

Susan Webster
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Interviewer: Susan Webster

Narrator: James Douglas

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COVID-19 and The Performing Arts: An Attendee's Perspective

SW: I'm Susan Webster and I'm interviewing James Douglas. Today is March 14, 2021. And I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional unseeded ancestral territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, specifically, the Kwantlen and Katzie Nations. So, James, do you consent to being recorded for this interview?

JD: I do.

SW: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project. As you know, my class is conducting interviews as part of a class project focusing on how COVID-19 has impacted different aspects of life. And my focus is on how COVID-19 has silenced live music and would like to hear from your perspective as an attendee of live music, your experiences prior to and during the pandemic. So, do you have a favorite genre of music?

JD: I do have—I don't say I have a specific favorite. I like a lot of different genres. I mean, one genre that I do like is—I like folk music like Sea Shanties, and, music that is—sort of tells a story, but I kind of like the folk from England, more than North American folk music.

SW: Would you say that your—that the music you liked has changed over the years much, or—

JD: I think it's definitely changed over the years. I still like a lot of music that I used to listen to. Like when I was younger, I listened to some terrible music. I listened to heavy metal and I listened to other things along that— [similar genre], like rock and stuff like that.

[1:59]

JD: But as I got older, I definitely listened to more stuff, and depending on—what I'm doing it is [dependent on] also what I listened to. I enjoy, you know, classical music as well, which I didn't really listen to a lot when I was younger. And I like a lot of Eighties music, which the kind of Eighties music—kind of like the Britpop Eighties music, which I didn't listen to in the Eighties. I listened to more heavy metal or new wave stuff. So yeah, it has definitely changed as I've gotten older.

SW: It's kind of broadened?

JD: It's definitely broadened. It's gotten—Yeah, I would say there's a little bit of music that maybe I used to listen to that I don't so much—some of the heavy metal but mostly, it's broadened. I'll even listened to newer music that—when I was younger, I wasn't a huge fan of rap. But I mean, I'm not a huge fan of rap now, but I can listen to a lot of rap and I actually enjoy some of the old school rap. Which is kind of funny because I didn't really listen to it that much when it was not old school.

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

SW: Do you have a greater appreciation for different genres?

JD: Yeah, I'm definitely more open to different music. I'm not—my views aren't so constrained, I guess anymore.

SW: Would you say listening [to music] can be dependent on mood?

JD: I would say listening is definitely dependent on mood. I'll listen to stuff—I'll sometimes even listen to stuff that puts me in different moods. If I'm cranky, I'll listen to something that will kind of get me out of that mood.

[4:00]

JD: I know when I'm cooking, I like to listen to classical, on the weekends, I'll make breakfast—I like to put some classical music on. Depending on how fast I want to drive will depend on what music I put on in the car. A lot of times I put on the folky type music because I don't want to speed to work. But if I put on some music, I'll end up driving too fast because it can really get you going.

SW: Angsty Music.

JD: Yeah, and I know that if I get into—sometimes I'll listen to—when I'm in a bit of a mood, I'll listen to Nine Inch Nails just because it does—It'll intensify emotion, but it also kind of lets you work through stuff, which is kind of weird, but Yeah, it does. I mean, music can definitely affect your emotional state. You know, It, could amplify it or it can change it as well. Well, for me anyways.

SW: Work through stuff like—when you're working listening to music?

JD: Yeah.

SW: Or working-out and listening to music?

JD: Yeah. And also just if you're grumpy about something, playing certain music will help you, will help you get over it or also just thinking of stuff in the past, where music will remind you of stuff that's happened or emotions—I don't know, there's a bunch of music that I'll listen to that my Mom [Jean] used to listen to—that is cool, because I think her.

SW: It sparks good memories.

JD: Yeah. And—good memories and sad memories.

SW: Yeah. So, can you remember the first concert that you went to?

JD: Yeah, the first concert I went to I was pretty young.

[6:02]

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

JD: I was seven or eight, and it was a concert my Mom took me to which was really cool because—I look back on it, and it makes me think that my Mom was actually a really cool person. The band was called the Mothers, and it was a punk rock band. We lived in a small town. I think at the time, we lived either near Guelf in Ontario, or near Owen Sound [Ontario]. And it was—for me, I was young, so it seemed like a big place, but I think it was a community centre or something. I don't think this band was famous in any regard, but they were really loud. And there was a lot of people there, but it wasn't super cramped. I remember walking through the crowds, and everyone was super tall because I was young, I only came up to people's waists but, I could still see the band a lot of the time. Some of the stuff that I remember was, it was super loud and the drummer was really cool and he would throw his drumsticks out into the crowd, and he would swear, and that was one of the first times I heard some bad swearing. But it was good. [chuckles] I was young, and I always remember that It's a good story—Yeah, my Mom took me to my first concert, and it was a punk rock concert. I really like that memory.

SW: It [first concert] had a huge, profound effect?

JD: It did, because I actually quite liked a lot of punk rock and rebellious type music growing up. So, it was good, and I really liked seeing it. It probably sparked appreciation for live music. But I mean, I can't say for sure. It's definitely one of my earlier memories in life.

[8:07]

SW: Was it just you and your Mom? [at the concert]

JD: I'm pretty sure it was just me and my Mom, but I'm not positive. I remember that it was just me and my Mom. I wasn't even with her all the time. I think I would escape and wander around through the crowds and then come and find her and then do it again because I was a kid and it was fun to adventure.

SW: What was your most memorable concert that you've attended?

JD: There's a lot. I mean, that was one of my most memorable ones for being young and as a first event. Another memorable one was I went saw Gowan at Canada's Wonderland [in Toronto], and that was memorable because it was the first concert that I had went to by myself. I paid for it and I went by myself, there was no one else there [with me]. I met some people there that I didn't know beforehand, I met up with them—we were sitting in different places but at one point, they were in seats in front of me and center and they called me over and I went and sat beside them and we watched [the concert] for about twenty minutes until security saw us and told us to go back to [chuckles] our seats. So, then we went back [to our seats] and we split up again. That was cool, and that was my first concert that I went to by myself.

SW: And then just met random people—

JD: Yeah, that was kind of funny. I saw other concerts later on, as I got older. I went to—memorable ones were festivals too. I really enjoyed festivals. It's funny actually, some of the memorable ones all revolve around meeting other people and groups.

[10:03]

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

JD: Going to Coachella [music festival in California] a lot—two or three years in a row—just seeing so many different bands, but the culture of seeing—just being around a whole bunch of people all there for the music, but also all there to be in—I guess the large group of people or the culture of it and just meeting new people all the time—that's actually a really cool thing that I enjoyed. I really liked the whole festival vibe, the feeling of that—So the festivals, they were quite memorable. The small—I saw a really cool [concert]—at the Plaza of Nations [venue in Vancouver], it was a super small venue. But I got to see David Bowie and I was about five feet away from him, which was super cool. It was such a small area for having David Bowie in, I mean, probably maybe two or three thousand people tops [at the venue]. And, I could almost reach out and touch him, he was so close. So that was really cool because who gets to see David Bowie that close. [chuckles] That was really cool. I enjoyed that.

SW: Was that one of his later performances?

JD: It was in the Nineties. I think it was his “I'm Afraid of Americans” tour, but I'm not positive. I'm pretty sure it was that. I don't know why he was playing such a small venue because he probably could have sold out GM Place [General Motors Place, in Vancouver], but he played Plaza of Nations, which was weird. Yeah, and—it was a really weird thing. But it was really fun, I'm really glad I got to see him because he was an old performer from my Dad's [Laverne] day—my parents got to see all kinds of really cool bands back in the day that my generation didn't get to see, and the younger generation definitely don't, because half of them don't play music or they're not around anymore.

[12:19]

JD: Some of the other memorable ones [concerts] was when I was in Australia. I saw Bjork live. I went with a couple of friends from England, and they thought she was okay. But then after being at the concert, afterwards, they thought it was really, really fun. They had a great time, because the live show was really energetic and super fun. It definitely changed their attitude, a little bit where they were—they really enjoyed the music a lot more. And that's probably just because of the whole live venue thing. So, that was really cool. Another one [concert] that I saw in Australia that was really neat was I saw Rage Against the Machine which was a totally different vibe because it was really packed. I was pretty much at the front and they had this great big iron fence that was basically almost chest level. It was so packed, and people were pushing. I think they had—they'd have to get a water hose and walk through the front line and spray everyone down because people were passing out and had to get handed up over people so that they could get pulled out because they were getting crushed. It was such a good show and it was super loud!

[14:02]

JD: Very—I don't know how to explain it, but it was very much what Rage Against the Machine would have been about and it was just really good. It was a good venue to see them in. I'm surprised no one got really hurt, so I guess it was okay.

SW: Do you think the whole live show component adds this other aspect that seems to have more of a profound effect on people—a new appreciation for music?

JD: I think the live music really adds a different element because if you just want to listen to music—live music isn't really the best music for just the music because it's not going to be the best sound all the time. There are weird things that go on. Like, if you listen to some of the music in the studio, you will

probably get the best music experience. But live music is so much fun. And it's not just about the music, it's about the atmosphere, it's about the band or the singers. It's about the people there, it's about the venue, there's so many different aspects. And, also just seeing the band—it's just reminded me, I saw on stage, I saw the Specials which is an old ska band that I really liked. I really liked their music, and then I saw them live. And they had so much fun, just playing on stage with each other, that it just made the whole show two hundred times better because you just saw how much they enjoyed just playing music for themselves and just playing music for their fans.

[16:08]

JD: And also, they would change the song so that they would have fun with the song. It wasn't the same songs all the time. It was something that they would play with and have fun with. The band just had so much fun together. It was really, really—and that rubbed off on the fans, and I'm sure the fans in the crowd, we're having a lot of fun listening. And then that would actually spur on the artists. There was another show I saw—two shows, actually, in Vancouver at the Commodore. One of them was the Presets—It was a Tuesday night! It was just a sleepy Tuesday night. No one expects anything to do really well. The show was just amazing. It just, I don't know, went off the hook. I don't know how you would say it, but it was really, really good. Everything just worked out. The band did really good. The fans were just enjoying it so much. Everyone was dancing and jumping around, and everything just aligned, it was such a good show. And even the band were surprised that they had so much fun—that it was a Tuesday night, and everyone was just so willing to just go nuts and have that much fun. Another band that almost always does that locally is 54-40 just because it's a local band, and they always have so much fun with the crowd. So as a live event, it's just really, really entertaining, and part of that is because of the interaction between the band and the fans—the crowd. I think they just feed off each other. The live shows are definitely something else, and they're really, really fun.

[18:05]

SW: Yeah, there seems to be this unpredictability aspect to it—between the audience and the band.

JD: Yeah, and it can go both ways because there's some funny stories of unpredictability [chuckles] going the wrong way where—I didn't go to it, but I know someone there when Oasis came here, and they were on stage and they said some stuff or something happened and it wasn't the best, and people started throwing stuff up on the stage. One of the singers got hit with a bottle or a shoe or something. And then they just walked off and that was it! The show was over! [both laugh]

SW: Yeah. And there's also this kind of unique component where they [artists] kind of recreate songs.

JD: Yeah, they play with the songs. I would think they may just get bored of playing the same thing all the time. So maybe they just have fun?

SW: What's your favorite venue to see a concert in?

JD: My favorite venue to see a concert in? It depends because the venues are so different. The small little club venues are really fun to see [concerts in] because they're small—And man, every time you ask a question, I think of other things. I saw this—it wasn't the Plaza of Nations. I can't remember the club. I think it was called The Rage. It was right off the Plaza of Nations and it is this really small,

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

crappy venue. But the bands didn't have anywhere to play. So, they basically just played on the dance floor. There wasn't really a separation from the band to the fans.

[20:02]

JD: It was a little tiny one [venue]. I saw some really cool bands there. I saw Front 242 there, which was hilarious. It was so much fun. It's a German band [Belgian band]. And they were so much fun to see. And we met this German guy that came out, which he doesn't do venues very much anymore. But he had to because he really liked them. It was just so much fun, listening, watching, watching them [the band] dance and just dancing to them and listening to the band. The other one [band] we saw there, which was so good was in the early days of Blur and it was so much fun. Because you're basically almost dancing with the band, because we were just in the crowd. I got separated from the people I was with and I was just dancing in the crowd. We were right—it was almost like dancing around them. It was so close. It was just so much fun and so much energy. It was a really small venue. I would be surprised if there was even a thousand people in the club. That's what it felt like—

SW: So, you would say that the smaller venues are more fun?

JD: Yeah, they have different vibes. The smaller venues are super fun for seeing the band up close and having interactions directly with the band. But I mean, festivals are super fun because you're there with twenty thousand other people and everyone is like minded, mostly. It's so much fun just seeing—I mean, it depends on what you like, I like meeting new people and I like talking to new people. I'm not afraid of just talking to whoever.

[22:00]

JD: I like the festival vibes, too, because you just meet so many new people and there's so much going on all the time. But that's not necessarily interacting with the bands and stuff like, you're interacting with all of the other people who are there to see other bands. where the smaller venues, you're pretty much right there with the band. I mean, you're not talking to them. But you do feel like it's a much tighter, smaller, more intimate show. I think it depends on what you're looking for—They all have their bonuses. The only thing I would say that is my least favorite is the stadiums, they kind of suck. I saw The Who and we were so far away that you're just watching the big screen. You don't get to see them, you can see these little people on stage, but you couldn't see them. I've seen a number of bands at GM Place [in Vancouver] and it's not the best. It's kind of sucks because you're basically just watching a great big screen, that's the only way you get to see them. I would say the stadiums are my least favorite place to see bands. But once bands get too big, that's all they go to. I definitely like the intimate— [venues] to see the bands and I like the festivals for the whole vibe of that. I saw Radiohead at Thunderbird stadium and that was kind of neat because everyone just sat around on the grass and watched them play. So, it wasn't really full, it was more like a small venue in a big venue. That was kind of neat.

SW: It was more laid-back.

JD: It was definitely more laid-back.

SW: So, you don't really find festivals overwhelming?

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

JD: No, I love that. But I mean, that's the kind of person I am. I know some people wouldn't like certain things because they don't like being in big crowds.

[24:00]

JD: I love being in big crowds. I have no problems being around that many people and just [being] in the excitement and the chaos of all of that. To me that's exhilarating, and I really enjoy that.

SW: Do you have any little moments at a festival that stand out like something crazy or— [chuckles]

JD: I mean, it depends. I've seen a lot of—

SW: Or more of the interactions with people there?

JD: I've got a lot of interactions with people that I had fun with at the time. So, in the moment, the festivals were quite fun. I remember just sitting and—it was during the day before the bands were even playing—just sitting around drinking and talking to the Coast Guard guys that were there, they were all young, just early twenties and they were all full of piss and vinegar and having a good time [laughs]. They were hilarious, they played these stupid drinking games, and they were just really energetic and had a good time—they weren't jerks. They were actually really cool!

SW: What festival was that?

JD: That was Coachella. That was the year where we had to hide-out under the cars because it was 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

SW: Celsius—

JD: So, people were—or sorry, forty-five degrees Celsius. Yeah, people were dying—no Fahrenheit [pause] it was really hot. It was really, really hot! People were dropping. We had to make sure that we're hydrated. And any kind of shade in the festival—there would be a palm tree and you'd see a line of people from the palm tree, going out to the end of it where the shade was. As the palm tree moved [the shade it cast] the whole line of people moved because [chuckles] they were trying to stay in the shade.

[26:06]

JD: There was that—One of the things that festivals—some of the bands are amazing and high energy because they do short sets, which is good. And then sometimes it's bad. I can't remember the band. [pauses] It's the band that does the song “Maps.” I'm trying to remember what their name is and for some reason I can't. But anyways, they did a really, really good live show and it was so much fun, and it was so energetic, and everyone responded accordingly. It was great. And then other bands that you think are going to be really good—they were kind of—I saw Morrissey, and he was shit! He was so bad. It was terrible. He just didn't care. He complained about being there, and then he didn't even finish the songs. He would be singing and then he would just go [JD makes a sound] [both laugh]. Because he wouldn't finish, he just didn't care at all. It was so bad. But that other band that was really good was the Yeah, Yeah, Yeahs, they were so fun. She was—the lead singer was so amazing. Another one was—Jarvis Cocker was great. He did—So some of those are really good because they're short and they just

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

give it their all. But sometimes it's too short. The festivals that I went to it would be—they're only doing a half hour set. They did four or five songs and they're done. So, in that regard, seeing them in their own venue was way better because you get to actually—they get to get into their groove and play enough songs and everyone gets into it. So, in the regard of the music, the festivals, it's more about the environment and the people not necessarily I would say just about the music, or—the other venues are more about the music.

[28:08]

SW: Have you ever met any bands?

JD: I would have to say I don't think I have. I know you've met way too many bands and bands that I liked that you didn't even care about. But no, I don't think I've met any bands, really. I mean, I don't think I would enjoy—[meeting a band] but I don't think I would be all starstruck or anything like that. But I don't think I've met any, really. Not that I can think of.

SW: I found an excellent quote by a British composer Malcolm Arnold, in which he said, “music is the social act of communications among people a gesture of friendship, the strongest there is.” Does any of that resonate with you?

JD: Well, when you're at an event with people, and even with people that you don't know, you're all kind of joined together by the music and by the feelings of what's going on. So, when you're out dancing, or even if you're just listening to the music, and everyone's listening to the same stuff, there is a whole communal, I guess, aspect of that, and the emotions kind of all sort of blend together. And—you're in, the big dance group—you can see, or you can feel all the emotions of everyone around you. And if you're outside of it, you can sort of see the kind of—it's almost like an organism, it's got a life of its own, where people are moving, and they're all moving separately, but they're all moving together. So, it's kind of interesting. It's hilarious, seeing different characters within that group, there's a lot of individuals, but it's still a group of people all enjoying the music together, and sharing that experience, and bringing them all sort of closer together.

[30:29]

JD: It's kind of funny, because you see everyone dancing and having a great time and loving the music, and all, sort of basically loving being together, mostly. And then the music stops, and everyone just goes their separate ways. [both chuckle]

SW: It's like a collective yet, there's—

JD: It definitely brings people together. It brings community together.

SW: But still individualistic.

JD: There's definitely individual aspects of it, for sure. Especially with dancing. You see, people have their own style, which is good, because I love seeing people just having a good time, even if they're crazy dancing, or they're doing stuff that's just outrageous and weird. But still, they're having a good time. And who cares? They're having so much fun. That's the whole point of this, which I love seeing

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

that, I love seeing people just having fun, and not caring what other people think [chuckles]. It's just hilarious. I love seeing that.

SW: Do you feel like live music is a form of escapism for you?

JD: [sighs] I don't think—I don't know. I don't think I think of it that way. I think—live music brings—

[31:59]

JD: Well, okay, it brings people together, it brings like-minded people together. So maybe escapism from your daily grind, like your work, your job. It's like, yeah, I'm working and then usually you're looking forward to the weekend or whatever. So, live music is an escape from your mundane, normal life to an extent. So that's, really good where—and you're doing it with a bunch—mostly you're doing with a bunch of other people. Or you have a group of friends that go.

SW: So, you'd say there is an important social component for you?

JD: Definitely, going to see—I mean, my second, or one of my more memorable events was me going to see a concert by myself. But the fact that one of the more memorable parts about that was me meeting other people. So, the social aspect of live music is really important. It's definitely a driving force. Whether that's something that you maybe recognize or don't recognize, at the time, you're going to see a band because you like the band. You're not going, hey, I want to go see this band, because there's going to be a bunch of people there that are going to be cool. You're going to go see the band because you like the music, and it's a side effect that there's a whole bunch of other people that like that music [that are] going to see the band.

SW: Would you say it's an opportunity to reconnect with friends, though?

JD: Definitely reconnecting—well, reconnecting with friends. Yes. And seeing friends because you don't see all of your friends all of the time. It's like a special occasion too where you get to see all your friends. But it's also partly a way to meet new friends and see new people, depending on the venue. If it's just a small club, it's not like you're going to meet a bunch of new people. I mean, you can but it's harder because normally people go there with groups of friends and they all kind of stay together and they talk [to each other] but you get to—

[34:01]

JD: Not now, but pre-COVID, you get six or seven of your friends, call them up and you're all like yeah, let's go see this band and everyone converges on the band [the venue] and you get to see them [friends] and you're hanging out and talking and drinking—it's a good time and you had fun. And you're all together in the same place where—and then everyone goes back and has their lives. which I mean, when you're younger, it's a bit easier because you have, I mean—you maybe have less life commitments, I think when you're younger. So as, [you get older] as older, live events are cool to meet up with friends, because everyone makes a point of doing it. You get to see all of your friends that you may not hang out with all the time. Where, my son, [Gavyn] he can hang out and do whatever he wants with his friends pretty much all the time because he's Twenty. He doesn't have—he's got some responsibilities, but not a huge amount. So, when you get older, actually, maybe—it is kind of cool to go to the live events to reconnect with all your friends that you don't see on a regular basis.

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

SW: So, it's been a year now since the World Health Organization declared to the world that COVID-19 was a global pandemic. And essentially, we went into lockdown. Soon after. What was the last concert you saw before the lockdown?

JD: Oh, man—I'm trying to remember, the last concert really? Before the lockdown? [pauses] I don't know if I remember.

[35:59]

I remember that [laughs] we had tickets for three or four other concerts that I'm pretty sure we didn't even get our money back for half of them, which kind of sucks. But there was—I mean, it might have been Peter Hook, I think it might have been. It was a concert that we went to—and it might have been during COVID. But before it was called COVID. I know that we brought our son to that which was super cool, because he was old enough to get in and it's something that we could do together which is always nice, because he's older and he doesn't want to spend any time with his parents. It was cool that we got to see them [Peter Hook]. Was it The Rickshaw? This was a really weird event before we saw [Peter Hook]—I don't know if it was before that or not. Anyways, it was before COVID. We went to this really weird event, which was really good. It was at The Rickshaw, [in Vancouver] and it was Midge Ur which is a musician out of England [Scotland] I had no idea who he was, but I did know some of his work. I had seen him in a TV show that's very situational. It's very—it's a Scottish show [Still Game]. But the event was basically—it was almost like a question period [Live Q & A]. We all went, and we sat down, and it was—basically—it was at The Rickshaw, and there wasn't a bunch of people standing and dancing [during the performance]. He was onstage and he would basically—you could ask him questions, and he would answer and then he would play some songs. And he would play requests. We learned a lot about him. About his process. He was instrumental in The Band-Aid song in the Eighties — “Feed the World” thing, which was really cool. And he could play music that people would request that he hadn't played in Twenty years!

[38:04]

JD: And amazingly, he would wait, and think and he would do a couple notes. And then say “okay, I got it” and then he would play the song. He hadn't played it in, Twenty years! It was amazing—It was amazing to see that kind of an artist and also to see that he's just a normal person—the way that he was talking with people having a conversation with the crowd. It was really cool. I really enjoyed that.

SW: Yeah, it was an interesting interactive Q&A show.

JD: Yeah.

SW: Yeah. Interesting experience. You mentioned concert tickets— [both laugh]

JD: Yeah, I'm pretty sure we still have two or four concert tickets that we still have to bring back to get our money back. Whether that's a thing or not, because Ticketmaster are jerks! We'll see. I don't know how that's going to work-out. But yeah, we had three or four concerts lined up that we were going to see. And one of them—two of them were far away. One of them was in San Diego [Los Angeles], and I think—I can't remember what the other one was. But yeah, thankfully we didn't buy plane tickets and

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

[book] hotels, but we were getting close to figuring that out. And then everything got put on hold and then delayed and then delayed some more and then cancelled.

SW: Do you have any [concert tickets] that have been rescheduled?

JD: No, not that I know of. I know that we had tickets to see My Chemical Romance. I know my daughter [Kyla] was pretty devastated that we weren't going to go see them. So hopefully, they'll reschedule at some point. Because I don't know if they're actually back together—back together. Or if they were just getting back together for a reunion tour that then got delayed a couple of times and then cancelled.

[40:00]

JD: So, we'll see what happens. I don't know. It's—

SW: Yeah, I know a lot of people were having issues with Ticketmaster, not refunding, or taking a long time to refund.

JD: Yeah, they're jerks, because they're basically—Well, you know, they are a business, and they don't want to give your money back. So, if they can delay it long enough, and keep your money you'll give up! I think we've done that for a couple of tickets, or we or—One of them was just trying to get back to Red Cat [record store in Vancouver] to bring our tickets back and we weren't leaving the house for basically, eight months. I don't even know if they'll take them back or not. I mean, I would think they should. But I don't know. It would be interesting having an argument with them about why they wouldn't take the tickets back and give you your money back? Because they should. There's a lot of weird stuff going on unrelated with the economy and COVID, though. So that's a whole other aspect of the weird crap the world's going through.

SW: Right. I think a lot of those ticket vendors are also small record shops, which had to close down.

JD: Yeah, if they're closed, you're—Yeah, you're out of luck anyways. [chuckles] But I mean, they're done. They got—I mean, you lost 100 bucks, they lost their job. So that kind of sucks for them.

SW: What do you miss most about not going out and seeing a band live?

JD: I mean, I'm sure I'm with everyone else, where the social interaction [chuckles] is the thing that everyone's lacking. So, missing being around a bunch of people.

[42:00]

I think it'd be weird if the live events come up again, I think some of us will feel strange being elbow to elbow with other people. Because it's been so long that people have been close to each other. I think a live event right now would be weird. Because people aren't used to being close, you know, with the social distancing, with masks and everything. I think if you went to a live event, like you did before, COVID, it would feel really, really strange. I mean, I think it's going take a little bit of time to get back to that.

SW: Especially music festivals!

Susan Webster
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JD: Yeah, I mean, seeing twenty-thousand people in one place, that's not a thing anymore. I mean, it's just really apparent seeing one person walk around without a mask. Seeing a whole bunch of people together, especially if—or in a small venue where everyone's dancing and sweaty and there's no room anywhere. Yeah, it's going to be weird. I think we've changed. I don't know. I hope not. But I think we're—I think things are going to be different from this point on. I don't know how the whole live events is going to play out. I think it may have to be more open areas. Who knows? I don't know.

SW: You mentioned traveling to different music events; there was a travel component, and now that's gone—

JD: Yeah, [chuckles] it would suck to have to quarantine for fourteen days just to see a band overnight and then quarantine for another fourteen days when you come home. So yeah, I mean, I don't think any of that is going to be viable in today's—with today's restrictions and all the crazy that's going on.

[44:05]

JD: Eventually when restrictions are lifted and things get under control, then yeah, you can go back to that [travelling]. Right now, yeah, it would be nuts to travel somewhere, just to see that [inaudible] [band]

SW: People used to just pop down to Seattle to see a band that wasn't playing in Vancouver, and then—

JD: Yeah, you probably can't even get across the border right now, if you try to—yeah, I'm just going to go and see a band. And they [border guards] would probably say, [laughs] “no, you're not, you're going back home!”

SW: Have you really felt any negative impacts for not being able to go to see shows? Have you found other ways to kind of fill that gap?

JD: Basically—I do a lot of online stuff already. So—for me, I still do a bunch of my socializing online on the computer. So that's not so bad. I know that a lot of people who are going stir crazy because they don't have a social outlet. So, if you are not someone who can sort of do that through the computer and online then I'm pretty sure you're going stir crazy. And, really need the release of the live venues or something like that, you know, just getting out of the house is like a mini vacation for a lot of people right now. Getting to go a live event would be pretty good. It would be pretty amazing!

SW: Some bands have found creative ways to perform virtually, live streaming shows. Have you engaged with any live streamed concerts?

JD: I mean, I've watched—I haven't watched a concert, but I've listened to some live stream stuff [music]. And it's kind of okay. But it's really not the same thing. It's like watching YouTube, really. I mean, you can watch YouTube and see a band playing and it's not the same thing.

[46:06]

JD: Sure, you're listening to someone to do it [perform] live, but it's different. It's not—it's the best we got at the moment, though. So, I mean, you take what you can get, I guess?

Susan Webster
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SW: Crank the music up.

JD: Yeah. Yeah. But, I mean, it's definitely not a substitute for being there in person.

SW: I guess—I think they sell tickets to log in virtually. So, it's a way to support the band.

JD: I think—yes, that's okay. I kind of think it's weird as well. If you're going to support the band, just buy their music, I guess. But I mean, yeah, paying money to watch someone virtually seems weird to me. Because there's already so much video culture out there, that it just—I mean, yeah, they're trying to make a living. I understand that. But it just seems— [sighs] It's not something that I think I would do. I'm not going to pay money to watch a performer on a streaming service. I don't think, I haven't done it yet—I don't know, maybe that's just a weird way that I look at it. Because I mean, you pay money to watch a movie, so there shouldn't really be much difference. But it just feels like there is. I don't know, maybe that's just—it's probably just me being weird. I would say—I understand supporting the artists and that makes sense, because they have to make a living. Most of the bands that we enjoy seeing are already making a way better living than I think I'm— [laughs] making so I don't think they're hurting for cash.

SW: There's smaller performers—

[48:01]

JD: The Indie performers. Yeah, I like that—But then you just buy their music. A lot of them are doing stuff also, there's other revenue streams that they can do, where they're making money off of doing stuff on YouTube and other social outlets. So if they're smart, and if they're semi successful, they already are pretty smart with how the whole system works, then they can make some money out of it without getting it directly—and then there's all these other—I mean, I'm not up on the technology, but there's so many other ways for you to support pretty much anyone somehow with sending money online [patreon] with all the different ways things are going. I haven't done any of the online streaming stuff. I mean, I watch videos on YouTube, with bands and music, but that's just because it's really easy to do. And that might be, you know—the convenience aspect of it might be the driving factor between YouTube and Spotify. You see most of the bands that you want to see and Indie stuff [music] if you're on SoundCloud or some of the other places [platforms]. But I think it would be really hard for new artists.

SW: Yeah.

JD: I think that they would have to—I think they'd be struggling to get their information out. But I mean, a lot of new artists at the same time, they've grown up and dealt with the whole social media aspect of how you get your name out and how music gets consumed now. So maybe they are a little bit better at it than some of the older bands. I don't know.

SW: You mentioned seeing Jarvis Cocker from Pulp.

JD: Yeah.

SW: And he's doing this thing he calls "Domestic Disco."

Susan Webster
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JD: Yeah. And that was—

SW: And he performs out of his living room, he live streams it on Instagram. It's free, though you don't [inaudible] [have to pay]

JD: Yeah. And that's actually the one I was thinking about when I listened to the live stream. But it's funny because he has no idea what he's doing. You can hear him setting his stuff up and screwing it up and not understanding what's going on. Because he's an old school—he's an older singer. He understands that you have to use social media.

[50:32]

JD: But he still struggles with the technology. I think that's kind of funny, he still does it, which is great. And he's—and it's pretty good. But I think newer people [performers] will have a better time at it because they understand the tech and understand the social media aspect of it. But he's just been in the business for so long that he knows what has to be done to stay relevant and current.

SW: Would you say there's that component of being raw, like he is, which will draw people to watch him?

JD: I don't think it's going to draw any new people. I think maybe word of mouth if someone says, “hey, did you hear this? He's doing it live. And it's funny, or it's cool.” But I mean, you're pretty much it's—that's the whole problem with social media is, you pretty much go to where you want to go to. You're consuming what you already know and want to listen to unless you're just randomly looking at stuff [music online] forever, and you find something new. You mostly are going directly to what you want to hear. You're not seeing a bunch of new stuff [music] that you haven't been—that you didn't know about.

SW: Yeah. And I think with someone like Jarvis Cocker, he is pretty well established with followers.

JD: Yeah. And I don't think he's getting a lot of new followers. But he's getting a lot of—he might be getting new followers that have already followed him in the past, they know who he is, and then listen to his music. You might get some new ones [fans], but I don't think he's going to be getting a whole bunch of—absolutely new people that have never heard him before.

[52:11]

SW: You mentioned, once the restrictions are lifted, when large groups can gather again, it's going to feel really weird going to a stadium.

JD: Yeah, I think it will feel really weird. I think there'll be a little bit of a culture shock—I think it'll be both, I think people will be like, oh my God, we can finally be close to other people! But then it might also be Oh my God, why are you so close to me! I don't know. It's going to be strange.

SW: PTSD?

Susan Webster
LIBR 588: Full Transcript

JD: Yeah, there's definitely going to be some weirdness. And I hope people don't have panic attacks and freak out because that'll be sad. But who knows?

SW: Social anxiety?

JD: Yeah, it's going to be weird. It's there's—yeah, I don't know. It's I mean, the world is already a weird place, and it's just getting weirder.

SW: So, are you looking forward to seeing any particular bands live again?

JD: I really wanted to see My Chemical Romance with my daughter because she loves them. And I do like them. And the other—Yeah, I just like the live events. I like seeing the older bands while you still can. Peter Hook was cool, and they're not going to be around forever. So, seeing some of the older bands while you still can is good.

SW: Okay. I think we're going to conclude the interview. Thank you for your time.

JD: No problem.