

Local music collecting in Canadian cultural heritage institutions: a summary of recent research

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Outline

- Introduction to Sounds of Home
- Summary: a survey of local music in Canadian libraries
- Research in progress: local music in Canadian cultural heritage organizations
- Next steps

Sounds of Home: Exploring Local Music Collections and Collecting in Canada

- Explores the connection between **music** and **place** through experiences of local music collection managers in Canadian heritage organizations



Georgia Straight, BEV DAVIES

Research objectives

- Identify locations of local music collections and their characteristics
- Document local music collection management practices and identify areas where practices may be improved
- Better understand the experiences and perceptions of those collecting local music

Why study local music collections and collecting?

- Growing professional and research interest
- Underrepresented in scholarly literature
- Connected to local histories, community diversity, and broader artistic and social developments

Areas of research

Music Scenes

- Popular music studies approach
- considers local music as documentary evidence of broader cultural formations

Special Collections

- library and information/archival sciences
- speaks to the value of collecting and documenting rare or unique artifacts

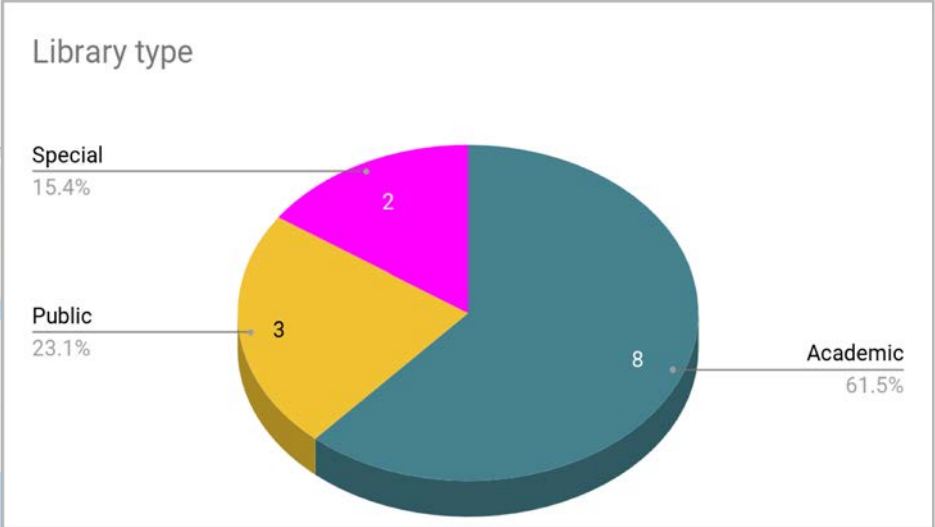
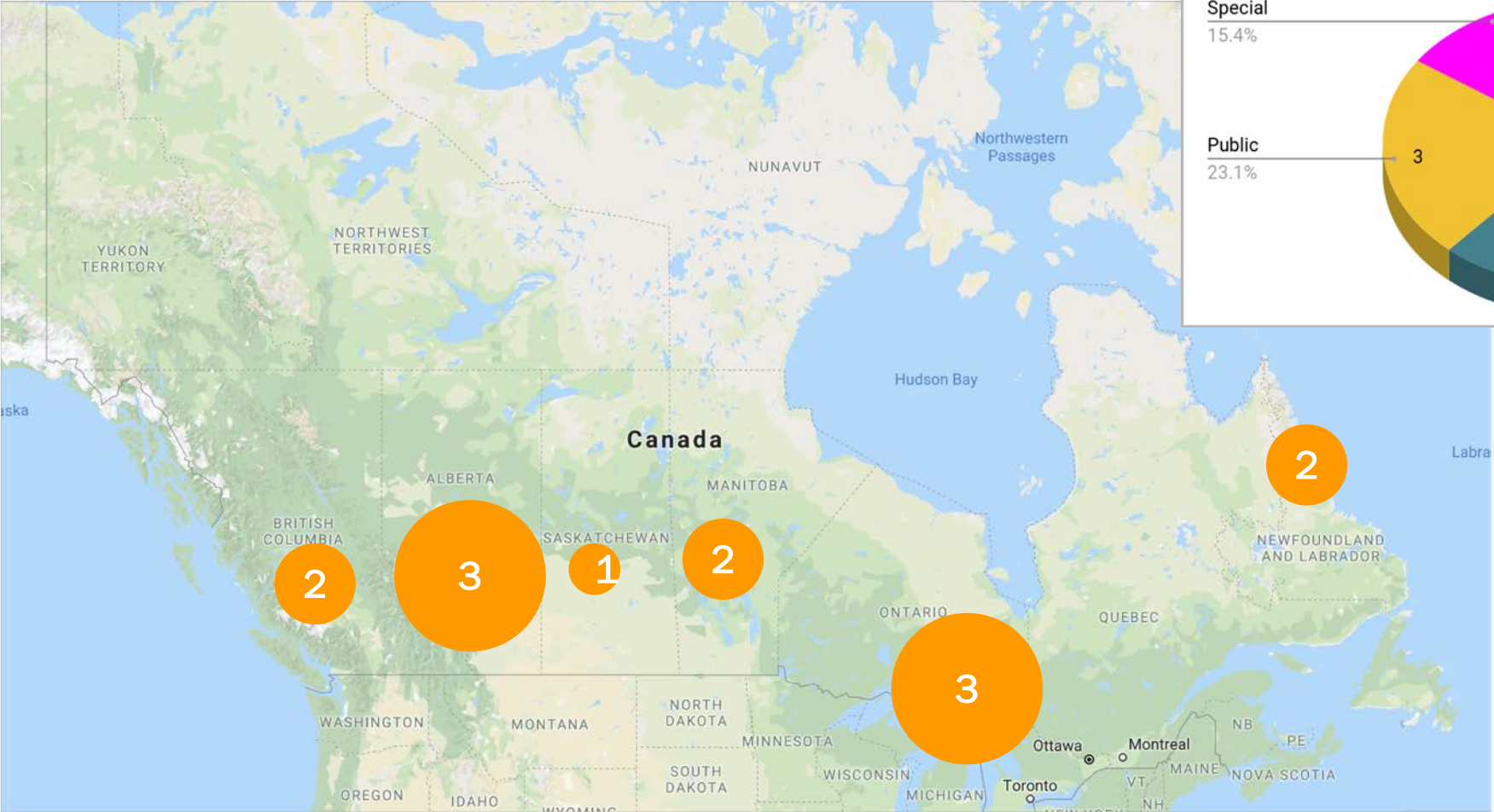
“Local scene is focused in social activity that takes place in a delimited space and over a specific span of time in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans realize their common musical taste, collectively distinguishing themselves from others by using music and cultural signs ...”

<http://subcultureslist.com/scene/>

Phase one: Survey of local music collections in Canadian libraries

- Method: exploratory survey research
- Survey distributed via email for a 3 week period in May 2018
- Participants from Canadian libraries
- 20 questions (18 closed/4 open ended)

Library location and library types

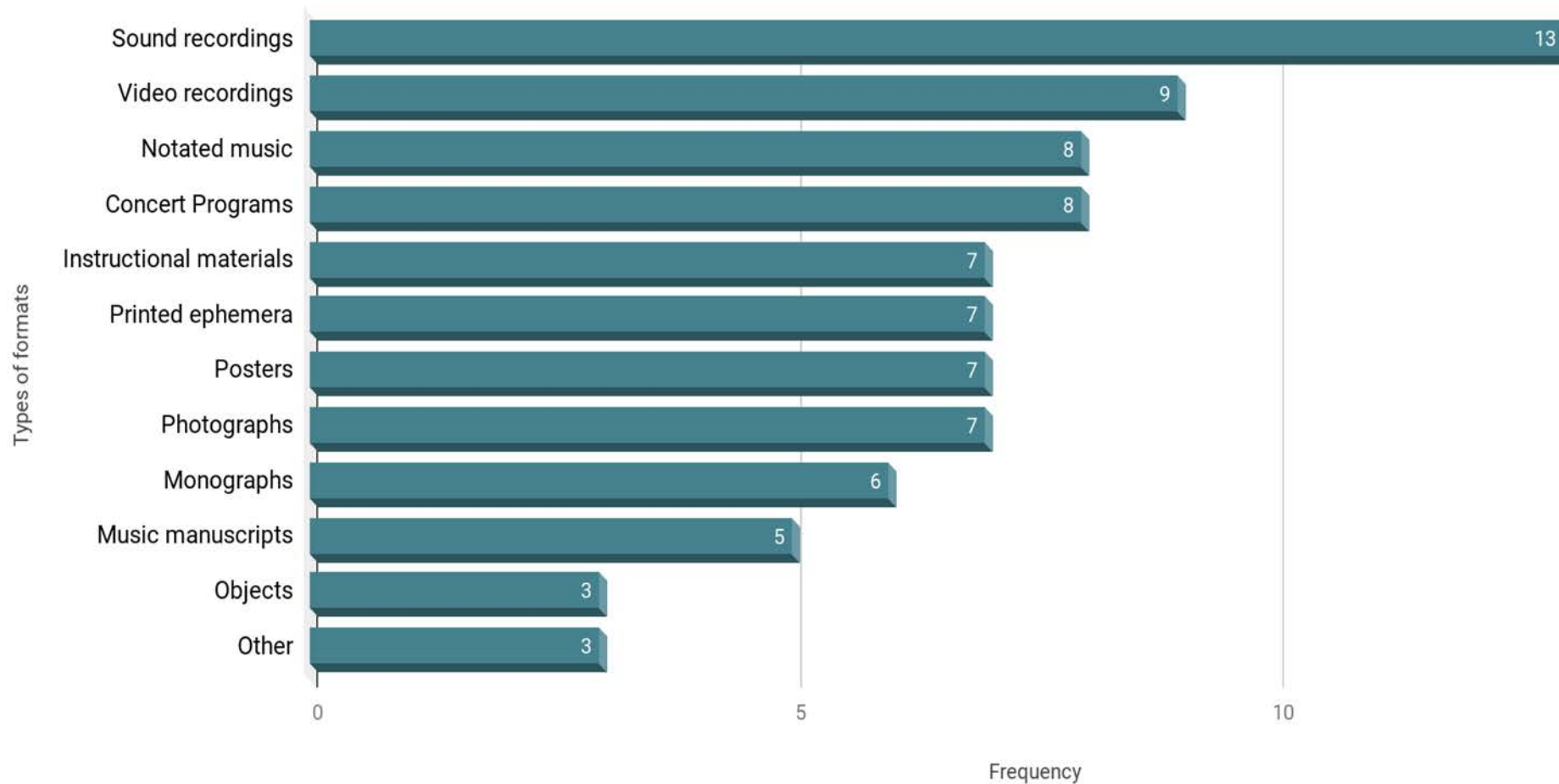


Local music collections descriptions

- Definition of local is varied (provincial, institutional, city, etc.)
- Collections contain many formats, including archival materials
- A/V materials (particularly sound recordings) are most often included
- Majority (12/13) of collections are growing

Formats

What formats are included in your local music collection(s)?



Local music collection 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)

Access and preservation

- All collections receive cataloguing (of some kind)
- 76.9% of collections use metadata to distinguish the local music materials
- Primarily located in an archive or special collection within the library
- All collections are accessible in person and more than half (61.53%) are also available online.
- 61.5% of respondents are employing some kind of preservation method (physical, digital or both)

“Working with the musical community is key to the development of a robust collection. That can be a challenge when the region is so vast, geographically. Hence, digital access is an important aspect of fostering relationships with individuals and communities that are situated great distances from the institution.”

Survey participant

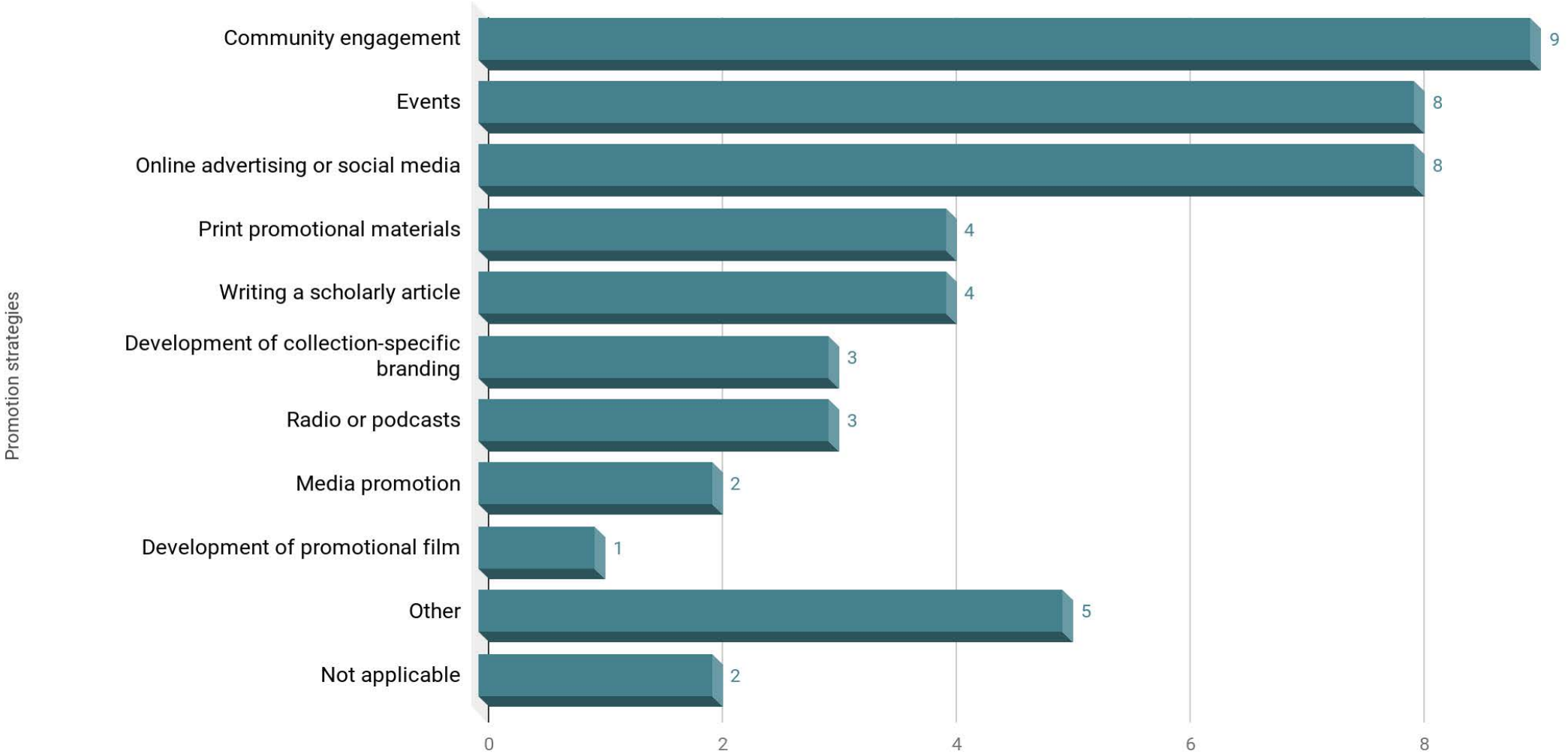
Acquisitions

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

Promotion, outreach, and fund acquisition

- 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

Q10 How are the local music collection(s) promoted?



Survey results: discussion

- Scope statements vary considerably with regard to definitions of “local,” format types, and type of connection to community
- Community & relationship building is key to successful collection building and long term growth
- Management of local music collections requires diverse and specialized skills

Phase two: Data collection in cultural heritage institutions

- Purpose: To better understand the **values**, **lived experiences**, and **perceptions** of local music collection managers in Canadian cultural heritage organizations
- Gather diverse perspectives on local music collecting, collections, and impact for communities
- Identify locations and descriptions of local music collections in Canada

Method: qualitative research interviews & site visits

- The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects
- Semi-structured interview guide approach
- The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 2015)
- Photo documentation and site visits

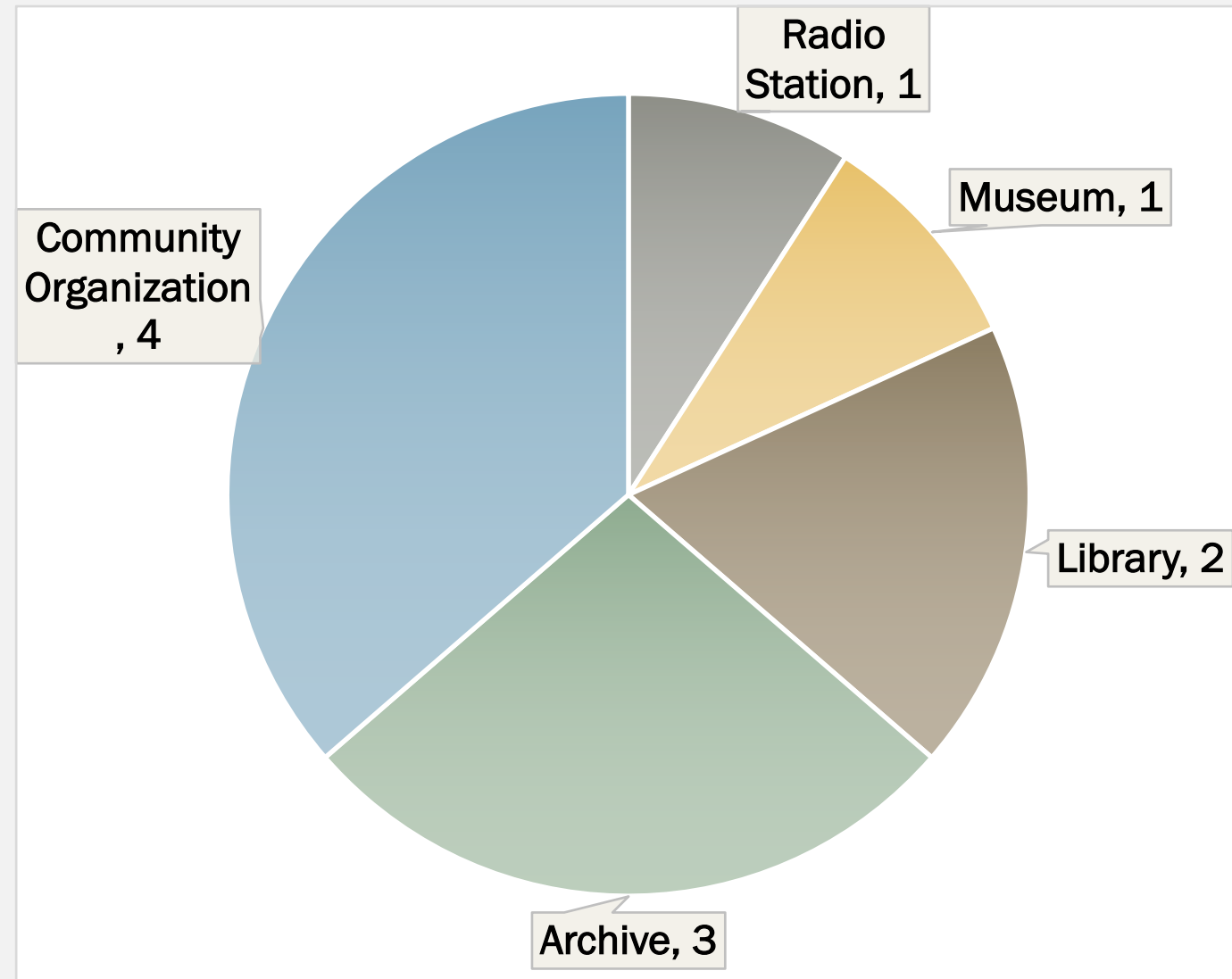


Interview guide

- Collection(s) background and description
- Participant background
- The value and significance of local music collecting/collections
- Local music collecting and the community
 - Contributors
 - Users
- Challenges

Participants

- Canadian cultural heritage organizations
- Collection or project managers working with local music



Initial findings ...

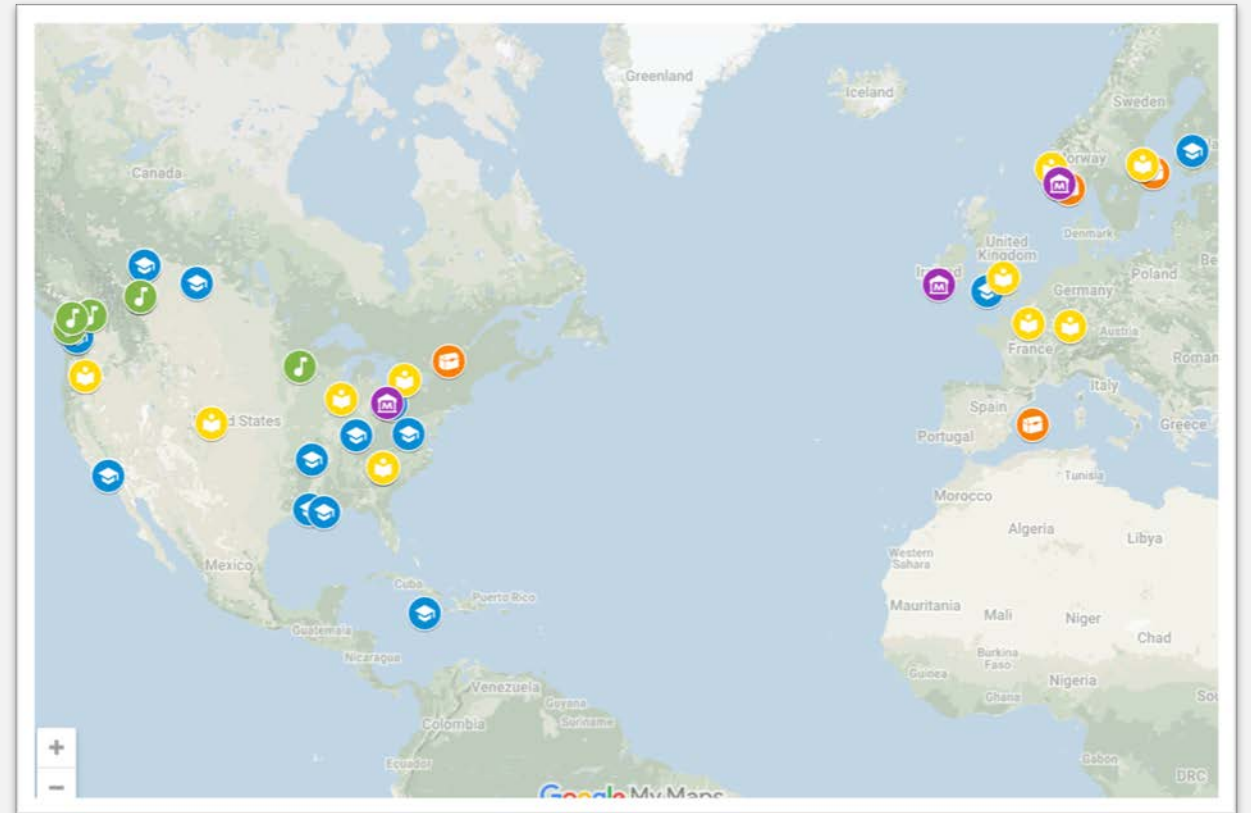
- Local music is collected in a wide variety of cultural heritage organizations and is often considered rare, or on the verge of being lost.
- collectors often consider local music to be underrepresented in academic conversations, but a significant part of colloquial community history
- collections are not format specific
- collection managers are often working closely with or as a part of the local community
- challenges include: funding, infrastructure, time, interest

What does this mean for music libraries?

- Reach out to community in all aspects of local music collecting work
- Opportunities for collaboration with other cultural heritage institutions

Next steps

- Ongoing interviews in central and eastern Canada
- Data analysis
- Upcoming publications & presentations (Fontes; MLA2019)
- Visualizing local music collecting and collections



Questions?

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