

**MUSIC
CITIES
AWARDS
2024**



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS REVIEW

A LIVING DATABASE OF INSPIRATION FOR MUSIC ADVOCATES STRIVING TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Cities may look and sound different.

But zoom in, and parallels emerge.

The way an after-school music workshop in South Africa—like the Kronendal Music Academy—manages to keep kids in class might be the solution to the same challenge faced by an El Sistema Youth Orchestra in Monterey, California.

Zoom in again.

The work Delia Arts is doing in war zones and areas of conflict—from Gaza to Lake Kivu—may offer insights to a project like Give Something Back to Berlin as it refines its music integration programs for migrants and refugees.

Zoom in once more.

Huntsville, Alabama's forward-thinking music policies could also serve as a model for untraditional music cities—Gold Coast, Sisaket, and beyond—on integrating music into urban development.

The Music Cities Awards exists to surface these stories, to connect these innovators, to share these solutions.

Music advocates are transforming cities everywhere and we need to learn from them. We need to be inspired by them.

And most of all, we need to recognize them—so their impact doesn't just last, but grows.

This is what the Music Cities Awards is about: a living database of ideas, proving that music isn't just culture—it's a catalyst for change.

And we have a responsibility to harness it.

Sound Diplomacy Events and Education is proud to present the results of the fifth edition of the Music Cities Awards, a global competition designed to recognize and celebrate the most outstanding uses of music to drive economic, social, environmental, and cultural development in cities and places around the world.

The 2024 edition received over 300 applications from 25 countries across six continents, competing in 11 categories—from “Best Global Music City” to awards recognizing projects at the intersection of music and health, diversity, education, youth engagement, real estate, sustainability, technology, and more.

The Awards Ceremony took place on the opening night of the 2024 Riyadh Music Cities Convention, on December 8th, 2024, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as part of Riyadh Music Week. Nine of the eleven winners attended in person to receive their awards, marking another milestone in the global movement to harness the power of music for positive change.

SOUND DIPLOMACY EVENTS & EDUCATION

Through its Music Cities Events brand, Sound Diplomacy Events & Education works to ensure that cities understand the transformational power of music for their communities and plan for it accordingly.

We do this by organising world-leading international conferences on the topic of music cities, producing the leading international awards ceremony Music Cities Awards, and running the Music Cities Community, the first-ever platform for professionals in all industries using music to create more value in towns, cities & places.

In everything we do, we aim to showcase the best uses of music by individuals, organisations and cities from all over the world.

UPCOMING GLOBAL EVENTS:

**Fayetteville AR Music Cities
Convention, Forum, September
16-18, 2024**

@Fayetteville, AR, USA

**Anguilla Music Tourism
Convention, November 4-6,
2024**

@The Valley, Anguilla



WHAT ARE THE MUSIC CITY AWARDS?

The Music Cities Awards is the most consolidated global platform that celebrates and recognizes outstanding organizations and initiatives shaping the future of local and global music ecosystems.

Since its launch in 2020, the Music Cities Awards has become a living database of inspiration for music advocates striving to create positive change in their communities.



PAST WINNERS INCLUDE

- Warner Music Group Global DEI Institute (Global)
- DGTL Festival (NLD)
- Diversify The Stage (USA)
- Auckland City of Music (NZD)
- Cidade da Música da Bahia (BRA)
- Ubunifu Arts Centre (KEN)
- Lead Foundation & Frida Amani (TZN)
- Bogota 24 Hours Nighttime Economy Initiative (COL)



PAST JURORS INCLUDE

- Richard Florida, Author: The Rise of The Creative Class (CAN)
- Silja Fischer, Secretary General, International Music Council (FRA)
- Brian Ritchie, Bassist Violent Femmes (AUS)
- Angela Ndambuki, Regional Director for Sub-Saharan Africa, IFPI (KEN)
- Kristen Chan, Manager, National Arts Council Singapore (SGP)

APPLY FOR THE 2025 EDITION OF THE CONTEST



The call for applications for the 2025 edition of the Music Cities Awards is now open. The Awards Ceremony will be taking place at the Opening Night of the Fayetteville Arkansas Music Cities Convention, on September 16th, 2025.

Follow this link to learn all
about the contest and apply:
WWW.MUSICCITIESEVENTS.COM/AWARDS



WE WANT TO THANK THE SUPPORT OF THIS YEAR'S SPONSORS:



Levitt Foundation - Presenter of: "Best Organisation or Individual Supporting Music in their City Category"

The Levitt Foundation supports free, high-quality live music in public spaces to foster community and cultural inclusivity.

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources -

Come Hear NC Programme - Presenter of: "Best Initiative Using Music for Economic, Social or Community Development Category"

Come Hear NC, by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, celebrates the state's rich musical heritage through events, storytelling, and initiatives promoting local artists, venues, and music tourism, such as the Musicians Murals Trails



THE CATEGORIES OF THE 2025 MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

1	Best Global Music City, presented by Experience Fayetteville	17
2	Best Initiative to Support Diversity & Inclusion in Music	21
3	Best Initiative to Support Music Education & Career Development	25
4	Best Music Tourism Initiative	29
5	Best Initiative Using Music to Improve Health & Wellbeing	33
6	Best Initiative Using Music to Support Environmental Sustainability	37
7	Best Initiative Using Music for Economic, Social or Community Development - Presented by North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources	41
8	Best Night-Time Economy Initiative	45
9	Best Use of Music in Real Estate or City Planning	49
10	Best Organisation or Individual Supporting Music in their City	53
11	Best Digital Innovation to Support Musicians or Music in Cities	57

THE JURY

Our 2024 Music Cities Awards Jury was composed of an inclusive global mix of music cities professionals, from economic development managers, educators, creative industry executives to leading diversity professionals.



DR CHRISTINA BALICO (GBR)

LECTURER, SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE,
LITERATURE, MUSIC AND VISUAL
CULTURE, UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

Dr. Christina Ballico, a lecturer at the University of Aberdeen, studies music and place, focusing on place-based industries and scenes. She edited *Geographically Isolated and Peripheral Music Scenes* (2021) and co-edited *Music Cities: Evaluating a Global Policy Concept* (2020).

ANNIKA PARK (HKG)

FREELANCE STRATEGIST,
BRAND/CULTURE/INNOVATION

Annika Park is a Senior Strategist specializing in regional brand strategy, cultural research, and innovation consulting. Born in Korea and raised in Singapore, she holds a BA in Government and Education Policy from Dartmouth College. Now a Third Culture Adult, she lives in Hong Kong.



THE JURY



ENRIQUE AVOGADRO (ARG)

CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PROMOTER,
PULMÓN CREATIVO

Enrique Avogadro is a cultural activist and policy maker, formerly Minister of Culture of Buenos Aires and Vice Minister of Culture of Argentina. A leading voice in Latin America, he champions creative industries and cultural entrepreneurship through innovative policies.

HELEN GLENGARRY (AUS)

MUSIC INDUSTRY LEAD, CITY OF GOLD
COAST

With over 20 years of experience, she fosters the Gold Coast's music scene as an industry lead for the City, promoting strategic investment in the sector. Formerly Director of Performances at WellingtonNZ, she specializes in programming and producing events across venues, supporting musicians, and driving industry opportunities within government.



THE JURY



KHADIJA EL BENNAOUI (UAE)

HEAD OF PERFORMING ARTS,
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND
TOURISM ABU DHABI

Khadija El Bennaoui, a creative agent, pioneered Art Moves Africa in 2005. Head of Performing Arts in Abu Dhabi, she teaches at NYU Abu Dhabi and consults for UNESCO and others, fostering independent arts and cultural sectors in the Global South.

LEE "BOO" MITCHELL (USA)

GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING ENGINEER,
PRODUCER, COMPOSER, OWNER, ROYAL
STUDIOS

Lawrence "Boo" Mitchell, a GRAMMY-winning producer and owner of Royal Studios, continues his father Willie Mitchell's legacy. He co-produced Uptown Funk, worked with Al Green and Bruno Mars, and shaped Memphis music, earning a GRAMMY for Cedric Burnside's I Be Trying.



THE JURY



NADA ALHELABI (KSA)

GENERAL MANAGER,
MDLBEAST FOUNDATION

Nada Alhelabi, MDLBEAST Foundation's Managing Director and XP Music Futures lead, drives Saudi Arabia's music industry growth. A Berklee graduate with an MA in Global Entertainment, she integrates music therapy into her work, advocating for its benefits through key initiatives.

PANOS A. PANAY (USA)

PRESIDENT, RECORDING ACADEMY

Panos A. Panay, President of the Recording Academy®, drives business growth, partnerships, and global expansion. Formerly SVP at Berklee, he founded the Institute for Creative Entrepreneurship and led key initiatives. An MIT fellow, he's recognized in Fast Company and Inc. Magazine.



THE JURY



RAOUL RUGAMBA (RWA)

FOUNDER AT HOBE AGENCY
& AFRICA IN COLORS

Founder and CEO of Hobe Agency, established in Rwanda in 2015, they lead creative communication and event management. Since 2018, they've developed Africa in Colors, fostering Africa's creative industry, job creation, global partnerships, and investment in African content and business collaborations.

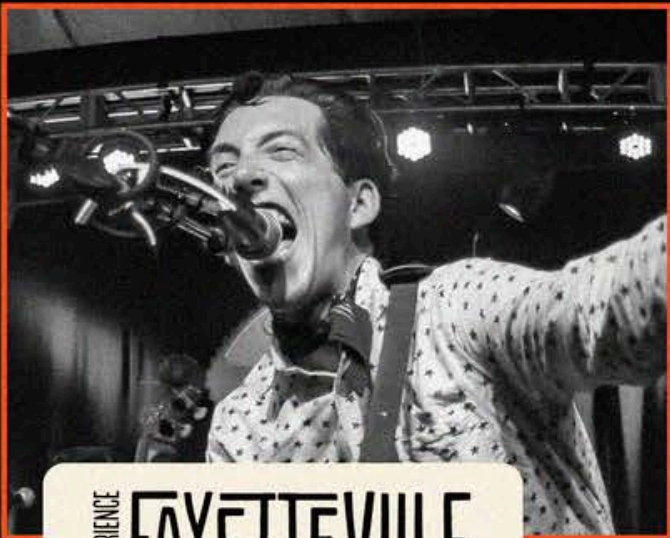
TOY SELECTAH (MEX)

PLATINUM RECORD SALES PRODUCER/
CEO, WORLDWIDE RECORDS

Toy Selectah, a Monterrey-born musician, producer, and DJ, pioneered hip-hop in Latin America with Control Machete. He produced Celso Piña's Cumbia Sobre el Río, shaping New Cumbia. He directs Worldwide Records and is the curator for the sonic ID's of Monterrey for FIFA 2026 World Cup.



Turn it Up **VILLE**



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ARKANSAS

**Ready to crank it up?
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**MEET THE
WINNERS OF
THE 2024
MUSIC CITIES
AWARDS**

CATEGORY #1

BEST GLOBAL MUSIC CITY, PRESENTED BY EXPERIENCE FAYETTEVILLE

EXPERIENCE FAYETTEVILLE

WINNER

SALVADOR CITY HALL (BRAZIL)

Salvador, Brazil's first capital, is a UNESCO Creative City of Music, celebrating its Afro-Brazilian heritage. Home to 2.61 million people, it thrives on music-driven tourism, commerce, and the world's largest street party—Salvador's Carnival—solidifying its status as a cultural powerhouse.



RUNNER UPS:

LONDON CITY OF MUSIC (CAN)

London, Canada's only UNESCO City of Music, fosters a thriving music sector with top institutions, award-winning talent, and major events. Its Music Strategy drives social and economic growth, hosting the 2024 UNESCO Cities of Music meetings to strengthen global connections.

CITY OF BRAMPTON (CAN)

The city's initiatives include "Performing Arts in Brampton", part of Cultural Services, which runs year-round across five venues. The This is Brampton series mentors local artists, while co-presentations and guest programs support organizations. Garden Square offers free entertainment, fostering a diverse and vibrant cultural community.



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY SALVADOR MUSIC CITY



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

What Is It: Salvador is Brazil's first capital and fifth most populous city. As the capital of Bahia, Salvador thrives on the rhythm of music, fostering social cohesion in its vibrant, multicultural community. The city is the birthplace of many globally renowned artists such as Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso, and of many music genres including tropicalismo, axé, bossa nova and samba. It was also in Salvador that the “trio elétrico”, a truck popularly used as a mobile stage for large outdoor music events due to its high power sound system, was created.¹

Salvador's multicultural community, and particularly its Afro-Brazilian heritage, is appreciated through numerous cultural events, earning the city its reputation as Brazil's most festive and musical destination. Bahian Carnival, the world's largest street party attracting 2 million people celebrating throughout 25 kilometres of the city's streets, avenues and squares for an entire week each year, transforms Salvador with afro blocks parading their African roots, and electric trios showcasing Brazilian music. More recently, contemporary festivals

such as Afropunk and the Salvador Capital Afro Festival merge modernity with the city's traditions and roots.²

Who Is Responsible: The City of Salvador, UNESCO Creative Cities, Music Cities Events.³

What Has It Done: In Salvador, public spaces are ideal stages to promote culture, and music in particular. This allows the city to hold the massive Bahian Carnival, which represents over \$248 million dollars of financial transactions, and is responsible for promoting the local music industry on an international scale.

¹ UNESCO Creative Cities Network, “Salvador”, accessed January 22, 2024,

<https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities/salvador>

² Visit Brazil, “Salvador”, accessed January 22, 2024,

<https://visitbrasil.com/en/location/salvador-en/> and

UNESCO Creative Cities Network, “Salvador”,

accessed January 22, 2024,

<https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities/salvador>

³ Salvador, Bahia, “Homepage”, accessed January

22, 2024, <https://secult.salvador.ba.gov.br/> and

UNESCO Creative Cities Network, “Salvador”,

accessed January 22, 2024,

<https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities/salvador>

and

Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024

Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024,

[https://www.musiccitiesevents.com/post/meet-the-](https://www.musiccitiesevents.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards)

[winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards](https://www.musiccitiesevents.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards)

This caused a significant increase of multilevel partnerships, as well as employment opportunities.⁴

Salvador's creative economy thus largely relies on the music sector, which is placed at the core of the city's social and economic development plans. In particular, the Sound Incubator project supports the emergence of music businesses and the promotion of local music bands on the international stage. In the framework of the network Brasil Criativo, setup by the Ministry of Culture, Salvador steps up its efforts through a wide range of capacity building programmes based on creative competences to make creativity a key enabler of inclusive and sustainable urban development.⁵

Additionally, a variety of museums record the importance of Salvador for national culture. This includes Cidade Da Música, a museum that aims to share the music vibrancy of the city to visitors through an exhibit that covers four floors and is full of immersive experiences.⁶

Salvador's efforts to support its local music ecosystem, and its rich Afro-Brazilian cultural influences and talent lead the city to be designated as a UNESCO Creative City of Music. Salvador was also honored as the "Best Global Music City" at the 2024 Music Cities Awards,

an internationally recognized platform celebrating individuals and organisations who use the power of music to transform their communities.⁷

Relevance: Salvador exemplifies the power of a thriving musical scene and heritage to shape a city's identity and future. With a government dedicated to social transformation and cultural preservation, the city's innovative projects not only celebrate creativity and cultural significance but also highlight the profound economic and social benefits music brings to urban life. This unique blend of tradition and innovation drives economic growth and tourism, boosts local commerce, and positions Salvador as a global creative hub.

⁴ UNESCO Creative Cities Network, "Salvador", accessed January 22, 2024,

<https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities/salvador>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Music Cities Events, "The museum that celebrates the music vibrancy of Salvador da Bahia, Brazil: Cidade Da Música", accessed January 22, 2024, https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/music_museum_cidade_da_musica

⁷ Music Cities Events, "Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!", accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

CATEGORY #2

BEST INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN MUSIC



WINNER

MIAMI MUSIC PROJECT, INC. (USA)

Miami Music Project (MMP) empowers underprivileged youth through music, mentorship, and academic support. Over 15 years, it has impacted 30,000+ students, boosting confidence, grades, and leadership skills. MMP fosters opportunity, community, and social change, earning the 2024 Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency.



RUNNER UPS:

CHEZACHEZA DANCE FOUNDATION (KEN)

ChezaCheza, a Kenyan non-profit, empowers marginalized youth through dance and music. Providing safe spaces in schools and refugee camps, it fosters mental well-being, social-emotional skills, and life education, helping vulnerable children build resilience, navigate challenges, and reach their full potential.

DELIA ARTS FOUNDATION (GLOBAL)

The Delia Arts Foundation empowers at-risk youth through music education, training, and infrastructure in underserved communities. It builds music centers, provides resources, and supports artists in conflict zones like Gaza, fostering cultural resilience, economic empowerment, and safe spaces for creative growth.

KEYCHANGE (GLOBAL)

Keychange, launched in 2017, promotes gender equity in music across 13 countries. Supporting 74 artists annually with development, mentoring, and festival visibility, it drives systemic change through the Keychange Pledge, uniting 620+ signatories worldwide to foster a more inclusive industry.



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY MIAMI MUSIC PROJECT



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

What Is It: Miami Music Project (MMP) is a nonprofit organization that uses music to drive social change. Through music education and performance programs, it empowers children - especially underprivileged youth - with essential values and skills, helping them reach their full potential and make a positive impact on their communities. MMP's mission is to: ¹

- Develop values of the community such as sharing and teamwork
- Develop creativity, discipline, perseverance and self-esteem
- Inspire people to reach excellence through their own efforts
- Improve the school performance of children
- Strengthen the unity of families
- Develop children's social emotional learning, to help them recognize and manage emotions, build healthy relationships, make responsible decisions, and demonstrate empathy. ²

MMP achieves these objectives via the following programs:

- Children's Orchestras (free afterschool music orchestras of five different levels) ³
- Summer Music Camp (intensive four-week camp for students, leading up to a grand finale performance) ⁴
- Young Musicians Development (year-round program equipping talented youth with the resources necessary to become professional artists, educators, and leaders in the South Florida community) ⁵

¹ Miami Music Project, "Mission", accessed March 10, 2025, <https://miamimusicproject.org/about/>

² Miami Music Project, "2024 Annual Report", accessed March 10, 2025, <https://miamimusicproject.org/2024-annual-report/>

³ Miami Music Project, "Children's Orchestras", accessed March 10, 2025, https://miamimusicproject.org/childrens_orchestras/

⁴ Miami Music Project, "Summer Music Camp", accessed March 10, 2025, <https://miamimusicproject.org/summer-music-camp/>

⁵ Miami Music Project, "Young Musicians Development Program", accessed March 10, 2025, <https://miamimusicproject.org/pathways-young-musicians-development-program/>

- Teaching artist training (equips teaching artists with the tools and skills needed to improve their teaching practice, including workshops and expert coaching experiences) ⁶
- Enrichment Opportunities (mentoring and performance opportunities alongside renowned musicians and institutions around the nation) ⁷
- Orchestra Boot Camps (six to eight intensive workshops featuring guest artists and instructors, held on non-school days throughout the school year and serving up to eighty students each. Focus on audition preparation for summer camps, solo performance master classes, and community outreach concert intensive rehearsals.) ⁸
- Events and performances opportunities (concerts, showcases, webinars, etc.) ⁹

Who Is Responsible: MMP is a nonprofit supported by many organizations, funds and donors including the National Endowment for the Arts, Florida Arts and Culture, and the Knight Foundation. ¹⁰

What Has It Done: In 2024, Miami Music Project (MMP) served 861 diverse students through orchestras, a summer camp, and bootcamps, providing an average of 576 teaching hours per student and organizing 30 performances. ¹¹

Beyond music, students showed academic, social, and emotional growth, reporting increased confidence and better emotional regulation. ¹²

MMP received the 2024 Music Cities Award for “Best Initiative to Support Diversity & Inclusion in Music,” ¹³ chosen among 300 applicants from 19 countries, recognizing its 16-year mission of using music to drive social change and youth development. ¹⁴

⁶ Miami Music Project, “Teaching Artist Training Institute”, accessed March 10, 2025,

<https://miamimusicproject.org/teaching-artist-training-institute/> and “Teaching Artist Training”, <https://miamimusicproject.org/teachers-training-program/>

⁷ Miami Music Project, “Enrichment Opportunities”, accessed March 10, 2025,

<https://miamimusicproject.org/enrichment-opportunities/>

⁸ Miami Music Project, “Orchestra Boot Camps”, accessed March 10, 2025,

<https://miamimusicproject.org/orchestra-boot-camps/>

⁹ Miami Music Project, “events and performance opportunities”, accessed March 10, 2025,

<https://miamimusicproject.org/events-and-performance-opportunities/>

¹⁰ Miami Music Project, “Partners”, accessed March 10, 2025,

<https://miamimusicproject.org/about/partners/>

¹¹ Miami Music Project, “2024 Annual Report”, accessed March 10, 2025,

<https://miamimusicproject.org/2024-annual-report/>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024,

<https://www.musiccitiesevents.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

¹⁴ Miami Music Project, “2024 Annual Report”, accessed March 10, 2025,

<https://miamimusicproject.org/2024-annual-report/>

CATEGORY #3

BEST INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT MUSIC EDUCATION & CAREER DEVELOPMENT



WINNER

FUNDAÇÃO ORQUESTRA SINFÔNICA BRASILEIRA (BRA)

Founded in 1940, the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra (OSB) pioneers innovation, touring nationally and abroad to democratize cultural access. A cultural heritage of Rio de Janeiro, OSB preserves Brazil's musical legacy while its Youth Orchestra fosters diversity and career opportunities in classical music.



RUNNER UPS:

THE PUSH - YOUTH MUSIC ORGANISATION (AUS)

The Push, a Melbourne-based youth music charity, has empowered millions for over 30 years. It provides access to music programs, fosters emerging talent, and connects youth with industry opportunities, shaping Australia's music scene and nurturing future music leaders.

THE RECSHOP CIC (GBR)

The RecShop provides a safe space for youth (11-25) to develop skills through free studio time, workshops, performances, and work experience. Supporting creative programs through venue hire, events, and a café/bar, we empower young artists to thrive and connect through music.



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY

FUNDAÇÃO ORQUESTRA SINFÔNICA BRASILEIRA



MUSIC
CITIES
AWARDS

What Is It: Founded in 1940, the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra (OSB) is one of Brazil's most esteemed symphonic ensembles. As the first Brazilian orchestra to tour both nationally and internationally, perform in open-air venues, and develop audience engagement initiatives, OSB plays a key role in democratizing cultural access. It embodies the connection between musical tradition and cultural heritage, preserving and promoting the legacy of Brazilian music. Recognized as a cultural heritage of the state of Rio de Janeiro, the OSB contributes to Brazil's national identity while bridging past and future through music.¹

The OSB runs several impactful educational programs including:²

- The Orchestra in the Classroom program: a partnership with the Municipal Department of Education and the Brazilian Conservatory of Music - University Center, integrates concert music into education. In the first stage, teachers attend workshops, receive materials, and discuss concert music to

share with their students. In the second stage, students, already familiar with the repertoire, attend a Youth Concert, enhancing their musical engagement and learning.

- The Youth OSB Orchestra promotes musical development, orchestral experience, and career opportunities while advancing diversity and representation in Brazil's concert spaces.
- The Link Up program: a year-long program integrates musical education into elementary schools, culminating in an interactive concert where students perform on the flute alongside the OSB.
- Conexões Musicais: a social responsibility and cultural outreach program that promotes music education and engagement in communities across Brazil. Active in 38 cities across 11 states, the initiative offers instrument

¹ Orquestra Sinfonica Brasileira, "Brazilian Symphony Orchestra", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/a-orquestra>

² Orquestra Sinfonica Brasileira, "education", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/educacao>

lessons, choral singing classes, and educational concerts. It operates permanent centers in São Paulo and Baixada Fluminense and continues to expand to new regions. Through its partnership with the Vale Música program, OSB musicians provide instruction in multiple cities, while select students participate in immersive training in Rio de Janeiro. Additionally, the Conexões Musicais Incubator supports small cultural projects in Rio de Janeiro's metropolitan area by offering training in management, fundraising, and cultural policy.³

- OSB Jovem: a program dedicated to supporting the next generation of Brazilian musicians by providing a comprehensive training experience. The program offers young musicians the opportunity to refine their instrumental technique, expand their repertoire, and receive mentorship from renowned professionals, contributing to the renewal of the country's music scene.⁴

Who Is Responsible: The Fundação Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira is a nonprofit organization that oversees the activities of the OSB and its artistic branches, supporting a legacy that spans nearly 80 years.⁵

What Has It Done: The OSB has played a key role in Brazil's cultural

development, performing over 5,000 concerts and collaborating with renowned musicians nationally and internationally.⁶ It has educated generations of musicians, brought music education to multiple states,⁷ and offered over 1,500 hours of instruction in 30 cities.⁸ In 2024, it won the Music Cities Award for "Best Initiative to Support Music Education & Career Development."⁹

Relevance: As it celebrates 85 years, the OSB views its legacy as an ongoing mission. Each artistic and educational effort advances its goal of using music for social change, with the 2025 season focusing on building the future of music through intergenerational exchange and societal engagement.¹⁰

³ Ibid.

⁴ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "Jovem", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/osbjovem>

⁵ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "homepage", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/>

⁶ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "Brazilian Symphony Orchestra", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/a-orquestra>

⁷ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "Brazilian Symphony Orchestra turns 85 in 2025", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/post/orquestra-sinfonica-brasileira-completa-85-anos-em-2025>

⁸ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "education", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/educacao>

⁹ Music Cities Events, "Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!", accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

¹⁰ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "Brazilian Symphony Orchestra turns 85 in 2025", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/post/orquestra-sinfonica-brasileira-completa-85-anos-em-2025>

CATEGORY #4

BEST MUSIC TOURISM INITIATIVE

QLD MUSIC TRAILS

WINNER

QUEENSLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL (AUS)

QMF, a strategic music agency in Queensland, tackles social, cultural, and economic challenges through music. Engaging 1M+ people since 1999, its Queensland Music Trails activate underutilized locations, boost tourism, and showcase local talent, fostering community engagement and cultural connections statewide.



RUNNER UPS:

MUXIC: MEXICO MUSIC TOURISM OFFICE (MEX)

MUXIC, Mexico's first Music Tourism Office, promotes the country's music scene globally. Based in Mexico City, it fosters cultural exchange, supports industry growth, and enhances visibility through a digital platform, boutique markets, education, and partnerships, positioning Mexico as a key music tourism destination.

FUNDACIÓN AMIGOS DEL YUNQUE, INC (PRI)

Fundación Amigos de El Yunque (FADEY), a nonprofit supporting El Yunque National Forest in Puerto Rico, promotes conservation, education, and responsible recreation. Through community engagement, green jobs, and sustainability initiatives, FADEY enhances the local environment while preserving its social and ecological resources.



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY QUEENSLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

What Is It: Queensland Music Festival (QMF) is a strategic music and cultural tourism agency in Queensland, Australia, that aims to harness the transformative power of music for building stronger communities and fostering cultural connections throughout Queensland, by enhancing community engagement and promoting local talent.¹

QMF was created in 1999 to give all Queenslanders access to world-class live music. The organisation has worked with leading artists and communities to produce signature events, tours, and mass-participation music experiences; and created innovative public music installations.²

QMF's remit has evolved over the past 20 years to incorporate a diverse range of music programs that respond to Queensland's social, cultural and economic challenges. Its present transformation from biennial festival organisation to strategic music agency is a natural progression of this evolution, and a response to the demand for engaging, innovative solutions to the

demand for engaging, innovative solutions to the complex problems of today.³

Its flagship initiative, Queensland Music Trails, features unique driveable itineraries of music events that promote tourism and activate underutilized locations like beaches and heritage sites. Each trail features a broad musical style that best evokes its distinct geography and caters to diverse audiences and musical genres, covering an area seven times the size of Great Britain.⁴

¹ QMF Strategy, "QMF Strategic Plan 2024-28", accessed March 14, 2025, <https://qmf.org.au/app/uploads/2024/06/QMF-STRATEGY-Digital.pdf> and Music Cities Events, "Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!", accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

² Queensland Music Festival, "Our History", accessed March 14, 2025, <https://qmf.org.au/about/>

³ Ibid.

lessons, choral singing classes, and educational concerts. It operates permanent centers in São Paulo and Baixada Fluminense and continues to expand to new regions. Through its partnership with the Vale Música program, OSB musicians provide instruction in multiple cities, while select students participate in immersive training in Rio de Janeiro. Additionally, the Conexões Musicais Incubator supports small cultural projects in Rio de Janeiro's metropolitan area by offering training in management, fundraising, and cultural policy.³

- OSB Jovem: a program dedicated to supporting the next generation of Brazilian musicians by providing a comprehensive training experience. The program offers young musicians the opportunity to refine their instrumental technique, expand their repertoire, and receive mentorship from renowned professionals, contributing to the renewal of the country's music scene.⁴

Who Is Responsible: The Fundação Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira is a nonprofit organization that oversees the activities of the OSB and its artistic branches, supporting a legacy that spans nearly 80 years.⁵

What Has It Done: The OSB has played a key role in Brazil's cultural

development, performing over 5,000 concerts and collaborating with renowned musicians nationally and internationally.⁶ It has educated generations of musicians, brought music education to multiple states,⁷ and offered over 1,500 hours of instruction in 30 cities.⁸ In 2024, it won the Music Cities Award for "Best Initiative to Support Music Education & Career Development."⁹

Relevance: As it celebrates 85 years, the OSB views its legacy as an ongoing mission. Each artistic and educational effort advances its goal of using music for social change, with the 2025 season focusing on building the future of music through intergenerational exchange and societal engagement.¹⁰

³ Ibid.

⁴ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "Jovem", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/osbjovem>

⁵ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "homepage", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/>

⁶ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "Brazilian Symphony Orchestra", accessed March 13, 2025, <https://www.osb.com.br/a-orquestra>

⁷ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "Brazilian Symphony Orchestra turns 85 in 2025", accessed March 13, 2025,

<https://www.osb.com.br/post/orquestra-sinfonica-brasileira-completa-85-anos-em-2025>

⁸ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "education", accessed March 13, 2025,

<https://www.osb.com.br/educacao>

⁹ Music Cities Events, "Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!", accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

¹⁰ Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira, "Brazilian Symphony Orchestra turns 85 in 2025", accessed March 13, 2025,

<https://www.osb.com.br/post/orquestra-sinfonica-brasileira-completa-85-anos-em-2025>

CATEGORY #5

BEST INITIATIVE USING MUSIC TO IMPROVE HEALTH & WELLBEING



WINNER

CENTRAL FLORIDA COMMUNITY ARTS (CFCARTS) (USA)

Central Florida Community Arts (CFCArts) fosters connection and inclusivity through music. Since 2010, it has engaged 1,000+ members in choirs, orchestras, and big bands, partnering with schools and social services to support diverse communities and combat social isolation through the arts.



RUNNER UPS:

BYE BYE PLASTIC FOUNDATION (FRA)

Bye Bye Plastic, co-founded by BLOND:ISH, is a women-led nonprofit eliminating single-use plastics in the music industry. Empowering artists, DJs, and fans, it fosters a sustainability ecosystem, using music's influence to drive environmental change and promote a plastic-free culture.

CLUBHOUSE GHANA (GHA)

Clubhouse Ghana, West Africa's first Clubhouse-franchised rehabilitation center, supports individuals with mental health conditions through advocacy, skills training, education, and healthcare. As a Clubhouse International member, it fosters dignity, self-sufficiency, and reintegration through employment, housing assistance, and community support.



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY

CENTRAL FLORIDA COMMUNITY ARTS



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

What Is It: Central Florida Community Arts (CFCArts) is a dynamic organization that promotes community building, connection and self-expression through the arts.¹

The organization collaborates with local governments, schools, local nonprofits, and social service providers to offer specialized programs for diverse groups.²

CFCArts offers arts learning and performance opportunities as part of the following programs, that celebrate community:³

- Community choir
- Symphony orchestra
- Big band
- Youth theatre program
- Performing arts summer camps for children and teens
- The Narrators program, a non-auditioned acting program for older adults (55+) designed to foster cognitive health and positive aging through participation in theatre arts.

- The Upbeat program, an artistic platform for youth, teen, and adult exceptional learners and neurodivergent performers.

CFCArts is committed to diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion, and belonging, and all the opportunities it offers are intended for individuals of all abilities.⁴

¹ Music Cities Events, "Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!", accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiessounds.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

² Central Florida Community Arts, "About us", accessed March 18, 2025, <https://cfcarts.com/About/>

³ Central Florida Community Arts, "Perform", accessed March 18, 2025, <https://cfcarts.com/perform/>

⁴ Central Florida Community Arts, "About us", accessed March 18, 2025, <https://cfcarts.com/About/>

Who Is Responsible: Central Florida Community Arts is a nonprofit organization supported by the State of Florida Division of Arts and Culture, the City of Orlando, the University of Central Florida, and private sponsors and donors.⁵

What Has It Done: CFCArts serves as a sanctuary for self-expression and belonging, providing a nurturing environment for all participants to thrive while combating social isolation through the transformative power of music and the arts.⁶ Since its inception in 2010, CFCArts has gathered over 1,000 members participating in its programs.⁷

In 2024, Central Florida Community Arts was honored as the “Best Initiative Using Music to Improve Health & Wellbeing ” by the Music Cities Awards, an internationally recognized platform celebrating individuals and organisations who use the power of music to transform their communities.⁸

5 Central Florida Community Arts, “Support us”, accessed March 18, 2025, <https://cfcart.com/give/>

6 Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

7 Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

8 Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

CATEGORY #6

BEST INITIATIVE USING MUSIC TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



WINNER

BYE BYE PLASTIC FOUNDATION (FRA)

Bye Bye Plastic, co-founded by BLOND:ISH, is a women-led nonprofit eliminating single-use plastics in the music industry. Empowering artists, DJs, and fans, it fosters collaboration and drives sustainability efforts, using music's influence to promote a plastic-free, eco-conscious culture.



RUNNER UPS:

CLIMATE MACHINE AT MIT (USA)

The Climate Machine, based at MIT, helps the music industry tackle climate change through data analysis, AI, and immersive experiences. It assesses live event emissions, uses VR/AR to engage audiences, and drives sustainability awareness and action within the music community.

ESNS ECO TAX (NDL)

The Solidarity Eco Tax is an initiative by Eurosonic Noorderslag (ESNS) to offset the carbon emissions from attendee travel. Introduced in 2022, it adds €12.50 to each ticket, funding sustainable travel and reforestation projects. Approximately 75% of ticket buyers participated in its first year.

MIT Climate Machine



ENVIRONMENTAL
SOLUTIONS
INITIATIVE



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY BYE BYE PLASTIC FOUNDATION



MUSIC
CITIES
AWARDS

What Is It: Bye Bye Plastic (BBP) is an international nonprofit organisation focused on eliminating single-use plastics in the music industry to restore ecological balance. Utilising music as a powerful social connector, the organisation aims to inspire grassroots artists and music lovers to create sustainability waves that promote a plastic-free culture. By fostering a sustainability ecosystem, the initiative encourages collaboration among artists, event professionals, and fans, amplifying the movement for a more environmentally conscious music scene.¹

Its key initiative, the Eco-Rider tool, was conceived as a way to send one small but crucial message: a need for small actionable steps for DJs to adhere to, for change to happen within the music industry. When a DJ or artist adopts the Eco-Rider, they commit to requesting that the venues and events they play at provide a single-use plastic-free DJ booth. And when a venue or event adopts the Eco-Rider as a standard, they bridge the gap and officialise their efforts to go single-use and plastic free, kindly asking for all of their guests' help.²

Who Is Responsible: Bye Bye Plastic is a women-led grassroots nonprofit legally registered in the Netherlands as Stichting Bye Bye Plastic Foundation and in the United States as Music for Movement, Inc. (dba Bye Bye Plastic USA).³

¹ Bye Bye Plastic Foundation, "Who We Are", accessed March 21, 2025,

<https://www.byebyeplastic.life/who-we-are>

² Bye Bye Plastic Foundation, "Eco-Rider", accessed March 21, 2025,

<https://www.byebyeplastic.life/eco-rider>

³ Bye Bye Plastic Foundation, "Who We Are", accessed March 21, 2025,

<https://www.byebyeplastic.life/who-we-are>

What Has It Done: Bye Bye Plastic has inspired thousands of artists and event promoters to back the initiative since launching in 2018, through the #PlasticFreeParty movement and Eco Riders.⁴

The organisation has partnered and consulted with industry giants such as International Music Summit (IMS) and SXM Festival, and led sustainability panels at ADE Green, IMS, Brighton Music Conference and beyond.⁵

In 2024, the Bye Bye Plastic Foundation was honored as the “Best Initiative Using Music to Support Environmental Sustainability ” by the Music Cities Awards, an internationally recognized platform celebrating individuals and organisations who use the power of music to transform their communities.⁶

⁴ Bye Bye Plastic Foundation, “DJs and Artists”, accessed March 21, 2025,

<https://www.byebyeplastic.life/djs-artists>

⁵ Bye Bye Plastic Foundation, “Who We Are”, accessed March 21, 2025,

<https://www.byebyeplastic.life/who-we-are> and

International Music Summit, “homepage”, accessed March 21, 2025,

<https://www.internationalmusicsummit.com/> and

SXM Festival, “homepage”, accessed March 21,

2025, <https://www.sxmfestival.com/> and

ADE Green, “homepage”, accessed March 21, 2025,

[https://www.amsterdam-dance-event.nl/en/ade-](https://www.amsterdam-dance-event.nl/en/ade-green/)

[green/](https://www.amsterdam-dance-event.nl/en/ade-green/) and

Brighton Music Conference, “homepage”, accessed

March 21, 2025,

<https://www.brightonmusicconference.co.uk/>

⁶ Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024,

<https://www.musiccitiessummit.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

CATEGORY #7

BEST INITIATIVE USING MUSIC FOR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL OR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



WINNER

FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE LA CANCIÓN DE VIÑA DEL MAR (CHI)

Viña del Mar, renowned for its culture and coastal beauty, hosts Latin America's largest music festival since 1960, featuring stars like Elton John. The festival boosts tourism and economy, while landmarks like Wulff Castle and Quinta Vergara enrich its vibrant appeal.



RUNNER UPS:

4:AM AGENCY (CRO)

4:am agency curates cultural events, music festivals, and nightlife experiences. We run RNB Confusion, Croatia's longest-running R&B/hip-hop night, Sutra Je Subota parties, Spotlight art exhibitions, and Croatia's only Food Truck Festival, attracting 15,000+ visitors annually while celebrating music and arts.

MDLBEAST FOUNDATION (SAU)

MDLBEAST, a Saudi-based music entertainment company, elevates local and global talent through festivals like SOUNDSTORM and XP Music Futures. As an official Formula 1 partner, it drives MENA's music scene with MDLBEAST Records, large-scale events, and cultural engagement worldwide.



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY

FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE LA CANCIÓN DE VIÑA DEL MAR



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

What Is It: The Viña del Mar International Song Festival is the most prominent musical event in Latin America and one of the most influential in the Spanish-speaking world. Held annually in Viña del Mar, Chile, it takes place in the iconic Quinta Vergara venue, which has a capacity for 15,000 people, where it brings together world-renowned artists and emerging talents, establishing itself as a key platform for Spanish-language music.¹

Since its first edition in 1960, the Viña del Mar Festival has been a meeting point for diverse musical expressions, encompassing genres such as pop, rock, ballads, reggaeton, and folklore. Its prestige has been driven not only by the quality of its performances but also by the energy of its audience, known as "The Monster," whose applause or disapproval can significantly influence an artist's career.²

Who Is Responsible: The municipality of Viña del Mar, Chile.

What Has It Done: The festival, gathering thousands of people each year, significantly boosts the city's tourism and socio-economic development.³

¹ Viña del Mar Festival, "Homepage", accessed April 8, 2025, <https://festivalvinadelmar.com/>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Throughout its history, Viña del Mar has hosted some of the world's most important musicians, including Luis Miguel, Shakira, Ricky Martin, Chayanne, Daddy Yankee, Juan Gabriel, Marco Antonio Solís, Alejandro Sanz, and Celia Cruz, among many others. The festival is also known for its comedy space, serving as a key stage for renowned comedians such as Stefan Kramer, Jorge Alís, Bombo Fica, Dino Gordillo, and Felipe Avello, who have all starred in memorable moments at Quinta Vergara.⁴

In addition to musical and comedy shows, the event features an international competition and a folklore competition, which promote cultural diversity and serve as a platform for discovering new talent.⁵

In 2024, the Festival Internacional de la Canción de Viña del Mar was honored as the “Best Initiative Using Music for Economic, Social or Community Development” by the Music Cities Awards, an internationally recognized platform celebrating individuals and organisations who use the power of music to transform their communities.⁶

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiasevents.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

CATEGORY #8

BEST NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY INITIATIVE



WINNER

BRISTOL NIGHTS (GBR)

Bristol Nights, a Bristol City Council initiative, supports nightlife and night workers (6pm-6am). Through its Women's Safety Charter, it promotes zero tolerance for harassment, enhancing safety and well-being while fostering community connections in the city's vibrant after-dark culture.



RUNNER UPS:

4:AM AGENCY (CRO)

4:am agency curates cultural events, music festivals, and nightlife experiences. We run RNB Confusion, Croatia's longest-running R&B/hip-hop night, Sutra Je Subota parties, Spotlight art exhibitions, and Croatia's only Food Truck Festival, attracting 15,000+ visitors annually while celebrating music and arts.

VIENNA CLUB COMMISSION (AUT)

The Vienna Club Commission is the free service point for all matters relating to clubs and events in Vienna. As an organization tasked by the City of Vienna, the VCC's mission is to promote and represent the local club culture while ensuring its protection.



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY BRISTOL NIGHTS



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

What Is It: Bristol Nights is a strategic partnership led by Bristol City Council aimed at supporting the city's night-time economy (NTE) and those who work during the hours of 6pm to 6am¹. The initiative was created to help Bristol thrive after dark by offering practical, coordinated solutions that ensure the safety, wellbeing, and professional development of night-time workers.^{1,2}

With a focus on inclusivity and sustainability, Bristol Nights collaborates with stakeholders from across the nightlife sector—venues, promoters, universities, local authorities, and health services—to create safer spaces, better working conditions, and accessible training opportunities. It also acts as a communication platform, sharing news, promoting events, and providing guidance and resources to those involved in the NTE.^{1,2}

More than just a cultural initiative, Bristol Nights is a public health-focused approach to nightlife, shaping the future of how cities support workers and communities during non-traditional hours.

Who Is Responsible: Bristol Nights is coordinated and funded by Bristol City Council, in close partnership with night-time economy stakeholders. These include hospitality businesses, music venues, cultural institutions, safety services, and community organizations. The Council plays a central role in ensuring the initiative's goals align with broader city planning and wellbeing strategies, making Bristol one of the first cities in the UK to institutionalize harm reduction and safety in nightlife governance.¹

What Has It Done: Bristol Nights has delivered a variety of initiatives to strengthen the city's night-time economy and improve safety, wellbeing, and inclusivity:

- **Harm Reduction Project:** Introduces a public health-based approach to drug and alcohol risks, shifting away from zero-tolerance. It promotes unified policies across venues and provides guides for implementing training and safety practices.^{4, 5, 6}
- **Design The Night:** A summit for

the nightlife community to exchange ideas through panels and workshops focused on topics like urban safety, mental health, and sustainability.³

- Women's Safety Charter: Encourages night-time businesses to adopt seven key commitments to protect women, supported by a toolkit and space audits.^{7, 8}
- Anti-Sexual Harassment Training: Free courses for all night-time staff covering harassment prevention, reporting, bystander intervention, and drink spiking. Supported by the It's Not OK campaign.^{9, 10}
- Thrive At Night: Offers resources and helplines to support night workers' mental health and wellbeing, addressing issues such as drugs, discrimination, and stress.¹¹

Thanks to these efforts, Bristol Nights has become a national leader in creating inclusive, safe, and supportive nightlife. Its model is now considered a blueprint for other cities looking to revitalize their night-time economies.¹²

In 2024, the initiative received international recognition by winning the "Best Night-Time Economy Initiative" at the Music Cities Awards, honoring its commitment to social

transformation through music, safety, and wellbeing.¹²

¹ Bristol Nights, "About", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://www.bristolnights.co.uk/about>

² Bristol Nights, "Support", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://www.bristolnights.co.uk/support/licensing-regulations>

³ Bristol Nights, "Design the Night", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://www.bristolnights.co.uk/dtn>

⁴ Bristol Nights, "Harm Reduction", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://www.bristolnights.co.uk/projects/harm-reduction>

⁵ Bristol Nights, "Harm Reduction and the Night Time Economy (Handbook PDF)", accessed April 10, 2025
https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/638a0242f6c1445cc9d75d9b/6399a60ac04f43887e5f01eb_Bristol_Nights_Harm_Reduction_Handbook_Digital.pdf

⁶ Bristol Nights, "Harm Reduction Resources", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/mkz6g26xwwtxxhpky6afe/h?rlkey=1jbidxqgk6kaiiv558ppys9c&e=1&dl=0>

⁷ Bristol Nights, "Women's Safety Charter", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://www.bristolnights.co.uk/projects/womens-safety-charter>

⁸ Bristol Nights, "Women's Safety Charter & Toolkit (PDF)", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61265ff5ca997f3516dc6059/t/6231c61f5a67f86b17ca1338/1647429155443/Womens+Safety+Charter+Digital.pdf>

⁹ Bristol Nights, "Courses – Anti-Sexual Harassment Training", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://training.bristolnights.co.uk/>

¹⁰ Bristol Nights, "It's Not OK", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://www.bristolnights.co.uk/projects/its-not-ok>

¹¹ Bristol Nights, "Thrive At Night", accessed April 10, 2025
<https://www.bristolnights.co.uk/projects/thrive-at-night>

¹² Music Cities Events, "Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!", accessed January 22, 2024
<https://www.musiccitiesevents.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

CATEGORY #9

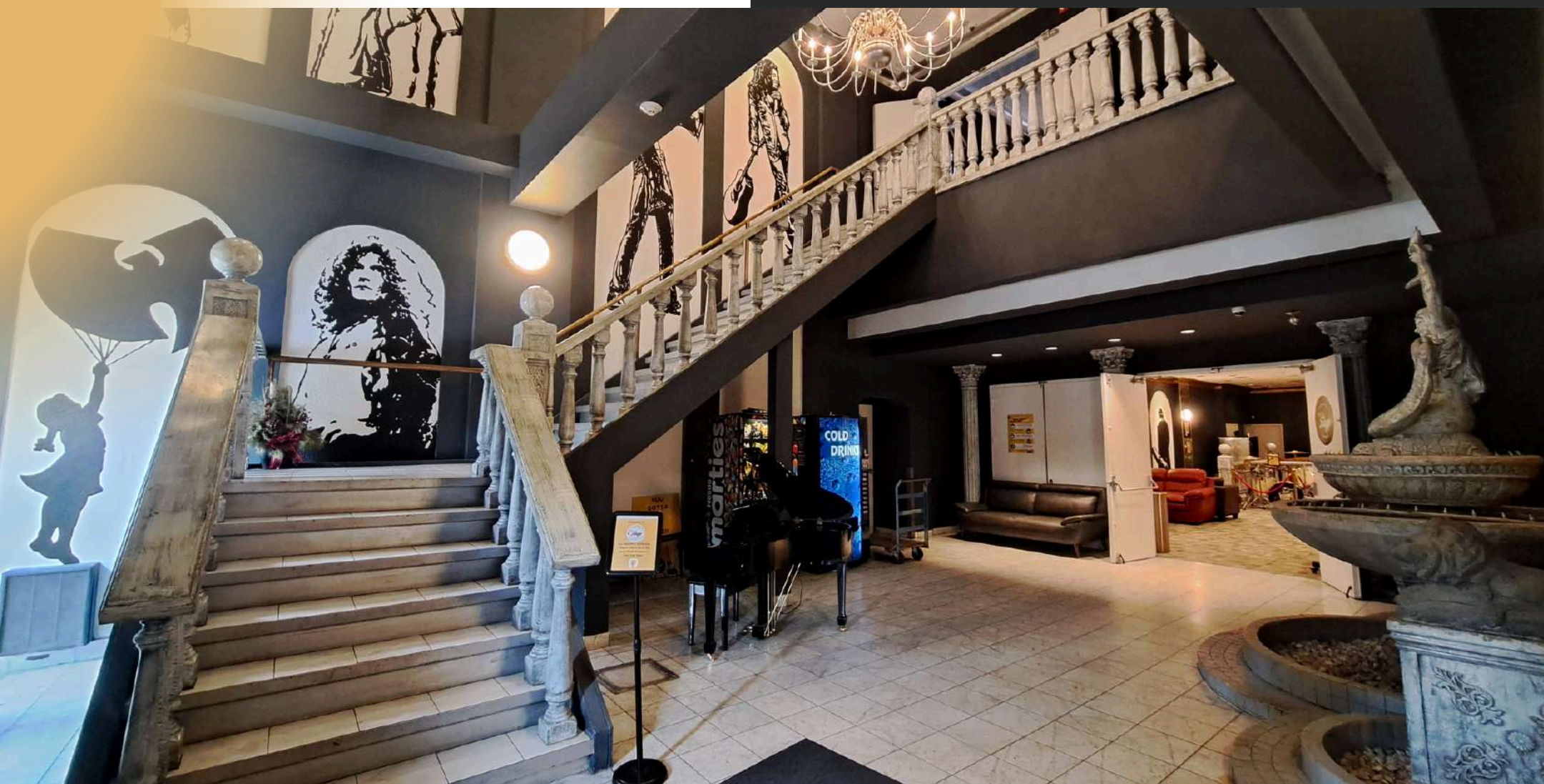
BEST USE OF MUSIC IN REAL ESTATE OR CITY PLANNING



WINNER

MAIN STAGE REHEARSAL STUDIOS (CAN)

Main Stage Rehearsal Studios offers affordable, fully equipped spaces for musicians in Toronto and Hamilton. With 14 hourly rooms, 25 private studios, a Live Room, and a 2000 sq. ft. Soundstage, it fosters creativity through professional gear, rentals, and community support.



RUNNER UPS:

AMCHA (PRY)

A.M.C.H.A., a non-profit in Asunción's historic center, unites entertainment businesses to promote and protect local club culture. Acting as an advisory body, it fosters collaboration between venues, production companies, and city officials, strengthening Paraguay's nightlife and cultural scene.

ORTIGIA SOUND SYSTEM APS (ITA)

Ortigia Sound System APS enriches Sicily's cultural scene through music and art. Since 2014, its Ortigia Sound festival on UNESCO-listed Ortigia Island attracts 12,000+ young visitors, blending disciplines and fostering community engagement while reshaping the city's artistic identity.

PIANO CITY (GLOBAL)

Piano City celebrates piano music through festivals in Berlin, Italy, Spain, Greece, Lisbon, and Germany. Showcasing local talent, it fosters community engagement and cultural appreciation, supporting artists and connecting audiences through diverse musical experiences across multiple cities.



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY MAIN STAGE REHEARSAL STUDIOS



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

What Is It: Located in Toronto and Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Main Stage Rehearsal studio provides affordable and accessible solutions for musicians facing challenges brought on by high real estate pricing in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).¹ Employing a staff of industry professionals, the rehearsal space prioritizes the community inherent to thriving music ecosystems. Main Stage's space in Hamilton is 35,000 square feet, making it one of the largest rehearsal spaces in the country. The space is available to book for practice, jam sessions, recording, auditions, listening parties, music video shoots, podcast recording, dance sessions, and other private events.² The downtown Toronto location boasts a 20,000+ square foot facility, with 17 distinct studios designed for rehearsal, recording, and musical performance of all kinds.³

Who Is Responsible: Main Stage Rehearsal Studios are a private enterprise co-founded and operated by Kelly Ng and Justin Dobbin.

What Has It Done: The typically thriving arts scenes in Toronto and Hamilton have been hampered in recent years by an uncertain real estate environment that has put affordable rehearsal space at risk.⁴ Located in the former location of the legendary Rehearsal Factory, Main Stage's Toronto location has managed to continue to provide reasonable options for artists in a city feeling the complications of gentrification.⁵ Across their Toronto and Hamilton locations, Main Stage provides 14 hourly rental spaces and 25 private studios for monthly rental, along with a Live Room for recording projects and a 2000 sq. ft. Soundstage for performances. All studios are acoustically treated and equipped with quality gear to meet professional standards. Additional services include an onsite music store and gear rentals, ensuring musicians have everything they need for productive sessions. With flexible scheduling and a focus on community, Main Stage supports musicians in their creative endeavors.⁶

Relevance: The developmental realities of cities like Toronto and Hamilton reveal the difficulties in maintaining healthy arts ecosystems in the shadow of rampant and barely-regulated real estate development that places working artists, musicians, and residents at significant risk of rising rents and evictions. In maintaining and growing some of the few remaining affordable rehearsal spaces in these cities, Main Stage underscores the importance of community to sustaining music ecosystems, even for privately owned and operated businesses.

¹ Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.musiccitiasevents.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

² Main Stage Rehearsal Studios, “Explore the Studios: Hamilton,” accessed January 23, 2025, <https://mainstagerehearsal.com/explore-studios-hamilton/>.

³ Ibid., “Explore the Studios: Toronto,” accessed January 23, 2025, <https://mainstagerehearsal.com/explore-studios-toronto/>.

⁴ Bruce DeMara, “Toronto’s running out of affordable rehearsal space. It’s putting the city’s rich arts scene at risk,” Toronto Star (January 10, 2023), accessed January 23, 2025, https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/toronto-s-running-out-of-affordable-rehearsal-space-it-s-putting-the-city-s-rich/article_150c5da1-20bb-58a8-9473-6708f9b83436.html.

⁵ Streets of Toronto, “A Tale of Two Toronto Music Studios and a Very Conservative Church,” accessed January 23, 2025, <https://streetsoftoronto.com/toronto-music-studios/>.

⁶ Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.musiccitiasevents.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

CATEGORY #10

BEST ORGANISATION OR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTING MUSIC IN THEIR CITY



WINNER

MUSIC VICTORIA (AUS)

Music Victoria advocates for the music industry through research, funding, and professional development. In 2022-23, it distributed over \$750K to musicians, venues, and industry professionals, supporting initiatives like the Black Music Alliance Australia while fostering music's social, economic, and cultural impact.



RUNNER UPS:

MUXIC: MEXICO MUSIC TOURISM OFFICE (MEX)

MUXIC, Mexico's first Music Tourism Office, promotes the country's music scene globally. Based in Mexico City, it fosters cultural exchange, supports industry growth, and enhances visibility through a digital platform, boutique markets, education, and partnerships, positioning Mexico as a key music tourism destination.

LONDON CITY OF MUSIC (CAN)

London, Canada's only UNESCO City of Music, fosters a thriving music sector with top institutions, award-winning talent, and major events. Its Music Strategy drives social and economic growth, hosting the 2024 UNESCO Cities of Music meetings to strengthen global connections.

WXPN (USA)

WXPN 88.5 FM, a non-commercial radio service of the University of Pennsylvania, curates broadcast and digital content, events, and local music journalism. A leader in Triple A programming, it connects artists and audiences through rock, blues, roots, and folk discovery.

CENTRO DE ECONOMÍA CREATIVA, INC. (PRI)

The Center for Creative Economy, a Puerto Rican non-profit, supports community projects driving economic, social, and cultural transformation. Based in San Juan, it provides strategic resources, operates a data observatory, and fosters Puerto Rico's rich musical heritage and creative industries.

A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY MUSIC VICTORIA



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

What Is It: Music Victoria is an independent, not-for-profit organisation and the state peak body for contemporary music. It represents musicians, venues, music businesses and professionals, and music lovers across the contemporary Victorian music community. Its mission is to enable the full social, economic, and cultural potential of music to be realised for the benefit of all Victorians, and to develop a valued, progressive, and equitable state music scene.¹

Music Victoria provides advocacy on behalf of the music sector, actively supports the development of the Victorian music community, and celebrates and promotes Victorian music.²

Its projects, initiatives and resources include:

- The Music Victoria Awards, an annual, high profile celebration, and professional development program for the Victorian music community.³
- Two funding programs to support music festivals and venues while providing more paid gigs for local musicians.⁴

- The Playbook Series, aimed at emerging artists and music industry professionals, and covering topics ranging from digital marketing, audience development, release strategy and finance. These workshops are an opportunity to network with music industry peers and experts, while also providing participants with useful tools and best practice advice for strengthening their career in music.⁵

¹ Music Victoria, "About Us", accessed April 11, 2025, <https://www.musicvictoria.com.au/about/>

² Music Victoria, "About Us", accessed April 11, 2025, <https://www.musicvictoria.com.au/about/>

³ Music Victoria, "Awards", accessed April 11, 2025, <https://musicvictoriaawards.com.au/>

⁴ Music Victoria, "Funding Prpgrammes", accessed April 11, 2025, <https://www.musicvictoria.com.au/initiatives/victorian-government-funding-programs-live-music-festivals-fund/>

⁵ Music Victoria, "Playbook series", accessed April 11, 2025, <https://www.musicvictoria.com.au/initiatives/the-music-victoria-playbook-series/>

- Resources, guides and toolkit about night time economy, access and equity, advocacy, agent of change, artists toolkits, best practices guides, event planning tools etc.⁶

Who Is Responsible: Music Victoria is an independent not-for-profit organisation.⁷

What Has It Done: In the 2022-23 period, Music Victoria distributed significant financial support, including \$293,221 to musicians, \$328,440 to venues, and \$134,776 to other industry professionals. Additionally, it allocated funds to support the Black Music Alliance Australia and Community Music Victoria. While commercial success is a goal, Music Victoria emphasizes the broader social, economic, and cultural benefits of music. Its efforts aim to create new opportunities for the music community, ensuring long-term positive impacts for members and stakeholders in the industry.⁸

In 2024, Music Victoria was honored as the “Best Organisation or Individual Supporting Music in their City ” by the Music Cities Awards, an internationally recognized platform celebrating individuals and organisations who use the power of music to transform their communities.⁹

⁶ Music Victoria, “Resources”, accessed April 11, 2025,

<https://musicvictoriamembers.com.au/resources/>

⁷ Music Victoria, “About Us”, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://www.musicvictoria.com.au/about/>

⁸ Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

⁹ Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>

CATEGORY #11

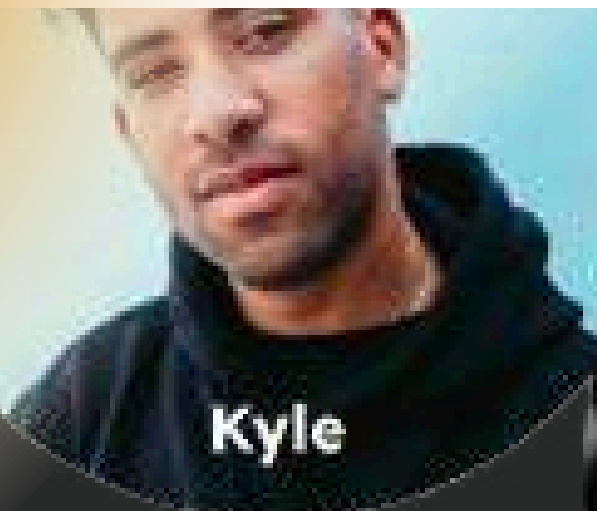
BEST DIGITAL INNOVATION TO SUPPORT MUSICIANS OR MUSIC IN CITIES



WINNER

OPULOUS (SGP)

Opulous is developing innovative products that transform how users engage with the music industry by leveraging blockchain technology and decentralized finance. It empowers artists with new funding opportunities, enables fan investment in music assets, and creates a more transparent, equitable music ecosystem.



RUNNER UPS:

MUSIC INNOVATION HUB (ITA)

Music Innovation Hub, Italy's first social enterprise for music, supports young talent through initiatives like Futurissima and Chorus | Music for Social Change. Based in Milan, it fosters collaboration, education, and innovation to build a sustainable, inclusive music community.

HEARBY, BY AREA4 LABS (GBR)

Hearby, the largest inventory of live music shows, simplifies event discovery. Using AI, it uncovers more local events than expected, from arenas to grassroots venues. Partnering with brands like Ticketmaster, it boosts artists, venues, and neighborhood economies through increased attendance.



A CASE STUDY BY SOUND DIPLOMACY OPULOUS



MUSIC CITIES AWARDS

What Is It: Opulous is a Singapore-based fintech company founded in 2020 that leverages blockchain technology to revolutionize music financing. Its mission is to empower artists by providing decentralized funding options and fostering direct connections with fans.¹

Opulous AI harnesses the power of big data analysis to offer precise forecasts of future revenues, filtering through thousands of data points collected through its partnership with Ditto Music, including 100+ streaming apps. This tool evaluates song performance across different regions and dissects payout structures, enabling swift predictions of future royalties. This process can save millions in unrecouped advances and protects artists from entering unfair record deals by accurately assessing the value of their music.²

Who Is Responsible: Opulous is a Singapore-based fintech company.

What Has It Done: In 2024, Music Victoria was honored as the “Best Organisation or Individual Supporting Music in their City ” by the Music Cities Awards, an internationally recognized platform celebrating individuals and organisations who use the power of music to transform their communities.³

¹ Opulous, “About”, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://opulous.org/about>

² Opulous, “Opulous AI”, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://opulous.org/ai>

³ Music Cities Events, “Meet the winners of the 2024 Music Cities Awards!”, accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.musiccitiesshows.com/post/meet-the-winners-of-the-2024-music-cities-awards>



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