

VICTORIA MUSIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE – Minutes April 9, 2020 11am to 12:30pm, Video Conference

In Attendance: *Kathryn Calder, Christopher Butterfield, Gaby Marchese, Kim Persely Kozlowski, Dane Roberts, Vanessa Leong, Sarah Pocklington, Neil Cooke-Dallin, Lindsay MacPherson, Jeff Day, David McConachie*

Regrets: *Dylan Willows, Jane Butler McGregor, Gary Preston,*

Review of Agenda

The agenda was approved and no new items were added.

Review of minutes

The minutes of the March 12 meeting were approved.

1. Sound Diplomacy Music Survey

- Currently 1478 responses to the survey with 5 days remaining until the April 13 closure. No indigenous responses in the artists and industry category. The numbers are however closely reflecting the community's makeup, however, there is a desire to seek out more engagement from indigenous artists and audience members.
- The April 13 survey end date is approaching and there was agreement to keep this date, but to continue engagement with Indigenous groups for their input following the survey closure. It was suggested that approaching key individuals in the Indigenous community to facilitate bringing artists together in an online format would increase indigenous representation in the survey.
- Concerns were raised that COVID 19 is having a different effect on the Indigenous community. Many Indigenous people are seeking help from friendship centers, and it would be difficult to engage the Indigenous community at this time. Their immediate focus is on health and wellness, and connecting with the Indigenous community digitally was not considered urgent at this time.
- An issue was also raised that any surveys submitted recently would be influenced by the effect of COVID 19 on the music community. About 95% of survey responses were received pre-pandemic so the survey results shouldn't be skewed as a result of the pandemic.
- Sound Diplomacy have budget for further engagement for the survey and may need to delay their findings until a connection is made with the Indigenous community to gather their survey responses.
- Lindsay and Jeff were in discussions with Nicholas from Sound Diplomacy about submitting a report on what they have been working on so far.

2. COVID 19 & the effect on the Music Industry

- Artists and recording studios are attempting creative ways to livestream musical performances and connect to their audience. Venues are closed and are anticipated to be for some time. Most of the focus currently has been on streaming to develop community. Some artists and studios have been able to monetize with some success but overall, it is difficult to monetize the live streams. Other livestreaming options are being

looked at in Victoria, including outdoor recording spaces and tiny desk concert style livestreams.

- Creativity among artists is constant and is withstanding the pressures of venue closures and tour cancellations. Artists are showing that they are continuing to find ways to perform creatively, but the challenge is the need to monetize their performances.
- The committee has concerns for Victoria businesses that can only last so long without visitors, tourists and audiences. Many local venues are only capable of surviving a couple of months in the current situation.
- Some municipalities are holding onto arts grants and determining what is the best way to allocate the funds to arts organizations.
- It is expected that most municipalities will cancel Canada Day in the coming weeks, and there are likely to be some staff layoffs at some municipalities – many municipalities are writing off the 2020 festival season.
- Within Victoria, many events are cancelling, some are postponing, some are moving ahead as planned. Council is modifying the 2020 budget in response to COVID 19 which may affect the availability of festival and event grants locally. At this time FIG budget remains, however, staff will make recommendations to council on how to allocate.
- Around BC, festivals are receiving positive feedback from funding streams that the funds are still available, and the Province has not been looking to take back grant funds it has already issued. Funders are being flexible and looking for different kinds of solutions, provided that organizations can show they will use the funding in productive ways – strategic planning, moving to an online model, and online events for example. ie Factor provided a sizable grant to one organization which allowed them to pay staff and work on strategic planning. It is difficult for non-profits to cover their operating costs, as these new event formats are difficult to monetize.
- UVIC – the University is preparing online courses. Students will return in the fall and COVID is causing uncertainty. People are finding creative ways to perform but there is a need to monetize performances. In the music department, how will auditions and rehearsals take place? How will music studios and teachers continue to service their students and clients?
- Dane is part of a BC festival collective that has formed as a unified voice for independent medium to large festivals, and they are concerned about a second wave of COVID 19 that could affect those events that are to take place later in summer. They are seeking greater clarity from the Ministry of Health over the potential of this lasting into the summer and the implications for events.
- It is likely that the Province won't lift social distancing thresholds all at once - it will be gradual over the coming weeks and months - there is little confidence in a return to mass gatherings this season. Life may not return to normal for 1-2 years and events should be planning for this eventuality.
- The committee discussed ways senior government could incentivize landowners to provide relief to arts and culture focused leaseholders. Venues might only start returning to normal once a vaccine is developed in 12-18 months.

Next Meeting

- The committee will connect with Nicholas from Sound Diplomacy following the completion of the survey and request an update at the next committee meeting.
- In response to how quickly changes are taking place and the impact on the music industry, the committee agreed to meet again in two weeks, on Thursday April 23, in conference call format.

- Councilor Loveday will be invited to attend the next meeting should Council's COW schedule allow.

Meeting closed 12:20pm.

Next meeting Thursday April 23, 11am, online conference call.