

Local Music in Cultural Heritage Institutions: Research from the Sounds of Home Project

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Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Outline

1. Project background
2. Survey
3. Interviews
4. Geovisualization

1. Project Background



Music and Place

“

...the importance of locality, and local structures of feeling, in revealing the significance of musical life—and the connectedness of music to other aspects of local history, heritage and culture

(Bennett, 2015: 24)

Local Music in Cultural Heritage Institutions

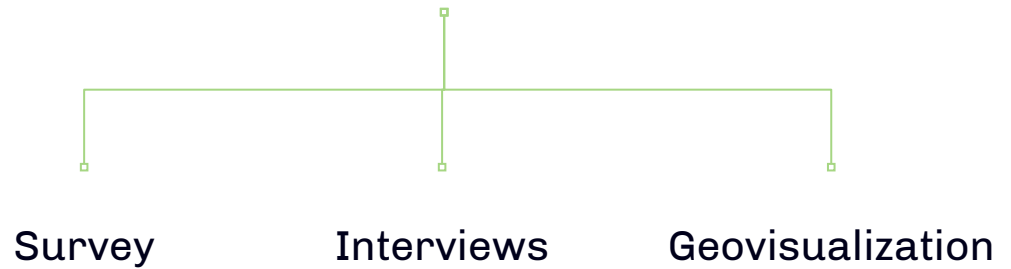
- Local music **artifacts**:
 - tangible representations of the connection between music and space/place
- Local music **collectors**:
 - help build and promote music communities
- Local music **culture**:
 - connects people and places

Research Model

Theoretical Frameworks



Methods



Theoretical Frameworks

Music Scenes

- Sociology of music/cultural production
- Considers various aspects of a music scene as related to broader cultural forms, including the network of people involved in creating and maintaining it

Special Collections

- LIS/archival sciences
- Focus on the value collecting of rare/unique artifacts
- Examines the history of the transmission, use, and reception of texts

Music Scenes

“ that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization

(Straw, 1993: 373)



Local Music Collectors

“ the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produce(s) the kind of art works that art world is noted for

(Becker, 1982: x)

Special Collections

“ The local history of music...has more than a regional interest, since definitive treatments of music...cannot be written until local studies provide the groundwork

(Epstein, 1967: 18)

“ ...we must not only help our collections speak to the needs of our communities, but to use our collections to help **build community**. Our access points and our technologies should allow members of the library community to converse with each other and in their own minds, with artifacts that house ideas, expressions, and emotions from all times and places

(Wasner, 2014: 333)

2. Survey

Research Questions

1. What are the local music collection management practices in Canadian libraries?
2. Where may practices for collecting local music be improved?

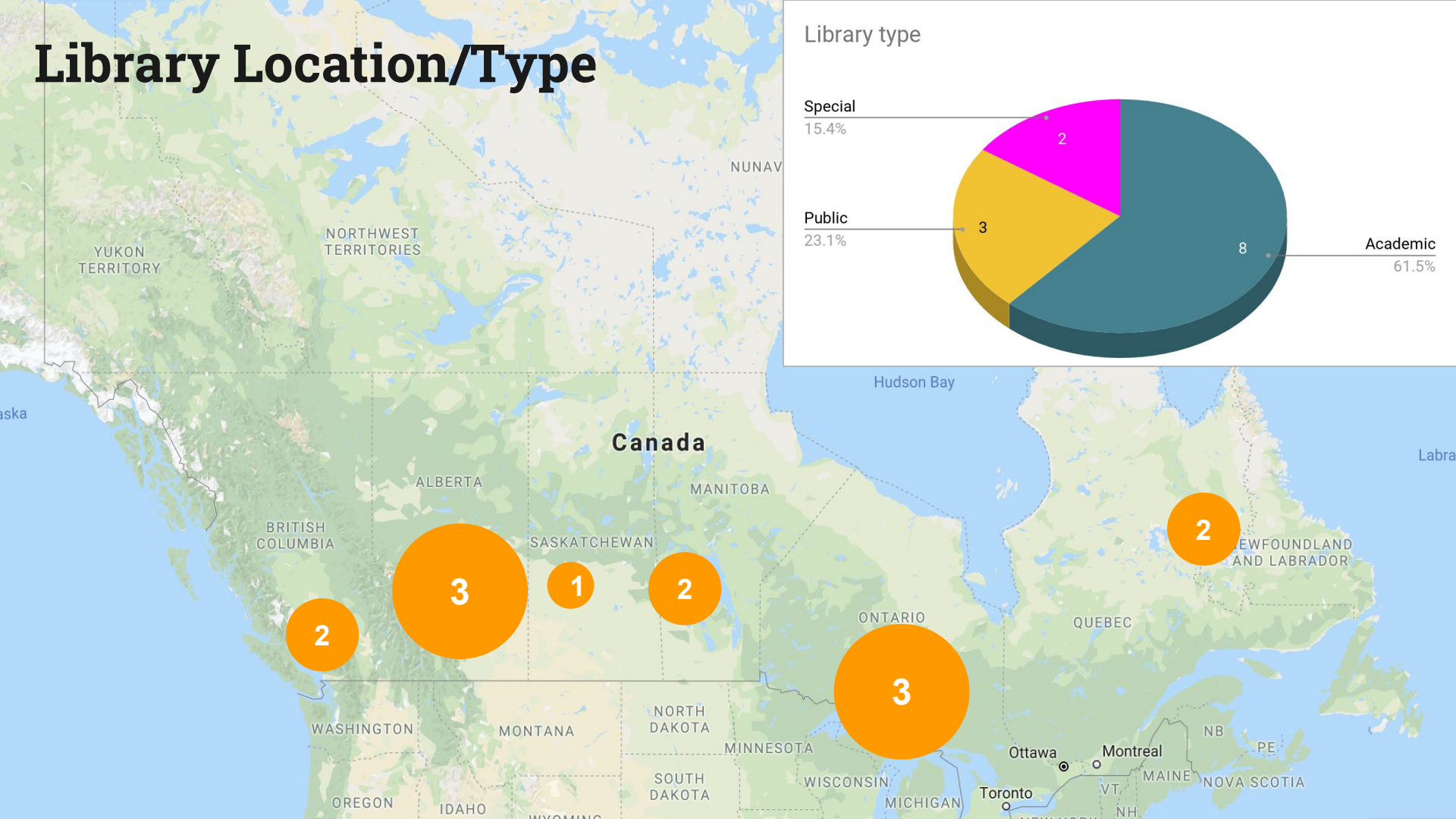
Method

- Electronic questionnaire in English/French
- 20 questions (18 closed/4 open ended): demographics, collection scope, collection development, promotion, access, preservation
- Follow up questions: identifying collections, follow up interviews
- Participants from Canadian libraries (105 selected)
- Open for 3 weeks

Results Highlights

*Dataset available at: <https://doi.org/10.7939/DVN/WAJ9UG>

Library Location/Type



Collection Scope

- Definition of “local” varies
- Collections contain many formats
- A/V materials (particularly sound recordings) are most predominant
- Majority of collections are growing

Acquisitions

- Popular acquisition strategies include: conducting research, community engagement, collection development policies, and building community partnerships
- Popular acquisition methods include: working with music stores/vendors, donations, working with individual artists

Access and Preservation

- All collections are cataloged to some extent
- Most collections use metadata to identify local music
- Primarily located in archives or special collections
- Physically accessible and more than half are also available online
- More than half of respondents are employing some kind of preservation method (physical, digital or both)

Users

- Community members are the primary users of local music collections, followed by researchers as secondary users
- Primary collection use is research based (scholarly, historical, community, family)

Outreach and Funding

- Most popular promotion activities are: community engagement activities, hosting events, and using online advertising or social media
- Funding is secured from a variety of sources within and beyond the institution

Survey Conclusions

1. Local music work falls outside of traditional professional competencies
2. May intersect more with archival practices
3. Preservation and online access are facilitated primarily through digitization and online hosting
4. Potential challenges: donor relations, community outreach, working outside skillset

3. Interviews

Purpose

1. Understand the values, lived experiences, and perceptions of local music collection managers in Canadian cultural heritage organizations
2. Gather diverse perspectives on local music collecting, collections, and their impact on communities

Method

- Aiming for 30 participants (about half complete)
- Qualitative research interviews
- Semi-structured interview guide approach
- Questions focus is on value and significance of collecting local music from their perspective
- Photo documentation and site visits

Initial Findings

1. Local music is collected in a wide variety of cultural heritage organizations and often considered rare or on the verge of being lost
2. Collectors consider local music to be underrepresented in academic conversations
3. Collection managers work closely with or as a part of the local music community
4. Challenges include: funding, infrastructure, time, interest

4. Geovisualization

Visualizing Local Music Collections



Background

- “Visual information seeking” introduced as a concept in 1993
- Since expanded into applications with library and music data
- Benefits:
 - Users can interact with data in a more engaging way
 - Understand musical data in a different way than textual representations
- Examples of recent geo visualizations of music data show ability to connect local music scenes and disparate geographic regions

Musical Map: Cities of the World

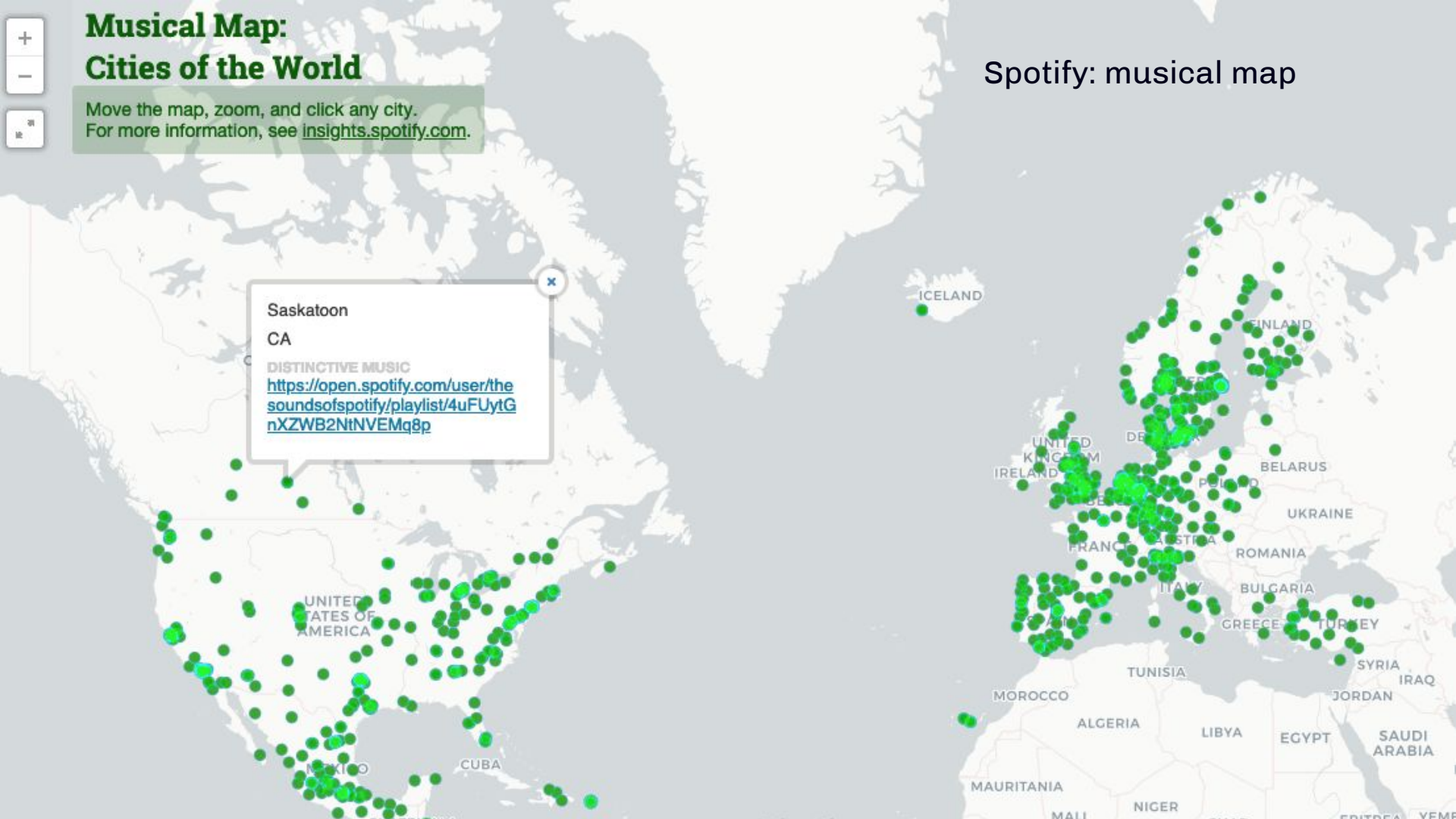
Move the map, zoom, and click any city.
For more information, see insights.spotify.com.

Saskatoon
CA

DISTINCTIVE MUSIC

<https://open.spotify.com/user/the-soundsofspotify/playlist/4uFUyGnXZWB2NtNVEMq8p>

Spotify: musical map



#streetmusicmap

HOME

ARTISTS

INSTAGRAM

SPOTIFY PLAYLISTS

MUSIC ALBUM

SHORT DOCS

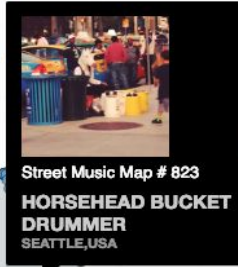
ABOUT

Artist

Country

City

StreetMusicMap



Street Music Map # 823

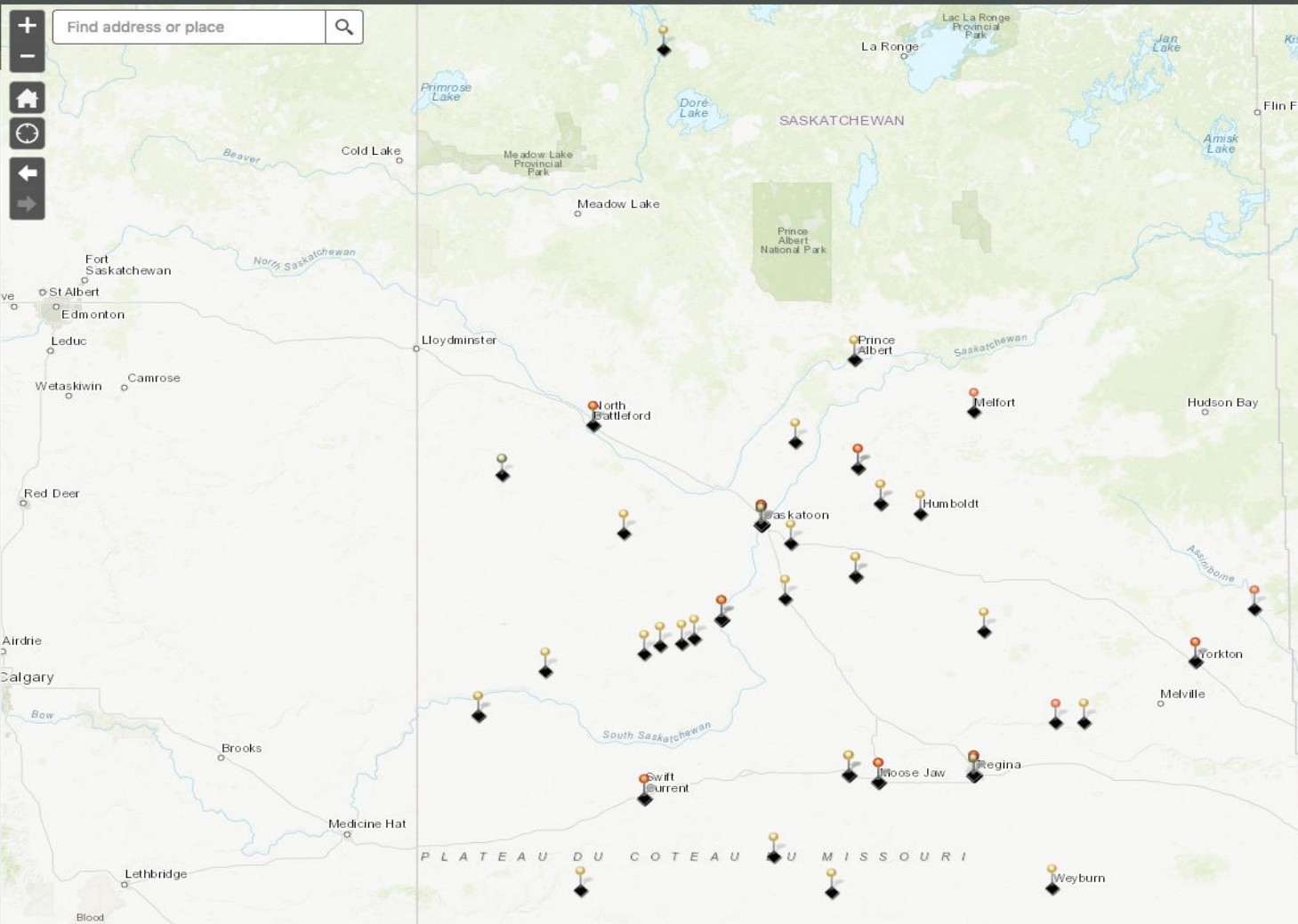
**HORSEHEAD BUCKET
DRUMMER**
SEATTLE, USA



Layer List

Layers

- Orchestras ...
- Bands ...
- Choirs ...
- All ensembles - location points ...
- All ensembles - location clusters ...



Saskatchewan
Music Collection:
Large ensembles in
Saskatchewan

Smithsonian Folkways Holiday Music Map

A "singing map" featuring traditional holiday music from the collection of [Smithsonian Folkways Recordings](#), the nonprofit record label of the national museum of the United States.

The Christmas, Chanukah, and Kwanzaa holiday traditions feature an incredibly diverse range of musical accompaniment. This sampling from the Smithsonian Folkways collection includes 56 songs from 24 nations. Click "audio tour" to hear them all, or pick and choose from the map or list below.

START AUDIO TOUR

Type to search...



- 1** **Asalto Navideño**
Kalihi, Honolulu, Hawaii
- 2** **Versos de Año Nuevo**
Española, New Mexico
- 3** **Las Posadas**
New Mexico
- 4** **Humildes Peregrinos**
Mexico
- 5** **La Piñata**



Project Purpose

To create a visual tool to demonstrate the geographic location and scope of local music collections in Canada

Developing a Local Music Dataset

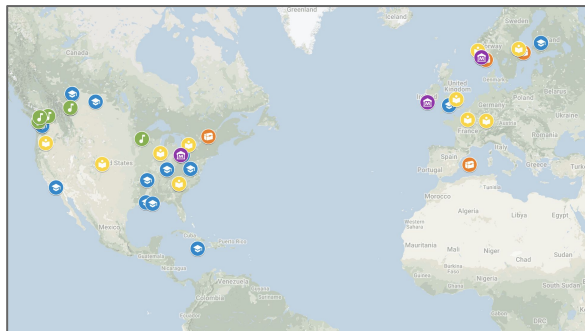
- Developing a dataset about local music collections in Canadian cultural heritage institutions
- Collections are found across the country
- Early experimentation with representation of locational data in Google maps. Platform is easy to use and adapt, but has limited features

Research Questions

1. Where is local music collected? Where is it not collected?
2. What is the relationship between collection locations and other aspects of collection scope such as genre?

Prototype Introduction

- Directory of local music collections held by cultural heritage institutions in Canada
- A way to explore collections and their characteristics, in relation to geographic location, and in relation to each other



Process

- Create dataset that includes locational and collection information
- Select platform - ArcGIS Online
- Iterate on data structure to work with ArcGIS Online
- Publish data as hosted feature layer
- Create interactive filter for genre data
- Create and publish web application
- Configure interactive genre filter

Prototype Demo

Video:

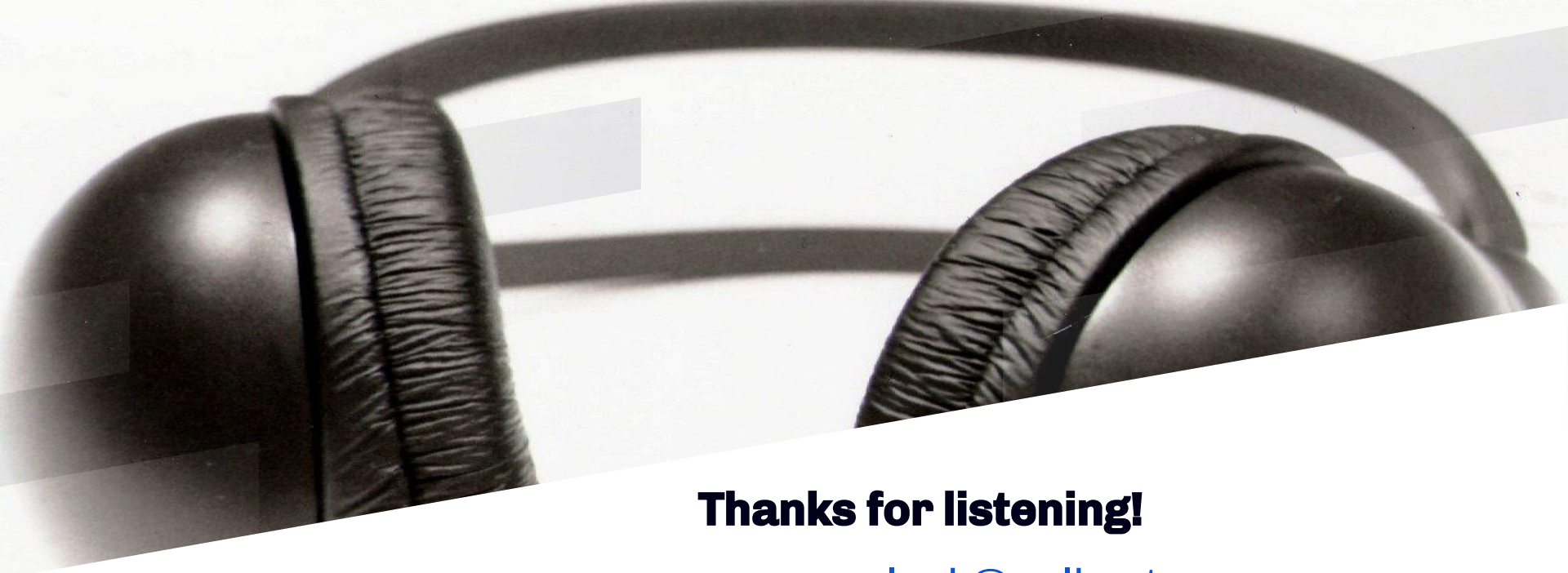
<https://usask.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=0739cfb8-f0fa-4222-a206-a9f101593ff8>

Limitations and Challenges

- Structuring data and building the web app while still developing skills
- Conceptualizing the final product while still developing skills
- Small dataset limits the utility of certain visualizations and types of analysis
- Representing collections that move, or that are held in multiple locations

Next Steps

- Continue to build dataset and add collection locations
- Find a way to explore and represent the scope of “local” music
- Gather feedback on prototype and revise



Thanks for listening!

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<https://research-groups.usask.ca/soundsofhome/>