



MEGAVERSE X TOWNHOUSES

Saturday 28 February 2026 | 19:00 | Strange Brew, Bristol

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Is this the future of live gigs?

Megaverse is one of CoSTAR National Lab's four pioneering R&D projects chosen as part of the **Grass Roots Music Venue Innovation** competition launched in partnership with **MusicFutures** and supported by the **Music Venue Trust** and which arose from research conducted by CoSTAR in 2025. The R&D competition invited UK companies to develop exciting ideas that would connect artists, grass roots music venues and audiences in new ways and in pursuit of a more equitable future for the UK's live music sector.

In collaboration with indie-rock group **Townhouses**, interactive studio **Megaverse** will present a one-off immersive live performance at **Strange Brew**, an independent grass roots venue in Bristol. The gig will be a visceral spectacle of large-scale visuals driven by real-time audio, movement and interaction with audiences in venue and online.

Built around a set from Townhouses, the visuals are generated live during the performance and evolve in real time and in response to live audio data from the band, depth camera movement in the venue and engagement from the audience online. The MegaStage platform is designed to integrate participation directly into the experience, recognising that different audiences either in venue or online want different ways to engage with live music.

Developed with the support of **CoSTAR National Lab** research expertise and access to technical infrastructure, Megaverse's prototype is designed to be portable and accessible for independent venues. The system is intended to be operated by existing technicians and crew using familiar workflows, in the same way lighting or sound would be traditionally used.

About Townhouses

Townhouses are a high energy indie rock band forged in Bristol's DIY scene and now based in London. Blending classic rock, indie sleaze, and psychedelia, they have built a reputation for electric live shows across the UK and Europe. With a live EP and a slurry of new singles due in 2026, Townhouses deliver big riffs and the kind of live energy that reminds audiences why gigs matter.

➤ **#GrassRootsFutures**

About Strange Brew

Strange Brew is an independent venue in Bristol with a focus on inclusivity and experimentation. Its eclectic programming and professionalism have made it a cornerstone of Bristol's contemporary underground scene. Acts that have played Strange Brew include: Djanjo Django, Last Dinner Party, Black Country New Road, The Horrors and Reggie Watts.

CoSTAR National Lab

Led by the award-winning **StoryFutures** team at **Royal Holloway, University of London**, the **CoSTAR National Lab** is the central hub of the CoSTAR Network, a £75.6 million investment by the UKRI Infrastructure Fund, delivered by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). This is infrastructure that combines state-of-the-art facilities, technology research and an exciting series of industry and academic partnerships to fuel creative industries growth across the UK. CoSTAR National Lab is delivered via an industry x research partnership that includes: Pinewood Studios, Disguise, BT, University of Surrey, Abertay University and the National Film and Television School.

About this Research Project

This Research Project is led by The CoSTAR National Lab working in collaboration with Liverpool based Creative Cluster MusicFutures and supported by the Music Venue Trust. The aim is to use new and emerging technologies and research expertise to tackle some of the grass root sector's unique challenges in pursuit of a more equitable future for the UK's live music sector. By catalysing new relationships between cutting edge UK companies, venue owners and operators and emerging artists we are seeking to innovate in the context of the shared live experience and the role that technologies can play in shifting and extending its boundaries and its value for grass roots venues.

