

Executive Director's Report

Music PEI Annual General Meeting
2023/2024 Fiscal Year

The 2023/2024 fiscal year is often referred to as the “post-COVID year”. It would now appear that COVID is here to stay, but the effects of nearly 2 years of closures and reductions have also left a massive impact on our industry. Norms have changed and the effect on audiences of live performances is no different. Where and how people spend their entertainment dollars has shifted.

There is no denying there seems to be an insatiable appetite for tribute shows these days, which are great for income for working musicians. Producers like Mike Ross and Craig Fair are creating some fantastic shows and they should be applauded. Unfortunately, inadvertently affected support for original music. With limited entertainment dollars in circulation, the competition for audience attention is fierce.

In addition, COVID-19 has reinforced the appeal of home entertainment. The sheer volume of content now available at our fingertips was unimaginable a decade ago, making the decision to go out for live events less automatic. Rising touring costs, declining recorded music sales, and performance fees that often fail to keep pace with inflation further exacerbate these challenges.

I’ve always maintained the music business is one of the most competitive businesses in the world and now it is also one of the most challenging.

And yet, year after year we see new artists entering the industry and many established artists finding a way to make it work. One of the things Music PEI has spent a lot of energy and focus on is teaching artists to learn how to create as many revenue streams as possible. Royalties and performance fees are the traditional streams, but more artists are finding licensing, publishing and label deals, scoring and creative merch sales are ways of helping to create a sustainable career.

Of course, at the end of the day, you also have to be good. And you also must be able to stand out in a very crowded room. There is a reason why it is usually a small number of artists who get most of the gigs. They stand out. Finding that uniqueness that sets you apart from the crowd is sometimes a lifelong goal. And the ones who make it look easy, it’s not, they’ve worked hard at it. The adage of 10,000 hours to mastery holds true, excellence is rarely (if ever) achieved without significant effort.

Music PEI hopes that the supports, programs and packages we have put together will help our members to achieve excellence. Programs like the Golden Ticket and Diverse Voices give artists learning opportunities rarely available to them at that stage of their careers, taking them through the recording and single release stages with guidance and support all along the way. The newly redesigned, Takin Care of Business program will now allow more

participants to learn the important steps to career development. And, of course, the Music PEI Investment Program has allowed our members to create hundreds of projects over the years.

This was the second consecutive year of financial challenges for Music PEI, with significant losses that eroded much of the reserve funding built up over 17 years. While most projects stayed within budget, revenue projections were overestimated. New financial controls have been implemented to prevent this in the future.

The fiscal year of 2023, 2024 was successful from many standpoints. Music PEI delivered three major events during the fiscal year, including the [Canadian Song Conference](#) in May 2023, [Showcase PEI](#) in September 2023 and [Music PEI Week](#) in March 2024. These links point towards final reports submitted to funders.

Music PEI was also the grateful recipient of the inaugural Prince Edward Island Arts Award for Organisation of the Year in 2023. It was a tremendous honour to be selected from among many worthy applicants.

Additionally, Music PEI presented 11 artists collectively at Reeperbahn in Germany in September 2023, English Folk Expo in Britain in October 2023, Your Roots are Showing in Ireland, Americana UK in Britain and Showcase Scotland in Scotland in January 2024 and Folk Alliance in the US in February 2024.

Along with those showcases Music PEI partnered with English Folk Expo and Viva Sounds in Sweden to create 2 Artist Exchange opportunities. The Artist Exchange Program began in 2012 and will continue in 2024/25 with opportunities at English Folk Expo and the Spot Festival in Denmark. These are excellent opportunities for our artists to experience a new market and to collaborate with international artists.

Participants of Export Showcases	
Reeperbahn	Brandon Howard Roy
English Folk Expo	Inn Echo
	Gordie MacKeeman and His Rhythm Boys
	Catherine MacLellan
Your Roots are Showing	Irish Mythen
	Shane Pendergast & Luka Hall
Americana UK	Irish Mythen
	Dylan Menzie
Showcase Scotland	Irish Mythen
Folk Alliance	Lennie Gallant
	Inn Echo
Artist Exchange Program	

English Folk Expo	Joce Reyome
Viva Sounds	Alicia Toner

Music PEI Week in March of 2024 was a tremendous success with a return to a gala format at the Confederation Centre of the Arts. Music PEI engaged Craig Fair to be the musical producer for the Awards Gala and also presented a wide variety of shows from Souris to Charlottetown, all made possible by our funders, volunteers and our amazing sponsors who continue to step up every year.

The following is the complete list of the 2024 Music PEI Award winners:

1. SWENN Album of the Year - **The East Pointers - *Safe in Sound***
2. The Buzz Album Art of the Year - **Inn Echo - *Hemispheres, Graphic Designer Jud Haynes***
3. Hijinks Design Agency Digital Presence Award - **Noah Malcolm**
4. Rising Tide Community Fund Lloyd Doyle New Artist of the Year - **Absolute Losers - *At the Mall***
5. Stay Golden Custom Recording Sector Award - **Colin Buchanan**
6. Terra Nova Fund Achievement in Classical/Jazz Music - **Sirens Choral Association Inc.**
7. SOCAN Songwriter of the Year - **Dylan Menzie**
8. ECMA Single of the Year - **Tara MacLean - *Sparrow***
9. ExamOne Atlantic Music Video of the Year - **Nadia - *Intertwine - Directed by Griffin O'toole***
10. Olde Dublin Pub Contemporary/Traditional Roots Recording of the Year - **Sirène et Matelot - *Un Monde de Dissonances***
11. Discover Charlottetown Rock Recording of the Year - **Liam Corcoran - *Hints and Traces***
12. GFL Environmental R&B/Soul Recording of the Year - **The Umbrella Collective - *Welcome to Studio UC!***
13. Arsenault Best Cameron Ellis Pop Recording of the Year - **Noah Malcolm - *Feel the Same***
14. Downtown Charlottetown Rap/HipHop Recording of the Year - **The Umbrella Collective - *Welcome to Studio UC!***
15. SaltWire Entertainer of the Year - **Lawrence Maxwell**
16. Maritime Electric Live Sector Award - **Canada Games IllumiNATION Festival**
17. Collège De L'Île Prix de L'Acadie - **Sirène et Matelot**
18. Diversecity Festival Achievement in World Music - **Tiffany Liu**

MUSIC PEI BOARD AWARDS

19. City of Charlottetown Leo Cheverie Community Contributor of the Year - **Mi'kmaq Heritage Actors**
20. Long & McQuade Educator of the Year - **Alan Dowling**
21. Sara Roach Lewis - SRL Solutions Industry Person of the Year - **Alyssa Gallant**
22. Atlantic Lottery Lifetime Achievement Award - **Chris Roumbanis**

23. CYMBA Music Publishing Live Music Production Professional of the Year - **Sergey Varlamov**
24. Caledonia House Rooted to The Island - **Jenn Grant**
25. Holland College Musician of the Year - **Hannah Melanson**

Financial Contributions

Once again, we received financial support for most of our projects from FACTOR and ACOA, without which we could not do what we do. But a special acknowledgement goes to Innovation PEI and the Province. They are responsible for 100% of our funding for our Investment Program and the majority of operations. We are extremely fortunate for that support.

Financial Contributions:

FACTOR	\$202,552
ACOA	\$147,314
Innovation PEI	\$248,000

Music PEI is also grateful to Skills PEI for helping provide staff to deliver our events. These staff, hired on for 5-month contracts, make it possible for us to do what we do, and we could not with them. We had a great team leader this past year in Alicia Toner and supported by Chris Martell, Dawn Doiron, Nick Doneff, Sara Austin and Daniel Hartinger.

Diverse Voices and the Golden Ticket also received support from TD Bank and RBC respectively. This support allowed us to increase the budget for those programs and provide incredible opportunities to the participants.

As mentioned, the past 2 years have been challenging financially. With a loss of \$65,000 during 23/24, we now have retained earnings of \$62,700. It will be our job to try to rebuild the retained earnings back to where they were.

To that end, we have hired an in-house bookkeeper. Alyssa Gallant decided to move on in June of 2024. We were very sorry to see her leave, Alyssa was an amazing, dedicated staff person who was a real joy to work with. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

With her departure, we decided to go in a different direction and hired her replacement, Shannon Smith as Finance Manager. With in-house bookkeeping we will be able to better control finances.

I also want to say a personal thank you to Maggie Clarkin, our outgoing bookkeeper, for 15 years of bookkeeping and support for Music PEI.

The permanent staff for the fiscal year included Programs Officer Andy Glydon, Admin Officer Alyssa Gallant and me as Executive Director. When I took on this job in 2008, I never

imagined I'd still be here 17 years later, but it has always been a labour of love. I've said many times it is the best job in the world, at least for me.

This current fiscal year we were very fortunate to receive increased funding from the province, part of which will go towards increasing the Music PEI investment program, and the balance going towards staff retention. Additionally, Music PEI was extremely grateful to receive funding for the first time from the city of Charlottetown for operations. This should help to allow us to have a surplus at the end of the year to add to retained earnings.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency has continued to provide significant financial support to the organization, funding both business development projects and professional development projects.

FACTOR has received less funding in recent years affecting all FACTOR recipients, including the provincial MIAs. We received a 10% cut from our request and a 20% reduction from last year. This trend may continue, making it ever more important for Music PEI to find additional and new sources of revenue.

Ripple Effect

Music PEI was proud to create a new program called the Ripple Effect. Led by Carlie Howell, Rebecca Ford and Program Director Andy Glydon, the Ripple Effect was successful in the work at combatting sexual assault and gender-based violence within the music industry locally and beyond through education and providing models for safe spaces. The program was facilitated through a partnership with Stacy Forrester of Good Night Out.

Training was provided through a series of workshops as well as being onsite at major events like Cavendish Beach Music Festival. This is a program we can all be proud of, bravo to the team!

Membership

Membership is largely driven by artist opportunities. Funding programs, Golden Ticket and Diverse Voices, showcases and the awards program are the main drivers for compelling artists and industry professionals to become members. Music PEI membership continues to hover between 250 and 300 members annually.

One of the most used member benefits has been the free ECMA membership to provincial MIA members. There are other benefits including the weekly newsletter that includes not only Music PEI opportunities but also member news and crucial industry news. Signing up for the newsletter is free and should be a must for all PEI artists.

Future Outlook

It is impossible not to be encouraged by the people in our music community. We continue to see great new artists developing and especially the diversity. Achievements by emerging artists like The Umbrella Collective, Absolute Losers and Emilia May, the continued growth

of artists like Noah Malcolm, Inn Echo, Logan Richard, Tiffany Lui, Lawrence Maxwell, Brandon Howard Roy, Alicia Toner and so many more along with the established artists like Catherine MacLellan, Irish Mythen, The East Pointers and Lennie Gallant, to name a few, are the reason we are able to continue the work we do.

It makes it easy for us to entice music industry professionals from around the globe to work with us, attend our events and provide opportunities for our artists. Showcase PEI and the Canadian Song Conference will continue to be important dates on the industry's calendar. We have recruited well over 500 delegates to our events creating millions in work for PEI artists.

One area Music PEI would like to focus on in the coming years is to build more infrastructure here for our artists. We have an abundance of talent; we continually hear this from delegates attending our event. What we lack is the industry support for that talent. If we were able to support agents, managers, labels and more, we would see many more opportunities develop for Island artists.

This will mean additional investment beyond our funding program or PD workshops. We need to find innovative ways to support emerging professionals in ways we have not done yet. It will take creativity, and of course money, but it is a challenge well worth the effort. Music PEI is actively seeking new funding opportunities and revenue streams.

Closing

In closing I would like to thank our generous funders Innovation PEI, Skills PEI, ACOA, FACTOR and the City of Charlottetown, our Music PEI Week sponsors and RBC and TD for their contributions. They make all our work possible.

I want to give a shout out to all the staff who have contributed this past year but especially Andy and Alyssa. We have been lucky to have you!

And finally, Music PEI has been blessed with some wonderful [Board of Directors](#) over the years, and this past year has been no exception. Nikki Waite has been a stellar President providing leadership and support that any organisation would be lucky to have. Also, a special mention to Blake Crocket who has done an excellent job as treasurer bringing his knowledge and expertise to the organisation. And the rest of the Board have all contributed, attending monthly meetings, providing insights, encouragement and ideas, and we thank you for lending your talents and time as a volunteer! It is greatly appreciated.
