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August 1, 2018  
Room Tax Commission for the City of Madison  
City-County Building, Room 406  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703-3345

Dear Members of the Room Tax Commission;

As the City of Madison's Arts Program Administrator and staff to the Madison Arts Commission (MAC), I would like to thank the Room Tax Commission for allocating funding for specific arts activities that enable Madison to maintain its national reputation as a music city and a cultural tourism destination. I respectfully ask you to review this modest request to increase our funding by \$25,000 for 2019. This brings the total 2019 funding request for Madison's Civic Conferences/ Fair/ Festivals/ Summer Concerts to \$165,000, which is less than 1% of the overall room tax funding. This funding allows the City to continue to leverage room tax funds for festivals, fairs, and events that ensure visitors are able to enjoy a diverse range of cultural activities across our great City.

Those of us in the creative sector feel great pride when we see Madison highlighted as one of America's most artistic cities (Viewfinder Travel Blog, Feb 12, 2018). We believe cultural tourists spend more and stay longer than other visitors, and they are more likely to share their experiences on social media, than other travelers. They also tend to buy local and eat well (Cultural Tourism Attracting Visitors and Their Spending, Cheryl Hargrove, 2014). We are proud of helping to make Madison a cultural destination and the impact we are making on the local economy.

MAC carefully reviewed dozens of applications for funding and debated over which cultural events support the effort to attract overnight tourists. This can be by showcasing Madison artists and musicians, enhancing Madison's brand through cultural expression, supporting placemaking and sense of community in our downtown and neighborhoods, contributing to the evolution of downtown and near east music clusters where tourists can readily experience our music scene, or celebrating the cultural vitality that tourists enjoy.

After careful consideration, MAC decided that this year's room tax funding for Civic Conferences/Festivals/Fairs/ Summer Concerts would be best directed toward the following events: Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society's 27<sup>th</sup> Chamber Music Festival, Four Lakes Traditional Music Collective' Sugar Maple Traditional Music Festival, Handel Aria Competition & Concerts, Madison Public Library's Wisconsin Book Festival, Madison Blues Society 16<sup>th</sup> Annual

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Blues Picnic, Madison Opera's Opera in the Park, People Building Opportunity Through Grace and Action's Fall Gospel Fest, Disability Pride's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Disability Pride Festival, Wilmar's La Fete de Marquette, Makeshift Festival 2018, Between the Waves Music Conference and Festival, Make Music Madison, and Dane Dances. Though the City does not manage these events, we do issue grant contracts and at the end of the year, MAC reviews final reports from each organization and evaluates the organizations performance.

The additional \$25,000 budget request will increase funding for one of our most successful events, Make Music Madison, by \$5,000, and help to fund one new program **Blink+** at \$20,000. In 2019, based on the wild success of Bucky on Parade, the City is proposing to use \$20,000 in funding for **Blink+**, a small but impactful, social media friendly, temporary public art projects (around \$1000 to \$2000 per project) in the downtown Business Improvement District. We piloted a few projects this summer including Flamingo Wings on the State Historical Museum, and tie-dying in conjunction with the Madison Reunion and the Madison Night Market. We saw great potential to help us deliver on our promise that downtown Madison is inclusive, dynamic, fun, vibrant, and unique.

Based on our interactions with leaders from the organizations who have received Room Tax funding, I believe, that even in the small amounts of redistributed room tax funds, these dollars act as an incentive to our artists and arts organizations to think more broadly about their role in identifying and understanding tourist markets, expand their marketing strategies, and improve the quality of their productions. In the end, these efforts will not only serve our local hoteliers, but will also help the City's arts organizations attract new audiences. Going forward, The Madison Arts Commission is exploring how we can partner with the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's State Arts Board to continue to educate the cultural sector in marketing and promotion to tourists.

**The Madison Arts Commission's partnership with the Room Tax Commission is critical to the cultural vibrancy of our City.** The Madison Arts Commission is committed to our grants program and we frequently review and revise it to help advance civic goals including making Madison a thriving cultural tourism destination. In maintaining the funding for arts and cultural programs we have leveraged millions of dollars of economic activity, as well as attracting employers, workers, and tourism to our City.

Respectfully submitted,



Karin Wolf  
Madison Arts Program Administrator