

# Advisory Points to the Memphis & Shelby County Music Commission From the Musician's Advisory Council Meetings

April - August 2005, 6-8 pm, Emerge Memphis Boardroom

I posed the following question to the people present at our MAC meetings over the past several months -

"What do we, as the Musician's Advisory Council to the MSCSC, need to 'advise' the Commission Board members on as a whole - both positive & negative?!?" Here are the responses:

- 1.) The MSCMC has CREDIBILITY/TANGIBILITY ISSUES within the local musician community, stemming mainly from the under-representation of working musicians on the Board itself and the lack of many 'tangible results' stemming directly from the Strategic Initiatives Plan to date. (Several working musicians being appointed to the Board &/or a few tangible, strategic results would go a LONG WAY toward stemming some of these concerns within the community at large...)
- 2.) The MSCMC, in general - and the MAC in particular - both need a stronger, more prominent online presence. (\*\*See Attachment.\*\*)
- 3.) We need a locally/regionally/nationally SYNDICATED TV SHOW that showcases Memphis talent (similar to "Austin City Limits" & "Live from the Bluebird Cafe") that has the "Memphis Brand" associated with it.
- 4.) Trademark a NEW LOGO &/OR SLOGAN for Memphis Music as a whole. (ND?)
- 5.) We need MORE REAL MUSIC INDUSTRY INFRASTRUCTURE in Memphis. (Record labels, management companies, booking agencies, publicists, marketing & promotion firms, etc.)
- 6.) Get MORE LOCAL ACTS INVOLVED IN MIM through the incorporation & inclusion of the Handy Park Main Stage during all three major MIM weekends in May (MusicFest, BBQ-Fest, Sunset Symphony on Memorial Day weekend) as the official "Bob Kelley Memorial Local Music Stage" for the festival as a whole, & program it cooperatively with maximum diversity & consideration.

- 7.) Create/initiate a LOCAL MUSIC AWARDS SHOW similar to the Premier Player Awards (the Memphis Music Awards?!?)
- 8.) We need more MUSIC BUSINESS RELATED INCENTIVES. Get the city to give tax breaks &/or financial incentives to emerging or established venues, local radio stations, recording studios, local record labels, & PR firms that provide live music opportunities & services for local musicians.
- 9.) We need to bring the "HYPE FACTOR" back to Memphis (like there used to be back in the 1950s-70s.)
- 10.) We need more substantial RADIO AIRPLAY for local artists!!! (besides WYPL, WQOX, & WEVL, etc.)
- 11.) Laws against live public music performances (in both Cordova & on Beale Street) need to be addressed by the MSCMC.
- 12.) The MSCMC could create a series of genre-specific "NEW MEMPHIS MUSIC COMPILATION CDS" to help promote the local community both within the city - and in particular - nationally & internationally. Maybe something similar to the Memphis Regional Chamber's "Memphis Jazz Box Set" & "The Music That Made Memphis" series of CDs, but with a focus on up & coming NEW artists as opposed to celebrating our city's musical past (AGAIN!), and also with a pay scale for the participating bands being fair & legal, etc. We might produce several CDs over a multiple year time frame; one Adult Contemporary Pop/Rock, one Blues, one Contemporary Christian/Gospel, one Indie Rock, one Rap/Hip-Hop, one with only local female artists, etc. (Compilation CDs are generally fairly cheap to produce - the music is already pre-recorded & available, with just the mastering, graphic design, & manufacturing costs as overhead - a fairly inexpensive endeavor with a potentially large payoff, both financially as well as helping us immensely with our standing among the local musician community, etc.)
- 13.) Create &/or foster the Memphis/New Orleans musical connection through an annual Amtrack-sponsored weekend musical trade-off of bands from Bourbon & Beale Streets.
- 14.) Create an environment where musical & music business related MENTORING can occur.

- 15.) We need a new, local, independent MEMPHIS MUSIC PUBLICATION.
- 16.) Create an avenue for a local SOUNDTRACK INITIATIVE that is connected to our emerging local film industry.
- 17.) The MSCMC needs to create a Suntrust-type VENTURE CAPITAL FUND of it's own for local artists to tap into - and possibly also host a workshop or two as a 'preparatory' step before the actual paperwork/red tape/grant application realities of record labels & banks inundates the average musician with too much information to process right off the bat.
- 18.) Do something for/with the Overton Park Shell: Pay qualified musicians to do the repairs. Have a silent auction/telethon/radiothon on PBS/Time/Warner/PAX w/ local celebrities & auction boards, plus LIVE LOCAL MUSIC as entertainment. (Band with the most donations during their performance wins special prize...)
- 19.) Mix Hip Art & Music together for a FUNKY FUNDRAISER thang!
- 20.) A "Remember When..." festival event with local music acts from days gone by, like: Human Radio, Tora Tora, Southern Creed, Come In Berlin, Target, Krokus, Jimmy Davis & Junction, Calculated X, Sam the Sham, Box Tops, The Grifters, (Geez, there's a MILLION of `em, but you get the idea...)
- 21.) There is EXCESSIVE TALENT here in Memphis, with very little professional opportunities for marketing & promotion, paying live gigs, pro studio recording jobs, TV, radio, etc.
- 22.) We need LESS COMMUNITY APATHY towards live music in general.
- 23.) We should develop (& then execute!) a NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ARTIST SHOWCASE (similar to SXSW in Austin, TX.) that includes a MINIMUM of 35% local acts.
- 24.) We need to do a better job recognizing the individual needs of the different musical genres within our community as a whole. (For example, local 'Rock' acts generally need more tour & logistics support while local 'Rap' acts generally do not. Local 'Blues' acts need more live music venues to perform in, while local 'Contemporary Christian' acts have more than enough churches to perform in, etc.)

25.) We need more genre-specific committee's &/or sub-committees in both the MAC & the MSCMC to promote their genre's specific needs & goals.

26.) Host an annual "Music Boot Camp" that functions as an ND music forum (something along the lines of the Rap Coalition's Seminar Series, etc.)

27.) Host some sort of semi-regular networking event (with a casual town hall meeting-type atmosphere) to bolster the music community's overall sense of connectivity.

(I know that many of the above items are addressed within the Strategic Initiatives Plan, but they were all responses that I felt needed to be written down.)

Anyway, the meetings were productive & lively, with many different ideas being batted around the table and comments & criticisms shared openly & freely - all in all, some constructive evenings all the way around!

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Thanks so much for your time & consideration, and I encourage you to call or e-mail me with your thoughts & comments concerning the points above at your convenience... I look forward to gaining your perspective.

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