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March 5, 2013

Councillor Michael Thompson
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Suite B24
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Thompson,

On behalf the members of Music Canada and our coalition of partners representing live music venues and festivals, concert promoters, recording studios and independent and major music companies, managers and artists, I wish to submit this detailed proposal to assist Members of City Council and the Economic Development Committee to determine the best allocation of funding to support Toronto's music cluster.

Detailed market research and analysis about the size of the Toronto music industry, its components and growth potential over the next decade are contained in the June 2012 Music Canada study, *"Accelerating Toronto's Music Industry Growth: Leveraging Best Practices from Austin, Texas"*.

Also documented in that report are the benefits that would accrue to the city from the three recommendations contained in this package:

- A. Creation of a Music Office;
- B. Establishment of a Music Industry Advisory Board;
- C. Support of the establishment of a multi-media product to document Toronto's rich music legacy.

By moving forward on these proposals, Toronto would not be acting alone. On the contrary, the Province of Ontario recently made a commitment to make the province one of THE global destinations for live music tourism. Working with the music industry, the province is developing a comprehensive web-based listing service and marketing strategy. As the anchor live music destination in Ontario, the coalition led by Music Canada is developing a live music brand for the city. The Province has also made a commitment to hire a music officer to act as a provincial coordinator of a broader music strategy.

Internationally, Toronto's twin city, Chicago, recently established a music office with two staff persons. And as mentioned, Austin, Texas serves as a model for all three recommendations listed above. Synergies among these three leading music cities can be leveraged if Toronto presses forward on these recommendations.

"Toronto is by any measurement, one of the most successful music markets in the world, evidenced by the diverse and authentic live music offerings found throughout the city on any day of the week," says Graham Henderson, President of Music Canada. "The business of music employs thousands of people, attracts visitors from down the road and beyond our borders, and makes the city a desirable place to live, work and invest."

The three proposals contained herein will establish the basis for a strong public-private partnership where the music industry will work closely with the City of Toronto to generate more economic activity, attract additional investment, create more jobs in an industry which predominantly employs young people, and generate additional tourism spending.

In addition to the economic benefits of the attached proposals, there are numerous social benefits that come from supporting a vibrant music scene,

"Successful communities are those that are multidimensional and diverse; in addition to offering employment, they offer a wide range of lifestyle amenities and a climate that encourages and cultivates creative expression. Cultural offerings such as music, are a strong draw for creative workers . . . a flourishing arts scene seems to suggest a region values and supports creativity in all its forms – technological and economic as well as artistic and cultural. (Florida, Richard, The Rise of the Creative Class: Why Cities without Gays and Rock bands are Losing the Economic Development Race, May, 2002, Washington Monthly, available at <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0205.florida.html>)

Commercial music is an accessible form of expression and entertainment that can be enjoyed by people of all ages, income levels and ethnicities. It cuts across language barriers and unites people of all backgrounds. Music is part of every neighbourhood, every corner of the city; every street could be a stage. Music is a cultural ally for the City of Toronto.

Sincerely,

Graham Henderson
President

A. CREATION OF A TORONTO MUSIC OFFICE

Music Office Stated Purpose

The commercial music industry in Toronto currently generates an estimated \$629 million in annual economic impact,¹ and is an important strategic industry sector that is primed for growth potential. The Toronto Commercial Music Office would serve as a dedicated office under the Business Services Section of the Economic Development & Culture division of the City government whose primary goal is to facilitate the growth of the commercial music industry in Toronto. The Music Office will be the City-staffed government counterpart of the recommended volunteer-based Music Industry Board (MIB), which would report to the Economic Development Committee and work with the Music Office on a regular basis to accelerate efficiency and effectiveness of its activities. .

The Music Office will have two main thrusts of activity:

- 1) Act as an information clearinghouse and problem-solving liaison for City regulations as they relate to the commercial music industry; and
- 2) Proactively create and produce commercial music industry economic development programs that align City and private industry efforts to grow economic impact.

Summary of Benefits for the City of Toronto

The creation of a Music Office, similar to Austin’s Music Division, would be the most efficient and effective solution to a number of issues that have unintentionally discouraged growth of Toronto’s commercial music industry, including persistent licensing, permitting and ordinance problems, a lack of tourism-focused branding and marketing, and limited infrastructure development.

As discussed in detail in the *“Accelerating Toronto’s Music Industry Growth...”* study, it is clear that a commitment to sustained, intentioned alignment between the City and the commercial music industry will lead to measurable economic growth over time. Toronto has direct experience with this result in its film industry – which this year is on track to generate \$1 billion in annual economic impact for the region.

Additionally, there will be immediate and direct labor cost savings impacting multiple City departments. Live music event and public concert permits require input and approval from as many as six different City departments. The activities within the Music Office to act as a central repository of information and streamlining for music operators seeking permits will likely result

¹ PRICE WATERHOUSE COOPERS, ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS OF THE SOUND RECORDING INDUSTRY IN CANADA (2012), <http://www.musiccanada.com/resources>

in a significant cost savings in time and labour for those City departments, allowing them to focus productive time elsewhere.

Finally, and perhaps of the most strategic importance, the creation of a Toronto Music Office is in direct alignment with many of the Toronto Prosperity Initiative's recommendations, and would make a significant impact in "re-engineering the business/government interface to stimulate job creation and investment attraction."²

Music Office First Year Activities and Success Measurement

The following is a suggested list of high-priority activities for the Music Office to undertake in its first year. Certainly there are many other productive initiatives that could be added over time, but this list is intended to provide a focus on actions that are both urgent for the industry and measurable for the City.

Section 1: Regulatory Mandate:

Act as an information clearinghouse and problem-solving liaison for City regulations as they relate to the commercial music industry.

The Toronto Music Office is partly analogous to the Toronto Film and Television Office (TFTO) in that a core component of its purpose is to minimize red tape and unintended City obstacles to growing and developing music business opportunities, especially as they relate to music venue operators, festival operators, and large concert operators.

For example, if a promoter wanted to hold an outdoor free public concert in a City park space, permits may need to be issued by the Parks Department, or may instead be issued by the City Transportation Department, and may also need to involve the Municipal Licensing and Standards, Special Events, Event Support, Police Services, Waste Disposal, and Fire Services departments as well as BIA chairs, resident association chairs, and local commercial businesses. Many of these permits also have associated costs, and in the face of such byzantine obstacles, stagnation occurs, as they discourage both new and seasoned event and venue operators from creating and growing new music events and venues. Thus City bureaucratic processes have unintentionally but clearly slowed commercial growth opportunities, as well as prohibited the creation of some unique public cultural events for the community.

Regulatory Music Office Activities:

- 1) Streamline Licensing and Permitting Process** – The Music Office would streamline the multiple permit process, acting as an intermediary, directing operators to necessary documentation and providing them with information on current City ordinances applicable to live music events/venues. In addition, the Music Office could develop a guidebook and/or a component of the www.toronto.ca e-City initiative that takes operators through the

² TORONTO PROSPERITY INITIATIVE: ESTABLISHING THE PATH TO GROWTH 20 (2011), http://www.toronto.ca/business_publications/pdf/path_for_growth.pdf.

necessary steps to create live music events. As well, it would coordinate with the Music Industry Board in any Toronto-related music efforts, such as provincial liquor licenses, and festival zoning and permits.

Will Interface with:

- Municipal Licensing & Standards Division
- Parks and Recreation Department
- City Transportation Department
- Toronto Special Events
- Event Support Unit
- Police Services, Fire Services
- Tribunals with Licensing Oversight
- Provincial Liquor License Permit Authorities
- Strategic Communications/Media Relations & Issues Management
- Music Industry Board

Success Benchmarks: Increased number of music events in next calendar year; decreased time & labor costs for both City staff departments and music industry operators; completion of successful operator guidebook and/or e-City portal.

- 2) Information Clearinghouse/ Venue & Event Registration** – The music office will become the central clearing house of information for private sector music industry. Today, a centralized source of information regarding permits, licenses, ordinances, upcoming events, proposed events, and stakeholder management outreach does not exist. The Music Office will create and maintain a database of venues and events to track ordinance, permit and license infringements, disputes and resolutions.

The Music Office will also respond to email and telephone questions, and assist in coordinating consistent messaging and outreach efforts.

Will interface with:

- Music Industry Board
- Festival, event & venue operators
- Artists, labels, & publishers
- Multiple City departments
- Strategic Communications/Media Relations & Issues Management

Success Benchmarks: Completion of database with easily accessible & distributable information; faster & more efficient communication between music industry and City departments; fewer labor hours from other City departments spent on repetitive questions from private industry

- 3) Issue Management and Mediation** – The Music Office will serve as a single point of contact for stakeholder issues and problem-solving with a focus on industry growth and development. For example, the office would assist venue owners with claims of improper fines levied against operators by various City enforcement agencies, as well as other

complaints such as, but not limited to, improper entertainment license enforcement, noise violations, and poster violations. It will also serve as centralized office to which other City departments can direct all music industry-related questions and complaints rather than approaching them piecemeal.

The Office will also make itself available to assist with issues and disputes from resident associations, BIA's, and other stakeholders groups with music-related concerns, such as those over the creation of venues outside of "entertainment zones". The Office will coordinate roundtable discussions between venue operators, BIAs, resident associations and other neighbourhood stakeholders to arrive at equitable resolutions to disputes or questions, and to promote ways to work together cooperatively.

Will interface with:

- Multiple City departments
- Festival, event & venue operators
- Music Industry Board
- Resident Associations
- BIA Chairs
- Strategic Communications/Media Relations & Issues Management

Success Benchmarks: Decreased number of costly improper citations issued to music operators; fewer citizen complaints registered and/or higher percentage of mutually satisfactory resolutions between music events and citizens/groups; round table discussions conducted with community stakeholders to generate cooperation and consensus around music industry growth initiatives in neighborhoods.

Section 2: Economic Growth and Development Mandate:

Proactively create and produce commercial music industry economic development programs that align City and private industry efforts to grow economic impact.

As noted in the *"Accelerating Toronto's Music Industry Growth..."* study, it is highly recommended that the Economic Development Committee adopt a 5 year economic impact growth goal. Setting a growth goal will stimulate incentive and urgency for action and also provide a benchmark for measuring success of overall efforts within five years. Also, the successful adoption of this goal will help align all relevant stakeholders to work more cohesively towards the same end. The music office can assist in this effort by providing some of the "leg work" for the EDC to determine a reasonable five year growth target.

Economic Growth & Development Activities:

1) Coordination of Sister City/Music City Alliances – As mentioned, Toronto's sister city of Chicago has recently established a music office to "create policy and programs that support the growth of the music industry". Building on this sister city relationship, and the cultural exchange between Toronto and Chicago, the Music Office can help to maximize sharing and exchange between the two music communities.

Austin, Texas is also very interested in a “music city” alliance with Toronto to build trade, commerce, and share both government and private industry knowledge. Coordination of these programs carries tremendous potential for fast tracking growth and economic development of the creative industries.

Will interface with:

- Economic development staff responsible for sister city relationships in each jurisdiction
- Music Advisory Board
- Music Office counterparts in Chicago and Austin
- Festival, event & venue operators
- Artists, labels, & publishers; music industry at large

Success benchmarks: Sharing of best practices on such things as regulatory issues, and public-private partnerships. Initiate planning for an annual Music City Alliance Summit for Alliance cities to share case studies, best practices, and outline Alliance agenda, goals, and activities for the coming year.

2) Music Marketing and Tourism – There are many possible ways to have an immediate and positive impact on the City’s music tourism efforts. A number of those programs may primarily fall under Tourism Toronto, but the Music Office can assist in expediting the process, helping with program design, launch and important industry contacts to assist these efforts. There are two thrusts for first year activity that look to find low-hanging fruit for music tourism:

a) **Work with Existing City Infrastructure to Leverage Untapped Marketing & Promotion Capacity**– Analyze *Special Events*, the *Event Support Unit*, the *Strategic Growth and Sector Development Unit*, and the *We’ve Been Expecting You* programs among others for their event development and music destination promotion capabilities. Identify ways to deliver new music tourism initiatives through existing channels by assisting those departments to design and launch programs including, but not limited to, a promotional web campaign and a live performance series for local talent that promotes Toronto to the world. Collaborate with Tourism Toronto and other relevant departments. With the aid of the proposed Toronto Music Industry Board and the private sector commercial music industry, utilize these services to help develop Toronto’s music brand and drive new tourism revenue.

- i. Just as importantly, capitalize on existing large Toronto-based events that have some government involvement, such as the upcoming Pan Am Games, and strategically plan for strong Toronto music integration into these events. Such integration furthers the expansion of music branding through large-scale visibility, while simultaneously conserving financial resources by integrating with existing events. The Music Office will play a lead role in looking for these opportunities and working with event organizers to integrate music.

- ii. Localized Community PR Outreach – The Music Office will set up an email newsletter to be distributed to the general public at least once per month. They will also reach out to local neighborhood/community free weekly papers to make sure they are aware of the music businesses and events happening in their area.

Also, the Music Office will make a consistent, sustained effort to work with BIA chairs that have a significant number of music businesses in their area to find ways to cooperatively better promote those businesses. Small changes such as BIA website listings of upcoming music events, twitter feeds, and other easy, low cost efforts can reap big rewards with consistent effort over time.

Will interface with:

- Tourism Toronto
- Toronto Special Events
- Toronto Pan/Parapan Am Games Organizing Committee
- Event Support Unit
- Strategic Growth and Sector Development Unit
- Music Industry Board
- Other relevant City Departments
- BIA Chairs

Success Benchmarks: New intra-departmental cooperative music marketing initiatives identified, created, and launched. Impact of each initiative benchmarked and measured for continued refinement and improvement. New relationships established with BIA's, increased visibility of music businesses in respective neighborhoods via BIA assistance and local newspaper support.

- 3) **Incubate and develop new industry components & advise policymakers on relevant music issues** – The Music Office will create and circulate an annual survey among the general music business operatives in Toronto and collect data about what issues are most pressing, what sectors have grown, and what opportunities exist for new growth. The office will collect the data and then utilize it to inform the creation of new programs, either City-initiated or in a public-private partnership, as well as advocate to the Economic Development Committee, City Council, and City staff for the adoption of those programs.

Will interface with:

- Music Industry Board
- Festival, event & venue operators
- Artists, labels, & publishers; music industry at large
- Multiple City Departments

Success Benchmarks: Survey completed and data analyzed; new ideas for future programs and initiatives designed and presented for Economic Development Committee and City Council consideration.

4) Increase Corporate Sponsorship Investment in Music Events – A City music office can play a pivotal role in helping attract new sponsors and increased sponsor dollars to music events throughout the city. The office will first work with event producers to determine a ballpark aggregate of current annual corporate investment, and then look at ways to increase brand activation by creating a publicly available Music Sponsor’s Guide to be updated annually – what’s been done before, what’s possible in public spaces according to City ordinances, timelines required, and how city can help. The office can also initiate quarterly meet and greets and other interfacing opportunities between music industry and potential corporate sponsors, helping guide ways for sponsors to get involved and providing aggregate information on benefits of sponsorship for music events.

Will interface with:

- Music Industry Board
- Festival, event & venue operators
- Artists, labels, & publishers
- Current and potential sponsors, both local and international brands with a Toronto presence

Success Benchmarks: Increased total annual sponsorship dollars invested in music-related events.

5) Increase Flow of Dollars to Toronto-based Music Industry via Funding Sources Info Table – While there are a number of funds available to help Toronto music industry operatives grow their business, develop events, and launch new initiatives, those funds are derived from a number of different sources, each with specific eligibility requirements, timelines, and year-to-year changes. There is currently no clear path to find funding opportunities specifically relevant for any music businesses, resulting in many wasted hours from companies and their employees repetitively looking for the same information. For example, there are multiple federal, provincial, and municipal government programs, as well as private foundation grant programs, public-private cooperatives, as well as venture funding opportunities from angel investment groups and private equity venture investment firms. The Music Office can conduct the necessary research to compile a funding flow chart that is publicly available for all Toronto-based music industry companies.

Will interface with:

- Multiple federal, provincial, & municipal funding programs and other relevant funding sources
- Music Industry Board
- Toronto music industry at large

Success Benchmarks: Increased total annual dollars captured by Toronto music businesses available through various funding programs.

Section 3: Music Office Staffing and Required Resources:

Staffing Requirements & Job Descriptions

For its first year of operations, the Music Office can work effectively with 2 full-time staff, as described here:

Music Senior Officer:

Role & Responsibilities: Operational & programmatic oversight, including budgeting, development and implementation of industry marketing and growth strategies, development and implementation of data collection strategies, development and implementation of inter-departmental industry-specific services including permitting and licensing systems, communications with City Hall, the Toronto Music Board, Tourism Toronto and other official bodies.

Required Experience and Skills: In addition to the customary experience and skill level typically required of a senior-level hire, this unique position also requires some specialized experience to be successful in building an effective Music Office. Past experience in other cities has demonstrated that the following attributes and experience are required:

- Extended Music Industry Experience - A “veteran” of the music industry has an irreplaceable knowledge of how to interface with the private sector, as well as the needed contacts to build effective public-private partnerships. This has been a critical component to the success of the Austin Music Division.
- Comfortable Working in Bureaucratic Environment – Oftentimes the job will require the Music Office Senior Officer to work with multiple department heads and staffers, as well as report to the Economic Development Committee and the City Council. Also, as the City representative for the music industry, this Senior Officer will often have face time with the public at large, neighborhood groups, other industry sectors, and will need to be an effective advocate and communicator.
- Entrepreneurial Motivation – The core part of the Music Office mandate is to seek out and find new ways for the music industry to grow revenue, jobs, and salaries, and to find ways in which the City and the private sector can work collaboratively to accomplish those goals. It is important that the Senior Officer is both highly comfortable with and motivated by finding new ideas, creating action around them, and delivering results.

Music Officer:

Role & Responsibilities: Responsible for day-to-day licensing and permitting activities, communications with music community, all music office-generated marketing & PR programs and outreach, assists the Senior Officer in his/her duties when required, standard administrative duties.

Required Experience and Skills: In addition to the customary experience and skill level typically required of a mid-level hire, additional recommended skills include:

- Highly developed social skills for interactions with music industry, media outlets, and the community at large.
- Knowledge and experience utilizing social media; some experience with writing press releases and marketing materials.
- Basic working knowledge of Toronto's music industry.

Facilities:

A modest office space large enough for two within City Hall or one of its off-site buildings, complete with computers and other requisite tools.

Proposed By-Law Language for Creation of Music Office:

This section yet to be written.

B. MUSIC INDUSTRY BOARD

1) Purpose:

The Toronto Music Industry Board is an advisory body. It provides a mechanism for input and suggestions from the music industry and industry stakeholders to the Economic Development Committee and Council on policy, strategy, and corporate practices to ensure the health, competitiveness and viability of the sector. It will also work to voice the Toronto position on provincial and national issues.

The Music Industry Board will also serve as a resource to the newly created Music Office.

2) Governance and Organizational Alignment:

The Toronto Music Industry Board will provide advice and recommendations to the Economic Development Committee and will report to City Council through the Economic Development Committee as needed.

Operationally, the Music Industry Board is aligned with the Economic Development and Culture Division and the newly created Music Office.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- a) ***Strategic Planning*** - to provide advice and recommendations on strategies and long term plans to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of Toronto for sound recording and live music performance; for marketing and promotion to attract new and return music-related business to Toronto; to identify music tourism opportunities and best practices; to ensure a positive atmosphere for live music venues and events in the City of Toronto; and assist in improving the image of Toronto's music industry locally and internationally;
- b) ***Industry Voice*** - to canvass the industry widely for ideas, issues and concerns and act as a forum through which the industry can communicate with the City and its agencies and corporations; and to maintain and enhance relationships with all industry stakeholders;
- c) ***Advocacy*** - to advise the Economic Development Committee and City Council on legislation, policies and regulations of other orders of government, government agencies and organizations which impact on Toronto's competitive position and be available to assist in advocating City positions.
- d) ***Policy & Community Relations*** - to provide advice and recommendations to the Economic Development Committee and City Council, for change on existing or new policies and practices of Divisions and agencies and corporations which affect the music industry; to monitor developments in the industry and progress within City Divisions, agencies and corporations; and respond to issues of concern from Councilors and community members as well as identify those in need of immediate action.

Composition, Membership and Support:

1. The Board will be comprised of a total of 12 members comprised of:
 - a) 10 citizens appointed by the Economic Development Committee, and drawn from a range of screen-based industry representatives, and
 - b) 2 members of Council, appointed by City Council on the recommendation of the Striking Committee, one of whom shall be a member of the Economic Development Committee and shall serve as a Co-Chair of the Music Industry Board.

2. Individuals appointed to the Board should collectively represent a range of knowledge and experience in the following areas:
 - a) Sound Recording Production and Post-production (e.g.: recording and mastering studios, record labels)
 - b) Live music performance (e.g.: live music venue owners, promoters, music festivals)
 - c) Partners (e.g.: managers, associations, digital service providers, training & development, education, local business)
 - d) Artists and Musicians

C. SUPPORT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MULTI-MEDIA PRODUCT TO DOCUMENT TORONTO'S RICH MUSIC LEGACY

Toronto has had an extraordinary impact on the history of Canadian popular music and genres as diverse as Caribbean and Electronic Dance Music. This deep musical history has shaped the city in which we live and is the foundation for the unique, vibrant musical culture that exists today.

Areas like Yorkville and Yonge Street are littered with legendary music addresses and yet, there is little representation of Toronto's music legacy in existing historical plaque programs.

Other cities with a rich musical heritage, like London, UK, have developed high profile recognition programs that document key events and addresses for the benefit of future generations.

A multi-dimensional program to recognize Toronto's music legacy would serve as a historical record for Toronto residents as well as an attraction for visitors. A combination of plaques and a smartphone-enabled software application would be the best format for such a program.

Various foundations and government agencies have supported similar programs in Toronto including most recently, Project Bookmark Canada. In order to get this project underway, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive budget for the establishment of the program, and its ongoing maintenance and additions. We recommend that Council direct staff to review the options and draft a proposed business plan that the newly created Music Office can use to solicit private and public funding.

City-sponsored Chicago Music Summit to debut

Chicago Tribune

February 28, 2013 | Greg Kot | Music critic

The City of Chicago has for the first time in its history an office charged with serving the needs of the local music community. Now begins director Dylan Rice's first major hurdle: alerting people that it exists.

"We're not calling ourselves the 'music office' just yet," said Rice, whose official title is director of creative industries-music. "Right now it's just me and David Chavez (program coordinator of creative industries) – we're an Army of two."

The Army of Two's first major initiative will be the Chicago Music Summit on Sept. 20 at the Chicago Cultural Center. The goal is to bring 500 musicians, singers and music-industry executives together to attend free educational panels and mini-concerts showcasing a range of local music, and build bridges that could help the community grow -- an attempted icebreaker in the typically chilly relations between the city and the local music business.

The summit would be a much more modestly scaled version of citywide music festivals such as the annual South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin, Texas. It would be centered at the Cultural Center, though Rice hopes to expand some events to local clubs, as South by Southwest does.

Chicago is "a music city in hiding," a 2007 University of Chicago study concluded. It found that Chicago's music industry was generating \$84 million annually and employed 13,000 people in 831 businesses. In all music sub-industries, 53,000 were employed and \$1 billion in payroll generated, third in the country. Yet, it noted that the city has done a poor job of supporting and promoting that resource, echoing complaints that the local music scene is often viewed as an underappreciated renegade within Chicago's larger economic landscape.

The administration of then-Mayor Richard M. Daley did not formally respond to the report, and did little to follow up on its recommendations. But the Chicago Cultural Plan unveiled last year re-energized efforts to give the music community a presence in City Hall. The appointments of Rice and Chavez were a first step, in effect creating a one-stop shop in the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events that the music community could call upon to help navigate the sometimes maze-like city regulations imposed on everything from music clubs to street festivals.

"We'd been bugging them to open up a music-industry office in cultural affairs, and that they finally did it is a big story," said Paul Natkin, director of the Chicago Music Commission, a promotion and advocacy group.

"Our main job is to create policy and programs that support the growth of the music industry, and also to provide assistance with city processes – a customer service function," Rice says. "We don't issue permits and licenses, but we can help venue owners and concert promoters get them."

In a city notorious for making life difficult for small businesses dealing with music, the department run by Rice and Chavez could potentially prove a valuable ally and advocate.

The Chicago Music Summit aims to amplify that mission, but exactly what the summit will entail is still unclear. Natkin was one of about 20 people from the music community -- including members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Metro owner Joe Shanahan, and Alligator Records founder Bruce Iglauer -- who attended a meeting last week with Rice to lay the groundwork for the summit.

"My initial reaction was, 'Why do we need this?,' " Natkin says. "But there was an interesting crowd at that meeting with some great ideas. We do events throughout the year, but it's easier to shine a spotlight on a one-day free event that addresses how to play the game. We need to know where the resources are in this city and how to access them."

The awareness-building will take time. Several key figures in the local music scene, such as Andy Cirzan, senior vice president at Jam Productions, were unaware of the new music office or the summit. "I'm not sure they know I exist, either," Cirzan said with a laugh.

Rice, who has performed and recorded as a solo artist and is a member of the band Software Giant, says he wants to broaden the conversation. Over the next few months he is conducting a series of focus groups with promoters, musicians, media and other members of the music community to help shape a strategy for his office. In the interim, he's helped relaunch the Chicago Music Commission's series of music forums (the next one, "How to Get a Gig," will be at 6 p.m. March 18 at the Cultural Center) and initiated a bimonthly series of "Off the Record" listening parties for new recordings by local artists (next up is Low, previewing its Jeff Tweedy-produced album, "The Invisible Way," at 8 p.m. March 7 at saki, 3716 W. Fullerton).

"Other cities like Austin, San Francisco, Seattle and Nashville have created music offices," Rice said. "It is a nationwide trend where they see that promoting music as an economic driver is a smart thing to do. The City of Chicago has not had any specific division doing that as its core mission."

Natkin is hopeful that Rice and Chavez can make it work because the local music economy is more challenging than ever. "Twenty years ago the music business was 80 percent music and 20 percent business, and now it's exactly the opposite," he says. "People need to know how to operate in this business, otherwise they're just flailing away in the middle of nowhere."

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