

2015 MPEI AGM E.D. Report

A look back at 2014

2014 was a very big year for Prince Edward Island with the 150th year celebrations of the Charlottetown Conference. Investments in local festivals and events provided more performance opportunities than normal for the Island's music community. Music PEI had 2 projects funded by PEI 2014 Inc.

The first project was a compilation CD celebrating the previous 12 years of Music PEI award winners with a double CD featuring 35 selected tracks. That CD has since been used for promotion as well as sales. Over 800 Deep Roots in Red Dirt CD's have been distributed to a variety of vendors across PEI and been used at music industry conferences and other events to promote PEI artists.

The second project was programming music for the Celebration Zone during the summer. Music PEI was asked to program 9 Thursday evenings and presented 19 artists during July, August and September. Both of those projects provided much needed income to the organisation.

Music PEI members continue to develop making an impact locally and internationally. The list of PEI artists touring Australia continues to grow and now includes recent tours by Gordie MacKeeman and His Rhythm Boys, the East Pointers, Paper Lions, of course veteran of numerous tours Tim Chaisson with promises of many more Island artists to come in the near future. With close to a dozen internationally touring artists PEI is representing extremely well globally for our size.

Other significant member accomplishments include a Juno Award for Catherine MacLellan as well as ECMA wins for Ten Strings and a Goat Skin and Irish Mythen. Dennis Ellsworth was a finalist in the New Song Contest in the US. Locally we have seen the emergence of new artists with fresh sounds like Whaleskin and Spencer Soloduka and the Tearaways and the powerhouse trio The East Pointers to name just a few. This is just a small sample of the highlights and list goes on as our industry and community continues to grow.

Music PEI Funding Program

In the fiscal year 2014/15, the Music PEI Funding program distributed \$85,600 in support of 25 applicants. Since 2008 approximately \$800,000 in funds have been distributed stimulating over 2.5 million dollars in investments by the Island music industry. Three levels of funding provide support to Emerging, Export Ready and Exporting artists as well as industry professionals for a variety of projects from marketing to touring support, showcase support and professional development.

The organisation continues to offer 2 funding deadlines per year in the spring and the fall. With recent funding cuts Music PEI has no alternative but to cut the funding program. Approximately \$7,000 will be available to applicants in October 2015.

Showcase PEI 2014

The 7th annual Showcase PEI recruited 40 buyers (the largest contingent to date) to come to PEI and attend showcases by 20 of our top artists. Showcase PEI continues to be the premier and most successful business development event for PEI artists. The event continues to draw top international delegates from around the globe and is closing in on \$2,000,000 in work created for our members as a result. The 2014 edition had delegates from as far away as Estonia, Belgium, the UK, the US and of course from across Canada.

The Artist Exchange Program expanded to include Wales along with the UK in 2014. A partnership with trac (Wales Music Tradition) was created and the young rising star, Kizzy Crawford was paired with Tim Chaisson. The existing partnership with the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) saw Ashley Condon paired with Maz O'Connor. The program includes co-writing, showcasing and touring in both countries.

Music PEI was forced to deliver the event without the assistance of Skills PEI for the first time in a few years. Tian Wigmore was hired to assist as technical director and assistance conference coordinator. Feedback from delegates was exceptional and the conference yielded some excellent results including agent and manager signings as well as song placements, showcase invitations and performance opportunities at festivals and venues. Multiple artists were signed to perform at Home County Music & Art Festival, Sunfest, Mariposa, and more.

Music PEI Week 2015

Music PEI Week went through a massive rebranding and retooling. The event was moved from the traditional January dates to the May long weekend and the Bell Aliant Canadian Song Conference as well as the Credit Union May Run Music Festival were created.

Since this falls in the next fiscal year, they will be featured in next year's annual report. As a very brief summary, the Conference focused on developing alternative revenue streams aside from performance and drew 30 delegates from Canada, the US, the UK and Australia. It was very successful in delivering productive panels and workshops and creating song placement and publishing opportunities as well as co-writing projects.

The Festival was a 4-day event presenting 70 artists in 25 shows with a very diverse line-up of artists from PEI and across Canada. Although attendance was below targets, Music PEI managed to create over \$11,000 in revenue for the organisation. For a first year event it was a success. We have to thank an incredible group of sponsors who helped us to deliver a great event and come out of it in the black. Our two title sponsors, Credit Unions of PEI and Bell Aliant deserve all of our gratitude. The 2016 edition is in planning stages now.

Music PEI at ECMA 2015

ECMA 2015 was held in St John's NL. This also falls in the next fiscal year but just barely. The event took place April 8th to the 12th. Music PEI presented 2 nights of showcases with 10 artists as well as a Radio ECMA afternoon with another 4 artists.

Music PEI has received tremendous support from Innovation PEI since the organisation started attending and presenting showcases at ECMA in 2006. They have provided much needed funding to assist our artists with enhancing and creating opportunities at the event.

Export Development Showcases

For the first time Music PEI presented all PEI showcases at Folk Music Canada (FMO) in Toronto in October and Folk Alliance International (FAI) in Kansas City in February. Both conferences featured a record number of PEI artists for those events. The showcases were well positioned and Island artists did exceptionally well at both conferences.

In addition Music PEI attended the Association of Festival Organisers (AFO) conference in the UK where Tim Chaisson and Meaghan Blanchard showcased as part of the Artist Exchange Program.

Economic Impact Study

Music PEI created a funding consortium to commission an economic impact analysis of the Island's music industry. Over \$20,000 was raised to hire Nordicity, a company with many

years of experience creating studies for similar organisations across Canada including Manitoba Music, Music BC, Music NB and others. The study yielded some very interesting data including a GDP estimate of the Island's music industry of \$24,000,000 and 1,000 fulltime equivalent jobs. Approximately 50% of the revenue from PEI's fulltime touring artists is attributed to export markets, which is good news for PEI's economy.

The study included 2 focus groups, one at the beginning of the process and one at the end. These focus groups helped to shape the study, the questionnaires and the results. Approximately 20 of PEI's industry professionals took part in the focus groups.

The study also identified a number of areas where growth and development is needed which mostly focused on developing a stronger infrastructure for the industry including local agents and managers. Mentorship programs were suggested.

The Nordicity study, ***Little Island, Big Voice*** will be published in August and ready for public consumption. Copies will be distributed to government and funders and the information will be a valuable tool as well as establishing a benchmark for future studies. It is important to gauge the growth of our industry.

Programming

Music PEI programmed music for a number of events in 2014 including Farm Day in the City for Discover Charlottetown for the third year, the 1st annual Victorian Christmas, the Charlottetown Tulip Festival and other select events including government and non-profit conferences. Revenue from these events helps to fund Music PEI activities. The public events like Farm Day are open to submissions for all members and a jury selects the performers. Conference events are programmed based on the client's (government or organiser) requests.

Partnerships

Music PEI has enjoyed many partnerships this past year. MBS (CFCY, Q93, SPUD FM) have been a tremendous partner and support. Music PEI has participated in the Q93 Battle of the Bands the past 2 years.

Bell Aliant has been an ongoing supporter for Music PEI through our events and has been providing free phone and Internet services to the organisation for the past 3 years.

Music PEI is a member of the Canadian Council Of Music Industry Associations (CCMIA) and through that partnership adds our voice to national matters including issues like Copyright legislation. CCMIA is also a vehicle for securing funding as demonstrated by the contribution to the Canadian Song Challenge from Bell Media through CCMIA.

With regards to grass roots activities, Music PEI is currently exploring ways to assist the all ages community to increase activities and the number of venues able to support the scene.

Music PEI is about to launch a new database dedicated to cover bands to be used to assist conferences and events in selecting entertainment for their events.

Funding and Revenue

As in the past Music PEI funding for core activities has come primarily from the Provincial Department of Culture (\$48,000) and FACTOR (\$30,000). Other funding from the Department of Culture contributes to the Music PEI Grant Program. All other funding is

essentially project based funding with very few opportunities for capturing administration fees. In order to deliver these projects Music PEI must provide the administrative activities without funding. This makes finding alternative revenue sources all the more important. Currently those are limited to programming and CD sales and any events that can contribute revenue.

In the face of shrinking funding, the organisation managed to secure \$12,000 in retained earnings from 2014. This added to the existing retained earnings to give the organisation a total of \$46,378 in total retained earnings (of which \$44,000 is cash). This could become important as we see funding cut even further in 2015. The recent 8% cut is in addition to previous cuts over the past 7 years bring total cuts to 17% since 2008. If you add inflation to that it becomes closer to 27%. With an increase in activities and output the reduced funding has an even greater impact.

The challenge has become to do more with less. Alternate revenue sources are important as relying on government funding for the future development of the organisation is becoming increasingly risky. Sponsorships will need to be explored further as well as the potential for charitable contributions. The May Run Music Festival is a source of potential revenue for the future.

The total revenue for the organisation increased from \$386,309 in 2013 to \$406,065 in 2014. The anticipated revenue for the budget for 2015 is currently at \$591,224. The significant increase is due to the new May Run Festival. At the moment the budget for 2015 is showing a small deficit of \$476 for the year.

2014/15 Music PEI Upcoming activities

Business Development

- Showcase PEI 2015 planning is underway. With the emergence of the Canadian Song Conference, the focus of Showcase PEI will shift from targeting delegates in many areas of the music industry to live performance opportunities only. This will primarily include festivals, venues, promoters and agents.
- The next Music PEI funding program deadline is October 30th, 2015.
- Music PEI is exploring showcase opportunities at various industry conferences. Currently funding is available for FMO and FAI.

Upcoming Events

- Showcase PEI 2015 will take place September 21 to 24.
- Planning for 2016 Music PEI Week will begin shortly and developed based on the 2015 results. The date is currently set for May 18 to the 22.
- Farm Day in the City will take place October 4th
- The organisation has funding for a new strategic plan. The initial plan was developed in 2008 and it is time to set a new plan and goals.

Summary

Music PEI would like to thank and acknowledge all of the staff that has helped contribute to the organisation over the past year including Tian Wigmore, Nathan Gill, Mike Mooney, Caroline Chaisson, Erin McHugh and Mike Carver. We could not have done it without you!

A major concern for the organisation is ongoing sustainable funding. Another area to be addressed in the near future is the current website which is 10 years old. It will need to be upgraded along with the newsletter program.

With current funding levels the budget will only sustain one fulltime employee. The budget includes some part-time administrative assistance, which will hopefully be a stop gap for the time being.

Membership is shrinking which is a concern and needs to be addressed. Historically memberships rise and fall annually based on funding applications, music award submissions and showcase opportunities. Those have been the primary drivers of our membership since inception. Hopefully with the introduction of things like the Cover Band database and other initiatives we can see some growth.

Music PEI will investigate new programs including mentorship programs and business development education. These are vital in insuring continued growth and development. The organisation is currently in discussion with Innovation PEI to fund these projects.

As a result of new government cabinet changes, Music PEI has been moved with the Culture Department to the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture. It remains to be seen if this is a good fit for us. As a music industry we owe it to ourselves to investigate alternatives and explore if we would be better aligned with Innovation PEI, which is the business development department of the government.

The music industry itself is healthy and growing well. New artists with fresh sounds are coming on the scene continually. Many of our artists are becoming more and more in demand around the world. We can be very proud of the accomplishments of so many of our members in bringing PEI's music to the world as well as providing our local community with one of the most vibrant music scenes in the country.

It is my honour to serve such an incredibly creative and hard working community and industry. I am continually amazed and impressed with our little island music industry as it continues to grow and hope that Music PEI can continue to serve our members to the best of our abilities.

Rob Oakie
Executive Director
Music PEI