

MINUTES

Seattle Music Commission Meeting

Wednesday, Nov 18, 2020 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Webex Conference

Commissioners Present: Reese Tanimura (Chair), Sharlese Metcalf (Vice Chair), Daniel Pak, Joleen Hughes, Ben Hunter, Sue Ennis, Terry Morgan, Kitty Wu, Nate Omdal, Paula Madrigal

Commissioners Absent: Jerry Everard, Ben Secord

City Staff Present: Alex Rose, Meghan Sebold, Scott Plusquellec, Meli Darby, Ashraf Hasham, Randy Engstrom, Dominique Stephens

Guests: Seattle musicians Shaina Shepherd, Andrew Joslyn, Tomo Nakayama; Jason Clackley (Y+C Committee); Bruce Garfield (Columbus OH Music Commission)

Call to Order: The was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by Reese Tanimura.

Public Comment: N/A

Welcome – Reese Tanimura

- We acknowledge that we gather, work, and play on indigenous land, the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people - specifically the Duwamish Tribe. Remember that we must cultivate authentic relationships with indigenous communities that have been doing this work for a long time.

Regular Commission Business – All

- Review Agenda
- Approval of Sept 16, 2020 SMC Meeting Minutes:
 - Sue motioned to approve, Pak seconded, all approved (no oppose, no abstain). Sept 16 minutes approved.

Guests: Shaina Shepherd, Tomo Nakayama, Andrew Joslyn – How artists are adjusting in the age of COVID

Reese

- This has been a large, interesting, and challenging year – and it exposed lots of gaps too.
- Our work is to center artists, and advocate for creative industries that surround our work.

- We invited Shaina, Andrew, and Tomo to come in and discuss what they're experiencing as working musicians and artists.

Shaina

- Maintaining structures for performance
- Seems to be a disconnect between resources and artists
- Reaching new audiences at this time
- There's a little bit of exclusivity in who is working with whom
- **Content creation and best practices** - trying to level the playing field of who can make content right now and who's invited to make content right now

Tomo

- Musicians who are self-sufficient and able to produce their own content are the ones succeeding/getting work now
- Sharing resources - **infrastructure to connect artists to video producers/equipment - would be great**
- Issues with playing with other musicians - depending on who you're talking to and where the performance is
- Lots of energy right when pandemic hit to support artists via livestreams/Bandcamp, but sees it waning - or maybe it's too spread out now - worried about this in going into next phase of pandemic

Andrew

- Agree - self-sufficient artists who can self-produce are the most able to lift themselves up
- Even for folks who do commercial work - not much work there either. Music supervisors want you to be able to self-produce.
- Had to close his studio in Pioneer Square
- Usually hires 12-14 musicians for orchestral sessions - this year, only had 2 recording session – pay was significantly higher to reflect **hazard pay**
- Agree with Tomo - fatigue in musician support on all fronts - everyone is asking for money, and it's getting harder
- Feels like a filtration process - those who can hang on longest will survive
- Applied for unemployment in March/April - came thru in June - **accumulated lots of debt**, operating on borrowed time

Shaina

- Where's the money and resources coming from - if there's a way to **create some sort of umbrella** – like MoPOP working with Amazon to honor Alice In Chains this year – increase access with support from big players (philanthropy/private)
- How can legislation, philanthropy, and policy come together - it started with venues, but there's fatigue around supporting venues because it feels like an impossible battle since we don't know when this is going to end (but you can see the results of an artist receiving funding)

Paula

- I'm so tired of doing online concerts – missing musicians and audiences
- Don't feel inspired. How do we inspire our fellow musicians?

Ben H

- Earshot Jazz show was the only show that required him to go someplace
- Constantly reminded of the fact that this industry is the first to vanish and last to reappear - YET it's the thing people need the most - entertainment, inspiration, music
- Is there a way **SMC can advocate to the public**, and make a plea to the City and people of WA: **this industry is hurting - if we can stay indoors, wear masks, etc. - we have the opportunity to go back out there and enjoy live music again!**

Jason

- VERA just received Seattle/King County Public Health grant - reaching folks the SKCPH hasn't been able to reach - young people ([see #SAFEINSOUND](#))
- 4 large scale streams with nat'l/int'l touring acts over the next 6 weeks - supporting artists directly + panels with relevant folks who can speak to what it's like to be working from home and keep the faith
- Working with lots of advocacy groups (e.g. El Centro), same message as Ben – ‘do you want this back? Then stay home!’
- **Inviting SMC to participate!** Want to get this out to thousands of folks in our County and change the way people are acting

Shaina

- Inspired by Andrew’s work at Seattle Symphony ([The Essential Series](#))! But no one knows about it unless they follow the Symphony. Need to cross pollinate, build awareness across the music community.
- Connect the dots – convince folks it’s worth the effort to do it as a unit

Andrew

- Yes! Want to use the Symphony’s platform to bring attention to other Seattle artists, engage wider audience - still fledgling in the series, hoping to get artists like Black Tones, Perfume Genius - wider array of genres, varied levels of career

Shaina

- **Change the focus of how the local music scene is marketed.** Redefine that conversation to be artist-centric, about artist development. Move **from ‘Let’s get through this time’ to ‘Let’s build things that reflect this time.’**

Tomo

- Believes the art will take care of itself if artists are able to live, to survive
- More of our energy can be spent on saving the infrastructure of the industry - venues, bars
- **City deferring bills has been really helpful** (e.g. electric bill) - let's make those widely available to musicians and artists
- Making survival not the chief concern will help the art being made

Meghan

- “Industry-training-industry” is something we hear a lot (e.g. connecting audio engineers to artists and training each other) – passing the mic to Nate

Nate

- **Workers giving workers new skills** – we'll have to define parameters and the cycle - probably a lot of little projects that can add up to something big
- Funding is also a question

Terry

- I'm a major advocate of supporting artists – like [SF's example](#) of supporting working artists with UBI of \$1k/month with first round of CARES funds
- **All the energy toward saving the venues won't mean anything unless there are artists to fill those stages**
- The industry is never going to go back to what it was
- Beware of **vultures** - venues and other spaces getting snatched
- **Consolidation of industry practice** – record labels buying up resorts to be destination venues (in the South, [development by Universal](#) is underway)
- We have got to protect our artists - most important commodity we've got - venues will come and go, hate to say - soon as you get out, someone else will get in - only so much money someone can lose before they take their health/livelihood/families into consideration

Reese:

- We're all hearing a lot from artists - many of us are artists ourselves
- Scary right now - hopefully relief coming in January - as venues have been able to coalesce and find their advocacy footing - looking for direction from this group to provide advocacy on behalf of artists who have been advocating for venues - how do we lead advocacy for artists?
- We'll hear from our City people soon - our dedicated tax streams have all been hit - lodging, attractions/admissions - **what sources of funding can we look to to fund artists to simply get by and live right now?**

Sharlese

- Feels lucky to have a job, and does streams in her free time as a hobby - can't even imagine being a full time artist relying on income from streaming
- **How can we get artists paid for their streams?** Right now people want to play, and streams are what we have - that can be really important to connect those dots

Jason

- VERA's been trying to find grant funds to pay artists - has been working okay!
- And also - Patreon for monthly streams!! Not a ton of funds but it's something
- Eventbrite RSVPs w/ donations for free streams seems to work a little bit

Sharlese

- Yes! Also - talking about who pays for these streams – Amazon, Spotify, etc. should be helping artists right now
- How do we **think about DEI when reopening our city?** White men run our music industry - want to see a whole new leadership emerge
- Talking to indigenous record label owner - wants to open up a venue in the next 5 years - how do we **identify emerging leaders like this to help them move into positions of influence?**
- Hears from artists that relationships with venue ownership are fraught

Bruce

- There's all kinds of different money available in govt and NGOs (landbanks, workforce dev, etc) - maybe establish a nonprofit venue owned and run by artists/BIPOC
- Not gonna change overnight

Nate

- Union perspective – recent advocacy (including from GRAMMYS) for YouTube to give up some of the money they make from music. Industry needs to be honest about what the goals are - are we trying to take over Spotify/YouTube, or create a new one? (like what Ben said)

Joleen:

- Does not recommend setting up a new music service - the expense to put together something like that is astronomical - rights, publishing, transmission - many moving parts, very slim margin

Andrew

- If you understand your relationship with the PROs, who owns the masters, etc. it's possible to make a living off of this but it's a slow burn. Bottom line - Spotify is only one revenue source - can't rely on one line of business
- I like the **SPL Playback program** – direct support of artists, local streaming service already built. How to **expand on something like this**, rather than recreate the wheel?

Joleen

- **Happy to set up a call to help artists better understand their music rights**

Andrew

- Back to Terry's point about the venues, they pay PROs that go into royalty funds that artists get paid from – it's all connected

Jason

- Echo what Sharlese was saying - not about creating a new service - about getting the money
- Why can't there be **nationwide advocacy for Spotify/Apple Music to pay artists more** - that can work with higher level artists!

Joleen

- Apple has reduced their fees from 30% to 15% for artists who make less than \$1m - can build on that for indie artists!

Pak

- This is an equity issue. We're essentially making a value proposition.
- Partnership is what the future needs to look like - collaboration - been serving on KML/venue coalition - sees a lack of education in community there - talking to Leigh from Tractor - recognizes need for artist representation at the table
- For venues that do make it - they realize they need to get a better understanding of equity, how to work with artists. Percentage of funds raised can go to artists directly.
- Young artists come to Pak and ask what they should be doing - recommends streams, Patreon, building exposure, and keeping folks involved
- Re: artists' rights - been teaching youth about publishing and songwriting royalties - got SPS to pay Totem Star artists for sync licenses - making some real money

- Remote sessions, remote production support - getting youth gear (digital equity) - getting self-production tools out to young artists is essential
- Recently met with Tim Keck - where can we monetize artists in this time - so many meetings that are corporate and so boring and dry - how can we get corporations or smaller companies to hire artists to start their meetings - while teaching about equity
- **Cultural Space Agency/PDA** is about to be chartered by the City - **we should be supporting that in public comment.** CSA could help buy a building, put together a governance board of Seattle artists to run a venue - step in rebuilding our city better - values of CSA are amazing - putting wealth back into communities - action plan

Paula

- Venues had been hiring **undocumented workers** - how are they helping those undocumented workers now?
- **POC and Latinx populations need to have more access to spaces**
- This moment is a good moment to do work like writing, creating work - how can City support that type of work **without having to do a performance - how can artists get paid for doing their work?**
- A lot of musicians aren't practicing right now because there's a lack of inspiration right now and lack of performance opportunities
- Undocumented people pay taxes - a lot of taxes - but they don't have rights

Shaina

- Speaking to connection of underrepresented communities and what Totem Star is doing - there is a **gatekeeping issue** in knowledge/trainings - more people should be invited to these convos
- Re: knowledge of licensing and law - has been historically kept to one part of the industry - feels like 'I earned this knowledge, so I'm not gonna share' - lot of people here dedicated their time to speaking at events, sharing knowledge about this and mentor folks on a smaller scale
- **Acknowledge artists collectives not just individual artists**
- **Mentorship** – Totem Star has created a beautiful infrastructure to share

Andrew:

- Yes! Everything Pak said. Mentorship program, help struggling artists get a leg up
- **Give our artists tools to be better DIY and monetize their industry and make money**

Reese:

- Yes, mentorship is something we can advance, and more than just expecting volunteers - **PAYING artists to mentor and participate**
- Gonna move it over to Alex talking about workforce development - not just youth

Updates from City Staff

Alex / Hope Corps

- Gratitude for this conversation!
- Some of the ideas that have come up (mentorship, skill sharing, skill building) dovetail nicely with the work program the City is developing for creative workers: **Hope Corps**

- City would secure funding (philanthropy etc.); get artist paid; address unemployment with artists, production workers, live entertainers; meanwhile addressing civic needs

Meghan / OED Grants

- Recent OED **Career Connected Learning Grants** - creative industries were a key industry - VERA was a recipient of this grant - creating career pipelines for youth into creative industries
- OED's **Small Small Business Stabilization Fund** - \$10k grants to microbusinesses
 - 4th round open, with broader eligibility criteria - doesn't have to be all-ages, doesn't have to be brick-n-mortar, nonprofits eligible - dedicated at least 10% to creative industries
 - Established an Inclusive Creative Industries outreach team also - paying folks to promote the opportunity - specifically want to support BIPOC creative businesses
 - Ad buys through neighborhood based media; business districts team also reaching out
 - **Apply! Info sessions! Call the triage team**
 - Reese: can you elaborate how this applies to individual artists?
 - As long as you have a valid biz license, you're good! LLCs are good. As long as you make \$2m or under.
 - Can't have received other City funding this year either
- Meli: part of the triage team. Note: for businesses that have licenses that have lapsed, you can renew and apply

Scott / Reopening Guidelines, Music Policy Forum Intensive

Reopening guidelines

- Hands down the greatest zoom meeting since we've closed down!! Inspired and blown away by this convo - thank you all!
- Further restrictions - reopening seems farther away than we thought
- Gov's office is tapped ArtsWA to develop reopening guidelines for performing arts/theaters (while WANMA and others have also developed guidelines themselves – ArtsWA referenced these in their doc)
- **ArtsWA's guidelines currently on the Governor's desk** - supposedly being vetted via L&I, DOC, Public Health, have been told they'll be first in line for vetting and consideration when looking at reopening once again - hard to say when that will be

Music Policy Forum Intensive

- Seattle has been helping guide upcoming conference coming up Thursday and Friday this week – [details here](#)

Reese

- One size does not fit all – part of the advocacy work is to make these guidelines make sense, especially for music venues and cultural spaces with vastly different sizes
- Before passing on to Randy, thank you to our guests! You're invited to join our conversations, committee meetings. We got your back!

Randy / ARTS Priorities

- 9 months into this - many more to go - not getting better yet, but will eventually
- Getting a Creative Industries Director is on the horizon
- Priorities from ARTS' standpoint - intersections with OFM and OED:

1. Increase BIPOC Investments

Whether that's the ARTS office, the BIPOC \$30M taskforce - our office is gonna lead a City-wide grantmaking team - putting our money where our mouth is - bringing in community stakeholders and citywide teams - reallocate investments, supporting community led efforts

2. Supporting Relief and Recovery

Long game - beyond recovery it's about reimagination - building a more equitable cultural ecology

- i. Fostering belonging and social cohesion: Seattle Together (WPA model Hope Corps is part of this; resource our artists to give hope to folks in this City)
- ii. Inclusive creative economy – continuing work with OED, OFM, ARTS – even Seattle Channel (we heard in the 2019 creative economy outreach that a content marketplace/distribution is needed - this could be it)
- iii. Basic COVID relief and recovery - navigate UI, reopening guidelines

3. Advancing Youth Opportunity

- i. Creative Advantage doesn't stop! One of the first pivots - hiring teaching artists to make arts education content for SPS students/families
- ii. King Street Station 2nd floor

4. Preserving Cultural Space + Building Community Wealth

- i. Cultural Space PDA - people should own the spaces they occupy; leverage policies and systems for different models of ownership
- ii. EDI, Equitable Development Fund
- iii. Invest in the skills-building - BASE program, Cultural Districts program – show people how to navigate the real estate game - teaching community how to fish - in addition to writing checks. Self determination is the real end game.

- Commissions will be a big part of this work ^^

Reese

- This commission has always been very hands on - let's make these exciting ideas a reality - supporting our City partners who have done work to move this work forward!

Meeting adjourned at 2:03 pm.