

“There’s A Reason Why I Love This Town”

Exploring The Halifax **Music Scene**

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“There’s A Reason Why I Love This Town”

Exploring The Halifax **Music Scene**

Project Title

Lyrics | “Love This Town” by Joel Plaskett

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1.0 Executive Summary

This independent research is an extension of a project organized by the Innovation Systems Research Network (ISRN) entitled “The Social Dynamics of Economic Performance.” The ISRN project attempts to uncover the relationship between social characteristics and innovation in Canadian cities. A component of this project involves the investigation of urban characteristics that influence attraction and retention of creative workers. Creative workers are highly mobile and choose to relocate based on the characteristics and quality of life that a city provides (Florida 2002a; Barrieau & Savoie 2006; Baum et al. 2007; Yigitcanlar et al. 2007). Research suggests that creativity is an economic driver of cities (Scott 2004; Barrieau & Savoie 2006); as such, identifying these characteristics helps improve a region’s ability to attract these desired populations.

Relatively little research has investigated the characteristics that creative talent seek in a city. This is especially true of creative cultural workers. Few studies have explored characteristics that attract talented workers from individual cultural sectors to specific cities (Currid 2007a). Halifax provides an ideal destination to investigate talent attraction in the music industry since the city has one of the most vibrant and diverse music scenes in Canada. Music is not only an economic producer, but it provides other valuable indirect benefits to the city, including improved quality of life, as well as attracting other talent. In order for Halifax to continue gaining these benefits from its local music, it is important to know what particular characteristics attract music professionals and what encourages them to stay.

The intent of my project is to:

Identify the characteristics of the Halifax Regional Municipality that play a role in attracting independent musicians, in order to assist the HRM in capitalizing on their presence in economic or cultural development policy.

Eighteen interviews containing open-ended questions were completed with key players of the independent music scene in Halifax, with a specific focus on pop and rock music. Interview participants spanned various professional positions, including musicians, festival directors, and music executives. The interviews were the primary source of data for this project.

Analysis for the project was divided into two phases. During phase one I conducted a thematic analysis of interview transcripts to determine the characteristics of Halifax that are important to musicians. This analysis uncovered many crucial characteristics to those involved in the music scene. Four general themes emerged from the analysis: Economics, Features of Halifax, Venues, and Social Interaction. A second thematic analysis identified four core elements that encouraged the Halifax music scene to develop. These elements also help distinguish the Halifax scene from other Canadian music scenes:

- The strong sense of culture and history provides an ideal context for music.
- The supportive nature of music professionals in Halifax.
- The audience base that the city provides.
- The location of Halifax along with its isolation from other urban regions.

The second phase of qualitative analysis reviewed local cultural and economic policy. In total, five policy documents were analyzed to assess how the current framework supports the Halifax music scene. The sample included three provincial documents and two municipal documents. This analysis, along with interviews, shows the province has been responsive to the needs of the music community. The *Nova Scotia Music Sector Strategy* led to music funding programs that are a valued asset to local musicians. The HRM has policies that could be used to support local music but the municipality has been unresponsive to the needs of musicians.

Interview themes seem to suggest that the Halifax music scene could become more attractive by a variety of measures that improve these four areas:

- Improving the economic environment for music.
- Addressing the current state of venues and infrastructure.
- Expanding the audience base.
- Increasing the awareness of Halifax music and the benefits it provides.

Analysis of interview and policy data indicates several potential options that could be implemented to provide more support for music. Improving the awareness of the benefits provided by the music sector is needed in both levels of the government to encourage support of the music industry. The province could consider expanding music funding programs to provide more support to local musicians. The HRM should address issues surrounding how it supports and enables music venues; the city could also provide more performance spaces. Offering municipally owned spaces could be one technique to accomplish this goal. Additionally, the municipality could create a music development officer or a music task force to provide recommendations on how to support the music industry.

This project makes an important contribution to the literature in its evaluation of attraction and retention characteristics of Halifax that are important to creative workers in the music sector. Research findings add to the ISRN's growing knowledge on the social characteristics of Canadian music industries. This project also provides insight on how a potential music strategy or policy amendments could improve the attractiveness of the Halifax scene to music professionals.



2.0 Introduction

This study stems from a larger research project of the Innovation Systems Research Network (ISRN). The ISRN received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to complete a project entitled “The Social Dynamics of Economic Performance.” The project examines characteristics that contribute to innovation in Canadian cities in order to guide the creation of effective policy (Innovation Systems Research Network 2008). ISRN researchers identify that creative endeavors are increasingly concentrated in urban regions in Canada. The competitive advantage of cities used to be attributed to the economic assets that they occupy; however, recent evidence shows that the social characteristics of cities likely have a more significant impact on the economic well being of a city (Wolfe & Gertler ND). Due to these findings, the ISRN project is based on the principle that social characteristics are primary assets of a city region. The ISRN project is currently investigating fifteen Canadian cities to explore the relationship between innovation and the social characteristics of city regions.

The ISRN project has investigated several employment sectors in Canada. Attention has begun to shift towards cultural industries because research suggests that culture creates economic prosperity. These cultural industries are an important component of a city region’s economic potential and they significantly impact the state of the Canadian economy (Scott 2004; Halifax Regional Municipality 2005a; Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council 2006; Barrieau & Savoie 2006; Conference Board of Canada 2008). According to the Conference Board of Canada (2008), cultural industries comprise 3.9 percent of the national workforce and contribute 3.8 percent of the national GDP.

Nova Scotia is recognized as having many diverse cultural industries compared to other provinces (Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council 2006). The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) has tried to distinguish itself from other cities based on its unique culture and tradition. These efforts have often been successful in attracting new residents and tourists to the Halifax region (Halifax Regional Municipality 2005b). Of all the individual cultural sectors within Halifax, the music scene attracts the most attention.

Halifax has garnered a reputation as having one of the most vibrant and diverse music scenes in Canada. Many musicians who started their careers in Halifax have gone on to achieve national fame. The success of local music has allowed music to become the second largest cultural sector in Nova Scotia, making it a valuable economic contributor to the region. This economic potential is only expected to grow in the near future (Halifax Regional Municipality 2005a).

This project investigates the Halifax music scene due to its economic benefits and its impact on other employment sectors. The music scene also provides many intangible benefits to the city, which may be more valuable than its monetary contributions. The music scene’s history and current reputation is a major contributor to the cultural vitality within the city. Local music is a source of entertainment and a major contributor to the quality of life that Halifax provides. Music also has the potential to affect creativity within other employment sectors (Markusen & Schrock 2006).

The ISRN has investigated talent attraction and retention during Theme II of the ongoing project. An examination of social and physical characteristics that attract creative people to city regions indicates that cities with a strong music scene provide a social context desired by creative workers. According to the ISRN project, Canadian executives who drive the current economy view music as a key characteristic that they value in a city. Music plays a role in attracting talented workers to a city, but it also has a large impact on attracting dynamic firms, new students, and tourists (Florida 2003; Markusen & Schrock 2006; Battista 2007; Conference Board of Canada 2008).

In order for the HRM to continue gaining these benefits from its local music scene, it is important to know what particular characteristics attract music professionals and what characteristics encourage them to stay. Previous research has found several characteristics that attract creative professionals to cities; however, few projects have explored those that attract and retain talent in specific cultural sectors (Markusen & Schrock 2006). The ISRN has recently started to explore this question by investigating the characteristics of the Toronto and Montreal music sectors. Research from this project will further contribute to the overall ISRN project by investigating what characteristics attract music professionals to Halifax's unique music environment.

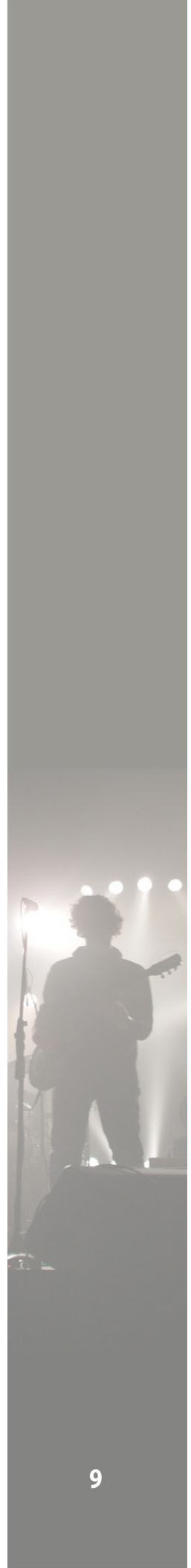
3.0 Research Background

3.1 The Creative Class

Economists and sociologists alike have held the long standing belief that individuals are attracted to cities due to traditional features such as the presence of firms, technological resources, and employment opportunities (Currid 2007b). As a result, policy makers and economists capitalized on these aspects to attract new residents and to contribute to social and economic growth. Promotional attempts focused on natural and physical assets of a region to encourage firms to relocate to an area (Gertler et al. 2002). Once these firms arrive, potential employees should flock to the area to capitalize on the increased supply of jobs. Researchers like Richard Florida challenge this vintage view of growth and instead investigate new potential theories of growth.

Florida's primary focus is the impact of the "creative class" on an economy. He defines the creative class as individuals who engage in work where creation is the key aspect of their employment; this includes those who are employed as scientists, engineers, professors, designers, artists, and musicians (Florida 2002a; Florida 2005a). The innovative products generated by this population led Florida to identify creativity as the fundamental building block of economic success (Florida 2005b). Any city that supports creativity and offers a high quality of life is more likely to attract creative individuals and reap the benefits of their presence (Florida 2002a; Barrieau & Savoie 2006).

The recent focus on social and economic growth has led to a change in



economic development behaviour (Markusen 2004; Currid 2007b). Firms now realize that actively seeking creative capital is the most crucial element for success, they target areas with high concentrations of the creative class for future office locations (Florida 2005b). City officials also changed their behaviour to attract this talent pool to a region, thus gaining a competitive advantage over other cities. Officials believe that the presence of high concentrations of the creative class will allow their cities to become vibrant and economically successful (Porter 1998; Musterd 2004; Wu 2005).

3.2 Cultural Industries

Cultural industries are one portion of the creative class that has gained attention in recent years. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines cultural industries as “those that combine the creation, production, and commercialization of contents, which are intangible and cultural in nature” (Barrieau 2004; 16). There is a growing awareness of the ability of culture to act as an economic driver of cities, as evidence suggests cultural industries create economic prosperity (Scott 2004; Barrieau & Savoie 2006). Cities with a substantial concentration of cultural workers also experience prolonged growth (Florida 2005; Yigitcanlar et al. 2007). Although the presence of cultural vitality does not ensure economic growth, strategic investments in culture appears to increase the likelihood of successful economic development outcomes (Barrieau & Savoie 2006).

Cultural industries play an important role in the Canadian economy. According to the Conference Board of Canada (2008), cultural workers made up 3.9 percent of the national employment in 2007. This percentage equals that of agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, oil, and utilities sectors combined (NA 2006). In the same year, \$46 billion dollars, or 3.8 percent of the national GDP, came from cultural industries (Conference Board of Canada 2008). A report from the UK explains that very few employment sectors are able to contribute this percentage of the national GDP (Haraldsen 2007).

Culture directly contributes to the economic prosperity of a country, but it creates additional indirect benefits to local economies through income generation, jobs, tax revenue, and improving the quality of life and vitality of a city (Barrieau 2004; Barrieau & Savoie 2006; Markusen 2006). These indirect impacts can stimulate creativity activity in other sectors of the economy, while attracting additional talent (Markusen & Schrock 2006; Conference Board of Canada 2008). Promoting a city as a cultural destination also helps attract investors and tourists to a region, further increasing economic gains (Markusen 2006; Ooi & Stober 2008). When estimating the total effects of culture – including real, indirect, and induced benefits – full contributions were estimated at \$84.6 billion dollars or 7.4 percent of total real GDP in 2007 (Conference Board of Canada 2008).

3.3 Attracting the Creative Class and Cultural Workers

The creative class and cultural workers tend to be a highly mobile population who expects to change jobs numerous times throughout their careers (Yigitcanlar et al. 2007). As a result, cities compete to attract and retain the creative portion of the population. Studies show that several characteristics may play a role in long term attraction and retention.

3.3.1 *Diversity and Openness*

Florida uses a “Gay-Bohemian Index” - a measure of individuals with alternative lifestyles - to identify regions believed to be diverse and open minded. Florida found this index correlates with a concentration of the creative class, which entails that creative workers are attracted to open and diverse cities (Florida 2002c; Yigitcanlar et al. 2007). The creative class also appears to be drawn to regions with a variety of ethnic backgrounds (Florida 2002a; Florida 2002c). Such environments provide the opportunity for experimentation without the fear of having creative ideas rejected (Rantisi 2006). A tolerant environment has low barriers to entry, thus creative workers can easily integrate into the community and explore a range of employment opportunities (Scott 1999; Florida 2002a).

3.3.2 *Geographic Features*

Identifying important geographic and physical features near concentrations of creative workers may help suggest which characteristics play a role in attracting and retaining creative professionals (Florida 2002a; Gertler et al. 2002; Yigitcanlar et al. 2007). Characteristics that have been attributed to impacting location decisions are climate and temperature (Yigitcanlar et al. 2007). Clark (2003) found that knowledge workers find a lack of humidity, water access, and topographic variation to be of interest in attracting talent, although the degree to which this applies to musicians is unknown. Older knowledge workers show a preference for these particular amenities while recent college graduates are typically attracted to other built amenities (Clark 2003).

The natural environment may provide inspiration for the production of cultural products. Cities with these natural resources may attract artists, writers, and musicians (Drake 2003). An artist may use the reputations and traditions of a particular location as a stimulus for creative projects or as a way to promote their work (Drake 2003). This appears to be the case with the “surfer rock music” movement in California during the 1960s (Carney 1999).

3.3.3 *Presence of the Creative Class*

The presence of an existing base of highly skilled, dynamic thinkers provides the potential for increased levels of creative output (Landry 2005), which may attract other creative people to the same region. Research shows that creative workers may unintentionally attract workers from other employment sectors (Markusen & Schrock 2006; Wu 2005). Connell & Gibson (2003) explain



that music scenes develop in areas where there is a mass of fans and musicians, along with other complementary features. Music scenes often develop in university towns because students and educated talent provide an initial base needed to gain popularity. Musicians can establish a “home base” in these areas from which they can quickly gain a following of fans (Connell & Gibson 2003). The presence of students means that the creative population will likely continue to increase in the future. This may help explain why small city regions such as Halifax have developed a thriving music scene; however, further investigation is required to determine if this is actually a contributing factor.

3.3.4 Constructed Amenities

Creative people prefer a rich cultural environment with features that serve as important sources of recreation. These amenities may take the form of museums, galleries, libraries, performance spaces, restaurants, or establishments that create a vibrant nightlife (Baun et al. 2007; Yigitcanlar et al. 2007; Markusen & Schrock 2006; Clark 2003). Of such amenities, performance venues are most important for musicians (Markusen & Schrock 2006). Even if creative people choose not to frequent all of these amenities, their availability helps define a social context that is considered appealing (Clark 2003). Artists and musicians are often attracted to old cities, since history serves as a source of inspiration, and historic homes can act as unique work spaces (Storper & Venables 2004).

3.3.5 Urban Core

Many creative people prefer to live in the urban core (Marlet & van Woerkens 2005; Markusen & Schrock 2006). Scott (1999b) reports that over 50 percent of workers in the cultural industries are concentrated in major metropolitan areas with a population exceeding one million. In fact, the large majority of these individuals in the United States reside in only two regions: New York and Los Angeles. A similar trend has been observed in the music industry. The majority of bands are located in the same two regions, with smaller groups located in regions like San Francisco, Seattle, Nashville, and Chicago (Scott 1999a). When bands locate in these densely populated areas, the likelihood of producing a hit song or record increases significantly (Scott 1999a).

3.3.6 Clusters and Knowledge Spillovers

A cluster is essentially a collection of interconnected companies or individuals concentrated in a specified geographical region. These clusters typically develop in regions with a large concentration of talent so employers can gain easy access to creative workers (Fallah & Ibrahim 2004; Porter 1998). The presence of a cluster increases the likelihood that innovative products will be produced, which may result from information sharing, known as a knowledge spillover. This transfer can occur between like-minded individuals and firms or even those that are unrelated. The degree of sharing increases when spatial proximity between individuals decreases. The unintentional spillover of knowledge helps contribute to innovation and the creation of creative products (Rantisi et al. 2006; Storper &

Venables 2004; Stolarick & Florida 2006; Fallah & Ibrahim 2004). The process through which these spillovers occur is still unclear (Storper & Venables; Baptista & Swann 1998); it appears that the process of clustering in the music industry is a relatively unexplored subject.

3.3.7 *Social Exchange and Face-to-Face Interaction*

The social realm has been described as the most important component in the cultural economy. Literature indicates that social exchange helps artists and musicians find employment and advance their careers (Currid 2007a; Currid 2007b). Social exchange occurs through various mediums but research suggests that face-to-face interaction is a vital element that cultural workers look for in a city. Such contact allows detailed information to be relayed in great depth and it provides immediate feedback that cannot be obtained through other forms of communication (Storper & Venables 2004; Currid 2007a). Interactions may contribute to forming a strong sense of desire and competition that may help motivate musicians to create better products (Storper & Venables 2004; Malmberg & Power 2005). Despite the suggestion that artists actively seek out these social situations to benefit their careers and personal life, further research is required to determine the role it plays in attraction and retention (Currid 2007a).

3.4 Halifax Context

Halifax scores well on two creative class indices. Halifax is the fifth best Canadian city in terms of talent - the percentage of the population over 20 years of age with a Bachelor's Degree. Halifax also ranks seventh in its concentration of artistic professionals, indicating that the city has the ability to attract both artistic and knowledgeable talent (Barrieau & Savoie 2006).

In 2002, 26,500 people worked for cultural industries in Atlantic Canada, which represents a 26 percent increase since 1991. Musicians and singers comprise the second largest group of cultural workers. In 2004, the cultural sector added \$2.1 billion to the economy, or 3.06 percent of the GDP (Barrieau 2004). Approximately \$1.2 billion of the total GDP is attributed specifically to Nova Scotia, whose cultural sector has the potential to grow in the upcoming years (Nova Scotia Arts & Culture Partnership Council 2006). Nova Scotia's economic stability also relies heavily on tourism expenditure that contributed approximately \$1.27 billion in 2003; \$630 million of this revenue is generated in the Halifax Regional Municipality (Halifax Regional Municipality 2005a). Cultural events and festivals play a significant role in the ability to attract tourists to the area (Nova Scotia Arts & Culture Partnership Council 2006).

As the economic and cultural capital of the region, Halifax has a strong concentration of cultural industries, but the independent music industry receives the most attention. The presence of music is a defining feature of



Halifax, and contributes to the quality of life and social vitality that residents experience. A study of the economic impacts of arts and culture in the HRM reinforces this point: “It is fair to say that the music sector is perhaps one of the cultural community’s leading disciplines in terms of economic growth and development, and certainly one of its most nationally recognized” (Halifax Regional Municipality 2005a; iv). While music is generally accepted as an important social and economic contributor, it is difficult to place monetary value on the music scene since it depends on a variety of components, including: music publishing, live performances, artist management, songwriting, festivals, and independent production (Durand 2003; Music Nova Scotia 2007). One study estimates that the music industry in Nova Scotia gained \$180 million in 2004 – approximately \$63 million of that total was earned in the HRM (Halifax Regional Municipality 2005a). Music sales have been decreasing in recent years, but emerging technology and new media provide a new way for the local music industry to generate revenue (Conference Board of Canada 2008). During this decline, music publishing and live performance have grown to become key revenue sources (Music Nova Scotia 2007).

3.5. Research Opportunity

Despite the information provided in the background section of this report, there is a general lack of research on city characteristics that play a role in attracting creative people to cities. Research on the subject tends to cluster a variety of occupations into the overarching title of “creative workers” or “cultural industries,” rather than focusing on a specific industry or profession. While grouping a variety of professions is an effective way to collect a body of information to develop initial research results on a subject, it is difficult to compare results from multiple publications. Careful research is necessary to evaluate individual employment sectors and to identify a set of attractive qualities that apply to a specific sector. The music industry is one sector needing further investigation (Markusen & Schrock 2006).

Any existing research on music industries tends to focus on large urban areas that have large concentrations of workers, thus small cities are in need more research (Rantisi et al. 2006). In addition, few focus on the Canadian context, aside from Toronto and Montreal (Hracs 2008). Few studies have produced meaningful recommendations that planners can apply to this sector of the population (Currid 2007a). Also, little work has been done to understand how the cultural industry works in particular places, and to examine how these areas differ from each other. Along with inspecting the features that attract individuals to a city, there is also need to investigate both the social and economic dynamics important to cultural producers (Currid 2007a). This makes Halifax an ideal location to study the dynamics of the music industry.

4.0 Intent of the Project

Halifax's rich and diverse music scene has produced many successful musicians – such as Sloan, Sarah McLachlan, Joel Plaskett, and Matt Mays - who have gone on to gain national and international fame. According to Music Nova Scotia (2007; 5), “Nova Scotia is the leading centre for independent music in Canada, it's recognized as a global centre of creation and professional excellence with all of our communities participating and benefiting from the music.” Evidence suggests that the characteristics of the Halifax Regional Municipality are particularly important to musicians who choose relocate to or remain in Halifax.

The research herein focuses on the independent rock and popular music portion of the music scene in Halifax. These artists compose the large majority of Halifax's music activity and are largely responsible for establishing Halifax's reputation as a music centre. The intent of this project is to *“identify the characteristics of the Halifax Regional Municipality that play a role in attracting independent musicians, in order to assist the HRM in capitalizing on their presence in economic or cultural development policy.”*

The following objectives guide the project:

- To determine what characteristics of Halifax are deemed important by those in the local music industry.
- To provide insight into why the music industry has clustered in this particular region and what factors lead to this cluster.
- To identify the ways in which economic and cultural planning could contribute to or support the music scene in Halifax.
- To produce planning and policy suggestions that could encourage musicians and industry workers to remain in, or relocate to, Halifax to contribute to the future growth of the city.



Sleepness Nights

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5.0 Methodology

5.1 Data Collection

During the past two summers, Dr. Jill Grant's research assistants completed interviews for the ISRN project in the Halifax region. These interviews consisted of open-ended questions to obtain a large amount of qualitative data in a short period of time. My project focuses principally on the independent music community in Halifax, in order to identify the characteristics of the city that facilitate and encourage musicians to reside in Halifax and produce creative products. Eighteen of the ISRN interviewees play major roles in independent music scene in Halifax. Fifteen of these participants were involved in rock and pop music, while three other participants have a background in classical music. These participants conveyed their experiences in this vital cultural industry and identified characteristics of Halifax important to music professionals. The music interviews are the primary data source of my project.

Data collection happened in three stages, each using three slightly different interview schedules (See Appendices A to C). ISRN divided the project into three themes, two of which are relevant to this study. Theme II is entitled "Talent Attraction and Retention," In the summer of 2007, Dr. Grant's research assistants completed seven interviews with five local musicians, one festival director, and one music producer (See Appendix D). These interviews are included in my sample. During the past summer, Jeffry Haggett and I were responsible for collecting the ISRN data relating to Theme I: "The Social Nature of Innovation." Six of these interviews were held with local music executives and festival directors and are also included in my evaluation. Finally, Mr. Haggett and I created an interview schedule for our independent research, with questions focused specifically on the dynamics of the local music scene and the attractive features of Halifax. This final schedule was used in five additional interviews.

The eighteen participants included four females and fourteen males. The professional range of participants is as follows:

Independent Rock/Pop Musicians	4
Classical Performers	3
Local Music Festival or Organization Directors	3
Artist Management and Promotion Executives	3
Provincial Official in Culture	1
Audio Engineer for a National Company	1
Local Music Producer and Engineer	1
Local Booking Agent	1
Local Music Journalist	1
Total	18

5.2 Data Analysis

All eighteen interviews were transcribed to prepare for thematic analysis. During the first stage of analysis, I reviewed the transcripts to familiarize myself with the relevant data. I examined the transcripts to find the characteristics that music industry representatives were discussing. I began by inspecting social and physical characteristics in the interview data, due to their potential role in encouraging talent to city regions. I later expanded my focus to investigate all characteristics specific to the Halifax region. The thematic analysis allowed me to determine what characteristics musicians' value and which features are problematic. By addressing these characteristics, planners and policy makers may have the ability to improve the music environment in Halifax. I grouped these city characteristics into four general themes. All relevant information and quotes on Halifax characteristics were compiled for the analysis. This provided insight into what characteristics of Halifax have supported the establishment of a music scene, while determining how Halifax differs from other music scenes in Canada.

The second stage involved a policy analysis of local cultural and economic development policy at both the provincial and municipal level. The policy review identifies how current policy supports local cultural development and it provides insight into where potential improvements could be made to improve the music industry. A brief review of policy used to support specific cultural industries in three other locations was also completed. The State of Western Australia has taken measures to support its contemporary music scene. Montreal and Vancouver provide examples of industry support in a Canadian context (See Appendix E). Both phases of my analysis serve as the basis for suggestions on how to improve support for the Halifax music industry.

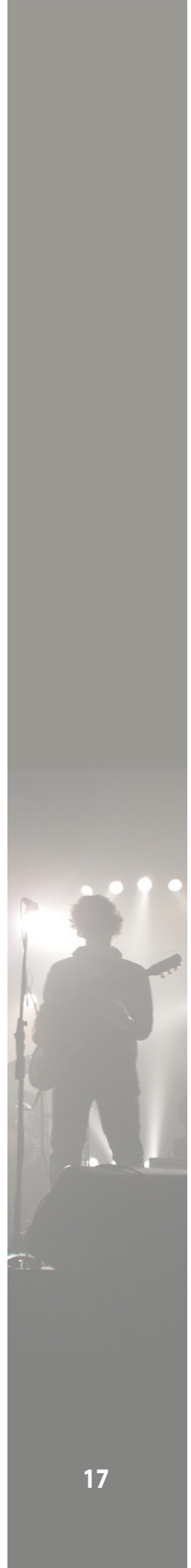
6.0 Interview Themes: Characteristics that Local Musicians Value

Thematic analysis indicates that participants have similar beliefs about the characteristics of Halifax that are both important and detrimental to the independent music scene. A review of interview content shows that subject matter can be distributed into four categories: Economics, Features of Halifax, Venues, and Social Interaction. Within each category, interview participants shared views on the importance of several common issues.

6.1 Economics

6.1.1 Music Funding

Access to music funding is the biggest economic asset to musicians in Halifax. Interviewees believe that the province does a good job of supporting the music industry with their available funding. The Department of Tourism, Culture & Heritage is responsible for distributing funds for the Emerging Artist Program. The program provides funds for new artists for a variety of



tasks including: recording; marketing; promotion; business development; and mentorship (Province of Nova Scotia 2008). This program was mentioned as successful although many suggested that additional funding would be a major asset. One participant added: “It is interesting that this department is the only division in Canada that has a full time music person [on staff] that does nothing but music. This is shocking, but there it is, little Nova Scotia.” This position ensures the Provincial government is always aware of the local music scene.

Music Nova Scotia operates the funding program that gained the most attention in the interviews. This organization administers funding for the Export Music Development Program, which focuses on tours, marketing, and business support for artists (Music Nova Scotia 2008). Artists can gain funding through this program, however, by just becoming a member, musicians can get advisory services and knowledge of upcoming projects. These accessible sources of funding are a factor in attracting emerging artists to the area.

“There’s a lot of funding available to me which is a huge resource to me in my career. As far as I can tell, the amount of funding in Nova Scotia is untouched by any other region in Canada in terms of allotting funding to musicians.” – Local Musician

The lack of municipal support for the local music industry was a sore spot for musicians. Musicians report a general lack of arts and culture funding from the municipal government. The city fails to support important aspects of local music, such as venues and festivals; with this said, the city does support activities that participants consider unimportant. One manager was willing to air his frustration with the local government:

“The regulations and the burden that the local government puts on the entertainment industry is laughable. It’s virtually impossible to do anything to make money here. It’s ridiculous and it’s sad on just about every single level that I can think of. The HRM is a joke.”

6.1.2 Cost of Touring due to Halifax’s Location

The major economic challenge facing Halifax musicians is the cost of touring. Gas prices are increasing and the geographic location of Halifax is isolated from other major music markets in Canada. Since New Brunswick does not have a large city known for live music, the next major city is in Quebec. Some participants mentioned that this is one reason artists leave Halifax. For instance, relocating to Toronto allows bands to easily access all areas of the Golden Horseshoe at a reasonable price, as satellite cities are located within a short distance. Some bands decide that accessing new markets is necessary to advance their careers, and leave Halifax. According to a local music journalist, this does not appear to have a huge impact on the local scene:

“A lot of bands move when they get successful and need access to a larger performing market. When bands leave, new ones step in so there is a natural equilibrium.”

6.1.3 Cost of Housing

Most participants commented on housing costs, although there was no consensus on the subject of affordability. Some perceive rent as reasonable in Halifax while others believe that it is a problem. Findings suggest that Halifax used to offer affordable housing but prices have steadily increased. Many musicians live in the North End, partially because housing is cheaper in comparison to surrounding areas. The North End is home to many Halifax musicians, especially those who are renting. A small number of established interviewees have purchased homes in Dartmouth because housing prices are less than on the Halifax peninsula.

6.1.4 Other Fees

There was some concern regarding the wages that musicians make. One participant noted that the majority of owners no longer pay artists to perform in their venues; artists typically receive a portion of the door fees. Conversely, the cost of recording in Halifax appears to be relatively cheap. Music producers often ask their friends to contribute material to other artists, which they typically do for free.

According to one interviewee, CBC Radio plays a large role in the Halifax music scene:

“The CBC is more into the music side of things in this city than they are in any other city that I can think of. They really try to help foster artists.”

This view appears to be shared by others. A small number of participants mentioned that CBC Radio helps emerging bands make records by providing their equipment and general professional advice. In addition to supporting the production of music, CBC acts as the first medium through which new bands gain exposure.

6.2 Features of Halifax

6.2.1 Size

The size of Halifax is an important characteristic to local musicians. One participant noted that Halifax is really just a big town instead of a city. Halifax is large enough to provide entertaining amenities, but not so large that it is overwhelming. Participants also seem satisfied by the number of bars here – both in terms of offering entertainment and acting as performance venues. The underlying belief suggests that Halifax is a manageable city. Interviewees like that they can walk or bike to most areas of the city relatively easily, which makes travel to the downtown reasonable despite the location of their homes.

In terms of performing music, the size of Halifax provides specific benefits for local musicians. According to participants, larger music centres offer more performance opportunities, but it is more difficult to gain attention. This may be a result of the sheer size of the city or a larger population of musicians.



In comparison, the size of Halifax allows musicians to gain recognition faster. Supportive organizations like CBC Radio and The Coast also assist in this process. The size and location of Halifax provides a relaxed atmosphere that participants believe is an ideal environment to express themselves and create new music.

6.2.2 Proximity to Nature

Participants said that access to nature is very important. This could be an attraction and retention feature that sets Halifax apart from other music centres in Canada. Proximity to the ocean played a pivotal role in the creation of the city and it continues to be an attractive feature. Participants said that regular access to the waterfront attracts artists to the area; the ocean also offers a source of inspiration. According to one culture official, the ocean creates a unique context for the city environment.

“It is a key component to what makes Nova Scotia unique. Not just the physical ocean, but what it does to people. People who want to live near an ocean are different than people who don’t care whether they live by the ocean. And I think it’s true of both ends. It is different mind set on both coasts, but certainly it is an ocean mentality. Certain people fit in here, and do well because of it, and do well creatively.”

Halifax also provides many parks and green spaces. One participant said he enjoyed Halifax because it was “one of the last green spaces around” in terms of Canadian cities. Parks such as Point Pleasant Park, Citadel Hill, the Commons, and Needham Park are great attractions. Also, Nova Scotia offers an assortment of lakes and natural area, which are easily accessible outside of the city.

6.2.3 Supportive Community

The vast majority of participants believe that the general community is open to new residents, which allows for easy community integration. Additionally, the community is open to new ideas in terms of music, the arts, and culture. Many participants specifically reference the North End community when talking about support. The support they receive, and the population of musicians in the area, likely acts as an incubator for musical talent. The general community takes pride in local musicians, but it appears this is magnified in the North End. This suggests that more attention could be placed on the North End to capitalize on its music population.

6.2.4 University Population

The Halifax area offers a variety of post secondary education options to students. These institutions – including various universities, NSCC, and NSCAD - are important to Halifax’s music scene. Participants say university students comprise a large proportion of the audience at local concerts and festivals. The presence of universities has been linked to the development of music industries in the past since it provides the opportunity for new bands to gain an initial following of fans (Shank 1994; Connell & Gibson 2003). This creative population may also

have the ambition to form new bands that will contribute to the local scene. NSCC has created a music management program, which may produce new managers who will benefit the local scene.

6.2.5 Importance of Culture and History

Culture and history are important to Halifax residents and contribute to creative individuals relocating and remaining in the city. The history of Halifax is seen in its historic buildings, Citadel Hill, festivals, museums, and through performances in local pubs. The city has always had a music tradition that some participants said is an attractive feature. Culture has become a way of life in Halifax and our participants seem to enjoy that Halifax cares about its past more than most cities.

6.2.6 Regional Capital

Halifax is the largest city amongst the Atlantic Provinces, and the capital of the region, thus Halifax provides the most job opportunities. This being a natural collecting point of talent and workers, is the reason why there is an appropriate music audience to support a music scene.



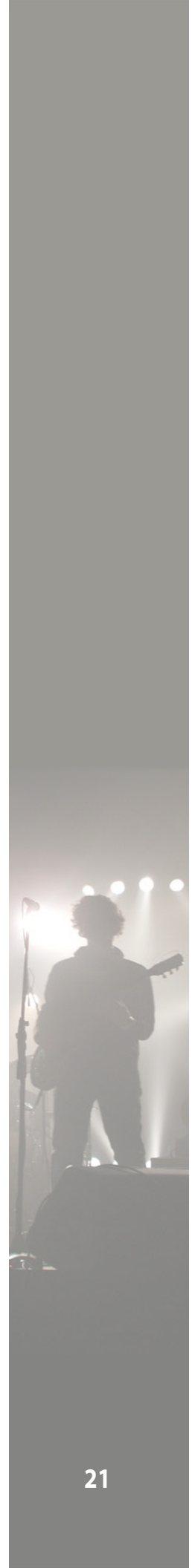
Entrance to the Marquee Club on Gottigen Street

Source | <http://www.flickr.com/photos/punch/2225353878/sizes/o/>

6.3 Venues

6.3.1 Lack of Music Venues

Interview participants believe there is a shortage of venues in Halifax. Many participants raised concerns that these venues appear to be closing at an alarming rate. This may partially be due to the inability to gain support when faced with financial challenges. The lack of venues may place additional strain on the local music community especially if the trend continues. One participant, however, mentioned that even though venues have closed, the actual number of venues might have remained constant. Several interviewees mentioned



that people are starting to create venues and coffee shops are now willing to let songwriters perform so there is no shortage of places to be heard. The invention of new venues may explain why overall numbers may appear constant.

6.3.2 *Quality of Venues*

Participants identified quality issues surrounding many local venues. The Marquee was described as the best rock venue in Halifax. Following the completion of interviews for this project, owners of the Marquee announced that the venue will be closing in January of 2009 (CBC News 2008). This loss is a major hit to the Halifax music scene, since the Marquee holds a variety of concerts for local and touring artists. Closing the best venue in the city means that the supply of quality venues will once again decrease.

The Seahorse was described as a good venue that is working harder to provide quality music shows. Gus' Pub gives new bands the opportunity to perform and the Rebecca Cohn is the only large performance venue in the city. There was some concern that these are the only standardized live venues in terms of sound quality. Many other venues are not really designed for music even though they provide an opportunity for artists to be heard. This may be due to the fact that people seem to be creating venues in establishments that were not designed to support them.

6.3.3 *Festivals*

Halifax hosts a variety of quality festivals including: The Halifax Pop Explosion, the Film Festival, and the Jazz Festival. Some participants believe festivals play a large role in the quality of life of residents while also attracting new people – especially students and young professionals - to the city. The Halifax Pop Explosion appears to be the most popular festival among interview participants. According to one music manager/promoter, the festival receives 850 applications from all over the world, but it is still unable to get funding from the municipality:

“A lot of people in independent music circles consider The Pop Explosion to be one of the best independent music festivals in the world. Can they get \$500 out of the city to support that festival? No they can't.” – Local Music Promoter

6.3.4 *Desire for New Venues*

Several participants expressed the desire for new venues. An affordable performance theatre is one of these requests because there are few options for medium sized concerts (between 1500 and 3000 people). Other participants mentioned that the Symphony might also need a larger performance space. The second type of venue that is in short supply is listening venues, which are designed solely for the purpose of listening to music. Halifax has numerous bars and pubs for live music, but there are few alternatives if residents want to listen to music without drinking or facing distractions. Interviewees suggest that the music population is becoming increasingly concentrated with singer-songwriters, so these venues would satisfy this increasing demand.

6.4 Social Interaction

6.4.1 Existing Population of Musicians

Halifax has a large existing population of artists who were described as having world-class talent. Ever since the pop explosion of the early 1990s this reputation has spread through many countries. One musician said:

“We have a ridiculous number of talented people here and we produce an inordinate number of really good artists from this part of the world. We’re known for it – it’s the Halifax thing.”

6.4.2 Supportive Music Community

The general community in Halifax is supportive of local music, but the greatest support is received from the actual music community. The overwhelming majority of interviewees suggest local artists are always willing to help and give advice to emerging artists. Several participants seem to suggest this is the greatest strength of Halifax. Many musicians will contribute to new projects by local artists and they may also help new artists integrate and facilitate the networking process.

7.0 Why does Halifax have a Successful Music Industry?

A review of the literature indicates many features of the city play a role in the attraction, retention, and success of musicians. Additional analysis determined why Halifax has developed such an important music scene despite the apparent obstacles that it may face. The analysis provides insight into why musicians prefer to establish their musical careers in Halifax instead of other major music centres in Canada. It appears this scene has formed from naturally occurring conditions that are beyond the control of planners and policy makers.

7.1 Strong Sense of Culture, History, and Tradition

Halifax’s rich culture and history set the foundation for the creation of a music industry in Nova Scotia. A small number of participants say that Halifax’s culture provides certain intangibles that are distinct to the city. The majority of interviewees made reference to how the cultural past was important to them. As a city, Halifax has made a conscious effort to preserve its history and tradition, and according to one participant it has been much more successful than other cities in this goal. According to participants, measures to preserve local heritage shows that as a city, Halifax cares about culture and the arts.

“People respect music and culture in this city in a way that does not happen in many cities. It’s certainly not happening in Ottawa this week - they just closed two international funding programs. Here we have a Premier and Ministers that support what we are trying to do. We respect culture and music on the east coast – not just in Halifax – in a way that does not happen in other places. It’s a way of life here.”
– Music Manager/Promoter



There is the underlying belief that the provincial government is aware of cultural importance, which suggests that Halifax continues to be a cultural destination. This reputation of being a historic and sociable city likely stems from its origins; as a military port, Halifax has a history of pubs and bars that helped music become ingrained into the social fabric of the city. One musician said:

“In terms of thinking about what people do here on the weekends... there has always been a history of employing live music in pubs and bars. I think that goes back to the time when it was really just a navy town.”

As Halifax began to grow, its reputation as a social destination spread – likely attracting creative people and musicians to the area. This is a trend that has continued until the present day through the help of art institutions like NSCAD. Halifax’s reputation as a creative and musical destination appears to have been magnified during the pop explosion of the early 1990s when bands like Sloan and Thrush Hermit came onto the national music scene. This was a pivotal point in the recent development of the local music scene. According to participants, Halifax has become “ingrained in people’s minds as a music destination.” Participants often discuss how it is just appealing to be a Halifax band. This is shown by the quote from two musicians:

“I’ve noticed that often people are looking for a way to categorize us in the press; just saying they are a “Halifax band” is enough sometimes. If someone said a Toronto band, that is not effective. But a band from Halifax – there is something interesting about that.”

“Wintersleep, Dog Day and all of these great bands keep popping out of nowhere... They will show up in Toronto and no one has heard of them before but they will open up for some band and blow everyone away. It looks like everything that walks out of Halifax is brilliant.”

It seems as if this past history and tradition, along with the recent promotion of the local music scene has created an environment where musicians want to be despite the challenges that are associated with Halifax. It seems unlikely that the music scene would have established itself here if not for the underlying history of the area. One promoter seems to suggest that this history helped establish the idea that Halifax is a place where musicians want to be.

“The history and all of those intangibles – those things are all fantastic. There’s a certain exotic-ness about Halifax, plus the fact that it’s established in the brains of all kinds of people. You talk to musicians from all over the world, everyone’s heard of Halifax. Everyone knows of its existence – They have always wanted to come here or perform here.”

7.2 Supportive Music Community and Collaboration

Halifax has an audience that supports and embraces local music. The general public is supportive of the music industry, but it is the music community that draws musical talent here – more specifically, the supportive nature of this community. The importance of local support was mentioned in the vast majority of interviews. It appears that this support manifested itself over time and is the defining feature of the Halifax music community. There are suggestions that the music industry would not exist here without this community spirit and artist interaction. An audio engineer believes:

“This is one of the most cooperative music scenes that I’ve certainly ever seen and I’ve been around most of them. You have to cooperate because the city is too small.”

Interviews suggest that despite its size, Halifax has made significant contributions to Canadian music. Participants express the belief that there is world-class talent in Halifax across a wide variety of genres. Some outside of independent music circles may not realize this since some of this talent has yet to gain widespread attention. Although interviewees believe there is less attention on Halifax now compared to the early 1990s, some participants believe that current music in Halifax is the best there has ever been. Two musicians said they came to Halifax because they believe it would be a great place to practice their craft because the existing artists are so supportive. This degree of support is a major attraction to other musicians. They believe that just being in this community would be the best way to gain experience and inspiration. A local music producer shares this view on why musicians come to Halifax.

“People move here to be a part of the community. They feel like there’s something exciting happening here, and they believe they can benefit from being in this environment with the energy that’s here.”

This tight knit community is a natural breeding ground for musical collaborations to produce innovative products. Discussions on the amount of support from the music community were a frequent topic in interviews. It seems relatively easy to find back-up singers for albums and to form new bands in the area. Interviews express that many musicians are interested in producing a variety of styles of music and are often in multiple bands, playing multiple instruments. Collaboration is very much a component of the nurturing nature of the music community and also plays a large role in the success of local artists. A music journalist explains:

“Looking at the credits on a variety of albums shows the degree of collaboration that exists in Halifax. From my perspective, it is what makes this industry unique and saleable from my perspective – it becomes a sales feature and part of our brand. We work it from all angles that this is a community. We are selling the community.”



Community support helps produce innovative music and helps new artists gain attention relatively quickly. A musician said, “you can gain attention easily but it is just as easy for it to disappear.” Prolonged collaboration may help serious new artists stay in the “lime light” for longer periods of time, or even gain attention outside of the local market. Interviewees also discuss that getting gigs and learning about new projects can be accomplished simply by walking down the street. Chance encounters increase the awareness of local talent. It is unlikely that this would happen in larger music markets. In the words of one musician:

“You bump into a number of people in Halifax who are aware of what you are doing – everyone keeps tabs on each other in a good way. It’s really encouraging when someone has heard your new stuff or is excited to hear a show you are going to play.”

The community of musicians is the main feature that sets Halifax apart from other music markets. Major markets like Toronto and Montreal have more performance venues and music managers. Even with a reduced supply of these opportunities in Halifax, it still continues to have a major music industry. According to participants, more music infrastructure in larger markets encourage some artists to move from Halifax because they believe that access to these opportunities will help them achieve fame. Large music markets, however, lack the nurturing qualities that are found in Halifax. Participants often described Toronto as being a “dog eat dog environment” where artists are viewed as competition rather than a source of moral support. There was some discussion on how peers had moved to Toronto and later returned to Halifax because they did not enjoy that music environment. The audio engineer expressed that:

“People come to Halifax because they have heard it is a nurturing community. Or they have come here while touring and realized it is a better place to base themselves as a musician than other places in Canada.”

It seems that there comes a point where artists have to make a choice between a nurturing music community and having easy access to music managers. Halifax seems to have established itself as an alternative to larger music markets; in Halifax, people focus on their craft and collaboration. When one musician was asked if it was better to be a musician in Halifax or Toronto he was unsure of the answer, but he did say that Halifax has a significant benefit which appeals to some artists.

“The cool thing about Halifax is the focus on the artistic end of music, which in the end is the most important thing. You can be a crappy band and you cannot be managed to be good – you need to have good songs. A lot of people around Halifax put emphasis on song writing, which is great although we may lack some of the flash and pizzazz that you see in bigger cities.”



Prospectors Union Performing at St. Matthew's Church, Halifax

Source | <http://www.flickr.com/photos/21092202@N08/3072110423/sizes//>

7.3 Strong Audience Base

Despite its relatively small size, Halifax offers a large audience base for local performances. Much of this support comes from North End communities – Agricola Street, Gottingen Street, and Maynard Street – where large numbers of artists and musicians make their homes. The greatest contributors to the audience base are the post secondary education centres. This is the population that will comprise the majority of audiences at pubs and other rock venues. Halifax has 81.1 post-secondary students for every 1000 residents, which is three times the national average (Greater Halifax Partnership 2008). This creates an ideal environment for new musicians to begin their careers and to gauge reactions towards new music. Many interviewees made reference to the fact that the student audience in Halifax “creates a ready made audience for music and the arts.”

Another benefit resulting from the concentrated network of educational institutions in Halifax is the natural rate of student turn over. Every year new students arrive in the city and are unfamiliar with the local scene; they create a brand new audience. This means that there will always be interest in local shows no matter how frequently a band plays in Halifax. The influx also leads to new bands entering the scene, as some students decide to express their own musical interests. Some participants suggest that this relationship works both ways; music and local festivals likely help attract new students because of the vibrancy it adds to Halifax.

The presence of art programs and institutions like NSCAD shows that culture and heritage is still valued in the city. Universities comprise the largest portion of student population but participants often described NSCAD as vital to the music industry although it offers no music programs. Those involved in other arts share common interests with musicians that may also contribute to community support. NSCAD brings together innovative minds and creates a hotbed of creative ideas across a wide range of artistic sectors. While the school



focuses on visual arts, students may choose to express themselves in a variety of forms. Musicians may have similar interests in terms of expression. One participant suggested this creates room for experimentation in Halifax without any boundaries. Participants also mention that many local musicians have gone to NSCAD or have some connection to the school. This includes some artists who captured national attention – like Sloan and Sarah McLachlan. In the words of one festival director:

“There was a 90 percent correlation between people in indie rock bands that were getting signed to American labels and people who had graduated from NSCAD, with like visual arts degrees – music was their hobby. It’s just a very creative environment.”

According to another festival director, NSCAD itself may promote music by acting as an incubator for talented musicians:

“NSCAD contributes to the overall cultural richness of Halifax rather than a direct music link. More creative people in the city make a more fertile breeding ground for everyone involved in the arts.”

7.4 Location and Isolation

Halifax is the regional and economic capital of the Atlantic Provinces. As a result, it is the meeting point for the best talent that the region has to offer. One person described Halifax as being the cultural capital of Atlantic Canada because it is becoming recognized as a “Mecca for artists and bands.” It is inaccurate to describe the music community as the Halifax music scene, as Halifax is the capital of the Atlantic Canadian music scene. Essentially, it is an all-star collection of the best musical talent from the population of 2.3 million, rather than a city with a population of 350,000. This may be one reason why Halifax seems to produce a disproportionate amount of talent for a small city. One musician said:

“None of us are from Halifax. I mean I’m now from Halifax because I love it here and it embraced us... But Lenny [Gallant] is From PEI, The Rankins are from Cape Breton, Jill [Barber] is from Port Credit, Ontario, Jenn [Grant] is from PEI, I’m from New Brunswick, two of my band mates are from PEI and one is from Quebec. Who else? Nancy from Dog Day is from Cape Breton. The guys from Wintersleep are from Stellarton and Yarmouth. We all end up here because it is the place to bring your wares; it is your best shot.”

The fact that Halifax is isolated from other major Canadian music markets is problematic for touring, but has helped Halifax establish itself as a music destination. Because of the isolation, and the poor weather during the winters, people in this area entertain themselves. There are fewer distractions in Halifax, in compared to Vancouver, which is beneficial in terms of allowing musicians to focus on their craft. Since music is part of the tradition of Atlantic Canada, it has always been a way for residents to entertain themselves. One participant said, “no

one comes here, the museums do not send their stuff here and art shows do not come here.” While Halifax musicians may suffer from isolation, one participant believes that local musician’s songs and lyrics are better because of it. Also, the fact that Halifax is far removed from other music centres suggests that Halifax musicians may be able to avoid popular trends that other musicians are exposed to.

“People had to entertain themselves. There are no out of town bands coming to entertain people so you basically had to imagine what that band would be. People’s experience of performances would be going to see people they knew. If you do not have a precedent you can probably make better music than what you can imagine other bands sounding like.”

This seems to be changing in recent years as Halifax has seen an influx of popular bands coming to the city including: The Rolling Stones, The White Stripes, Queens of the Stone Age, Bloc Party, and Elton John. Even with this increasing import of musical entertainment, the benefits of isolation seem to be ingrained in the culture of local music. One musician said:

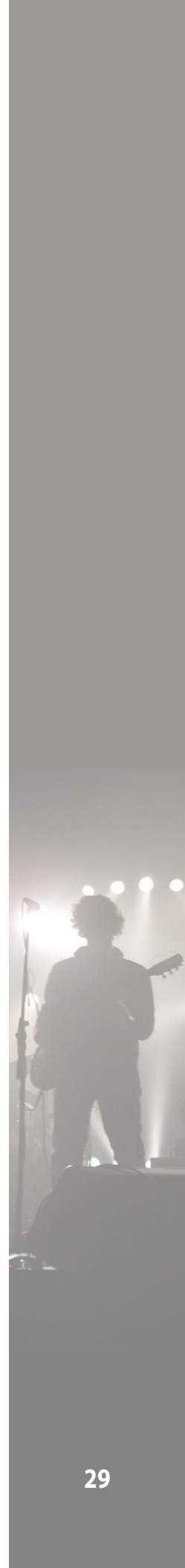
“So many good bands come out of Halifax because we have a really high level of knowledgeable song writing here – it is in our blood here. When you are more isolated you’re a little less distracted and you’re more focused on your art so I think we benefit from that. I think it’s a Maritime thing or an Atlantic Canadian thing.”

8.0 Provincial Policy Documents

Nova Scotia is developing policies to sustain and improve the cultural heritage of Nova Scotia. Interviews with music industry professionals show that the Halifax, Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada music scenes are inter-dependent on one another. If the province makes strides to improve music throughout Nova Scotia, it will indirectly improve the Halifax music scene as well.

8.1 Nova Scotia Culture Sector Strategy

The *Culture Sector Strategy* was created in 1999 to guide the Provincial government during cultural development initiatives. The document focuses on the economic elements of cultural planning to improve the state of culture. Guided by an advisory committee consisting of stakeholders in Nova Scotia’s cultural sector, the document acknowledges that different sectors of cultural industries have different needs. The province chose, however, to create a common strategy for all sectors of the industry. Six goals are addressed, along with identifying objectives to accomplish each task. The goals of investment and community development are most important for increasing the attractiveness of Halifax as a music destination. The document also presents recommendations to implement the strategy.



Although the *Nova Scotia Culture Strategy* is identified as a key document in the development of culture in the province (Music Nova Scotia 2007), an executive at the Department of Culture said this document is no longer a key aspect of the decision making process. According to Wayne Mason – a key contributor at Music Nova Scotia – this document was a poor representation of the needs expressed by key cultural stakeholders. As a result, the strategy was not effective in advancing the state of culture in the province. The lack of attention to the actual needs of culture resulted in the document failing to gain acceptance in the broader community. The poor relationship with the cultural community may account for why the detailed plan on implementing the goals of the strategy was never released. Regardless, the Department now focuses on the *Creative Nova Scotia* document for recommendations on cultural planning.

8.2 Creative Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council (NSACPC) is a partnership between members of the culture sector and the Department of Tourism, Culture, and Heritage. The NSACPC was established to create a cultural development plan. In 2006, *Creative Nova Scotia* was released. This is largely an educational document that begins by introducing the idea of culture and its importance to the way of life within the province. The document explores the possible benefits that culture can provide residents of Nova Scotia including the ability to: stimulate creative thinking, attract immigrants, improve tourism, educate, stimulate community development, revitalize neighbourhoods, and improve healthy living.

Music is specifically addressed in *Creative Nova Scotia*, but only in regards to its ability to excite communities, stimulate creativity, and its potential role in improving the health of individuals with serious illnesses. The document fails to provide suggestions for various sectors of culture, although it states each sector may require different improvements in order for each sector to grow and become a larger economic producer.



Matt Mays

Source | <http://www.flickr.com/photos/davidfmiller/376101784/sizes/o/>

8.3 Nova Scotia

The *Music Sector Strategy* was created in 2002 by Music Nova Scotia in partnership with the music industry. The goal of this unique document is to nurture, develop, and promote musical talent so musicians are able to remain in Nova Scotia. Music Nova Scotia recognizes that the province is the leading independent music centre in Canada and that further support is needed to ensure this continues into the future. The strategy suggests, “development of all parts of the music sector will result in large potential for growth and represents a sound investment for the province” (Music Nova Scotia 2007). The document provides three strategic priorities to create artistic and economic growth in Nova Scotia: Increase artists and project investment, improve the business climate, and increase financial capital. The document also describes how these priorities may be achieved. The *Music Sector Strategy* is a great asset to the music scene since its recommendations are in line with the *Creative Nova Scotia* document.

9.0 HRM Policy Documents

The Halifax Regional Municipality has two plans that could be applied to improve the support of the local music scene and enhance its attractiveness as a music destination. While these strategies suggest the framework to accomplish this task is in place, the municipality offers limited support to local musicians.

9.1 Strategies for Success: HRM’s Economic Development Strategy 2005-2010

Halifax Regional Municipality’s (HRM) *Economic Development Strategy* was developed to guide future economic growth of the city. In cooperation with the HRM *Regional Plan*, and the *Cultural Plan*, it aims to improve quality of life within the region. The strategy seeks to “improve and empower the lives of every citizen by building a prosperous, dynamic, globally competitive economy where creativity and risk-taking can flourish alongside a quality of life that is the envy of the world” (Halifax Regional Municipality 2005b; 6). To accomplish this task, the strategy identifies five principal goals that need to be addressed:

- Supercharge the Labour Force.
- Leverage the Creative Community.
- Create a Gung-Ho Business Climate.
- Capitalize on our Reputation.
- Convert Rivalries Into Partnerships.

9.1.1 Implications for the Halifax Music Scene

The *Economic Development Strategy* does not specifically mention music and offers little to suggest a vibrant music scene exists in Halifax. The document fails to adequately describe the link between music and the quality of life that it promotes. It does, however, indicate that culture is important to the future



economic success of Halifax. Many of the goals mentioned in the strategy could be used to increase the strength of the local music scene if the HRM chooses to do so.

One goal of the *Economic Development Strategy* is to leverage the creative community, which musicians are a critical component of. The strategy states that creative people drive the economy and that investing money in the right areas will attract them to Halifax. The HRM's current investment in social and cultural infrastructure is limited, but through investment by 2010, the document states that Halifax could become a vibrant place for creative professionals. There is no indication as to if this spending will actually benefit local musicians. The document argues that local universities have yet to reach their full potential. Capturing this potential would improve the economic base of Halifax, while simultaneously enhancing the music audience.

Strengthening the existing labour force will improve the likelihood of economic success in the HRM. The strategy suggests this may be accomplished by increasing the immigration of young professionals to the city. The strategy also expresses the need to create attraction and retention initiatives to capture economic potential in the city. These two measures could assist music in reaching its economic potential by expanding the music workforce in Halifax. This study, along with past research on cultural industries, may provide an initial framework on how attraction works in this area. When combined with cooperative efforts by the provincial music association, this strategy could potentially result in initiatives to strengthen the music scene.

The economic strategy stresses the importance of branding and capitalizing on the reputation of Halifax. It adopts the stance that Halifax's reputation is based on culture, tradition, and community strength. This statement mirrors the interviews conducted with music industry representatives. Furthermore, the interviews indicate that music is a large component of the cultural traditions within the city. The HRM has guidelines in place to improve the state of the music industry, but seems unwilling or uninterested to pursue them. With the proper development of cultural infrastructure, the goals of increasing the population of creative professionals, improving the workforce, and strengthening the music industry could be addressed concurrently.

The strategy also discusses the potential for initiatives to be enacted by 2010. According to the progress report, measures that may improve the current situation of the music scene – attracting/retaining immigrants, increasing university admissions, increasing investment, and increase research/incubation space – are all below the 2010 targets.

The economic strategy discusses several strategies to address issues pertaining to the document's five goals. Along with the recommended strategies, potential organizational partnerships are identified to increase the likelihood of achieving favourable outcomes. The document specifies priority actions to accomplish the main goals before 2010; however, these priority actions seem to do little to support the music scene or attract additional musical talent to the region.

9.2 HRM Cultural Plan

The HRM's Cultural Policy, released in 2006, states that Halifax's culture sets it apart from other areas. Culture is a key tool in attracting people to the city. Like *Creative Nova Scotia*, the *Cultural Plan* takes a broad approach to culture. The cultural policy will guide future cultural development within the HRM to create a vibrant city. This policy does not stand-alone; it should be used in association with the *Regional Plan*, *Economic Development Strategy*, and other HRM policies to strength the cultural state of the city. With these policies in place, municipal officials hope that HRM will gain recognition as a cultural capital of Canada.

During the creation of the city's plan, a Cultural Advisory Committee was created to engage with the community and stakeholders to inform policy creation. The committee identified nineteen guiding principles, leading to the creation of nineteen goals that need to be addressed by the HRM. The plan has numerous steps through which the HRM can use to implement the goals. The goals are divided into the following strategic directions: service delivery and partnerships; cultural access and equity; community character and heritage; life long learning and creative expression; and strategic investment and promotion. Finally, an implementation strategy discusses how the plan will be used during the course of the next decade.

9.2.1 Implications for the Halifax Music Scene

The *Cultural Plan* is meant to encourage cultural considerations in the HRM during development of new projects. Its presence seems to suggest that culture will be a key component of the future growth of Halifax. Many of the suggested goals and actions could be used to better support the music industry. Like the *Economic Development Strategy*, the *Cultural Plan* calls for future increases in cultural infrastructure. If these efforts were directed in the proper area, it seems the music population could directly or indirectly benefit from infrastructure improvements. Other initiatives such as public art projects, heritage conservation and community celebrations may also play a role in increasing the enjoyment of local musicians in Halifax, but it seems these measures would do little to influence their relocation to Halifax. The plan says the HRM should promote its cultural identity to bring additional awareness to the city, yet here is little indication from interviews and personal contacts to suggest anything has been done to support music through this goal.

The *Cultural Policy* claims that the HRM will do a better job providing support for local artists after the release of the plan. The policy states the HRM will work with foundations to provide funding for arts and culture organizations, and that the city will recognize its culture and support local artists. Goals fifteen and sixteen seem to be particularly important to local musicians. Goal fifteen focuses on the need to support and expand the creativity community within the HRM, while the other supports artist development. Suggestions to address increased support include providing studio rental space,



investigating tax benefits, supporting developments that act as talent incubators, and creating an HRM grant program. These measures have yet to be addressed, partially due to the fact that they were not recommended during the first three years of the policy's implementation.

9.2.2 Problems with the Cultural Plan

It is difficult to determine if the music industry was even considered during the creation of the *Cultural Plan*. The policy takes a broad approach to culture and never specifically mentions the Halifax music industry. The plan attempts to support the arts, but does not identify who is included in the definition. It is reasonable to assume that music fits within that category. The Cultural Advisory Committee contained no individuals who are involved in the local music industry, although documents suggest that music holds the most economic potential of all cultural sectors, while also acting as the sector that achieves the most widespread attention (Halifax Regional Municipality 2005a). The plan suggests that collaboration is important to the formation and the success of the *Cultural Plan*. There is a wealth of music knowledge available to the HRM from the world-class talent that resides in Halifax, along with many music organizations and promoters. Interview participants expressed displeasure with the plan and the fact that representatives from the music industry were not consulted. A festival director stated:

"I think that the municipality is losing out on a lot of talent and brain power because they haven't asked us or they don't want us to be engaged I guess. They should be – someone should be saying "What we really need is to pull the art gallery, Neptune, etc. them all together into a group and say, what direction are we going here?" There needs to be some engagement there."

Interestingly, respondents suggested that few measures were taken to consult with the provincial government (Department of Culture). If HRM failed to consult with the provincial government, there is no reason to assume Music Nova Scotia representatives were consulted in regards to potential improvements for the music industry. The HRM may have missed a vital opportunity to further support the Halifax music industry.

"It shocked me that as a cultural officer for the province, I'm not regularly hearing what the HRM is thinking about and I'm not consulted on cultural policy. Nobody phones me and says "we're thinking of creating a new cultural space for HRM, have you got half an hour." Nobody does that. They go out to their own people; they don't come to the province. I find that bizarre, absolutely bizarre."

It is difficult to assess the usefulness of the *Cultural Plan* following its creation three years ago. The HRM's Cultural Affairs Division has released no progress report on the success of the *Cultural Plan* at this time. According to the HRM, they hoped to have a progress report completed, but the process has been slower than anticipated (Halifax Regional Municipality 2008). All indications

suggest that thus far, the *Cultural Plan* has done little to encourage the growth of cultural sectors that make significant economic impacts on the Halifax region, including the music industry. This is confusing considering the plan discusses how culture can add a significant amount of wealth to the city through direct and indirect impacts. Thus, in terms of the ability of the *Cultural Plan* to contribute the *Economic Development Strategy*, it has not been successful in stimulating growth initiatives. This lack of success is likely due to the fact that many officials within the municipality have not warmed to the importance of culture or supported the implementation of this plan. The benefits of culture have yet to be recognized by municipal officials who continue to see culture as a luxury (Halifax Regional Municipality 2008). A local musician also expressed this belief.

“People in power are very conservative and they don’t see that part of having a vibrant city is having a vibrant cultural scene where you support the people who exactly express who we are.”

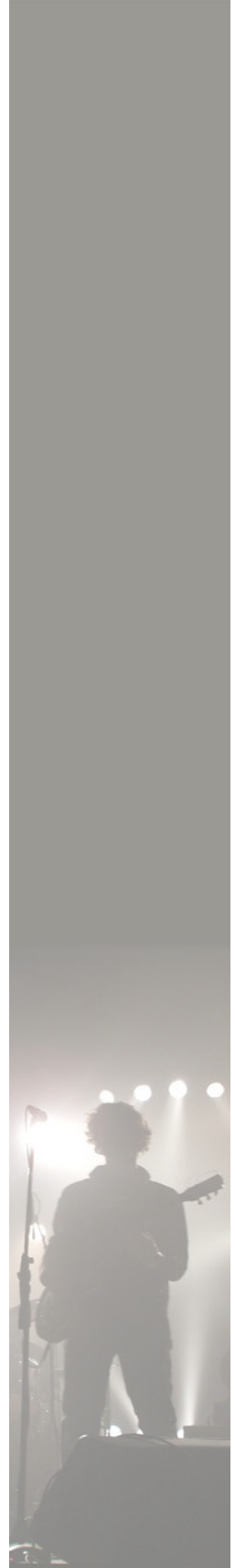
Meanwhile, the *Cultural Plan* seems to have produced some community art projects, which may contribute to strengthening communities; however, they do little to stimulate and support the local music industry.

The *Cultural Plan* seems problematic in the sense that it recommends an enthusiastic number of possible action strategies that the HRM will complete. Nineteen goals were suggested along with potential actions to accomplish all of these goals. It is difficult to determine how the HRM has the capability to accomplish all of these tasks in a reasonable manner, even if they were dedicated to improving the state of the arts. The HRM believes collaborating and allocating resources in a more effective manner can achieve the goals of this plan. In order for the plan to be more effective, funding must be attributed to the plan to improve the cultural state of Halifax.

“We have a *cultural plan* that has not seen a single bit of incremental funding increase or an actual concrete investment.” – Local Festival Director

There are no financial terms attached to the plan’s implementation despite the statement that the HRM will attempt to fund all of the defined initiatives. Initiating such a policy without a dedicated source of funding created a situation where the plan was unlikely to become successful from the beginning. It appears the HRM failed to provide consistent budgetary contributions that likely led to the failure of achieving primary goals (Halifax Regional Municipality 2008). One festival director made the following suggestion to create a more successful *cultural plan*.

“I actually tried to read all the way through it and there’s no money attached to it...I think the municipality needs to take the *cultural plan* that they did and they need to focus it into something that is like 15 pages and identify what are the top three to five priorities for the municipality in the next two to three years. Then they need to put some funding behind it. And they need to empower the city staff – they actually need to have a couple city staff members to work on it.”



The lack of a progress report, poor funding, and difficulty obtaining information from the HRM suggests the implementation timeline was inadequate. Several tasks were supposed to be accomplished within the first three years of the plan, yet not all have been completed. For instance, the *Cultural Plan* suggested an assessment of cultural assets and the mapping of cultural facilities in Halifax within three years of the plans implementation, but contact with the Cultural Affairs Division shows the assessment actually began during the end of October 2008, slightly over two months before the implementation timeline expires. The implementation strategy is flawed in the sense that it only guided the first three years of the plan's implementation. It has also proved ineffective for the music industry since the goals that would support the current industry and the attraction of future musicians were not included in this three-year time frame.

Problems with the original *Cultural Plan* will attempt to be addressed through the creation of a new five-year *Cultural Operating Plan* that provides only four priority actions to address in the next five years. The plan proposes cultural initiatives that will improve the overall state of culture in the city, but initiatives are unlikely to play a role in music attraction and retention. Some projects may help stimulate the local music industry. An Artist-in-Residence program will provide mentorship for local arts, including musicians. There are also plans for Cultural Cluster Incubator program. This will provide affordable space for emerging musicians to gather and develop their talent. Research shows that clusters would likely be beneficial for new musicians (Storper & Venables 2004; Rantisi et al. 2006). Other potentially useful programs include "Cultural Space Granting System", future grant programs, and cultural worker promotion (Halifax Regional Municipality 2008).



Performance at Gus' Pub

Source | <http://www.flickr.com/photos/barbcrawford/2372462304/sizes/o/>

10.0 How to Improve the Halifax Music Scene

Thematic analysis of the interviews shows what characteristics of Halifax are important to those involved in the Halifax music scene. Key features that led to the creation of the Halifax music scene and help distinguish it from other music centres in Canada were also uncovered. Many of these important characteristics are unlikely to be impacted by policy makers, planners, and city officials, as many are social factors. The social nature of the Halifax community and the supportive nature of the musicians will continue regardless of the actions of these officials. Culture and tradition have shaped the city into its present form, and aside from historical preservation, improving the sense of culture in Halifax would be a major challenge.

The thematic analysis suggests that the attractiveness of the Halifax music scene could be improved by targeting four areas:

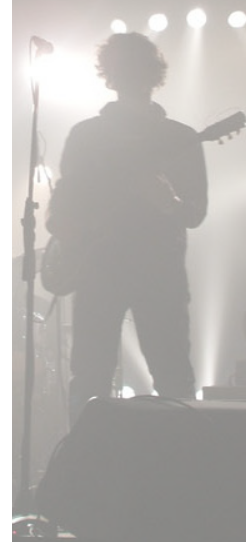
- Supporting the economic environment for music.
- Addressing the current state of venues and infrastructure.
- Expanding the audience base.
- Increasing the awareness of Halifax music and the benefits it provides.

Policy makers and other officials can potentially influence these areas, by focusing their efforts on encouraging the growth of the music sector, and increasing the ability of the city to attract more musicians. Many potential ways to address these four areas could improve the long-term prosperity of the music industry. Reviewing interview data and analyzing policy analysis has uncovered options that could potentially improve the Halifax music industry. These options are not necessarily the most effective or feasible solutions, but government officials and policy markers could potentially explore these suggestions to support local musicians.

11.0 Provincial Improvement Options to Support the Music Industry

11.1 Increase Support of the Provincial Funding Programs

Following the original release of the *Music Sector Strategy*, the provincial government quickly addressed the need for music funding. In 2003, Rodney MacDonald – the Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Heritage at the time – announced the department would contribute \$750,000 annually during 2004 to 2008. These funds went towards the creation of the Export Development Program and the Emerging Artist Business Program (Government of Nova Scotia 2003). This response supports interview sentiments that the provincial government is responsive to cultural needs throughout the province. Representatives from Music Nova Scotia and the Department of Culture confirmed that both funding programs were extended in April of 2008. Each program has the annual operating budget of \$375,000. More importantly, both music-funding programs are now “core programs” and no longer require renewal.



These funding programs are a major asset to musicians in the province; nevertheless, the programs could be expanded to ensure the success of the local music scene. This recommendation seems to be the top priority of all provincial suggestions. The *2007 Music Sector Strategy* also recommends that expansion be seriously considered as an approach to address all three strategic priorities of the document. Interview participants expressed a need for more provincial funding, both to support artists and to improve the overall attractiveness of Halifax as a musician destination. A representative from the Department of Culture said the province has committed to doubling the \$8.2 million budget for culture over the next three years, which would allow music funding to expand.

The greatest concern in the short term is the Export Development Program, as the increased cost of touring is the major challenge facing Halifax musicians. This, along with the cancellation of Federal cultural funding programs in August, will make touring increasingly difficult. One of the programs cut is the PromArt program which provided funding to international tours of Canadian artists (Fortin 2008). In order to account for this loss, the Provincial government - in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Culture, and Heritage – could consider taking a proactive role in accounting for these losses to Nova Scotia musicians. This may include the expansion of existing programs or identifying creative new ways to promote talent from the local Halifax Scene. In order to ensure the future success of the program, it would seem wise for the Department of Tourism, Culture, and Heritage to collaborate with the Department of Economic Development to determine the best course of action to establish a new funding scheme for music exports. This need to increase cultural exports has been raised within the Department of Economic Development (Government of Nova Scotia 2007).

Increased funding to the Emerging Artist Program is beneficial because it would allow artists to obtain funding over a longer period of time to encourage long-term development. The program could also be expanded to include more funding categories, like those included in the funding scheme used by the Government of Western Australia (See Appendix E). Increased attention could be placed on skill development, which would be especially advantageous to refine the skills amongst the growing singer/songwriter population in the province. Funding categories could also be implemented for music publishers since this area is becoming the largest component of the local music scene and it holds the greatest economic potential (Music Nova Scotia 2007). Funding for other music businesses, like managers and promoters, could be explored because of the current shortage in the city.

Increasing funding projects likely means that partnerships need to be developed to effectively distribute grants. Music Nova Scotia is currently the provincial organization responsible for music support. Music Nova Scotia's responsibilities could be increased to administer these funds. If Music Nova Scotia is unable to do this, a Music Panel – like that in Western Australia - may need to be created in association with the Department of Culture and Music Nova Scotia.

11.2 Report on the Importance of Music

The existing document on the impact of Arts and Culture in the HRM discusses the economic and intangible benefits that arts provide for the city. Even with the HRM report on the benefits of culture, it seems the findings have not become embedded in the minds of the public and some provincial departments (Halifax Regional Municipality 2005a). Halifax is a unique place for musical talent, yet the old *Culture Sector Strategy* and the *Creative Nova Scotia* document made no attempt to reflect this uniqueness. A document could be created to describe this unique music environment while stating the direct connections between music and its benefits. The report could describe the benefits that provincial music funding provides, while also demonstrating Halifax's role as the major music centre of the Atlantic region. The report could illustrate the city's role as an incubator for creative talent. This may help capture the attention of the province, residents, and HRM officials to focus efforts on supporting the local music scene. The document would also satisfy recommendation 10 of the *Creative Nova Scotia* document that calls for research on the "feel good" aspect of culture. If these individuals can recognize the direct connection between quality of life and music, they will be more likely to view music support as an investment opposed to considering it as welfare.

11.3 New Culture Sector Strategy

Since the old *Nova Scotia Culture Sector Strategy* is no longer in use, the Department now uses the *Going Global, Staying Local* document to guide export development. An export document, entitled *Going Global: Creative Pursuits*, specifically guides the exportation of cultural products. The province also focuses on the *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity 2006 Strategy* as a method to ensure economic development occurs in a sustainable manner. *The Sustainable Prosperity Strategy* says that quality of life is important to Nova Scotians (Government of Nova Scotia 2006), yet like other documents, it fails make the connection between music and life satisfaction.

The existing documents provide the framework for export and sustainable development, but additional guidance may be needed for other cultural advancements. The Provincial government could investigate the potential of creating a new culture strategy that accurately reflects the existing cultural environment. A new strategy would fill gaps in economic development that are unaddressed by the existing provincial strategies. This comprehensive strategy for culture would emphasize the importance of developing culture in the province. Similar documents released by Western Australia and Montreal improved the state of their own culture in a short time (See Appendix E). It is possible that Nova Scotia could see similar benefits.

According to Wayne Mason, flaws in the original *Nova Scotia Culture Sector Strategy* may be attributed to the consulting firm's lack of familiarity with cultural industries and organizations. If the province determines that this type of



policy would benefit the state of culture, an individual or a team with experience in cultural industries should complete the strategy. Developing this strategy with a collaborative approach would improve the potential success of the document. This should include a variety of representatives from provincial departments along with cultural professionals, along with an increased focus on music industry representatives, since music has been identified as the leading cultural sector in terms of economic growth (Halifax Regional Municipality 2005a). Doing so might help the music scene expand and gain the support that is needed to attract new musical talent.

Recommendations made in the *Music Sector Strategy* should be considered during the creation of new culture sector strategy to encourage music and cultural growth. Of particular importance are live performance and music publishing, along with considering tax benefits.

The *Music Sector Strategy* suggests that live performances and music publishing are the cornerstones of the current music environment in the province. According to the strategy, live music is the foundation of the provincial music sector, yet musicians are concerned with the supply and quality of Halifax venues. Recommendations on how to improve the quality of these spaces would encourage the long-term strength of the music industry. This is especially important following the recent announcement that the Marquee will be closing. Improving performance and rehearsal spaces would benefit all cultural industries, not only the music industry. Changing technology means that publishing is now the popular way to promote artists and increase their profits. This increasing importance may warrant further attention to encourage growth in the music sector.

The City of Vancouver has taken steps to reduce taxes on the film industry to make it an attraction destination (See Appendix E); the same could happen for music in Nova Scotia. The music strategy and interviewees suggest that the tax structure should be altered to improve the likelihood that the music industry will expand. Taxes in Halifax are higher than other major Canadian music centres, which make it difficult to support venues, encourage business, and to improve the attractiveness of Halifax over other regions such as Toronto. Measures to provide tax benefits, while also reducing high taxes on alcohol and live performances, would create a stronger cultural environment that may encourage more musicians to relocate to Halifax. Two music management executives shared this view.

“In Montreal they have grants up the wazoo – they even fund English stuff sometimes. In Ontario there’s no provincial tax on a show. So we’re at an 8 or 9% tax disadvantage for every ticket we sell here.”

“No tax breaks is a problem. I have to depreciate recordings because of the tax laws. I think it’s 20% the first year and 10% every year after. I spend \$60,000 to make a record, I need that to be a direct expense. Depreciating over ten years is laughable because a recording has an immediate life of maybe two years.”

Several objectives from the old *Culture Sector Strategy* could be included or expanded to provide benefits to musicians. In order to successfully reach new markets the province could potentially encourage the development of managers

and agents. Strengthening this sector of the local music industry may help reduce the exodus of musicians to larger markets since Halifax would be able to provide an improved level of service. By involving Nova Scotia Economic Development and Nova Scotia Business Inc. and helping them recognize music and culture as a business, this goal could be attainable (Music Nova Scotia 2007). Additionally, the goals of further investment and community development are particularly important for the local music scene and cultural industries in general.

An implementation strategy on how to achieve future economic goals would likely increase the probability of achieving success. *Creative Nova Scotia* provides recommendations, yet it fails to provide an implementation strategy on how to achieve these recommendations. The original Culture Sector Strategy also failed to provide implementation guidelines. Recommendations are useful, but without an accompanying implementation strategy, ideal benefits may not be achieved. A list of priorities in terms of these goals, while suggesting which culture sectors need immediate attention, may also lead to successful outcomes.

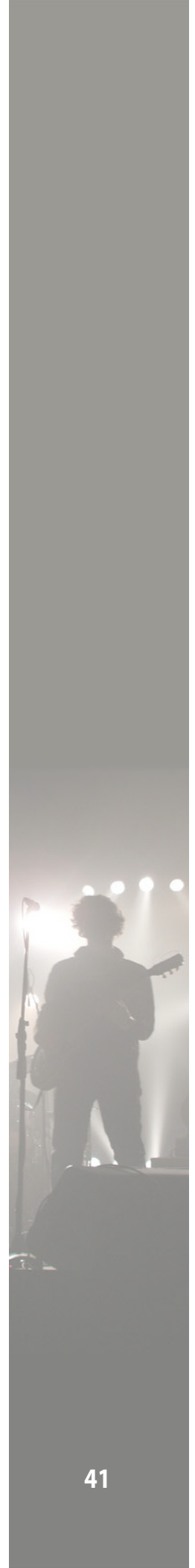


Youth Performers Busking on the Waterfront

Source | <http://www.flickr.com/photos/18588282@N00/111343156/sizes//>

11.4 Education Initiatives

Creative Nova Scotia and interviewees describe the need for more emphasis on culture in provincial schools. In order to further support the growth of the Halifax music scene, the province could look into increased opportunities for music education in its schools. Although this measure will not help attract or retain musicians, it may encourage some children to engage in long-term musical training while increasing the music audience. It is also possible that the Halifax music scene could indirectly benefit in the future if more children are encouraged



to explore their musical talents. Two possible approaches to accomplish this initiative may include:

- Introducing songwriting into the music curriculum to improve reading and writing skills.
- Creating a program that allows Halifax musicians to visit schools. This may present students with inspiration for their potential careers in music.

The Department of Education may need to investigate potential ways to further support small universities and colleges in the HRM due to the role they will play in the future of the Halifax music scene. The department should ensure that the music business program at the NSCC's Waterfront Campus is supported due to the importance of developing local music professionals. Additionally, the department could explore measures to support NSCAD due to its role in breeding creativity and developing musical talent.

11.5 Music Information Technology

A relatively cost effective way to allow individuals from other cities to gain exposure to Halifax musicians would be to create a website dedicated to the Halifax scene. The Government of Western Australia provided funds for the local music association to create a new website. This site was dedicated to promoting local artists and creating links to services where artists could gain business advice. Another option includes the creation of a blog dedicated to the Halifax music. One musician mentioned that it is an easy way for new bands to be heard through the country. It is also another way to overcome the lack of national journalists in Halifax.

"One drawback which surprises me about Halifax is that there is no prevalent blog around here. There's a blog called Hero Hill that does a great job. A lot of other blogs are based out of Toronto. It's too bad because blogs are such an easy way for bands to find out about new bands."

If budgetary concerns allow for its creation and management, a blog could help to promote the local music scene in the short term. Other musicians could then learn about the talent that currently resides in Halifax, expanding the city's exposure and helping to attract new musicians.

12.0 Municipal Improvement Options to Support the Music Industry

The interview data, along with the review of municipal policy, has provided insight into how the music industry could be better supported in order to attract and retain more musicians. One participant feels the city does not value music like it did in the past, even though the existing talent base is as strong as ever. If this is in fact the case, this analysis has identified several measures that the municipality

could take to improve the position of music within the city, while also attracting more musicians. These options may not necessarily be ideal solutions, but they should help address the current state of the Halifax music scene.

12.1 Increase Municipal Awareness of the Music Industry

Interview participants believe that the provincial government makes attempts to support the local music industry. The responsiveness of the provincial government may be due to the presence of a Music Development Officer in the Department of Culture who is responsible for staying up to date with current Nova Scotia musical talent and administering provincial funding programs. If the HRM is serious about improving the cultural state of the city, and obtaining the benefits of a thriving music industry, the municipality could consider creating a music officer position or a music task force in the Cultural Affairs Division. Interviews suggest many music stakeholders would be willing to contribute to such a task force. One participant said the municipality has no cultural direction; a new position or task force would create such a direction for music. One of these positions would give Halifax musicians the representation that they need in local government to stimulate music improvements.

The presence of a staff member or a task force would increase the awareness of the benefits of the music industry within the HRM, while encouraging measures and policy to support music. A primary task of this position could involve investigating the state of the current music scene while generating recommendations to strengthen it. This is similar to the accomplishments of the film task force in Vancouver (City of Vancouver 2007). At the very least, it would allow music to be considered in conjunction with initiatives from the new *Cultural Operating Plan* and the *Economic Development Strategy*. This position may be instrumental in improving Halifax's attractiveness as a music destination.

12.2 Increase Collaboration with Provincial Government and Music Organizations

The *Cultural Plan* says that the Cultural Advisory Committee collaborated with community members and representatives from other HRM committees; however, no reference was made to the provincial cultural documents or the *Music Sector Strategy*. It appears that the HRM did not consult anyone from the provincial government to gain advice on creating an ideal *Cultural Plan*. This was conveyed during an interview with a representative from the Department of Culture.

"One unfortunate thing I've learned by being in government is different levels of government, different areas of government don't work particularly well together. So it is much easier for me to work with the Department of Education, which is also provincial, than it is for me to work with the HRM. It's almost easier for me to work with another province to tell you the truth."



The provincial and municipal governments share common goals and could work on initiatives to improve the state of the local music scene. For reasons unknown, this has not occurred in the past. Collaboration with the Provincial Department of Culture – specifically the Music Development Office – would show the HRM how municipal characteristics that attract musical talent could be easily improved upon through existing policy. This would allow the HRM to gain an expertise that they are lacking within the municipal government, since many members are unaware of the benefits that music and culture provide for Halifax. There are many areas where these governing bodies could coordinate action to improve conditions of the industry. Three options include:

12.2.1 Maximize the Potential of Post Secondary Institutions

Collaboration between governing bodies may help Halifax post-secondary institutions maximize their full potential. Attaining this potential may also address goals of the *Economic Development Strategy*, mainly to improve the labour force and strengthen the creative community. Together, these bodies may be able to develop more effective strategies and techniques to capture the full ability of universities. This would be an effective way to generate more revenue in the city.

Not only would maximizing the potential of post secondary institutions increase the economic state of Halifax but it would help further support the music industry. Recent research (Shank 1994; Connell & Gibson 2003) and local music professionals both acknowledge how important students are to the success of any independent music scene. Any measure to strengthen one will indirectly strengthen the other. Increasing the student population provides a larger audience for local musicians, meaning there will be increased demand and music spending.

12.2.2 Consider Tax Benefits

The suggestion of tax benefits was previously addressed in the provincial government recommendation section and the *Cultural Plan* suggested it as a manner to support local culture. The current tax structure in Halifax puts the city at a disadvantage as a music centre. In the increasing global market, participants believe the municipality fails to see taxes as an obstacle in promoting Halifax as a musical destination.

“The fact that there is no volume discount on alcohol [is a problem]... In a lot of places, like Montreal, they have a volume discount for institutional buyers of alcohol. So that makes things really uncompetitive here. And the property tax structure makes it uncompetitive. In Toronto and Montreal you’ve got band bars that have been in business for 30 years with this great history and lineage.”
– Local Festival Director

If both levels of the government are to recognize the tax structure as a challenge for local musicians, it might increase the likelihood of developing proactive measures to reduce the tax burden. Reducing taxes on performance venues, rehearsal space, and other institutions that support music would allow venues not only to survive, but to create a reputation, which would increase the perception of Halifax as a music destination. Providing any support to local venues in the short term may lessen the need for future funding. Furthermore, if the province and the municipality make it easier for venues to operate, new venues would open and provide more opportunity for musicians to perform.

12.2.3 Improve Music Business

The municipality could investigate the potential of creating a favourable business environment for music so the industry has the ability to thrive and expand. Improving tax structures would be one way to accomplish this goal but there are other ways that it could be improved. For instance, the municipality could work in association with the provincial government to increase the number of music professionals in Halifax. Numerous participants have mentioned that this is a major obstacle in Halifax's ability to increase its potential.

"There is a total lack of infrastructure in the Halifax music industry. There are three or four artist managers, there are four publicists, and there are no major booking agents. There are literally maybe twenty-five people working in the music industry in Nova Scotia. It's really unattractive that way." – Local Musician

Opportunities could be presented to recent graduates of the music business program at NSCC to allow them to establish a career in Halifax. The *Music Sector Strategy* recommends working with Nova Scotia Economic Development and Nova Scotia Business Inc. to identify ways to support the growth of the music industry. This may help existing music management companies to expand or even stimulate the creation of new music firms.

12.3 Investigate the Creation of a Music Industry Inventory & Halifax Music Strategy

"I think the lack of a municipal strategy means that we do not have the venues and facilities that we should have." – Local Festival Director

Investing in a music inventory to examine the state of existing venues, rehearsal spaces, and recording studios could provide the municipality with the compelling evidence they need in order to address music infrastructure. This would identify the shortcomings of existing infrastructure and emphasize measures to improve venues and other facilities. Both the *Cultural Plan* and interview participants suggested similar measures to explore infrastructure. This report has also identified industry shortcomings, including listening venues, a large concert hall, and affordable spaces, but a more extensive study is needed.



A music sector strategy for the HRM may help direct future improvement projects to increase the city's attractiveness along with encouraging the long-term strength of the music industry. The provincial strategy was able to produce immediate funding initiatives after its conception. A similar outcome will not occur as quickly in Halifax, but a municipally recognized music strategy would reinforce the importance of music that is currently lacking. According to a local festival director, musician funding typically comes from the provincial government, although funding could be addressed in this strategy. A key component of this sector strategy would focus on infrastructure, music development and other efforts to support music.

A music strategy would be used in coordination with the *Regional Plan*, *Economic Development Strategy*, and the *Cultural Plan*. It might be reasonable to ask the individuals responsible for the *Nova Scotia Music Sector Strategy* to create a new guide that focuses specifically on Halifax. This goal may also be accomplished through the creation of a music officer or music task force. Regardless of who creates the strategy, thorough collaboration with local musicians, music organizations, and Music Nova Scotia would identify key initiatives. The strategy would reinforce goals found in the *Cultural Plan*, including musician development and music investment. However, it would also suggest how to accomplish the goals of attraction, retention, and musical support, while providing a timeline as to when each goal should be accomplished.



The Seahorse Tavern on Argyle Street

Source | <http://www.flickr.com/photos/78501027@N00/2329802875/>

12.4 Investigate Venue Support

Interview participants generally seem disheartened over the current state of music venues within the HRM. Supporting local venues should be a priority focus for the HRM. Despite recommendations to improve cultural infrastructure in the *Economic Development Strategy*, the HRM has not been successful up to this point. To improve one of the key characteristics of the city, the municipality should investigate ways to support operating venues or provide more performance opportunities for musicians.

12.4.1 Increase Music Opportunities in Municipal Spaces

Recent history demonstrates that the HRM is willing to hold major concerts with major touring acts on municipally owned spaces like the Commons; however, similar opportunities for local musicians remain limited. The HRM should investigate ways that they could open municipally owned spaces to provide local musicians with the opportunity to perform. This would be a cost efficient method of supporting the music scene. It may take the form of offering the Waterfront and Parade Square to local musicians during the summer months. Other options may include opening gymnasiums and community centres for concerts. These spaces would be able to maintain a sizable audience, and may be relatively underutilized within the HRM. The Halifax Forum still holds occasional concerts; steps could be taken to increase the number of music events in the Forum. Many of these locations, particularly those in public spaces, would be a good way to build support for local music talent while contributing to other benefits, such as promoting cultural tourism.

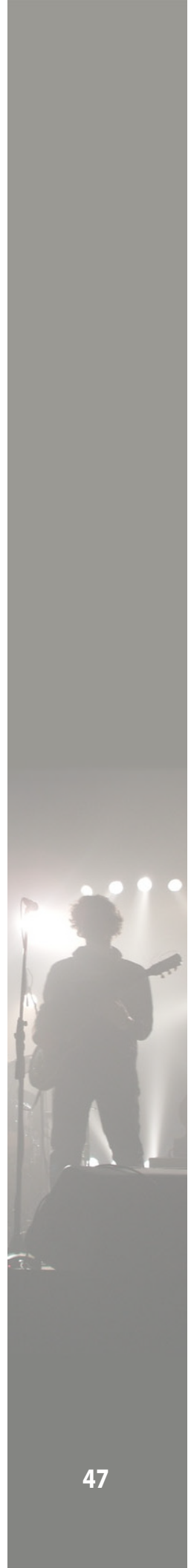
12.4.2 Explore Funding Options for Halifax Venues and Festivals

“It seems like the municipality is very quick to brag about the cultural environment here. They are aware of how important that is, but they’re unwilling to make an investment in sustaining it and they are quite willing to let other people carry that load to make sure that it keeps going.” – Local Festival Director

The HRM should investigate potential ways that they could begin to support existing music venues in Halifax. Providing tax breaks may help achieve this goal but funding may also be required to support the existing stock of venues and to stimulate the creation of new ones. Previous policy suggestions to improve investment and grant programs have not occurred, yet they could be used to support venues. The City of Montreal has recently provided funding to support cultural venues following the release of the *Montreal, Cultural Metropolis* cultural development strategy. The HRM has been unwilling to provide assistance to major venues faced with financial challenges and the threat of closing in the past. A local musician explains:

“The Khyber Club was shut down by the city. The city decided that the city should not subsidize this arts bar, yet they subsidize the police and firemen bar and the legions get a tax subsidy. They could not get the idea of subsidizing an arts venue. After they shut it down, they did a year long study to determine what should go there. They found that it should be exactly what it was.”

The closure of venues means that there are fewer places to play or that musicians are only given the opportunity to perform in low quality venues. Musicians see this trend and wonder if it is worth staying in Halifax as the municipality does little to support them or advance their craft. If the municipality is unable to provide funding support to local venues, they may need to initiate communication with local cultural groups to identify creative ways to support venues.



The HRM is also unwilling to support festivals that are intended to promote and support the current independent music scene. Doing so would help improve the success of the festivals but it would also show musicians that the city supports their work. The municipality should investigate opportunities to support festivals other than those that they have a vested interest in; participants claim there are only two festivals that the municipality supports. Another participant believes the only people who can get funding from the municipality are those who are involved in the “old boys” network. The Halifax Pop Explosion has gained a reputation as one of the best independent music festivals on the continent, yet the municipality does not support it. The HRM could also investigate supporting local music organizations that contribute to the overall quality of music in the city.

“The municipality gives Symphony Nova Scotia \$15,000. The next lowest paid symphony in Canada is Edmonton who gets \$100,000.”
– Local Festival Director

12.5 Review Legislation for All Age Music Events

Creative Nova Scotia addresses the importance of education and allowing the public to gain access to culture. Currently in the HRM, it is difficult for teens to gain exposure to music and live concerts. The municipality could make advancements in providing this age group the opportunity to learn from musical talent that currently exists in Halifax. This concern was raised during interviews for this project. A booking agent was interested in providing more all age shows but he said it was extremely difficult to do so through current the legislation.

“I think the legislation of all age shows should be something that needs to be seriously looked at. You cannot have a 16 year old in a bar or a room where there is liquor on the shelf. I just think it is slightly absurd. At the end of the day who are we really hurting? Why are we restricting these youth from quality entertainment?”

Making all age shows more feasible would be a good opportunity to provide youth with quality entertainment while expanding the size of the music audience. Increased all age venues and shows would likely many teens to pursue their musical interests and to enhance their creativity.

12.6 Promote the Local Music Scene

Research indicates that creative cultural projects produce many direct economic benefits, along with many indirect benefits that they contribute to a city (Barrieau 2004; Barrieau & Savoie 2006; Markusen 2006; Halifax Regional Municipality 2008). The *Economic Development Strategy* suggests the HRM needs to work to promote the city as an ideal destination. Interview participants feel that promotion is an effective way to encourage new musicians to the area, but up

until this point the HRM has failed to utilize this strategy. One music manager/promoter mentioned that great talent from Halifax can “percolate under the radar for a long period of time” on the national level. Promotion would be a way that musical talent could gain increased recognition.

“Every year the city throws untold thousands of dollars at shit that has nothing to do with anything as far as I am concerned – like lobsters dancing on the beach. That is someone’s idea of how to promote this part of the world but it isn’t.” – Local Music Manager

In order for the HRM to capitalize on its reputation, the city should attempt to brand itself by focusing on what the city is known for – its culture. In order to accomplish this goal, and to increase the strength of the Halifax music scene, its music should be presented to the rest of Canada through promotional measures. Previous promotion techniques focused on traditional and Celtic music. However, this archaic view of the city does little justice to the creative work currently taking place within the city boundaries. New promotion should focus on the current state of the Halifax music scene and the music that is emerging from it. This will show the rest of the world that Halifax is a musical hotbed worth visiting due to its world-class talent and supportive community.

Branding Halifax as a creative musical city would have a direct impact on attracting more musicians to Halifax. One participant believes that it would show the strengths of the city are unique to Halifax. It would also present music as a defining feature of the city. At the very least, it would encourage touring acts to visit Halifax.

Promoting the music environment in Halifax may accomplish other benefits that were described in research and the *Economic Development Strategy*:

- It will attract more university students to Halifax. One participant said that “people choose to go to university here because of it [the music scene] and they choose to stay here because of it.”
- University graduates will be more likely to remain in Halifax if the city supports music and cultural talent in Halifax. Other young professionals will be more likely to relocate to Halifax since research shows that a concentration of cultural workers is a key attraction (Markusen & Schrock 2006; Wu 2005).
- With an increased concentration of musicians and creative professionals, the economic potential of the city will increase. This will stimulate the creation of new music firms along with other firms across various employment sectors.
- As Halifax gains a reputation as a city that cares about music, cultural tourism will increase bringing more people and economic capital to the city.
- This promotion would give local advertising firms employment and increase their income.



With this promotion, and the other municipal recommendations, Halifax will become known as a city with unique talent and a place that is supportive of creative work. This may stimulate the overall rates of immigration.

Another potential promotional tool may be to create an annual “Halifax Music Scene” tour, which would consist of bands currently performing in the local music scene. This would be a potential mechanism to provide musicians with tours while allowing music fans in other cities to gain immediate access to talent from the Halifax music scene. Such a tour could raise exposure of the Halifax scene while encouraging new musicians to relocate to the city.



Jenn Grant

Source | <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ngagnon/1872741921/sizes/o/>

13.0 Planning for the Music Industry

At this time it is difficult to identify ways planners can support the local music scene because there appears to be little municipal support behind improving the music environment. If the HRM continues their current lack of dedication to the music scene, it will be difficult for planners to enhance the attractiveness of Halifax, since their efforts will likely be focused elsewhere. While it may be difficult, planners have the ability to take small measures to improve the state of the Halifax music community.

13.1 Create Clusters of Cultural Incubation

Most performance spaces are located in a corridor along Barrington and Argyle Street, while interviews show the majority of musicians and music professionals reside in the North End of Halifax. Planners should advise the municipality to cluster future cultural infrastructure in these areas. Clustering near Barrington and Argyle would allow music infrastructure to be separated from

major residential zones so the general public will face limited disruption from these areas. The North End community seems to provide more musical support than other areas of Halifax. It is important to consider siting more venues and cultural centres in the North End to capitalize on this population who welcomes exposure to music.

Clustering would likely benefit residents of the city, but it would also encourage the incubation of musical talent. Clustering cultural facilities allows for increased exchange of information that could magnify the degree of creative cultural output in the city. This is due to the belief that creativity increases as spatial proximity to other sources of innovative activity decreases (Storper & Venables 2004; Rantisi et al. 2006). These clusters could promote increased face-to-face interaction that is the desired medium of exchange according to interviews and relevant research (Storper & Venables 2004; Currid 2007a).

13.2 Improve Transportation Connections

A small number of participants are concerned that many residents may not have the ability to support events that take place in the evening. Many concerts and evening events – especially those in bars like the Seahorse – begin late at night. It is very difficult to find transportation alternatives, mainly transit and taxis, following the completion of these events. A lack of transit is described as a major deterrent to supporting local music. Because municipal transit finishes before these events do, planners need to investigate the potential of extending transit services to areas known for supporting late night cultural events, so the community has the opportunity to support them. It is possible that this extended service may only be required on Friday and Saturday evenings. This approach would also be effective if future cultural infrastructure is clustered.

13.3 Respond to the Needs of Musicians

Research shows that cultural workers desire a variety of amenities to improve the overall quality of a city (Marlet & van Woerkens 2005). One amenity particularly important for musicians is performance venues. If the municipality is open to improving the state of venues in the city, planners should encourage future development based on the desires of musicians to ensure that music related projects are successful. According to the interviews conducted for this project, these needs include more listening venues and a concert venue to support medium sized audience. To respond to the needs of musicians, the creation and the support of such venues could be prioritized, although further consultation with musicians may be needed before a decision is made.

Planners and officials in other cities have often used culture and music to jump start revitalization efforts. Planners can learn from the mistakes of past revitalization efforts. Music revitalization has often focused on grandiose



projects like the creation of large amphitheatres and concert halls. Such projects have often failed because efforts were not directed at the needs of artists who typically prefer small-scale investments that provide the opportunity to produce cutting-edge products (Rantisi et al. 2006).

13.4 Create Multi-use Music Facilities

Planners should promote the creation of multi-use facilities instead of those that serve one basic purpose, in order to provide infrastructure for variety of musical events. A medium sized concert venue would be beneficial to independent musicians and classical performances. For instance, interviews suggest that the Nova Scotia Symphony is approaching capacity at its existing location. If the HRM determines that a medium sized performance venue is needed, it should be designed to support all musical performers. In a new venue, it would also be valuable to include smaller music rooms where singer/songwriters could perform for a more intimate audience. Interviewees did mention that Halifax has some rehearsal spaces but other affordable options could be available in previously mentioned music rooms. Designers could also consider creating music education programs within the facility. This would allow the facility to be used throughout the year, even when no major events are scheduled. This type of environment would also allow seasoned musicians to interact with those who are emerging into the world of music. Such a unique environment would reflect the degree of support and collaboration that the music industry was built on.



Wintersleep in Concert

Source | <http://www.flickr.com/photos/brooklynstewart/2895263318/>

14.0 Conclusion

This project has discussed a unique Canadian music environment that has previously been unexplored. The research contributes to the need to investigate what characteristics of a city are important for attraction and retention of musical talent. It also contributes to the larger ISRN research project that has recently expanded to explore social elements of Canadian music centres. Interviews provided insight on many characteristics of Halifax that musicians value and those that are obstacles. These characteristics are divided into four general themes: Economics, Features of Halifax, Venues, and Social Interaction. Reasons why the music industry developed in Halifax were also determined. Exploring these characteristics shed light on why being a musician in Halifax is advantageous over larger music regions in Canada. The project has also exposed potential ways that policy makers and city officials could improve the attractiveness of the Halifax music scene.

An exploratory project is a good first step in examining the features of the Halifax music scene, as well as ways to support it, but further research is necessary to increase the understanding of this unique cultural industry. The information collected during this project warrants a detailed project on the Halifax music industry. Eighteen key stakeholders in the local music industry were sampled for this project, but more data collection is necessary. The findings of this project reflect the opinions of those established within the music industry. Since new emerging musical talent were not included in the sample, these findings may not reflect the opinions of everyone involved in music. While it is reasonable to assume that the observed characteristics are important to everyone involved in music, there may be other characteristics that are lacking. It is impossible to determine at this time if the sample is representative of all music populations.

Future research should be conducted to include other sectors of the Halifax music scene. Independent pop and rock professionals were the focus of this project due to the reputation of these genres. Other genres are essential in maintaining the diversity that the Halifax scene is known for; including hip-hop, rap, country, electronic, jazz, and traditional music. Exploring the opinions of professionals in these genres may identify other characteristics that were missed in this project. It may also show that characteristics of importance may vary depending on the genre of music. Regardless of the final outcome, including these genres in future projects would help create a more complete picture of characteristics that influence talent attraction and retention.

If future research is to continue on this subject, it may be useful to generate a standardized interview question schedule for the music industry. The interview schedule used during interviews with six music executives gathered specific information on individual music firms, their operation, and attractive characteristics of the city (See Appendix B). More relevant information on the benefits of being a musician in Halifax may have been obtained with a specific schedule, similar to that used with other interview participants (See Appendix C). A standardized interview schedule would be helpful in the future to allow for detailed collection of information, while making comparisons between genres and professions easier. This schedule could also build on the findings



from this project to create more detailed questions that explore topics such as how the industry has grown despite little municipal attention and the relationship between musicians and access to nature.

The discussion of venues within the music sector could likely provide enough information for a separate exploratory project. Halifax venues are closing at an alarming rate, which hurts the local music scene. New venues in the city seem to be located in spaces that offer lower quality shows. Some interview participants also suggested the interest in local shows may be decreasing, which is partially attributed to poor venue quality. The exact nature of this relationship needs to be explored to determine the most efficient way to improve the state of music venues. This project suggests that the existing stock of venues may not support the full desires of musicians and audiences. Participants express a need for more listening venues in the city. With that being said, each genre may have specific desires for performance spaces. If this is the case, these desires may cause further problems on the existing stock of venues. Identifying all challenges facing these venues is a key component to the future success of the Halifax music scene.

This project has identified several possible options to support the Halifax music scene based on the interview data collected from participants and the policy review. These options are not necessarily the most effective or most feasible solutions. If this project were to continue, the next step would be to consult with policy experts to gain insight on the process of creating policy and implementing potential suggestions. Consultation would indicate if the four improvement areas discussed in section 11 are, in fact, viable approaches to supporting the local music scene. Recommendations on how to accomplish the possible suggestions may also provide insight into their feasibility and application. Further research or collaboration is needed to identify the best policy approaches and strategies to support music. One effective way to generate techniques to support the music industry would be to gather key music players together to generate creative solutions.

Interview participants identified a lack of political will within the local government to support the music scene. Even with policies that could potentially stimulate local music, there has been a failure to do so. Participants discussed that the municipality seems willing to accept the status quo, rather than taking new efforts to improve the quality of the city. This suggests the first stage of improvements may need to focus on increasing the awareness of the music industry and the benefits that it provides. The municipality fails to recognize the benefits of the music industry, as well as the unique opportunity it provides to improve the state of the city. Raising awareness of the importance of music is the first step in increasing the municipality's support of the industry. Once this issue is addressed, other improvement areas should be targeted for action. Findings from this report suggest, that the municipal priority is to investigate methods of supporting venues or providing performance alternatives. The provincial government could focus its efforts on improving the economics of music, potentially through funding. Priority actions on how to improve the music environment will be much easier to accomplish after encouraging increased awareness.

While this project may not have produced specific recommendations on how to support the local music community, it does provide insight on how a potential music strategy or policy amendments could be developed to improve the

attractiveness of the Halifax scene. The first phase of this process should involve collaboration between important parties. City officials, policy makers, and key music stakeholders in Halifax need to come together and discuss the music scene. This discussion could centre on the current state of the Halifax scene, possibly discussing the findings of this report, while describing any additional shortcomings that exists within the music industry. Viewpoints on the benefits of music along with the potential role of music on the future of Halifax could also be discussed. The importance of identifying commonalities and differences within these two groups during the brainstorming process would likely lead to favourable outcomes. These parties may then be able to identify goals for the expansion of the music scene while reviewing these potential improvement options and creating their own.

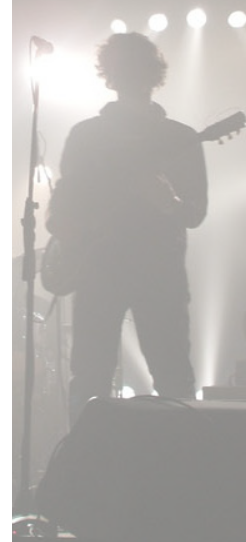
Collaboration with music performers, organizations, and companies is the key element to the future support of the local music scene. Interview participants expressed concern that key contributors to the Halifax music scene have not been involved in the creation of policy; this is especially true of the HRM's *Cultural Plan*. Knowledgeable individuals involved in music would be a valuable resource during this process. In direct regards to the *Cultural Plan*, one music director said,

“The municipality is losing out on a lot of talent and brainpower because they haven’t asked us to participate or they don’t want us to be involved.”

This collaboration may further educate city officials on the importance of culture. Music stakeholders could identify beneficial and realistic improvement options that will directly benefit the music scene. Policy makers will be able to take these suggestions and integrate them into future music strategies.

When these parties determine potential solutions, a collaborative effort should be used to determine which recommendations would be most effective at improving the attractiveness of the Halifax music scene. Determining the priorities for suggested recommendations is important to the success of new policy or amendments. This is evident from poor priority recommendations offered by old documents like the *Cultural Plan*. Those with knowledge of the situation should determine priority actions, but they may include measures suggested in this document like increasing music awareness or addressing the state of venues. Involving music stakeholders in this process could potentially uncover the most efficient means of supporting music.

The final element of this process requires the parties to generate an implementation strategy to guide these specified recommendations. This is an asset that has been absent in other culture strategies in the past. The *Nova Scotia Culture Sector Strategy* intended to produce one, but it failed due to lack of support. *Creative Nova Scotia* made no attempts to produce one. The *Cultural Plan* provided an initial strategy, but implementation was not a great success. Involving these parties increases the likelihood that future recommendations to improve the music scene will be effective. The music community has valuable insight into the state of the music that is lacking amongst policy makers. This may be a component of previous strategies that has contributed to their lack of success.



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Appendix A: ISRN Theme II Interview Schedule

Theme 2: Social Foundations of Talent Attraction and Retention Questions for Highly Educated / Creative Workers

Talented individuals play an essential role in the learning economy. A key societal challenge is to create the conditions that attract and retain talented individuals in the city region. We are interested in understanding what conditions facilitate or inhibit the Halifax city region's ability to attract and retain creative and talented individuals.

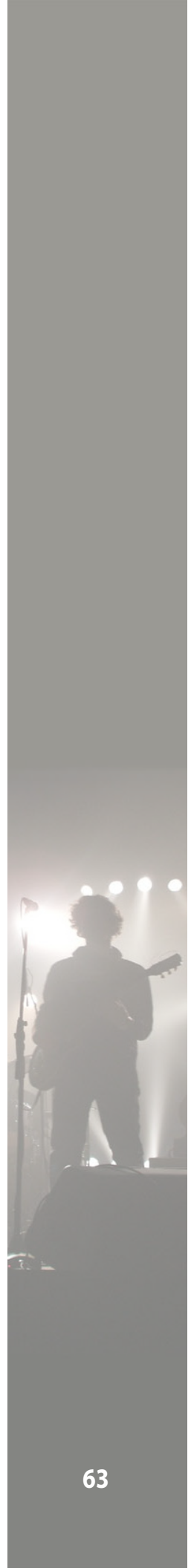
1. Where were you born? (If outside Halifax,) when did you first move here?
2. How would you describe your ethnic identity?
3. Please describe your educational history and credentials (institution, degree program, location, years)
4. Please describe your employment history (firm / organization, location, sector, position)
5. What is your current occupation?
 - a. Does your current job fully utilize your skills, training and education?
 - b. To what extent have you moved between different kinds of sectors or occupations?
 - c. To what extent does the Halifax economy enable this kind of mobility and the kinds of opportunities available?
6. (If you came from outside Halifax:) Why did you move to Halifax?
 - a. If you worked in your field in another city, how does Halifax compare?
7. What characteristics of the Halifax economy and / or labour market make it an attractive place to work in your field?
 - a. To what extent is Halifax open to creativity and experimentation?
 - b. To what extent is it tolerant and open to diversity?
 - c. To what extent is it "leading edge" in your field?
8. What characteristics of the Halifax economy and / or labour market might undermine its attractiveness as a place to work in your field?
 - a. Have you encountered any problems in the economy that may be particular to Halifax?

9. What characteristics of living in Halifax make it an attractive place for you?
 - a. To what extent is Halifax a good place to be a single person?
 - b. To what extent is it a good place to raise a family?
 - c. What physical assets and amenities of this area make it attractive?
 - d. How safe and secure is the community?
 - e. How does the affordability of living in Halifax play into your decision of where to live and work?
 - f. Are there particular aspects of Halifax that enhance creativity in the city?
 - g. To what extent are Halifax's strengths unique to the city?
10. What characteristics of Halifax reduce its attractiveness as a place to live?
11. If you were to move to another city, where would you choose to live, and why?
12. How would that location(s) compare to Halifax in terms of career opportunities?
 - a. In terms of quality of life/quality of place?
 - b. How likely is it that you will move to another city-region within the next three years, for reasons just discussed?

Our last few questions deal with your thoughts about neighbourhoods and newcomers in Halifax:

13. What neighbourhoods do you find most creative?
14. What neighbourhood do you work in now? In what ways does it facilitate creativity (or not)?
15. Are newcomers easily able to integrate into this region?
 - a. What mechanisms are most effective for integrating them?
 - b. What challenges affect the integration of newcomers?
 - c. What associations assist newcomers to integrate?
16. How do civic leaders in the region respond to the diverse gender, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds that newcomers bring?

Thank you for your cooperation. Is there anything you would like to add?



Appendix B: ISRN Theme I Interview Schedule

Theme 1: Social Nature of Innovation Creative Firm Interview Guide

Part A: Innovation

1. Can you please describe your education (field of study, highest level attained, and locations).
2. Please describe your employment experience at your present position. How many years of experience do you have here? How many years elsewhere?
 - a. What other industries have you worked in previously? In this city or another city? What factors contributed to your move from another industry to this one?
 - b. How has your prior work experience provided you with knowledge that is important to your current works competitive success?
3. Have you ever established a firm in any industry? Can you please describe it for us?
 - a. Have you ever worked for a start-up firm (a firm that had started less than 3 years before you commenced your tenure)?
4. What does your company do, and how does it earn its revenues? (probe if required – eg,. products that you manufacture, services you provide, reseller of another firm’s products, system integrator, etc.)
5. On what services or products does the firm earn its highest profit margins?
6. Of the kinds of innovations described in the survey, which are the top two or three sources of competitive advantage for your firm and why?

Introduction of new services	Improved processes
Improved client interactions	Improved organizational structure
Improved distribution channels	Introduced new product platforms
New ways of selecting suppliers	Developed new customer segments
Brand extension	New ways of working with employees
Recaptured value from existing, revenue streams, or customer interactions	

7. To what extent, and in what ways, is knowledge produced by other Halifax firms in OTHER industries important to your firm’s innovation activities?
 - a. Where do your ideas for new products or services come from? (e.g.. in house R&D, buyers or suppliers, research universities or public labs, private consultants, industry consortia, etc.)

8. Does your firm own unique products, services, licenses, in other words, its own intellectual property (IP)?
- a. Where was this IP created or obtained? (e.g. internal R&D, university, public research lab, partner firm, etc.)?
 - b. What strategies does your firm use to manage or protect these unique products or services (e.g., rapid prototyping and design, licensing and patenting, copyright and trade mark protection, industrial secrets, etc.)
9. How does your firm collaborate with others in the local music industry?
- a. How does your firm foster and establish business agreements with local musicians?
 - b. Where are your most important collaborators and suppliers located?
 - c. What method does your firm use to determine whether you might have a business interest in a local band or musician?
10. When your firm or business unit has a problem with production, or market development that it cannot solve on its own, where do you go for solutions?, (e.g., suppliers, technical or marketing consultant, industrial association, peer, university or college faculty, government programs, such as IRAP or public research facility, internet)
11. What kind of involvement does your firm or business unit have with local industry or trade associations?
- a. What are the most valuable benefits you gain from this involvement?
12. Does your firm collaborate with other firms or industry players (research partners, industry consortia, public or private research institutes)?
- a. If so, what are the motivations underlying the decision to collaborate?
 - b. If you do not participate in collaborations with other players, why not?
13. What benefit does your firm gain from being in the HRM with other music industry or firms in closely related entertainment industries?
- a. How do you benefit from being around unrelated industries? (Prompts: benefit from shared pool of managerial talent, skilled labour, ability to observe practices in other sectors, source of innovative ideas, etc.)
 - b. What are the main advantages or disadvantages for your firm being located in Halifax?
 - c. What other city would be more advantageous? Why?
14. What particular characteristics of the Halifax region benefit your firm?



15. What particular characteristics of the city region limit your business here?
 - a. What characteristics of Halifax benefit or undermine its attractiveness for those employed in the music industry?

Part B: Talent Attraction and Retention

16. Where does your firm recruit managers and professional, technical, or creative staff from? (Prompt: What educational or training institutions, competitors, customers or suppliers, in this city region or others?)
 - a. What challenges (if any) do you experience in attracting and retaining managers or professional, technical, or creative staff to your firm?
 - c. What challenges (if any) does the Halifax city region have in attracting and retaining professional and creative workers in the music industry?
17. What do you see as the future potential of the Halifax music scene?
 - a. How has the Halifax music scene been affected by new media and emerging technologies?
 - b. How does the local music industry contribute to the Halifax region?
18. What are the preferred places for musicians to perform and why?
19. What kinds of things could local authorities do to help your firm attract talented workers to the city region?
20. What would you recommend the provincial and municipal governments do to support the local music industry?

Appendix C: Independent Interview Schedule for the Halifax Music Scene

Interview Schedule 3: The Halifax Music Scene
Musician/Music Professional Interview Guide (Version Three)
Developed by Jeffry Haggett and Jesse Morton

Background

1. Are you from Halifax, if not where are you from?
 - a. When did you relocate to Halifax?
2. Can you describe your educational background?
 - a. What kind of musical training do you have?
3. What neighbourhood do you currently live in?
 - a. How does this neighbourhood affect your work as a musician?

Halifax + Innovation

4. What are the financial challenges and advantages for musicians in Halifax? (eg, making a living, cost of studios, job market, ...etc.)
5. How many times a year do you perform in front of a live audience in Halifax? What are the key venues for you?
6. In what ways does the local music industry contribute to the culture and social vitality of the Halifax region?
7. To what extent do you find the people of Halifax tolerant and open to innovation and experimentation in music?

Attraction + Retention

8. What is Halifax's relationship to the larger national music scene in Canada?
9. Which Canadian city has the best music scene and why?
 - a. Would you to consider relocating to this city because of its music scene?
10. Is Halifax's existing music population (people involved in the music industry) decreasing, stable or increasing?
11. What physical aspects and amenities make Halifax an attractive place to live and be a musician?



12. What features of Halifax undermine its attractiveness for those working in the music industry?

Spaces + Policy

13. What are the best spaces in Halifax to perform in?

14. What improvements to the performance spaces would benefit people in the Halifax music industry?

15. In what ways do Halifax musicians connect to other Canadian music scenes and markets?

16. How are the provincial and municipal governments supporting the local music industry?

a. What could the provincial and municipal governments do to (further) support the local music industry?

Knowledge Sharing

17. Who do you collaborate with? (music, art, culture..etc,)

18. How does collaboration help you as a musician?

19. What are the positive/negative aspects of living in a city the size of Halifax?

Future Directions and Conclusion

20. In general is Halifax a good place to be a musician?

21. What do you see as the future of the Halifax music scene?

Appendix D: Interview Sequence

Year	Interview Schedule	Occupational Classification	Gender
2007	ISRN Theme II	Rock/Pop Musician	Male
2007	ISRN Theme II	Classical Musician	Male
2007	ISRN Theme II	Rock/Pop Musician	Female
2007	ISRN Theme II	Festival Director	Male
2007	ISRN Theme II	Classical Musician	Female
2007	ISRN Theme II	Music Producer and Engineer	Male
2007	ISRN Theme II	Classical Musician	Male
2008	ISRN Theme I	Music Management and Promotion Executive	Male
2008	ISRN Theme I	Music Management and Promotion Executive	Male
2008	ISRN Theme I	Director of a Music Organization	Female
2008	ISRN Theme I	Provincial Official in Culture	Male
2008	ISRN Theme I	Festival Director	Male
2008	ISRN Theme I	Music Management and Promotion Executive	Female
2008	Independent Interview Schedule	Music Booking Agent	Male
2008	Independent Interview Schedule	Audio Engineer	Male
2008	Independent Interview Schedule	Music Journalist	Male
2008	Independent Interview Schedule	Rock/Pop Musician	Male
2008	Independent Interview Schedule	Rock/Pop Musician	Male



Appendix E: Cultural Industry Support in Other Regions

Basic policy provisions available to individual culture sectors in other regions were reviewed to determine the degree of policy support. The State of Western Australia has taken important policy measures to ensure that their music industry continues to thrive and experience growth. Montreal and Vancouver have also taken steps to support culture sectors that are important to their cultural vitality and the quality of life that they experience.

E1.0 Western Australia: Contemporary Music

Perth, Australia is known for having a vibrant music scene that produces talented musicians. Like Halifax, Perth is isolated from other urban centres in Australia that makes touring a difficult endeavor. The Government of Western Australia realizes the potential of the region's music scene and has shown dedicated support to improve the state of the music industry (Government of Western Australia 2007).

E1.1 Championing Creativity

The state government realizes a specialized document is needed to guide development of cultural industries since their dynamics differ from traditional economic producers (ArtsWA 2004). The document identifies three goals all of which relate to encouraging creative development, creating hubs for creative industries, and creating an arts sector that is appreciated and supported. In order to accomplish specified goals, the policy targets four areas that should be targeted: support for artists; assistance for organizations; promoting the arts; and strengthening pathways and partnerships.

E1.2 Contemporary Music Task Force

The Government of Western Australia showed its dedication to improving the contemporary music scene with a \$5 million commitment in 2001. The state created a seventeen member Contemporary Music Taskforce to determine the most efficient means of distributing these funds. They released a *Contemporary Music Plan* with eighteen recommendations (Government of Western Australia 2006). The Government of Australia was responsive to the majority of the recommendations, including contemporary music grant programs, creating a music panel and music officer, and increasing all age programs (Government of Australia 2002; Government of Western Australia 2006).

E1.3 Contemporary Music Grant Program

The release of the Contemporary Music Plan has led to the Contemporary Music Grant Program. These grant contribute to the growing Perth music scene by providing \$850,000 per year. Since its conception in 2002, four hundred grants have been awarded. The Contemporary Music Project Officer, in cooperation with a Contemporary Music Panel, determines who receives awards in the following categories:

- Touring in Australia or internationally.
- Mentoring and Skills Development: Funding for products to increase skills in songwriting, performance, marketing, etc.
- Production of a recorded product.
- Commercial development of artists or music businesses.
- Quick Response: These grants are awarded in situations where the musician has no control of the timing of a potential opportunity.

E1.4 Community Cultural and Arts Facilities Fund (CCAFF) Policy

State government created the *Cultural and Arts Facilities Fund* to improve the state of regional facilities or to support future facilities through careful planning and development. This includes the support and creation of music facilities. A variety of projects can be funded including fixed furniture improvements, technical upgrades, facility modifications, construction of an arts facility, cultural component of a multi-use facility, and feasibility studies. The fund has contributed to \$2.75 million dollars to facility improvements between 2004 and 2008 (Government of Western Australia 2007).

E2.0 Montreal: Fashion Industry

Montreal has policy to guide cultural development in the city called *Montreal, Cultural Metropolis*. Montreal is unique compared to other North American cities since its culture is embedded in francophone roots and it has a reputation as being a leader in artistic sectors like theatre, fashion, film and music. The document hopes to capitalize on these characteristics of the city to help Montreal to become known as a “Cultural Metropolis”. To accomplish this goal, the document outlines thirty-eight commitments for city officials to target (City of Montreal 2005). The 2007 progress report shows improvements to all but four of these commitments.

The province has established specific strategy for the fashion industry. Montreal, along with New York and Los Angeles, is one of the fashion leaders in North America. When the fashion industry faced economic challenges, the Quebec Provincial government created the *Quebec Fashion and Clothing Industry*



Strategy. The province recognized the economic importance of fashion and wanted to ensure it remains a strong industry. The strategy has five points and funding to improve the strength of Montreal fashion (Province of Quebec 2007).

- Foster the adaptation of business models: This will help the industry to improve profits and competitiveness.
- Encourage product introduction, marketing and exporting: This strategy involves a \$2 million annual contribution.
- Support reliance on design and advanced technologies.
- Promote Montreal as a fashion centre.
- Make the business environment more favourable.

The Province of Quebec has created a business assistance program for fashion called the Promotion of Fashion and Industrial Design. The fashion portion of the program hopes to encourage promotional techniques for the industry businesses. The program makes monetary contributions to appropriate projects up to 40% of the total expenditure while not exceeding \$50,000. Funded projects usually use media to reach the public, attempt to unify the sectors distribution networks, or attempt to brand Montreal as a fashion centre (Province of Quebec 2008).

E3.0 Vancouver: Film Industry

The British Columbia film industry generates an annual income of over one billion dollars. Due to the city's unique filming environment, the City has taken measures to ensure the long-term success of this economic generator. The Vancouver Film Office was established to implement filming guidelines created in 1980. This staff also generates filming permits and protects residents to provide an easy filming process (City of Vancouver 2007). The mayor of Vancouver commissioned a task force on the Film Industry to determine how the city could further support the film industry and improve its relationship to local communities. The task force released recommendations in 2007 to improve the ease of film production in the city (City of Vancouver 2007).

To capitalize on opportunities created by Vancouver's film industry, the provincial and federal governments created tax credits to attract more film producers to the region. There are two categories of tax credits. Domestic tax credits are given to Canadian film and television produces who film in Vancouver. Foreign tax credits ensure the industry stays competitive to international film producers. These tax credits are describes as the most accessible in all of Canada (British Columbia Film Commission 2008).

