Every single day, all over the world, human beings perform music in front of other human beings. This happens in public and private areas, large and small, in what is probably the most widespread communal cultural activity that we engage in, and yet almost none of it is recorded. There is some information available about famous performances by major artists which occasionally includes setlists, but even this is patchy and reliant on enthusiastic fans, and the fact that it is concentrated on such a tiny subset of performances ignores the vast majority of what actually goes on.

This dataset provides a tiny snapshot of some of this other activity. It contains details of the one thousand gigs I performed between 3 February 1988 and 2 February 2023, derived mostly from the database used to run my website, www.mjhibbett.co.uk, with the addition of some private data held about merchandising sales at gigs. My hope is that providing this data for analysis will encourage others to do the same, and thus start to provide a more balanced view of live music performance.

It consists of three linked tables, as follows:

Gigs

One thousand performances, with date, venue name, city, wider area, the line-up it was played with (e.g. solo, with my band The Validators, or other configurations), how many units of merchandise (usually CDs but sometimes t-shirts, badges or cassettes) were sold afterwards, and a link to further details online.

Setlists

The songs played at each gig and they order in which they were played, along with a link to further details online, including lyrics.

People

An approximation of who else was involved in the gig, coded as either in the same band as me (1), in a seperate act (2) or a combination of the two. The public version of the data includes only a code ("personcode") for each person, but a more detailed list, including stage names, is available on request.

The dataset has many issues. The website database was set up in 1998, and so data before then is sometimes unreliable, being based on information found in old diaries, posters, photographs, and the contributions of website visitors over the past twenty years. Gig sales were first recorded in 2003,

and so data is only available from that point. Setlists were first recorded in 2005, and although some historical setlists were added later the data is only reliable from this date. Data on other people who were involved with the gigs has been entered based on memories, photographs, diary entries and old blogs.

These and other issues are discussed at some length on my website, starting with the blog called [Data Entry](http://mjhibbett.co.uk/blog/showblog.php?blogid=3696) dated 17 January 2023 (available at http://mjhibbett.co.uk/blog/showblog.php?blogid=3696) and then continuing for several weeks afterwards with some basic analysis and enthusiastic commentary.

Despite the many caveats, I believe this dataset provides an interesting snapshot into how low-level music-making worked across this period. It gives an insight into an under-reported activity, both in terms of my own performances but also as a description of the many venues that existed during this time, the sort of sets that were played, and the frequent turnover of other acts on the scene.

I hope that its existence will encourage others to rediscover and release their own records of music-making, and begin to create a more accurate description of humanity's most popular cultural activity.

Mark Hibbett, 20 February 2023