

David Dacks: 00:00:00 Alright. Hi everyone. Thanks for coming to the Music Gallery: basement edition [audience laughs]. I'm David Dacks I'm the artistic director and I'm moderating this panel called the Future of Creative Music, and with me is Michael Rancic, Rich Brown, Amanda Smith, and Jessica Cho, AKA Korea Town Acid. So the future of creative music-- why have this panel in this festival or in general? We here at the Music Gallery, which is called Toronto's centre for creative music, have a series called the history series in which we take a look back at creative music in Toronto's history. We had a panel a few years ago with a CBC broadcaster, Amanda Parris, who talked about "why is it that I always hear about all these cool things that used to happen in the city, only in things like panel discussions or one-off sort of retrospectives and there isn't really a history to access of a greater story to be told and connections to be made between different creative music scenes in the city over time?" So that got me thinking since the Music Gallery has been around for 43 years now we'd be in a good position to have the network to reach out to, to create a series dedicated to looking at some of these histories and making those connections. This has been going on for about three or four years and since the theme of this year's festival is forward it makes sense to look forward to see what might be in store for creative music in the future. That's why there are four panellists from different musical backgrounds who each have different and similar things to say. It should be a good dialogue.

David Dacks: 00:01:56 But first I want to talk a little bit about creative music in general because it sounds good-- kind of like the word "forward," it sounds progressive, but what does it really mean? "Creative music" is both a general term and it's also a specific term. Specifically "creative music" came from the 60s, from a time in jazz, specifically related to an organization in Chicago called the Association For The Advancement Of Creative Musicians which was an Afrocentric group, a community organizing group designed to encourage original music by the people who are in the membership and they also created a community in which everybody had to either pay dues or attend a certain number of gigs in order to keep this community going. So creative music in this historical context was in their words, "serious original music." It was rather Afrocentric, very much focused on improvising, but also very interesting compositions, which paralleled a lot of notated music movements in the 60s as well. And generally a very expansive sense of global musical traditions.

David Dacks: 00:03:04 So the ACM, still is from an Afrocentric organization, which relates specifically to these traditions. However, around that time, a lot of artist-run spaces and loft spaces that were presenting cutting edge jazz and free improvising, adopted this "creative" term to describe what it was that they were doing. The

Music Gallery was founded in 1976 along with various other institutions across Canada that still exist, like the Western Front in Vancouver, they call themselves "creative music institutions." In fact, New York state has an Institution For Creative Music, which also very much comes from that. In that sense it picks up the improvising contemporary classical world music 1.0 and sort of post-punk skronk by the end of the seventies coming out of places like New York and created it into an aesthetic that was very identifiable in the 70s, 80s and through the 90s.

David Dacks: 00:04:04 Since I've been at the Music Gallery as artistic director since 2012, I've tried to respect both the specific meaning of creative music and also expand the definition to basically any kind of music that has a questing spirit that tries to do something that's never been done before. Unlike the historical interpretation of the term, I think there's a wide range of popular forms that can also qualify as creative music. And it sure as heck doesn't always have to be serious music to be creative, innovative, or experimental. That's why on this panel there are these different folks who come from different traditions and have their own ideas about what creativity means to them.

David Dacks: 00:04:42 I guess let's get started with reading the bios to hear what everybody's all about. To my left, Michael Rancic, he is a freelance music journalist based in Toronto. His writing routinely focuses on emerging Canadian musicians and the ways in which federal, provincial, and civic politics influence music scenes. His byline has appeared in Exclaim!, Chart Attack (RIP), VICE, Spacing, and the Guardian. Currently you can find his work in NOW Magazine and Bandcamp Daily. He has pieces coming out shortly with Music Works and The Walrus. Ooh, the Walrus, that's fun.

David Dacks: 00:05:12 Jess, on the end. Named one of NOW Magazine's, electronic musicians to watch at the beginning of 2019, Korea Town Acid has been creating a buzz on the Toronto circuit with her timelessly cosmic live sets using an experimental and purely improvised approach to samplers and synths, Korea Town Acid's expensive, [laughs] expensive, is it expensive?

Jessica Cho: 00:05:34 Just to point out, it was actually 2018.

David Dacks: 00:05:38 Oh, 2018 okay. I think you're an honorary in 2019. Her rhythms sit at the juncture of dubby house free, jazzy techno and funky ambient territories. Hypnotic compositions are dexterously assembled as skittering, slowly billowing, Technicolor, synth jewels.

David Dacks: 00:05:57 Rich Brown: electric bassist and composer Rich Brown started his professional career playing in 1992. Since that time he's

released three albums as a leader and appears on over 70 recordings ranging from jazz to funk to traditional Arabic and Asian music. Rich has performed with a wide variety of artists including Rudresh Mahanthappa, Steve Coleman, Angélique Kidjo, Kurt Elling, and Kim Mitchell, James Blood Ulmer, Parachute Club and David Clayton Thomas, just to name a few. He also leads his own groups Rinse The Algorithm and the Abeng, and was nominated for a Juno Award in 2016 in the category of Jazz Album of the Year for his latest album Abeng.

- David Dacks: 00:06:34 And Amanda Smith is a Toronto-based stage director and founding artistic director of FAWN chamber creative with whom she commissions, produces and directs new Canadian offers and interdisciplinary works that correlate new classical music with other art forms described as a visionary by Ludwig Van, her versatile creativity is demonstrated by her explorations with a wide variety of music spanning from early music to very new. Regardless of the era her passion for expanding classical audiences, has led her to create work that impacts eclectic audiences. Amanda has shown this in her extensive work with Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra's house music series, as well as with the Banff Centre, Stratford summer music, Opera Lyra Ottawa, the Iranian Canadian Composers of Toronto, Opera Laurier, University of Toronto Music Festival, Cowtown Opera, Against The Grain Theatre and Musique 3 Femmes. So as you can tell, a really wide range of experience in the room. And let's kick off this discussion.
- David Dacks: 00:07:32 I should probably start it off with a more positive question about how really there's a lot of concern about spaces and just creative places to do music in Toronto in general. And I think it's probably appropriate to start with the question, what are the worst systemic barriers that hold down creative music expression in Toronto right now?
- Michael Rancic: 00:07:55 I think the lack of racial diversity in positions of power is probably one of the top ones that I can think of. Whether it's at the granting level or through labels or at music venues that lack of diversity results in lack of diverse performers, sort of rising up through the ranks. If you think about the way that in terms of like venues we heard earlier in the year the issue with Cinecycle there being an issue with them not wanting to book a hip hop related party because they thought they associated it with certain things. I know that Haviyah Mighty who just won the Polaris Prize this year, she's a hip hop artist and even though she has all these accolades and critical acclaim, she actually has a lot of difficulty getting insurance to perform because she performs at hip hop shows and insurers won't pay for it.
- David Dacks: 00:09:07 Wow.

Amanda Smith: 00:09:07 That's wild.

David Dacks: 00:09:07 It is. Rich?

Rich Brown: 00:09:10 Well I think there's more emphasis placed on commerce and people just not taking chances on music that would appeal to people. Cause everyone wants the names, like the larger festivals want the names that will fill the seats. I remember in the nineties, it was Ron Gaskin that used to book the next wave series at the jazz festival, which ended up booking like a lot of very creative artists from around the world. And you don't see that kind of curation happening in larger festivals anymore. That's for sure.

David Dacks: 00:10:00 Ron Gaskin gave me my first big gig.

Rich Brown: 00:10:02 Yeah? He's s great guy.

David Dacks: 00:10:03 He's a great guy. Amanda?

Amanda Smith: 00:10:07 I was just thinking about your [Michael's] comment about diversity obviously in leadership is really important, but leading to on the stage, trying to make sure that there's awareness and training for people who are young to feel as if they can do these things. I come at it from a producer/presenter standpoint and I work in classical music where we work a lot with electronic experimental, electronic music and it's not to say that diversity-- obviously we know that diversity does exist, but it's up to people in leadership positions to put even more work into making sure that there's representation in just what you do. It's making sure that all communities are represented as best as possible. I mean, my hope would be that the more we put these efforts forward, that will become more of a natural thing going as our generations continue.

Jessica Cho: 00:11:20 Probably the real estate of Toronto, now. Although venues are disappearing and stuff. Or even, just if we have last call till 4:00 AM, then we could definitely have more artists on the bill, where [now] people come and tend to leave after the bar sales are done. So instead of like pushing the alcohol sales starting in the morning instead of like extended in that late night life, I think that could possible plug in more artists to more diverse parties.

David Dacks: 00:12:00 I think many of you are saying that it's a combination of not enough admixture of people, partly driven by the necessity of commerce, whether it's alcohol sales dominating the music experience in Toronto. And the way that funding happens and the way that festivals have become so top down in terms of, I'm sure when you were playing in the 90s, there was more of a middle zone for festivals for people who weren't stars to get paid.

Rich Brown: 00:12:34 Absolutely.

David Dacks: 00:12:34 As opposed to, you know, the top headliner getting 25 times what your typical gigging musician would get.

Amanda Smith: 00:12:48 I just had a comment regarding more spaces being needed. Like this is a conversation that we have had for years and increasingly so. The topic is how can we foster creativity, to be able to have platforms for people, spaces for people that allow for amplified sound, that allow for public traffic to come in that aren't going to be like hassled by the police? Even my concerts have had police show up and you know, they're classical with amplified electronics, but it's still, it can cause an issue in terms of neighbourhood. And I guess this is why we're seeing shows like Red Bull, which was great, we got to see like a lot of locals play at the same time, but it's quite out of the way, which can be like exciting for people, but it's not necessarily accessible for everyone.

Jessica Cho: 00:13:58 That doesn't happen every week. It was very special.

Amanda Smith: 00:14:02 So say someone wants to just put on their own show, it's actually pretty hard to do that. There's a lot of risk to put on a show, especially when there aren't really that many spaces that allow for it. But I'm always on the hunt for venues and not just venues that will allow it but are also affordable. Especially the ones with pianos, it's really hard to find.

David Dacks: 00:14:34 You talked about putting on your own shows. That's a point well worth making. I'm sure you remember when we started out, when I started gigging in the 90s, a \$5 cover. That's what it was. Now you're hard pressed to break \$10. Most of the time it's so many other costs have gone. And what people are willing to pay for music has remained below the rate of inflation for sure. So trying to make your money back, especially when people are expecting more from even DIY gigs now-- better production values gear is more expensive, all that kind of stuff. It's just hard. It seems harder and harder to have a sustaining series. I'd like to sort of move into that right now. I would touch on festivals as being a place where-- I mean, festivals have a lot of advantages: we're in one right now and it attracts a lot of media attention. It can attract a lot of resources, special grants available. But what are some of the other pros and cons of festivals versus year-round programming and what that means for creative music. Jess can talk about that in terms of the electronic scene because it seems like that that can be really quite segregated in a way between like huge festivals and trying to find stuff that happens otherwise.

Jessica Cho: 00:15:52 Yeah. So what was your question?

David Dacks: 00:15:54 The pros and cons of festivals as opposed to year-round programming.

Jessica Cho: 00:15:56 Oh, well I think if there's, if it's a partnership with a bigger sort of corporate, it's a much bigger production as in, it's a lot of collaboration between different production teams and a lot of artists. So I think it could be challenging, but if it goes well, it's very satisfying. For instance if you were to do your own kind of DIY low key thing, but that also you are just kind of creating your own. So it's also like kind of unique and special in that way too. The bigger corporate festivals are bigger exposure to newer audiences, which is always like essential for artists to develop and gain that sort of a profile. It looks good on a resume, but if you do like small party yourself, you're just building sort of your, your own branding, which you can be like really cool too.

David Dacks: 00:17:03 When you do these big corporate festivals, do you find that there are limits placed on what you can and can't do?

Jessica Cho: 00:17:10 Not necessarily, actually. They give a lot of free booze and [inaudible].

David Dacks: 00:17:18 Like creatively. Could you do...

Jessica Cho: 00:17:19 Sorry, creatively. No, actually they were pretty open. I was actually chosen to do like a back to back DJ set with a friend and we came out with a plan that we were going to do like a live set just cause we were like opening at 10 o'clock and we want to make it something exciting for the audience, just more captivating. So I just had a lot of artist development for myself doing all these rehearsals and it went really well. So I kind of want to have a regular collaboration with that particular project. So it was a lot of pros for me.

David Dacks: 00:18:04 Do you find that's the case with many of the corporate festivals or like the larger scale ones where there's serious investment involved?

Jessica Cho: 00:18:12 Yeah, it's a really bigger production. Every, everything's very like detail oriented. When I played for the MUTEK festival, they're very professional. I think it's really actually nice to learn how they do things cause everything has to be very planned out and there's like a technical rider, stage manager sound person. Those details are very important to make perfect performances. Like the lighting that goes into it and it's bigger sound, better sound.

David Dacks: 00:19:00 One of the questions that I have for you specifically was going to be about MUTEK and MUTEK for those who aren't familiar, is a festival that originated in Montreal, but now it's worldwide. It is

widely respected as being a festival that encourages creative sounds from all over all kinds of electronic sources. With what you said before about Haviah Mighty having a hard time getting insurance for hip hop shows, if you're working with a larger entity such as a new tech or red bull or stuff like that, these kinds of questions are much, much easier to deal with all the economic muscle that they can bring and the legitimacy and just the ease of dealing with bureaucracy that has the hoops to have to jump through. So given that MUTEK has been like a real important part of Montreal for what, 20 plus years at this point, could you see something like that working here?

Jessica Cho:

00:19:57

I think slowly but surely. I want to be optimistic about it. I think honestly Toronto has like really like amazing artists that are super underrated that creates live music, whether they're using like laptop or hardware. It's not there yet, but it's definitely-- I think Montreal is one of the most influential for electronic music in Canada and Toronto's definitely getting there. But the lack of venues that are like accessible is definitely hurting. But partnering with a magazine company like VICE or something like, even like Red Bull, for them to have a such big production, like two rooms curated. There's live acts, there's DJs and there's international artists as well as showcasing original local creative sounds. Yeah, I think we just have to partner with like-minded people, or through, you know, artists grants right. You want to throw a party like MUTEK and that their programming is very like very niche but amazing. I've just been going there for the last five years and discovering so many different artists that I never heard of and that I would listen to them like for the rest of the year. So it's all about just exposing those sort of new artists that are like just bedroom producers like they don't really play a lot of shows, but they do this thing that's really cool. Whether using, you know, tape or hardware or like using Ableton, like left, like Macbook kind of things.

Amanda Smith:

00:21:59

There was a festival here a while ago, not the same level as MUTEK, but there was a festival called Foundry and I think it had two iterations. There was like a whole multi floor festival at the great hall and that was a combination of, I believe it was Brian Wong and possibly the mansion crew people. Brian Wong was actually a pretty big force in like bringing these, trying to do these like festivals. There were a lot of really interesting festivals and artists that they brought from what I've heard just from these friends, it's not my industry, but socially I've had these conversations quite a lot. The burnout for producers or promoters is massive and it's not necessarily sustainable because even though they're huge and you go to these events, they're still run by just a few individuals. Oftentimes the financial risk is quite high. So, and you know, wouldn't know just as an audience member, you just wouldn't realize. But we have had them here.

It's just the individuals may or may not feel like they can maintain it.

David Dacks: 00:23:33 Michael, I mean, you've probably written more about venues in the city, music venues, arts venues than anybody else. Certainly you've heard a lot of stories about both how venues meet their demise and also people's burnout tales. Do you have any stories that you could share with us about that or in general?

Michael Rancic: 00:23:56 Sure. I mean I'm more familiar with like the DIY, punk sort of aspect of things. So with SHIBGBs, which was a punk space up on Geary lane and then Faith/Void, this sort of record shop slash gallery/performance space that followed, both of those [losses] were sort of as a result of burnout and burnout in terms of the kind of bureaucratic, sort of red tape that they had to deal with in order to remain a venue. So, in both cases it was noise that was their demise. And this is unfortunately before we just revised our noise bylaws. So things are much different now. But, with Faith/Void the most recent example, it was like a basement venue and residential two stories over top of that. And I guess the people in the building next to them, that building was empty for the first year of Faith/Void's existence, and then finally people moved in and then started making noise complaints, not knowing that there was a space there that had been running and it was essentially a part of the community on College street at that point. So [the new neighbours] called and made a noise complaint. They were visited by a noise bylaw officer. They took some measurements and at the time the unfortunate thing was is that we had this general noise bylaw, which blankets all other sort of noise issues. So, even though they were creating amplified sound within the thresholds that they were allowed to do, general noise basically says that if you hear a baby crying across the hall from you, you can call and make a noise complaint. Anything is noise under the general noise bylaw. So that was what did them in, and rather than fighting it, because ultimately what that would involve is likely going to court, the owner, Ryan Tong just decided to pack it in. So there's, there's all sorts of instances where NIMBYism -- I kind of want to know the person who called the noise complaint on their classical concert.

Amanda Smith: 00:26:03 [Laughs] Well they get pretty loud actually.

Michael Rancic: 00:26:08 But the city's full of it, and it's, and speaking of exhaustion, just think about like the Matador and what they went through. That's like 10 years of trying to put in a venue in a space that was already a venue previously, in a supposedly progressive neighbourhood. They all vote NDP, but they don't want a music venue there. Anyway, so they couldn't do it and ended up having to leave. So now it's going to be a condo.

David Dacks: 00:26:36 Now there's a new noise bylaw that you've just written about. How do you think that that will change at both venues and in what's possible to do in venues as a result of this?

Michael Rancic: 00:26:46 We'll see. I feel pretty positive considering that there's no more general catchall that exists. So if you're creating amplified sound, you are always going to be looked at through the guidelines of the amplified sound subsection. There are actual measurements now, whereas before the thresholds weren't really clear or what time of day, those weren't really clear either. So it's more defined than before and yeah, I'm optimistic that it'll, it'll work out and actually helped people maintain their venues and stuff like that.

David Dacks: 00:27:28 Meanwhile, it's a contrast that, I guess I'm casting you to the--- you and I are the old men on the panel.

Rich Brown: 00:27:34 It, it's true.

David Dacks: 00:27:36 Back in the 90s when we were young and fresh in cheek, how would you describe the club scene and just the music making scene in general? In relation to the noise issues that we face now and difficulties with insurance. From my memories it was a lot just easier to find places to play.

Rich Brown: 00:28:00 Yeah, for sure. Yeah. There were a lot of different venues in the city and a lot of venues that were taking chances on different styles of music, which you don't see as much anymore.

David Dacks: 00:28:12 In what way?

Rich Brown: 00:28:13 Well in what way back then? Well you would get a wide variety of artists over the course of a week at one venue, whereas now a lot of venues are specializing in one style of music or maybe a couple of styles. So I don't know, there was much more diversity, not just in the music itself, but that also fostered great opportunities for each of the musicians in the community to collaborate with different genres outside of their own sort of comfort zones. I guess. So that kind of intermingling doesn't happen as much anymore. Of course the venues specializing, so it makes it a little more difficult for the growth of the music in general nowadays, whereas before everyone would just, you know, playing with everybody, you know.

David Dacks: 00:29:18 Yeah, that's gotta be an important ingredient in creating new music as you've got experience with a lot of different types of genres-- and you're a gigging musician. That's something that sometimes gets lost in today. Like you're in a band and maybe that's the only thing that you do, but if you are a fantastic bass player, then you've got lots of different opportunities for employment and you've got to learn a lot of different styles and

come up with your own thing. Maybe that's a little bit less common.

- Rich Brown: 00:29:44 Yeah. Well you know, being a little bit older I'm in a bit of a fortunate situation in that, like I've sort of established myself on the scene, so the phone rings for me. So it's going to be a lot harder for younger musicians to find those same sort of diverse opportunities in the scene. I'm not sure what to add to that.
- David Dacks: 00:30:16 Jess was talking about how MUTEK has been really good and productive and encouraging growth at all kinds of different levels. If you were to contrast to jazz festivals I guess there's the one big one, but there are other things that happen throughout the year. How would you contrast how jazz festivals happen as opposed to what she's describing about MUTEK?
- Rich Brown: 00:30:44 In what sense?
- David Dacks: 00:30:45 Do you feel like for instance, the Toronto Jazz Festival encourages a kind of musical activity in all kinds of levels that a MUTEK would?
- Rich Brown: 00:30:55 I don't see that in this festival and I say that from an interesting perspective because I was actually on the board of the festival for the last couple of years, which basically meant that I could suggest different artists to the festival and they would look into those artists and book them or not book them, not book them in my case. So I don't see as much of that happening in the festivals now, which is incredibly unfortunate and there are many opportunities not just for the festivals themselves, but it's also a great opportunity for the audience to check out some music that they would not be familiar with otherwise. That's mainly the reason why the scene can potentially stay so stifled because everyone stays in their zones. It's a sad state of affairs in that respect.
- David Dacks: 00:32:00 Yeah. Unfortunately, I'd have to have to agree with that. You see smaller jazz room provides festivals like the tone festival or women from space, which just started last year. These are fantastic artists, mostly local artists who it seems like hit a bit of a brick wall when it comes to a larger stage.
- Rich Brown: 00:32:19 It would be great if something like the next wave series would happen now with maybe some of these smaller festivals, collaborating with the Jazz Festival to put on their own sort of thing as part of the festival because the festival is when people show up and they show up and even people here in Toronto they show up and they say, "Oh, I didn't know this music was out there." And then the festival's over and they go home and you don't see them for the rest of the year.

David Dacks: 00:32:47 Well, one part of music in which that is different is a classical opera and contemporary music because we tend to organize ourselves in terms of seasons. So presumably continuous musical exposure can happen over the course of a year as opposed to just being concentrated to a weekend a year. But how would you, Amanda compare this part of Toronto's music scene with what you've been hearing from the other panellists?

Amanda Smith: 00:33:16 Well, I can completely relate to what you're [Rich] talking about in terms of like the siloing and that being a real issue. I mean, this is actually my own personal feeling about it. I studied classical music and went to opera school and I was very interested in all the, the new music that was being created, but I just really felt like everyone was so stuck in their world. And not every individual, but what I found was that like when the really exciting things happened, it was like people who were reaching out outside of our immediate community-- because, you know, it's just like you go to school together, you read the same texts, you study the same people. I think it's really important to collaborate not only with other musical artists that are musical artists that are in different genres, but just other art forms in general. You know, there's a huge thing in classical music of like, how do we get new audiences? How do we get young people? And you know, it's not about doing the same thing. And so that's, I mean, that's basically what that's like the whole reason behind FAWN, the company that I started way too long ago. Our whole thing is that we want to create new work, we want to collaborate with other artists, and the hope is that we stumble upon some exciting material that's not just for people in our industry. In terms of collaboration we're putting on this concert series, this season called convergence theory and it's all the only, the only big like theme is experimental electronic music and classical and non-classical. My real hope is that audience members from both sides and people who are just like "that sounds interesting" come and they hear the connections between the different genres. And then not only just for the, to overlap and meet each other and discover, but also for the artists. It's always, it's really my hope that people will get talking and possibly collab. That's how collaborations start. So you never know. If you just put people in the same room and you introduce each other's music to each other, you never know what's going to happen. And I do a lot of collaborative work wit, bringing classical and electronic music together. And it doesn't make it any less classical or, or the other. It's just, it is what it is and it becomes something really exciting and you don't get stuck. If you're siloed, then you can get... it's, it's not with any one genre. Pop music. Every genre has traps, right? Every genre has traps.

David Dacks: 00:36:33 Especially trap. [Audience laughs].

Rich Brown: 00:36:33 I was waiting for that!

Amanda Smith: 00:36:42 There are socially agreed upon formulas in some contexts of music and in notated music, there are formulas that you are literally taught. But what I hope in terms of the growth of creative music is that people just take that as a foundation and not as a rule, and then see what happens. Like it's good to have a foundation cause then you know what rules you can break in, what rules you really want to break. I'm pretty like driven by that exact mandate of just trying to get people talking and creating together.

David Dacks: 00:37:29 Cool. that's, yeah, that's an interesting point. Would the rest of you feel that way about to aspects of your musical practice that you're out there to help I guess build community is what you're talking about. How, how much of a role does that play in in your own work? Let's start with the journalist.

Michael Rancic: 00:37:52 Wait, what?

David Dacks: 00:37:52 Well, we had actually one of the history series discussions was about the role of journalism in creative music and how years ago there was this brick wall between journalist who is supposed to be the impartial objective observer and the things that they were covering. I don't think that's the case anymore. And a lot of what you write is very activist. So how would you describe what you do in terms of encouraging community in the scene?

Michael Rancic: 00:38:25 There's a lot of blur, like you're saying in the, in the community in part because other journalists are also musicians and then you end up writing about them. So you can't draw that line anymore. And I think it's kind of a result of the internet and no one being an expert anymore. Everyone's an expert. So if everyone's an expert and everyone can write, then you're not going to have those clearly drawn lines of objectivity that used to exist or at least people used to pretend existed. I don't even know where to draw that line myself sometimes because I created a petition recently because there was somebody who was transphobic and racist who was going to be put on the Toronto Music Industry Advisory Committee. And I thought, "okay, I can like sit around and wait for this to be a story or I could just make a petition and then make it so that this person doesn't have a seat. And I can actually write about maybe some of the good things that the committee does." So I decided to pass around a petition. So I just went around to different shows and I put it out online and a lot of people signed it. So I was very happy with that result and I didn't feel like I had crossed a line because it felt kind of shitty to wait for something bad to happen.

David Dacks: 00:39:52 Even 10 years ago, people would get fired for that. Yeah. So good. I'm glad you're still employed.

Michael Rancic: 00:39:58 Me too.

David Dacks: 00:40:01 Rich, you have a radio show, on JazzCast.ca. Tune in! Is that another tool in your arsenal of trying to do what you do and help the people who should be helped?

Rich Brown: 00:40:15 Yes, absolutely. On the show, I try to play things that might not be familiar to people, but at the same time, I'm also trying to, you [Amanda] mentioned before, the foundation. So I'm also trying to provide the foundation that sort of paved the way for a lot of the music that's happening now because I think the foundation is ultra-important if we want to move the music forward. There's that saying, "you gotta know where you're coming from if you want to know where you're going." So for me, the show provides that sort of lineage of the innovators from yesteryear and where that has sort of led today. It's cool to see a lot of that happening with young musicians who are also taking chances on trying some different things and incorporating different sounds into the tradition of jazz which wasn't as encouraged when I started. So it's great to see that now. Problem is, we get back to that same issue of finding venues for these people because it's harder to categorize them in a world where these venues are specialized. We only do jazz here. We only do this. So opportunities for these younger musicians becomes difficult.

David Dacks: 00:41:58 Jess, I know you've, you've curated shows before and yeah, you just champion people. How would you say that you use your own talents to create community?

Jessica Cho: 00:42:12 I think I pay attention to what other people are doing. I'm going to check out shows and just trying to find a connection and if you naturally feel connected and then there's a future collaboration and spending time jamming with your friends to sort of explore different musical ventures. Also you give to the community, they give back, you know, if you support their shows and that they'll come to see you. And I think that's very big part of like a community and like as a performing artist, as you feel the same way.

David Dacks: 00:43:07 I guess you've partly touched on this as we lead into it, but is there anything further you'd like to add about a position of FAWN or what you see in other people in the classical new music opera scene? Trying to create community and create opportunities.

Amanda Smith: 00:43:23 You know, yeah, actually I had an interesting thought that it's connected to this, but one of the questions that you sent and you

were wondering like about how creative music, how notated music can have creative music, how can it be creative when it's notated? I was thinking about like how when you notate music versus like improvised and all of that more collective way of creating it's music that's made for other people to play. It's music that's no longer a part of you in the same kind of way as it, if it was made specifically just for you. And I've thought about how that actually in a way, I've never really thought about it before, but just that act is actually an act of community, you know, like a piece by a Montreal composer can live and be performed across Canada, across countries. And those people that are performing it, the people that are hearing it, they all become sort of part of a community who have experienced this music. So I dunno if that, that's not exactly what you're asking me, but, but it was something that I was like, well community almost just happens. I mean you have to foster it in other ways, but community happens within classical music because it's like, "Oh yeah, I played that," you know? "Oh yeah, I've heard, I heard about that composer who's like no miles away," but you feel this like sense of belonging. Which is kind of interesting cause I was really thinking how does it make it more creative or less creative or, you know, but I really, I started getting away from that and thinking more about how yeah, it can strengthen community. The way that I try to foster community with FAWN is as I said before, collaborating with different people. So as an example for convergence theory, it's not enough just to program different people. You need some partners, community partners. So I approached David Jones who, he's pretty, he's very active in like the experimental electronic scene here and very much part of the community of it. And so I asked him to join us and be a co-curator so that not only is it about us bringing these musical worlds together, but also we have someone who's a community leader who would be able to be a voice in these concerts. I try to find different ways to do it. And just knowing that it's not really just up to me how it's done. So trying to communicate to other people and get it from, you know, if you're trying to integrate other communities, you have to work with those communities.

Jessica Cho:

00:46:49

I just thought about something, I think within the electronic music, like a DJ producer or culture the form of community is when you like share your work of your recordings that are maybe unreleased or forthcoming. And then people download them and play them at their radio show or their gigs or they post it. Then some other DJs are like "Oh, what's this track?" And then like that sort of gets big. And then it's like your friends like helping out for exposure to, for instance, Machine Woman, she's an amazing producer. I'll always play her track, and she plays like my track or a variation of it, I think that's a really big sense of community and creative music, especially within the current dance music.

David Dacks:	00:47:38	It's nice to see people talking about inspirations. We started off with asking what are the barriers, but where do you see hope in Toronto's music scene? Where do you see some building blocks? This seems like a very concrete example. I think like SoundCloud could, you know, obviously never have existed 20 years ago and the ability for that to form community both within the local space and worldwide that would be some something that helps local artists who might otherwise be trapped in a silo leapfrog that and you know, find other spaces to go. Where else do you see hope? Michael?
Michael Rancic:	00:48:13	I see hope when I see people organizing and responding to things that are happening. So one example I can think of is, when Not Dead Yet, a punk promoter in the city, threw an event to raise money for the Parkdale rent strike, in support of it, or they did another event for the Toronto overdose prevention society. Like, these are ways in which we can as like a musical artistic community address and reach out to other communities that we're interconnected to. And I, I sort of feel because I talk so much about the venues question seeing people organize around that and sort of resisting the sort of cycle of here's a new venue, then it closes, let's find another venue. Then it closes. And trying to find creative ways and solutions around that. So I'd like to see more of that sort of happening. Maybe in some sort of like coalition between DIY promoters or smaller venues and stuff like that so that they can have more of a voice and a seat at the table for something like TMAC.
Rich Brown:	00:49:37	It might be a cheesy answer, but I see, I actually see hope in the youth and a lot of the young musicians coming up.
David Dacks:	00:49:43	Do you believe the children are the future?
Rich Brown:	00:49:45	I believe teach them well. But I teach at Humber college and I also am really blessed to have the opportunity to go to Banff and join the faculty for the creative music program there almost every year. And I see such incredible creativity in these young musicians. I also see that idea, especially at Banff of community and collaboration, which is like so important to the growth of the music in general because especially at Banff where you get these participants getting involved with the program from all corners of the globe. When they get together in their own ensembles and exchange ideas and bounce different concepts off on each other and how receptive they are to each of these new ideas and their willingness to step out of their own comfort zones, to see that firsthand makes me excited to see what the future of the scene will actually be as far as the creative music and the music that, that will result from these collaborations. It's exciting. I dunno, I feel like when I was starting in the scene that-- I may have said this already-- but that kind of thing wasn't encouraged enough.

David Dacks: 00:51:23 You're talking about being on the faculty of Humber now. when we both started on the scene. Humber was probably best known for churning out Wynton Marsalis clones. You wear a sharp suit. You had to play that eighties like straight ahead, fifties redux jazz. It's not happening anymore.

Rich Brown: 00:51:37 Well, I mean there's still that. And I can see why because the foundation is important. But I like the fact that, you know, last year at Humber I was a part of the jury that adjudicated the recording projects that the students were handing in for their fourth year projects and I heard straight ahead, jazz and pop music, country, I heard a metal band that was killing. Like, I love that. I love that that's happening at Humber. And then when I go to Banff the last time I was at Banff it was myself and a number of jazz musicians on the faculty with me, but also a DJ from Haiti. Val Jeanty. Yeah. She's incredible. And like a rock and roll guitarist from New York who was also really great and they all had equally important ideas that they were able to contribute to the program. It was fantastic to see that kind of diversity not just in the faculty but in the participants as well. It really made for some great collaborations and that makes me hopeful. That's where I see hope.

David Dacks: 00:53:02 Cool. Amanda, you spent time with Banff as well...

Amanda Smith: 00:53:07 Yeah, actually I find it interesting cause everyone's sitting in the same like cafeteria and buffet. Yeah. I always found like they tell you that they want everyone to mix and talk to each other, but no one ever does. [Laughs] There's scientists over there, everyone just kind of like "oh okay." But it is interesting cause you, it's more so at like the, the watering hole where you start to talk to people. later at night and people start to blend their conversations and you hear what other people's projects are doing. Yeah, it's pretty, pretty exciting.

David Dacks: 00:53:51 In Toronto, like what would you see as being hopeful in that regard?

Amanda Smith: 00:53:56 I guess I'm going to like bring a bit of pessimistic perspective first. I mean but it'll end positively. But the idea like, people talk about classical music, "it's dying." You know, companies are folding, opera companies are very expensive to run. There just aren't a lot of opportunities. And as a result of this lack of industry support, career support there are all these like new companies popping up. I think there's like 12 of us maybe, but we have Indie opera TO, and it's all these different companies that are all doing very different things. We all kind of come together and we share stories and, and kind of have each other's back. And as a unit we try to have a stronger voice. Was it you that was talking about bringing together venues and ... so we're

trying to do that, having a stronger voice as a group. But it is, it's exciting. Like every year there are new companies that are popping up and, you know, I have my own frustrations with the old guard, which is I guess why I do what I do. Not that like it's all legitimate. But it can't be exclusively that and what's popping up is a response to that. So I think it's actually creating more options for audience members and more options for artists to figure out what kind of artists do I want to be, you know, what kind of creative music do I want to participate in? So yeah, that's kinda where I'm focusing right now.

- Jessica Cho: 00:56:01 I feel very optimistic about it, especially given like how Red Bull Music Festival, turned out. As long as I think we support each other within the communities and encourage each other and take the risks and really focus on like, why you're creating these events-- and it's to showcase like different eclectic, like creative music. Instead of getting to trap them like bar sales was or like, you know, like charging \$40 at the door, which is actually very common for cover nowadays to go to a DIY rave. That's a lot of money, right? So, you know, I think reasonable ticket pricing is what people are enticed by. For instance, last night it was \$20 and there was three international headliners with five live acts and local DJs that are really involved and very busy hot DJs right now that are kind of leading the Toronto underground dance music scene. You know, a collaboration with the right branding like partners, like, you know, Red Bull, government funding, support from the alcohol companies or different production teams. And to make it more accessible to people and really focused on the showcasing different sounds.
- David Dacks: 00:57:46 Yeah, I would say that's one thing that's really changed a lot since the 90s, is the nature of corporate involvement. I mean not that there still aren't really poorly constructed events which are meant to showcase the brand more than the music. But you know, back in the day any kind of informed involvement with corporations would be branded as a sell out immediately. That was the rock and roll attitude and if there were these different ways to go now and Red bull is definitely one of them. There are other issues with Red Bull of course, but generally in the music side they tend to be on a very encouraging and very knowledgeable about the people they deliver. That's been my experience as well from most people who've dealt with them that it's generally been not evil.
- Jessica Cho: 00:58:31 I mean I think also you just have to think of all the programming is very important because nowadays the music is so accessible that you can just go on Spotify or like SoundCloud and YouTube, you know and people check out so much music that like they're very trend sensitive and they will not hear it. Like if it's like a really great programming and bookings and like people

will come and I think support regardless, So it's like, it's making that like sort of storyline within the bill that's enticing people to open their wallet or like even open their ears.

David Dacks:

00:59:17

There's three points that I want to make before turning it over to Q and A. One of which we talked before about spaces and how things are being pushed further out. I feel like that's a matter of perspective. I mean, there's 3 million people who live in the city and most of them don't live downtown. It kind of goes without saying that we think of the music scene as being a downtown based thing, but I see it as a potential positive as things move out. That cultural activity happens more and more in the city and that can only help draw newer people into the scene from a further more diverse geographical area. Which is only a good thing really. And there's also funding initiatives. I'm on the music committee for the Toronto arts council and there's a program called arts in the parks, for instance. There's also arts and libraries that these things never used to exist, which bring not only culture from downtown, but culture from uptown to downtown. And these interfaces that are really well constructed that can create creative situations like never before. This also turns into, we've talked about diversity, which is such a loaded term from time to time and having more genuine interfaces in a wider geographic area over the city can only make these encounters more meaningful and create true fusions or hybrids because it's happening in an organic way. That never could have happened before. And a third thing that is a priority now it's not in evidence everywhere, but I think that it's helping to create a more equitable playing field is the, is the drive towards safer spaces for music because it's one thing to want to attract new people to a scene, but if that scene is hostile to them or hostile to new voices particularly hostile to women, then that will drive people away and discourage people. And again, not that every space is safe and it's not even about the safe space, but safer spaces. But in order to actually take a look at how things are constructed, how people communicate, how the music gets made in the first place, some people might portray this as like a policing a good time, but really it's creating conditions, winning conditions for everybody to enjoy the music and everybody participate in music. So I think that these are also signs of hope in the city. So yeah, can mull all of these things over. But I'd like to throw it over to the floor to see if there's any questions for the panellists or any comments about what they consider to be a good, bad and indifferent things happening in the city right now.

Audience #1:

01:02:02

So kind of the policy end of all this very loosely, and I do want to say like, this is like, one of my primary interests, but I hear this conversation and I look back at my general field and I can't help but think that there are crises everywhere. So this is not to say that this is not important, that's not what I need at all. What I'm trying to say is, I'm curious about your take [Michael]

specifically on this idea of the larger issues feeding into the issues in this area. So when I think about development, the venue issue is about affordability, right? And I think about just a lot of other issues like talking about the racialized aspects in one of these venues, then I just think about [inaudible] right? It's like kind of all just ties all together. So I think there's like a good grounds can be found, but I'm curious what your take on this is.

Michael Rancic: 01:02:55 Sure. I think music is a good way to have a sense of, of how these things play out. Like in the sense of the vanishing music venues. We don't have a lot of data on affordability in the city, but seeing the way that those businesses are disappearing gives us a metric to look at the loss of culture that's happening because of all of this unfettered development. And so that's my perspective when I'm coming at this, I'm like a music journalist, but I'm using it as a way to talk about these bigger issues. So yeah. In terms of...what was the other part, like structural racism?

Audience #1: 01:03:43 Yeah, I guess that wasn't really my question, my question was just about kind of this idea of like I guess I didn't really vocalize my question, but like whether like the steps to take are small in this area or like you kind of just need like the solution is in the wholesale overhaul kind of thing.

Michael Rancic: 01:04:01 Well, it kind of, when I said when I was talking about like, hope, I think that there's future in like partnerships. So there's a lot of great people who are doing a lot of important work in terms of affordability, housing... housing is a public health issue. It's an environmental issue and there's so many different things that it touches. And, and we know that with artists a lot of them are more marginalized people and they don't have access to, to funds. And some of them don't even have time to like work on their music all the time because they're working two different, three different kinds of jobs. So music is just a way for us to, to look at how these issues are affecting people. I would like to see more partnerships between the musical community because we still, we still live in a city where the politicians see things through that rich Richard Florida "creative class" sort of lens.

Audience #1: 01:05:03 The economy is so important.

Michael Rancic: 01:05:05 Yeah. We don't have to value things through that lens, but understanding that they do means that people in the creative class can leverage that and use it as a way to have the ear of policy makers.

Audience #2: 01:05:25 So likewise coming a little bit from the policy angle, but much like the folks on the panel spent an inordinate amount of time thinking about the sort of systemic barriers around this

discussion. But increasingly I find myself thinking about what I'll call the consumer side problem and it was touched on a little bit by yourself near the end there. But I'll kind of hammer the question home with an example. We were at Red Bull last night and we complained plenty during our hour long commute to get there. And then we realized that, you know, in places like New York or Berlin that hour long trek to Bergheim or wherever it's ritualistic, it's, it's expected. And so I'm wondering in a time where the sort of ethos of convenience is changing consumer side, how do you folks think we might battle that? Because then there are the systemic sort of larger scale political issues. But then there are also individual habits to put it in another kind of blunt way. Like I'm realizing increasingly that my friends and myself are lazy when it comes to our support for the arts. Right? We're, just not showing up the way we could arguably should be. And sometimes that's because our wages are low because there are systemic barriers, but other times it's just because we're conditioned to be lazy. And so I'm wondering if there are some thoughts on how to change that side of the equation.

- Amanda Smith: 01:06:52 I have some thoughts on that cause I think when it's most effective and you have to like go out of your way is when it's made to seem like an adventure. You go and you're like walking down an alley. You don't know if you're actually supposed to be there or not. Is this the right place? It's fun. And when you make that part of the experience and I'm speaking from both a producer cause I, I try to have an essence of that with my concerts. But like, it's because when I go to these dance music shows and I have that experience, I'm like, "this is cool." It's cool from the moment that you're getting in an Uber or taking TTC and you're getting there and you're like feeling like you're some sort of warrior, you know? But yeah, like making it clear that it's part of the experience kind of a fun thing.
- Rich Brown: 01:07:55 There's also the idea of like bringing the mountain to Mohammed so to speak. Like what venues would be available close to where you are, that maybe you would be able to organize a concert or event that would allow us to come to you? That can be an option.
- Amanda Smith: 01:08:16 I do find that specifically with my company depending on where I put the concerts, people will or will not come. Maybe this is because of our audience, but putting on a show or an event on the East end, I'm going to have a really, really hard time putting on a show. We did an opera upon Dupont sorry, Geary. And I mean we had people come but like the complaints, "Oh I have to walk up from the bus" [Audience laughter] I have to be really conscious about where we put our shows and it's not because of like cool or not cool or will people want to go. I'm still at a point where like, although I'm trying to create that ethos of the funness

of finding a place, but geographically, it actually still needs to be-- for my shows-- they still need to be more central or West or else we just don't get the numbers and then we lose a ton of money.

- Michael Rancic: 01:09:28 Yeah. Feast in the East has been telling us we've been lazy for however many years now. It's a trek to cross over the Don River, but it's worth it when you do make the trip. And so yeah, it is really difficult to try and get that message across. But I guess to sort of Jessica's point earlier about the 4:00 AM last call, Amsterdam made their last call... I don't think they have one. I think it's the 24 hour licensing thing now, but the venues that are licensed are outside the city centre. That was like a crime thing, but it was also a way to drive people out from the downtown core. So I feel like you need to, if you want to drive culture further and further out, you also need to have the infrastructure to support it. And over there they just bike everywhere and that's part of the culture. We don't really, we're not quite there yet. So to have like other kinds of buses to support us going outward would be very helpful. Other forms of transit. Because when we talk about like the nighttime economy, that's one of the things that one of the pieces that needs to fit in order for that to work is, how are people going to get home? How people are getting home safely, not even to the place, but like, back from there?
- Amanda Smith: 01:10:36 Like the subway ends at one.
- Michael Rancic: 01:10:37 Yeah. Yeah. How are we going to have 4:00 AM last call if we don't have that? But yeah, I feel like we need to do all of these things at the same time in order for it to work.
- Amanda Smith: 01:10:47 Montreal has a 6:00 AM, I don't know if they still do, I don't know if anyone knows this, but they, a couple of years ago they implemented a 6:00 AM last call and not every bar-- people can choose whether or not they're going to be open that late. But I'd be curious to know like what that as a case study look like
- David Dacks: 01:11:07 Also on the consumer side I feel that pricing plays a big role and we are generously, publicly funded. I think that one of the important things for us to do is to keep prices at a certain level so that it's accessible for more people. We're really lucky that we're this close to the subway and that was a big part in having moved a couple of years ago. But it's really in defiance of the whole return on investment priority that's arts funding advocates and opponents would hammer on. It's like, let's keep the prices low. We don't have to make our money back at the door. You could have the pay what you want idea of charging cover where you could have people pay a toonie up to 75 bucks for a concert if that's what they can afford, is an interesting one too, in terms of trying to convince people to act in a certain way. So those are

potential ways forward. I think that it would be great if-- one thing that's almost entirely missing in Canada, which exists a lot in the States, is individual donors and private foundations which, you know, here there's more public funding, which has rules and consistency attached to it more than foundations and individual whims. But the plus side of having foundations and individual donors is that a lot of that cost pressure is taken off and can, you know, help influence consumer behaviour that way.

- Audience #3: 01:12:35 Yeah. So from the perspective of the audience. So I'm interested in the issue of aesthetic accessibility and I've been impressed with the role of media, podcasts and radio, in helping me understand what it is that I'm going to be listening to and to create interest in what I'm going to be listening to so that what are you going to be hearing, is no longer outside my zone of proximal development. It's the longer noise to me. It's, it's, it's something that I can understand and I can appreciate more. Now I wonder if, if there's any kind of concerted effort in that regard regarding educational institutions or media.
- David Dacks: 01:13:18 How's, how's both talk about jazz cast a bit? I mean that, that sort of addresses that.
- Rich Brown: 01:13:24 Well I think with respect to jazz cast, have you listened to that?
- Audience #3: 01:13:36 I haven't heard that.
- Rich Brown: 01:13:36 JazzCast.ca is a sort of a 24 hour jazz station, but not just jazz, it goes right across the board and for a lot of different styles of music. The aim is to open your ears to some new sounds while still giving you sounds that you're already familiar with, so you're allowed to, you're able to sort of stay within your comfort zone, but then that comfort zone slowly gets expanded.
- Audience #3: 01:14:12 So I've certainly heard podcasts like Hooked On Pop where there's an intellectual framework that is presented to allow me to understand what it is that I'm hearing. And sometimes CBC radio does that as well, where there's an upcoming show and where it's a bit unusual, but they'll have somebody who can interpret what's going on. And I know that for new music there have also been educational sessions to explain what this is all about and to provide a vocabulary that was not within my realm previously. And I have found that helpful.
- David Dacks: 01:14:53 I find that festivals are focusing on outreach events more than they used to and they're better constructed than they used to be. We make a priority of keeping almost all our outreach events free so that there's really no barrier to coming in and learning more from an eclectic group of people. So that's another way to

provide context, particularly local context for music that might be out of your conference or your comfort zone.

- Audience #4: 01:15:21 You sit on the arts council?
- David Dacks: 01:15:24 Yup.
- Audience #4: 01:15:24 And you fund certain functions, which brings up a question about the jazz festival. I don't know what happened to it, but it was very successful at city hall for a number of years and this year they moved it up on Bloor, they closed the street and you're listening, you know, like on the pavement in a confined space and so on. I'm just wondering, you know, if you know anything about it. like, how it just has it sort of fizzled out seems like a real shame. They had Mill Street brewery I think sponsoring it for, to help it along and TD jazz, right? TD Bank funds all the jazz festival from Canada. But I don't know what happened this year. It's just terrible.
- David Dacks: 01:16:17 I don't think it's an arts council thing, but there was a change in upper management and I think that the new what's his title? Executive director...
- Audience #4: 01:16:26 Would be nice to be able to complain to somebody.
- David Dacks: 01:16:28 Yeah. Complain to them, I think.
- Audience #4: 01:16:31 I went to TD Bank and I tried to leave a letter and ask them and nobody knew who runs the TD festival circuit. Like there was no contact person other than having to go to Josh Grossman who actually runs the festival. And I'm trying to like, give him my complaint. You know, like about how poorly he organized it. And I just felt like so stupid, you know, that I might as well just forget it. I'm pissing in the wind.
- David Dacks: 01:17:02 Certainly a bold experiment to move it to where it is now.
- Audience #4: 01:17:07 It was terrible. I mean, you know, it should be in, you're talking about venues and stuff. I mean a beautiful park would've been so nice to be a little bit lounge. Bring your lounge chair, sit in a park and drink beer and listen to jazz.
- Rich Brown: 01:17:21 I don't think it was all by choice. I think part of the reason was that they weren't, I don't know if this is for sure, but I don't think they were able to get the proper permits, whatever it would've been, to allow the festival at city hall again. I've played with festivals...
- Audience #4: 01:17:45 I don't know how come all of a sudden the city would revoke their...

David Dacks: 01:17:52 Wasn't there construction at city hall at one point that caused it to move?

Rich Brown: 01:17:55 I think so, yeah. I've played the festival in both areas of the city and I much prefer city hall as a musician.

Audience #4: 01:18:08 You played this year, up in Yorkville? I mean it was terrible, wasn't it?

Rich Brown: 01:18:10 Yeah. It's not, it's not ideal. It's far from ideal.

David Dacks: 01:18:24 Kristel?

Kristel Jax: 01:18:24 I have a question from Facebook, the land of Zuckerberg, talking about big corporations like Red Bull. Why aren't we getting together creating co-ops and divesting from big corporations? Or have any of you seen evidence of things like that happening?

David Dacks: 01:18:43 Wow. Co-ops. Well, I'm going to take it back to my arts council experience, but it's nice to see organizations like Not Dead Yet and Long Winter getting public funding really early in their... there are people who know how to run those festivals and not just speak the language of what funders want to hear, but also, I can tell you in the jury room that those juries have changed in terms of what they're looking for. And the concept of punk arts is kind of exploded as a funding priority in the last a few years. So that's one way to get around going to a corporation like Red Bull. In terms of collectives and co-ops, can you think of anybody?

Michael Rancic: 01:19:35 Not really, not anyone that's doing anything on that level. And I think that's the incentive. I mean, if there was an alternative, I think more people would be incentivized to take that route. But people are turning to Red Bull because they offer such a high standard, high production value as Jessica was saying. And the thing with like, especially electronic music, you can't just play, you just can't like plop a PA down and then pump your stuff out of that. You, you want to be able to sound good because it's all about people's experience and that costs money. And Red Bull seem to be the people who are willing to foot that bill at this point in time.

Amanda Smith: 01:20:10 You made an interesting point about possible collectives with venues and unless that happened, I don't see that pressure, financial pressure of like trying to get corporate sponsors to go away cause it's just, it's just expensive. Like whether or not if you have a collective of companies or artists that are putting on, they still have the same financial responsibilities. Essentially you need, you have to have vendors. So either it's going to be vendors who are getting marketing opportunities out of you or they're vendors who you know, who are just giving something to

you in kind. Which may or may not be a marketing opportunity as well. So yeah, you just have to have vendors or else like ticket prices are going to be continuously rising and just inaccessible.

- David Dacks: 01:21:11 I got time for one more question. Sorry, was there somebody in the back that got missed? Oh, okay. I'm sorry I didn't see you there.
- Audience #5: 01:21:24 George W: artist, filmmaker, musician. In reference to access, what I found is good idea is that when you see a storefront that's vacant, a lot of times it's vacant for months. You talk to the real estate agent, a lot of times they might give you that venue for artistic impression, whether it's music, art or affiliated with both. And as far as I'm concerned that should be going hand in hand anyways. Artists with musicians because not only is it a visual but get all your perception is broader. It's got both, right?
- David Dacks: 01:22:01 Yeah. There's an organization, a presenting organization called It's Okay, which has done a few shows, which is exactly about that. Looking for spaces that aren't being used and turning them into venues. They're popups, but it's still pursuing that kind of aesthetic, which is really exciting to see.
- Amanda Smith: 01:22:17 I've had, I've had thoughts about that because how do you plan far ahead in advance? Like you have to have shows that are maybe a month out, a few weeks out, you couldn't have like a season planned. And sometimes you like really need the security to know that you're going to have a venue because of the scarcity. I have thought about those kinds of opportunities cause I think that was just a cool idea to go in some like unused space. Very brave.
- Audience #5: 01:22:52 Another way of not restricting yourself is there's a few people, and it's based out of Trinity Bellwoods park and Kensington market is, you have people with bikes that have been super fortified, with a lot of batteries and they can play whatever they want and they're mobile.
- Amanda Smith: 01:23:07 Right. There is a problem with that though because actually, in order to have amplified sound in a park, you need a license. There are a lot of rules around that. So it's not actually so simple just to do it. I mean you could do it and just be willing to be kicked out. Like you could do that...
- Audience #5: 01:23:25 Could they kick out a few hundred people? I haven't seen that.
- Multiple: 01:23:27 Yeah.
- Amanda Smith: 01:23:34 So it's just to say like as an organizer, these are all risks and you're putting a lot of money and you want to make sure that at

the end of the day you aren't personally responsible for thousands of dollars because you want to make sure that you, no matter what you're paying your artists, right. No matter what. So you know, at the end of the day like that, that fee, that risk falls on someone. So having a potential of either getting kicked out or renting one of these places, which I do think the idea is cool, but what if, you know, they get a rental? What if someone wants to rent that place and all of a sudden you're not a priority cause you're only for one day you get kicked out and then you have no venue and you're like two weeks before your show when you really should be focusing on other things...

- Audience #5: 01:24:30 You know that bank over at Bathurst And Dundas? It's been vacant for over a year. You know that place?
- Amanda Smith: 01:24:31 Yeah. I mean it's not just, it's not to say that it's impossible, it's just to say that it's, it's a very scary prospect for a producer. I mean there are other ways.
- David Dacks: 01:24:49 Okay. So we are just about at 7:30 here. And we should probably wrap this up. So I thank you very much for everybody who's come to listen to participate in this conversation. And I hope you stick around for the concert upstairs. Doors are opening right now, in fact.