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For Immediate Release

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REVS Initiative Launches with US Pilots and Complementary UK and Canadian Tracks
Multi-City Project Aims to Support Timely and Safe Music Venue Reopening

Music Cities Together today announced the launch of Reopen Every Venue Safely (REVS), an international initiative aimed at promoting best practices, work plans and protocols to ensure music venues are able to open as quickly and safely as possible.

REVS is a campaign to develop and disseminate action plans and budgets rooted in a hyper-pragmatic understanding of the challenges ahead. Music Cities Together is supporting 8 United States pilot communities with technical assistance and mentorship as they develop their own local reopening plans. Working as a national cohort, these pilot communities will share information and resources as they develop their locally-based work plans and protocols. Later this year, these pilot plans will be made available to public officials and venues in other communities in an effort to share best practices and learnings.

Parallel REVS initiatives are operating in Canada and the United Kingdom.

This level of coordination and collaboration will be new for most communities. REVS will be guided by a national leadership council of government officials, public health experts, venue leadership and communications experts to develop best practices, identify and support pilot cities and bring the project to national scale.

Pilot communities in the United States include King County/Seattle, New Orleans, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Albuquerque, Chicago, Austin and Portland. The Canadian REVS initiative is led by Music Policy Forum board member Kwende Kefentse while the UK REVS program is directed by the Music Venue Trust.

Music Venue Trust cofounder Mark Davyd said “in this moment of crises for venues it is all hands on deck. We look forward to sharing strategies with our colleagues in the US and Canada to learn how we best manage this unprecedented challenge as a community.”

Music Cities Together’s Michael Bracy said “We all want live music back as quickly and safely as possible. This can only happen through unprecedented levels of communication and partnership between local
governments, venues and communications experts to make sure venues are safe and music workers and audiences are protected.”

MCT’s Don Pitts added “Local governments, including elected officials, public health experts and creative industries advocates, are responsible for implementing and deploying reopening strategies in alignment with Federal, State and Regional guidelines. For live music to reopen, government officials require direct and coordinated access to venue owners and other music businesses to ensure they are included in reopening strategies.”

King County (Washington) Executive Dow Constantine said “Preservation of our independent live music venues is critical. There is no doubt that these small businesses have particularly challenging safety concerns to address. King County is invested in saving live music, and we look forward to partnering with other great music regions across the country to help establish safety protocols that will support America’s independent live music venues, and contribute to the cultural and economic vitality of our communities.”

King County Creative Economy Strategist Kate Becker added “While all industries are challenged in the wake of COVID-19, live music venues have an exceptionally difficult landscape in which to navigate their way back into business. We are thrilled to partner with music industry, Public Health and creative economy leaders from across the country to tackle this work collectively, and develop some pilot protocols to help ensure that live music makes a strong comeback across the land.”

Lisa Alexis, the Director of the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Economy in New Orleans, said “Music venues with an uphill stance are up for the challenges of reopening. We recognize that these uncertain times carry additional responsibilities and costs. We also understand, it is unrealistic, and in some ways irresponsible, to blithely move ahead and assume venues will be in a position to open without an aggressive, integrated plan to anticipate the resources and strategies necessary to successfully -- and safely -- reopen our live music economy.”

The Mishawaka Amphitheatre’s Dani Grant said “Venues need access to these officials to inform and have direct knowledge of timelines and, especially, health and safety protocols. It is necessary to understand and inform social distancing, testing and sanitation guidelines to develop budgets, work plans and calendars to effectively reopen.”

The Ella Project co-founder Ashlye Keaton said “Music workers and audiences will not come back to venues unless they know the rules of the road and feel safe. Part of the REVS model recognizes that timely, accurate and trusted information is essential if we hope to see vibrant live music scenes in the future.”

"With an incredible diversity of performance venues across Albuquerque, a city known for its vibrant live music, we are eager to reunite musicians and audiences in a responsible and safe manner," said Dr. Shelle Sanchez, the City of Albuquerque’s Cultural Services Department director. "We look forward to this important national discussion as we all develop and implement best practices that bring musicians back to stages and live music back to our communities."

MPF Board Member and City of Ottawa official Kwende Kefentse said "Music happens in municipalities, and as we are determining the safest possible way back it so important to be networked. What we’re
able to share between our Canadian cities along with our colleagues in the US and UK can only help our municipalities get back to music together, more safely and sooner. "

REVS is a project of Music Cities Together and is overseen by a leadership team including Michael Bracy, Don Pitts, Kate Becker, Dani Grant, Ashlye Keaton and Kwende Kefentse. The goal of MCT is to strengthen mentorship and relationships between public officials, musicians, music industry leaders, advocates and researchers interested in supporting local music ecosystems. For more information, visit www.musiccitiestogether.org or https://www.musiccitiestogether.org/revs. Interested parties can sign up for the REVS mailing list at https://form.jotform.com/201256984278061 or contact us at REVSinformation@gmail.com.