



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 13, 2017
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TO: Library Board
FROM: Dawn Ibey
SUBJECT: Sun Life Financial Musical Instrument Library Update

SUMMARY

This report summarizes the first year of operation of the Sun Life Financial Musical Instrument Lending Library.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board receive this report for information.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

VPL has been introducing non-traditional materials into circulation for several years, including experiences (Inspiration Pass), e-readers, energy metres and tablets. A circulating instrument collection extends and builds upon VPL's role as a sharing institution and supports the creativity and imagination of Vancouver residents. While started during the previous strategic plan, this initiative aligns with the current strategic plan under *3.2 Access & Equity > Patron-Centred Experience > Reduce Access Barriers*.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, Shaw Saltzberg of NextStage Entertainment approached Chief Librarian Sandra Singh with an idea to make musical instruments available for loan through public libraries. As a result of discussions between Mr. Saltzberg, Vancouver Public Library (VPL), and Sun Life Financial, VPL entered a two-year partnership with Sun Life Financial to lend musical instruments.

The Sun Life Financial Musical Instrument Lending Library launched on June 7, 2016 with an initial collection of 100 instruments supplied by Sun Life. The Sun Life Financial Musical Instrument Lending Library launch collection contained strings, keyboards, and light percussion instruments. The plan was for the collection to grow over time to approximately 250 instruments through targeting marketing and a community instrument drive. The instrument drive resulted in the donation of 146 additional instruments. In March 2017, Sun Life provided VPL with an additional 50 instruments for the collection, in recognition of Canada 150. The announcement of the additional instruments and the program's expansion across Canada to other public libraries was held at VPL Central Library.

Maintenance of the musical instrument collection is supported through agreements between Sun Life Financial and both the Sarah McLachlan School of Music and Long and McQuade Musical Instruments. Lending periods and practices are similar to other library materials. Instruments appear in the library catalogue where patrons can find and place requests on instruments. A decision was made to limit pick up of instruments to the Central Library for the two year pilot period. Expanding the pick-up options system wide will be explored for year three.

DISCUSSION

Instrument Collection

The VPL collection consists of 14 different kinds of string and percussion instruments. The collection has grown from 100 instruments to 205 instruments in June 2017.

The most frequently loaned instrument is the soprano ukulele, and the second most frequently loaned instrument is the full-size, steel string acoustic guitar. The total percentage usage of each individual instrument was calculated in December 2016 for the original 100 instruments and demonstrated strong usage in most categories (*Appendix*).¹

Over the last year, the holds lists have decreased as additional instruments have been added to the collection. A few items still have lengthy holds lists. As part of our year one reporting, staff

¹ Total percentage usage for each instrument was calculated based on a 10 day hold period, a 3 week loan, and time for maintenance of the instruments. Irregular visits from the support person at Sarah McLachlan School of Music meant that some instruments were out of circulation longer than we would have liked.

will seek permission from Sun Life Financial to redirect some funding to purchase additional high demand instruments.

Based on patron feedback, there was a modest interest to add brass, woodwinds, electric guitars and basses, cellos, accordions and electronic drum kits. After consulting with Long & McQuade, VPL has decided not to add accordions, brass, or woodwinds to the collection. Accordions are complex instruments that require a significant amount of effort to tune and maintain. Cleaning and sanitizing brass and woodwinds is a complex 20-30 minute process that requires access to a sink and additional equipment. The associated costs of retrofitting a workspace and the time required to maintain the instruments make adding these instruments unrealistic for operations. Sun Life Financial provided VPL with two electric guitars and amps in March 2017 and these have been added to the collection. Staff will consider adding some of the other requests after having purchased additional high demand instruments.

Partnerships

Sun Life Financial established two third party arrangements to support the program at VPL, one with Long & McQuade and the other with the Sarah McLachlan School of Music. These agreements are in place until June 2018.

VPL has worked successfully with the partners over the past year, however, some service gaps have been identified that may impact our ability to expand the service. Staff will review these relationships more thoroughly at the end of the two year agreement and look at alternative models for year three.

Patron Feedback

VPL has been collecting patron feedback on the program in order to make recommendations and inform future directions. Each instrument loan contains a feedback form that asks a number of questions about the patron's experience with the instrument and their thoughts on corporate sponsorship of library programs. Patron feedback suggests that close to half of our patrons are trying out an instrument they've never played before. Overall, the responses from our patrons have been overwhelmingly positive.

Over 77% of VPL survey respondents also believe it is important for the corporate sector to support programs such as this.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All of the costs to operate this program have been covered by the funding support from Sun Life Financial. The program is operating within budget.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will report back to the VPL Board on year two of the instrument library in July 2018.

FINAL REMARKS

The Sun Life Financial Musical Instrument Library is a unique opportunity for Vancouver Public Library to provide musical instruments to Vancouver residents, supporting them in exploring their creativity and interest in music. It has been an incredibly popular addition to our collection, and we look forward to the second year of the program.

Appendix: Total Percentage Usage of Each Instrument

Call no.	Title	Copies in Seed Collection	Loans 2016 (June 7-Dec 31)	Max Loans possible	Percentage Usage
BASS ACOUSTIC	Acoustic bass guitar.	2	14	22	64%
GUITAR NYLON 1/2	Acoustic guitar, nylon-string. 1/2 size	1	7	11	64%
GUITAR NYLON 1/2L	Acoustic guitar, nylon string. 1/2 size left	1	5	11	45%
GUITAR NYLON 3/4	Acoustic guitar, nylon-string. 3/4 size	2	13	22	59%
GUITAR NYLON 3/4L	Acoustic guitar, nylon-string. 3/4 size left	2	5	22	23%
GUITAR NYLON 4/4	Acoustic guitar, nylon-string. Full size	6	46	66	70%
GUITAR NYLON 4/4L	Acoustic guitar, nylon-string. Full size left	2	9	22	41%
GUITAR STEEL 3/4	Acoustic guitar, steel-string. 3/4 size	4	35	44	80%
GUITAR STEEL 3/4L	Acoustic guitar, steel-string. 3/4 size left	2	6	22	27%
GUITAR STEEL 4/4	Acoustic guitar, steel-string. Full size	6	84	66	127%
GUITAR STEEL 4/4L	Acoustic guitar, steel-string. Full size left	2	13	22	59%
BANJO 5STRING	Banjo, 5-string.	2	30	22	136%
BONGOS 7+8.5	Bongo drums, 7 & 8.5 in.	4	34	44	77%
CAJON	Cajon.	5	33	55	60%
KEYBOARD 61NOTE	Digital keyboard, 61-note.	8	68	88	77%
PIANO 88NOTE	Digital piano, 88-note.	3	27	33	82%
DJEMBE	Djembe.	2	14	22	64%
DOUMBOK	Doumbek.	3	22	33	67%
MANDOLIN	Mandolin.	5	39	55	71%
UKULELE SOPRANO	Ukulele, soprano.	20	173	220	79%
VIOLIN 1/4	Violin. 1/4 size.	3	22	33	67%
VIOLIN 1/2	Violin. 1/2 size.	3	24	33	73%
VIOLIN 3/4	Violin. 3/4 size.	3	20	33	61%
VIOLIN 4/4	Violin. Full size.	5	47	55	85%
XYLOPHONE ALTO	Xylophone, alto.	2	14	22	64%
TOTAL =		98	804		