

April 13, 2015

Nancy Martins  
Office of the Secretariat  
Economic Development Committee  
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

By email: [edc@toronto.ca](mailto:edc@toronto.ca)

Dear Ms. Martins,

### **Letter of Support: A Music Incubator in Downtown Toronto**

The Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area (DYBIA) works as a tireless advocate for the economic well-being of our neighbourhood, and music sector development is a key focus of our work. We believe that collaboration, stewardship and facilitation are key roles that the DYBIA can play in achieving a healthy, prosperous and growing district economy.

Today, for that reason, we are writing to support the recommendations tabled by Economic Development & Culture Division's *Startup Toronto Business Incubation Strategy*, which is being tabled as Item ED3.6 at the City's Economic Development Committee on April 16, 2015.

- We want to record our support for the overall direction and vision outlined in *From Concept to Commercialization: A Startup Eco-system Strategy for the City of Toronto* as we believe it will support entrepreneurship, and its eco-system, in the City of Toronto.
- Specifically, we support Action 23, Goal 2 in the *Strategy*: **Collaborate with the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area to establish an urban music incubator program.**

### DYBIA's Music Strategy

Downtown Yonge is Toronto's music mecca because it is not only the historical home of Toronto music, and heart of live music, but also the traditional hub of music retail too – think Sam the Record Man, Cheapie's, A&A and Sunrise Records, to name just a few.

During the fifties, sixties and seventies, Yonge Street hosted some of the world's most renowned musicians at the city's well-known live music venues. Think of jazz great Oscar Petersen performing at the Town Tavern, or

Motown icons Stevie Wonder and Diana Ross at Club Blue Note. Whether rocking to Bill Haley & the Comets at Friar's Tavern – now the Hard Rock Café at Yonge and Dundas - or soaking up soul music at Le Coq d'Or Tavern, music lived in Downtown Yonge.

Today, live music continues to flourish on Yonge Street with 14 live performance venues that can accommodate almost 16,000 people at any given time. That includes established concert venues like historic Massey Hall, as well as jazz clubs like The Jazz Bistro, theatres like the Elgin & Winter Garden, event spaces like The Carlu – and a host of churches, like the Church of the Holy Trinity, which provide exceptional performance spaces.

Yonge Dundas Square, the city's premier public performance space, is also right at the heart of Downtown Yonge.

DYBIA has been actively engaged in the development of the arts, culture and music sectors in the neighbourhood. For example:

- In 2013, we launched Play the Parks, a now annual showcase for live music in our parks and squares during the summer months, supporting artist development and independent labels; and
- We support a variety of music events in the neighbourhood, by working with events and festivals like NXNE and Manifesto, as well as delivering a music component to our own events.

With artist support at the core of the DBYA's music strategy, the idea is to not only reflect on the past but also build for the future. Downtown Yonge BIA's music strategy is thus multi-pronged, focusing on the past, the present and the future:

- Homage to Toronto's **music legacy**
- Activating live music throughout Downtown Yonge **today**
- Paving the way to Toronto's **music future**

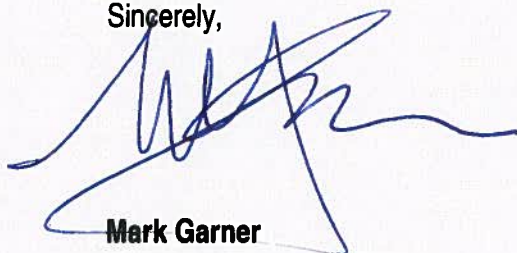
### A Music Incubator in Downtown Yonge

As part of our commitment to paving the way to Toronto's music future, our vision is to create a music incubator for emerging artists. Work is already underway a pilot initiative to launch an Artist Management Program in Downtown Yonge in collaboration with both Canada's Music Incubator at Coalition Music, as well as Entrepreneurship Services and the Music Office at the City.

We would like to put on record our support, and commitment to, bringing a music incubator into Downtown Yonge, an area that is rich in music, arts and culture (both past and present) and provides an opportunity to not only connect different parts of the music sector, but also create a vibrant use of space in our downtown neighbourhood.

**We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the City in the short- to medium-term to facilitate this key project.**

Sincerely,



**Mark Garner**  
Executive Director & CSO

cc

Ken Gruber, Chair: Board of Directors, Downtown Yonge BIA