Simon’s work in lighting and projection mapping is skilled, and is very people-based. He makes effects (emotionally and in physical construction) which suit and develop their context: the background, people and the event. This is a rare way of working, and it makes a difference. Fitting the fashion or echoing times of social angst is one thing: fitting the mood and need, and helping elevate them, is another.

I first met Simon in early 2017 at a projection mapping event which he organised in Northampton, through people I met at a festival which we put together as a collaboration of crews from Sheffield, Brighton and London. Simon’s artistic and atmospheric work with light and motion is superbly complemented by his musical assimilation and creativity through DJ work. His DJ productivity is informed by his extensive knowledge of music tracks in various music genres, focused around modern dance music genres. He knows much about when tracks and mixes hit the music scene, and the impact they had through aspects of their originality, and how that still plays out today. His DJ work, more than that of most DJs in my opinion, is informed by, and carries, the underlying culture and its stories. In my experience of Simon’s DJing, he is adept – indeed, quite outstanding – in a variety of styles and moods, always done with the joy of the music and a knowledge of music’s ongoing place in humanistic caring development and wellbeing. There is never, or very rarely, a sense of combat in his DJ work, which differentiates his knowledge and craft from many other DJs and music producers. In my view this relates to how Simon considers the totality of music as an ongoing social component with great collective value, rather than viewing individual tracks or artists as being in competition with one another for fiscal value.

Simon never stops creating and learning.

Simon’s dedication and work ethic are exemplary. Music and arts events, in my experience, include a broad mixture of personalities, in terms of reliability, clarity, competence, punctuality, etc. I have been crew on many music and arts festivals, and seen a wide variety of competence, dedication and reliability. I have not kept in touch with people whose dedication I would hold in question. Simon does what he says, while knowing more about his own plans than most people can readily comprehend so far in advance as he can. He is outstanding in how well organised and hard working he is, typically while also being relaxed – in ways which often only come with experience of always being well organised in advance, as well as adaptable to others. This is why, I am sure, Simon is core crew in the events which I think of as being not only the best organised and smoothest, but also the easiest to work with in terms of collective collaborative spirit, and a spirit of everyone helping others however needed. Simon leads in this demeanour, influencing the people and environment around him, which he shares. He is not only personally brilliantly organised, technically skilled and practical: he is also key to ensuring that the whole event runs similarly, from start to finish.

Simon has discussed with me the subjects of his intended study.

These questions are of interest to many people in the music and entertainment industries, in many parts of the UK. The patterns of cultural influence and exchange, and economics, are of useful relevance to the livelihoods of a great many people who are already established in these industries, as well as being of informative interest to those who are joining these milieux, with an active consciousness of cultural and economic sustainability. While much is lived on the dancefloor, there is an extensive appreciation and consciousness of its cultural and fiscal archaeology and future.

My personal background in academia includes over 350 citations in developmental psychology and psychiatry. From 1998 to 2021 I worked in top-rated UK academic institutions (The University of Oxford, and the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London), in senior administrative roles: Executive Assistant to the Dean of the Institute of Psychiatry, and manager of the John Fell Fund (the largest University research fund in Europe, and fourth largest globally: £6M/year), manager of many other regional research and application funding streams (e.g. STFC and BBSRC Impact Acceleration Accounts), Oxfordshire ESIF funding (19M € over 5 years), and bespoke funding streams such as the University of Oxford’s Knowledge Exchange Seed Fund (for 7 years, since it’s inception in 2013, until I left the University in February 2021), which delivered the largest economic and cultural returns of any of the funds which I managed (<https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/funding/ke-seed-fund>). I was Secretary to the UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2007-2008 for biological, veterinarian and agricultural sciences (Main Panel D: <http://www.rae.ac.uk/panels/members/>). Prior to leaving the UK in 2021, in order to remain a citizen of Europe, I was the representative for further and higher education on the UK’s ESIF national marketing and communications sub-committee, in addition to managing these European funds’ distribution and performance for Oxfordshire. I am the main author of the Oxfordshire OXTTA Science and Innovation Audit for government: an evidence-based report on investment strategy for quantum, satellite, medico-digital, and autonomous technologies (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/science-and-innovation-audits-second-reports-published>).

Simon’s choice of subject matter for study is admirable, and is superbly suited to his knowledge, skills, network, and experience. I can think of no-one else nearly as well suited to this study, either in background, or current activity and influence, or in terms of the benevolent mentality to apply and spread it in ways which will be of use in the relevant areas of music and entertainment industries, and of benefit to people from many walks and dances of life, who enjoy and value it.