Sweet Home New Orleans
2012 State of the New Orleans Music Community Report

About the Report

This is our fifth annual examination of the New Orleans music community, based on data collected by providing services to our constituents and by administering surveys to the musical community. Sweet Home uses this data to craft our responses to the evolving needs of our community: designing and implementing practical programs to help local artists participate in the broader cultural economy in ways that build on community assets and respect the dignity and cultural traditions of each individual.

Since 2008, Sweet Home has produced a yearly State of New Orleans Music Community Report. This resource has been cited by the Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, C4 project, the Village Voice, USA Today, and The Wall Street Journal as well as being used in a variety of academic contexts. It is intended to be a resource for the cultural community; for those who love, serve, and study it; and for the policy makers who determine the legal and regulatory framework in which our music and culture are created and performed.

As Sweet Home's mission has shifted, we are incorporating a new emphasis on ongoing evaluation and dissemination through multimedia channels, making our information more timely and accessible as a programmatic model.

About Sweet Home New Orleans

Sweet Home New Orleans helps New Orleans musicians to make a living, while living *in* New Orleans.

We do this through three program areas:

Economic Empowerment Education Programming

Sweet Home offers intensive, hands-on training in music business for small groups of artists who are connected as bandmates, teachers, and leaders. We teach them how to make more money from their music. They spread their new skills through word of mouth, reaching the whole community.

Research and Documentation

Sweet Home provides a self-reported glimpse into what is broadly a cash-based, informal economy. Sweet Home believes that quantifying that economy, and the economic lives of its participants, is crucial to growing an equitable cultural economy in New Orleans. In addition to our annual report, Sweet Home has a new emphasis on perpetual evaluation and distribution, making our information more timely and accessible.

Advocacy

Sweet Home provides information and supports direct community engagement in decision-making that affects the New Orleans cultural community. We share our community's goal of a New Orleans with a sustainable cultural economy, respect for our cultural traditions, and support for the art and artists that make our city unique.

Programming through Partnership

New Orleans's cultural community needs a broad-based response to systemic challenges that no one organization can adequately address. We cannot overstate the importance of building strong partnerships with other non-profits as well as the academic, business, and public sectors to provide needed interventions and long-term investment in the New Orleans music industry. In light of this, Sweet Home is actively working through partnerships with:

- The Ellis Marsalis Center, providing a programming home for digital media training.
- The Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, providing music business curriculum development and comparative economic data.
- Live Music NOLA and Digital Tip Jar, providing live streaming performance and related revenue streams.
- PledgeMusic, providing fan-funding training and support for our constituents.
- The Music and Culture Coalition of New Orleans (MaCCNO), providing broad-based, grassroots advocacy working to affect policy to better support the New Orleans cultural economy.

Sweet Home New Orleans Board of Directors

- Susan Clade
- Jody Towers
- Evan Christopher
- Sherri McConnell
- Brandon Sherman
- Howard Shapiro
- Travis Laurendine

Sweet Home New Orleans Staff and Interns

- Suzanne-Juliette Mobley
- Sarah Gromko
- Isaac Netters
- Victoria Heffron
- Sarah Meyer

Acknowledgements

The Board and Staff of Sweet Home New Orleans are deeply grateful to the thousands of donors whose generosity and commitment to our mission have made possible seven years of progress in supporting our New Orleans musical community.

Sweet Home would like to thank Dr. Frederick Weil, a sociologist at Louisiana State University, whose work and expertise make this report possible, and whose passion for this community and good humor make it a genuine pleasure to work with him.

Sweet Home is deeply grateful to Jenny Toomey of Ford Foundation and Lisa Yancey of Yancey Consulting for their tireless work in facilitating Sweet Home's transition from a social safety net to a music business incubator. We are fortunate to work with those who understand that data is most powerful when applied to make real change.

We would also like to thank the Surdna Foundation for their support in the production of this report and in the programming shift driven by the data provided. Sweet Home is deeply grateful to the Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy for their support in providing curriculum development and the comparative data cited in this report.

Methodology

Surveys of our program participants, and the broader New Orleans cultural community which makes up Sweet Home's constituency, form the basis of our findings. The musical community of New Orleans has consistently entrusted us with unprecedented access to personal data because of their confidence in our integrity, dedication, intent, and actions. We work to repay this trust by presenting the information respectfully and honestly. We are humbled and thankful for their collective participation.

In previous years, annual surveys were completed by all applicants for Sweet Home New Orleans social service referrals and financial assistance. This created serious concerns that a sampling bias was driving low income reportage. With no formal registry of New Orleans cultural community, determining appropriate weighting presented additional challenges. For our 2011 survey, the practice of surveying social service applicants was eliminated mid year, and in 2012, one quarter of applicants who applied for assistance received surveys on site, while outreach was increased to the broader cultural community. Happily, at least in some senses, median income, employment, and demographic data remained consistent with prior years despite the methodological shift.

Outreach for the primary annual survey was done through OffBeat, WWOZ FM, and NOLAVie, as well as social media, direct email, and 500 postal-mail surveys sent to constituents in the Sweet Home database who do not have email addresses or computer access. The 2012 report also incorporates data from survey applications for Sweet Home's music business courses. Survey Monkey was used to collect data directly and through manual input. The annual survey was open from June to October of 2012.

Demographics

In terms of race and gender, Sweet Home's course applicants are significantly different demographically than the broader cultural community. The applicants for our course in Accessing Current Revenue Streams are 54 percent White and 43 percent Black, in contrast to our overall survey where 65 percent of respondents were Black and 35 percent White. This demographic skewing is also in stark contrast to prior years' demographics for social service clients, where 79 percent of recipients were Black and only 18 percent White. To a lesser extent, there is an increase in the percentage of females in Sweet Home's applicant pool at 32 percent, rather than the 28 percent in both our general survey and prior years' social service applicants.

There are a number of contributing factors to these discrepancies; not least that Sweet Home's new focus on increasing economic measures through music and media limits the percentage of Social Aid and Pleasure Club members and Mardi Gras Indians in our applicant pool. These populations have together made up over 30 percent of our general survey population each year (including 2012), are nearly universally Black, and are disproportionately male. Outreach is likely a factor as well, with Sweet Home relying heavily on earned media and our allies at OffBeat magazine and WWOZ FM. Reaching a broader audience in general, but particularly for our Economic Empowerment Education Programming, is a major organizational goal. There are additional concerns, however, that lack of computer access is also a contributing factor, presenting challenges which we are currently seeking means to address.

As an alternate approach, it has been proposed that Sweet Home's data collection be restricted to 'professional' musicians, in an effort to align our data and mission. There are, however, considerable challenges in defining a 'professional' musician: percentage of income from music/media earnings can easily indicate low overall income, rather than a successful career, and gigs per month has a strong bias against women, who perform less frequently and are disproportionately vocalists, as shown consistently in our data. Given the largely informal nature of the New Orleans musical community in defining itself, Sweet Home prefers an opt-in approach, considering self-defined SAPC members, Mardi Gras Indians, and musicians as the basis for the broader musical community, which we estimate at 5,000 individuals. Based on our database, and comparing to other data sources, we place a rough estimate of New Orleans musicians at around 4,000 individuals, over one percent of the population of New Orleans.

Summary of Findings

As has been consistently true since Sweet Home's first report in 2008, incomes in the cultural community are extremely low, at or near poverty levels. In 2012, on average, individuals earned about $17,800 a year, at approximately the same level since 2008. Approximately 39 percent of New Orleans musicians make less than $10,000 per year, and 40 percent are unemployed other than live performance. Both pay per gig and number of gigs per month have seen slight but steady declines since 2008, a trend that bodes especially poorly for reliance on this primary revenue model.

There is little diversity in income streams from music/media sources and a broad need for professional services, infrastructure, and knowledge to shift New Orleans musicians from a gig-to-gig cash cycle. Over-dependence on local, live performance leaves the New Orleans musical community vulnerable: helping to drive pay per gig down, limiting opportunity for exposure digitally or through touring, and creating an economic ripple effect in the event of the hiatus or elimination of live performances at any given music venue.

2012 Overview

2012 was, by most measures, a good year for the New Orleans cultural economy and an inconsistent one, at best, for New Orleans musicians. Hurricane Isaac provided several days of cancelled gigs and nearly a week without electricity to follow. On the heels of those setbacks, the City of New Orleans began a round of permit enforcement that shuttered several venues and prompted others to cancel shows voluntarily. In our final year of providing direct financial assistance, Sweet Home fielded a 300

percent increase in calls for help during this period, with evictions and foreclosures presenting a real threat for many, due to the loss of two or more nights of income.

On the whole, however, 2012 was a year of quiet change, with shifts in established festivals and the launch of a new festival in the Tremé, the announcement of an eventual end of HBO's *Tremé*, and an increase in tension about the role of music and noise in a changing city.

French Quarter Festival restructured their music sponsorship model after the Musicians' Union announced it could no longer provide support through the Music Performance Trust Fund which relies on sales of recordings, those assets having decreased in the digital age. In the past, non-union musicians, and those unwilling to perform for the rates offered, had to seek out their own sponsors in order to play at the festival. In 2012, the French Quarter Festival took over that responsibility.

A new festival, Jazz in the Park sponsored by People United for Armstrong Park, started in the spring of 2012, with seven free concerts, and continued with a second seven in the fall of 2012, providing local music in an underutilized setting.

HBO's *Tremé* announced that it would be renewed for a fourth season, but that the fourth season would be abbreviated and the final season. *Tremé* has been a boon to local musicians, actively placing local music in the show, as well as providing support for setting up royalty payments for musicians' placed intellectual property. We believe that much of the increase we have seen in our surveys related to use of music business services, particularly entertainment attorneys, is directly attributable to *Tremé*. The opportunities provided for musicians through *Tremé* have also spread throughout the larger community, creating significantly broader awareness about legal protections and media revenue streams. Sweet Home is grateful and hopeful that we can build on those trends in a lasting way.

As referenced above, 2012 was also marked by a series of challenges faced by live music venues. In August, the Circle Bar and Siberia found themselves shut down by the city for lack of proper permits, prompting a number of other venues including Mimi's in the Marigny to voluntarily cancel live music and DJ nights preemptively. A meeting, called by Kermit Ruffins at his new Tremé Speakeasy, offered venues and musicians an opportunity to push back at what was commonly viewed as arbitrary enforcement. Over the course of the fall, the "Wednesday meetings at Kermit's" coalesced into the Music and Culture Coalition of New Orleans (MaCCNO).

Ruffins's Speakeasy was one of a handful of new venues to open during 2012, along with Publiq House in the Freret Corridor and Little Gem in the CBD in the first weeks of 2013. The iconic trumpet player was given permission by the New Orleans City Council to reopen the Ernie K. Doe Mother in Law Lounge as well, in a Council session that revolved around his prior performances at two Councilmember's weddings. By contrast, Little People's Place in the Tremé became a focus for a debate on gentrification and neighborhood integrity. By the end of 2012, a combination of factors and increasing press coverage had contributed to the ossification of an ongoing narrative of a war on music and culture in New Orleans.

In New Orleans, as elsewhere, there is tension between old and new residents, between creating safe neighborhoods and retaining affordable ones, between desirable music and culture and problematic

noise. As in other cities, neighborhood disagreements often become polarized, reinforcing the paradigms of gentrification and conflict. Inevitably, all parties throw around the phrase "Quality of Life."

"Quality of Life," is a subjective term; it calls for an examination of whose definition of quality, and whose life, we use as a reference point. For a street musician, quality of life requires an income, an audience, and the right to create, on that spot, the music and culture in which this city claims to take pride. For a shop owner, quality of life requires customers, an accessible door, and sound levels that allow them to do business. For most residents, quality of life requires that both of these businesses, informal and formal, keep the streets clean, keep the crowds calm, and shut it down before bedtime.

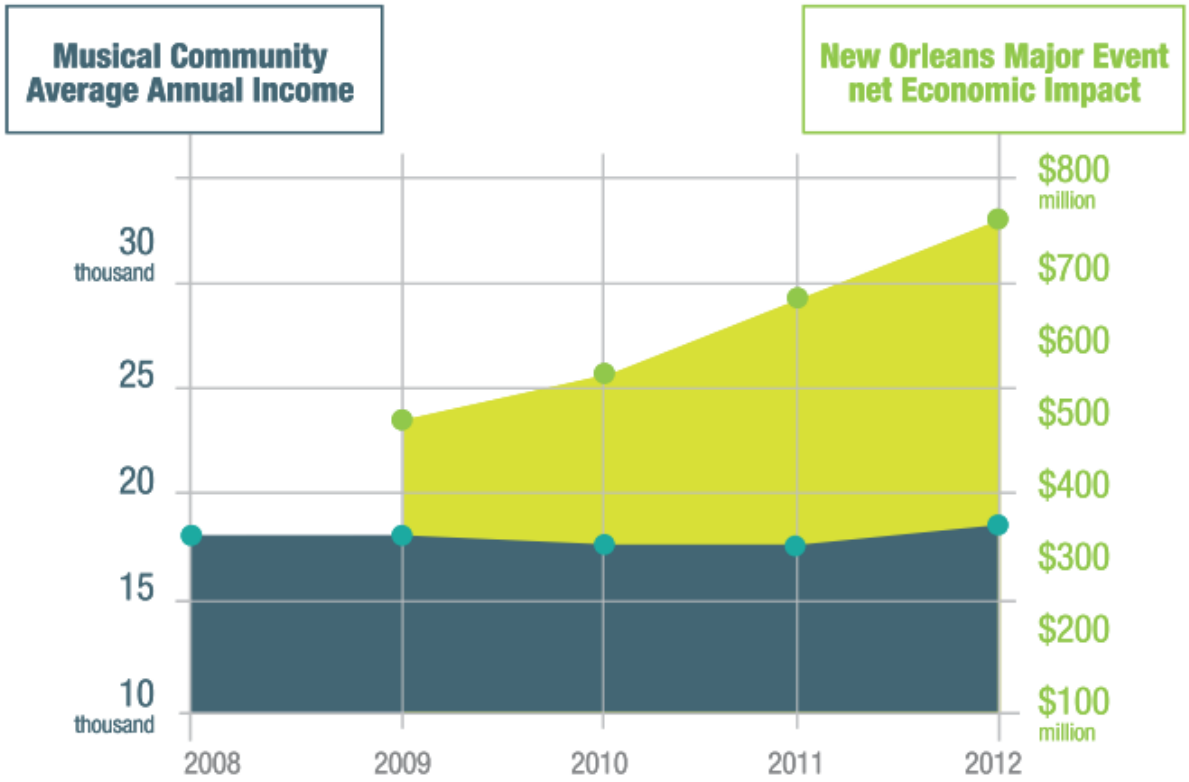
None of these definitions of "Quality of Life," are mutually exclusive, but meeting them all requires a certain amount of compromise, a goal that is ill-served by the deeply flawed hodgepodge of processes and policies currently in place. Zoning still requires grandfathering-in or exceptions for live entertainment; the much delayed and hotly debated noise ordinance remains in limbo, and so, by extension, do our musicians and culture bearers themselves.

New Orleans Cultural Economy

The New Orleans cultural economy has boomed over the past six years, with significant growth in gigs and the number of, and net income from, music festivals, ranging from small, neighborhood based celebrations to the Jazz and Heritage Festival. From 2002 to 2012, New Orleans's entertainment sector grew over three times faster than that of the United States average (34.1 percent compared to 9.6 percent[i]). In 2012, the New Orleans cultural economy made up 13.8 percent of the total workforce, up 7 percent from 2011, and was one of the few sectors to experience growth in that period.

All told, there were 1,722 cultural businesses in New Orleans in 2012, paying 1.1 billion in salaries. The entertainment sector alone brought in 14.4 million in sales revenues to city coffers[ii], but that growth is not trickling down to the artists who create the culture. Incomes and employment levels in the musical community have remained flat, in stark contrast to both overall economic trends for the New Orleans region and continued growth in the Cultural Economy and Tourism sectors.

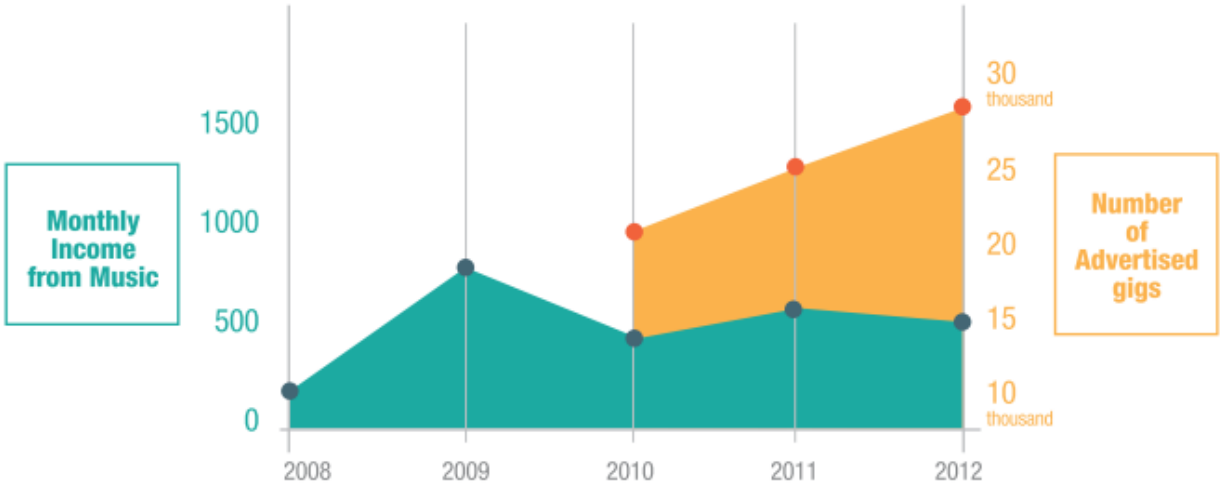
Along with the overall cultural economy, the number of available, publicly-listed gigs has also been increasing, with the Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy counting 24,700 individual gigs in 2010, 26,199 in 2011, and nearly 30,000 gigs in 2012.[iii] These were concentrated primarily in the French Quarter and Faubourg Marigny, with 8490 and 7184 listed gigs respectively. The 110 live music venues recorded by the Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy are inclusive of the 85 venues in New Orleans with live entertainment permits, but clearly exceed those permitted and exclude a large number of unofficial performance spaces that regularly feature live music illegally.



The official gig count also excludes actual festival gigs, which have increased over the past few years with the expansion of Jazz and Heritage Festival and Foundation offerings throughout the year, the addition of new festivals such as Po-Boy Fest and Harvest the Music, and the expansion of old favorites like French Quarter Fest. In 2012, an estimated 3.9 million people attended the 126 festivals hosted within New Orleans, an 8 percent increase from the prior year.[iv] Beyond the impact of gigs available at a given festival, the Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy finds that a festival increases the number of additional gigs on a given weekend day by 11% and on a weekday by an average of 34%.

Income Indicators

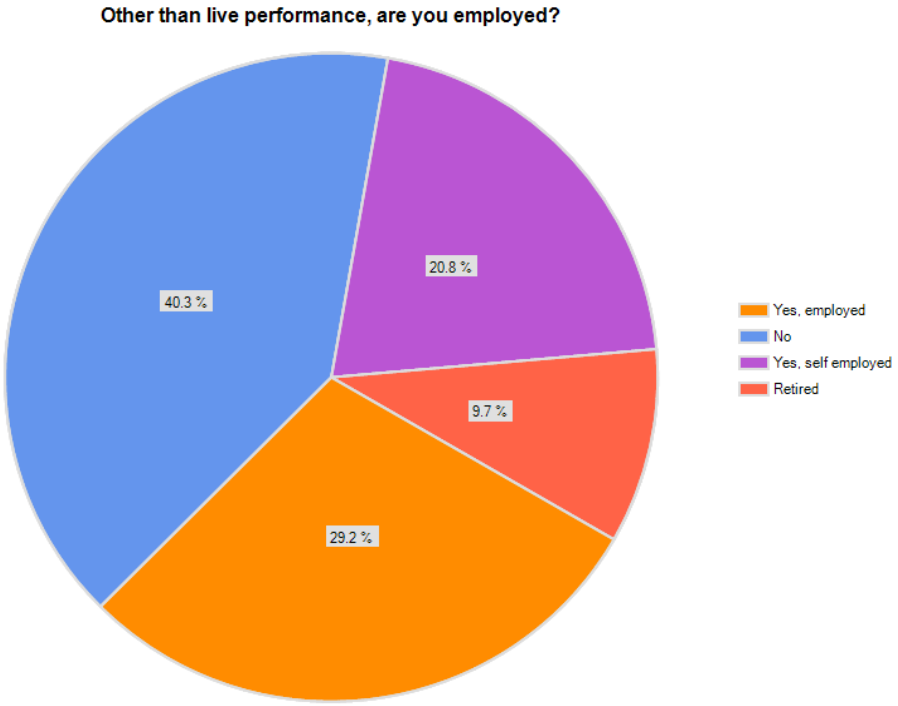
While the framing for music emphasizes gigs and festivals in the Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy snapshot, live performance is not the best measure of a strong music industry. Nor is dependence on live performance income a viable model for a sustainable music career. Sweet Home is working to move New Orleans musicians from a gig-to-gig cycle to stable, diverse income streams; but we will be the first to admit, gigs matter. Live performance provides the primary source of income for over half of New Orleans musicians and is in turn the primary setting for sales of merchandise and recordings. By contrast, an international Future of Music Coalition study on Artist Revenue Streams found that live performance made up only 28 percent of musicians' income on average and that fewer than 13 percent of musicians rely exclusively or primarily on live performance.[v]



In 2012, New Orleans musicians earned about $17,800 on average, having stagnated at approximately the same level since 2008. There is relatively high variation in income at the higher levels of our sample, with a few individual artists making incomes in the high five figures, but approximately 39 percent of New Orleans musicians make less than $10,000 annually. It is also worth noting that Future of Music Coalition also found an average personal gross of $55,561 and music income average of $34,455, three times the average for New Orleans.[vi]

Revenues generated by the music industry, in particular record sales, have rapidly declined over the past decade. The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) reports that, despite rising sales of digital music, the recorded music industry overall has fallen from a $14 billion industry to a $6 billion industry over the last ten years. The global decline of the recorded music industry is an additional challenge to growing what is already a modest market for the majority of local musicians. While diversifying revenue beyond live performances is a key step towards financial sustainability, musicians cannot rely on the old model of record sales to make up the difference. Artists must be educated in new ways of doing business and enforcing their intellectual property rights to broaden their earning potential.

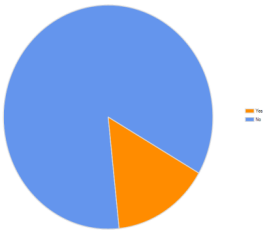
Income derived from music and media are not inherently exclusive of non-musical employment for most musicians, a day job, of some sort, is what keeps most New Orleans musicians on the kinder side of the poverty line. The tradeoff for greater financial security is then a loss of time to practice, compose, collaborate, and gig. In New Orleans, where service industry employment has long been the largest and most flexible sector for 'day jobs,' but rapidly rising costs of living and schedules that overlap with opportunities to perform present challenges. Many of our artists face additional barriers to employment due to a lack of educational attainment, criminal records, chronic health issues, and age. 2012 is the first year in which Sweet Home has separated unemployment from retirement in our survey design. In our 2011 report, we controlled for age and found unemployment other than live performance at nearly 35 percent. At just over 40 percent, that rate is considerably higher for 2012.



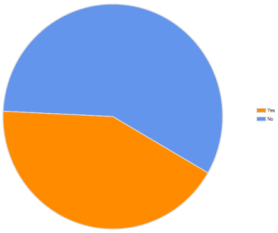
For some New Orleans musicians, employment options are improving, with around 40 percent now working in music education to supplement gig income. Programs like Kid SmArt, Young Audiences, and Roots of Music have done heroic work in expanding access for children across New Orleans and providing teaching opportunities for musicians. Teaching is not an option for everyone, however, nor should it be. Given the importance of musical culture to the identity and economy of New Orleans, it is incumbent upon the public, private, and non-profit sectors to actively increase opportunities for cultural community members to have flexible working hours at a decent wage.

As Sweet Home undertook strategic planning in 2012, our external analysis highlighted the expansion of youth music programs, particularly those that engaged artists as teachers, as a bright spot in the New Orleans musical ecosystem. New Orleans also has considerable assets in higher education for music, with a particular strength being the diversity of offerings across this sector, related to price points, scheduling, and ease of access. There are also a wide range of organizations and programs serving the musical community's varied needs, from Tipitina's provision of instruments and a co-op office space, to the Louisiana Cultural Economy Foundation's grants and trainings.

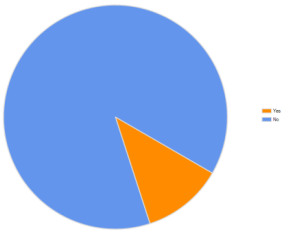
That said, the number of New Orleans musicians who seem to access these services is relatively low. Three of the best examples are Tipitina's Co-op, the Musicians' Clinic and the Musicians' Union, all of which serve as excellent and much needed resources for the New Orleans musical community, but which have much lower measures of use than expected. More troublingly, especially in a community which is driven by word-of-mouth transmission, 70 percent of the reported reasons for this underuse in each case are either "did not know it existed" or "don't know what they do."



Tipitina's Co-op membership, 15 percent



Use of Musicians Clinic, 42 percent

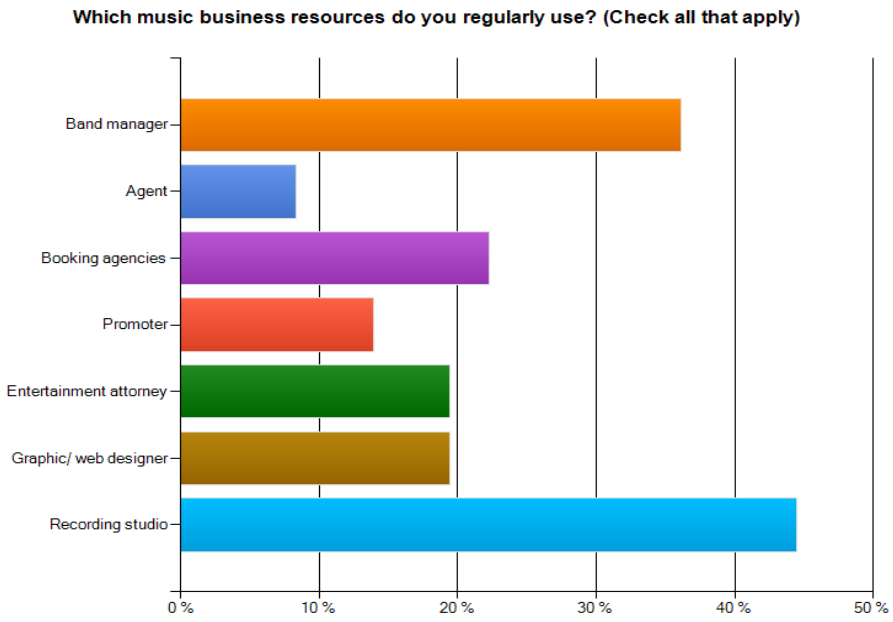


Musicians' Union membership, 11 percent

While New Orleans has a broad range of organizations and services aimed at, or applicable to the musical community, the overall network is disjointed and underutilized, with a number of institutional lacunas and redundancies. Without a cohesive structure or citywide vision, and driven by a perception of competition for organizational resources, not enough is being done to coordinate or strengthen the sector which serves New Orleans musicians. Strategic coordination of services needed and offered, as well as a collaborative approach to outreach, would do a great deal to close some of these gaps, and will be a priority for Sweet Home moving forward.

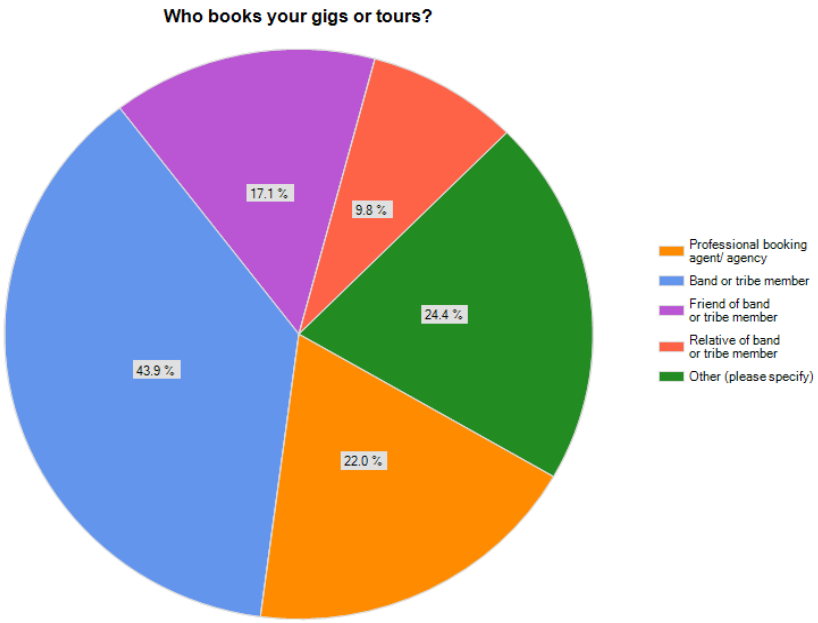
Music Business

Historically, much of New Orleans indigenous music and culture has been created outside of the mainstream. Second lines and jazz funerals, for example, derive from the practices of benevolent societies in communities of color that were denied access to burial insurance on the basis of race. Many recording artists responsible for hit songs loved around the world were met with exploitative practices in the music industry. A long history of erratic local policies, particularly where music and culture have intersected with race and class have also played a role in undermining stability and investment in what should be a strong regional industry.



Our surveys show that only 27 percent of New Orleans musicians have professional managers, only 22 percent work with professional booking agencies, and fewer than 15 percent work with professional promoters. Given New Orleans musicians' heavy reliance on live performance revenue, the level of professional support around gig booking and marketing is markedly lower than might be expected, even given the generally limited margins available. The tight physical distribution of New Orleans entertainment districts and interconnectedness of the cultural community are likely the primary countervailing factors against professionalization.

The majority of booking support services are provided through relational networks, or by members of a given band, for a total of 70.8 percent. Relying on a non-professional booking agent has a striking impact on the negotiation process, as does booking for one's self. In many places, musicians or their informal agents have the ability to create a fictitious persona for negotiations. In New Orleans, scale alone renders that approach impractical, especially as negotiations are often face to face. Negotiating as an artist requires a separation of the self from the marketable product, a difficult prerequisite for many to manage. Of the 24.4 percent of survey respondents who answered 'other,' 70 percent of the write-in responses were the respondents themselves.



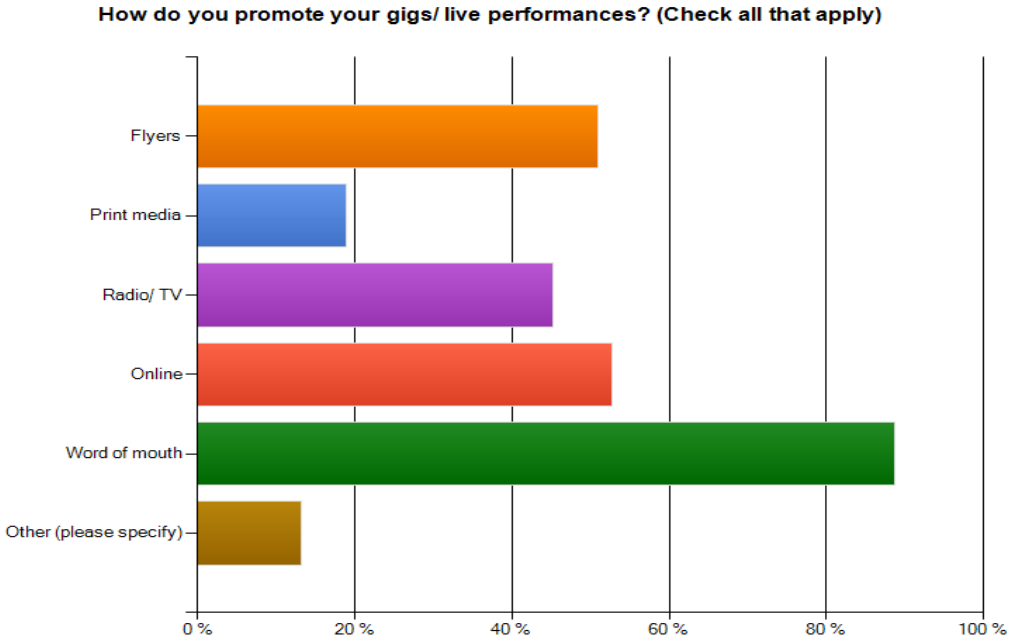
The very density of New Orleans performance opportunities and the relatively high numbers of performers feeds into downward pressures in pay, often related anecdotally as "if I/we/they don't take it, someone else will." Furthermore, negotiating is an acquired skill, aided by not having to focus on the ability to pay rent or buy food based on the outcome of each deal, a luxury clearly not available to many in New Orleans's musical community.

While the disconnect between rising numbers of available gigs and static overall income may be a reflection of an increase in the number of musicians or bands available to play, an emerging trend in Sweet Home's data seems to indicate a slow decrease in pay per gig over time. While it would be

precipitate to confirm this, given the methodological and population shifts in the time period covered, self-reported pay per gig averaged 140 dollars in 2008 and for 2012 averaged near 105 dollars.

The reduction or elimination of several post-Katrina "gig-funds," including Sweet Home's own, may be affecting that average. Additionally, our 2012 survey saw an abrupt drop off in average number of gigs per month, which may be an anomaly, or a contributing factor. Clearly, all of these factors bear close attention in future research. Each speaks to a need for better support in booking and negotiations, through professional assistance and more robust preparation for artists and their informal bookers.

Marketing and promotions present additional challenges to New Orleans musicians. As can be seen below, New Orleans musicians promote upcoming shows primarily through word of mouth, with a significant drop off for the next highest categories of promotions online or through flyering. Given the concentration of New Orleans live entertainment venues along a small selection of heavily populated corridors, even very low levels of promotion may have a limited impact on a given night. A combination of low promotion and near universal lack of fan email lists, however, has an exaggerated impact for opportunities such as fan-funding or touring. New Orleans musicians regularly play before international audiences, without leaving home, but are often ill equipped to turn a tourist into a long-term fan.

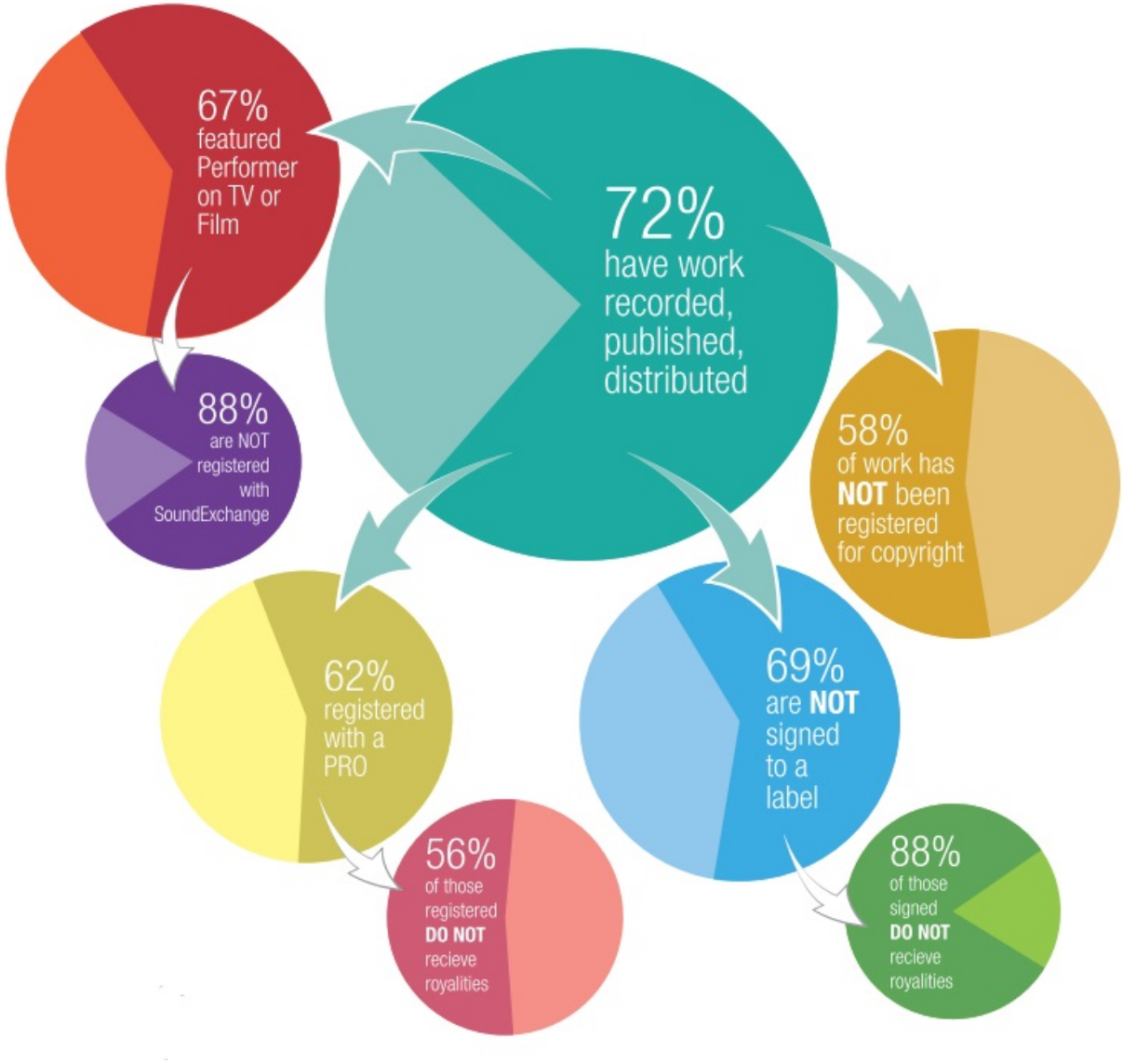


It is worth noting that online promotions were not broken out in the general survey, so the 53 percent who promote online is inclusive of websites, online event listings, and personal and band social media. These approaches to online promotions have differing audiences and are most effective with appropriate management and materials. While Sweet Home's 2012 annual survey did not provide a break-out on type of online use, our Fan Funding course application, a sample set too small for general inclusion in this report, provides further insights.

In Sweet Home's Fan Funding application survey, we found that only 40 percent of those applying have a Twitter handle as an artist, and that 31 percent use solely a personal Facebook page to promote gigs online. On a more positive note, 69 percent use both official and personal Facebook pages for promotions. Additionally, 76 percent have an email list, though fewer that 40 percent of that number are managing their lists on a platform designed for that purpose. More troublingly, the applicants for our Fan Funding course are collectively much further advanced in their careers than the general population, leading us to expect lower percentages in our 2013 report when the same questions are asked of our broader constituency.

Fifty-four percent of New Orleans musicians do not have a press kit, and of those who do, many have no digital version available. This makes it difficult to book tours and expand the reach of a given band beyond New Orleans. It also puts a burden on local venues to produce materials for promotions on behalf of a band, or as is often the case, under-promote a show. As more musicians sell recordings at performances (74 percent) than in retail outlets or online (45 percent), the primary means of monetizing recorded music again reinforces dependence on live performances, in this case as a sales venue. Troublingly, earnings from royalties, sales of recorded songs, and studio work represent 5 percent or less of the total income from music of most New Orleans musicians.

Of those who applied for Sweet Home's course in Accessing Current Revenue Streams, 72 percent had recorded music and 81 percent of those had self-released albums, but only 31 percent had ever been signed to a label, leaving the remainder of these artists with the full responsibility of protecting and promoting their work. Only 42 percent of their potential copyrights had been registered; collectively this sample had registered 297 of their 701 musical works. Only 62 percent of applicants had registered with Performance Rights Organizations, and, most alarmingly, only 22 percent of performers had registered with SoundExchange. The decline in rates of formal participation in music business, from production of recordings through to the registrations that allow for actual revenue collection, reinforces New Orleans musicians' dependence on live performance and limits access to additional revenue streams.



Overall, New Orleans musicians are not participating in formalized music business. Professional support, in the form of managers, agents, attorneys, or marketing, and booking remains strictly limited, and with low profitability these services are likely to remain scarce and underutilized. Digital income streams and online marketing are significantly underutilized as well, and should be prioritized as an area where low entry costs and access to international markets could have a significant positive impact.

Moving Forward

New Orleans musicians are overwhelmingly dependent on live performance as their primary source of income. Traditionally, many have had to leave New Orleans to have successful professional careers, but there are new opportunities that can change that pattern. Over the past decade, there has been a sea change in the global music industry, with digital moving to dominate production, distribution, and marketing. That shift is driving a decline in traditional record labels, but creating space for a new musical middle-class of savvy individual artists and small labels.

New Orleans musicians have much to gain by embracing the Internet culture: the digital shift opens markets to niche performers and offers pathways to new revenues with low entry costs. The New Orleans musical community is well positioned to benefit from the digital shift by being overwhelmingly do-it-yourself. Our traditional word-of-mouth networks provide opportunities for the knowledge and skills necessary to spread quickly within our community.

Sweet Home is working to directly impact the economic potential of New Orleans musicians by giving them the skills and hand-on experience to manage their own careers better and by encouraging the spread of those skills throughout the musical community. Our broader goal is to create the capacity for growth in the musical community at large. Increasing the margins for individual artists and bands provides an opportunity for the infrastructure of music business to develop in New Orleans.

Sweet Home calls on musicians and venues to make better use of professional services available and to invest in their careers and businesses. We call on audiences to support venues which treat musicians well and pay them like professionals, and we have developed the Empower Musicians, Seal of Approval initiative to help indicate those venues and encourage the expansion of better business practices.

Sweet Home reiterates the importance of collaboration for the development of a robust music sector in New Orleans. We call on cultural non-profit, academic, business, and public sectors to provide needed interventions and long-term investment in the New Orleans music industry.

The public sector must do more to contribute to the growth of New Orleans's cultural economy, by encouraging existing resources to flourish and creating new opportunities for individual artists. An equitable, enforceable noise ordinance for example, would provide a much needed measure of consistency for local musicians. A straightforward permitting process for new venues, or the addition of live music to established venues, would allow for more strategic expansion of commercial corridors and support greater numbers of paying gigs. There is a holistic, equitable way for the culturally significant historical sites of New Orleans to be protected and leveraged to attract paying visitors. New Orleans must apply lessons learned from other locales that effectively promote music and perpetuate culture.

Sweet Home New Orleans calls on the New Orleans Tourism and Marketing Corporation and Convention and Visitors Bureau to expand their support to the perpetuation of a robust cultural ecosystem with the same enthusiasm that they apply to marketing that culture to visitors.

We call on the City of New Orleans to prioritize the development of Music Business as an indigenous industry, to at least the same level as has been done for film, through the creation of a Music Business Office under the Department of Cultural Economy.

In addition, Sweet Home New Orleans strongly advocates for codification and accessible publication of zoning, permitting, and ordinance regulations as they apply to cultural businesses and individual musicians in order to provide coherent policy access and a more level playing field for a largely informal economic sector.

---

[i] 2012 New Orleans Cultural Economy Snapshot, The Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, City of New Orleans.
[ii] 2012 New Orleans Cultural Economy Snapshot, The Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, City of New Orleans

[iii] 2012 New Orleans Cultural Economy Snapshot, The Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, City of New Orleans
[iv] 2012 New Orleans Cultural Economy Snapshot, The Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, City of New Orleans
[v] Artist Revenue Streams Report, Future of Music Coalition, June 2012
[vi] ibid