RELATIVE PITCH

ENCOURAGING PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SPACE

by

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ABSTRACT

Street musicians and performers attract people to public spaces. These performers, or 'buskers' as they are commonly referred, typically congregate along specific streets, parks, plazas, and transit stops in a city. The term pitch describes the place buskers perform. Pedestrian flow, visibility, and acoustics are just some of the factors that street performers consider when selecting a pitch. While performers resourcefully adapt to the challenges of different pitches, public spaces often do little to accommodate performers and their audiences. William Whyte observed how street performances facilitate social interactions between strangers and give character to cities and neighborhoods. Relative Pitch explores where performances occur and how they benefit public places.

Case studies of popular busking locations establish a typology of squares, streets, and transit stops. Video clip analysis of street performances demonstrates the spatial relations between performer and audience. Dimensions and observations from these case studies provided insight and information for the application of the typology to proposed sites in Wichita, Kansas.

Buskers adapt pitches relative to their physical environment. Point, linear, planar, and volumetric elements define and articulate temporary stages, audience space, and circulation paths during performances. Design proposals for the typology sites in Wichita illustrate how flexible performance spaces can be incorporated in squares, streets, and transit stops. This project looks at ways to activate public spaces by encouraging street performance.

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PRELUDE

One morning I received an email containing a video clip of concert violinist Joshua Bell performing in the Washington D.C. Metro. As I watched this time-lapse video of the hour-long performance *(Video Clip 0.1)* I was amazed to observe how few people stopped to listen. Having seen Joshua Bell in concert, I found it hard to believe you could be in the presence of a performer that good and not pause to listen.



Video Clip 0.1 - Joshua Bell performing in the Washington D.C. Metro (YouTube)

The article that accompanied the video in *The Washington Post* titled "Pearls Before Breakfast" discusses in detail the entire event and asked similar questions concerning people's reactions, or rather lack of reactions, to Mr. Bell's performance. Gene Weingarten, the author of the article, observes how the speed and distractions of technology and modern society have hindered our ability to recognize and enjoy our daily physical environment. He asks the question, "If we can't take the time out of our lives to stay a moment and listen to one of the best musicians on Earth play some of the best music ever written; if the surge of modern life so overpowers us that we are deaf and blind to something like that—then what else are we missing?"

Weingarten's question raises an important point made by this experiment; however, I began to question if there was something in the performance that was "missing." After viewing the video clip several times, I began wondering how the place where Joshua Bell performed influenced people's attitudes and reactions concerning his performance. Obviously, if he was on a stage in a concert hall people would respond differently than they would passing him by on their way to work. However, were there places in the subway station that could have helped Bell attract a larger, more appreciative audience? Were there spaces that could have provided a better stage for his performance?

These questions piqued my interest in observing how street performers, or *buskers* as they are commonly called, select the places they play and create temporary performance spaces or "pitches." Having performed music most of my life with a variety of groups in different sized venues—from sports arenas to coffee shops—I have always been interested in how spaces influence performers and audiences. While I would not consider myself a street musician, I have played music in public parks and plazas and have noticed specific challenges when performing in these spaces, such as electrical access, seating, and accommodating pedestrian circulation.

Many cities build amphitheaters, band shells, or stages specifically for outdoor public performances that are excellent at holding formal performances for large crowds. However, in the absence of these sporadic large events, these spaces often remain vacant. Urban designer William Whyte observed how "…the smaller informal presentations are the bread and butter of programs. For that reason it is good to be chary of planning elaborate amphitheaters. They can accommodate large numbers, but tend to be single purpose facilities and are not well adapted to smaller groups" (Whyte 2009, 151). Spaces that are flexible and multi-functional, unlike the amphitheaters that Whyte describes as "frozen in concrete," encourage smaller spontaneous performances that attract people and enable casual social interactions.

William Whyte's work—documented in his books *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* and *City: Rediscovering the Center*—are some of the few sources focusing on the benefits of street performers in creating active urban environments, and give suggestions on how designers might better incorporate buskers in public spaces. Currently there is a lack of published material addressing how to design streets and public spaces that accommodate buskers. Authors in the social sciences have written the majority of the material I encountered on the subject, and it seems very little has been written by designers or planners.

A musician's ability to hear the intervals or spaces between notes is referred to as relative pitch. Likewise, this project looks at busking pitches and the spatial relationships between performers, audience members, and pedestrian circulation relative to their physical environments. Similar to William Whyte's work, a large part of my research has relied on video recordings. Collecting video clips of street performers from websites like YouTube, Vimeo, and busking websites like thebuskingproject.com has allowed me to sample a variety of performances in a wide range of geographic locations on a low budget, in a relatively condensed time frame. *Relative Pitch* analyzes the spatial definitions of busking pitches, exploring how performers and audiences create these temporary urban spaces. Hopefully this project can begin to fill the void that I believe exists in understanding how buskers define and articulate spaces and will encourage designers and planners to consider ways to accommodate performers in public open space.



Figure 1.0 (Mark J. Davis)

INTRODUCTION

DILEMMA

Performance artists often perform in streets and public spaces for money and donations. These street performers, or buskers as they are historically called, attract pedestrians, creating small impromptu public concerts and shows. These informal performances help give streets and neighborhoods identity, activating public places and providing opportunities for social interaction.

“Pitch” is a term commonly used by buskers to refer to the site where a performance occurs. Pedestrian traffic, visibility, acoustics, and amenities like seating or electrical access are all factors that performers consider when selecting a pitch. While buskers will resourcefully adapt to the challenges of different urban environments to create pitches, the designs of many public spaces often do little to accommodate performers and their audiences. Furthermore, many policy makers and merchants discourage street performers citing issues like noise levels and crowds as reasons to outlaw performances. These conflicts have led to lawsuits and specific policies concerning outdoor performances in many cities.

Currently there is limited research analyzing the spatial definition of pitches and how places within cities could be transformed or designed into sites that encourage busking activity. This lack of information presents a challenge for designers, planners, and policy makers looking for ways to incorporate street performers and create multi-functional public spaces.



Figure 1.1 (Mark J. Davis)

THESIS

Research that analyzes active busking areas and looks at how pitches accommodate performers, audiences, and circulation will help designers, planners, and policy makers understand ways to integrate street performance in to public open space. Creating pitches that better accommodate buskers and audiences can improve the performance experience and heightening public awareness of street performers and their contributions to society. Designing and integrating these flexible pitches into urban infrastructure will help cities create identity and activate open spaces, streets, and neighborhoods.



Figure 1.2 (Mark J. Davis)

WHAT IS A BUSKER?

Busker is a word traditionally used to describe performers like musicians, mimes, jugglers, dancers, and magicians that perform in public spaces often times for money or donations. The word can be used as a verb like busk or busking to describe the act of performing. Patricia Campbell, author of the seminal book *Passing the Hat: Street Performers in America*, has observed how, "The word has almost disappeared from American speech, and we have to resort to the phrase 'street performer'" (Campbell 1981, 7). Busker is a term still commonly used in countries like England, Ireland, Australia, and many American performers refer to themselves as buskers. This project will typically use the term busker when referring to street performers. "Street performer" seems limiting in that it implies buskers only perform in the street when in actuality they perform in a wide variety of locations from underground subway stations to parks and plazas.

Campbell observers that, "The history of busking is the history of urban civilization. There have been street performers at least as long as there have been streets" (Campbell 1981, 8). However, much of the history of buskers is largely undocumented with the exception of occasional historic mentions or pictures. While most buskers are typically musicians there are a broad range of performers that often times reflect a culture or a city's traditions, history, and diversity. Author Susie Tanenbaum writes in her book *Underground Harmonies* that buskers in the Boston area and much of the Northeastern United States perform traditional American folk music on instruments like hammer dulcimers and acoustic guitars (Tanenbaum 1995, 54). Hollywood California, the epicenter of the motion picture industry, is home to a unique group of performers who dress up as their favorite movie characters or super heroes and walk along Hollywood Boulevard performing primarily for tourists. Buskers are a unique group of individuals who



Figure 1.3 (Smith 2010)

Campbell states, "Other than the love of freedom there are no common characteristics of personality, background, or lifestyle that describes the average street performer" (Campbell 1981, 12). Some performers have other professional careers as doctors or teachers, some are students or college graduates, and others have little formal education. Some performers make their living from busking everyday; others will occasionally busk when they feel like it. However Campbell observes, "… in every city I visited I found a hard core of people who had dedicated their lives to the street, who saw themselves as bearers of a tradition, and who were articulate and thoughtful about their place in the world" (Campbell 1981, 12).

Buskers take pride in their work and feel it provides an important cultural and civic role. Tanenbaum writes, "The prototypical street performer has a moral and political philosophy about their work. They perform in public space to challenge established ideas about what legitimate culture is and where it can be found. They present their ideas before anyone is willing to invest in them. They democratize their art by making it accessible to everyone regardless of income, race, gender, or age" (Tanenbaum 1995, 19). There are many reasons people decide to busk, some do it for the money, many just love to perform, and others do it in hopes of one day being famous. But most buskers perform because they believe it provides entertainment that brings people together and enjoy the direct connection and feedback audience members have in the creative process.



Figure 1.4 (Smith 2010)

BUSKING AROUND THE WORLD

Busking occurs throughout the world and has unique cultural origins and significance in different countries. West African griots perform in the streets singing and often playing music on an instrument called the kora (*Figure 1.5*). Their music delivers not only the history and traditions of their culture, but news and commentary about current events and issues. Some ethnomusicologists trace the roots of today's rap and hip-hop artists back to this oral tradition.

Similarly Andean musicians from Chile, Peru, and Argentina perform music that has its roots in pre-Columbian traditions and indigenous Andean culture. These Andean musicians are typically part of panpipe ensembles known as *sikuri* (*Figure 1.6*). These groups express solidarity with the long-oppressed indigenous population and reject foreign cultural imperialism (Tanenbaum 1995, 34).

When the American Civil War ended African-Americans migrated from the rural South to major cities like New Orleans, Chicago, and New York. These emancipated slaves were barred from most professions and musical venues; consequently street performing was one of their few means of economic survival. This racist segregation led to the rise of blues, jazz, and dance performances in public spaces (*Figure 1.*7). Many of jazz's great originators and innovators like Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith started their careers performing in the streets (Tanenbaum 1995, 37). The diverse backgrounds and origins of many buskers illustrate their individuality and express the traditions, history, and values of many different cultures.



Figure 1.5 - West African griot (msnyder.typepad.com)



Figure 1.6 - Peruvian panpipe musician (wordpress.com)



Figure 1.7 - King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band (www.redhotjazz.com)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BUSKING

People have publicly performed in streets and plazas dating back to antiquity. In 40 A.D. Greek writer Dio Chrysostom recalls, “And I remember once seeing while walking through the Hippodrome, many people on one spot and each one doing something different: one playing the flute, another dancing, another doing a jugglers’s trick, another reading a poem aloud, another singing, and another telling some story or myth” (Cohen and Greenwood 1981, 12). However the history of street performers is often found through laws that prohibit it (Harrison-Pepper, 1990, 22). Sally Harrison-Pepper, author of *Drawing a Circle in the Square* observes that “Street performance is viewed as an event that is marginal, inconsequential, unworthy of documentation, even a threat to the image of a city, established structures of commercial theater, or other businesses” (Harrison-Pepper 1990, xiv).

In 421 B.C. the Roman *Laws of the Twelve Tables,* outlawed the songs and performances of street performances or street singers under the penalty of death (Cohen and Greenwood 1981, 14). France’s rulers feared the jongleurs—a multitalented performer whose name is translated today as juggler—forbidding them from certain cities in 1106 (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 22). Laws in 13th century England strongly prohibited outdoor performances. Henry the IV’s parliament declared that, “no westours and rimers, minstrels, or vagabonds, be maintained in Wales” (Jusserand 1950, 113). This attitude continued throughout the centuries as Henry VIII in 1520 ruled that beggars, a category that included minstrels and players, found without licenses “should be punished by being tied naked to the end of a cart and beaten with whips throughout the town or place ‘til the body be bloody by reason of such whipping” (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 22-23). Many American colonies had similar laws outlawing street performances. A 1612 law in Jamestown outlawed conjurers and actors. Similar rulings against street performers can be found in a 1699 ruling of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and a 1773 ruling in Connecticut (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 23).

However, attitudes toward street performers in the 19th century became more tolerant, especially in rapidly growing American cities with large immigrant populations. An 1897 article from a New York magazine called *Leslie’s Weekly* included an illustration of an Italian hurdy-gurdy player and a favorable view of their contributions to city life. This author wrote, “The hand-organ musician is ubiquitous, but he flourishes in great numbers in the metropolis, where he delights or worries the people, according to their individual temperaments. The children in some parts of town, notably where tenement houses are most numerous, get great amusement to the music ground out by these washed sons of sunny Italy... Only churls complain of the interruption of traffic” (Harrison- Pepper 1990, 23-24).



Figure 1.8 (Mark J. Davis)



Figure 1.9 (Mark J. Davis)

ARGUMENTS AGAINST BUSKING

Some of the same historical complaints and arguments against allowing street performers in public spaces persist today. Common conflicts people have with buskers are: excessive noise or volume levels, the interruption of traffic flow or pedestrian circulation, and on rare occasion a disruptive message that causes protests, dissent, or possibly violence. Solicitation is another major complaint by city officials or merchants who find busking an annoyance or associate it with panhandling (Whyte 2009, 36).

However, the First Amendment protects the right of buskers to perform as "freedom of speech." Many of the founding fathers including Sam Adams, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin wanted the right to protest governmental policy through demonstration, songs, and printed pamphlets in streets and public spaces. Street performance and the free press are historically connected. Even after the printing press made books and written material more readily available to the public, few people could read or afford books. Historical and current events were often communicated in the streets through story-tellers, minstrels, and troubadours. Street performer and busking advocate Stephan Baird observes that colonial America news events were printed on single page documents called broadsides that were sung and sold. Benjamin Franklin's autobiography gives accounts of his experiences reciting and singing books and poems for money in the streets of Philadelphia when he was twelve years old (Baird 2009).

Many opponents of busking, including law enforcement, argue that performers add to the chaos, confusion, and potential hazards of large crowds gathering in public spaces. However, Jane Jacobs writes in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* that busy streets are in-fact safe and ordered "by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves." Jacobs concludes, "No amount of police can enforce civilization where the normal, casual enforcement of it has broken down" (Jacobs 1993, 40).

Merchants often are the primary opponents of buskers. William Whyte observes in his book *City* that "Merchants have been the main force against street entertaining, and it has been largely on their say-so that city councils have passed repressive ordinances against it. One feature of such ordinances is the prohibition against soliciting money" (Whyte 2009, 36). While not all street performers solicit donations, many buskers' livelihoods depend on donations. Whyte argues, "What is so wrong about solicitation? The passerby is under no duress. They don't even have to stop. If they do stop they don't have to give. If they do give the amount is entirely up to them and their judgment of the worth of the entertainer. It is the latter who has taken the entrepreneurial risk. He should be entitled to some reward" (Whyte 2009, 36). Merchants argue that buskers hurt business by blocking building entrances and congesting sidewalk circulation. Pedestrian safety and amenity are the typical legislative arguments used by merchants against buskers.

IN DEFENSE OF BUSKING

Three major court cases that demonstrate buskers' rights to perform and accept donations in public spaces are *Goldstein v. Town of Nantucket, Davenport v. Alexandria,* and *Friedrich v. City of Chicago* (Baird 2009). All three cases are a result of conflicts between merchants and buskers and two of these cases included urban designer William Whyte as an expert witness due to his expertise and understanding of urban spaces.

Goldstein v. Town of Nantucket (1979)

A hammer dulcimer player named Robb Goldstein and the ACLU initiated the suit after the Transit Vendor Bylaw denied him a permit to perform in the street. "The licensing criteria required (1) financial responsibility by the applicant, (2) effect on neighboring properties, and (3) the opinion of town merchants" (Campbell 1981, 241-242). Goldstein filed suit on grounds that his First Amendment rights were being denied and he did not need the consent and permission of town merchants to perform.

Judge Zobel agreed with Goldstein and stated "street music, even though it is commercial 'speech' is protected by the Constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression, and therefore not subject to narrow regulation by municipalities. And most specifically, 'the requirement of merchants' approval is irreconcilable with freedom of expression. It is unqualified censorship and it is just what the First Amendment forbids" (Campbell 1981, 242).

Davenport v. City of Alexandria (1983)

Lee Davenport was a bagpiper and music teacher who performed in the streets of Alexandria until merchants from the city enacted a 61-block ban on any street performing in the central district. This ban restricted buskers to playing in designated parks only. Davenport did not want to perform in designated parks and preferred playing on the sidewalk where there were more people. Davenport sued the city in a case that went to the U.S. District Court.

The merchants claimed that Davenport's performances congested sidewalks and made streets unsafe. William Whyte was called as a witness for the city of Davenport and testified that the "city's own counts and measurement of the sidewalk showed there was an excellent balance between sidewalk space and pedestrian flows. In this respect, indeed, Alexandria was outstandingly well provided-not only the two blocks in question, but the whole central district" (Whyte 2009, 37).

Judge Albert V. Bryan struck down the ordinance because, the court found "no actual safety endangerment, any real impediment of pedestrian traffic or any substantial interference with patrons of businesses even in the affected area." The judge also found that the designated parks were not an adequate alternative to performing on the sidewalks saying, "The exponent of the First Amendment expression is to be 'encountered' by those he wishes to receive his or her message. The sidewalk is a traditional place for such expression. Pedestrian flow and turnover is the 'life blood' of the street performer" (Whyte 2009, 37).

Friedrich v. City of Chicago (1985)

In the summer of 1979 the city of Chicago started hiring street performers to play at bus stations and transit stops. However, merchants did not appreciate the performances and successfully banned performers from the upper Michigan Avenue area by passing an ordinance through the city council in 1982. The city claimed that pedestrian flow on the sidewalk had reached drastic levels and that buskers added to the congestion. Guitarist Wally Friedrich with the support of the ACLU initiated a class action suit against the city. William Whyte served as an expert witness on the pedestrian aspect of the case. Whyte states that the city's claim that buskers needed to be banned to provide more room for pedestrian safety and amenities, "was an extraordinary complaint. Of all the avenues in the United States, they could not have picked one with broader sidewalks than upper Michigan Avenue...The amount of space per pedestrian was very generous and provided a level of service that rated an A by anybody's computation" (Whyte 2009, 38).

In the end the court upheld the ordinance in part and denied it in part. The court ruled that the city was within its rights to limit street performing when it endangered public safety. However, it found the ban to be much more stringent than necessary and ruled that performances could occur during certain times of day (Whyte 2009, 38).



Figure 1.10 - (Smith 2010)



Figure 1.11 - (Smith 2010)



Figure 1.12 (Mark J. Davis)

CONTRIBUTIONS OF BUSKERS IN PUBLIC SPACE

The primary advantage of allowing busking is it initiates an event or performance that has the potential to attract people. William Whyte observes how people tend to be drawn towards crowds of people. Soon one performer can have dozens of audience members listening to a piece of music, watching a dancer in amazement, or laughing at a comedic juggling act. Complete strangers smile and exchange comments on the performance. Whyte states, “Street entertainers can have a strong binding effect on people. This is particularly the case when the entertainer is skillful in involving members of the audience in the act...even bad performers can unify a crowd. There is a communal sense to these gatherings and though it be fleeting, it is the city at its best” (Whyte 2009, 35). Visual and performing arts give people an opportunity to interact with one another, helping to build communities and neighborhoods.

One of the unique aspects of busking performances is the immediate interaction between performer and audience. Susie Tanenbaum observes, “In street performance, the audience is part of the event. In contrast to most other forms of live entertainment, the presence of the audience creates a stage. Moreover, by giving or withholding applause, comments, and money, the audience advises the performer on how to perfect his art and improve his street skills. Together, performer and audience articulate conflicts and hopes that exist in their city at that particular stage in history” (Tanenbaum 1995, 19). The directness and exposure of an artist to their audience not only draws performers to busk, but draws audiences to watch and listen. Patricia Campbell interviewed a violinist named Richard Wexler who busks in New York City, he explains that, “A good street performer is like a pilot light…People come to it” (Campbell 1981, 56). Skilled buskers perfect their craft, working to learn when and where to find a potential audience.

The spontaneity of street performance is one of the primary reasons people are drawn in to listen and observe. Urban planner Kevin Lynch explains how people are attracted to impromptu events writing, “In a complex society spontaneity is not often encountered...Periodically, we want to enjoy a common, vivid present, enlarged by group expectations and memories” (Lynch 1976, 88). Buskers surprise people by performing in places and situations where people often times would not expect to find entertainment. William Whyte writes, “It is interesting to watch people as they chance upon an entertainer. So often they will smile. A string quartet. Here at Forty-fourth! Their smile is like that of a child. For moments they seem utterly at ease, their shoulders relaxed. People enjoy programmed entertainment, too, but not in the same way. It is the unexpected that seems to delight them most” (Whyte 2009, 35).

The congregational effects buskers can have in streets and parks provide security in neighborhoods. Susie Tanenbaum observes how buskers performing at subway stops relieve the anxieties and fears of passengers. “New York’s subway system never closes; late at night, when the platforms might otherwise be deserted, musicians with unconventional schedules perform and offer these various benefits to riders. Thus, subway music is worth studying in its own right” (Tanenbaum 1995, 15). Public hearings in New York City were held in 1989 when several transit authority officials argued

CONTRIBUTIONS OF BUSKERS IN PUBLIC SPACE

that buskers made subway station accidents more likely. However, many passengers contradicted these claims stating that musicians helped promote crowd control and prevented crime on deserted platforms by gathering passengers together. These statements are consistent with Jane Jacob's "eyes on the street" theory that these subway performers provide added security in areas with little or no police surveillance (Tanenbaum 1995, 178-179).

While occasionally street performers congest pedestrian pathways or make too much noise, they also provide safety and make pedestrians feel more comfortable using streets after dark. On a recent trip to Rome Vibhavari Jani, a committee member for this project, observed how street performers provided protection against crime. She noticed that while being alone in a foreign city she felt less vulnerable walking in the city at night because the streets were active with artists and musicians.

Busking also provides economic stimulus in markets and busy streets. Performers are drawn to the crowds of people around retail and commercial centers contributing to the vibrant atmosphere and excitement that can attract shoppers. William Whyte explains that there is a, "high degree of compatibility between a strong retail street and a lively street life." Whyte believes buskers help the economic vitality of streets and neighborhoods, however, he acknowledges the lack of research that proves this claim (Whyte 2009, 36). Buskers frequently play at outdoor markets with food vendors and artisan booths providing a carnival like atmosphere that people enjoy. Portland Oregon's Saturday Market (*figures 1.13-1.15*) is an excellent example of this type of experience.

Busking also exposes people to different cultures, types of performance, and ideas. During 1989 public hearings, debating whether to allow musicians to perform in New York subways, a teacher named Linda O'Hare testified on behalf of performers saying. "One little boy [in her class] said…music in the subway lets people who can't afford to go to live concerts to hear music. He said you don't have to be rich to listen to music" (Tanenbaum 1995, 159). The teacher continues to explain how subway performances enrich children's lives by educating them about people of different races, nationalities, and cultures (Tanenbaum 1995, 159). There is an educational component that buskers provide communities, and this education is available to all people regardless of income level, social class, or background, illustrating the democratizing effect of street performance.



Figure 1.13 - Portland Saturday Market street drummers (Author 2011)



Figure 1.14 - Portland Saturday Market street musician (Author 2011)



Figure 1.15 - Portland Saturday Market silver man street performer (Clement 2011)

PROJECT SCOPE

Relative Pitch is intended to provide fundamental knowledge of busking and serve as a resource for design and planning professionals. Case studies in this project identify and describe some well-known busking locations. The studies analyze what attributes make these sites desirable to performers and demonstrate how buskers create and spatially define their pitches. Issues of accommodating circulation, and how and where audiences form to observe performances, are also key ideas explored in this project with the aid of video clips, diagrams, and 3D models. A typology of busking performance spaces is illustrated in the case studies. Important elements of these types are then applied to potential sites in Wichita, Kansas in the Project Design section.

This project focuses on the physical spatial components of busking. An important factor incorporating artists into streets and public open space is addressing and understanding policies and regulations regarding street performing. Laws pertaining to issues like panhandling, licensing, and noise levels vary from location-to-location and can influence the feasibility of including performers in public streets and open space. The legal issues surrounding street and public open space performance are discussed as they relate to the different case studies and the Wichita sites. This project is not dedicated to creating new policies or ordinances; however, it recognizes the need for planners and lawmakers to adopt clear policies that address the rights and responsibilities of street performers.



Figure 1.16 (Mark J. Davis)

PHILOSOPHY & PROCESS

“Landscapes move us in a manner more nearly analogous to the action of music than anything else...Gradually and silently the charm overcomes us; we know not exactly where or how.” For me this quote by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted elegantly describes the strong connection between music and landscape.

Much of my design philosophy originates from experiences playing, listening to, and studying music. My love and enthusiasm for improvised music led me to perform in a number of musical groups and receive my bachelors of music in jazz studies. A key component in improvisation is actively listening to the environment and musicians around you. Similarly, landscape architecture requires “listening” to the site in order to make appropriate design decisions and flexibly accommodate future uses.

Transcription is the process in which musicians notate recordings that are entirely or partly improvised, or for which no written score exists. This demanding task helps musicians, particularly improvisers, learn and develop the musical vocabulary necessary to create their own improvised solos and compositions. This skill builds a musician’s relative pitch, or ability to hear and identify the spaces between notes, as well as awareness to dynamics, rhythm, articulation, and phrasing.

I believe the process of transcription can also be applied to design and the analysis of physical space. This project relies on case studies to learn how buskers improvise and adapt to create temporary performances spaces in urban environments. Video recordings of street performances were observed and transcribed by digitally modeling and dimensioning these spaces. Observations from this process provide insight into how busking pitches are spatially defined and articulated, and provided information vital to the prototype pitches I have designed for Wichita, Kansas.

The great jazz bassist and composer Charles Mingus once said, “Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that’s creativity.” Many of the solutions buskers employ to form performance spaces are ingeniously simple. I believe that as a designer much can be learned from examining how buskers create these spaces. I also believe that working to include performing arts in public places is a crucial component in creating vibrant urban spaces.

“Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that’s creativity.”
- Charles Mingus

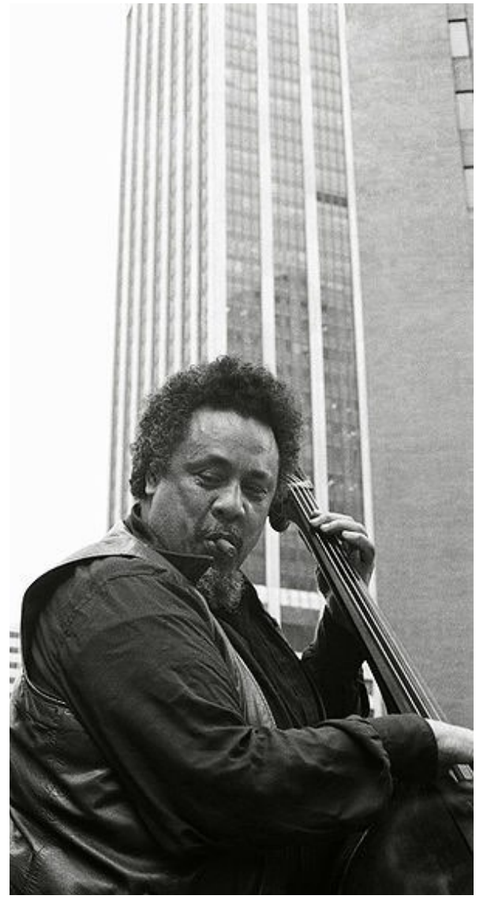


Figure 1.17 - Charles Mingus (Marcello 1976)

PROJECT PROCESS DIAGRAM

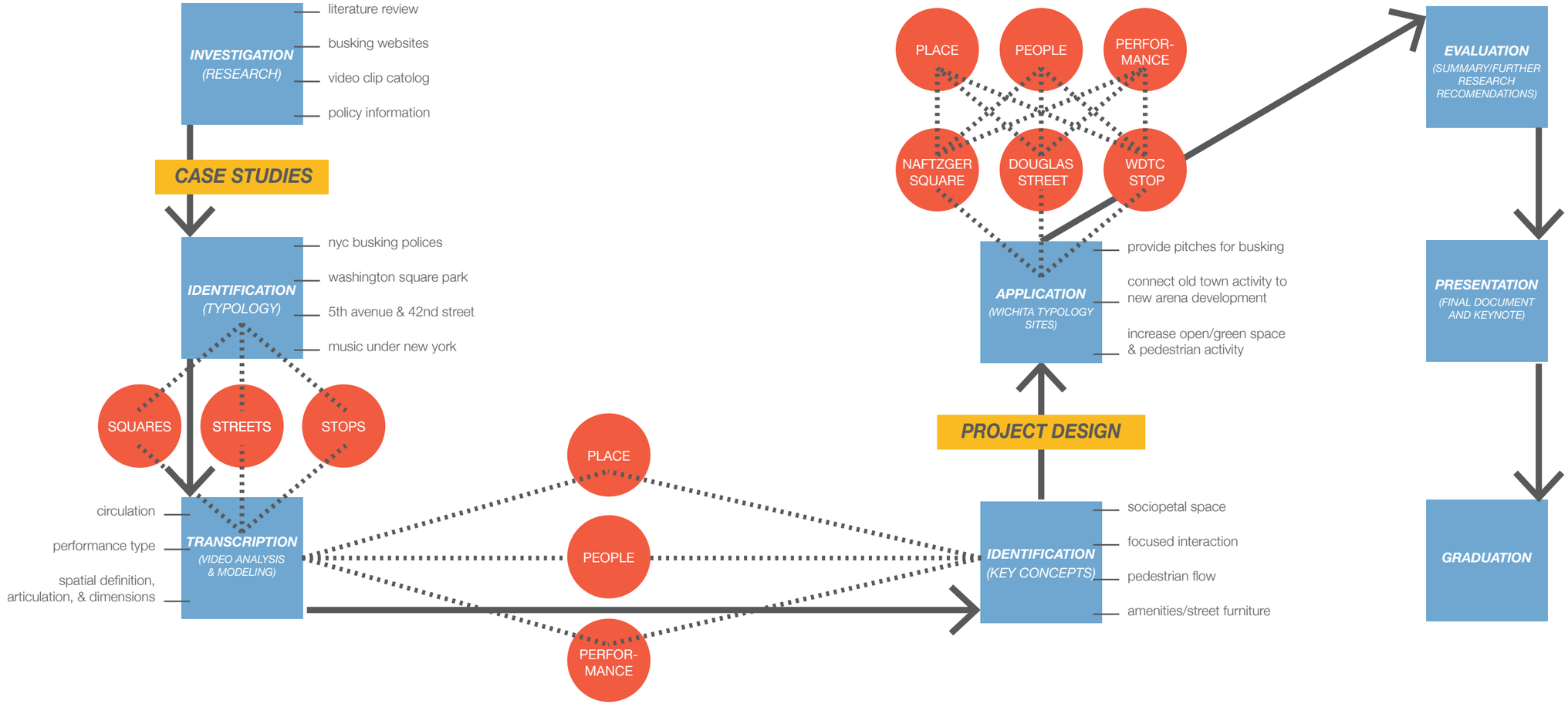


Figure 1.18 - Process diagram (Author 2011)



Figure 2.0 (Mark J. Davis)

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY OBJECTIVES & LOCATIONS

CASE STUDY OBJECTIVES

Understanding how to design and accommodate buskers in public spaces begins by determining what elements contribute to a good pitch. The objective of these case studies is discovering places where busking occurs, observe how people are involved in creating these events, and identify how these spaces perform. A list of cities in the United States known for street performer activity (*figure 2.1*) was compiled from researching busking websites, YouTube and other video websites, and published literature. While this list is not a definitive directory, it represents a range of sites where street performance can typically be observed. Several case study sites were selected from this list and are presented in this section.

U.S. CITIES KNOWN FOR BUSKING ACTIVITY

New York City, NY - 5th Avenue, Subway System (Music Underground New York), Washington Square Park, Central Park Times Square

Boston, MA - MBTA transit stops, Downtown Crossing, Faneuil Hall Marketplace

Cambridge, MA- Harvard Square, MBTA transit stops

Asheville, NC - Biltmore and Patton Avenues

Nashville, TN - 2nd Avenue and Broadway

New Orleans, LA - Jackson Square

Miami, FL- South Beach

Austin, TX - 6th Street

Dallas, TX - Deep Ellum Neighborhood

St. Louis, MO - Delmar Loop

Chicago, IL - Michigan Avenue Maxwell Street, limited CTA transit stops

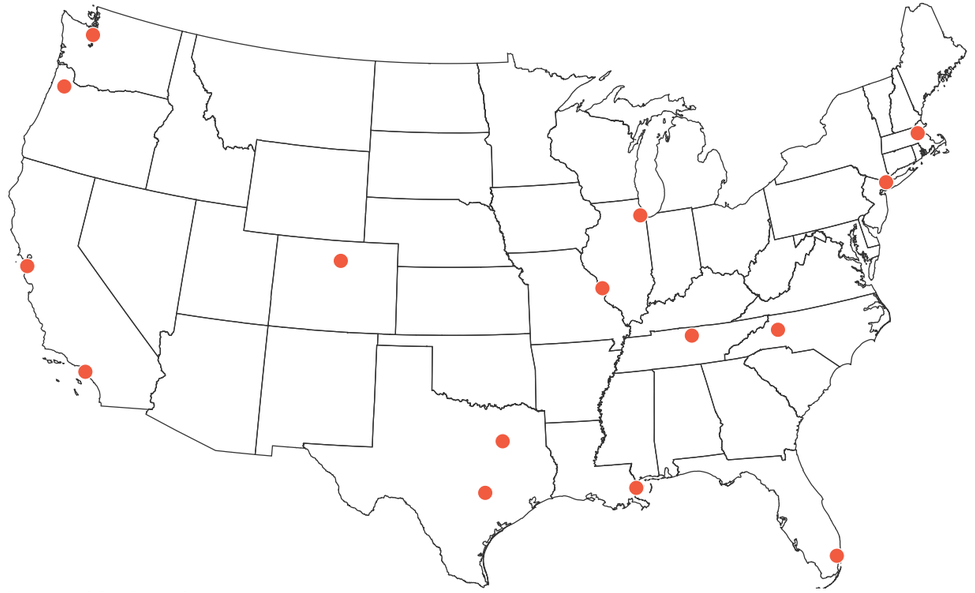


Figure 2.1 - U.S Cities known for busking activity (Author 2011)

Boulder, CO - Pearl Street Mall

Seattle, WA - Pike Place Market, Seattle Center

Portland, OR - Portland Saturday Market, Pioneer Courthouse Square

San Francisco, CA - Fisherman's Wharf, Market Street, Ghirardelli Square

Los Angeles, CA - Venice Beach Boardwalk

CASE STUDY FINDINGS

CASE STUDY FINDINGS

There are no defined guidelines or rules for designing busking pitches. Places where street performers choose to play, and the way they define their performance spaces differs from performer to performer. However there are several key concepts illustrated in these case studies that designers and planners should consider when creating public spaces that are intended to accommodate buskers.

SQUARES, STREETS, & STOPS
A pitch typology—made up of squares, streets, and stops—emerged and was defined by analyzing different case studies. These three types identify the places where busking almost always occurs.

PEDESTRIAN FLOW
Buskers are typically attracted to areas with a good flow of pedestrian traffic; more traffic means more audience members, and potentially more money. This attracts them to areas where people are going to be walking. Riverfronts, downtowns, outdoor markets and retail centers are all likely places to find street performers.

SOCIOPETAL SPACE & PERFORMANCE CIRCLES
Spaces that tend to bring people toward one another and encourage social interaction are called *sociopetal spaces* (Main and Hannah 2010, 26). These spaces naturally lend themselves to busking because they direct pedestrian flow to a central open space where there is room for people to gather around a performer. Audiences tend to form a circle around the performer, creating the perimeter of the performer's stage. This configuration is called a *performance circle* and is the most common and most flexible pitch configuration for street performances.

TRIANGULATION & FOCUSED INTERACTION
Performance circles lend themselves to a phenomenon that William Whyte calls *triangulaton*. Triangulation occurs when an event like a street performance attracts people around to listen and observe. However, people watch more than just the performance, they watch each other also, commonly smiling or commenting to one another about the performance. Sociologist Erving Goffman calls this type of social exchange a focused interaction. Focused interaction is when people relate and communicate to each other face-to-face through a shared activity or event.

AMENITIES & STREET FURNITURE
The amenities that are needed by performers depend greatly on the requirement of their type of performance. Electrical access, seating, lighting, and protective overhead planes are all important amenities that attract performers to play in specific spaces. Seating, shade, and other amenities also attract audiences, and a smart busker will try and find ideal locations to perform where audiences can sit and listen. The term street furniture, coined by William Whyte, describes how people use elements like railings or bollards for sitting or leaning against. Street furniture shows how people adapt the uses and functions of objects to feel more comfortable in their environments.

SPATIAL DEFINITION & ARTICULTAION

Buskers typically define their own pitches. Legendary street performer Philippe Petit taught performers that, "one has to sculpt the space… The street is not a theatrical place, one has to establish oneself there, to defend oneself there. An imaginary theatre has to be built" (Harrison-Pepper, 1990 42). Buskers can create their pitches by bringing something with them to define the space, or by relying on surrounding environmental surfaces and objects. Materials like rope or chalk are often used to define a busker's performance space. Musicians sometimes use old rugs or carpets, and even the instrument case or bucket where donations are accepted can define the edge of the performer's stage. Existing built environment objects also define the busker's space: bollards, lampposts, the edges of hardscaped surfaces or expansion joints in a sidewalk are all examples of environmental objects used by buskers to delineate their pitches.

SPACES ARE DEFINED & ARTICULATED BY POINTS, LINEAR ELEMENTS, PLANAR ELEMENTS, & VOLUMETRIC ELEMENTS
Buskers define and articulate spaces using a combination of points, lines, planes, and volumes. These primary elements defined and described in Francis Ching's book *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order*, help explain how performers' pitch boundaries are created.

POINTS
"Points indicate a position in space" (Ching 2007, 3). Examples of the ways points are used by buskers include elements like lights, traffic cones, or bollards.

LINEAR ELEMENTS
"A point extended becomes a line with properties of length, direction, and position" (Ching 2007, 3). Lines formed by rope or chalk, edges of adjoining planes of hardscape materials, change in a material's texture or color, and a series of points that create a line, like pillars and columns can all be linear elements that define spaces for buskers.

PLANAR ELEMENTS
"A line extended becomes a plane with the properties of length and width, shape, surface, orientation, and position" (Ching 2007, 3). There are many examples of ways buskers use planes to help define space and can be broken into three categories: ground planes, vertical planes, and overhead planes. Ground plane elements include mats, blankets, or hardscape surfaces. Vertical planes include elements like walls, posters or signs that act as backdrop for a performance. Overhead planes include elements like building awnings and trellises, or tree canopies.

VOLUMETRIC ELEMENTS
"A plane extended becomes a volume with properties of length width and depth, form and space, surface orientation and position" (Ching 2007, 3). Volumes can be a mass or a void. Examples of masses used by performers to define space would be platforms, buildings, and staircases. An example of a void would be a courtyard or empty space contained by a bounded mass like a group of buildings.

CASE STUDY FINDINGS

PROXEMICS

Proxemics is a term introduced by anthropologist Edward T. Hall that describes space types and a set of measurable distances between people in the U.S. circa 1966. The three space types are *fixed-feature space, semi-fixed feature space,* and *informal space*. The four measurable distances are *intimate distance, personal distance, social distance*, and *public distance* (Main and Hannah 25, 2010). This classification of spaces and measurements will be used in the case studies to help describe spatial relationships.

The three types of spaces are:

1. *Fixed feature space: Comprising things that are immobile (walls, territorial boundaries, fixed-furniture)*
2. *Semi-Fixed feature space: comprising movable objects such as furniture that is not fixed*
3. *Informal Space: the personal space around the body that travels around with a person and determines distances among people*

The four measures of distance are:

1. *Intimate distance: for embracing, touching, or whispering (6 – 18 inches)*
2. *Personal distance: for interactions among good friends (1.5 – 4 feet)*
3. *Social distance: for interactions among acquaintances (4 – 12 feet)*
4. *Public distance: for impersonal observation (12+ feet)*

(Main and Hannah 25, 2010)

Busking occurs in fixed-feature and semi-fixed feature space and performances usually generate personal and social distances. Illustrating how performances can take strangers and spatially distance them in the same category as a friend or acquaintance. This spatial proximity initiates the opportunity for social interactions.



Figure 2.2 (Mark J. Davis)

NEW YORK CITY CASE STUDY SELECTION

New York City is the primary case study example for this project because of the depth of information regarding busking in New York. Of the relatively few published materials concerning street performance, two excellent books focus exclusively on the city. *Drawing a Circle in the Square* by Sally Harrison-Pepper concentrates specifically on street performance in New York's Washington Square Park. *Underground Harmonies* by Susie J. Tanenbaum gives a detailed look at musicians who perform in subway stations and the Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA's) Music Under New York (MUNY) program. Both authors have social science backgrounds and spent years observing performances in these locations and conducting interviews with buskers and audience members. While these books focus specifically on New York, they are also valuable resources for general information about street performance.

Video footage of performances has been vital to the research of this project; fortunately a large number of clips of buskers in New York City are available on websites like YouTube, and Vimeo. There are also videos on websites specifically dedicated to street performance in New York like undercoverny.com. These videos illustrate many key concepts observed and discussed in *Drawing a Circle in the Square* and *Underground Harmonies*. People attracted to buskers record performances on camcorders and cell phone cameras later posting them on the websites for people to observe. Multiple clips of the same pitch can be found of different performances taken at different times and seasons.

New York City's diverse, multi-cultural population is represented in the wide range of street performance types. From Chinese Americans playing traditional instruments like the haegeum in Chinatown, to African American dance troops performing in Times Square, the variety and concentration of buskers existing in New York is unlike any other city. New York also allows buskers to perform in a wide range of locations in New York City including subway stops, streets, parks, and plazas, unlike many other cities that only allow playing in streets or specific parks. New York's policies toward street performance are currently quite fair and clear. These policies specifically state the rights and responsibilities of performers and are easily attainable through websites like citylore.com.

NEW YORK CITY BUSKING POLICIES

HISTORY

The history of street performance is often found in the laws that prohibit it, and no city illustrates this better than New York City (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 22). Laws and policies surrounding the legality of street performance in New York City have been debated for centuries. In the late eighteenth century acrobats, conjurors, animal trainers, and musicians filled the streets of New York City. Street performers were tolerated, though they were sometimes seen as a nuisance. In the 1900s a number of city officials, including mayor Fiorello La Guardia saw street musicians and performers as beggars. In March of 1935 Mayor La Guardia turned the city's licensing of street performers over to the Welfare Department. Author Sally Harrison-Pepper observes, "It seems that street musicians were virtually eradicated from the city, for they resurface only in scattered references" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 24).

Around 1945, musicians began to gather around Washington Square Park's fountain area to perform. Singers, and musicians around the city would gather in the afternoon on Sundays. The musicians received permits to sing or play in the square from the Parks Department. Permits were easily available and were renewed monthly. Performers with permits were allowed to play between 2:00 and 6:00 P.M. In March of 1961, Park Commissioner Newbold Morris authorized a ban on musicians' permits due to, "minstrels of unsavory appearance giving performances in Washington Square Park and then soliciting money from their audiences" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 25). This ban sparked debate and protests known as the Washington Square Riots.

Demonstrations led by musicians and advocates of First Amendment rights gathered over the following months until the ban was repealed. Morris was ordered on July 6, 1961 by the Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court to grant permits to performers (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 26).

John Lindsay incorporated street music into his mayoral campaign in 1965 and, once elected, signed an ordinance eliminating the requirement that street musicians be licensed. This change in policy illustrated the public's growing acceptance of street music and entertainment. However, this ban did not extend to musicians and entertainers wanting to perform in subway stops. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) rules and regulations regarding performing in subway stations outlawed performances until mid 1980s. In 1985 The MTA established the Music Underground New York (MUNY) program to help organize performance locations and times for musicians (Tanenbaum 46, 1995).

Currently New York City's policies regarding street performance are quite clear. Online resources like buskeradvocates.org, citylore.org, and undercoverny.com provide information to educate New York City street performers about their rights as performers. New York City's rules and regulations are quite straightforward in comparison to other cities in the United States where policy information is vague or not readily available to the public.

NEW YORK CITY BUSKING POLICIES

"Know Your Rights! A Guide for Subway Musicians and Other Performers" by Susie Tanenbaum also outlines regulations for musicians and entertainers that want to perform in Manhattan streets and parks. "Know Your Rights!" states:

STREETS & PARKS

Streets and parks are traditional public forums, places which "by long tradition or government fiat have been devoted to assembly or debate." [Perry Education Association v. Perry Educators' Association, 460 U.S. 37, 45-46 (1983)] This means that performers definitely have a constitutional right to express themselves in these forums.

STREETS
Since the 1970s, musicians have not needed a license to sing or play on the streets of New York, but now there is a sound amplification permit requirement. Street performers who use amplification devices are required to apply for a permit from the local police precinct Community Affairs Office overseeing the area where they wish to perform. The permit costs $45 a day, and musicians are expected to apply for it 7 days before they perform.

During the 1990s, a street musician went to court to challenge these regulations. In Turley v. Police Department of the City of New York, Robert Turley argued that the city's sound amplification permit system was overly restrictive and unconstitutional. The Second Circuit upheld the city's policy with regard to amplified music. Robert Turley may be appealing this decision to the Supreme Court.

Turley also argued that New York City's vendor-permitting scheme violated his right to free speech and denied him equal protection under the law because he was effectively barred form selling cassette tapes and CDs during his performances. The court rejected Turley's argument, because it found that the city's permitting scheme satisfied the conditions for meeting a "legitimate government interest."

The sound amplification permit requirement is not enforced consistently throughout the city. Some amplified musicians continue to perform without this permit. Some also continue to sell cassette tapes and CDs. They risk getting ticketed by the police, or possibly having their work confiscated.

PARKS
Parks Department regulations require street performers to apply for the same sound amplification permit from the local police precinct, if the performance in question can be heard outside the immediate area.
In addition, the Parks Department requires performers to obtain a $25 Special Events permit, at least 21 to 30 days in advance, if either of these conditions apply:

1. *The performance is expected to draw a large crowd (over 20 people)*
2. *The performer wants to set up in a particular location*

A single Special Events permit can cover 3 dates in different locations, or up to a full month (every day) in a specific location. Permits are granted subject to availability and if the Parks Department deems the location to be appropriate for the performance. In general, performers are also expected to comply with Parks Department rules and regulations, which can be found on the web site: www.nyc.gov/parks.
To obtain the Special Events permit, performers have to fill out a one-page application and submit it in person, by mail, or on the Internet. The application is available as a link on the Parks Department's web site: www.nyc.gov/parks.

If a performer's request for a Special Events permit is denied, they can appeal the decision to the Parks Department's legal office. Normally, these problems are resolved through negotiation.

If street performers intend to have vendors at, sell anything at, charge for, or conduct any other revenue-generating activity at their event on parkland, a Temporary Use Authorization (TUA) is required (Tanenbaum 2004, citylore.org).

SUBWAY SYSTEM

The New York City Transit (NYCT) is the subdivision of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) that operates the city's subways and buses. The NYCT authorizes these types of free expression in subway stations:

"Public speaking; distribution of written materials; solicitation for charitable, religious or political causes; and artistic performances, including the acceptance of donations."

The statement comes from Section 1050.6 (c) of the New York City Transit rules and regulations governing "non-transit use of transit facilities." As a consequence of the regulations, these activities are also protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Government (in this case, the NYCT) can only regulate the time, place, or manner in which the activities are presented, and only if restricting them advances a substantial government interest. This translates into the following restrictions on performances:

1. *Setting up at least 25 feet from a token booth*
2. *Setting up at least 50 feet from the marked entrance to an NYCT office or tower*
3. *Not blocking access to an escalator, stairwell or elevator*
4. *Not interfering with transit services or passenger movement in general*

NEW YORK CITY BUSKING POLICIES

5. Not performing in an area where construction is underway
6. Not performing during a public service announcement
7. Not performing above 85 dBa measured at 5 feet, or above 70 dBa measured at 2 feet, from a token booth
8. Not performing in subway cars

Street performers do not need a MUNY permit to play in the subway system. Some subway performers are members of the MTA's Music Under New York program, also known as MUNY. Other performers are independent, and in this guide we refer to them as freelancers.

MUNY schedules performances on designated mezzanines in the subway system and commuter railroad terminals. You have to pass an audition to become a member of MUNY. Twice a month, MUNY members receive a schedule ("permit"), which gives them priority in the spots where they are scheduled to perform. You do not have to be a MUNY member to perform in the subway system! Also, MUNY has nothing to do with subway platforms.

Street performers have the right to perform acoustic music on subway platforms. Freelancers are authorized to perform on subway platforms. But the NYCT prohibits the use of amplification devices on platforms, including battery-operated Mouse amps and microphones. Freelancers, just like MUNY members, may use amplification when they perform on subway mezzanines.

Neither MUNY members nor freelancers are authorized to sell recordings in the subway system. Many of them do anyway, and they risk getting ticketed by the Transit Police or having their work confiscated.



Figure 2.3 (Mark J. Davis)

COMMON NEW YORK CITY BUSKING LOCATIONS

Pitch locations that are commonly active in New York City are identified in *figure 2.5* by the red dots. The highest concentration of pitches is found south of Central Park. These pitch locations occur in a variety of locations, however, they are primarily focused in and around specific parks and squares, streets, and subway stops. Information used to identify these pitch locations was collected from *Drawing a Circle in the Square, Underground Harmonies*, buskarsadvocates.org, the Metropolitan Transit Authority website, and searching for video of New York City street performance clips on the internet.

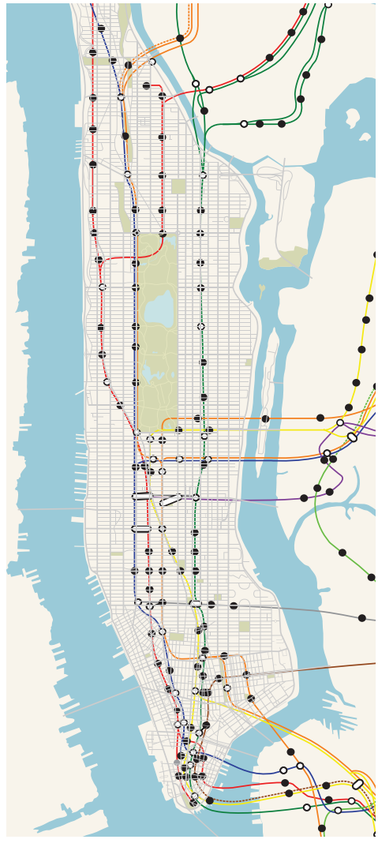


Figure 2.4 - New York City parks, streets and subway system (Author 2011)

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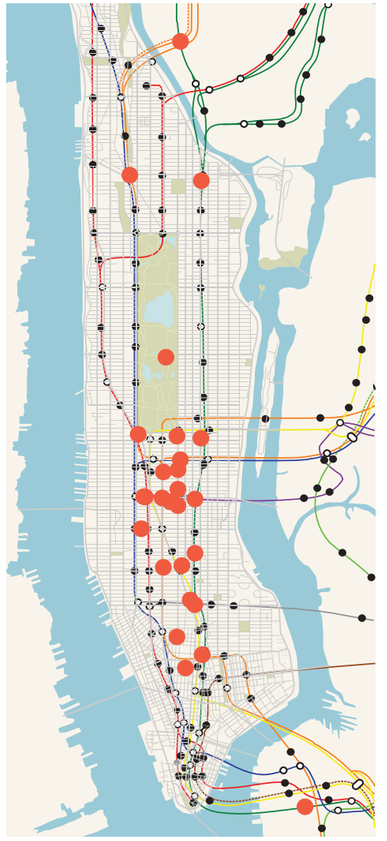


Figure 2.5 - Common New York City busking locations (Author 2011)

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COMMON NEW YORK CITY BUSKING LOCATIONS

SQUARE AND PARK LOCATIONS

Parks and squares where buskers perfom include, but are not limited to, Central Park, Madison Square, Union Square and Washington Square Park. These parks and squares typically contain a few different performance pitches within each park or square and are located along 5th Ave. Of all the parks and squares in New York City, Washington Square Park has the richest history of busking and continues to attract crowds of people who go to watch performances daily.



Figure 2.6 - New York City parks and squares (Author 2011)

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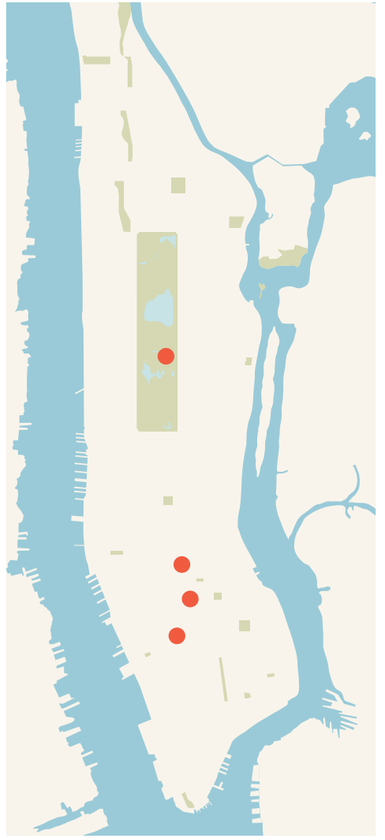


Figure 2.7 - Common New York City park and square busking locations (Author 2011)

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COMMON NEW YORK CITY BUSKING LOCATIONS

STREET LOCATIONS

The majority of performers found in the streets of New York City are found along 5th Avenue and the 42nd Street Times Square area. These streets attract pedestrians and are popular destinations among tourists because of the shopping and access to many notable New York City locations like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Central Park, and the New York City Public Library. These streets are also main arterial roads with heavy traffic and wide sidewalks.

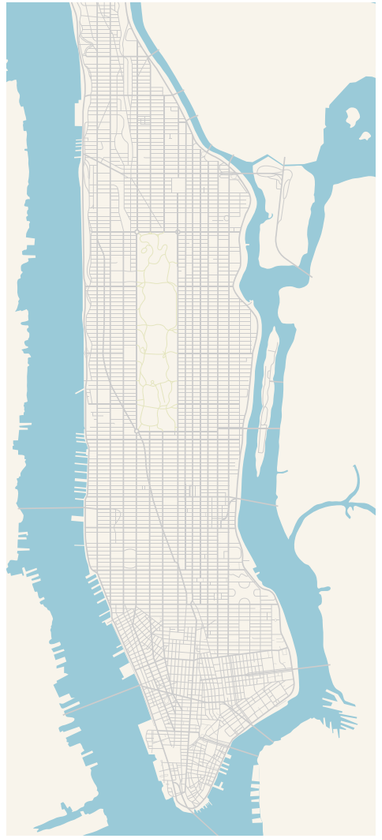


Figure 2.8 - New York City streets (Author 2011)

NTS



Figure 2.9 - Common New York City street busking locations (Author 2011)

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COMMON NEW YORK CITY BUSKING LOCATIONS

SUBWAY STOP LOCATIONS

Subway stops identified by the MTA's Music Underground New York (MUNY) program as designated performance pitches are where the majority of subterranean busking occurs. These pitches are located in high traffic stops throughout the city where metro lines connect. High concentrations of these stops occur south of Central Park around the areas where the majority of street, square, and park pitches occur.

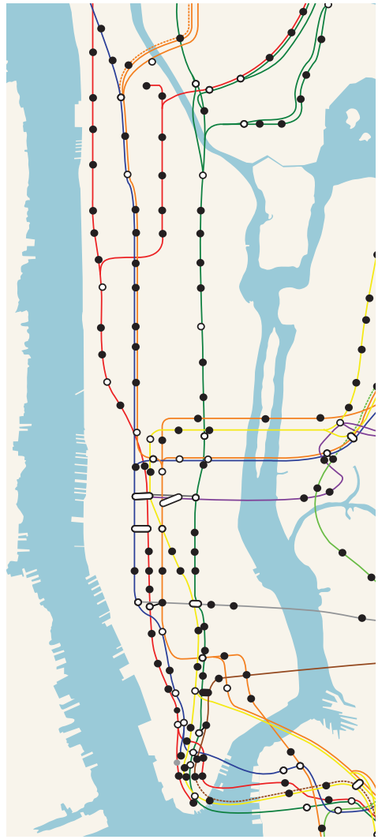


Figure 2.10 - New York City subway system (Author 2011)

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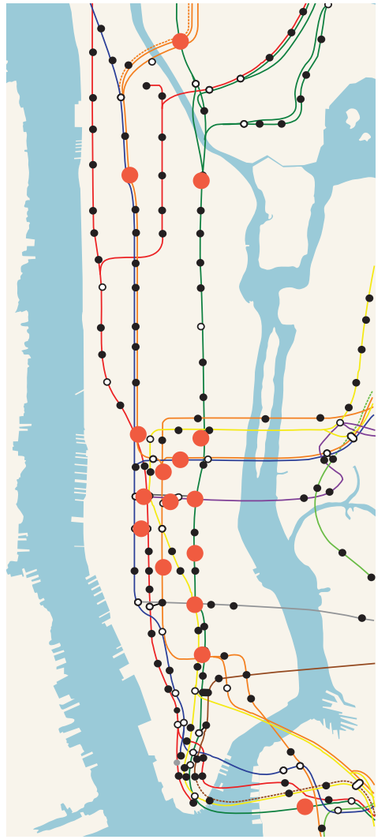


Figure 2.11 - Common New York City subway system busking locations (Author 2011)

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NEW YORK CITY PITCH TYPOLOGY

Three distinct pitch location types emerge from analyzing New York City's street performance activity. Square, Street, and Stop pitches define the pitch typology that will be explored and explained further. New York City's Washington Square Park, 5th Avenue, and selected subway stops will be explored more in-depth to better define and identify key characteristics of these three pitch types.

SQUARES

The Square pitch type is defined as a public park, plaza, or square with an open central space. Typically the surface is hardscape. A variety of pitch configurations can occur, flexibly accommodating many different performance types and audience sizes. While the central space is where the most busking occurs, performances are also found along the edges of squares.



Figure 2.12 - Square Pitches (Author 2011)

NTS

STREETS

The Street pitch type primarily includes sidewalk performances. Street pitches are often grouped together along the same street or neighborhood. Movement that occurs in these spaces is linear and buskers can encounter conflict when their performances congest pedestrian traffic. The ways performers and audiences negotiate circulation is a key concern in analyzing street types.



Figure 2.13 - Street Pitches (Author 2011)

NTS

STOPS

The Stop pitch type is defined by transit stop locations where performers, primarily musicians, perform. This network of transit stops can stretch performers throughout different stations in a city and sometimes there are multiple performers at the same stop. Stop pitches typically are found in high traffic transit stations with connecting lines. Many mass transit authorities have programs that regulate and try to accommodate performers. Stop pitches that are in underground subway systems protect performers from the elements and accommodate performers year round.

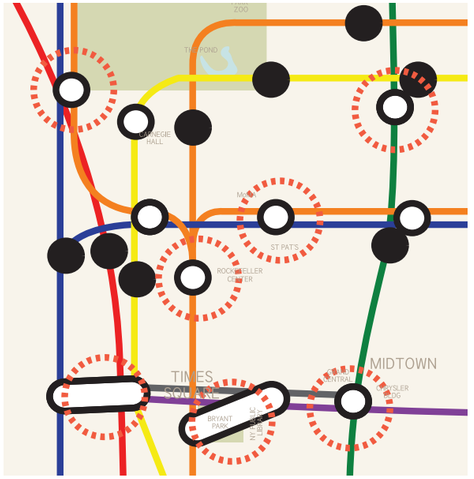


Figure 2.14 - Stop Pitches (Author 2011)

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SQUARES: WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

Washington Square Park is a 9.75-acre park located in the heart of New York City. It is surrounded by the New York University (NYU) campus and is recognized as the school's quad, even though it is a public park. NYU rents the park from the city for graduation ceremony every year. Notable landmarks in the park include a large stone arch and central fountain. These major focal points serve the close proximity to NYU, residential neighborhoods, and Greenwich Village. Restaurants and stores make Washington Square Park a popular public space in New York.

Washington Square Park was built in the 1820s on a site that was previously a public gallows and burial ground for paupers. The park has gone through a series of modifications throughout the years and is currently under renovation. Washington Square Park has a history of attracting musicians, poets, writers, and artists during the 1950s and 1960s like Allen Ginsburg, Jack Kerouac, and Bob Dylan. In 1961 conflict between law authorities and musicians caused the Washington Square Riots which ignited a debate concerning First Amendment rights in public spaces. Today musicians and street performers continue to flock to Washington Square to perform for locals and tourists. Chess tables, comfortable seating, playgrounds, and dog runs attract visitors of all ages, making the square one of the top 12 public squares in America according to the Project for Public Spaces (pps.org).



Figure 2.15 - Washington Square Park context map (Author 2011)

NTS

Busking Location

NYU Campus Building

Greenwich Village

SQUARES: WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK

ANALYSIS

A range of hierarchical gathering spaces in Washington Square Park facilitate different sized groups and crowds. The centrally-focused circulation paths lead people to congregate around the large fountain in the middle of the square. A variety of programmed spaces like playgrounds, chess tables, and dog runs attract nearby residents of all ages on a daily basis to visit the park. *Figure 2.16* shows the planned park modifications currently under construction.

Hierarchical Gathering Spaces

Circulation Pathways

Programmed Spaces

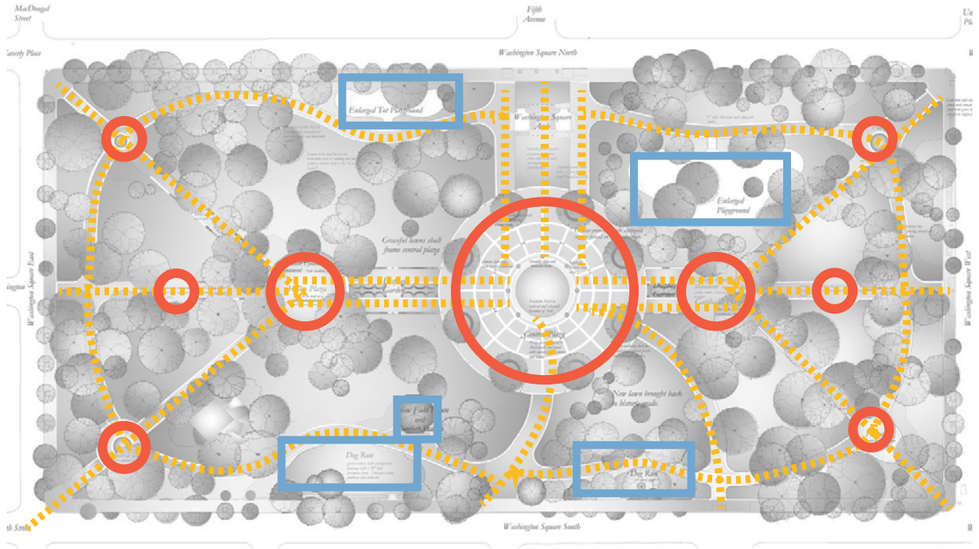


Figure 2.16 - Washington Square Park circulation and spaces (Adapted by Author from Washington Square Park Blog 2010)

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SQUARES: WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK

SOCIOPETAL SPACE

Washington Square Park is an example of what psychiatrist Humphrey Osmond calls sociopetal space. Sociopetal and sociofugal are terms used to describe the social activity of different spatial configurations. Sociopetal space tends to bring people together and encourage communication and interaction. In spatial terms it is described as a radial with merging and overlapping routes and interconnected rings and spirals. Sociofugal space tends to keep people apart, suppress communication, and isolate people by facing them away from one another. Sociofugal is spatially described as boxlike or grid like (Main and Hannah 2010, 26).

Harrison-Pepper recognizes how the “spoke like” configuration of Washington Square clearly illustrates the phenomenon of sociopetal space stating, “People are drawn together via routes that merge and overlap throughout the square...Placing the sociopetal design of Washington Square within the grid like pattern of New York’s streets further enhances our understanding of the square’s appeal. In contrast to the environment of the city—with its activities separated and strung out along its streets—Washington Square pulls activities together” (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 64). Harrsion-Peppers diagrams adapted in *Figures 2.17* and *2.18* illustrate two sociopetal concepts she calls the funnel and the spiral.

Washington Square Park’s buskers typically perform around the centrally-located arch and fountain. The design of Washington Square focuses performances and activity towards the heart of the park. The overall sociopetal design of Washington Square creates interaction similar to the way busker performances do by drawing people together and focusing their attention on a common point, therefore, busking also creates sociopetality.

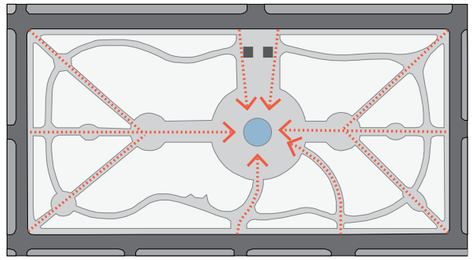


Figure 2.17 - The funnel sociopetal concept (Adpated by Author 2011 from Harrison-Pepper)

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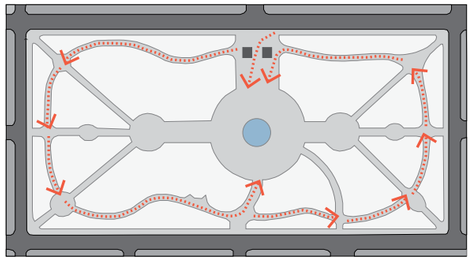


Figure 2.18 - The spiral sociopetal concept (Adpated by Author 2011 from Harrison-Pepper)

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SQUARES: WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK

CIRCLES IN THE SQUARE

The circle is recognized in the book Drawing a Circle in the Square as, “the most sensible arrangement out-of-doors for performers and their audiences, for it provides the greatest number of persons, while assisting in crowd control by placing focus in the center” (Harrison-Pepper 126, 1990). This circular arrangement also allows the performer’s pitch size and shape to change according the space required by the performer, and the size of the audience.

Circulation occurs around the outer edges of the circle, but these gatherings often persuade people passing by to investigate. Sociologist Herbert Blumer observes, “Milling attracts and infects individuals, many of whom originally are detached and indifferent spectators and bystanders. At first, people may be merely curious about a given behavior, or mildly interested in it. As they catch the spirit of excitement and become more attentive to the behavior, they become more inclined to engage in it” (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 124). When different performances occur at the same time audience members can flexibly move between performances perhaps observing a magician while listening to a neighboring rock band. A variety of acts and performances supply audiences with wide a range of entertainment.

“Audiences clustered in circles around individual performers, emphasizes the collective origins of performance” (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 126). Many times performers outline their performance spaces by drawing chalk circles or outline their stage with a rope. For many performers who require a certain amount of space for their performance, this helps crowds understand where the temporary stage’s boundaries are.

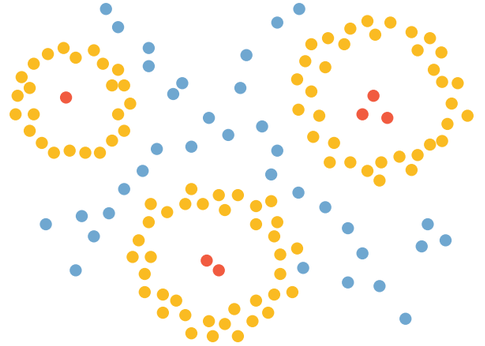


Figure 2.19 - Performance Circles (Author 2011)

SQUARES: WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK

TRIANGULATION

Washington Square Park performance circles show how circularity can promote “shoulder-to-shoulder and across-the-space interaction” (Harrison-Pepper, 1990 127) by sharing a central focus. This across-pitch visual interaction between audience members is an excellent example of William Whyte’s principal of triangulation (*Figure 2.20*). Whyte defines triangulation as, “the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to each other as though they were not” (Whyte 2001, 94).

Indoor theaters have an unspoken system of codes and conventions tending towards sociofugality. “Each spectator has his or her own well-marked space and relative immunity from physical or visual contact with others in the audience. The result is an emphasis on the personal rather than social perceptions and responses,” (1990, 126) writes Harrison-Pepper. Busking circles on the other hand, are sociopetal events that enable visual and verbal communication among audience members through triangulation.

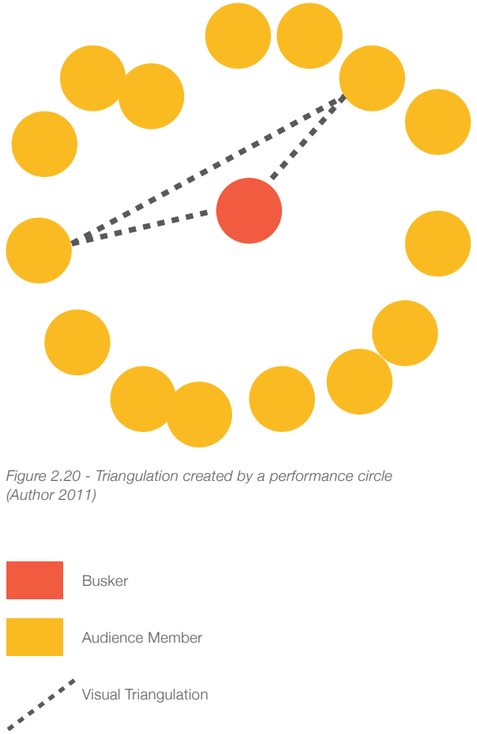


Figure 2.20 - Triangulation created by a performance circle (Author 2011)

SQUARES: WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK

VIDEO CLIPS & ANALYSIS

AFTERNOON PERFORMANCES (VIDEO CLIP 2.1)
This video clip shows a variety of performances captured in April of 2009. Performances from a rock group and the acrobatic duo Tic-Tac are the primary performances highlighted in this clip. A PA system amplifies the rock group causing the audience to listen and observe from a distance because of the volume. Tic-Tac’s audience is much closer to the performance. Ropes lay on the ground help define the stage where the audience gathers around in a large rectangle. A group of doo-wap singers use the side of the entrance arch.



Video Clip 2.1 - Afternoon Washington Square Park performances (Vimeo)

SUMMERTIME DIXIELAND GROUP (VIDEO CLIP 2.2)
This brief clip shows a Dixieland jazz group assembling around a long curved bench on a summer day in 2010. Some audience members share the bench with the performers while others stand back and listen. Nearby food vendors attract audience members for the musicians, and the music attracts potential customers for the food vendors, illustrating the symbiotic relationship that can exist between vendors and performers.



Video Clip 2.2 - Washington Square Park Dixieland jazz group (Vimeo)

SQUARES: WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK ARCH

PLACE

Location: North Entrance of Washington Square Park in Manhattan's Greenwich Village neighborhood against the east side of Washington Square Arch

Pitch Space: The pitch is defined and articulated by lights, these point elements frame the performance and allow audience members to observe this performance at night. Planar elements including the metallic grate on the ground plane and the vertical plane of the arch help form a stage for the busker. The pitch illustrates how the entrances along the edges of squares are popular busking locations as well as the central sociopetal spaces. The proxemic definition of this pitch is a *fixed feature space* because it is comprised of immobile objects.

PEOPLE

Buskers: The types of buskers this pitch accommodates vary; however, it appears to be popular with soloists and small groups of musicians.

Audience: People observing the performance could do so by entering the square or leaving the square as well as walking along the street. Audiences are composed of a wide range of people including NYU students, tourists, and nearby inhabitants. The bollards provide street furniture for audience members who wish to rest. The proximic distance measurement of this space would be *social* (4-12 feet).

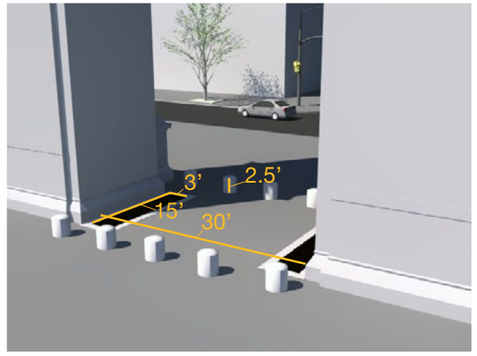


Figure 2.21 - Dimensioned Washington Square Arch pitch (Author 2011)

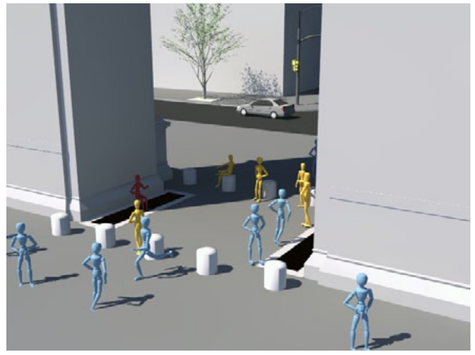
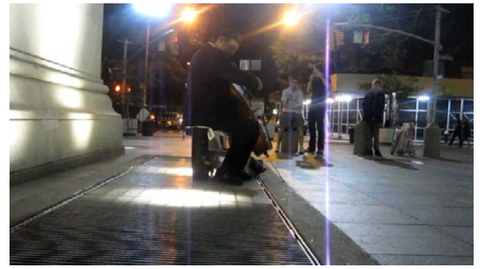


Figure 2.22 - Populated Washington Square Arch pitch (Author 2011)

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.3 shows cellist Peter Lewy performing at night. He strategically sets up between the two lights framing his performance, which create a dramatic stage-like lighting effect. A line in the hardscaped surface between the banding and the concrete serve as the edge of the stage and accommodate the cellist's endpin. The pitch's location at the edge and entrance of the square in a highly visible position is a good site for attracting pedestrians.



Video Clip 2.3 - Cellist Peter Lewy performs under the Washington Square Arch (Vimeo)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

STREETS: 5TH AVENUE & 42ND STREET

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

42nd Street and 5th Avenue are two of the most well known streets in New York City. These streets are lined with a number of iconic Manhattan tourist destinations including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Central Park, Times Square, and Empire State Building. 42nd Street and 5th Avenue have tens of thousands of pedestrians walking their sidewalks everyday making them popular locations for street performers.

In 1970 mayor John Lindsay signed a bill abolishing licensing requirements for street musicians helping New York gain its reputation as on of the most hospitable streets in America for street entertainment. Technically people are allowed to perform anywhere in the city without a license if no amplification is being used. However, sometimes performers without a license are asked by law enforcement to “move on” (Baird 2009).

For the most part law enforcement intervenes in street performances only when crowds become too large. Harrison-Pepper observes that street performers have learned to avoid confrontations with shop owners and police by congregating in specific areas and comments how street performers have “learned to develop performances that reflect the behaviors of each area” (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 39). Poets and magicians will perform in Central Park; jugglers and mimes choose areas around museums and libraries; musicians, street drummers, dancers, and acrobats will often be found along 5th Avenue and Times Square (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 39).



Figure 2.23 - A guitarist and soprano saxophonist perform along 5th Avenue (Flickr)

STREETS: 5TH AVENUE & 42ND STREET

PITCH INVENTORY

Popular pitch locations along 5th Avenue and 42nd Street include:

1. In front of the Metropolitan Museum of Art on 5th Avenue
2. In front of the Public Library on the corner where 5th Avenue and E 42nd Street Intersect
3. In front of the Safra Bank on the corner of 5th and W 45th Street
4. In front of the Chase Bank on the corner of 5th Avenue and W 42nd Street
5. Around Pulitzer Fountain on 5th Avenue between W 58th Street and W 59th Street
6. Sidewalk of W 42nd Street in the Times Square area

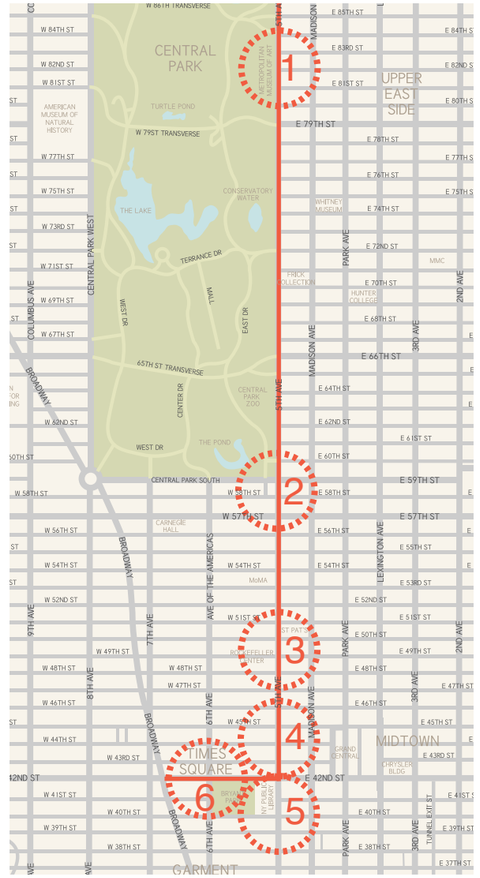


Figure 2.24 - 5th Avenue and 42nd street pitches (Author 2011)

NTS

STREETS: 5TH AVENUE & 42ND STREET

FLOW

5th Avenue and 42nd Street are wide streets with wide sidewalks that have space to accommodate street performers. However, these wide sidewalks are not the most important reason performers are attracted to these streets. The consistent strong flow of pedestrian traffic is what attracts buskers to 5th Avenue and 42nd Street. William Whyte observes, “What entertainers most look for is a place with a strong flow (Whyte 1990, 34).

New York’s gridded street system creates direct linear movement. This type of spatial organization is categorized as sociofugal, efficiently moving pedestrians from point A to point B suppressing interaction and communication. This fundamental difference between streets and squares like Washington Square Park, makes busking in streets different from squares. Buskers that perform in streets contend with pedestrian circulation much more directly making their pitches typically smaller and more compact. These buskers often play around fixed elements like trashcans, lampposts, or newspaper vending machines to help define their space and not disrupt pedestrians passing by. People usually observe these performances briefly backing up to allow circulation to occur between performer and audience. While many people don’t stop to listen, they will make donations as they pass by, illustrating how pedestrian flow is crucial to street performers.



Figure 2.25 - Singing group Acapella Soul performs along 5th avenue (undercoverny.com 2011)



Figure 2.26 - 5th Avenue dancers define a pitch with chalk lines (Dooley 2011)

STREETS: 5TH AVENUE & 42ND STREET

STREET PERFORMANCE CIRCLES

Buskers performing in streets need to be highly mobile to accommodate pedestrian traffic and avoid conflicts with law enforcement and merchants. A large number of dance groups perform along 5th Ave. for reasons other than the wide sidewalks and constant stream of pedestrians. Dancers can enter and exit a pitch quickly. If a dance group needs to move they can easily do so. The stage is rapidly constructed by a piece of chalk. This simple gesture also acts as a safety precaution for the audience. The chalk outline defines how much space is required by the performers and helps prevent people from entering the stage area and getting injured. Dancers, who are not performing, walk the perimeter of the stage preventing people from crossing into the performance space

Harrison-Pepper observed how street performers like Philippe Petit would *draw a circle in the square* to define his territory. She observes, “The chalk circle, set apart from the empty space, confined attention and limited activities, thereby defining the situation as theatrical one” (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 126). A chalk outlined stage can easily be expanded, contracted, or erased, and is a good solution for making a temporary performance space (*figure 2.26*).

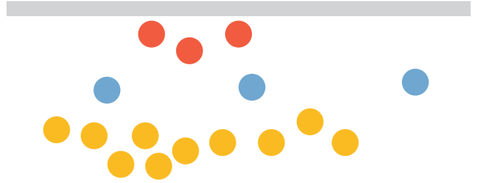
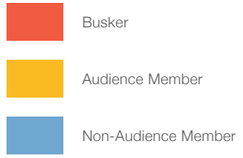


Figure 2.27 - Street pitch configuration where circulation moves in front of audience, this configuration usually occurs during a street music performances (Author 2011)



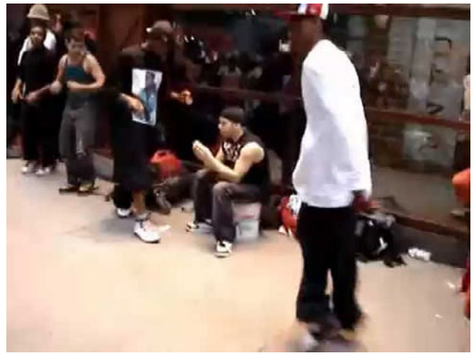
Figure 2.28 - Street pitch configuration where circulation occurs around the outer edge of the performance circle, this configuration usually occurs during street dancing performances (Author 2011)



STREETS: 5TH AVENUE & 42ND STREET

VIDEO CLIPS & ANALYSIS

42ND STREET DANCERS (VIDEO CLIP 2.4)
This Times Square dance group provides entertainment along one of the most crowded sidewalks in New York. This clip shows how members of the group who are not dancing help control the configuration of the stage and collect tips. Ropes are linear elements that help define the performer's stage, similar to Tic-Tac's Washington Square performances.



Video Clip 2.4 - Times Square street dancers (YouTube)

MUSEUM STAIRCASE SINGERS (VIDEO CLIP 2.5)
A male singing group called Acapella Soul gives insight into the life of street performers. Filmed along 5th Avenue in front of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the long wide staircase to the museum's entrance provides natural stadium seating for audience members and keeps them separated from pedestrian circulation. Singing groups like Acapella Soul do not require a lot of equipment and are quite portable, making this a type of performance well suited for busking in streets.



Video Clip 2.5 - Acapella Soul interview and performance (YouTube.com)

STREETS: PRINCE STREET

PLACE

Location: 95 Prince Street in Manhattan's Soho neighborhood in front of a building that is currently a J. Crew clothing store and is adjacent to other popular retail shops like an Apple Store.

Pitch Space: The pitch is defined and articulated by the volumetric space created by a non-functioning stairway. The stairs provide a platform for small performance groups. The separation from the sidewalk that the stairway produces delineates not only the stage, but also the circulation of pedestrian traffic. These immobile objects define a *fixed feature space*.

PEOPLE

Buskers: The types of buskers this pitch accommodates are small musical groups, normally men's singing groups performing doo-wap standards like "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," and "Stand by Me."

Audience: Typical audience members are shoppers drawn to stores like the Apple Store and J. Crew, or pedestrians. Audience members are spaced close together in *personal* (1.5 – 4 feet), and *social* (4 – 12 feet) proxemic distances.

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.6: Fortunately by not removing an existing non-functional stairway, a stage for musicians was unintentionally created. This unique pitch example illustrates how designers and planners should promote and preserve potential pitch locations for street performers. When this space is not in use by performers it provides seating for resting shoppers. Simple multi-use platforms like these create stages for performers and seating for pedestrians.



Video Clip 2.6 - Prince Street acapella performance (YouTube)

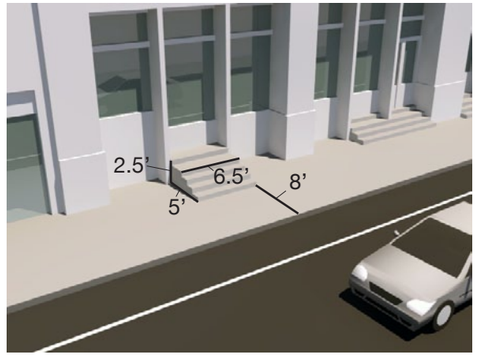


Figure 2.29 - Dimensioned Prince Street pitch (Author 2011)

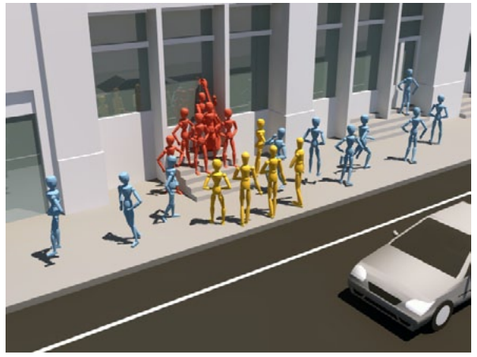


Figure 2.30 - Populated Prince Street pitch (Author 2011)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

STOPS: MUSIC UNDER NEW YORK

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

Music Underground New York (MUNY) is a program that the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) initiated in 1985. MUNY establishes performance locations throughout selected metro stops on subway mezzanines and platforms. The majority of these performance locations occur south of Central Park along metro stops on streets with heavy pedestrian traffic like 42nd street.

Musicians who want to be part of MUNY audition in Grand Central Terminal in front of a jury of professionals, consisting of representatives from the music industry, cultural institutions, MTA station operations, and fellow musicians. Auditions are held annually where each contestant performs for five minutes. Applicants are judged based on criteria of “quality, variety, and appropriateness for the mass transit environment” (mta.info 2011).

Performers selected by the jury attend orientation meetings explaining the procedures of the program and the regulations of the transit system relating to passenger safety and comfort. MUNY members receive a personalized banner that is displayed during scheduled MUNY performances in the designated performance locations.

The MUNY program was started after years of conflict between Transit Authority officials and musicians. Ever since the New York opened subway lines in 1904, spontaneous music making was prohibited. During the 1960s and 70s when more street performers started performing in locations like Washington Square Park and Central Park, they were still not allowed in New York subways (Tanenbaum 1995, 149).

In the 1960s the Transit Authority extended its ban on busking by increasing fines and sending some rule violators to jail. In the late 1970s and early 1980s as more musicians ventured into the subways to perform, especially in the colder winter months, many performers were issued summonses for “begging and soliciting,” “obstructing traffic,” “disorderly conduct,” “making unnecessary noise,” or even “entertaining passengers” (Tanenbaum 1995, 151).

In 1985 the MTA introduced MUNY as part of a campaign to use art to draw New Yorkers back into the subways. Currently there are over 100 solo and group acts affiliated with MUNY who provide 150 performances a week in dozens of different subway stops locations. Apart from these regular performances MUNY presents special theme events like a Blues Festival, Jazz Fesival, Divas Underground, and Summer Solstice concert.

PITCH INVENTORY

The highest concentration of MUNY stops occurs south of Central park where there are also many street and square pitches. MUNY pitches open and close over time, however, this selection of pitches represents some of the oldest and most active.

1. Columbus Circle, 60th Street 2 locations – Mezzanine above uptown 1 line, near 60th Street entrance Wide platform area of uptown 1 line
2. 59th Street, Lexington Avenue North end platform area of the 6 line
3. 53rd Street, Lexington Avenue Corridor between 6 line and E, F lines, by the stairs to downtown 6 line
4. Rockefeller Center, 50th Street Mezzanine area of B,D,F lines, near entrance at 50th Street
5. 42nd Street, 8th Avenue Mezzanine area above A,C,E lines, below Port Authority
6. Times Square, 42nd Street Mezzanine opposite the Shuttle line, below 42nd and Broadway
7. 42nd Street, 6th Avenue North end of the mezzanine below 6th Avenue, near entrance
8. 34th Street, 6th Avenue Mezzanine area above N,R,Q lines, opposite the entrance
9. 28th Street, Lexington Avenue Platform area on the uptown side of the 6 line
10. 34th Street, 6th Avenue (Herald Square) Mezzanine area above N,R,Q lines, opposite the entrance
11. Astor Place Near entrance area, platform areas of 6 line
12. 14th Street, Union Square, N&R Mezzanine above last stairs to N, R, Q lines, southwest corner of station near entrance

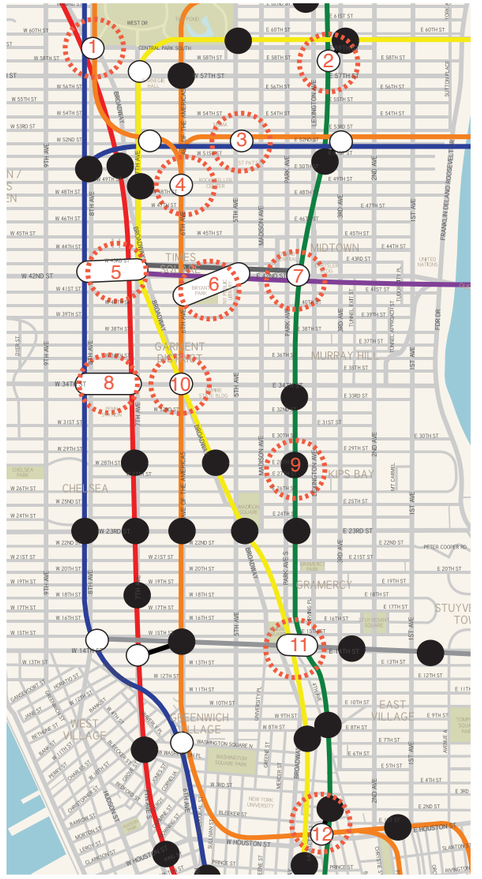


Figure 2.31 - Subway system stop pitches (Author 2011)

NTS

FOCUSED INTERACTION

An in-depth analysis of the MUNY program was conducted in the early 1990s by Susie J. Tanenbaum, and published in her book *Underground Harmonies*. During her research she observed different performances and interviewed subway musicians, MTA workers, law enforcement, and city officials concerning MUNY. A good portion of this book looks at the political issues surrounding MUNY and subway performing, however, she also makes observations concerning the spatial configurations of different pitches.

In Tanenbaum's chapter "Boundaries and Bridges: Relationships in Public Space," she cites sociologist Erving Goffman and his pioneering work conducted in the 1950s that studied relationships between strangers in cites. Tanenbaum states that, "Goffman named two types of behavior that are especially relevant in exploring subway music. The first kind, 'unfocussed interaction,' primarily refers to pedestrian traffic...The second kind of behavior, 'focused interaction,' refers to situations in which 'a set of people...relate to one another through the medium of a common activity" (Tanenbaum 1995, 98).

Tanenbaum cites William H. Whyte and Jane Jacob's work as documented studies of unfocused and focused *interaction*. She recognizes the work of Sally Harrison-Pepper concerning performance circles and observes the way similar circular pitch configurations occur during MUNY performances. The formation of these "audience circles" start with a few audience members that typically stand at a distance from one another, similar to how strangers will sit at opposite ends of park benches. Tanenbaum observes how audience members spread out to, "maximize their sense of safety and ironically, freedom in anonymity. Or they may separate simply to lay claim to the 'elephant feet' pillars girding the mezzanine, which they use as back supports (*figure 2.32*)" (Tanenbaum 1995, 99).

As more audience members join the circle, 2nd or 3rd tiers may form around the initial audience circle. The circular structure allows audience members to watch the musicians and one another promoting "social contact, mutual surveillance and a greater sense of security" (Tanenbaum 1995, 99). These circles have a maximum size, and when recently arriving subway riders cannot see a performance taking place inside a multi-tiered performance circle, they typically walk by.

Tanenbaum observes two typical ways non-audience members will pass by a performance stating, "When a circle is large passersby generally walk around the perimeter rather than across the 'stage.' They do cross it when it is the most convenient route or when they are oblivious or antagonistic to the performance" (Tanenbaum 1995, 101).

STOPS: MUSIC UNDER NEW YORK

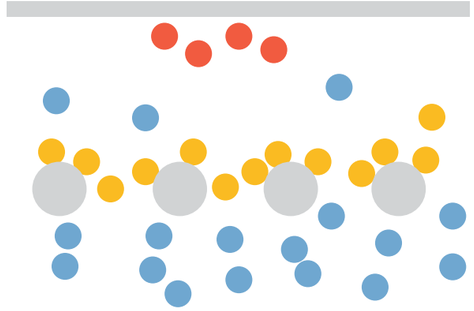


Figure 2.32 - 'Elephant feet' columns provide a place for audiences to rest, while also helping define the boundaries and circulation of the pitch (Author 2011)

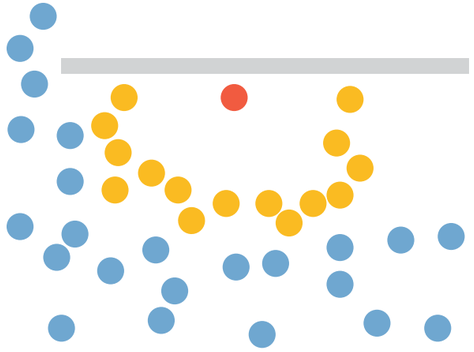


Figure 2.33 - Walls and fixed objects can direct circulation and create pockets where buskers can perform without conflicting with pedestrian circulation (Author 2011)

STREET FURNITURE

William H. Whyte observes in his book *City* how people will transform objects in a street, plaza, or park into furniture (Whyte 1990, 91). Similarly, Tanenbaum observes how MUNY audience members would look for places to sit down or lean up against, often sitting on staircase banisters, gate railings, and leaning up against pillars. She also describes the way audiences assign new functions to their own belongings by sitting on cases and bags they are carrying in an effort to make their city more comfortable. "Their casual acts of transformation give them an increased sense of belonging to the spaces they temporarily inhabit," writes Tanenbaum (1995, 99).

Musicians will also create their own furniture sitting on instrument cases, bringing their own chairs, crates, stools, or using subway station benches. Seating is necessary for some instrumentalist like cellists or kora players while others can perform standing up. Many older or disabled audience members require seating to enjoy a performance. Therefore, furniture that accommodates both performers and audience members are crucial elements that enhance the comfort and success of a pitch.

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

STOPS: MUSIC UNDER NEW YORK

MASS TRANSIT DEFINES STOP PITCHES

Stop pitches like those found in New York subways, are unique from square and street pitches in they can occur in underground-protected spaces and are managed by city transit authorities. However, stop pitches have characteristics of both squares and streets. Some stop pitches occur in open plaza and mezzanine areas where people converge and interact. These pitches resemble those found at squares like Washington Square Park where there is more space and fewer concerns about interfering with pedestrian traffic. Other stop pitches are on subway platforms or more confined areas where buskers have to contend with pedestrian circulation. Stop pitches that occur along streets at bus stops and light rail stops are practically street pitches. However, the fact that these pitches are centered around mass transit hubs make them different from square and street pitches and are the defining characteristic of the stop pitch type.



Figure 2.34 - A guitar duo performs at a MUNY pitch. The sign behind them identifies the name of the group and recognizes their affiliation with MUNY (x7d.xanga.com)

VIDEO CLIPS & ANALYSIS

SOLO GUITAR PERFORMANCE (VIDEO CLIP 2.7)
This clip taken in the Times Square 42nd Street stop shows classical guitarist Yily Nelson performing. Nelson sets up in an open space using two pillars to help define his stage. This is one of many different YouTube clips of him performing in this same location. His pitch is defined by the linear elements created by the columns and the change in tile color. The MUNY sign suspended overhead acts as a planar element to define his performance space. Audience members lean against the subway stop columns.



Video Clip 2.7 - Guitarist Yily Nelson performing at the Times Square 42nd Street subway stop (YouTube)

KORA PERFORMANCE (VIDEO CLIP 2.8)
This video clip produced by the MTA highlights the kora music of M. Salieu Suso. Suso is originally from the African country of Gambia. Here he is playing at the Union Square station. Suso has set up against the wall of the station and is using a battery-powered amplifier for his voice and instrument. Audience members can be seen observing the performance leaned up against railings and pillars. The uniqueness of Suso's instrument and music stops curious pedestrians. MUNY selects many international musicians to perform which exposes New Yorkers music from a range of cultures.



Video Clip 2.8 - Kora player M. Salieu Suso performing at the Union Square subway stop (YouTube)

ANDEAN FOLK PERFORMANCE (VIDEO CLIP 2.9)
Espiritu Andino is a group of traditional Andean musicians who busk throughout New York. Here they are performing at 34th Street and 6th Avenue station. This clip clearly shows audience members leaning up against the large "elephant feet" columns (*Figure 2.32*). The group of four musicians set up against the railing of a stairway and easily fit in this open space. The railing helps define the pitch space but also allows visibilty for subway passangers passing by. The performers and audience seem to use the tile pattern on the ground as a linear element to help define the stage area.



Video Clip 2.9 - Espiritu Andino performance at the 34th Street and 6th Avenue subway stop (YouTube)

STOPS: UNION SQUARE SUBWAY PLATFORM

PLACE

Location: Union Square Subway Platform in New York City

Pitch Space: A stairway creates an important volumetric element for this subway stop pitch that create a *fixed feature space*. The stairway protects buskers from obstructing pedestrian circulation, forming a type of “eddy” where performers can comfortably perform. The pitch is located on a platform and performers must contend with loud passing subways.

PEOPLE

Buskers: Duo and solo performing groups are best suited for this pitch due to the limited space. There are few amenities for performers other than the basic benefits of performing in subway station, like protection from elements and available lighting.

Audience: Typical audience members are commuters waiting for their subway limited seating is available and people lean against the columns along the platform. The distance between audience members varies from *personal* (1.5 – 4 feet), *social* 4 – 12 feet) and *public* (12 + feet) proxemic distances.

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.10: Union Square is an active subway station and has excellent pedestrian flow. While performing on a subway platform with loaded subways passing constantly presents a considerable challenge for performers, people waiting for their subway car provide a captive audience for buskers. These buskers have a straightforward performance routine that is highly mobile and acoustic, allowing them to perform in many areas restricted to musicians using amplification.



Video Clip 2.10 - Acoustic duo performs on Union Square Subway stop platform (YouTube)

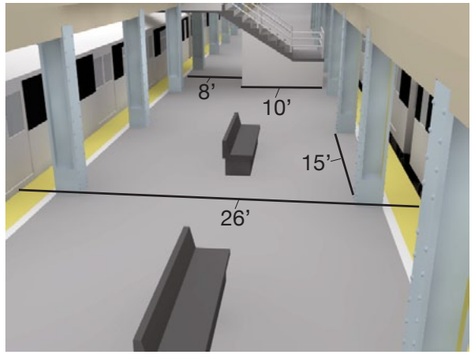


Figure 2.35 - Union Square subway platform dimensions (Author 2011)



Figure 2.36 - Populated Union Square subway platform (Author 2011)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

TYPOLOGY: CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Harvard Square has a rich history as a gathering place for students, writers, poets, and political protesters much like Washington Square Park in New York. Harvard Square is the home to the first printing press in America illustrating the strong connection between the free press and street performing. Cambridge, Massachusetts is known for its active busking scene, largely due to the efforts of busker and advocate Stephan Baird. Baird organized groups and petitioned officials to allow street performing. The city established a licensing process for street performers with clear, well-defined policies included in the appendix to this document. Similar to street performing in New York City, buskers create pitches in squares, streets, and stops. This case study illustrates how this typology exists within the Harvard Square area.

Licensing street performers as Cambridge does has advantages and disadvantages. While licensing can help cities regulate performances, prevent conflict with merchants, and encourage neighborhoods to embrace buskers, some argue that this changes the fundamental nature of street performance. Harrison-Pepper observes that Harvard Square performances, “were polished and slick, but lacked the rawness and courage that first attracted me to street performance” (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 37).

The dangers and challenges performers can face is part of the attraction of street performance for many buskers and observers. Philippe Petite explains, “Finding a spot, waiting for the rain to stop, hiding from a cop is part of what street performance is about and I hope it doesn’t change” (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 37). However, for many buskers and city officials, licensing serves as a type of quality control and Baird argues that licensing provides greater opportunities for busking to grow and be accepted as an important part of public spaces (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 38).



HARVARD SQUARE PITCH TYPOLOGY SITES

1. BRATTLE SQUARE
2. MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
3. HARVARD SQUARE MBTA STOP

Figure 2.37 (Adapted by Author from Google Earth image 2011)

NTS

SQUARES: BRATTLE SQUARE

PLACE

Location: Small square southwest of Harvard Square in Cambridge, MA

Pitch Space: Brattle Square illustrates how square pitch types can occur in small squares. There is one pedestrian path opening up in the center of the square to provide room for gatherings. The boundaries of this pitch can be defined by the implied edge of the pedestrian pathway and the seating wall that surrounds the central *fixed feature space*.

PEOPLE

Buskers: This pitch could accommodate a wide variety of performers but probably groups no larger than ten people. Seating walls and shade provide inviting amenities for performers and the pedestrians are directed to pass through this space giving the square excellent pedestrian flow. However, performances would need to be loud enough to carry over the noise of traffic.

Audience: Audience members are tourists, shoppers and students. The low walls, grassy berms, and shade make this a comfortable space for people who want to stop and watch a performance. *Personal* (1.5 – 4 feet) and *social* (4 – 12 feet) distances separate audience members.

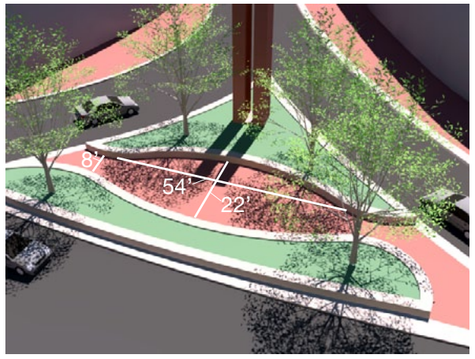


Figure 2.38 - Brattle Square dimensions (Author 2011)

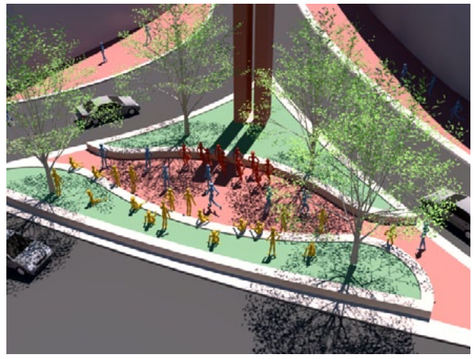


Figure 2.39 - Populated Brattle Square (Author 2011)

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.11: The Brattle Square pitch is an excellent example that shows how simple amenities like seating walls, trees, and lawn can provide comfortable spaces for audiences. This small sociopetal square accommodates performances in an area not much larger than a traffic island. The surrounding vehicular traffic makes this a difficult site to perform in unless the performance is quite loud, like this drum ensemble.



Video Clip 2.11 - Brattle Square drum ensemble performance (YouTube)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

STREETS: MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

PLACE

Location: 1366 Massachusetts Avenue, directly east of Harvard Square in front of an Au Bon Pain cafe.

Pitch Space: Wide sidewalks and an outdoor café seating area provide plenty of room for busking in this location. Pitches could be defined by planar elements like the metal grate, or by elements brought to the site by the performer. In the video the guitarist uses a blanket to define his stage these movable objects make this a *semi-fixed feature space*. The raised platform of the outdoor café serves as a place for pedestrians to stop, sit, and experience a performance.to stop, sit, and experience a performance.

PEOPLE

Buskers: Like most street pitches this space can accommodate small musical groups or solo performers. Buskers would probably perform with their backs against the street so they are facing the outdoor café area along the sidewalk.

Audience: Audience members are tourists, shoppers, students and café patrons. There is movable seating and umbrellas provided in this area making it a comfortable place for people to stop and listen. The distance between audience members varies from *personal* (1.5 – 4 feet), *social* (4 – 12 feet) and *public* (12 + feet) proxemic distances.

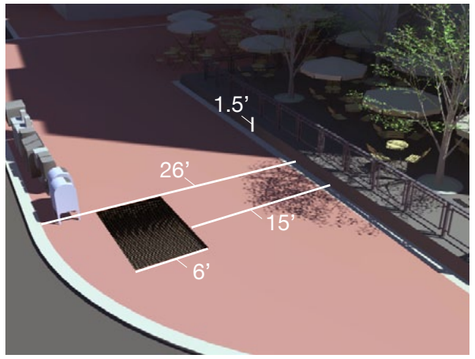


Figure 2.40 - 1366 Massachusetts Avenue dimensions (Author 2011)



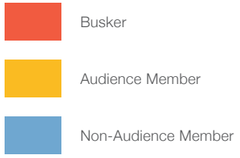
Figure 2.41 - Populated 1366 Massachusetts Avenue (Author 2011)

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.12: Busking in front of outdoor cafes can help provide a pleasant atmosphere for diners. The guitarist looks like he is using seating for the dining area for his amplifier and to sit. A woman and children observe the performance from a distance sitting on the raised café seating area. One child looks particularly intent watching the performance and demonstrates the powerful response young children can have to buskers.



Video Clip 2.12 - Massachusetts Avenue solo guitar performance (YouTube)



STOPS: HARVARD SQUARE SUBWAY PLATFORM

PLACE

Location: MBTA subway station stop beneath Harvard Square

Pitch Space: The bench that is providing seating for subway passengers and buskers helps define this pitch and make it a *fixed feature* proxemic space. A volumetric void where the bench space is contained surrounds the performer and makes the busker's obstruction to passing pedestrians minimal.

PEOPLE

Buskers: Solo musicians or duo groups are well suited for this Harvard Square subway stop pitch. Performers that require or prefer seating will find this pitch particularly attractive.

Audience: Typical audience members at this location are subway commuters. Seating is available for audience member, possibly alongside the performer. Large columns provide street furniture for people who would rather observe from a distance while waiting for the subway. The distance between audience members varies from *personal* (1.5 – 4 feet), *social* (4 – 12 feet) and *public* (12 + feet) proxemic distances.

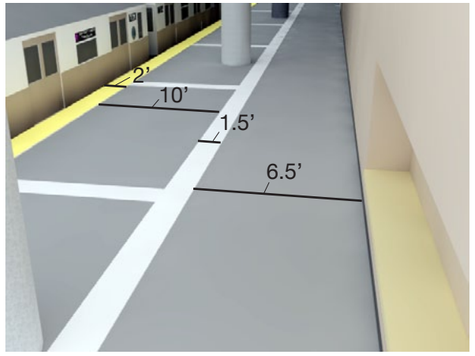


Figure 2.42 - Harvard Square subway platform dimensions (Author 2011)



Figure 2.43 - Populated Harvard Square subway platform (Author 2011)

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.13: The performance is very similar to the Massachusetts Avenue example. A classically trained guitarist uses a battery-powered amplifier for his guitar and microphone. The busker uses a dolly to make the transport and set up of his pitch easy and portable. A clever microphone stand that also servers as a music stand helps this guitarist reduce the amount of equipment he has to carry. This performance would be extremely difficult to hear in this loud space without the aid of amplification, demonstrating the need of sound reinforcement for many buskers



Video Clip 2.13 - Harvard Square subway platform solo guitar performance (YouTube)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

TYPOLOGY: PORTLAND, OREGON

Pioneer Courthouse Square is widely regarded as one of the United States' great public spaces and is affectionately known as "Portland's living room." The square's central downtown location helps make it a constantly active space. William Whyte writes that the square is "One of the finest examples of well-programmed space," (Whyte 2009, 152) and hosts a number of community events including musical concerts, protest rallies, and dance recitals. A non-profit corporation helps manage and regulate activities and provides amenities for different events.

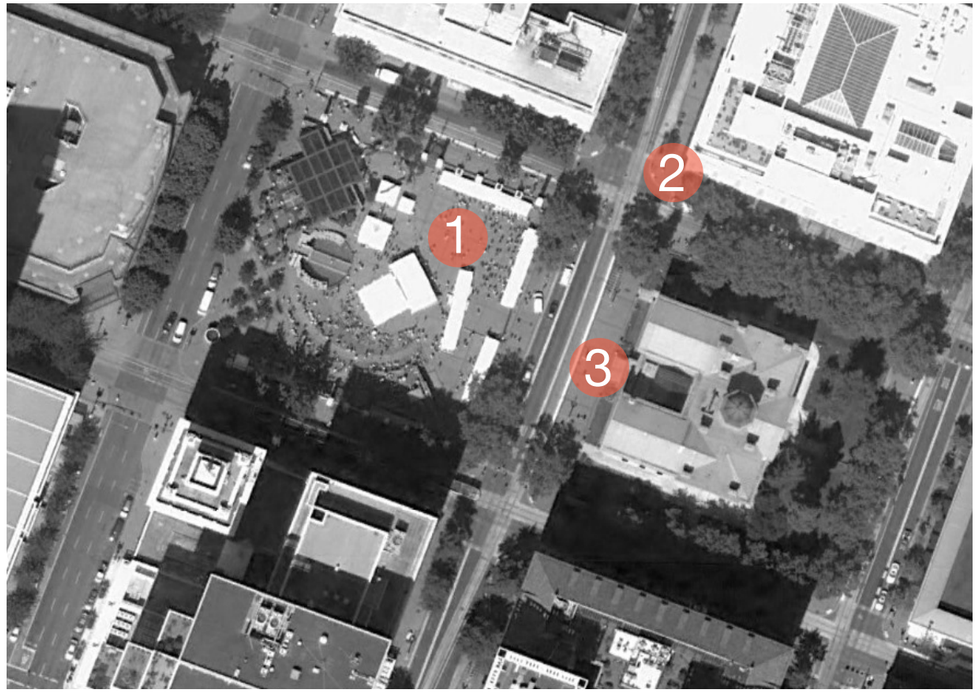
Impromptu street performances occur along the adjacent streets of the Pioneer Couthouse Square because buskers are not allowed to perform in the square (Waldroupe 2011). Portland buskers are restricted to perform in streets only. It is illegal for them to perform in parks, and even the Saturday Market technically shouldn't have performers. Buskers work around this rule by performing on the streets surrounding these spaces. Interestingly, for a city with somewhat rigid busking laws there is considerable street performer activity in Portland as highlighted in the following case studies.



Figure 2.44 - Facing west in Pioneer Courthouse Square (Author 2011)



Figure 2.45 - Facing east in Pioneer Courthouse Square (Author 2011)



PIONEER COURTHOUSE SQUARE PITCH TYPOLOGY SITES

1. PIONEER COURTHOUSE SQUARE
2. SOUTHWEST 6TH AVENUE & MORRISON STREET
3. SOUTHWEST 6TH AVENUE MAX STOP

Figure 2.46 (Adapted by Author from Google Earth image 2011) NTS

STREETS: SW 6TH AVENUE & MORRISON STREET

PLACE

Location: Corner of SW 6th Avenue and Southwest Morrison Street.

Pitch Space: A lamppost and newspaper vending machine are *fixed features* that help spatially define and articulate the pitch enabling a performer to play in front of the entrance to this Macy's department store. The color change in the brick ground plane surface helps define an edge to the busking pitch.

PEOPLE

Buskers: Solo musicians are well suited to play at this street pitch. Space is too confined to include more than one or two musicians. It would also be a difficult pitch for a performer who would need to sit. Standing buskers could more easily move and adjust to accommodate pedestrian traffic on at this busy intersection.

Audience: This pitch type includes many types of audience members including shoppers and light rail commuters, however this space does not accommodate audiences larger than a few people due to fact they feel they are in the way of pedestrians. *Personal* (1.5 – 4 feet) and *social* distance (4 – 12 feet) separate audience members

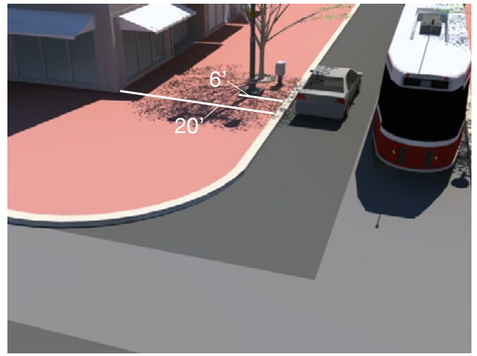


Figure 2.47- SW 6th Avenue and Morrison Street dimensions (Author 2011)

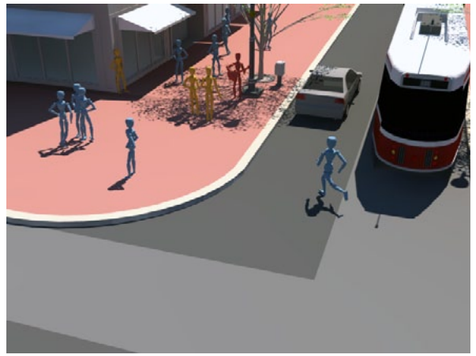


Figure 2.48 - Populated SW 6th Avenue and Morrison Street (Author 2011)

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.14: This pitch is close to the stop pitch. This performance takes place on the Northeast corner looking into Pioneer Courthouse Square. The guitarist uses a battery-powered amp to help project his music into the square, similar to the cellist in the previous example. The high pedestrian flow makes this a desirable pitch for performers. The performer is able to stay clear of circulation rounding the corner of the building by positioning himself on the outside of the sidewalk rather than the inside edge, which helps make him more visible.



Video Clip 2.14 - SW 6th Avenue and Morrison Street solo guitar performance (Author)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

STOPS: SW 6TH AVENUE MAX STOP

PLACE

Location: SW 6th Avenue Max stop on the east side of Pioneer Courthouse Square

Pitch Space: A low wall in front of the Pioneer Courthouse provides seating for performers, but many performers stand also. Performances face into the square and seem like part of the activity of the square even though busking performances in this space are illegal. The pitch has fantastic pedestrian flow and has light rail stops surrounding and is naturally appealing to street performers. This space would be defined as a *fixed feature space*.

PEOPLE

Buskers: Solo musicians or duo groups are well suited to play at this stop pitch. The low wall attracts buskers by presenting a seating option.

Audience: This pitch type includes a wide range of audience members including commuters, tourists, and shoppers. The people most attentive to the busker however are typically those people waiting for the light rail, helping define this pitch as a stop type. Audience members can be spread out anywhere between *social* (4-12 feet) and *public* (12 + feet) proxemic distances.

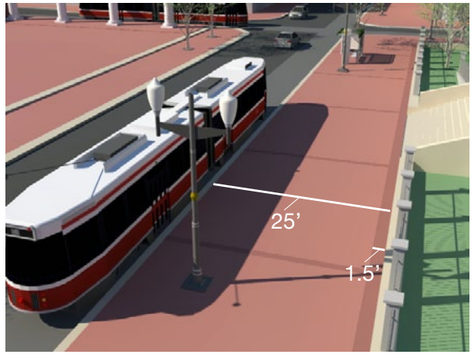


Figure 2.49 - SW 6th Avenue Max stop dimensions (Author 2011)



Figure 2.50 - Populated SW 6th Avenue Max stop (Author 2011)

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.15: This pitch is unique because it is a combination of all three-pitch types. It feels like part of the square even though spatially it is not, it is by a transit stop and serves waiting passengers, but it is also on a busy street. The cellist performing in the clip is using amplification and looping parts of his performance to create a fuller more orchestrated effect. This video beautifully illustrates the activity of the Pioneer Courthouse Area. The dance performance occurring in the square seems to correspond with the musical performance.



Video Clip 2.15 - SW 6th Avenue Max stop cello performance (Vimeo)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

SQUARES: JACKSON SQUARE, NEW ORLEANS

PLACE

Location: Jackson Square in New Orleans' historic French Quarter along the northwest entrance

Pitch Space: Benches help define the pitch and make it a *fixed feature space*. This open street in front of Jackson Square is closed to vehicular traffic allowing plenty of space for busking. Open instrument cases are typically the only element defining the front edge of the stage.

PEOPLE

Buskers: New Orleans brass jazz bands typically busk in this location. New Orleans' deep jazz history helps provide this area with a number of jazz musicians. These groups are loud and their sounds carry over into adjacent streets drawing people to the square

Audience: Jackson Square and the French Quarter are popular tourist destinations attracting visitors from all over. Audiences typically observe performances from under the arcades or shadows of the St. Louis Cathedral. *Social* and *Public* distance are the typical measurements between audience members.

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.16: A group of young musicians play for a good-sized audience along an outside edge of Jackson Square. These buskers gather around a bench using it as a type of base for their equipment. The buskers play energetically and stylistically accurate to the traditional New Orleans jazz style that people would want to hear when visiting the French Quarter. Art vendors can be seen behind the performers gathered along the fence. Many of these artists create their paintings in front of visitors making these artists another unique type of street performer.



Video Clip 2.16 - Jackson Square jazz band performance (Vimeo)

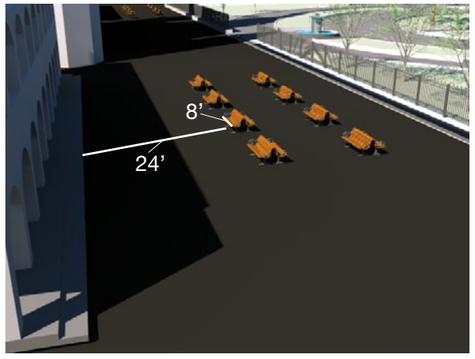


Figure 2.51 - Jackson Square dimensions (Author 2011)



Figure 2.52 - Populated Jackson Square (Author 2011)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

STREETS: MICHIGAN AVENUE, CHICAGO

PLACE

Location: 600 N Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois, currently in front of a Levis department store

Pitch Space: Planer elements along the ground plane help define and articulate the space of this pitch. The space between planting beds provides and excellent adjacency to the pedestrian circulation area, I which buskers can perform. The proxemic definition of this space would be fixed feature.

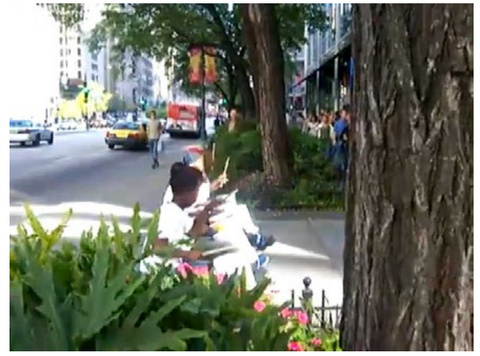
PEOPLE

Buskers: Small groups or solo busking acts could easily be accommodated in this space. There are no amenities like seating or electrical access in this area, but wide streets with constant pedestrian flow make this a desirable location for busking.

Audience: Potential audience members are most likely shoppers. There is sufficient sidewalk space in this area for crowds to gather and not feel like they are obstructing pedestrian circulation. Audience members are spaced 1.5 – 4 feet apart (*personal distance*)

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.17: Michigan Avenue is home to a popular shopping area called the Magnificent Mile. Shopping, dining and entertainment make this a popular destination for shoppers and tourists. Street drummers are naturally drawn to this area to busk. This video illustrates how wide sidewalks can help accommodate busking and how these performers have cleverly created a stage between two planting beds. Audiences have space to circle around the performance without conflicting with pedestrian circulation due to the smaller sidewalk space between the street and planting beds that continues to function.



Video Clip 2.17- Michigan Avenue drum ensemble performance (YouTube)

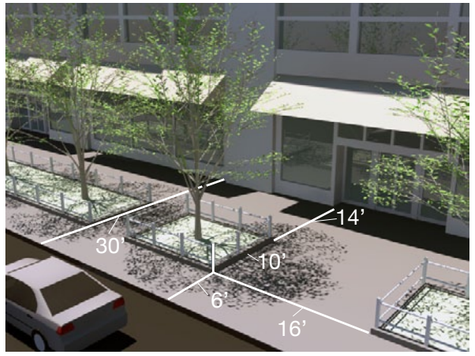


Figure 2.53 - Michigan Avenue dimensions (Author 2011)



Figure 2.54 - Populated Michigan Avenue (Author 2011)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

STOPS: LONDON TUBE SUBWAY STATION

PLACE

Location: The London Tube, the exact locationof the subway station stop is unknown

Pitch Space: Many elements help define this busking pitch, even a sign that says “Busking Pitch.” Ground plane and vertical plane elements are provided for performers by London’s transit authority Transport for London. Similar to MUNY, authorities have decided where buskers are allowed to perform. These spaces have been clearly marked specifically for busking with well-defined planar elements delineating the limits of the performer’s space and where circulation should occur. These elements are fixed features, however they can be easily removed or adapted by the transit authority.

PEOPLE

Buskers: Buskers are required to be licensed similar to programs like MUNY. There are applications and a tryout process. Buskers are accommodated with a defined space to perform. This particular space could only accommodate solo or small groups of maybe three performers.

Audience: Tube passengers are the potential audience members for this pitch. While amenities have been provided for performers there are really no amenities for people wanting to stop and listen to a performance at this particular location.

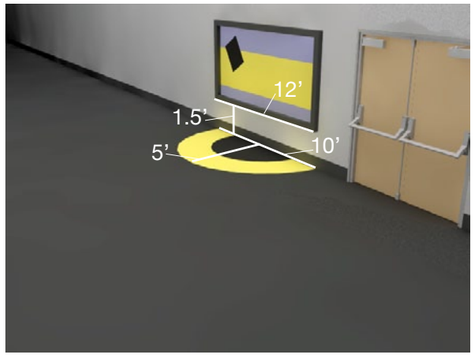


Figure 2.55 - London Tube pitch dimensions (Author 2011)

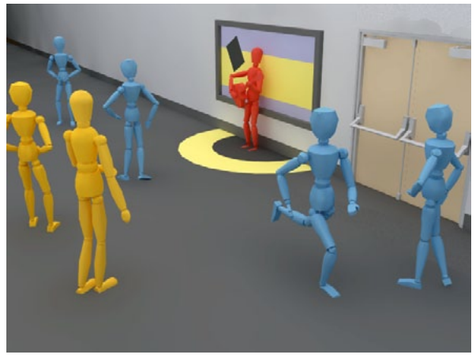
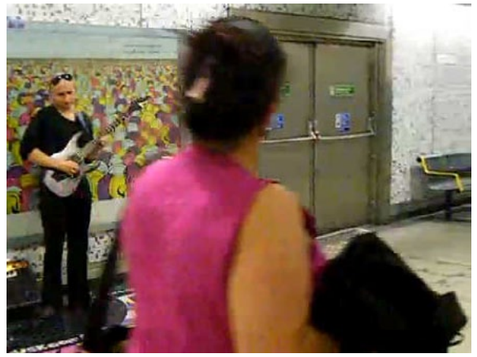


Figure 2.56 - Populated London Tube pitch (Author 2011)

PERFORMANCE

Video Clip 2.20: The London Tube is the only case study example from outside the United States for this project (due to time constraints). It illustrates some of the innovative ways other countries accommodate street performers. London Underground (LU) has up to, “39 pitches across 25 subway stations which are clearly marked by a semicircular floor graphic and a backdrop advert on the wall” (www.tfl.gov.uk). Sponsors can pay for pitches and brand them within the set guidelines of LU. This clever solution to create performance spaces for busking is a great example of how simple solutions can create stages for buskers and how performing art can be integrated into the peoples daily lives of urban dwellers.



Video Clip 2.18- London Tube solo electric guitar performance (YouTube)

Busker

Audience Member

Non-Audience Member

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Several key concepts concerning the spatial and social characteristics of street performances and busking pitches are represented by these case studies. A typology of pitch types revealed that pitches commonly occur in squares, along streets, or within around transit stops. Pedestrian flow is one of the primary considerations for performers when determining where to perform. Spaces that are sociopetal facilitate performances by bringing people to a central point and focusing activity inward. Similarly, performance circles are a naturally occurring audience configuration that are flexible and encourage triangulation. Amenities like furniture or “street furniture” can also influence how pitches are configured and where buskers choose to perform.

Buskers can create their pitches by bringing something with them to help define the space, or by relying on surrounding environmental surfaces and objects. These brought or existing elements help define and articulate space through points, linear elements, planar elements, and volumetric elements. The performance spaces defined by elements have perceivable relationships of adjacency, or overlap and sometimes being within circulation spaces or corridors. Designers should use these primary elements of form, space, and order, along with the key concepts previously discussed, when considering ways to spatially accommodate buskers in urban environments.



Figure 2.57 - (Mark J. Davis)



Figure 3.0 (Mark J. Davis)

DESIGN

WICHITA SITE SELECTION

Case studies in New York City and Cambridge, Massachusetts demonstrate how square, street, and stop pitch types can be grouped together forming a network of performance spaces. The primary objectives of the project design section of *Relative Pitch* is to apply this typology to specific sites in a city, and design prototype square, street, and stop pitches to activate dormant public spaces.

Due to the research and case study focus of *Relative Pitch*, limited time was available to complete this Project Design section. Potential places to apply the typology were not assessed until after the majority of research was complete leaving little time to select sites, conduct site inventories and analyses, and complete prototype pitch designs. These design proposals are thus conceptual and are intended to illustrate awareness of the social and spatial concepts of busking discussed in the case studies.

Wichita, Kansas is a city well suited to implement the square, street and stop pitch typology. Busking is currently legal in Wichita, and has been since 2006. Street performers have been part of a downtown development strategy to increase street activity, particularly in the redeveloped Old Town area. In 2007 the Downtown Development Corporation of Wichita was actually subsidizing buskers; paying them modest amounts of money to perform in the streets (Cohan, 2007). An article in *The Wichita Eagle* titled “Busker Fridays, Musicians Take to the Streets,” interviewed several buskers participating in this program, one of whom was Tom Page.

In the process of selecting a potential site to apply this pitch typology I talked to Katie Kingery Page, a Kansas State University landscape architecture faculty member, and Wichita native about this project. She mentioned that her brother Tom Page frequently busked throughout downtown Wichita and helped me contact him. I talked to Tom and asked him about busking in Wichita, where he tended to play, and what locations might serve as sites for pitch prototype designs. He stated that the majority of busking activity occurred in the Old Town area, particularly Warren Square and recommended I visit Wichita to get a feel for where some possible improvements or designs could be implemented.

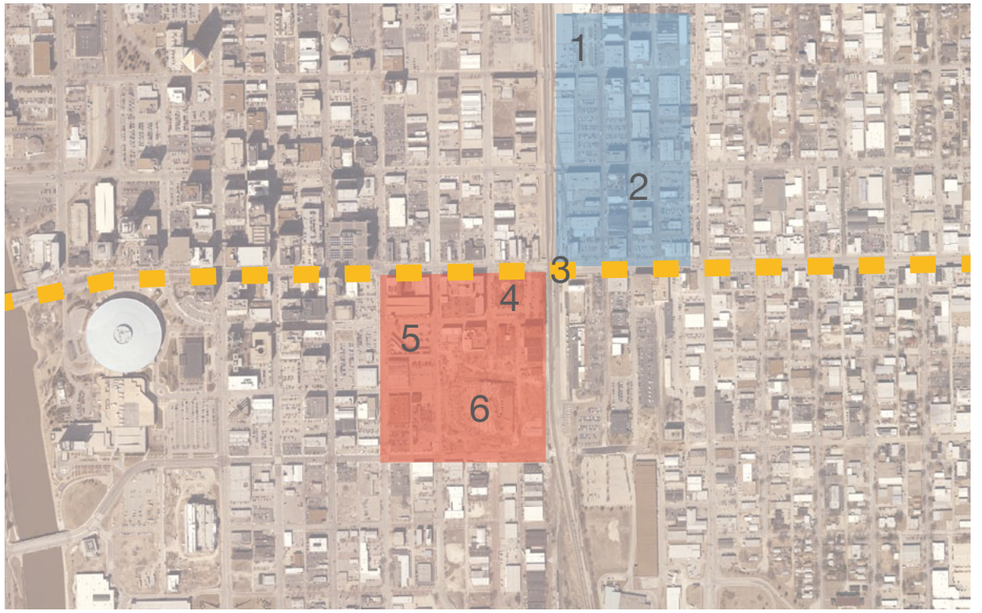


Figure 3.1 - Context Map (Adapted by Author 2011 from Wichita GIS image)

DOWNTOWN WICHITA CONTEXT MAP

SCALE
1” = 1200’

DOUGLAS STREET

OLD TOWN

NEW ARENA AREA

1. WARREN SQUARE
2. FARM & MARKET SQUARE
3. DOUGLAS STREET UNDERPASS
4. NAFTZGER PARK
5. WICHITA TRANSIT CENTER
6. INTRUST BANK ARENA

WICHITA SITE SELECTION

OLD TOWN

Old Town has seen substantial redevelopment and is a popular entertainment, dining, and shopping destination (*figure 3.2*). There are many locations in Old Town that serve as excellent busking pitches. Many of these spaces have been designed for pedestrians and feature many amenities that accommodate street performers.



Figure 3.2 (Author 2011)

WARREN SQUARE

Warren Square is an excellent example of a public space with electrical access. The importance of electrical access is something William Whyte emphasized, writing, “In the planning of plazas and parks, architects should be induced at gunpoint to provide several well located 115-and 220-volt outlets” (Whyte, 1988, 152). This small square has 14 outlets making it a great space to host a variety of programs (*figure 3.5*). Seating walls and lawn make it a comfortable place for audiences to sit and enjoy a performance its centrally located around restaurants and a popular movie theatre (*figures 3.3 and 3.4*) attracting many people to this space.



Figure 3.4 (oldtownwitchita.com)



Figure 3.3 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.5 (Author 2011)

WICHITA SITE SELECTION

FARM & MARKET SQUARE

Farm and Market Square fills Old Town's need for an open area where large crowds can congregate . The large open square accommodates weekly farmers' markets and concert events (*figure 3.7*). Similar to Warren Square, there is an abundant supply of electrical access. Bollards along the edges of the square are equipped with power outlets. While this space serves large gatherings well it might be too large for a solo street performer (*figure 3.6*).



Figure 3.7 (oldtownwitchita.com)



Figure 3.6 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.8 (Author 2011)

OLD TOWN STREETS

The streets in Old Town are pedestrian friendly. Slow speed limits and old brick roads reduce vehicular traffic speeds and wide sidewalks with frequent benches and raised planters provide a comfortable atmosphere for pedestrians (*figures 3.9 - 3.11*). Performers could easily create street pitches along these streets setting up to play against a planter or around a public art sculpture.



Figure 3.10 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.9 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.11 (Author 2011)

WICHITA SITE SELECTION

NEW ARENA AREA

Douglas Street is a major arterial downtown street that defines the southern edge and entrance into the Old Town Area. Heading west on Douglas towards the Arkansas River the road goes under a train overpass. The elevated train tracks define the western edge of Old Town. The sidewalk continues through the overpass (*figure 3.12*) and on the other side of the tracks things appear quite different from the Old Town area.

Many business locations adjacent to these tracks are vacant and others appear to be economically depressed compared to many stores and shops on the east side of the train tracks (*figure 3.14*). A large new arena that houses athletic events and large concerts was built within the last few years. The Intrust Bank Arena is planned to help revitalize this area. The city's Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan outlines several proposed plans that focus on redeveloping the blocks surrounding the new arena.



Figure 3.12 (Author 2011)

DOUGLAS STREET UNDERPASS

One of the immediate challenges of trying to connect the vibrant Old Town with the efforts of the New Arena area is the train overpass. The overpass is quite long and dark, even in the middle of the day. The sidewalks under the overpass are quite wide (15 feet) and well separated from the busy traffic but the space is unpleasant, and at night the space is even more uninviting and dark (*figures 3.13 and 3.15*). This overpass presents a barrier for many pedestrians who feel uncomfortable using this space.



Figure 3.14 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.13 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.15 (Author 2011)

WICHITA SITE SELECTION

NAFTZGER PARK

The park on the south side of Douglas Street is Naftzger Park. The park is named after Wichita banker Maurice Naftzger who was a patron of the arts, donating generously to the Wichita Art Museum, music programs, and symphony. The park has few entrances, with a low wall and fence running all the way around the perimeter. Seasonal water feature, gazebo, and picnic table areas are the parks main amenities. However, with all the fences and walls there is poor visibility into the site. The retaining wall along the south side of the park makes visibility in the park impossible form the south side (*figures 3.20 and 3.22*). The park is closed at night and is known to be unsafe. The park is also confined, offering very little open space for children in nearby apartments.



Figure 3.17 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.16 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.18 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.19 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.21 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.20 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.22 (Author 2011)

WICHITA SITE SELECTION

The large parking lot to the east of Naftzger Park is usually empty now that the Spaghetti Works building is vacant. Part of the Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan is to redevelop this entire block inserting a parking garage, new commercial space, redesigning Naftzger Park. *Figure 3.26* is a map of parks currently located in the downtown Wichita area illustrates the lack of parks and greenspace. The city's Redevelopment Plan recognizes the need for more parks and open space in the area. However, the proposed designs for Naftzger Park reduce what little green space this park provides by half. The new development intends to provide more parking for the Intrust Bank Arena and create a plaza-like park that would serve as an entrance into the Arena from Douglas Street.



Figure 3.24 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.23 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.25 (Author 2011)

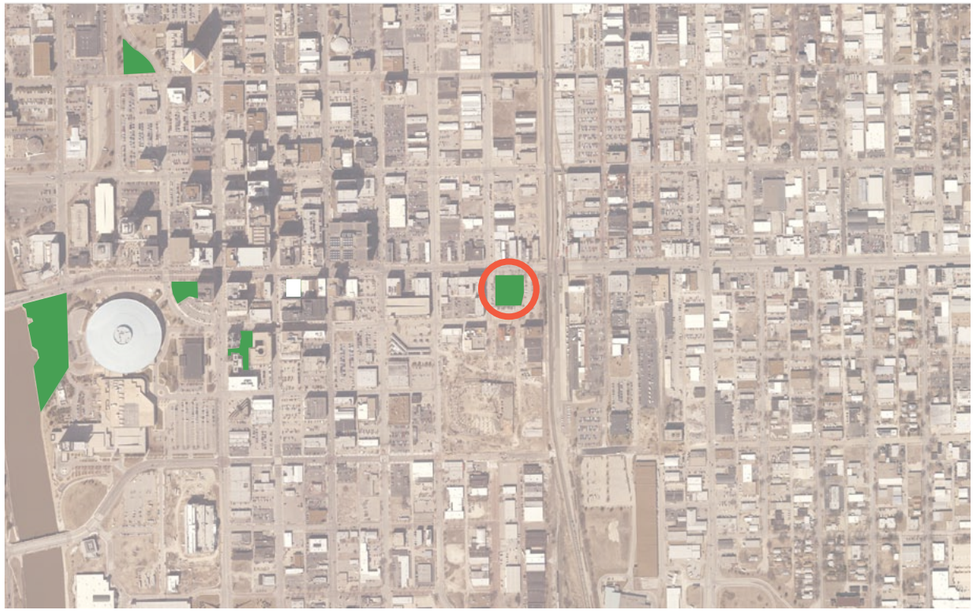


Figure 3.26 Downtown Wichita Parks (Adapted by Author 2011 from Wichita GIS image)

WICHITA SITE SELECTION

WICHITA TRANSIT CENTER

The Wichita Transit Center is the main mass transit hub in Wichita. Bus lines go through this stop, providing mass transit for many Wichita citizens. The transit center building and bus platforms provide a variety of seating and overhead cover, helping to protect waiting passengers from the elements (*figures 3.27 and 3.29*). The Wichita Transit Center is located two blocks southeast of Naftzger Park. The large clock tower serves as a focal point for the transit center and the large adjacent parking garage.



Figure 3.28 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.27 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.29 (Author 2011)

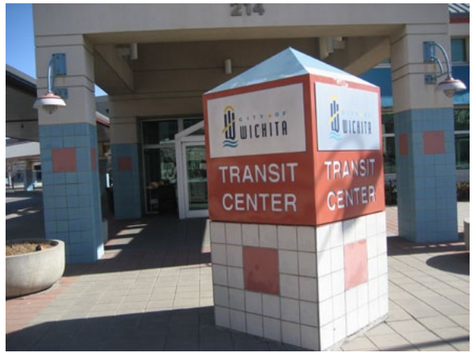


Figure 3.30 (Author 2011)



Figure 3.31 (Author 2011)

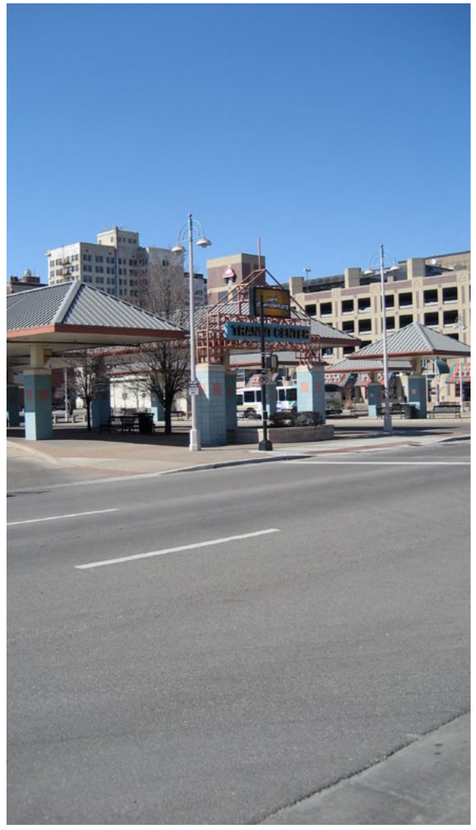


Figure 3.33 (Author 2011)

TYPOLOGY APPLICATION

Visiting Wichita's Old Town and new arena areas helped determine where square, street, and stop pitches should be designed. The Old Town area has very little need for redesign. The square spaces provide amenities such as electrical access and seating, the streets are pleasant and inviting for pedestrians, it is no wonder why busking activity takes place in these spaces. The arena area however, presented prime locations for the application of the pitch typology: Naftzger Park, Douglas Street, and The Wichita Transit Center were selected as prototype design sites (*figure 3.34*).

The overall design objective of Wichita's pitch typology is to use busking pitches to connect the pedestrian oriented streets, and active atmosphere of Old Town to the currently struggling new arena area. The design of three specific pitches illustrating the square, stop, and street pitch types will initiate this program. The close proximity between the three selected sites allows the typology to establish a network of performance spaces that could expand in the future to other downtown public spaces.

SQUARE PITCH

Extending Old Town's atmosphere and energy to the other side of the tracks requires creating a destination where people would want to be. A redesign of Naftzger Park is needed and will most likely happen with the redevelopment of the arena area. Downtown Wichita's lack of green space suggests that Naftzger Park should be enlarged, not reduced as previous proposals suggest. "More park, less parking," is a key concept in the design of a sociopetal square that will create activity and attract people. A variety of spaces designed to accommodate buskers and performance will be a key component in creating Naftzger Square Park.

STREET PITCH

Connection from Old Town to the proposed Naftzger Square Park and existing Intrust Bank Arena requires a strong pedestrian pathway. The sidewalks connecting these neighborhoods are wide and well-maintained, however the train underpass that divide the neighborhoods is dark and uninviting. The redesign of the pedestrian space in this overpass incorporates lighting, public art, and well-delineated busking pitches to increase safety and comfort for pedestrians and provide a unique link between Old Town and the new arena area.

STOP PITCH

Multiple modes of transportation provide options and enhance access to key downtown locations. The Wichita Transit Center is the hub for mass transit activity in downtown Wichita. Promoting mass transit use in Wichita could decrease current demands for parking around the arena and decrease automobile traffic in the downtown area. Currently the transit center has many amenities that could accommodate buskers including benches and overhead structures. Incorporating performance spaces around the Wichita Transit Center building and platforms will provide entertainment and opportunities for social interaction among passengers, and hopefully encourage mass transit use.



Figure 3.34 - Typology Sites (Adapted by Author 2011 from Wichita GIS image)

SQUARES: NAFTZGER SQUARE PARK

Washington Square Park in New York City is a great public space famous for its constant activity. The central circular space is highly adaptable and successfully accommodates buskers and audiences. Sally Harrison-Pepper writes about Washington Square Park's flexibility stating, "Public reflexivity is built into the square, stimulating performative behavior among all who visit the space. It is not only a theatre in the round, it is a revolving theatre in the round offering multiple viewing and performance opportunities, choice in consumption, and the possibility of the unexpected" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 124).

The strong sociopetal nature of circular spaces draws people together. Buskers are attracted to these areas because there are many potential audience members. The focused interactions created by performances cause the formation of smaller circles within the space facilitating triangulation between buskers and audience. As performances change and audience size grows or decreases the pitch is modified "reflexively." By not having a defined stage buskers and audiences chose how they use the space.

Naftzger Square Park (*figure 3.36*) proposes the same flexible central space principles illustrated in Washington Square Park to create opportunities for busking performances. Attention was given to provide a variety of configurations of performer and audience space, and also to how these spaces could serve functions other than busking. The entrances of the square accommodate busking performances, showing how, in the case of many squares like Pioneer Courthouse or Jackson, performances often occur along the edges of squares.



Figure 3.35 - Naftzger Park aerial photo (Wichita GIS)

CURRENT NAFTZGER PARK

SCALE
1" = 120'

SQUARES: NAFTZGER SQUARE PARK

PLACE

Currently Naftzger Park is 0.88 acres. The proposed design of Naftzger Square Park expands it to 1.47 acres (*figure 3.36*). People going to or from the Intrust Bank Arena are directed through the park via the 20-foot wide primary pedestrian pathway. This diagonal circulation connects the activity of arena events to the square and helps it serve as an entrance and gathering space for arena patrons.

The primary circular gathering space is located at the intersection of these pathways, focusing activity to a central sociopetal space. Eighteen-inch-high seating walls define the edges of this space and provide permanent seating. Water jets in the center of the gathering space provide an activity for children and help cool the space on hot summer days (*figure 3.38*). A raised covered platform extends over the west edge of the circular space park providing shade, and buffering the surrounding apartment building from noise of this central space. The structure provides added hierarchy that helps to define the circle as the primary gathering space. A park manger kiosk, storage area, and restroom facilities provide necessary amenities and maintenance for the square and are integrated into the design and function of the circular gathering space.

1. CENTRAL SOCIOPETAL PERFORMANCE SPACE
2. FLEXIBLE SEATING ARRANGEMENTS
3. COVERED PLATFORM
4. RESTROOMS
5. STORAGE
6. PARK DIRECTOR KIOSK
7. FOOD VENDOR AREA
8. LAWN RECREATION AREA
9. TERRACED LAWN GATHERING SPACES
10. NORTHEAST ENTRANCE AND BUSKING SPACE
11. NORTHWEST ENTRANCE AND BUSKING SPACE
12. SOUTHWEST ENTRANCE AND BUSKING SPACE
13. PARKING

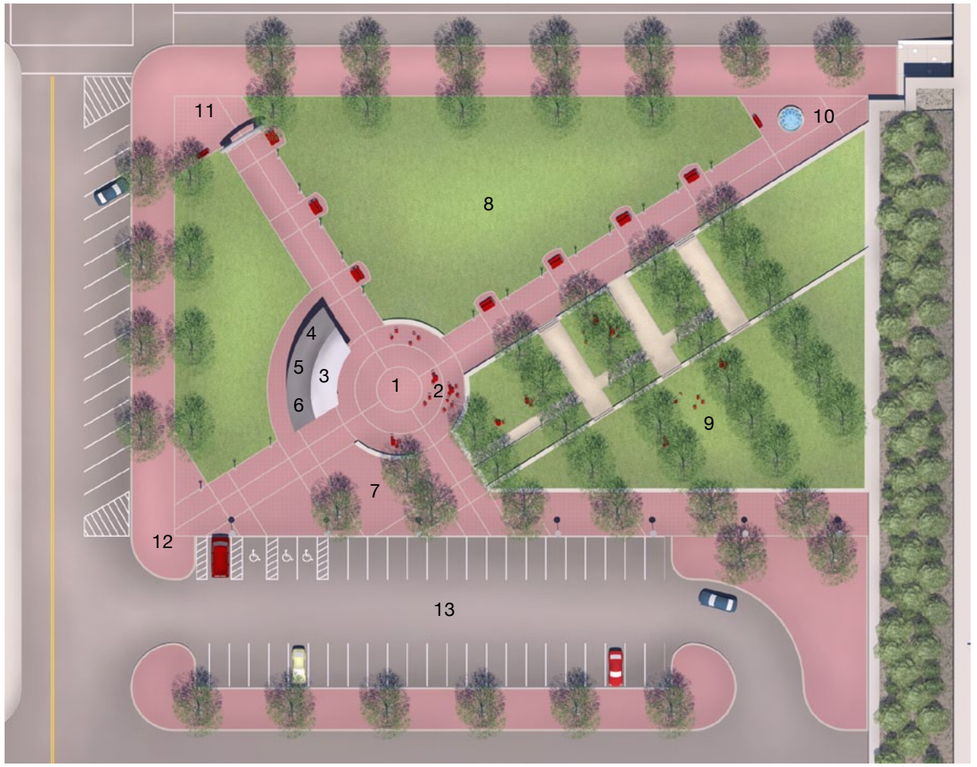


Figure 3.36 - Naftzger Square Park Master Plan (Author 2011)

PROPOSED NAFTZGER SQUARE PARK

SCALE
1" = 65'

SQUARES: NAFTZGER SQUARE PARK

Large landing-like entrances provide spaces for activity and arrival into the park. However, each entrance is unique. The northeast entrance is intended to serve pedestrians immediately exiting the train overpass, drawing them in off the street and into the park. A water feature helps attract people into the park and provides a place to sit and rest. The northwest entrance is the most visible entrance from Douglas Street and is likely to be the entrance used by many people coming to the park from Old Town. A large gateway helps define this as the primary north entrance. The south entrances bleed into one another and into the primary circular gathering space. These entrances are the closest to the arena and are meant to join with the circular space (*figure 3.37*).

The park contains open lawn areas for children from neighboring apartment buildings to run and play, helping the square serve the needs of nearby inhabitants. Visibility into the square and the central performance space is unobstructed and well lit at night, making it a safer space than it currently is. The rows of trees along the south side of the square help provide shade for the park, particularly the terraced areas. These long diagonal terraces provide a variety of spaces conducive to smaller more personal gathering where people can sit under the trees and talk. The walls creating these terraces provide plenty of additional seating and an assortment of places for people to observe from a distance the activities occurring in the central gathering space.



Figure 3.37 - This Nafzger Square Park aerial perspective facing southeast demonstrates how performances along the entrances of the park create activity along Douglas Street as well as attract pedestrians into the park. The northwest entrance is the primary entrance into the park for pedestrians coming from Old Town. Large lawn areas provide space for recreation and play while the 20-foot wide primary circulation paths accommodate large groups of pedestrians who will use go through the park during events at the Intrust Bank Arena. (Author 2011)

SQUARES: NAFTZGER SQUARE PARK



Figure 3.38 - Central sociopetal space activities illustrate the multiple functions of this space. A busker along the outer edge of the circle is using one of the many electrical outlets supplied in the central space and throughout the park. Water jets provide a water feature for children to enjoy on warm summer days, while movable tables and seating provide options for park patrons to watch the events taking place in the park. The raised terraces enable visibility into the central space while creating a variety of places to for smaller social gatherings. (Author 2011)



Figure 3.39 - This Naftzger Square Park performance circle shows an audience gathered around a theatrical sketch. Concrete banding on the brick paver surface forms an informal boundary for the performer's stage. The covered platform behind the audience provides shade for park patrons who prefer to watch the performances from a distance. (Author 2011)

SQUARES: NAFTZGER SQUARE PARK

PEOPLE

Buskers: Naftzger Square Park's proposed circulation and central circular space create a sociopetal place conducive to busking. Performances of many different types and sizes can be flexibly accommodated in the space. The linear element of concrete radial banding provides a subtle possible pitch boundary for buskers, similar to the way linear elements are used by the Andean folk musicians in *video clip 2.9*. The central circular space and covered raised platform are located by the primary parking area for the park making loading and unloading equipment for performances in these spaces easier.

The raised covered platform provides a space comparable to a traditional stage and can be used for busking, however, this space accommodates small recitals, weddings, or meetings. The height and dimensions of the platform make it feel less like a formal stage and therefore operative for impromptu performances. The raised covered platform is oriented towards the train tracks to project sound out towards the train tracks and buffer sound and disturbance to apartment dwellers (*figure 3.40*).

Proposed entrances into the Naftzger Square Park also offer options for buskers to create pitches. These entrances are areas of high pedestrian flow and include amenities like seating, lighting and electrical access. A variety of seating options are available to buskers, including movable seating without armrests to accommodate musicians. Electrical access is included in all entrance areas, the seating walls along the central circular space, and at various locations along the terrace seating walls providing power for different performances.

Audience: Naftzger Square Park will accommodate audiences by providing amenities, primarily seating. A variety of seating options, including movable seating, allow audiences to decide where they would like to sit and observe a performance. Other seating options like benches provide spaces for people to sit together. These benches have armrests to help elderly and disabled people to sit and stand. Trees provide shade in many parts of the park and the raised covered platform provides a space with some enclosure to protect audience from rain and sun. ADA accessible ramps enable park patrons with disabilities to access the terraced lawn gathering areas. Restrooms, drinking fountains, trash and recycling bins, plastic bags for dog owners, and a park manager kiosk provide additional services.

The southwest entrance of the square provides close parking to this central sociopetal space and van and handicapped parking elderly patrons and those with disabilities. This parking entrance provides a hardscaped area for food vendors to set up stands and provide food and drinks during performances or events at the Intrust Bank Arena (*figure 3.41*).



Figure 3.40 - The covered platform on the west edge of the central sociopetal space provides a stage for small musical groups and other performers. Movable seating creates an audience space that can be formed in a variety of sizes and configurations. Bathrooms, storage, and a park director kiosk are located along the back of the covered platform providing amenities for patrons and helping the structure buffer apartments across the street from the potential noise of performances in this central performance space. (Author 2011)

SQUARES: NAFTZGER SQUARE PARK

PERFORMANCE

The primary spaces where busking performances will occur in Neftzger Square Park are the central circular sociopetal space, the covered raised platform, and the entrances into the square. These spaces can attract a variety of street performers and no space is designed for a specific type of performance. Nor are these spaces limited to solely busker performances. Organized outdoor concerts, plays, and events could take place in the central circular space or on the covered raised platform. Larger events and performances would most likely occur in these spaces. Smaller busking performances of probably no more then ten performers would take place at park entrances. This variety and hierarchy of performance spaces makes Naftzger Square Park flexible in its ability to facilitate busking, and similar to the environment of Washington Square Park (*Video Clip 2.1*).



Figure 3.41 - Southwest entrance busker and vendor activity is illustrated in this perspective. This Naftzger Square Park entrance is located close to the park's primary parking allowing performers to easily unload there equipment and carry it a short distance to the central sociopetal performance space. The southwest entrance also allows space for food vendors to set up portable stands and provide food and drinks for park patrons. The park director kiosk is in the south corner of the structure and allows visitors to ask questions use the restrooms, observe the events taking place in the park, and maintain the movable seating and amenities of the park. (Author 2011)

STREETS: DOWNTOWN STREET SHUFFLE

Busker advocate Stephan Baird has observed how technology has competed with street performing throughout the years. First “it was the printing press. Then it was the lightbulb! Then radio, records, TV, and videos.” Baird concedes that each of these innovations increased choice among forms of entertainment. “But,” he says, “that doesn’t stop the need for self expression, and that sure doesn’t stop the need for group participation in a live event… That’s what a street performer does - he puts people in contact with each other” (Tanenbaum 1995, 46).

Today there are even more entertainment options. Computers, smart phones, personal gaming devices, and iPods are just some of the highly portable devices capable of accessing the Internet and connecting people all over the world. The portability of many of these devices, particularly cell phones and personal music players like iPods, have changed the way humans interact with one another in public spaces. People can be sitting on a park bench chatting with people all over the world and have little or no contact with the person sitting next to them. Buskers have the difficult task of competing with these portable digital media outlets and connecting people that inhabit the same space.

The popularity and portability of iPods, particularly the model known as the “shuffle,” have revolutionized the way people experience and listen to music. The random shuffle function on iPods enables people to upload huge catalogues of music on a device the size of a pack of gum and randomly play different tracks as they move through public spaces. Video clip 3.1 of Ashville, North Carolina illustrates a phenomenon similar to selecting “shuffle” on an iPod where pedestrians encounter a random array of performance types as they walk through the street. Downtown Street Shuffle proposes ways to incorporate the chance occurrence of different street performance types along a street or linear space. People can move through these spaces and encounter a diverse selection of live performances encouraging people to take out their ear buds and engage in social interactions with the people around them.



Video Clip 3.1 - Assorted buskers in Ashville, North Carolina (Vimeo 2011)

PROPOSED STREET PITCH LOCATIONS

POTENTIAL BUSKER PITCH

MEAD STREET

DOUGLAS STREET

1. WARREN SQUARE
2. FARM & MARKET SQUARE
3. NAFTZGER PARK
4. WICHITA TRANSIT CENTER
5. INTRUST BANK ARENA



Figure 3.42 - Street Shuffle Concept Plan (Adapted by Author 2011 from Wichita GIS image)

SCALE
1” = 600’

STREETS: DOWNTOWN STREET SHUFFLE

PLACE

Downtown Street Shuffle incorporates existing Old Town pitches along Mead Street and extends them west along Douglas Street to the new arena area connecting busking pitches in Old Town's Warren Square all the way the to the Wichita Transit Center (*figure 3.42*). The focus site for the Downtown Street Shuffle is the sidewalk on Douglas Street that pass under the train overpass. The two pitches on both sides of the street are well-defined and marked with similar clarity and simplicity as the London Tube example illustrated in *video clip 2.18*. The sidewalks are 15 feet wide and can accommodate performers and still have plenty of room for pedestrian circulation.

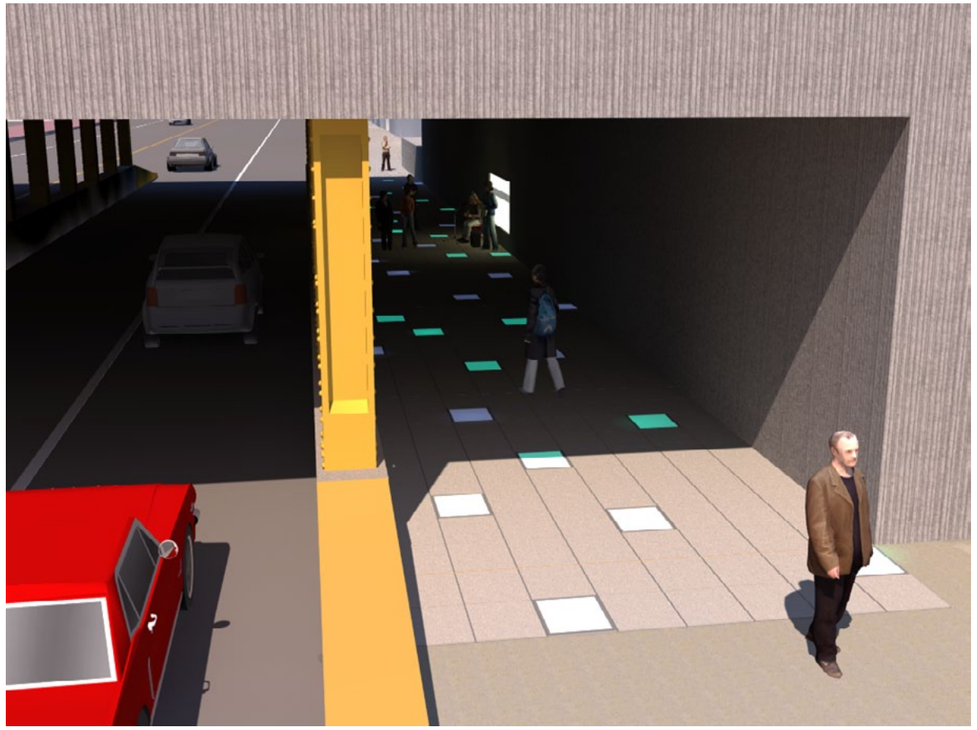


Figure 3.43 - The east entrance of Douglas Street underpass illustrates how light tiles illuminate the pedestrian space during the day encouraging people to walk through the space and observe the performances occurring at the clearly defined busking pitch. (Author 2011)

STREETS: DOWNTOWN STREET SHUFFLE

PEOPLE

Buskers: There are two spaces available for buskers in the overpass space. Both accommodate small groups due to the spatial constraints of the space. These pitches are best suited for solo or small music groups are loud enough to perform over the noise of vehicular traffic. Electrical access is crucial in this space to allow musicians to amplify their instruments and vocals. Light tiles flexibly define the approximate limit of the buskers stage on each corner (*figure 3.44*).

Audience: Pedestrians will be the primary audeince members. The highest flow of pedestrian traffic in passing these pitches is likely to be around the time of an event at the Intrust Bank Arena when people park and dine in the Old Town and walk to the arena. The light tiles help encourage pedestrian use by reinforcing the existing pathway between Old Town and the new arena area and increasing visibility and safety.



Figure 3.44 - The underpass busking pitch is clearly defined to help pedestrians identify the busking activity as a city sanctioned event. Electrical access is provided in these spaces to allow buskers to amplify their performances and help them carry over the sound of passing vehicular traffic. (Author 2011)

STREETS: DOWNTOWN STREET SHUFFLE

PERFORMANCE

The design of these pitches is clearly defined by a backlit sign. The sign declares the legitimacy of performers in these public spaces for and can be easily adapted for a variety. Light tiles will provide light both day and night in the space increasing pedestrian comfort and safety as they move through the underpass. The colors of these tiles will change, creating different patterns over time. The unique effects of the lighting design of this space will draw people into the space and encourage a connection between Old Town and Naftzger Square Park (*figure 3.45*).

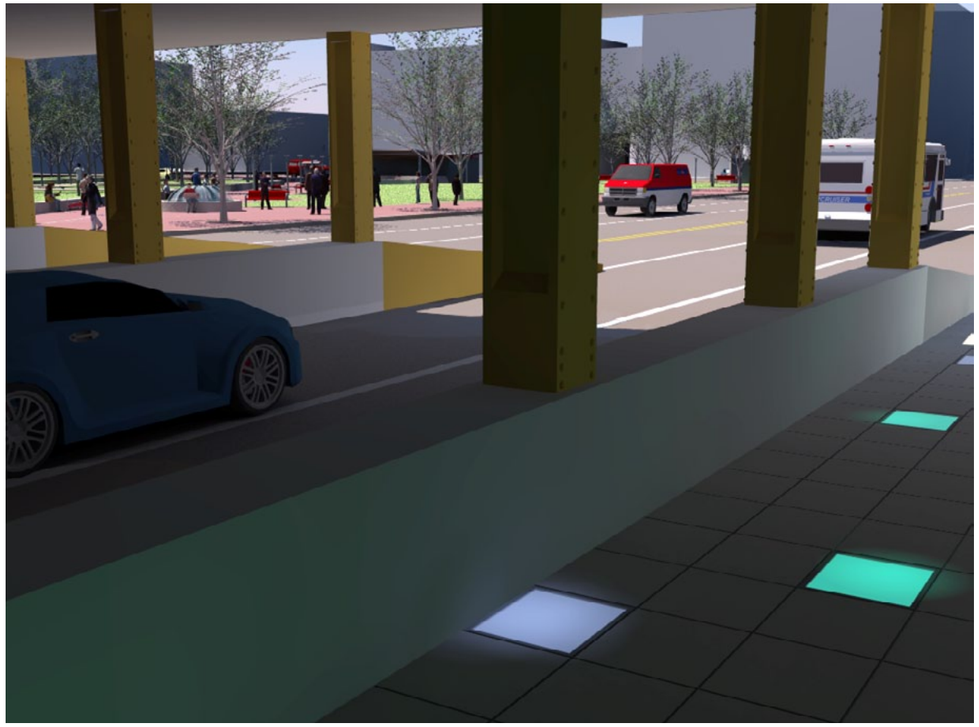


Figure 3.45 - The Douglas Street underpass connection to Naftzger Square Park illustrates how the square and street pitch types are interconnected working together to provide buskers with perfrormnace spaces, and promote pedestrian activity. (Author 2011)

STOPS: WICHITA TRANSIT CENTER STOP

Transit stops are often lifeless, utilitarian places that function solely to pick passengers up and drop them off. However, these stops could be multi-functional sites promoting social interaction and community involvement. Susie Tanenbaum writes, “Cities do not need more single-minded spaces with narrowly defined, instrumental functions. Instead, they need more open-minded spaces that encourage positive social activities and attitudes such as lingering, receptivity and ‘tolerance for diversity.’ Subway music, I believe, helps to transform the single-minded subway system into an open-minded transit facility and meeting place” (Tanenbaum 1995, 121).

New York City’s Music Under New York (MUNY) program shows how the cooperation of transit authorities with buskers has lead to the creation of more “open-minded spaces.” These transit stops accomplish more than their practical purpose of moving people from point A to B, they create gathering spaces where people can share the common experience of a performance.

Wichita Transit Center Stop utilizes many of the same ideas incorporated by many mass transit buskers, and programs like MUNY and Underground London. Simple functional busking pitches can be defined and articulated using simple linear and planar elements. Changes in the texture and color of the ground plane and use of portable signage help create performance spaces that are easily modified and do not interfere with the operations of the transit center. Future bus stops in Wichita should contain amenities to enable the potential for busking performances but also serve the primary function of accommodating passengers.



Figure 3.46 - Transit center busking location plan (Adapted by Author 2011 from Wichita GIS image)

STOPS: WICHITA TRANSIT CENTER STOP

PLACE

The Wichita Transit Center is located one block southwest of Naftzger Park. The center is the main hub of for mass transit in downtown Wichita. Almost all bus lines make stops at the center making it an active space during the day, especially in the mornings and afternoons when people commute. The Wichita Transit Center has a number of amenities for buskers like seating, overhead protection, visibility and pedestrian flow (*figure 3.47*).

PEOPLE

Buskers: A number of excellent busking pitches currently exist at the Wichita Transit Center along the platforms under the overhead structures. There are few electrical outlets to accommodate amplification, however, there are a number of benches and places for acoustic musicians and other buksers to perform. Paving patterns in these spaces could help buskers define and articulate their pitches also.

Audience: Bus passengers waiting for their bus or arriving to the transit center would be the primary audience members for these pitches. Seating and shade increase the comfort level of the transit center persuading passengers to stop and listen to performances occurring in this space.

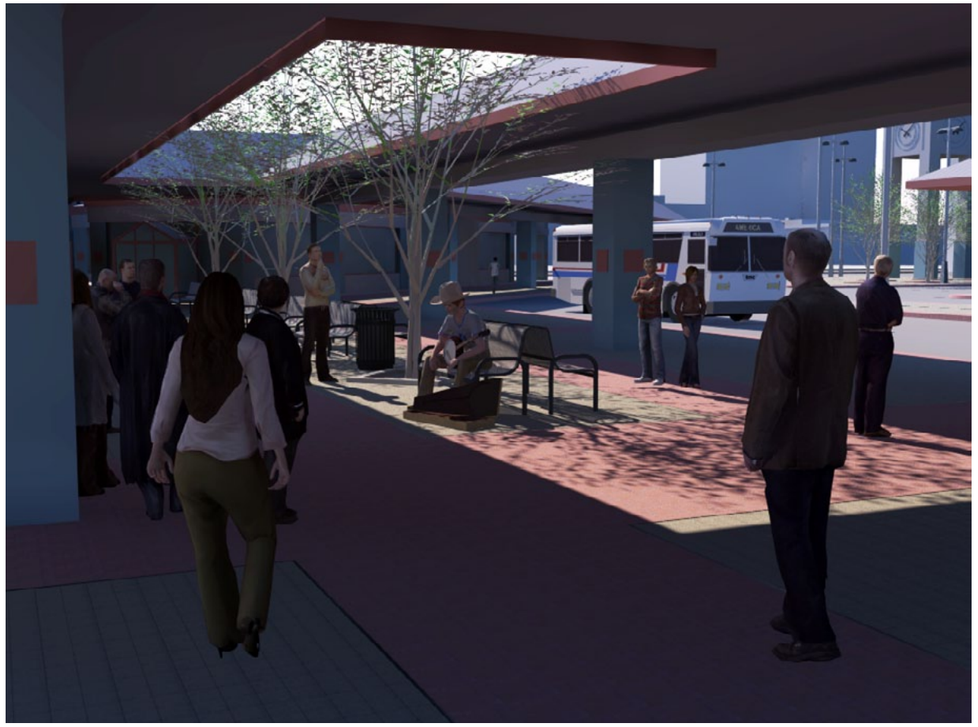


Figure 3.47 - Transit platform busking performances provide waiting passengers with entertainment and an opportunity to interact and socialize with one another. A variety of pitch locations are available for buskers with amenities like seating and shade. (Author 2011)

STOPS: WICHITA TRANSIT CENTER STOP

PERFORMANCE

Performances in these spaces could be very similar to the types of performances found along subway platforms in the case study examples of MUNY. Small musical groups or soloists could perform in the spaces under the overhead structure and building awnings during morning and afternoon hours helping add variety to passengers' daily commute (figure 3.48). The Wichita Transit Center could invite buskers to play in these spaces and initiate a small scale program, similar to MUNY, to place buskers at other high traffic bus route stops to help encourage the use of Wichita's mass transit system.



Figure 3.48 - The southwest corner busking pitch is visible from adjacent streets helping draw pedestrians into the transit center and increase public awareness of the multiple modes of transportation available in downtown Wichita. (Author 2011)

DESIGN SUMMARY

The city of Wichita's acceptance and promotion of street performers make it an ideal place to work with designers, artists, and performers to create pitches. The support of the city, along with the emergence of busking areas like Old Town, suggests that the application of this typology in Wichita is feasible.

The square, street, and stop prototype pitches designed for these Wichita sites are intended to not only illustrate the application of key concepts regarding creating performance spaces for buskers, but to also propose solutions for the redeveloping new arena area. The scale of some of these design proposals, particularly Naftzger Park, might be too large in scale and costly for the city to consider. However, I feel downtown Wichita desperately needs more parks, and creating an active green space where currently there are few will provide a unique amenity to the downtown area that could help revitalize this neighborhood.

Smaller parks like Naftzger Square Park have the potential to be active areas accommodating a wide range of uses and serve people who live and work in the area on a daily basis. The work of landscape architecture firm Thomas Balsley Associates illustrates how small neighborhood parks fill the vital role of social gathering spaces. In the April 2011 issue of *Landscape Architecture Magazine* Thomas Balsley talks about his numerous small New York City parks and plaza projects stating, "These little spaces can be even more important than Central Park in touching our daily lives and defining our urban experience" (Zeiger 2011,78).

Balsley's recent Westshore Park in Baltimore (*figures 3.49-3.52*) emphasizes the need for flexible performance spaces and is similar in many ways to the central sociopetal space and design concepts for the Naftsger Square Park. Westshore Park is "supposed to be a sort of stage for downtown Baltimore. 'You're not going to have performances everyday,' Balsley says. But the idea is that as more people began to pass by the area, they would pause, stick around, and start to populate a part of the city they had neglected to consider" (Zeiger 2011, 87).

The street and stop protype designs are more modest in size and scale and could be more easily adopted by the city than Naftzger Square Park. The crucial improvement the street prototype addresses is increasing pedestrian connectivity between the east and west sides of the train overpass. Lighting design is perhaps the most vital component in doing so. However, adding a well-defined performance space where a busker could be "eyes on the street" would provide an additional level of safety and attract pedestrians.

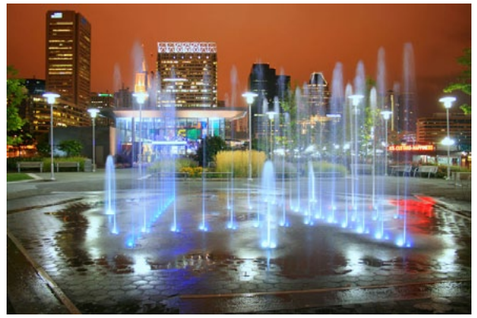


Figure 3.49 - Westshore Park Baltimore, Maryland (tbany.com)



Figure 3.50 - Westshore Park Baltimore, Maryland (tbany.com)



Figure 3.51 - Westshore Park Baltimore, Maryland (tbany.com)



Figure 3.52 - Westshore Park Baltimore, Maryland (tbany.com)

CONCLUSION

EVALUATION

Through researching and documenting case studies a clear typology of squares, streets, and stops was established. While there are some busking pitches that might be a hybrid of these types, like the example in Portland, busking performances generally occur at one of these three types. I believe the development of this typology is a simple and strong discovery that begins to classify characteristics of busking pitches. The modeling of the case study spaces provides some quantitative data of the spaces that could be useful in creating spaces for street performers. However, the variability of performance, space, and audience size make applying these dimensions to another site difficult.

Similarly, one aspect of applying ideas and designing spaces similar to those illustrated in the case studies was adjusting to the differing scales of spaces. For example, New York City's Washington Square Park is close to ten acres and the central sociopetal space is 200-feet in diameter. Therefore this similar space was scaled down considerably (60-feet in diameter) to appropriately fit the 1.5-acre Naftzger Square Park. With the exception of the half circle radius dimension from the London Tube case study, measurements from case studies were not applied directly to these prototype pitches. In future applications of the square, street, and stop typology, case studies that more closely match the size of the sites being designed for should be used.

The research depth and case study focus of *Relative Pitch* restricted the amount of time I had to apply the typology to a site. Starting my project with this site would have enabled me to have more involvement with the busking community and would have helped my design decisions. However I feel the designs proposed, particularly Naftsger Square Park, are successful at creating a variety of busking pitches. The prototype sites selected were excellent sites not only because they accommodated the typology, but because the design of these spaces went beyond providing performance spaces and provided additional benefits and amenities for the new arena redevelopment area.

FURTHER RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The case studies provide only a small sample of busking pitches. Additional performance pitches should be further inventoried and analyzed to build a more comprehensive catalog. Studying more of these spaces will not only reveal unique creative ways buskers define and articulate pitches, but also help determine what spatial patterns exist between the different spaces.

For the most part my research focused on busking in the United States. Busking exists all over the world in various forms. The people of some countries are more accepting of street performers than others, however, performers can be found in all cultures. One excellent busking example encountered during research was *Video Clip 3.2* in Karlskrona, Sweden. Analyzing a wider variety of countries or even focusing specifically on one culture or city would uncover new types of performance, places where performances occur, and how these pitches function socially, spatial, and even spiritually.

Work by groups like thebuskingproject.org, have started to document busking all over the world. Working with groups like this could help collect and share information valuable to future research. The Internet is an amazing research tool, and has endless examples of performances that would be hard to discover and access any other way. However, I feel that personally analyzing one pitch specifically over time is also an important research method. Seeing performance in person gives a far more complete experience than viewing YouTube video clips from an armchair. The most valuable published resources concerning busking all stem from the work of authors who observed in many cases a handful of busking pitches over a long period of time. I believe that Laurie Olin provided sound advice to Witold Rybczynski when he was researching Frederick Law Olmsted: "Always look at the work first" (Rybczynski 1999, 422). I feel the next step in my research would be to personally visit these case study locations to better understand how they accommodate buskers.

I also believe that helping create places for performers to play in a specific city demands establishing a good working relationship with buskers who will use the spaces. Each city is unique, and the individual buskers within the city can be even more unique. Understanding specific needs and receiving feedback from performers who frequently perform in certain streets or neighborhoods will help create pitches that perform well.



Video Clip 3.2 - A trio of buskers perform in Karlskrona, Sweden (Vimeo 2011)

CONCLUSION

FINAL THOUGHTS

Relative Pitch started with a desire to better understand how to incorporate performers into public spaces. Knowing little about street performers, and never having heard the term busker, I initially thought that this project would result in the design of highly detailed little stages physically "frozen in concrete." I soon realized that in most cases designing to accommodate performances meant helping create conditions where buskers would be attracted to define and articulate their own spaces. My research reveals that buskers are not only skilled performers, but also skilled spatial improvisers.

Simple solutions using primary elements of points, lines, planes, and volumes help solve complex issues like pedestrian circulation occurring with associated activites. Buskers understand how groups of people gather and move in public places because their livelihoods depend on it. Designers and planners can learn much from observing buskers, and one urban designer who understood the importance of observation and street performers was William Whyte. This project has given me a new appreciation for the immense contributions of his work in analyzing the social aspect of public space. I believe that *Relative Pitch* complements Whyte's work by providing a more in-depth look at street performers and their performance spaces.

Similar to the flexibility of busking pitches, the process of completing *Relative Pitch* has required adaptation. Frequent adjustments to scope and scale were made in an effort to define the focus of this project, and in the end I recognize a great deal of additional research needs to be done to continue the work initiated by this project. In the future, I hope to further develop my typology and knowledge of busking to help create convivial spaces activated by creative musical performance.



Figure 3.53 (Mark J. Davis)

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Figure A.1 (Mark J. Davis)

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

Busker (Busk, Busking) - A busker is a person who performs in public, often outdoors, and usually for donations. Busk and busking are the verbs used to describe the act of performing. Busker is synonymous with the term street performer.

Fixed-Feature Space - One of three space types defined by Edward T. Hall comprising things that are immobile (walls, territorial boundaries, fixed furniture) (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Focused Interaction – A term used by Erving Goffman to explain a concept applied to the coordination of face-to-face interaction by two or more people (Tanenbaum 1995, 98).

Informal Space - One of three space types defined by Edward T. Hall comprising the personal space around the body that travels around with a person and determines distance among people (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Intimate Distance - One of four informal space distances defined by Edward T. Hall between 0”-18” typically associated with touching, embracing, or whispering (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Music Under New York (MUNY) - Program established by the Metropolitan Transit Authority MTA that organizes buskers to play in subway stations. MUNY was established in 1985 and is part of the MTA Arts Underground.

Performance Circle - Term used by authors Whyte, Tanenbaum, and Harrison-Pepper to describe a circular spatial configuration of audience members around a performer. Performance Circles create a flexible pitch type that facilitates triangulation.

Proxemics - Term introduced by Edward T Hall that describes different space types and set measurable distances between people. The three space types are fixed-feature space, semi-fixed feature space, and informal space. The four measurable distances are intimate distance (6-18 inches), personal distance (1.5-4 feet), social distance (4-12 feet), and public distance (12+ feet) (Main and Hannah 25, 2010).

Personal Distance - One of four informal space distances defined by Edward T. Hall between 1.5’-4’ typically associated with interactions among friends. (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Pitch - Term commonly used by street musicians to describe the location of a street performance. It can also used to define the money gathering strategy of a busker.

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) - “Project for Public Spaces is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people turn their public spaces into vital community places, with programs, uses, and people-friendly settings that build local value and serve community needs. PPS embraces the insights of William Whyte, and is an internationally recognized center for best-practices, information, and resources about placemaking” (www.pps.org).

Public Distance - One of four informal space distances defined by Edward T. Hall between 12’ + typically associated with impersonal observation (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Semi-Feature Space - One of three Space types defined by Edward T. Hall comprising movable objects such as furniture that is not fixed (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Social Distance - One of four informal space distances defined by Edward T. Hall between 4’-12’ typically associated with interactions among acquaintances (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Sociofugal - Term used by psychiatrist Humphrey Osmond to describe one of the two major systems for patterning space. Sociofugal space tends to keep people apart and suppress communication. Spatially it is described as boxlike or grid like. (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Sociopetal - Term used by psychiatrist Humphrey Osmond to describe one of the two major systems for patterning space. Sociopetal space tends to bring people together and encourage communication and interaction. In spatial terms it is described as a radial, with merging and overlapping routes and interconnected rings and spirals (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Street Performer - Throughout this document street performer is used interchangeably with busker. The term extends beyond performers who perform streets to performers on subway, parks, and squares.

Triangulation - Term used by Whyte to describe “the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to each other as though they were not” (Whyte 1980, 94).

Unfocussed Interaction – A term used by Erving Goffman to explain communication by gestures and signals that arises simply through actors being co-present, as in the case for example of body language (Tanenbaum 1995, 98).

KEY AUTHORS & PEOPLE

Baird, Stephen – Street performer and founder of the Street Artists' Guild of Boston and Cambridge, MA. Baird runs the website www.buskersadvocates.org which promotes the rights of street performers throughout the United State. His work specifically focuses on policy, and he is an important source of information for Harrison-Pepper and Tanenbaum's work.

Campbell, Patricia - Author of *Passing the Hat* a comprehensive book that focuses on street performing in the United States. Legal issues, performance, techniques, profiles, and pictures of performers are contained in this book.

Goffman, Erving - Sociologist who defined the concepts of "focused" and "unfoccused interaction." These terms are used by Tanenbaum to define the social interactions between audience members (Tanenbaum 1995, 98).

Hall, Edward T. - Anthropologist and author of the 1966 book *The Hidden Dimension.* This book introduced the term proximics to discribe different types of spaces and set measurable distance between people as they interact. Hall offers three different types of space and four measures of distance in ineraction.

Harrison-Pepper, Sally - Author of *Drawing a Circle in the Square*. Harrison-Pepper's book focuses on research conducted in Washington Square Park in New York City. One of the key components of her book focuses on the spatial relationships of performance circles

Osmond, Humphrey - Psychiatrist interested in how social environments influenced welfare or recovery within mental institutions, identified two major systems for patterning space known as sociofugal and sociopetal (Main and Hannah 26, 2010).

Petit, Philippe - Well-known busker most famous for tightrope walking between the World Trade Centers in 1974. Petit is recognized by both Whyte and Harrison-Pepper as the greatest street performer of his generation. He frequently performs in and around Washington Square Park

Tanenbaum, Susie J. - Author of *Underground Harmonies*. Tanenbaum conducted research focused on evaluating New York City's Music Under New York (MUNY). Musicians, audiences and MTA workers were interviewed and surveyed to evaluate the program.

Whyte, William H. - Urban planner and Author of *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* and *City: Rediscovering the Center*. Whyte's is considered the mentor for Project for Public Spaces because of his seminal work in the study of human behavior in urban settings. (www.pps.org)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Campbell, Patricia J. Passing the Hat: *Street Performers in America.* New York City: Delacorte Press, 1981.

Pages 1- 41 (first two chapters) give a good intro and history of busking. Chapter 2 contains a section titled “A Good Place” that discusses some aspects of pitches. However, no specific design guidelines are found in the book. This book contains narratives from a wide variety of performers in a wide variety of places where performance spaces are occasionally mentioned. This book is frequently referenced in *Drawing a Circle* in the Square.

Campbell identifies San Francisco, New York City, Boston, and New Orleans as the four centers for street performers. Other cities mentioned include Seattle, Key West, Los Angeles, and college communities in cities like Boulder, Austin, and Berkeley. Campbell observes:

> “The parts of town where buskers congregate are highly specific. You may see dozens of performers for five blocks, and then, across the street and farther on, none. This segregation of street entertainment reflects not only the density and receptivity of pedestrian traffic but an uneasy mental map truce between performers and civic authorities. The good places within each city are part of the folklore of the road for performers, and tales of comparison are part of every encounter between traveling entertainers” (Campbell 17-18, 1981).

Campbell writes how New York City’s street performers occupy a variety of areas including Central Park, Greenwhich Village, 5th and 6th Avenues. Washington Square Park and Sheridan Square are cited as the center of street performing action in Greenwhich Village. 5th and 6th avenues from the forties streets up to Central Park are recognized as a “musical feast” (Campbell 26, 1981).

Childs, Mark C. *Squares: A Public Place Design Guide for Urbanists.* University of New Mexico Press, 2006.

Page 186 of *Squares* contains a section titled “On Stage.” The importance of creating space for street performers and buskers is acknowledged by Childs who states:

> “Good street stages need to be near a pedestrian crossroads but in a subspace with a radius of about fifteen to twenty five feet from the performer to accommodate the stage and audience. Many buskers prefer to have a wall or other backdrop, but some prefer a theatre in the round. Sculptural and architectural artwork that props or creates a stage might also invite a renaissance” (Childs 2006, 186).

These are suggestions to consider and evaluate, particularly his dimensions of the 15-25 foot radius. Overall this book was not particularly insightful but this specific dimension is a measurement to consider.

Gehl, Jan, and Lars Gemzøe. *New City Spaces, Strategies and Projects, 3rd edition*. The Danish Architectural Press, 2001.

This book has excellent pictures and analysis of current public spaces. The organization of this book is also similar to how I envision my final book. Gehl starts by presenting nine cities with particularly good public spaces as case studies. 39 specific spaces are then briefly analyzed. I find this structure similar to the way my project uses New York City as a precedent study of a city with an active notable busker culture, then my typology of street, stop, and squares is inventoried and analyzed through specific pitches in different locations.

New City Spaces provides information concerning two squares that I intend to research more in-depth. Schouwburgplein in Rotterdam designed by West 8 uses many different surface materials to define spaces and is a highly programmable space that can accommodate a range of stage configurations. Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland is another space that Whyte recognizes in City as an important performance space and *New City Spaces* has excellent pictures and text that discuss this square in detail.

Harrison-Pepper, Sally. *Drawing a Circle in the Square: Street Performing in New York’s Washington Square Park.* University Press of Mississippi, 1990.

Drawing a Circle in the Square is an in-depth look at street performing in New York City’s Washington Square Park. This square has a deep rich history of street performing and it is a primary source of information for not just my Washington Square precedent, but New York City street performing in general. Harrison-Pepper’s diagramming, time-lapse photos, and written description of performance circles give a detailed look at performance circles. This book along with *Underground Harmonies* are the two most valuable sources for my research. The history of New York street performing, politics, definitions of key terms, and spatial analysis of pitches are just some of the topics covered in this book.

> “Street performers know that it is essential to choose a location appropriate to their style of performance and consonant with civic expectations and demands.....As we traveled to various street performance areas around the city I saw that (Peter) Shub rejected spots lacking certain environmental cues, preferring traffic, posters, window displays, dogs ,or lampposts to quieter or more orderly environments. He avoided areas that lacked ‘the kind of audience who’ll appreciate my humor.’ he sought locations with pedestrian density and flow.
>
> Often, Shub spent a half hour or more wandering around indecisively, testing and abandoning a series of locations. he might discard a potential performance space based on an indescribable feeling about it - a feeling that emerged from a combination of his energy level, the weather, time of day, day of the week, garbage on the street, not enough space, people looking bored or stingy. In interviews, however, Shub was confident of

> his performance intuitions, remarking, 'I have a good eye for what works, I always have'" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 9-10).

This quote gives insight to a performer's pitch selection and the factors that are taken into account by a performer (Peter Shub) who does magic, juggling, and comedic performance routines. Shub's attention the "environmental cues" show how a performer's pitch selection is crucial to the success of his performance, it also demonstrates how different performance types require different pitches. A violinist for example would probably search for a quieter location than a juggler like Shub. Issues of pedestrian density and flow are also identified in this passage as vital elements in pitch selection.

Harrison-Pepper quotes Ray Jason a prominent San Francisco juggler from the 1970s that offers the following reasons why street performers perform:
1. "Because they can't get hired anywhere else"
2. "They entertain for hopes of being 'discovered'"
3. "Enjoyment"
Harrison-Pepper observes a fourth motive for many New York City performers: "Freedom - a desire to be 'outside the system,' self employed, and self sufficient" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 9-10).

Chapter 2 titled "Negations and Transformations" focuses on the political and regulatory issues surrounding street performance throughout history. The Washington Square Riots are a particular focus due to the author's focus on Washington Square.

> "Around 1945, Washington Square Parks' Fountain area was the regular weekly meeting place for a variety of singers and musicians...The range of Musical Styles included bluegrass, jazz, and ragtime, jug band, blues, and folk songs. Musician and author Barry Kornfeld has firsthand reports of Tom Paley, Pete Seeger, and Harry Belafonte informally performing...During my 1980-1984 documentation of the square, the fountain continued to serve as a meeting place for musicians.
>
> The musicians received permits to sing or play in the square from the Parks Department. These were easily available and could be renewed monthly...But on March 27, 1961, Parks Commissioner Newbold Morris authorized a ban on the musicians' permits. A spokesperson for Morris said the commissioner had "noticed recently that minstrels of unsavory appearance were giving performances In Washington Square Park and then soliciting money from their audiences" Two weeks later, on April 9, 1961, several hundred folk singers and musicians gathered in the square to protest their eviction. They carried placards - "Music Tames the Savage Beast"- sang songs, and marched across the space, ending their protest in front of Judson Memorial Church on the southwest corner of the square.
>
> Around 5:00 P.M. fifty-five uniformed officers and six mounted police officers arrived to disperse the crowd, and ten demonstrators were arrested. Several musicians and three policemen were injured. The following day, the New York Times reported "A Riot in Washington Square"...
>
> On Sunday, April 13, 1961, Judson Memorial Church pastor Reverend Howard Moody sponsored a "Right to Sing Rally" for over five hundred folk singers and their friends. Village attorney Edward Koch (the same Edward Koch who would later become the New York's mayor and sanction the frequent arrest of street performers throughout the city) volunteered as one of several attorneys defending the demonstrators. "I think Villagers should now realize this folk singing fight is part of a common cause to save the Village," Koch said....
>
> More than two thousand singers, musicians, and fans again gathered in the square on Sunday, April 20, to protest the ban. The arrest of a student "nearly set off a riot," according to the New York Times reporter Robert Conley. Two weeks later, on May 4, 1961, the New York Supreme Court upheld Commissioner Morris's ban, noting that the folk singers "drew crowds that interfered with those who wanted to use the park for sitting, resting, relaxation, and meditation"...
>
> On Sunday, May 7 six hundred folk singers, led by Reverend Moody and Israel Young, again assembled in Washington Square. On the occasion, however, they sang acappella, having discovered that the Parks department ordinance required permits only for those singing with Instruments. Guitars draped in black were held aloft, and Moody declared in a speech that the ban was a sign 'of a city's becoming soulless'
> Finally nearly six week after Morris's ban was enacted, Mayor Robert Wagner announced that folk singing with instrumental accompaniment would be permitted on Sunday May 14, 1961, "on a controlled basis," between 3:00 P.M. 6:00 P.M. 'as a compromise between conflicting uses of the people.' on July 6, 1961 the Appellate Division of the state Supreme Court unanimously reversed Justice Hect's decision to uphold Morris's ban. Commissioner Morris was ordered to receive permit applications from the musicians" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 24-26*).*

This passage helps summarize an important historical event concerning street performance in NYC especially as it pertains to an event that took place in Washington Square Park. This event received a lot of newspaper and media coverage and raised questions concerning first amendment rights in public spaces. While this project and report does not focus in-depth on these events it is important to provide some background that illustrates the historic importance of Washington Square concerning street performance rights.

> "New York performers therefore learn to avoid confrontation by congregating in certain areas. In addition, they have learned to develop performances that reflect the behaviors of each area. Manhattan is a borough of economic and cultural territories, each exhibiting a unique style and pace - Greenwich village, wall Street,

> Chinatown, Fifth Ave, Times Square - and it also exhibits a range of street performance styles and territories" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 39).

Pages 38-44 focus specifically on New York City street performance. Common pitch locations are identified and mapped, particular pitches (along 5th Ave, Times Square, museum entrances, etc...) and the typical types of performances that occur at or along the different street, squares, and other "territories" are discussed.

> "Petit taught performers, for example, that 'one has to sculpt the space...The street is not a theatrical space, one has to establish himself there, to defend oneself there. An imaginary theatre has to be built'" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 42).

This quote illustrates the way performers build their own performance space. The role and importance imagination plays in creating a performance space for the performer.

> "During the Petit are, New York newspapers and journals responded to the street performance craze with a wealth of articles and photographs.... In 1977, Manuela Hoelterhoff of the Wall Street Journal said, " on the whole, theses outdoor entertainers are making this city... a friendlier, more cheerful place. New Yorkers who would normally freeze with fear if you began talking to them on the street strike up conversations with strangers about the merit of a particularly intense bongo player or saxophonist.' Describing musicians, mimes, jugglers, and magicians, Hoelterhoff concluded that 'street entertainers are injecting some welcome spontaneity, humor and color into cities that are too often tense, hectic, and impersonal.'

Whyte, too declared in 1974 that Manhattan has "the best street life in the world' and that street performers in particular are 'good to have around.' In 1988, describing the crowd gathered around a street magician, Whyte said: "There is a communal sense to these gatherings, and though it may be fleeting, it is the city at its best," 'Good performance and good audiences…are the stuff of a good street life,' he added" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 43-44).

The important work of William Whyte and his authority on social behavior in public space is recognized by the Harrison-Pepper. The support of news and media outlets toward street performers advocates their important role and civic function.

Chapter Three of Drawing a Circle in the Square is titled "Making Space into Place." This chapter carefully documents the formation of Washington Square and the historic design modifications made from the 1850-1980s. Maps and diagrams show the transfigurations of the Square as well as the territories and performance areas that different performers use. Pages 63-71 are particularly relevant to the design elements of the park prompt behaviors that affect performances. Harrison-Pepper calls these elements the Star, the Funnel, the Spiral, and the Ring and they are defined and diagramed. Concepts of 'sociopetal' and 'sociofugal' spaces are defined and discussed. *"Sociopetal pattern, for example, is conducive to communication and interaction. People are drawn together through its design as routes merge and overlap. Conversations may ensue. Sociofugal space is more efficient but also more isolating" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 63).*

The "star" or spoke-like configuration of Washington Square paths to a central point makes it a sociopetal space. The "funnel" is very similar in its function and description to the Star, both draw people in towards a central point. The "spiral" describes how the curvilinear walkways wind in toward the center of the square. The performance circle in the center of the square illustrates the "ring". The circular sitting areas created by the steps and benches facing in toward the fountain increase *"public reflexivity in the square: each person within the ring knows that he or she is on display to all others and acts accordingly" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 68).*

Chapter Six titled "Drawing a Circle in the Square," provides a more in depth discussion of how Washington Square Park's design is crucial to the park's ability to accommodate performers and audiences.

> "The fundamental sociability of performance experience is revealed in the square's very structure. Curving pathways, circular sitting areas, benches, and ledges surrounding a central fountain area - all prompt circular gathering of spectators and circling patterns of movement through the space. Public reflexivity is built into the square, stimulating performative behavior among all who visit the space. It is not only a theatre in the round, its a revolving theatre in the round, offering multiple viewing and performance opportunities, choice in consumption, and the possibility of the unexpected" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 124).

This quote summarizes Harrison-Pepper's analysis of why the design of Washington Square Park is successful in encouraging performances. The flexibility and adaptability of the spaces Washington Square provides both audience and performer along with the "unexpected" performance pitches.

> "Conventional theatre also tends toward sociofugality: each spectator has his or her own well marked space and relative immunity from physical or visual contact with others in the audience. The result is an emphasis on personal rather than social perceptions and responses. The sociopetality of Washington Square's performances, on the other hand, with audiences clustered in circles around the individual performers, emphasizes the collective origins of performance" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 125).

The differences of sociofugality and sociopetality are illustrated by comparing a typical indoor theatre experience to a spontaneous street performance. I think it is important to note how Harrison-Pepper recognizes the sociopetality and collectiveness of street performance. There is a unique, more personal connection between performer and audience, as well as between audience members themselves with street performances.

> "Focus in the square is therefore flexible and multiple. Spectators watching a juggler may hear

> a nearby rock band or see another, perhaps more interesting performance begin across the square." (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 125).

One advantage of multiple types of performances occurring in a common place is to give more options for audience members. Multiple performance types provide audiences with a feeling that there is something for everyone, as well as agency or freedom for audience members to select their type of entertainment.

> "Petit, Vera and the Millses for instance, defined their territories with chalk, marking a tangible boundary on the previously undefined space of a public sidewalk. The chalk circle, set apart from empty space, confined attention and limited activities thereby defining the situation as a theatrical one. Charlie Barnett, on the other hand, used the natural boundary of the fountain to delimit his performance space. But each performer developed a specific spatial configuration, based on personal preference, performance requirements, environmental demands, and particular skills" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 126).

The use of a visual gesture like a chalk circle to define a stage shows how solutions to create pitches can be simple.

> "Certainly a circle is the most sensible arrangement out-of-doors, for it provides maximum visibility for the greatest number of persons, while assisting in crowd control by placing focus on the center. Spectators may watch each other as well as the show: in several confrontations I witnessed between performers and hecklers, the audience rather than the performer ejected the unruly member by shouting him or her into submission. Circularity promotes shoulder-to-shoulder and across the space interaction a shared focus, a heightening of interest and participation" (Harrison-Pepper 1990, 126).

This passage clearly summarizes the advantages of a circular spatial configuration for performances and social interaction. Whyte's concept of triangulation is recognized by Harrison-Pepper's observations. The ways members of these spaces negotiate conflicts within the group are also discussed.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* New York City: Random House, 1993.

Jane Jacobs book The Death and Life of Great American Cities is a pivotal book in urban planning and design. While her book does not directly discuss the importance of street performers, she does promote the benefits of vibrant streets and sidewalks describing movement on the street to *"…an intricate ballet in which individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive part, which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole" (Jacobs 1961, 50).*

Main, Bill, and Gail Greet Hannah. *Site Furnishings: a Complete Guide to the Planning, Selection and Use of Landscape Furniture and Amenities.* New York City: Wiley, 2010.

This current guide to using landscape furniture and amenities in outdoor public spaces provides valuable information concerning different conceptual tools for furniture planning. In the second chapter of the book, the authors discuss concepts and language developed by social scientists and designers to explain human behavior in public space. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall's concept of proxemics is used to describe different types of spaces and set measurable distances between people. These helpful guidelines define three different types of space and four measures of distance. The three types of space are: fixed-feature space, semi-fixed-feature space, and informal space. The four measures of distance are: intimate distance, personal distance, social distance, and public distance. Proxemics is useful in providing a metric for describing spaces in this project.

Along with proxemics, Humphrey Osmond's definitions of sociopetal and sociofugal space are discussed as a key concept in planning public spaces. The definitions of these terms are also used by Harrison-Pepper in talking about Washington Square Park. Socialpetal seating is defined as inward facing, while sociofugal seating is outward facing. Designers influence the amount of interaction within a space by the way they configure elements like seating. The comprehensive approach of this book provides an excellent primary reference concerning site furnishings and amenities.

Shaftoe, Henry. *Convivial Urban Spaces: Creating Effective Public Places.* London: Earthscan, 2008.

> "As with public art, there has been a long history of street entertainment. This can consist of formal events such as festivals and bandstand concerts, or through the enabling of busking and informal events such as bric-a-brac stalls and demonstrations. Such events often make city administrators nervous as they are not predictable and can be messy. However, they are a low-cost way to bring public spaces to life with the minimum of regulation, they can offer substantial social and democratic benefits...
>
> It is therefore surprising that more street entertainment is not encouraged, whether proactively by organizing events or simply be designing spaces for buskers and so on, as it is an almost no-cost way bring colour, joy and delight to public spaces and there seems to be an endless potential supply of artists and performers eager to exercise their talents in public" (Shaftoe 2008, 120-121)

This U.K. author and book recognize the benefits of including street performers in public space as well as the way street performers provide a low-cost solution to enliven streets and neighborhoods.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tanenbaum, Susie J. *Underground Harmonies: Music and Politics in the Subways of New York.* Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Tanenbaum's book is an in-depth look at the Music Underground New York program In New York City. The book compiles research Tanenbaum conducted in 1990-1992. Interviews and questionnaires with performers, audience members, and MTA officials help her explore the vibrant underground music culture and politics-surrounding street and subway performing. Tanenbaum's work observes the benefits of performers in subway stations and the way spontaneous activity can impact public spaces.

> "In this specialized setting, live music may seem out of place, if not dangerous, compared to street performing, which often blends in with the recreational atmosphere of today's parks and plazas.
>
> But like the streets, the subways shape and are shaped by the live performances. The acoustics underground for example, accommodate both intimate and scattered audience circles. And the labyrinthine structure of such stations as Times Square leads to surprise encounters with musicians; according to William H Whyte, 'It is the unexpected that seems to delight [urban people] most'" (Tanenbaum, 1990, 15).

The space influences the performance and the performer influences the place. Acoustics are mentioned here as a key concern for performers in selecting a pitch.

> "Sally Harrison-Pepper appropriately calls the New York subways a 'moving performance space.' Yet it is also a space that demands considerable amount of standing and waiting. Perhaps it is in this respect that subway music most differs from street performing. It makes the waiting easier for many riders. It relieves their anxieties and even gives them a feeling of safety in their dismal surroundings. Moreover, New York's subway system never closes; late at night, when the platforms are otherwise be deserted, musicians with unconventional schedules perform and offer these various benefits to riders" (Tanenbaum, 1990, 15).

The safety that street performers provide patrons of the Subway System and Streets is an important point in favor of allowing musicians and performers to perform, particularly late at night when people may be more vulnerable to an attack or robbery.

> "Subway music has hardly been documented, and even the street performing tradition has largely been excluded from the official historical record. As Sally Harrison-Pepper observes, 'Much of the history of street performance is found in the laws that prohibit it'" (Tanenbaum, 1990, 15).

This quote acknowledges a challenge I have encountered while researching the topic of street performance regarding the overall lack of published information about street performing and performances. Also the historic attitude of opposition to street music and performers is illustrated.

"Campbell and Harrison-Pepper identify the essential characteristics of street performing, and these apply to subway music as well. Most, although not all, of these performers are men, which is why Harrison-Pepper uses the male pronoun to describe them, and why I follow her practice.

The prototypical street performer has a moral and political philosophy about his work. He performs in public space to challenge established ideas about what legitimate culture is and where it can be found. He presents new ideas before anyone is willing to invest in them. He encounters his audience directly, obviating the need for advertisements, agents, auditions, or opening night reviews, he democratizes his art by making it accessible to everyone, regardless of income, race, gender, or age.

In street performance, the audience is a part of the event. In contrast to most other forms of entertainment, the presence of the audience creates a stage. Moreover, by giving or withholding applause, comments, and money, the audience advises the performer on how to perfect his art and improve his street skills. Together, performer and audience articulate conflicts and hopes that exist in their city at that particular stage of history.

Both Campbell and Harrison-Pepper found that, despite the tremendous diversity among street performers and their audiences, they tended to resemble this model. My task was to test the model underground" (Tanenbaum, 1990, 19).

I found this quote relevant to the question of why musicians want to perform in streets, subways, and other public open spaces in a non-formal spontaneous atmosphere. This quote is vital to the idea of a person's presence and participation creating a physical stage, rather than fixed built objects. The symbiotic relationship between performer and audience is also evident in this quote and it explains how performers depend on audiences not just monetarily but as critics of their art also. The importance of a street performer's role in democratizing art is also essential to his civic role. Performances expose people to cultures, instruments, genres, and ideas that might otherwise not have the opportunity.

> "During fieldwork I learned that an exceptional amount of cooperation and self-regulation, even feelings of community, are generated in audience circles. (Tanenbaum, 1990, 97).

The idea expressed here closely resembles Whyte's observations of Triangulation as well as the cooperative and adaptive nature of audience circles.

> "For close to thirty years, scholars have drawn on the work of Erving Goffman to explain collective behaviors in public space. In the 1950's Goffman, a sociologist pioneered the study of relationships between strangers in cities. In particular, he contended that the dynamics of pedestrian traffic and spontaneous public gatherings

have social meaning. Through years of field research, Goffman identified patterns of collective behavior in public, and he concluded that, however momentarily, strangers in cities behave cooperatively.

Goffman named two kinds of behavior that are especially relevant in exploring subway music. The first kind, “unfocused interaction,” primarily refers to pedestrian traffic. When we walk in public thoroughfares, we exchange multiple subtle cues with people on ether side of us and with those approaching from the opposite direction. By means of head tilts, eye movements, shifts in gait, even more aggressive brush against the shoulder, we signal one to change speed or direction. Although not always executed with the utmost grace, this coordination helps to prevent the collisions that would otherwise constantly occur.

The second kind of behavior, “focused interaction,” refers to situations in which ‘a set of people…relate to one another through the medium of common activity.” Amanda Dargan and Steven Zeitlin describe how focused interaction operates in the context of play: “Rules of transformation tell the players how the real world will be modified inside the encounter. With the outside world held at bay, players create a new world within. A kind of membrane forms around them. They often experience a sense of intimacy, the closeness of sharing a world apart.” Street performing, broadly defined, is often described in similar terms. Patricia Cambell quotes a performer who says that his act gives his audiences “permission to play’” (Tanenbaum, 1990, 98*).*

Goffman’s terms of “unfocused interaction” and “focused interaction” define a “common activity” between strangers as the crucial difference in social interactions among strangers. These clear terms create two distinct categories of social interaction. The word “membrane” is an accurate adjective to describe the way a type of permeable space is formed by performances.

> “How does an audience circle form? It begins with two or three riders, often of the same racial or ethnic background as the musicians or otherwise familiar with music, who stop because they see the musicians setting up or hear them warming up. The first ‘points” on the audience circle tend to stand at a distance from one another, just as riders generally sit at the opposite ends of subway benches, perhaps to maximize their sense of safety and ironically freedom and in anonymity. Or they may separate simply to lay claim to the elephant feet pillars girding the mezzanine, which they use as a back supports. As William H. Whyte points out, people transform street objects into street furniture. Those who stop to sit down in addition to leaning against pillars, they lean or sit on staircase banisters and gate railings” (Tanenbaum, 1990, 99).

The performances form spontaneous temporary spaces. The formation of these spaces often occurs in a similar manner, but never in exactly the same way. Another key observation is the adaptation of objects into furniture and the role physical comfort plays in an audience and performer’s desire to participate.

Whyte, William H. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. New York City: Project for Public Spaces, Inc., 2001.

William Whyte’s seminal work in this book is a commonly referenced analysis of how people interact and use public space. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* and *City* are the primary urban planning and design texts cited by Stephen Baird, Sally Harrison-Pepper, and Susie Tanenbaum. The last chapter of this book is particularly pertinent to observing audience reaction to street performers.

> “I call it triangulation. By this I mean some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk with each other as though they are not” (Whyte 1980, 94).

This is the definition of triangulation. A concept recognized by authors including Tanenbaum. Whyte explains in this chapter how musicians and street performers can be key catalysts in facilitating triangulation.

> “A virtue of street acts is their unexpectedness. When people form a crowd around an entertainer- it happens very quickly, in 40 or 50 seconds- they look much like children who have come up upon a treat; some will be smiling in simple delight. These moments are true recreation, though rarely thought of as such, certainly not by retailers who try so hard to outlaw them. But there is something of great value here and it should be fostered.

Why Not invite entertainers onto a plaza instead of banning them? One corporation is considering a plan to welcome the best of the street entertainers into its new building. The entertainers would be given the equivalent of several good collections to their act” (Whyte 1980, 97).

The surprise of a performance occurring somewhere or at sometime unexpected is part of the charm and appeal of performances for audiences. Whyte recognizes the simple pleasures people experience encountering performances as well as the antagonism these performances incite from nearby merchants. Whyte is advocating the integration of street performers in urban spaces and one corporation’s realization as to the service performers can provide for businesses.

“I am not heaven forefend, going on to argue for places of maximum gregariousness, social directors for plazas. Anomie would be preferable. What I’m suggesting, simply, is that we make places friendlier. We know how in both design and management of spaces, there are many ways to make it easier for people to mingle and meet. It would be no bad idea to move in this direction” (Whyte 1980, 98).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of design and the importance of designing to accommodate performance and activities that encourage triangulation are emphasized here by Whyte. He seems to disapprove of a formal system that would regulate and facilitate these opportunities. A program like MUNY might run counter to his opinion of what these spaces need to foster performances.

Whyte, William H. *City: Rediscovering the Center.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

City expounds on many key concepts and ideas discussed in *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces.* Whyte focuses specifically on the importance of street performers and how they benefit and activate urban spaces. Pages 33-39 focus on "entertainers" as Whyte calls them. Whyte addresses quite a few issues concerning policy and laws that have influenced street performers; he gives a concise informative history without going into too much detail. Perhaps the most valuable and comprehensive resource regarding the design of spaces that accommodate and encourage street performers are two pages (151-152) found in his chapter "The Management of Spaces." While these pages are more concerned with facilitating organized events than impromptu buskers, the suggestions are still relevant.

> "Probably the finest street entertainer of our time is Philippe Petit. I was lucky enough to catch one of his first performances after he arrived from Paris. It was on upper Fifth Avenue at the Pulitzer Fountain" (Whyte 1990, 33).

Petit is a legendary street performer and it is important to see Whyte's documentation of that. It also cites a pitch where I have observed numerous YouTube street performance clips take place, Pulitzer Fountain across the street from Central Park.

> "Merchants have been the main force against street entertaining and it has been largely on their say-so that city councils have passed repressive ordinances against it" (Whyte 1990, 36).

> "It is odd that people who champion the free market are against such a pure expression of it. What is wrong about solicitation? The passerby is under no duress. They don't even have to stop. If they do stop they don't have to give. If they do give, the amount is entirely up to them and their judgment of worth of the entertainer. It is the latter who has taken the entrepreneurial risk. He should be entitled to some reward." (Whyte 1990, 36).

This passage forms an excellent well-worded argument against those who oppose solicitation.

> "I wish I could say that our research proved that street entertaining is good for merchants' stores. I think it is, but our research does not prove this. What it does prove is there is a high degree of compatibility between strong retail and a lively street life. Merchants do not see this" (Whyte 1990, 36).

This statement is the acknowledgment of the lack of proof concerning the monetary benefits of street performers for merchants.

> "As an itinerant observer I have a few observations to make. One is that the best place for presentations is a simple open space. The number of people a performing group will draw is 125-150 at the maximum; beyond that, people on the edge are too far back to enjoy the show, and there is a certain self -limiting factor at work. Symphony concerts and other large-scale events are anther matter; they require large spaces and special logistics.
>
> But smaller, informal presentations are the bread and butter of programs. For that reason it is good to be chary of planning elaborate amphitheaters. They can accommodate large numbers, but they tend to be single purpose facilities and are not well adapted to smaller groups. Too often the space between performers and the first row of the audience is much too great, and since the amphitheater is frozen in concrete, there is not much that can be done about it. To repeat, keep it simple. A grassy Lawn makes a fine stage, and if it slopes a bit, so much the better" (Whyte 1990, 151).

The need for multi-programmable spaces that are adaptable and accommodate different performance types and sizes are recognized. Whyte also warns against expensive limited-function amphitheaters and advocates spaces that are comfortable for smaller informal presentations.

> "When it comes to equipment municipal governments are stingy. People who stage the programs are forever scrounging around and borrowing equipment. What cities need is a good in house supply of chairs, tables, demountable platforms, and amplifying equipment that actually works. Pittsburgh's program is one of the few that has a fair store of equipment, and that is one reason it is an outstanding program.
>
> Another need is electricity. In the planning of plazas and parks, architects should be induced at gunpoint to provide several well-located 115 and 220-volt outlets. Very few spaces have been so provided, and as a result lines have to be laid in, covered with tape, taken up, and laid up again. They are costly, ugly, and dangerous and add to insurance liability. Permanent lines accessible at a number of points would also have more choices to make original plans called for waterlines to be run in. If there are going to be festivals with food booths and such, water will be indispensable. Running it in after the fact is very costly if done" (Whyte 1990, 151-152).

From personal experience performing an amplified instrument in a number of public plazas and parks, I have noticed lack of electrical access is a common problem. Whyte strongly advocates the need for planning and design to include these amenities in the outdoor built environment. This dilemma as an issue I will explore in the formation of my design prototypes.

> “One of the finest examples of well-programmed place is Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland, Oregon. It had to be programmed to be built. a parking facility occupied the site, and many of the merchants and politicians would just as soon have kept it that way. An open space would attract undesirables, they said. A vigorous citizen effort won the day, however, and to capitalize on the momentum a great brick sale was launched. Within a year over 35,000 people had purchased bricks and other features for the plaza, raising much of the 7.8 million-construction budget. Finding one’s inscribed brick is one of the square’s diversions” (Whyte 1990, 151-152).

I intend to conduct a more thorough analysis of Pioneer Courthouse and use it as a precedent in my typology (Square Type). This space is featured in several other books I encountered, particularly *New City Spaces*. I think that a space that Whyte recognizes as a good example deserves a closer more in-depth look.

LITERATURE MAP

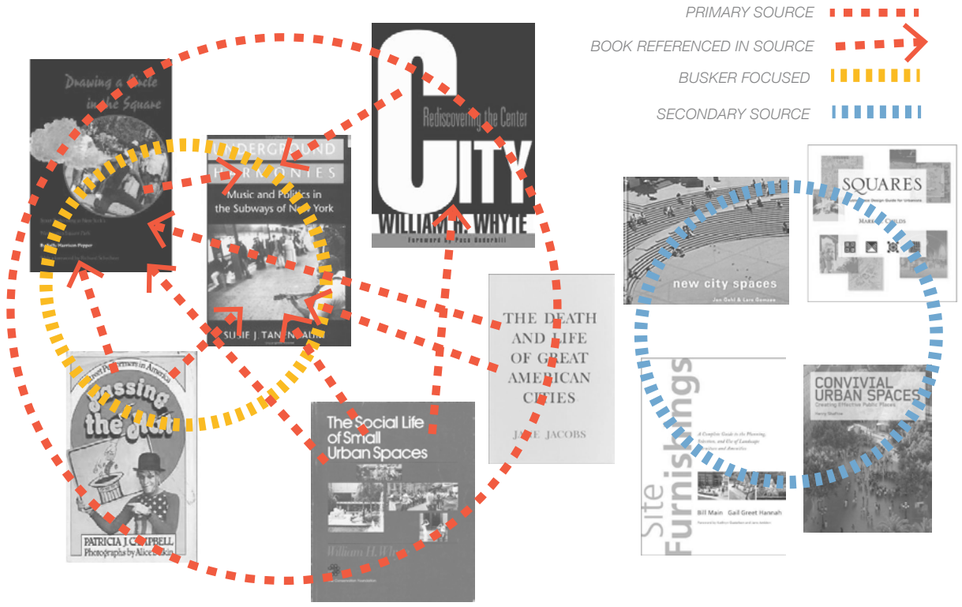


Figure A.2 - (Author)



Figure A.3 - Subway saxophonist
(therealtalkingfish.tripod.com)

RELATIVE PITCH

ENCOURAGING PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SPACE

DANIEL SMITH