

**GLOBAL
TORONTO
MUSIC
FESTIVAL**
**SEPT 28 – OCT 1
2024**

small
world
music

APPROACHES AND ACTIONS TO CHALLENGE CULTURAL ERASURE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 || INTRODUCTION

4 || MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR PRESERVING INDIGENOUS
LANGUAGE AND TRADITIONS

5 || DECOLONIZATION OF INDIGENOUS MUSIC IN CULTURAL
INSTITUTIONS

6 || INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS STRATEGIES IN
RESISTING CULTURAL ERASURE

7|| INDIGENOUS MUSIC EDUCATION INTEGRATION

Introduction

In this Tool-kit resource, we explore “approaches and action to challenge cultural erasure”. We gather arts and culture professionals, students, and artists to discuss and develop actionable tools and strategic insights to address equity in music. The resources of this tool kit was developed by participants of the Global Toronto Music Festival.

TOPIC: CHALLENGING CULTURAL ERASURE: MUSIC AS A RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

The impact of colonialism on culture is not just historical. This issue continues to influence global cultural dynamics with consequences to the music landscape. Colonialism and imperialism resulted in a negative impact on Indigenous peoples and cultures. As a system, colonialism disrupted, oppressed, and marginalized ethnically diverse communities, stripping them of their land, autonomy, and cultural practices. Indigenous cultures, rich in traditions, languages, and worldviews, were often seen as inferior and subjected to cultural erasure through forced assimilation tactics such as the suppression of language rites and rituals and the destruction of cultural artifacts.

The impact of this cultural erasure is evident today in the ongoing struggles of Indigenous peoples to reclaim their heritage, fight for recognition and rights and revitalize knowledge systems. The legacy of such restrictions have obstructed the cultural and spiritual right to ceremonies, such as the powwow until 1951. Despite these challenges, Indigenous cultures have shown resilience, preserving their traditions and adapting them to contemporary contexts.

As industry professionals in the music landscape we hold particular power and privilege to be action focused allies. Collaborating to address cultural injustices through a commitment to support Indigenous cultures through presenting, producing and the promotion of cultural sovereignty.

MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR PRESERVING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND TRADITIONS

This section provides resources and tips in how we can work and collaborate among Indigenous communities to preserve, appreciate and promote their cultural identities through music.

Acknowledging the Power of Music

Music serves as a powerful tool for cultural and traditional expression among the Indigenous communities. This is designed to facilitate collaboration between industry professionals, organizations, and communities to preserve and celebrate Indigenous cultures.

Music as a Nucleus of Identity

Music has become means of resistance for reclaiming identity. In Indigenous traditions, music plays a role as a vehicle for passing generational stories and tradition. It plays an integral part of cultural preservation.

TIPS

- Archiving Language and Traditions
 - Support initiatives that digitize and archive Indigenous music.
- Encouraging Community Engagement
 - Facilitate, open discussions, include important voices and *lived experiences* in events. Collaborate with Indigenous artists and musicians to share their insights.
- Seeing Culture and Art as one unity
 - Culture and art should be considered as a part of inspiring change and creating musical impact in everyday living.
- Post-colonial perspective shedding
 - Elevate awareness and allow those to reclaim their cultural identities.
- Combat Homogeneity
 - Actively promote Indigenous art and create spaces for these cultures to be recognized.

DECOLONIZATION OF INDIGENOUS MUSIC IN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

This section provides resources in approaches to promote the decolonization of Indigenous art forms.

Reclaiming Indigenous music in a modern settings

Festivals and cultural institutions often serves as platforms to showcase talent and emerging artists. However, due to the modern perspective, institutions often prioritize aesthetics that exclude and contribute to the erasure of Indigenous art forms. This resource will explore strategies to reclaim and create better opportunities for Indigenous artists.

Music as a Reinforcer and Cultural Reconnector

Music has the ability to bridge generational gaps, highlighting the importance of preserving older traditional art forms. It allows younger artists to blend traditional styles with modern genres, allowing the opportunity to decolonize the current music perspectives.

TIPS

- Building genuine connections with Indigenous Communities
 - Establishing authentic relationships with indigenous communities, avoiding tokenism.
- Modernizing archived/Old traditions
 - Providing a platform and an open understanding of older traditions and how we can apply it to modern contexts.
- Diverse Representation
 - Diversity and accessibility needs to be made for festival delegate by providing more representative in the Indigenous lens.
- Creating Spaces for Cultural Expression
 - Festivals and cultural institutions designing accessible spaces that honor the diverse needs of Indigenous practices.
- Spiritual Importance
 - Acknowledging drumming, singing, and ceremonial customs that carry a sense of interconnectedness to Indigenous identity.

INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS STRATEGIES IN RESISTING CULTURAL ERASURE

This section offers resources and strategies for promoting cultural identities, outlining the importance of fostering meaningful connections through music.

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Music as a bridge that unifies diverse traditions

Music serves as a critical role in connecting individuals, despite language barriers, culture, or traditions. Music brings people together through shared experiences and creates opportunities for community building.

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INDIGENOUS MUSIC EDUCATION INTEGRATION

This section offers resources and strategies in how we can incorporate Indigenous music in early years curriculum and how we can foster appreciation among these cultures.

Promoting cross-cultural knowledge

Cross-cultural understanding enables individuals to learn from different perspectives and traditions of diverse communities. It strengthens and enriches learning through exposure of different experiences, fostering a diverse perspective and appreciation of other cultures.

Music as a foundation of learning

Music can foster immersive learning experiences for diverse individuals. By integrating Indigenous music in to curriculum from the early years, it creates nurturing environments that sets foundation for multicultural awareness. Typically, Indigenous traditions and history are not introduced until the later grades.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action no. 6–12 and no. 62–66 focuses on addressing the educational gaps within Indigenous communities. It is essential to incorporate these actions to day-to-day curriculum.

TIPS

- Emphasis on Inter-community collaborations
 - Encourage and integrate an inter-community lens. Inter-communities unifies diverse communities, allowing to learn from each other.
- Advocating for Indigenous Representation in curriculum
 - Indigenous learning should be encouraged during early education can lay a foundation of appreciation for these cultures.
- Accepting and Sharing
 - Encourage others to share and work closely within Indigenous and diverse communities.
- Being open to opportunities
 - Engage in professional development and learning opportunities. Unconscious and conscious bias continue to exist.

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