

# Local Music Collectors in Cultural Heritage Organizations: Finding Joy through Occupational Devotion

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## ABSTRACT

Local music collecting in cultural heritage organizations is a rich practice for the study of joy and information. This article examines the joyful and personally meaningful experiences of local music collectors, as drawn from interviews with twenty-two individuals at eighteen cultural heritage organizations conducted from 2018 to 2020. Collectors describe their work with local music collections to be personally meaningful, positive, and even joyful. For many, the positive affective experiences found through the blending of personal interests and professional projects is a key factor in their workplace well-being, motivation, and personal fulfillment. Collectors apply a community-engaged approach to their professional practice, finding self-fulfillment through their work and connection to the local music community. These findings are discussed within the context of the serious leisure perspective, and the pleasurable and the profound in library and information science research.

## INTRODUCTION

Local music collecting is a rich practice for exploring joyful experiences with information. This article examines the impact and value of the joyful experiences of local music collectors (hereafter referred to as collectors) in cultural heritage organizations in Canada.<sup>1</sup> Using qualitative interviewing and site visits, we analyze interviews with twenty-two individuals at eighteen cultural heritage organizations conducted from 2018 to 2020. We use content analysis

to examine their personally meaningful experiences and interactions with communities and collection users across a number of positive language codes, extracting meaning from joyful and related positive impressions. Findings are situated within the context of the serious leisure perspective, and the pleasurable and the profound in library and information science.

This article emerges from a broader research project that examines the perceptions, motivations, and experiences of collectors in Canadian cultural heritage institutions (Doi and Luyk 2020). As librarians, collectors, and musicians ourselves, the concept of local music in an information context is intriguing. Our work with local music feels different from other areas of our professional practice as academic librarians; deep engagement with a topic of personal interest is both meaningful and enjoyable. Similarly, the work done by collectors in libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural heritage organizations is different; our colleagues express unique information experiences, leading us to examine local music collecting as a distinct information practice (Savolainen 2007, 2008).

Through conducting semistructured interviews (Seidman 2013), we noticed that affect was a significant element in the experience of collectors; joyful experiences, in particular, were an area worthy of further study. The impact of such experiences on the lives of collectors, artists, and community members is profound, moving beyond the professional to the personally meaningful.

#### LOCAL MUSIC COLLECTING IN CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANIZATIONS

Collections of local music document local histories, the development of musical practices, and the career trajectories of artists and contain artifacts of broader personal, communal, and cultural significance. They can serve as representations of the ideas and cultural norms of the communities where they were created and provide insight into local musical cultures at specific

moments in time. Although privately held local music collections and individual collectors are fascinating areas of study that demonstrate the richness of music collecting as a human pursuit (Margree et al. 2014; Giles, Pietrzykowski, and Clark 2007; Milano 2003; Shuker 2004, 2010), local music collectors in cultural heritage organizations operate in a professional milieu that allows for interesting connections to be made between collections and the wider communities they represent.

Interest in collecting local music is long established in the music librarianship and archival literature. Leading figures in music librarianship have long recommended collecting local music materials, arguing that it impacts both local communities and the nation by serving as the basis for national music histories (Spivacke 1940; Epstein 1967). The majority of the professional literature on the topic of local music collecting in libraries consists of case studies that describe individual collections and encourage music librarians to recognize the importance of building local music collections for their libraries (Allen 2007; Hathaway 1989; Luyk 2013; Stevenson 1988; Wanser 2014; Winling 2012; Krzyzanowski 2013; Moyer 2012; Himel and Chance 2014; Daniels et al. 2015; Thedens 2002). Case studies of specific collections in libraries and archives have, for the most part, focused on issues of professional practice (Belford 2007; Doi 2015; Rafferty 2001) or have argued for the perceived value and importance of collecting local music materials (Epstein 1967; Luyk 2013; Spivacke 1940; Vallier 2010). To date, few studies have examined the *emotional impact* of local music collections on collectors, users, and communities.

Recent literature provides recommendations for professional practice based on qualitative research. In a qualitative systematic review and thematic analysis of the scholarship on local music collections and collecting in cultural heritage institutions, Doi demonstrates that “institutions are documenting local music histories and developing local music collections with

increasing frequency” (2018, 220), outlining several professional recommendations for local music collecting in the areas of collection development, management, access, and context. Similarly, based on the results of a recent survey of Canadian local music collectors in libraries, Doi and Luyk identify complexities in local music collection management, noting the importance of “strong ties with communities, . . . community engagement and relationship building” (2019, 31).

Local music as a phenomenon, theoretical construct, and social world has been widely researched in sociology and popular music studies, frequently employing the “music scenes” approach. Grounded in and inspired by Becker’s *Art Worlds*, which established a theoretical framework based on “the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produce(s) the kind of artworks the art world is noted for” (1982, x), the music scenes approach examines the broader social networks that sustain scenes. Scenes research emerged from cultural studies scholarship in the early 1990s that explored issues of music and place within the context of the significant evolution of the culture industries at the time. As first theorized by Straw (1991), the scenes approach amplifies the importance of space and place in the study of popular music and emphasizes local musical cultures specifically. Influential research in this area focuses primarily on independent popular music scenes (Straw 1991; Bennett and Peterson 2004; Kruse 2003, 2010; Connell and Gibson 2003). Related research in ethnomusicology considers how local music relates to national or global music cultures (“transnational scenes”) and, more generally, what impact globalization has on music (Guilbault 2006; Fairley 2011; Biddle and Knights 2007; Burkhalter 2013). We also find scenes research that makes connections to the field of memory studies and emotional geography (Bennett 2016) and that which looks at the impact of DIY cultures on music scenes

(Bennett and Guerra 2019), which is of particular importance to the topic of local music collecting and collections.

Recent literature in popular music and heritage studies shows a growing interest in the state of popular music material culture in museums and community archives (Baker et al. 2015; Bennett 2015; Baker and Collins 2015; Baker, Doyle, and Homan 2016; Leonard 2007; Istvandy, Baker, and Cantillon 2019; Istvandy 2021). Research in this area situates the concepts of memory, nostalgia, heritage, and affect in the context of popular music historiography, attending to the “spatial and geographic frameworks underpinning the production of popular music” (Baker et al. 2015, 1), and addresses the heritage challenges specific to music in community archives (Istvandy 2021). The role of amateurs in collecting and documenting popular music material culture in a museum and community archives context is also an emerging area of interest bridging popular music and heritage studies (Baker 2015, 2018). Related research in the archival literature informing this work establishes a research agenda centered around affect, the ethics of care, and social justice, seeking to connect these theoretical frameworks to archival practice. Cifor establishes a research and practice agenda for archives based around affect, drawing on affect and social justice theory as a way to begin to remedy the undertheorization and consideration of affect in archives (2016, 12). In the context of popular music and heritage, Long et al. explore the affective nature of popular music archivists’ work. Through explorations of the experiences of professional and DIY archivists working with popular music heritage collections, they reveal that “in the particularities of popular music practice which inform an archival impulse and public history activities, affect is paramount” (2017, 74).

## LOCAL MUSIC AND THE SERIOUS LEISURE PERSPECTIVE

The serious leisure perspective is a useful way to examine collectors, the social worlds they shape, and the communities they benefit through their work. Along with many collaborators, the serious leisure perspective emerged as a viable theoretical framework in 1982 through the work of Stebbins. In more recent work, Stebbins provides an expanded definition of serious leisure as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that people find so substantial, interesting, and fulfilling that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centred on acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge and experience” (2007, 5). Situated within the leisure studies approach, which also includes the categories of casual and project-based leisure, serious leisure stands out as a rich area of study for information science given its argued higher complexity and time commitment required on the part of participants (Hartel 2003; Stebbins 2009b).

In his later work, Stebbins expands the serious leisure perspective to incorporate the work context (2004, 2009a, 2017a, 2017b), which, given our focus on collectors in cultural heritage organizations, provides a generative way to examine their joyful experiences. Occupational devotion is defined as a practice where the “line between work and (serious) leisure is virtually erased” (Stebbins 2009a, 768). It shares the six defining characteristics of serious leisure:

- the occasional need to persevere
- finding a career in a serious leisure role
- significant effort based on specially acquired knowledge, training, experience, or skill
- durable benefits such as self-development, self-enrichment, and self-expression

- a unique ethos that “grows up around each instance of it”
- participants identify strongly with their chosen pursuits (Stebbins 2009a, 765–66)

The work that occupational devotees do is referred to as devotee work (Stebbins 2017a) and is distinguished from serious leisure in that it is remunerated work where devotees gain a “significant part of their livelihood” from (2017a, 156). Also, it is the nature of the work itself, and not any pleasurable aspects peripheral to it (e.g., the working environment and opportunities for socialization) that qualifies someone as an occupational devotee (158). Although occupational devotees experience work that is meaningful and fulfilling, like any work, “a little rain does occasionally fall, watering down to a degree the pure fulfillment felt there” (158). In other words, devotee work is still work, and pleasure makes up just part of their complete experience.

Gallant, Arai, and Smale (2013) challenge some of the accepted dualisms and biases in the early serious leisure perspective research and further reinforce Stebbins’s later research connecting the serious leisure perspective to work. The leisure-work divide, they argue, may have been naïve, as was the exclusion of casual leisure (97). Building on a feminist communitarianist theoretical framework, their expansion of the serious leisure perspective shifts the focus from the individual to the group experience (94), opening up space for studying the various forms of leisure from a more collectivist, social-world-centered view. They provide a revised definition of serious leisure better suited to the study of joy and information, especially experiences that are not exclusively individual. Their definition builds on Stebbins’s initial work, describing serious leisure as “the committed pursuit of a **core leisure experience** that is substantial, interesting, and fulfilling, and where engagement is characterized by unique identities and leads to a variety of

outcomes for the person, social world, and communities within which the person is immersed” (104). The use of a revised and expanded serious leisure perspective and focus on occupational devotion allow for productive links to be made between the experiences of collectors as devotees and the wider community.

The topic of serious leisure is also found within the library and information science literature. Of particular relevance is Hartel’s work contextualizing information behavior within the serious leisure perspective in hobby domains (2003) and, later, the liberal arts hobby (2014). This work is driven by a desire to edge library and information science research away from its central focus on reified contexts such as academia and to shift the focus from negative to positive experiences with information (Hartel 2003). Aligned with Stebbins, Hartel suggests that serious leisure is the kind of leisure most worthy of study as it is “information-rich and poses direct challenges to LIS orthodoxy” (2003, 236). Other information science research using the serious leisure perspective includes, for example, investigations into leisure domains ranging from coin collecting (Case 2009) to food blogging (Cox and Blake 2011), knitting (Prigoda and McKenzie 2007), and beauty vlogging (Thomson 2019).

There is, however, limited literature that observes music information behavior using the serious leisure perspective. Henderson and Spracklen (2014) observed the transition from serious leisure to serious work for folk musicians. In their study, discussions with folk musicians demonstrated the nebulous boundaries between leisure and work; musicians were concurrently engaged in casual leisure, serious leisure, and serious work through cultural production. Kuusi and Haukola (2017) used the serious leisure perspective to examine the experiences of musicians and non-musicians, exploring the coexistence of work and serious leisure. Vesga Vinchira (2019) used the serious leisure perspective and social practice theory to model the information behavior of

fandom as a social practice, observing a number of social and personal factors that influence the information activities and behaviors of fans in their study.

Additionally, related research in library and information science centered on positive and meaningful information experiences informs our approach. This includes research on pleasurable and profound experiences in the context of the museum experience (Latham 2013), the sharing of “happy information” (Tinto and Ruthven 2016), personally meaningful experiences with information (Gorichanaz 2019), and information and contemplation (Gorichanaz and Latham 2019; Latham, Hartel, and Gorichanaz 2020). Occupational devotion and serious leisure are productive concepts for discussing the joyful experiences of cultural heritage collectors. Discussions of higher things, those positive human experiences that transcend the everyday (Kari and Hartel 2007) and “‘realms of experience’ beyond the cognitive or epistemic” (Gorichanaz and Latham 2019, n.p.), are new and interesting ways to look at local music collecting.

## METHODOLOGY

The findings presented in this article are situated within both collectivist and domain analysis approaches (Talja, Tuominen, and Savolainen 2005) recommended for the study of serious leisure (Hartel 2003), as they focus on the experiences of collectors in their professional context as cultural heritage professionals, and consider the broader communities they serve as the unit of analysis. The data set used for this article was built from qualitative semistructured interviews and site visits conducted in western and central Canada between September 2018 and February 2020. We spoke to twenty-two collectors for roughly one to two hours at eighteen cultural heritage organizations, as identified through online research, our existing knowledge of local

music collections in Canada, and word of mouth. Participants were included in the study if they have worked in a cultural heritage organization or with a local music collection (including librarians, archivists, volunteers, and community organizers) and if their collection was publicly accessible either in person or online. Conversely, participants were excluded if they were working with private collections, if they identified as a private collector, or if they were unable to speak about the topics of collecting or collection use. Participants worked in a variety of cultural heritage organizations including libraries (5, 27.8 percent), archives (4, 22.2 percent), folklore societies (3, 16.7 percent), arts organizations (2, 11.1 percent), museums (2, 11.1 percent), cultural centers (1, 5.6 percent), and community radio stations (1, 15.6 percent) and were categorized as serving particular communities (8, 44.4 percent), the public (6, 33.3 percent), the government (2, 11.1 percent), and higher education (2, 11.1 percent).

The qualitative interviewing portion of this project follows Seidman's methodological theory for phenomenological interviewing, which argues that human experience is temporal and transitory, that experience is subjective, that lived experience makes up the foundation of "phenomena," and that meaningfulness resides in the "act of attention" to that lived experience (Seidman 2013, 16–18). The interviews focused on capturing the reflections of participants as they describe their work, community relationships, and experiences, as they have understood them.

### *Procedure*

This study received an ethics exemption from the University of Saskatchewan on November 8, 2017, and an ethics approval from the University of Alberta on March 17, 2017. A research assistant scheduled site visits and interviews where collections are located. Interviews were conducted by one of the authors, following an interview guide with semistructured and open-

ended questions. Interviews explored the value of local music collections, community interactions, approaches to collecting local music, challenges, and participant backgrounds. Through site visits the authors gathered photos of collection holdings, storage areas, exhibits, and adjacent collection spaces. The Social Sciences Research Laboratory at the University of Saskatchewan undertook transcription and storage of the recorded interviews. If participants chose not to be recorded, interviewer notes and observations were included for data analysis instead of an interview transcript.

### *Coding and Data Analysis*

To understand the underlying connections within the transcribed text and images, we referred to the thematic and content analysis works of White and Marsh (2006), Lofland et al. (2006), and Saldaña (2016). We used Dedoose software to organize and code the interview transcript texts and photos, with both authors conducting collaborative coding of all transcripts. The first cycle of coding included elemental, affective, and procedural methods (Saldaña 2016, 68). Influenced by Lofland et al.'s units of social organization and aspects (2006), the codes were organized into four overarching categories in the first cycle of coding: (1) emotional aspects, (2) domain and taxonomic aspects, (3) cognitive aspects, and (4) hierarchical aspects and inequalities. Codes relevant to the concept of “joy” and its related meanings were analyzed further to identify related themes within the data.

### LOCAL MUSIC COLLECTING AND PERSONALLY MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

Collectors shared their personally meaningful experiences (Gorichanaz 2019) of local music across a range of affective dimensions. These included joy and happiness, fun and humor,

excitement, pride, celebration and appreciation, inspiration, and spirituality, as drawn from positive affect codes established in our analysis. Additionally, three concepts on broader experiences that contain strong ties to joy and positive affect are included in these findings: emotion and feeling, personal meaning, and connection and reconnection. The following sections are thematic explorations of the joys of local music shared with us by collectors, connecting these findings to literature on occupational devotion, the pleasurable and profound in information science, and discussions of popular music and cultural heritage.

*Joy and Happiness: “I Think People Are Very Happy to Be Part of This History Piece Too”*

Among collectors, joyous experiences emerge as they recount the involvement of community members in their local music projects and the resulting sense of belonging experienced by them and community members alike. For example, as explained in an interview, this collector working at a public library describes a jury member’s appreciation for—and experiences of happiness with—their involvement in the selection process for a local music collecting project: “The jury’s exciting for artists. Like when the jury—those people on the jury listen— . . . they hear their songs when they submit. And that’s exciting . . . I think people are very happy to be part of this history piece too. I think becoming part of this local music history is a benefit for artists, you know and I think that’s what I hear is they’re excited about that idea” (Participant H, Public Library). Likewise, collectors experience joy and self-fulfillment by bringing local music collection projects to fruition and being able to combine their personal and professional interests in this work. This collector working at a public library recounts their excitement at being able to combine their personal interests in a workplace context, while also witnessing the rewards of seeing community members inspired: “I just—I mean this is my favorite project. It’s so much to

work on. It's very feel-good. Every—I don't know I just find it a very rewarding work and it's so much fun to see people get excited about music" (Participant H, Public Library). The mutual benefits enjoyed by collectors and users in these excerpts demonstrate how joy can be experienced through the sharing of "happy information" (Tinto and Ruthven 2016) with others. We see this among the collector who expressed joy upon observing jury members' personal satisfaction at being part of a local music project and, conversely, how their joy resulted in self-fulfillment on the part of the collector.

In the context of occupational devotion and the serious leisure perspective, these excerpts also highlight how collectors as occupational devotees find "deep self-fulfillment in their work" (Stebbins 2009a, 768). This deep sense of self-fulfillment evidenced in these excerpts is perhaps a direct result of the sense of belonging expressed, a durable benefit received through social interaction (Stebbins 2009a, 765–66) with local music community members.

*Fun and Humor: "I Try to Not Be Too Formal, Try to Crack Some Jokes"*

Connecting with local music communities in a cultural heritage context is sometimes characterized by a fun and humorous approach as a means of further fostering a sense of belonging. The intentional use of humor by this collector working in an academic library reveals how a lighthearted attitude that reflects the character of a local (popular) music community can aid in the collectors' interactions and connection with the community: "What we try to do is always be present at orientations to start, just so that there's a face to put to things, so that we seem approachable. I try to not be too formal, try to crack some jokes. It usually goes better with musicians 'cause they're younger and they're kinda there to have fun" (Participant K, Academic Library). Several collectors described how fun experiences resonated in a more meaningful way

to collectors. Reflecting on a meaningful local music event also elicits memories of fun experiences, such as this collector discussing an event their museum organized: “We went behind the scenes and interviewed volunteers, ’cause volunteers for festivals in particular, they wouldn’t exist without those dedicated volunteers . . . so that was a lot of fun—it was almost set up like a speakers’ corner where people could come in and share their stories” (Participant J, Museum). As we see in these excerpts, setting a humorous tone when working with community members and creating a fun and inviting atmosphere at a local music event are examples of the unique characteristics of this information practice (Savolainen 2007, 2008) and emulate a similar ethos found in local music scenes. This is reminiscent of Stebbins’s claim that a “unique ethos” surrounds serious leisure activities (2009a, 765–66). In this instance, the unique ethos of popular music scenes spills over to a cultural heritage context, revealing the overlap between the personal and professional in devotee work (Stebbins 2017a).

The oftentimes “outside-in” perspective that local music collectors in cultural heritage institutions occupy perhaps leads to their adoption of the character and tone of the music communities they hope to document, which in these excerpts is a lighthearted, less serious one. This is confirmed by Leach and Thomas, as they reflect on the mismatch between typical institutional approaches to music heritage as compared to anti-institutional mindsets of local music scenes: “The do-it-yourself ethos of a number of rock music offshoots and inclusive local music scenes are inherently anti-institutional . . . to many [in these scenes] the term ‘history’ implies something old and finished” (2018, 4). From a social worlds perspective, this also reflects Becker’s idea that communities organize themselves around “joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things” (1982, x) as a way of establishing cooperative activity and purpose.

*Excitement: “I Just Wanna See That Stuff Out in the World”*

Collectors are motivated by a desire to share the knowledge contained in their collections, and through doing so, demonstrate their own experiences of excitement, and self-fulfillment.

Reflecting on their excitement about a new acquisition, this collector working in a provincial archive highlights their desire to see a collection shared with the wider community and noticed by users, bridging both personal interest and professional interests: “I’ve been a fan, it’s just a really cool collection of stuff and he was a really interesting guy and did a lot of kooky stuff musically. . . . We’re just in the early stages of making that more accessible and getting the word out, so I’m hoping that’ll attract a lot of attention ’cause I just wanna see that stuff out in the world” (Participant T, Provincial Archive). The motivation to share local musical knowledge can also take on a more self-directed nature, as evidenced by this excerpt from a collector in a museum society, reflecting on their enjoyment at sharing music traditions with others: “Part of it is that I’m a storyteller, I like teaching people things. I like showing people things. There’s a certain amount of that selfish level, personal reason for doing it” (Participant O, Museum Society). The emphasis on sharing knowledge in these excerpts embodies Bates’s assertion that librarianship (and, by extension, other cultural heritage domains) operates within a strong values-based ethos centered on service and empowerment (1999, 1049). The collectors in these excerpts consider their work as both essential and meaningful—for themselves and others—and this is framed in relation to values such as the inherent benefit of sharing local music knowledge as well as a sense of personal satisfaction gained by doing so.

*Pride and Celebration: “On a Personal Level I’m Proud in a Humble Way”*

A culture centered on service and empowerment through knowledge sharing also extends to feelings of pride, as collectors describe their professional accomplishments related to local music collections, services, and programming. A collector working in an academic library reflects on the individual sense of accomplishment and pride they received through a local music project and in blending their personal and professional interests: “On a personal level I’m proud in a humble way, if that makes any sense, that an idea I had came to fruition with the support of my colleagues. . . . I was really happy when it got started, also the fact that my bosses gave me the time . . . to work on this. . . . That was pretty cool, ’cause as a musician I’m interested in this kind of stuff” (Participant H, Academic Library). Collectors’ feelings of pride sometimes go beyond the personal and spill over to the collective and take on a more active character focused on celebrating and appreciating the local music community, as this collector from an arts organization shares: “What we can do is use our position in the community to act as kind of a cheerleader for our members. So, we publish a newsletter that comes out every week which is full of concert listings and composer opportunities and composer news, and all that kind of thing. So, I’m always encouraging composers to submit whatever they’re working on. We’ll make an effort to put that out—to announce it, to celebrate that” (Participant D, Arts Organization). It is clear that the experiences of joy found through personal meaning making in these excerpts, which focus on personal and communal senses of pride and celebration, reflect local music collecting as a serious leisure, occupational devotee activity, which creates “outcomes for the person, social world, and communities within which the person is immersed” (Gallant, Arai, and Smale 2013, 104). In the first excerpt, we again see how the professional and the personal intersect through the serious leisure experience of local music collecting. In the second, we see

the role of the collector as supporting their community by celebrating and promoting it to others. These findings bring to mind those of Doi and Luyk (2019), in a survey of local music collection practices in Canadian cultural heritage institutions, which revealed the importance of community and relationship building in local music practice.

*Spirituality: “There Are People Who Really See This as a Special Place”*

Collectors sometimes describe their experiences and those of their users in ways that move beyond the epistemic and cognitive to the “contemplative” realms of experience (Gorichanaz and Latham 2019). This moves us into discussions of higher things and information (Kari and Hartel 2007). Place and space, in particular, are significant aspects as collectors recount their personally meaningful experiences with local music collections, such as this excerpt from a collector in an academic library describing how “special places” can inspire creators who participate in a residency program at their organization: “There are people who really see this as a special place, and it is, who are like, ‘yeah, I gotta go back, like I gotta go back.’ And I think it’s that environment that leads to creation of the music. It is a special place, and it doesn’t feel like people are just coming here with a fully formed idea and recording it or splitting, or performing and splitting. It’s like, they’re working on something here, and they’re adding to the body of knowledge or information that’s been going on since 1933, right?” (Participant K, Academic Library).

*Connection/Reconnection*

Place and space may be understood as literally part of the music and sound that collectors document, causing reflection on the important role that collection objects, as carriers of meaning,

play in connecting with communities. This collector at a museum reflects on the various ways that geography is part of the musical experience: “If you look at a collection like ours there are different ways that you can read sound into it and place into it. . . . For example, a musical instrument, in some cases you look at the materials that it’s made of and it’s geographically tied to—these are the trees that are available . . . these are the whale baleen that was available, they’re made of literally the earth from which they emerge, and the sound is connected absolutely to place” (Participant S, Museum). Connecting to family history through a local music collection is significant and impactful for users. This collector in an academic library recounts an especially meaningful moment for a user who discovered an aspect of their father’s life they were previously unaware of:

He knew his father came here, he wasn’t really sure why, and we came across one that was, it was a dance residency from the seventies and his dad was in the chorus I think for it, and performed. It was the only recording we have of it as a practice or a rehearsal. And he’s making a documentary . . . and his dad never talked about this part of his life. And his dad has since passed away so this is the only connection he has. . . . It’s a huge connection for him. It will play a larger part in the documentary, in that kinda narrative but on a personal basis, that’s a connection, a direct connection to his family and it means a lot to him. (Participant K, Academic Library)

Finally, the idea of connection also arises in discussions of collection use, specifically how one might connect or reconnect with personal history, forgotten stories, or the broader musical community. Collectors often use these acts of connection as examples of the importance of local music collecting or the value of collections, such as in this touching excerpt from a collector in a museum:

There was one case where I was interviewing a woman in southern Manitoba about songs she would have grown up with in a village, because I knew that we had recordings of her father from the early 1960s. . . . After we visited I was like, “Do you want to listen to these recordings that I brought of,” I’m sure I said, “of your father.” And we were listening and she was like, “Oh, he’s got such a wonderful voice!” And we were enjoying this, she’s in her eighties at the time, and I said something like, “Well, yeah, your father was a wonderful singer.” And she looked at me and she said, “This is my dad?” And she hadn’t even realized. I guess the nature of our correspondence, she hadn’t caught that one piece. (Participant S, Museum)

Our conversations with collectors demonstrate how local music collections elicit emotional responses on the part of users and collectors through acts of connection and reconnection, moving us toward considering local music collecting as an information practice that elicits experiences of higher things (Kari and Hartel 2007). Place and space, frameworks of particular importance to many forms of music (Baker et al. 2015), are one common way that collections, collectors, and users connect, as are connections to family histories. Further, the examples highlighted here bring to mind research on the “numinous experience” that places objects across a spectrum of meaning and significance for the numen seeker, ranging from the personal to the collective and the communal (Maines and Glynn 1993; Cameron and Gatewood 2000, 2003; Latham 2013, 11). Specifically, the person-document transaction and object link described by Latham as a “unique experience that can only happen between that person at that moment in that place with that object (document)” (2013, 12) appears in the user experiences collectors recount to us in these excerpts. An object “acts as a trigger or link, sparking the perceptions, thoughts,

and/or feelings of this encounter, and acts as evidence or a witness to the past” (9), activating deeply personal and meaningful experiences.

#### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

It is important to note that although positive affective experiences figured significantly in our findings, not all of them would be considered joyful. Because some of the collections in our study may represent past personal, familial, or cultural traumas, or elicit negative memories, some collection users and collectors reported negative affective experiences. Furthermore, some of the experiences shared were not necessarily either positive or negative but may have included a mix of positive and negative affective experiences.

Further research is needed to confirm the personally meaningful experiences of local music collection users, as the experiences shared in this article were from the perspective of collectors. It may also be possible to apply the serious leisure perspective to users of local music collections, given the potential for music as a serious leisure pursuit. Furthermore, a study of such users would develop deeper insight into the themes of community, connection and reconnection, and personal meaning making as they relate to local music collections. Place and its relationship to collection objects and spaces may also provide for productive future research, especially as it relates to collection objects of personal and community significance and their impact on users’ affective experiences with information.

#### CONCLUSION

Our interviews with local music collectors in Canadian cultural heritage organizations reveal a deep connection between work, personal interest, and personal fulfillment. Positive affect is

revealed to be a key factor in workplace well-being, motivation, community impact, and personal meaning. Collectors describe many joyful experiences in local music collecting, including workplace fun, happiness, inspiration, excitement, pride, celebration, appreciation, and even spiritual significance. The variety of positive feelings toward their work and its impact demonstrates a link between personal meaning in the workplace and beneficial outcomes for communities. While professional goals may factor into a collector's motivations, many identify personal motivations and fulfillment as keys to success; collectors are unique in their community-minded approach to work, often blending their professional and personal identities. Local music collecting stands as a distinct information practice that contains aspects of both serious leisure and work. As occupational devotees, this blended identity works to benefit a wide range of professional responsibilities; collectors are likely to find self-fulfillment through their connections to local communities and in bringing about positive affective experiences for others. This research invites reflection on the role of local music objects as triggers for joyful experiences and engages with research in library information sciences that looks at positive and profound experiences with information. In particular, the "local" plays a significant role in facilitating personally meaningful, memorable, and joyous experiences with information.

#### NOTE

1. We use the term "collectors" to describe the librarians, archivists, curators, and others involved in the collection, preservation, and dissemination of local music collections in cultural heritage organizations. Their active involvement in collecting local music artifacts varied. For example, many archival collections were expecting no further accruals, whereas some library collections were actively growing.

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