Local music collecting and collections in Canadian libraries

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Outline

1. Background
2. Methods: survey research
3. Results
4. Discussion
5. Next steps
Sounds of Home: Local Music Collecting and Collections in Canada

Explores the connection between **music** and **place** through experiences of local music collection managers in Canadian heritage institutions

National Music Centre Credit: Neil Zeller
Research Objectives

1. Identify locations of local music collections and their characteristics
2. Understand how collectors perceive the value of collecting local music
3. Document local music collection management practices and identify areas where practices may be improved
Areas of research

Music Scenes

● Popular music studies approach
● considers local music as documentary evidence of broader cultural formations

Special Collections

● library and information/archival sciences
● speaks to the value of collecting and documenting rare or unique artifacts
“Local scene is focused in social activity that takes place in a delimited space and over a specific span of time in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans realize their common musical taste, collectively distinguishing themselves from others by using music and cultural signs ...”

http://subcultureslist.com/scene/
Why Study Local Music Collections?

- Indicates broader artistic and social developments
- Connected to local histories
- Representative of community diversity
- Growing professional interest
Research questions

1. What are the local music collection management practices in Canadian libraries?
2. Where may practices for collecting local music be improved?
Method: exploratory survey research

- Electronic questionnaire in English or French
- 20 questions (18 closed/4 open ended)
- Participants from Canadian libraries (105 distributed)
- Distributed via email for a 3 week period
Library location and library type

Library type

- Special: 15.4% (2 libraries)
- Public: 23.1% (3 libraries)
- Academic: 61.5% (8 libraries)

Map of Canada showing the distribution of libraries by location.
Local music collections descriptions

- Definition of local is varied (provincial, institutional, city, etc.)
- Collections contain many formats, including archival materials
- A/V materials (particularly sound recordings) are most often included
- Majority (12/13) of collections are growing
What formats are included in your local music collection(s)?

- Sound recordings: 13
- Video recordings: 9
- Notated music: 8
- Concert Programs: 8
- Instructional materials: 7
- Printed ephemera: 7
- Posters: 7
- Photographs: 7
- Monographs: 6
- Music manuscripts: 5
- Objects: 3
- Other: 3

Frequency
Access and preservation

- All collections have some kind of cataloguing.
- 76.9% of collections use metadata to distinguish the local music materials.
- Collections are primarily located in an archive or special collections area.
- All collections are accessible in person and more than half (61.53%) are also available online.
- 61.5% of respondents are employing some kind of preservation method (physical, digital or both).
Where is the physical location of the local music collection within your institution?

- Archives or special collections: 8
- Interfiled with other music collections: 6
- Onsite storage: 5
- Special collection within a music: 4
- Other: 1
“Working with the musical community is key to the development of a robust collection. That can be a challenge when the region is so vast, geographically. Hence, digital access is an important aspect of fostering relationships with individuals and communities that are situated great distances from the institution.”

Survey participant
Local music collection users

- Community members are the primary users of local music collections, followed by researchers as secondary users.
- Primary collection use is research based (scholarly, historical, community, family).
Who are the users of your local music collection(s)?

- Community members: 8 (Primary or secondary users: 3, 3rd or 4th: 4)
- Researchers: 7 (Primary or secondary users: 7, 3rd or 4th: 1)
- Students: 6 (Primary or secondary users: 2, 3rd or 4th: 2)
- Visitors from other communities: 6 (Primary or secondary users: 1, 3rd or 4th: 5)
- Donors: 1 (Primary or secondary users: 1, 3rd or 4th: 1)

Types of users:

- Community members
- Researchers
- Students
- Visitors from other communities
- Donors
How do your users make use of your local music collection(s)?

- Scholarly research: 7
- Historical research: 6
- Teaching: 5
- Community research: 4
- Artistic work: 4
- Family research: 2
- Other: 2
Acquisitions

- Collection managers use a wide range of strategies to identify and acquire local music materials.
- Popular strategies for identifying and selecting local music include: conducting research, community engagement, collection development policies, and building community partnerships.
- Popular acquisition methods include: working with music stores/vendors, through donations, or working with individual artists.
Q13 How useful are these tools or strategies when identifying and selecting local music for acquisition?

- Through the media
- Building lists
- Selecting from
- Community
- Establishing or
- Gathering
- Conducting research

Frequency

- N/A / Not useful
- Minimally / Somewhat useful
- Useful / very useful

Acquisition strategies
Promotion, outreach, and fund acquisition

- Collection managers use a wide range of strategies to promote local music collections
- Most popular promotion activities are: community engagement activities, hosting events, and using online advertising or social media
- Funding is secured from a variety of sources within and beyond the institution
How are the local music collection(s) promoted?

- Community engagement: 9
- Events: 8
- Online advertising or social media: 8
- Print promotional materials: 4
- Writing a scholarly article: 4
- Development of collection-specific: 3
- Radio or podcasts: 3
- Media promotion: 2
- Development of promotional film: 1
- Other: 5
- Not applicable: 2
How are funds to purchase new local music materials secured?

Funding sources

- Main institutional collection fund: 9
- Donations from members of the community: 8
- Designated endowment funds: 5
- Grants: 3
- Government funding: 2
Discussion

- Local music collections are complex due to the unique contents, unique user groups, and unique subject matter.

- Community impacts all aspects of local music collecting and collections - what are respectful ways to engage with community?
Conclusions

1) What are the local music collection management practices in Canadian libraries?
   ○ Work may fall outside traditional professional competencies
   ○ May intersect with archival practices
   ○ Preservation and online access facilitated primarily through digitization and online hosting

2) Where may practices for collecting local music be improved?
   ○ Potential challenges: donor relations, community outreach, working outside skillset
Next steps

- Publish data and survey results
- Article about local music collecting in upcoming issue of *Fontes*
- Expanded data collection through interviews and site visits with collection managers in cultural heritage institutions in Canada
- Exploring the value, community impact, and limitations of collecting local music
Questions?
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