

Cultural Grant Reconsideration Request 2003

Summary and recommendation
Applicant's letter
Front page of application

Office of Cultural Affairs
City of Vancouver

Basil and Thyme Jazz Society (#12)

Grant request: \$20,000 Project Grant
Original staff recommendation: Deferral to next Project grant deadline

Original staff comment

“The festival is scheduled for the fall of this year; however, specific venues and artists are not confirmed at this time. A decision on this request is deferred to the June project grant deadline in anticipation of these confirmations being provided.”

Applicant’s basis for requesting reconsideration

The society’s letter requesting reconsideration does not identify the specific grounds for reconsideration. *See applicant’s letter, following.*

Results of staff reconsideration

Although the society’s request letter does not identify grounds for reconsideration, it refers to its financial situation, stating the need for a confirmed grant before it can confirm its program and venues. In the initial application review, an important question was how this jazz festival’s programming differed from the many activities of the Vancouver International Jazz festival, which the City funds. The “niche” and distinctive musical identity of the Basil and Thyme festival proved hard to assess because the applicant could not confirm program content. Proposed activities included local performers who appear in the city at other times, and national performers presented by the International Jazz Festival. Staff also had concerns about the emphasis placed on a relatively large grant from the City, and other uncertainties about the revenue budget that made it hard to assess the actual scope of the event.

With a view to getting program information needed to evaluate the application, and to give the applicant time to confirm grants and other sources of revenue, staff recommended deferral to the second Project Grant deadline in June, noting that the society had applied for the June deadline last year. A formal deferral was needed, since organizations can only apply for project grants once a year.

For the reconsideration process, a staff committee reviewed the applicant’s original application and reconsideration letter, and met with the festival’s director. At the meeting, the director reiterated that a deferral to the second Project deadline would not be helpful, and also provided the committee with a list of partially confirmed events and venues. He indicated that corporate fund-raising was on track, but did not have confirmation of government grants at this point. These grants represent over half of the projected revenue budget of \$173,000 (which includes in-kind donations).

The staff committee accepts that a deferral to the second Project deadline is not useful, and that a recommendation on the application should be made now. The committee notes that, even with the late information provided by the applicant, the distinct identity of this jazz festival is not clear. Nor is the scope of the event, since a significant part of the budget is unconfirmed. The committee also notes that the level of civic support needed by the society is well beyond the capacity of the Project grant budget and disproportionate to grants to other emerging organizations. A grant is not recommended for 2003.

Recommendation: No grant.



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Mar 2, 2003

Office of Cultural Affairs
City of Vancouver
100 – 515 West 10th Ave
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4A8

Dear Mr. Lorenz von Fersen

Thank you for your call advising me that the Basil & Thyme Jazz Soc. should re-apply in June of 2003. The *no grant decision* cited is summarily attributed to the lack of confirmed artists and venue bookings.

Since we did not receive any funding from the OCA last year; the society does not have a reserved budget to book artists in the first quarter of 2003. Therefore the application into the OCA office for funding was one of the crucial elements that need to be in place in order for the society to proceed with the planned artist and venue bookings. We did provide an extensively researched list of venues and artists under consideration which the festival will act upon if an OCA grant was forthcoming

Our very first OCA application was met with the statement that "*A grant for a second jazz festival in Vancouver is not recommended at this time*" And in private meetings with the OCA, specificity of programming was not stressed except the requirement that artists be of professional quality level. The Vancouver Sweet Basil Jazz Festival has presented two very high quality professional festivals beyond the doubt of critics, fans and top-ranked professionals; and will continue to take that quality approach.

We suggest to the OCA to award the society with a decent grant with the condition that the funding be released in normal course upon the presentation of specific venues and artists by May 1, 2003. Awarding a grant after June or July will not give the 2003 September festival the required lead time to make choice bookings, complete all the required additional programming, promotion / advertising work.

Since there is no guarantee that the OCA will not come up with more rejection reasons in June 2003, the society can not risk booking venues and artists to the wide extent that it'd planned on unless an established and specific grant award amount was provided in this current application cycle. We hereby have no choice but to request reconsideration before March 11, 2003 and take the issue to Council.

We trust that the OCA will look at our counter suggestion and be supportive and reasonable towards a growing and promising professional festival. Please direct correspondences to my attention. Thank you.

Yours truly

Michel Pan, Festival Director
Basil & Thyme Jazz Society (S-43679)



2003 Project Grants

Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Vancouver

Deadlines:
December 9, 2002
and June 2, 2003

1. Applicant

Basil & Thyme Jazz Society

^ Organization name and, if different, name of registered non-profit society applying for/sponsoring grant

1330 East 17th Ave, Vancouver, BC V5V 1C8

Mailing address

Michael Pan, P.Eng. (current festival director)

Contact person and title

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E-mail address of contact person

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Telephone

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Society no.

www.sweetbasiljazz.com

Website address

Participating group(s) if different from above

2A. Activity Summary

Briefly describe your organization, and list your current and proposed projects for the next 12 months. Please indicate the project(s) for which you are requesting a grant. Type answers directly on this form. (A copy of this page is given to City Council.)

1. The Vancouver Sweet Basil Jazz Festival, produced by the Basil & Thyme Jazz Society, will focus on Canadian jazz culture and legendary artists, select renowned artists, Juno winners, francophone stars, aboriginal artists and ethnic minority improvisatory artists within Canada. Performing artists are presented in intimate concert halls and select venues settings whereby the artists' exposure, promotion and music are the prime focuses. The VSBJF will join the Alliance For The Arts & other festival alliances and explore joint presentations and networking support. Two successful festivals have been produced to date and future editions will further promote the local economy and provide an attraction for tourists. With the 2010 Winter Olympics in view, this winter jazz festival is a festival worthy of support from all levels of government. Additional government revenues will be added to the budget when paid professional resources can be dedicated to fundraising. Three new unique initiatives will be explored subject to funding availability, these include Jazz For Dancing, Jazz with Film and Jazz For Artistic Dance presentations. In contrast the wonderful Vancouver International Jazz Festival, occurring in the summer, favors a great deal of avant-garde and international stars in its programming over the years, and with its large operating budget the well paid stars get the best concert venues while many Canadian artists get background music restaurant gigs & minimal artistic connection & impact with the public. Sweet Basil Jazz provides different emphases & focuses.

2. The support experienced by the fall Sweet Basil Jazz Festival indicates that the Vancouver public desires an alternative to the Vancouver International Jazz Festival and an alternative to the monopoly of jazz festival presentations by the Coastal Jazz & Blues Society in Greater Vancouver which has persisted for 17 years. The Basil & Thyme Jazz Society can provide a healthy and excellent counterbalance.

3. As a legitimate professional organization which has benefited the City and the public in very measurable quantities and terms, with quality and professional presentations and results (well attended year-round presentations and two successful annual festival editions to date); the SBJ festival states unequivocally that it requires adequate funding assistance from the City in order to sustain its existence since its demonstrated growth and increased professional activities now far exceed the donated services and physical capabilities of its founder and volunteer director, volunteer administrative staff and general volunteers. The collective professional services required to procure funding and revenues for its various projects, to orchestrate and execute its projects' programming objectives, to administer the organization, to foster and organize the donated services and works of volunteers constitute just some of the project demand and costs and justify its funding from the City of Vancouver.

4. Project objectives to be realized in 2003, subject to funding availability:

- Jazz with Film Presentations
- Sweet Basil Potpourri Jazz Series (diverse ethnic jazz groups)
- Sweet Basil Jazz Piano Series
- Jazz For Dancing Series or Festival (Swing bands & orchestras)
- Sweet Basil Free Noon Hour Jazz Presentations
- Sweet Basil Jazz Duo Series (JUNO stars and legendary artists)
- Jazz For Artistic Dance Presentations
- Annual Vancouver Sweet Basil Jazz Festival (approx. 30 plus shows)
- Target artists to include Oscar Peterson, Francois Bourassa, Senator Tommy Banks, Guido Basso, Ed Bickert, Dal Richards, Celso Machado, Sal Ferreras plus other ethnic and aboriginal improvisatory artists. New initiatives will also involve dance artists, film presentations with improvisatory music, jazz for dancing with swing bands/orchestras and CD releases of live recorded shows.

5. The current budget of \$234,400 now includes paid professional staff, contract staff, paid services and real cash expenditures.

2B. Financial Summary

Fiscal year [mm/dd]	2003	to	[mm/dd]
Last actual annual budget	\$ 86,551	Current annual budget	\$ 234,400
Project budget *	\$ 234,400	Project grant request	\$ 20,000

* Request budget should be Expense budget.

Civic cultural grant history: No previous grant.

Comments & Recommendation

The festival is scheduled for the fall of this year; however specific venues and artists are not confirmed at this time. A decision on this request is deferred to the June project grant deadline in anticipation of these confirmations being provided.

Cultural Planner	Grant Recommended	Approved by Council
LvF	\$0 Project	\$