Creating a Roadmap for the Future of Music at the Smithsonian

A summary of the main discussion points generated at a two-day conference organized by the Smithsonian Music group, a pan-Institutional committee, with the support of Grand Challenges Consortia Level One funding

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Abstract

The Smithsonian Music group, a pan-Institutional assembly of Smithsonian staff who work with music collections, exhibitions, research, publications, education, and live programming, received a Level One grant from two Grand Challenges Consortia – Understanding the American Experience and World Cultures – to convene a two-day conference with high-level Thought Leaders from the wider music community, Smithsonian senior managers, and SI staff. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the amplification of music collections access and care, pan-Institutional collaboration and programming, and opportunities for audience participation.

The two-day conference (June 12 and 13, 2012), “Creating a Roadmap for the Future of Music at the Smithsonian,” was held at the Hall of Musical Instruments, National Museum of American History (NMAH). The Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) recorded the proceedings and prepared a report summarizing the main points raised during the conference’s thematic sessions: Taking Stock, Assessing Opportunities, Setting Priorities, and Drawing the Roadmap.

The conversations the conference generated are a tremendous indication of the interest and need for more shared vision, coordination, and collaboration around bringing the Smithsonian’s vast musical resources, as one conferee put it, out of the Smithsonian’s attic and onto its front porch.