



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Nashville and South by Southwest 2008
Date:	14 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay Head of Economic Initiatives ext 3459 Lisa Martin Economic Development Manager ext 3427

Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that at the Development Committee meeting of 14 November 2007, approval was given to undertake a music event in Nashville, Tennessee and to attend the South by Southwest (SXSW) Media Conference and Showcase in Austin, Texas. The project was a collaboration between the Council's Economic Development and Tourism units.

The connection with Nashville has a special significance because of the very strong links between Ulster and the Tennessee capital which dates from the Scots-Irish settlement of the area in the eighteenth century. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Mayor of Nashville and the Lord Mayor of Belfast in 1994 and this has resulted in many collaborations.

It was proposed that to further develop this relationship, a music showcase in Nashville as part of the Sister Cities meeting would be beneficial and would coincide with the South by Southwest festival thus creating a bigger impact.

Belfast City Council has identified creative industries as a priority sector in relation to economic development and has been successfully supporting the sector strategically since 2004. A key area in supporting the creative sector in Belfast has been internationalisation and export related activity. As part of this ongoing intervention, it was proposed that Belfast City Council help strengthen the City's creative sector in the international marketplace by participating and showcasing at South by Southwest 2008.

Key Issues

In July 2007, Belfast City Council's Tourism Development Unit in partnership with the Northern Ireland Industry Music Commission (NIMIC) planned and delivered a Belfast Nashville showcase concert in Belfast. This event was attended by a significant contingent from Nashville including the Mayor of Nashville.

Through the Council's Sister City relationship with Nashville, the Mayor was keen to look at the possibility of mutual showcasing in Nashville and at South by Southwest. As a result, it was proposed that the Belfast showcasing artists travel to the city of Nashville before participation at South by Southwest. A joint showcase event was organised to celebrate the Sister City relationship in 'Music City' and provide an opportunity for the artists and related businesses to rehearse and consolidate the showcase event at SXSW. A separate report will come to Committee on an action plan for the Nashville/Belfast relationship.

South by Southwest 2008 is the premier global event focusing on the creative side of the music and entertainment business which takes place annually in Austin, Texas in March. It involves a conference and exhibition – attended by more than 10,000 people and a variety of showcases with performances from over 1500 acts on 75 stages throughout the city.

SXSW remains the key US showcasing, deal striking, networking and media forum for the international media industry and attendance at the event remains a key priority for all of those interested in the business of media and creativity. The event mirrors showcases such as MIPIM and MAPIC (Retail Property Exhibition) in its ability to attract participants and outputs.

The aim of attending SXSW was to further enhance Belfast City Council's support for the creative industries by promoting Belfast musicians and music related businesses to an international audience and showcasing the investment and purchasing opportunities offered by Belfast's music industry.

Participation aimed:

- To appreciate, value and celebrate Belfast's creative sector
- To provide networking opportunities for those working in Belfast's music sector and potential buyers and distributors in the world music industry
- To attract up to 5 Belfast based musicians to participate
- To identify new sales opportunities
- To promote Belfast as a city for tourism, business development and inward investment
- To identify new investment and partnership opportunities
- To increase the profile of Belfast's creative sector in the international marketplace
- To increase the number of Belfast companies doing business internationally

On initial consultation with those participating, the project was deemed one of the most ambitious and successful showcasing events to date in relation to the creative industries. Early indications show that a total of \$450,000 was leveraged for participating artists as a result of their attendance and this figure looks set to increase over the coming months. The only negative feedback received from participants was that of lack of time to prepare for the trip and that a longer lead in time would have provided them with the opportunity to prepare additional marketing material and arrange a greater number of meetings.

A full feedback report detailing outcomes and comments on both the Nashville and South by Southwest visits is attached in **Appendix 1**. This is the evaluation of the Showcase in a short time period but indicates already significant leverage from the process. It is therefore recommended that Committee agree to Belfast participating in South by Southwest for the next two years at a cost of £40,000 per year and that a review is carried out at the end of the three year cycle.

To maximise our outputs it is crucial that planning starts much earlier in the year, this will allow for better resource usage, to lever cash and to potentially include a greater number of partners in the project. There is also the potential to strengthen the linkage between Belfast, Nashville and South by Southwest and this is currently being further explored.

Resource Implications

Financial

£80,000 to be included in Departmental Plan for 09/10 and 10/11 (expenditure for event for 09/10 financial year)

Human Resources

Co-ordinated by the Head of Economic Initiatives and implemented by the Creative Industries Officer and Cultural Tourism Officer.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Note the contents of the report
2. Agree to supporting Council participation at the South by Southwest Media Conference and Festival for 2009 and 2010 up to a maximum of £80,000 for both events.

Key to Abbreviations

SXSW – South by Southwest

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – South by Southwest Feedback report

APPENDIX 1

Nashville / South by Southwest Review

Introduction

Since June 2007, Belfast City Council had been involved in discussions with the Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Arts Council and Invest Northern Ireland, in relation to the possibility of participating and showcasing local musicians and creative businesses at the infamous South by Southwest media conference, exhibition and showcase (SXSW) in Austin, Texas.

It was also considered that an additional event as part of the Sister Cities relationship be implemented to add value to the promotion of Belfast but also would be a perfect platform to promote Belfast's creative music sector.

It was proposed among the partners that a showcase event in Nashville and participation at SXSW were the perfect events to profile the City and region's growing music industry and Belfast City Council successfully raised a total of £40,000 funding from these organisations to assist in the event management, promotion, registration, travel and accommodation costs for all participants.

Participants

Participants included:

- **CDC Leisure Ltd** is a dynamic, exciting company with extensive expertise and many years of experience within the entertainment and leisure industry. The company run 4 Belfast based music venues; The Limelight, Spring & Airbrake, Katy Daly's and Auntie Annie's and also promote a wide range of concerts throughout various sized venues.
www.cdcleisure.com
- **AU Magazine** – Ireland's premier music, culture and lifestyle publication. Now in its fourth year, the magazine continues to promote the cream of homegrown musical talent alongside the best in international and underground artists. Previously called Alternative Ulster but since rebranded as simply AU on account of their growing distribution throughout mainstream channels right.
www.iheartau.com
- **Joe Dougan** – Booker for The Stiff Kitten, an 800 capacity night club situated in Belfast. In addition, Joe is Managing Director for 'Radio K' brand which has brought countless club promotions to Belfast, as well as branching into Artist Management for electronic combo Alloy Mental, one of Northern Ireland's most successful new acts. '
www.thestiffkitten.net, www.radiok.co.uk, www.alloymental.co.uk
- **Smalltown America** – Independent Record Label which cultivates a self-sustainable model through which artists can release the best records they can possibly produce. Smalltown has been home to many fantastic artists including Clone Quartet, Fighting with Wire and Oppenheimer.
www.smalltownamerica.co.uk

- **Belfast Nashville Songwriter Festival** - Now in its fourth year, the festival explores the art of song writing and celebrates the Sister Cities relationship. Grammy Award winning songwriters travel over for the festival including Nanci Griffith, Paul Overstreet and Gary Nicholson who have performed on stage with talented Northern Ireland artists including Paul Brady, Juliet Turner and Bap Kennedy.
www.belfastnashville.com
- **Real Music Club** – Key promoter of acoustic music in Belfast, RMC specialise in ‘real’ music performed by ‘real artists’ and over the past seven years have worked with numerous award winning artists including Steve Earle, Billy Bragg, Rodney Crowell and Billy Joe Shaver.
www.therealmusicclub.org
- **Brian Houston Songs** - When his demo played on local radio, switchboards lit up and thousands of hastily pressed debut albums sold. He regularly topped the NI charts and national airplay followed resulting in headline tours of England. Taste makers across the country created armfuls of fabulous reviews and the best kept secret leaked. “Sugar Queen is bristling with hope, joy, love and fabulous songs” Mojo Magazine****
www.brianhouston.com
- **Eilidh Patterson Music** - “Eilidh has a voice as clear as the frosty night air and her self-penned songs suggest a maturity beyond her years. Brilliant.” Maverick magazine
 Lyrically her compositions bring a message as passionate and fresh as the vocal. Based in Belfast, she is currently preparing material for her debut album. This follows universal acclaim for her first 3-track EP which has had extensive air-play locally, nationally and as far afield as New York City.
www.eilidhpatterson.com
- **Oppenheimer** - “No.1 Most Likely To Succeed Amongst Irish Music Professionals” – Alternative Ulster
 “Oppenheimer are like the Irish Flaming Lips or Mates of State... they’re an incredible new band” – Gary Lightbody (Snow Patrol)
 Oppenheimer’s 2nd full-length album, ‘Take the Whole Midrange and Boost It’, is due out on Bar/None Records on May 18th.
www.oppenheimermusic.co.uk
- **The Answer** – This band has achieved over 100,000 debut album sales, award nominations from Classic Rock and Kerrang and notable early success in the last 18 months through UK, Europe, Japan and Australia. Having toured with The Rolling Stones, The Who and Aerosmith, The Answer’s debut album ‘Rise’ has been hailed as a significant and important new contemporary classic rock album.
www.theanswer.ie www.myspace.com/theanswerrock
- **In Case of Fire** - Equal parts Refused, Muse and The Mars Volta, In Case Of Fire emerge from the blender to 5/5 live reviews and major label A&R managers knocking their door with increasing regularity. Tours with 30 Seconds To Mars, QOTSA and plaudits from every corner make this a name to watch closely.
www.incaseoffire.co.uk

www.myspace.com/incaseoffireuk

- **Driving by Night** - have supported Keane, The Thrills, Kings of Leon, The Futureheads, Faithless, and Arctic Monkeys. They've recently played an In the City showcase a UK and Irish tour and have since been locked away in their rehearsal studio, gigging quietly, bringing new tunes to air, and putting the final touches to their long awaited debut album which hits the streets in March.

www.drivingbynight.com

www.myspace.com/drivingbynight

- **Foy Vance** - described as 'the most important solo musician to emerge from Northern Ireland since Van Morrison,' Foy Vance has a distinctive, cracked soulful voice. His debut album 'Hope' was released in August 2007 to critically acclaim. Already with two songs featured in 'Grey's Anatomy', Foy counts Pete Townshend and Bonnie Raitt amongst his fans.

www.foyvance.com

www.myspace.com/foyvance

- **Ben Glover** - Ben has been compelled to write songs since his mid-teens when he was awoken and unsettled by Bob Dylan and Tom Waits. Ben gigged throughout his years at Queens University, Belfast, where he graduated in Law. Although he had earned his degree he inherently knew that it was essential for him to pursue a career in music. In the summer of 2004 Ben put together his touring band, The Earls and in spring 2006 the band released their debut EP The Ballad of Carla Boone.

<http://www.benglover.co.uk>

Other participants on the mission included the **BBC, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Invest Northern Ireland** and the **Northern Irish Music Industry Commission**.

Itinerary

The project itinerary consisted of a music showcase in Nashville, Tennessee to coincide with the Belfast / Nashville Sister Cities meeting and the South by Southwest Media conference and festival in Austin, Texas. Belfast City Council worked closely with the Mayor's Office in Nashville, the Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission and the UK Trade and Investment in relation to the event management, press and PR and meeting facilitation.

The Nashville / Austin project itinerary took the following format:

Monday 10 March 2008	Event set-up and management Live Concert: A Celebration of Belfast Nashville Songwriters
Tuesday 11 March 2008	Musicians travel to Austin
Wednesday 12 March 2008	BCC staff travel to Austin SXSW Conference Registration Belfast Nashville Showcase SXSW Exhibition set up
Thursday 13 March 2008	Governor of Texas - Breakfast reception SXSW Exhibition set up UK Trade and Investment Showcase reception SXSW Conference and Exhibition attendance
Friday 14 March 2008	New Music from Northern Ireland Showcase SXSW Conference and Exhibition attendance

The Nashville showcase and participation at South by Southwest allowed representatives from Belfast's music sector to promote themselves at the largest international showcase and conference in the industries calendar and participation in the exhibition and conference. It also gave Belfast City Council and representatives from Belfast's creative business community a chance to promote their businesses and develop networks with potential investors, collaborators and media buyers.

Outcomes to date

The key outcomes from this showcase event included:

- 1 Showcase event held in Nashville.
- 250 delegates in attendance.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of the opportunities available in Nashville for musicians by distributing information to NIMIC database on return.
- Promoted the 2009 Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival to new artists and music industry figures.
- Key relationships developed with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), The Americana Music Association and labels and publishers including market leaders Universal.
- 2 Showcase events held in Austin.
- Over 500 delegates in attendance.
- 11,000 delegates in attendance at exhibition over 3 days.
- Over 7000 attendance at Belfast / UK Trade and Investment stand.
- 3,000 Belfast 'Sounds of the City' multimedia product distributed.
- 100 x High Quality Belfast Posters produced and distributed throughout various venues in Austin
- 5000 x A6 Flyers produced and distributed
- 4 x pages in British Music Guide distributed in 16,000 official SXSW delegate bags and at UK Trade and Investment / Northern Ireland stand
- International Publishing contracts signed worth over \$450,000
- 2 artists met with a variety of tour agencies in the USA and are currently in final discussions of signing a major US tour contracts.
- 3 Artists are returning to both Nashville and Austin in April / May 2008 to record and to meet with music publishers and US based artists for collaborative projects.
- Extensive media coverage both at home in the USA. BBC's Ralph McLean promoted both events in Nashville and in Austin through his regular newspaper column and on his radio show on Radio Ulster.
- BBC's Across the Line TV programme will be broadcasting an entire programme on South by Southwest at the end of April 2008.
- Belfast artists chosen to be filmed for Direct TV, a new digital channel in the USA. This will air for 6 months on television and up to one year online.
- Planetary Promotions in Boston will be promoting the 'Belfast – Sounds of the City' CD compilation and featured artists to the US media as part of their international music campaign.
- Planetary promotions have recently completed the second week of their US specialist radio campaign for the CD compilation which has significantly elicited 9 Station 'CMJ playlist ads' and over 100 regular Station playlist ads. Significantly it features as the No 1 playlist entry of a key New York regional station.

Following the visit, each company completed an evaluation of the programme and key comments are as follows:

(A) Company: Bruised Fruit

Comments:

- Event well organised
- Wide variety of music
- Excellent networking opportunities
- Learning opportunity
- Developing lasting business relationships
- Raised the profile of our company
- Brought the work Northern Irish artists to an American audience
- Contact maintained with 70% of people met at the exhibition
- Will return to the event next year
- Willing to participate in any further NIMIC initiatives

(B) Company: Mr Jones Productions

Comments:

- Beneficial contacts made
- Worthwhile experience
- Opportunity to strengthen relationships
- Experience gained will greatly help with future planning and managing future participation in SXSW
- Raised profile
- Showcased to industry figures
- Introductions to promoters, digital marketers, publicists and press contacts
- Stronger connections with fellow artists
- Co-written song is now a 'priority song' with Universal Publishing
- Extremely worthwhile trip
- Keen to participate in similar future initiatives

(C) Company: Panarts, Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival

Comments:

- Event ideal vehicle for our company
- New contacts for our festival
- Developed new links with commercial sponsors
- Have developed further relationships with 8 other companies

(D) Company : The Real Music Club

Comments:

- Fostering of relationships in sister cities programme
- Stronger links with local and Nashville artists
- Touring network extended
- New project now implemented with 2 local artists
- New projects planned with Nashville and Austin artists
- Compliments to NIMIC staff and BCC

(E) Company: Shine Productions

Comments:

- Very Informative
- Event well organised
- Accessing new talent
- Networking with other professionals
- Successful meeting with booking agents
- Reinforcing existing alliances
- In process of securing a large number of booking contracts as a result of the trip

(F) Company: Penny Distribution

Comments:

- Informative
- Networking with artists
- Networking with other industry professionals
- Re-establishing existing contacts
- Insight into current trends in the music industry
- Helped focus on the planning direction of our company
- Developed partnerships with 9 other companies
- Secured contracts with 3 companies with estimated income at £22,000

(G) Artist: Foy Vance

Comments:

- Great promotional opportunity
- Networking with other professionals
- Developed relationships with press and promoters
- In process of initiating dialogue with Nashville based promoter and major publishing companies

(H) Artist: Oppenheimer

Comments:

- Excellent opportunity to meet with long distance contacts
- Excellent opportunity to make new contacts
- Instant positive reviews in American magazines
- Forthcoming coverage in 6 media companies as a direct result of SXSW
- Creative meetings with international artists for future collaborations
- Further touring opportunities with international artists have been offered
- A publishing deal with a Los Angeles based company
- A contract from a European booking agency

(I) Artist: Driving by Night

Comments:

- Invaluable experience
- Contact made with potential new producer and management
- Heightened profile throughout the industry
- Networking with numerous industry professionals
- Networking with other artists

(J) Artist: Eilidh Patterson

Comments:

- The event was an excellent platform to showcase to an international artist
- Positive peer support was confidence building
- Invitation (and scholarship) to return to a song writing workshop
- Numerous co-writing sessions planned with Nashville based writers
- Inspired and enlightened
- Whole experience was an excellent career and artist development opportunity
- Networking with numerous industry professionals
- Networking with other artists

(K) Company: Brian Houston

Comments:

- Great networking opportunity
- Given clarity and direction
- Gained insight to the American method of organising shows in terms of quality and showmanship
- Networking with numerous industry professionals

(L) Company: CDC Leisure

Comments:

- Two goals of social networking and 'bookings' successful
- Believe we made a positive impact as local promoters
- Very useful meetings with BCC regarding development of music venues
- Meetings with a south of Ireland promoter on future joint initiatives
- Various discussions with UK based agents on tour promotion
- Presently discussion to promote a concert featuring Van Morrison
- Event was very well organised
- A very positive experience.

BLANK PAGE