

A new word for noise

Help! The music industry, and others, have hijacked our favourite word.

They are still lagging behind in taking over vibration, but how long will it be?

Attempting to search the Internet for “noise” brings up over 1,000,000 hits, many of which are music related.

“The Art of Noise”, “ennoise”, “The noise”, “Bring the noise”, “noiseonline” and many, many others. “Noiseit” is an Italian page, whilst most confusing of all, “noisepollution” is a German music page.

At the same time, motorcycle champion Barry Sheen demands more noise at race tracks and is concerned at the prospect of silencers to limit noise from bikes.

Noise as entertainment is a strange, even depressing, idea to noise professionals, who devote their time to reducing it. If only the other lot had used “sound”, it wouldn’t have been so bad, but that they get a kick out of “noise” tells us something about the

modern world.

What was it that turned music into noise? The audio industry has to take some responsibility. It is they who have made it possible to amplify beyond the requirements of the music itself, until rhythm, not tune is the main ingredient, whilst high sound levels cocoon listeners in their own worlds, from which they look out on others sharing a similar isolation.

OK, if they want to go to Rock Concerts and be blasted, it’s up to them, but what do they then do back home? They enjoy noise! This is where the problems start - a real problem of mind-set. Noise is not good, desirable or acceptable. It is a fiendish imposition on those who don’t want it. Linking noise with entertainment gives it an acceptability, which moulds long-term attitudes.

Has anybody suggestions for a new word for noise?

Noise-free America

Recent wooden spoons awarded to winners of Noise-Free America’s “Dirty Dozen” include, for December last, the city of Norman, Oklahoma, for taking a relaxed attitude toward thunderous boom cars, nuisance barking dogs, ear-splitting rock bands, and raucous campus bars and fraternities. Michael Wright, a Norman resident, commented that “twenty years of abuse from noise pollution in Norman has impaired my social life, my artistic life, my professional endeavors, and my financial position. By inflicting me with sleep deprivation and daily doses of stress, it has also threatened my health.”

Wright reports that his house is constantly under audio assault by young men driving boom cars, and they have ruined his home working environment (from which he had previously written four successful federal grant applications). The “boomer boys” often wake him up in the middle of the night. Wright has also lived in several Norman neighborhoods beset by chronic dog barking. On numerous occasions he has heard outdoor rock concerts several blocks from his house. One reason why Norman is “noise hell” is the permissive attitude of local authorities. When called about noise complaints, the Norman Police

department usually just issue a courteous verbal warning. Wright describes one encounter with a young police officer who told him that on several occasions she had stopped boom cars, but did not issue any citations. When asked why not, she replied, “Officers’ discretion.” Apparently, the Norman police fail to realize that noise is Americans’ number one complaint about their neighborhoods, according to the US Census Bureau. The Norman Police also fail to understand that noise violators have an aggressive, hostile attitude toward society - exactly the same characteristics as “real” criminals.

noise notes