

NMC releases *Fertile Ground*: A report on the economic opportunities of Alberta's music industry

(Calgary, AB — November 27, 2014) The National Music Centre (NMC) has released a new report on Alberta's music industry, detailing the economic benefits of a strong provincial music industry and making recommendations to government and other sector partners.

NMC commissioned the report from Music Canada, with funding from the Scotlyn Foundation. The report, titled *Fertile Ground: Alberta Music Cities Initiative*, makes detailed recommendations to stimulate the growth and sustainability of Alberta's music industry through an economic lens.

"Graham and Paul Lessard with the Scotlyn Foundation approached us, eager to do something meaningful for Alberta's music industry. I was very aware of the incredible work Music Canada had done in Ontario, and wondered if the same strategic business approach could work in Alberta," said Andrew Mosker, President and CEO of the National Music Centre.

In early 2014, NMC approached Music Canada, a national non-profit trade organization, on taking a critical look at the music landscape in Alberta. This work was inspired by Music Canada's success working with leaders across the music ecosystem in Ontario. That work has demonstrated the value of provincial and municipal live music strategies, and supported the creation of investment plans that support economic growth and tourism, and provided artists with more professional opportunities.

"This report is about breaking music out of the cultural box, and into the general consciousness of Alberta's economic leaders, demonstrating its value and ability to attract and retain creative talent, support tourism and inspire investment across a variety of economic sectors, thereby supporting efforts to diversify Alberta's economy," said Amy Terrill, Music Canada and author of the *Fertile Ground* report.

As part of their research, Music Canada and NMC spoke with dozens of stakeholders across the province, working with the provincial music industry, tourism agencies, Alberta Chambers of Commerce, and municipal governments. Alberta Music provided a critical grassroots perspective to the project.

"We need a strong music industry in Alberta to support and promote the impressive array of homegrown talent. This report shows a clear vision for building a world class music scene in our province," said Graham Lessard of the Scotlyn Foundation.

The *Fertile Ground* report concludes with four key recommendations for the growth and development of the commercial music industry in Alberta:

- Develop a comprehensive understating of the economic profile of Alberta's music cluster, with regional breakouts for Calgary and Edmonton as well as other smaller cities as appropriate.

- Position music as a key economic sector, a vehicle for the diversification of Alberta’s economy, and a tool that municipalities can use to stimulate economic growth, increase investment, retain youth, and drive tourism.
- Develop and implement a strategic plan to build the business capacity of the music industry in Alberta.
- Develop and implement a live music strategy for Alberta to improve the live music product offering in Alberta and generate increased music tourism.

To learn more about the AMCI project and to download a copy of the Fertile Ground Report, please visit nmc.ca/AMCI.

About the Alberta Music Cities Initiative (AMCI)

The report is the first step of a much larger project — The Alberta Music Cities Initiative (AMCI), which is committed to building a strong music industry that benefits the province on multiple levels.

A larger AMCI committee is being assembled to develop a broader strategic plan and engage as many stakeholders as possible, to ensure that the seeds of the *Fertile Ground* report grow into a powerful, provincial strategy to stimulate economic growth and support the music industry.

Founded by Alberta Music, the National Music Centre, Music Canada and the Scotlyn Foundation, the AMCI is committed to developing a strong music industry in Alberta at multiple levels and with a diverse range of groups.

About the National Music Centre

The National Music Centre is the home for music in Canada and its mission is to amplify the love, sharing, and understanding of music. The new National Music Centre will be a 160,000 square-foot, architecturally stunning destination in the heart of Calgary’s East Village, and an international hub for music and technology. It will resonate with expanded programming including education, performance, artist incubation, and exhibitions. The new building will open in the spring of 2016. Learn more at nmc.ca

About Music Canada

Music Canada is a non-profit trade organization that represents the major record companies in Canada. Music Canada also works with some of the leading independent record labels and distributors, recording studios, live music venues, concert promoters, managers and artists in the promotion and development of the music cluster. Learn more at musiccanada.com

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The Alberta Music Cities Initiative Fact Sheet

What is it?

The Alberta Music Cities Initiative (AMCI) is a strategy for the development and growth of a vibrant music industry in Alberta. The report, *Fertile Ground: Alberta Music Cities Initiative*, describes the economic benefits of a strong provincial music industry and makes recommendations for development. The report was released on November 27, 2014.

What benefits would this bring to the broader community?

1. Community building effect of music – music brings people together and adds life to our neighbourhoods – people are attracted to music scenes
2. Talent Attraction and Retention – creative people are drawn to vibrant music scenes, young people in particular; cities like Austin and Seattle are attracting workers, immigrants and families with the strength of their music scene; labour shortages in Alberta constrain growth and economic activity
3. Economic Diversification – innovative companies from all sectors are competing for talent and are drawn to places where young talented creative workers gather; in support of the premier’s Council for Economic Strategy, an action plan published in 2010, music will help broaden the economic base beyond the natural resource-based economy
4. Music Tourism – music festivals and year-round music scenes draw tourists who tend to stay longer and spend more

How would you describe success?

“Alberta is recognized as the “peoples’ choice” in terms of artistic talent and industry support for produced music, audience, funders and location. Popular music is created by local, national and international talent and a strong support community exists to produce the highest quality of music for commercial release (hard copy and online), TV, Podcasts and live streaming. The Alberta music industry is profitable and the province, business and audience support excellence & creating a better place to live for musicians, related talent and the industry support community.”

Recommendations:

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of the economic profile of Alberta’s music cluster with regional breakouts for Calgary and Edmonton as well as other smaller cities as appropriate.
2. Position music as a key economic sector and vehicle for diversification of the economy of Alberta and method by which municipalities can stimulate economic growth, increased investment, youth retention and attraction and tourism.
3. Develop and implement a strategic plan to build the business capacity of the music industry in Alberta.
4. Develop and implement a live music strategy for Alberta in order to improve the live music product offering in Alberta and generate increased music tourism.

What we know about Alberta's Music Sector and the audience:

- More than 77,000 or 3.5% of the workforce, are currently employed in arts and culture in Alberta
- Arts and Culture sector contributes an estimated \$8.2 Billion to the GDP
- Alberta has a young, affluent audience and the highest per capita cultural spending in the country
- Alberta has a long and storied history of award-winning artists, musicians, bands, and ensembles from a variety of genres
- Alberta is home to some of the most successful festivals in the country including the Calgary Folk Festival, Edmonton Folk Festival, and the Big Valley Jamboree
- Live venues range from small clubs to larger arenas which play host to local and touring artists
- Key institutions like The Banff Centre, National Music Centre, MacEwan University and CKUA Radio play unique supporting roles
- Insufficient music industry infrastructure to support artists at all stages of their careers, creating the opportunity to enhance the business capacity of the music community through mentorship and training

AMCI Founding Partners: Alberta Music, Music Canada, National Music Centre, and the Scotlyn Foundation.

Supporters to date: Calgary Arts Development Authority, Calgary Chamber of Commerce, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, Tooth Blackner Presents, and Tourism Calgary.

How was the report developed?

It began with a conversation between the Scotlyn Foundation and The Banff Centre in 2011; in 2013 and 2014 Music Canada and the National Music Centre joined forces with the Scotlyn Foundation to engage the broader business and economic community through research and a series of interviews and meetings.

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