



Report on the Access Music Round Table October 23, 2016

A Project of the SweetWater Music Festival

Introduction

Access Music is a one-year project (Sept.2016-2017) initiated by the SweetWater Music Festival, with the generous support of the Grey Bruce Community Foundation.

The project goals are:

- To bring together community organizations and stakeholders to talk about shared challenges, successes and opportunities.
- To identify ways that we can work together to provide better access to music and learning opportunities for children, youth, families and communities members.

'How do we teach people the value of what we have here?'
(Access participant)

Invitations were sent to over 30 groups and individuals for a Round Table discussion on October 23, 2016. Twenty-two (22) people, representing diverse cultural, musical and artistic groups and individuals in the region attended Round Table, and many invited groups and individual expressed interest and look forward to staying connected. ¹

'Music is just a way you live your life.'
(Access participant)

The focus of the afternoon was to 'build connections between groups and individuals interested in the goals of the Access music project, and to look for some shared themes'. The resulting discussion was lively, passionate and practical. At the end of the afternoon there was a strong wish to meet again to further develop the ideas and themes discussed at the Round Table, and to look at some concrete ways we can work together to build audiences and develop musicians in Grey and Bruce.

This report is a short summary of the main themes and discussion topics from the Access Music Round Table and we hope that it will be shared broadly among the participating organizations at the Round Table, and with other arts and music groups and organizations that share the goals of the Access Music project.

'Parents need to lobby - rural communities are losing out with music.' (Access participant)

Themes from the Introductions

Each person introduced themselves and talked about the organization, group and/or perspective they represented. As part of their introduction they offered their thoughts on developing audiences and musicians in Grey Bruce. Ten broad themes were identified:

¹ A list of participants is attached at the end of this report



SWEETWATER MUSIC FESTIVAL

MARK FEWER | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

1. The critical need for **more music in the school system**. Reach out to teachers, schools, boards of education, advocate provincially.
2. The need for **communication and connection** between music and other arts groups in Grey Bruce to create and build audience interest.
3. Music across the life span – **start with the very young**.
4. A new generation of performers is needed in Grey Bruce. **Younger players are needed** to take over.
5. **Students are taking initiative** and need recognition and support.
6. All music genres must be 'at the table'. There are opportunities for **cross-pollination**.
7. **Take music where the people are** – pop up concerts, classics on main, and music for youth as examples.
8. Take **personal action** to introduce people to music. Invite a friend or family to a concert/event.
9. Make music **accessible** for all – address barriers to participation.
10. Welcoming spaces support **collaboration** – build on this (example of Harmony Centre).

'We can share lists of opportunities for subsidized, free lessons and concerts' (Access Participant)

'Let's break down barriers between music genres- it pays off with audiences and connections.' (Access participant)

In addition, several people noted resources and best practices from other communities that may be helpful for this work: The Coalition for Music Education in Canada is an advocacy group, and the Harmony Project from California was recommended. An online recommendation suggested looking at the Met in New York and their work developing youth participation <http://www.metopera.org/Search/?q=schools>

Researching and sharing ideas about what works in other regions, and with diverse arts organizations, was suggested as a way to learn more from the experience of others and using this information for our region.



SWEETWATER MUSIC FESTIVAL

MARK FEWER | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Developing Audiences and Musicians: What is Working in Grey Bruce and Why?

The participants shared many exciting things that are working well in the region and talked about why they are successful. The chart below summarizes key discussion points:

What's Working Well in Grey Bruce?	Why?
The Harmony Centre	Affordable, accessible space for teachers and concerts
Community Bands	Engaged adults so they get their children involved
Music in public spaces (8 th St. Orchestra, 'classics on main', street music)	Downtown. Music in unexpected places. People exposed to new music experience
Orchestra North	Blending genres, ages and experiences
GBS 50% for new subscribers	New audiences and over 50% returned
Christmas Concert for Children & Families	Building audiences every year, pay what you can, good time for kids and parents
Convenient Concert Times (Southampton Summer Music Festival and GBS) bring out bigger audiences	SMF change to 6:30 works for kid's bedtimes. GBS afternoon concert in February addresses winter driving
Pay What You Can (GBS, Noon Hour Series)	Removes barriers and makes accessible, increases attendance.
Inclusive practices - working together, removing barriers (examples Rock the Sound, Youth Orchestra, Cello Choir)	Students teach one another – more involvement, hospitable and welcoming, recognizes needs, makes connections
Audience and musician development over time (many examples)	Taking the long view, Growing organizations over time, support for young and developing musicians, passion and dedication of volunteers and mentors.
Collaboration – example of Southampton Music Festival and Look Up Theatre and others	Brings alternative groups together. Attracts new audience members for both. Fun and innovative.
Partnerships (marketing, promotion, joint events)	Brings more people, raises awareness, saves money, leveraging effect, builds relationships
Bringing Artists here, Connecting local artists with out of town artists	Isolation in Grey Bruce supports local innovation – bring artists here and they love it. Connecting local and imported artists brings audiences out.
Multi-media approaches, using new technology and social media (You Tube)	Attracts new audience members. New technology presents things in a new way, brings people together in new ways
Music with children and families (examples – Kindermusik, children's programming)	Building the future and new pathways for learning.
Good access to media and publicity in Grey Bruce	Supportive media helps organizations get the word out, helps with costs
Mixing Genres (many examples)	Bigger audiences with new exposure to music and art, new relationships between artists, creative, fun.



SWEETWATER MUSIC FESTIVAL

MARK FEWER | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Challenges with building musicians and audiences

The Round Table ended with a brief look at some of the challenges facing us in the region as presented below:

What are Challenges and Barriers?	Why?
Musicians leave the area, especially young musicians. Poor pay, hard to find work.	Difficult to make a living – making less than in 1980's. Musicians not valued and the loss of structures to support decent wages.
Affordability	Costs of production are high, but people can't afford high-ticket prices. Low average income in Grey Bruce
Valuing local music and musicians	Dollars are concentrated on 'stars'. Local music may not be a 'priority'.
Long Term Investment needed to develop musicians	Musicians need years of training, available skilled teachers, and funds to pay for it all. Some students face barriers, or don't continue their studies.
Lack of opportunities for children to discover instruments and playing music – no entry to music.	School music is greatly diminished so children do not have access or opportunities.
Family fatigue	Families are busy and stretched. Late night concerts are expensive and require a lot of planning for people with young families.

Next Steps:

The Access Music Round Table discussion was lively and positive. Participants recommended that another Round Table be held soon to build on the discussion and ideas generated. Several specific next steps were identified:

Action Item	Responsibility	Time Frame
Prepare a short report from the Access Music Round Table and distribute to participants and those invited.	Sweetwater Board and Staff	October-November
Participants take the report to their respective organizations for further discussion and input.	All participants	November - January
Organize a second Access Music Round Table , invite additional participants as well, and look at opportunities for collaboration.	Sweetwater Board and Staff	Sunday Feb. 12, 2017 2:00 – 4:00 pm Harmony Centre



SWEETWATER MUSIC FESTIVAL

MARK FEWER | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Participants at Access Music Round Table – Oct. 23, 2016

Colleen Purdon, Marion McDougall, Shawna Macivor, Paul Eichenbach: SweetWater Music Festival

Nancy MacDonald, David Adair, Deirdre Orr, Norma Morrison: Georgian Bay Symphony

John and Deedee Schnarr: Kincardine Music Festival

Joanne Macdonald, Kim Lake: Southampton Summer Music Festival

Keira MacArthur: Cello instructor

Nolan Murphy: Student and musician

Vicky Teichbourne, Dave Hawkings, John Stewart: Harmony Centre

Anne Findlay Stewart: Publisher - Owen Sound

Barb Dyck: Piano teacher and collaborative pianist with Georgian Bay Concert Choir, business owner (the Colour Jar)

Tim Dyck: Non-professional musician, business owner (Colour Jar)

Joachim Ostertag: Noon Hour Summer Music Series and Orchestra North

Ariel Barkley: Private Music Teacher and teaches young infants music appreciation

Thank You

- ✓ **To the Community Foundation Grey Bruce for Project funding for Access Music.**
- ✓ **To all of the participants who attended for their wonderful ideas and passionate support of music and the arts in the Grey-Bruce region and beyond.**
- ✓ **To all of the people who wanted to come, but couldn't because of other commitments – We hope to see you February 12th at 2:00 pm!**