

VICTORIA MUSIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE – Minutes May 14, 2020

11am to 12:30pm, Video Conference

In Attendance: *Kathryn Calder, Jane Butler McGregor, Christopher Butterfield, Gaby Marchese, Kim Persely Kozlowski, Vanessa Leong, Sarah Pocklington, Gary Preston, Lindsay MacPherson, Dylan Willows Jeff Day, David McConachie, Nick Aramouni (Sound Diplomacy).*

Regrets: *Neil Cooke-Dallin, Dane Roberts*

Review of Agenda

The agenda was approved and no new items were added.

Review of minutes

The minutes of the April 9 meeting were approved.

1. Sound Diplomacy

Economic Impact Report

- Sound Diplomacy have released a lengthy and detailed economic impact report that is being reviewed by City staff to assess the accuracy of the findings relative to previous economic analysis of the BC creative industries. The City's position is that as long as Music BC supports Sound Diplomacy's economic impact findings that the discrepancies between the Create Victoria data set and the Sound Diplomacy data set will be acceptable.
- Committee members will have the opportunity to add comments/feedback to each section of the report as soon as possible.

Music Resiliency Report

- Sound Diplomacy launched a music resiliency report today to the global music community which covers how communities could combat the crisis, and includes an open letter that music community advocates can use to address their local councils so that 'music has a voice'.
- Nick from Sound Diplomacy added that the report includes economic impact analysis and 18 recommendations, and including 8-9 crisis relief measures to combat the COVID crisis impacts.

Sound Diplomacy Music Strategy report

- Further engagement and input from the Indigenous community is needed before the music industry survey findings can be summarised. There is still significant concern about the risk of opening Indigenous communities to others. Some communities have closed roads to prevent access. Engagement with Indigenous communities will be included when the time is right and more information on this is likely at the next MAC meeting.
- Timing of the Sound Diplomacy report is a major factor to consider and whether it is the right time given the COVID crisis. There is no rush to present the report to council this

summer. Council has many pressing issues to address and the music strategy may not be viewed as urgent given the nature of COVID impact on the community.

- A late fall (November) presentation to council could be the best time. There is a need to be mindful of the challenges the music industry faces, and ensure the report isn't tone deaf - COVID 19 needs to be positioned at the front of the report.
- The nature of community support, and the semi-professional nature of much of Victoria's music industry, nurtures a uniquely supportive music ecosystem locally that will likely prove to be more resilient to the economic impact of the pandemic and bounce back quicker than other markets.

2. COVID-19

Funding for the Arts and Cultural sector

- Council is currently discussing the impact of the pandemic on the cultural sector, and how the City can help this sector re-start and recover.
- Council is pushing for adjustments to bylaws that will allow restaurants, bars and cafes to expand their patios. City staff are exploring options for local artists to play in these areas (i.e.. Bastion Square).
- Council has reviewed the Festival Investment Grant (FIG) budget for 2020. The \$25k increase in grants for 2020 has been removed and re-allocated to COVID related emergency funding, however the core amount of the FIG budget has remained available. City staff will make recommendations on distributing the grants as if festivals were happening. This funding is critical as local government support can be used by organizations as leverage for larger grants from the Provincial and Federal government. It is the City's preference to continue to provide festival and event grants as originally recommended, regardless if they are able to program an event or festival, to assist their ability to operate and recover.

Festival and Event status

- All major events for the summer and fall of 2020 have cancelled due to COVID-19 event restrictions. City staff will listen to event organizers who propose alternative events and can demonstrate that they will be able to follow the Provincial Health Officer's orders for gatherings. For example, Theatre Skam are looking at ways to present by limiting the number of guests at their event, audience registration for each performance, and holding the event outdoors in a dispersed format.

Roundtable updates

- Chris gave an update from UVIC – the University is pushing for face-to-face teaching to be classed as an essential service, but there is the possibility there won't be any face-to-face teaching through the year. Maximum capacity for people in a space has been capped at 15 people. Students still want to be on campus and there have been very few deferrals, despite being a destination University with many students travelling to be there.
- Jane gave an update from the Conservatory of Music, which has been closed since March 17. They have successfully moved 90% of their studio teaching online and faculty are teaching from home. They are aiming to start bringing private group lessons (10-15 per class) back into the building from June 1. Private lessons and post-secondary work are targeting a September return, using the hall to space people out appropriately.

- Gary gave an update from the Island Musician's Association on the music industry on Vancouver Island. The Victoria Symphony has cancelled the rest of the winter season and summer 2020 season. The Island Music Association have been lobbying the federal government so they understand the impact on musicians. There has been \$840,000 in lost gig revenue for musicians on the island so far. They are looking at ways to broadcast performances, however monetizing online performances continues to be a big issue. Artists also face travel restrictions as a barrier to booking gigs. Streaming fatigue is an issue and there are resources how to livestream effectively. One role the community can play is promoting local artists and developing an appetite in the local community for supporting local artists. Funds could be available to support musicians through the Island Musician's Association Musician Performance Trust Fund.

Music Community Initiatives and Solutions

- YYJ Arts United Facebook page is a resource for sharing local music industry info including upcoming gigs and live streams.
- Beacon Hill Park's Cameron Bandshell venue has been discussed, but is a difficult venue to ensure physical distancing and limit attendance. RAP has also been discussed as a venue, but issues remain around maintaining the cleanliness of the washrooms.
- Side door (sidedooraccess.com) livestreams gigs where the audience pays (tickets around \$10) to attend with 100-person max attendance. There are some reports that musicians are making money with these methods.
- While the number of gigs has decreased, online lessons have gained popularity and this is one avenue to encourage musicians to pursue.
- Artists should consider letting viewers see behind the scenes of their lifestyle, see behind the curtain, show their personality, and display their home studio set up.
- Ethan Kruz has been running end of the street neighbourhood gigs and is now starting a drive in movie set up in Esquimalt (victoriadrivein.ca). Drive in ideas have also been discussed with the City – ambient light and streetlights are an issue as well as insurance issues and clauses for COVID.
- A major issue affecting events in 2021 will be insurance policies and fees. A number of events won't be able to return due to insurance costs alone and the difficulty obtaining event insurance.
- Communication – private Facebook group to be set up for the MAC sharing.

Meeting closed 12:30pm.

Next meeting Thursday June 11, 11am, online conference call.