

South by South West and Liverpool Sound City

Arts Council England, North West has a history of supporting the development of emerging and established musicians and encouraging music enterprises to flourish. We work strategically and in partnership with a number of music delivery agencies, which in turn provide support to those working in the music sector regionally. We support new ideas and assist those who wish to work nationally and internationally. Our general focus for support is on developing and supporting artistic talent, musical excellence, innovation and audience development. Over the last three years we have strategically invested in ACME and Liverpool Sound City who have taken a number of regionally based music businesses and bands to South by South West (SXSW) in Austin Texas, North America. SXSW is a premier music industry conference and performance showcase for new creative talent from all over the world.

In 2008 and 2009 we invested through our Grants for the arts scheme in Liverpool Sound City - a four-day music industry conference, live music and art festival which focuses on new and emergent talent.

Watch: Liverpool Sound City 2009

Both these music industry events secured additional investment from a range of partners including Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Vision, Northwest Vision and Media and private sector funders. Another investment partner in relation to SXSW and Sound City was UKTI North West, whose focus is on economic development, export promotion and income generation.



Liverpool Sound City 2009
Photo: Mark McNulty



Liverpool Sound City 2009. Photo: Mark McNulty

UKTI North West and Arts Council, North West - while working largely independently of each other and having separate relationships with the music delivery agencies in the region - acknowledge that joint support and collaboration on projects such as SXSW and Liverpool Sound City provides a much more holistic approach to supporting and growing the region's music sector. This allows more musicians to gain access to and take advantage of national and international markets.

Northwest Vision and Media, who became the regional cluster agency for creative and digital industries in April 2009, have acknowledged the SXSW public sector partnership as a model of good practice and are keen to support it.

SXSW and Sound City have formed key

parts of ACME's sector development programme over the last few years and ACME has been keen to encourage their long term sustainability by encouraging a model that has a variety of investment sources. Sound City and SXSW have demonstrated less reliance on the Arts Council and more reliance on other public sector funds. Over the next three years Liverpool Sound City and SXSW aim to reduce the amounts of funding coming from the public sector and increase the amount of income coming from private sector sponsorship and ticket sales.

ACME's tracking of the music businesses and bands that have been supported through the public sector partnership investment in South by South West over the last few years indicates that there has been a return on investment in the region of £3 million plus. (This figure is based on

information provided on deals secured by Magnolia Management, SB Management, Creative Cultures, and the Coors licensing deal recently secured by The Whip.)



Liverpool Sound City 2009

Photo: Mark McNulty

SXSW and Magnolia Management

Magnolia Management was set up by ex A&R man Dave Wibberley after he moved back to Merseyside in 2005. He signed artist David Ford and put out David's first album on his own label. As an experienced ex A&R man he knew the value of SXSW and the opportunities it offered for exposure to the North American market place.

When David Ford was offered the opportunity to play at SXSW ACME were able to support him with a small amount of public finance to enable him to travel to SXSW.

As a result of this showcase gig they secured a £1 million record/publishing deal with Sony America. This deal was

agreed at SXSW and signed off two weeks later. On the back of this, Magnolia was also able to secure a label licensing deal in the UK. Dave Wibberley was immediately able to create two new jobs in his management company. He is happy to acknowledge that the small amount of investment he received from public sector partners in the North West enabled this to happen.

SB Management

SB Management is owned and run by Simon Bobbett. The company was set up in 2006 and at this time was a vehicle to solely manage artists, The Wombats.

'If it wasn't for Sound City and the public sector funding package that we were able to access then I am not sure what we would have done.'

Up until their first visit to SXSW, The Wombats were signed to the UK-based independent label Kids Records. Simon knew it was important to get the band to SXSW but did not have the experience or finances to allow him to do so. He worked closely with Sound City who mentored him through the process and also helped him secure the necessary funding from the public sector partnership. As part of the deal The Wombats were invited to take part in the Liverpool Sound City showcase event.

Simon said: 'If it wasn't for Sound City and the public sector funding package that we were able to access then I am not sure what we would have done. They helped us make the most of SXSW. Through their PR campaign and the high profile Sound City event we were able to attract a room full of A&R executives to our show. After that everything started to happen. Following this, SB Management was able to secure full time employment for two assistants. As well as this they now employ four full time people who work consistently on the road with The Wombats.'

Creative Cultures

Creative Cultures was set up in 2005 to provide digital solutions to businesses that operate in the culture and arts and entertainment economy. In 2007 they decided to go to SXSW to network with industry executives and to try and expand their client base into the USA and Europe. They acknowledge that the public sector funding they received was crucial in allowing them to afford to attend and to make the most of SXSW.

'We came home and the phone did not stop ringing with new clients. Dubai Sound City is now happening as a direct result of contacts made at SXSW.'

A member of the team explained: 'We came up with the idea of blue tooting an

exclusive track to everyone's mobile at the Sound City event. This meant we could have meetings all week and then invite people to the event to let them see how the technology worked. This could not have gone better for us. We came home and the phone did not stop ringing with new clients and we can directly attribute £100,000 of new orders to SXSW and five new jobs. Dubai Sound City is now happening as a direct result of contacts made at SXSW.'



Liverpool Sound City 2009

Photo: Mark McNulty



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Liverpool Sound City 2009

150 local bands and artists.

The audience for the performances is estimated to have been 30,000.

The headlines:

- **£2 million visitor spend**
- **£300,000 revenue for local hotels**
- **£600,000 revenue for local venues**
- **£1 million business for local creative businesses**

Liverpool Sound City held its second music festival and music industry conference in May 2009. The conference was held from 20-21 May at the Hard Days Night Hotel. The music festival ran for a week and used 35 venues throughout the city.

The festival featured 50 international bands and 200 UK bands and artists, plus



Liverpool Sound City 2009

Photo: Mark McNulty

This year, with an eye to the future, there was a special event called The Trial. At this event, 40 young people from the North West had the opportunity to cross examine and challenge 20 Industry



Liverpool Sound City 2009. Photo: Mark McNulty

mentors working in the music industry on its future.

There were 200 event attendees in total at The Trial, with eight schools and five community groups participating on the day and contributing to the creation process. The Trial also featured a one-off special performance by Billy Bragg.

At the conference itself there were 40 panellists across 14 music industry panels which featured national and international speakers from the world of music, film and digital media.

The event had 1,000 registered delegates from 20 countries in addition to 1,500 Twitter users and participants.

The first ever North West music specific Meet the Buyer event was held at Liverpool Sound City from 22-23 May at St George's Hall.

There were 90 North West and UK business representatives in attendance as

suppliers and 26 international industry representatives as buyers.

A staggering £1million of business was generated for those attending.

Media coverage in 2009 generated £1,500,000 in equivalent value of advertising in print media and £62,000,000 in broadcast reach, with total PR generated for the region estimated at £2.4 million.

In comparison to 2008, the 2009 event had increased ticket and wristband sales by 30 per cent.

Importantly, private sector investment was increased by 110 per cent and the overall event attendance by 20 per cent.

The national geographic profile was improved by 60 per cent and international geographic profile by 75 per cent (maintaining regional audience levels).

Below is just a selection of websites for further reference:

ACME

www.merseysideacme.com

In The City

www.inthecity.co.uk

Liverpool Sound City

www.liverpoolsoundcity.co.uk

South By South West

www.sxsw.com/

MIDEM

www.midem.com/en/Homepage/

North West Vision & Media

www.visionandmedia.co.uk

Youth Music Action Zone

www.youthmusic.org.uk

Music Generator (Cumbria)

www.generator.org.uk/

Performing Rights Society

www.prsformusic.com

Music Managers Forum

www.musicmanagersforum.co.uk/

Band on the Wall

www.bandonthewall.org/

Unconvention

www.unconvention.wordpress.com/

PPL

www.ppluk.com

Musicleader

www.musicleader.net

AIM (Association of Independent Music)

www.musicindie.com

Sonicbids

www.sonicbids.com

International Songwriters Association

www.songwriter.co.uk

Business Link

www.businesslink.gov.uk

Music Tank

www.musictank.co.uk

UK Music

www.ukmusic.org

Musicians Union

www.musiciansunion.org.uk