

IMPACT 2022



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR:

DEAR DSC COMMUNITY



I want to take a moment to reflect on my two years and three months as Director of Detroit Sound Conservancy and working in our music & sound archives as Director of Collections. DSC has made massive strides that could not have been accomplished without you, our supporters; our Director of Operations Jonah Raduns-Silverstein; our Board of Directors; and many friends and advisers. You gave us your selves as volunteers, as advisers, as board members, as donors, as philanthropic partners, and as visionaries. Thank you!

The year 2022 now lives in our archives. It was our 10th Anniversary and we met several of you at our birthday party at UFO Factory - thanks for coming! It's been 10 years of being committed to, advocating for and preserving Detroit's music history.

We've now opened up to more of our potential, as we connected to support that will help us into another stratum. This support begins to bring us into sustainability but we will remain there with your ongoing support.

Our future home at The Blue Bird Inn is closer to being real as a music venue, community space and music archive. This past summer, the community of the West Side opened its arms and we partied, like the old jazz tune, "Strutting

With Some Barbeque" along with wonderful community partners like United Block Club Council, Westsiders, Larchmont Community Association, Nacirema Club, Cardinal Foundation, and Class Act Detroit - and we are making more friends with every new month.

In 2023, we are turning our focus towards sustainability, which means raising awareness in and educating our community. It means earning the trust of a resilient folk who have always been underestimated. This focus makes it an exciting time as DSC becomes stronger and recognized as the advocate, educator, and preserver of culture that we are. Continue along with us - and together let's protect our world class music and sound for generations to come.

Oh, the future is shining brightly!

In Sonic Solidarity,

Michelle Jahra McKinney
Director of Detroit Sound Conservancy
& Detroit Sound Conservancy Board
and Staff

OVERVIEW:

SOWING THE GRASSROOTS AND WORKING TOWARDS ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

In 2022, Detroit Sound Conservancy has continued sustainable development to serve the Detroit music community into the long term future.

Rounding out the successful completion of our two year archival project funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, DSC has proven itself as the archive and advocate for Detroit music preservation. Through focus on our three core collections of The Graystone International Jazz Museum Collection, United Sound Systems Recording Studio Collection, and Club Heaven Collection we are showing the power of protecting our own history.

We are rehabilitating the Blue Bird Inn, a birthplace of bebop jazz and a working-class hearth for the Black community before Motown, into a music venue, gathering space and Detroit's music archive. In 2022, we raised nearly

\$300,000 in capital funds with grants from The Kresge Foundation, Detroit Regional Chamber and The National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund.

Our programming reached our community and continued celebration and conversations about the importance of Detroit music history. We offered three music tours, facilitated a two-day community archival program with Black Bottom Archives, celebrated the Club Heaven legacy and hosted our annual BBQ and music performance outside the Bird.

Our staff and board are hard at work planning for the future of the organization. We are planning for rehabilitation as well as implementing strategic planning and governance initiatives such as expanding our Board of Directors to grow into the future.



Left to Right - DSC Director, Michelle Jahra McKinney; Director of Operations, Jonah Raduns-Silverstein; Board President, Larry Williams; Board Vice President Alyson Jones Turner



Gayelynn McKinney Zone Trio performs outside in front of The Blue Bird Inn for neighborhood residents, DSC partners and supporters as a part of our annual BBQ and celebration in partnership with The Cardinal Foundation, August 2022.

EDUCATION:

YOUTH GRIOT SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Over 2022, we've begun planning the implementation of our education initiative, **Youth Griot Society**. This program will bring young Detroiters into a supportive positive vision of community history, storytelling and techniques of preservation.

PRESERVATION:

ARCHIVAL WORK AT THE ARCHIVE, ONLINE AND IN THE COMMUNITY

Through support from the Community Based Archives Program from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we have successfully implemented archival processes and practices for long term sustainable holding and preservation of Detroit music history. In 2022, we began to make accessible our three signature collections: **The Graystone International Jazz Museum Collection, United Sound Systems Recording Studio Collection, and the Club Heaven Collection.**

PERFORMANCE:

CELEBRATION OF CLUB HEAVEN

In July, we hosted a celebration of Club Heaven where we presented a **panel conversation with stories shared by Club Heaven's community** followed by a tribute to the music of Heaven with a dance party deejayed by a Club Heaven disciple, DJ Tony Peoples.

PLACEKEEPING:

OUR FUTURE AT THE BLUE BIRD INN

After years of work, we have found significant fundraising success with the awards of two major capital grants for the rehabilitation at The Blue Bird Inn. DSC has received **\$100,000 from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund** and **\$150,000 through the Kresge Foundation for the KIP:D+ implementation program.** In combination with completed construction documents and additional grants, The Blue Bird Inn is poised for capital rehabilitation through 2023.



DSC Board Members Damon Percy (left) and Michael Fotias (right) speak on a panel with D'Angela Show Shannon, DJ Tony Peoples and DJ NIOSE about the legacy and importance of Club Heaven. July 2022.



DSC Director Michelle Jahra McKinney leads a drumming and storytelling workshop as a part of our "Preserving Detroit Stories" Community storytelling gathering. June 2022.

COLLECTIONS

Support from the Community Based Archives Program from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has allowed us to perform inventorying and accessioning our collection. This work has now made accessible artifacts, documents and ephemera pertaining to three different significant historical periods of Detroit music. Throughout the year, we expanded the archival work of physical processing, inventorying, and extensive preservation planning. In addition we have acquired new material, overhauled our digital preservation methods, worked with archival volunteers, and grown partnerships with the Library Science programs at Wayne State University and the University of Michigan. **Mondays and Saturdays are open for volunteers at WGPR. Come on down!**



VOLUNTEERING

DSC's projects are always implemented by the combined efforts of our dedicated staff and volunteers. Our robust and enthusiastic volunteer network played a pivotal role in implementing the transformations that we have carried out in our archives with the increased funding received from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Community-Based Archives Grant. Our increase in successful in-person programming during 2022 could not have been done without our volunteers, who were present at all of our events. We are humbled that community members choose to dedicate their time to working with us toward our mission of preserving Detroit's musical heritage and we are dedicated to providing a positive and mutually rewarding volunteer experience.

More info: detroitssound.org/volunteer

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT:

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[View all 22 comments](#)



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Blue Bird Inn

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Liked by csgfunk and 175 others

MEDIA IMPACT:


Featured in 13 local and national press outlets showcasing our work.

Highlights include:



Fight continues to save Detroit's United Sound Systems Recording Studios via CBS Detroit

Home // Radio // Here & Now

 **Preserving Detroit's United Sound Systems, where icons like Miles Davis and Aretha Franklin recorded**

August 23, 2022

What do Miles Davis, Marvin Gaye and Aretha Franklin have in common?

Well besides being some of the biggest musical artists of the 20th century, they all recorded at [United Sound Systems in Detroit](#).

The 1916 brick building that houses the studio was designated a historic landmark in 2015, but local preservationists are worried that [may not be enough to protect it forever](#).

Here & Now's Celeste Headlee speaks with **Michelle Jahra McKinney** of the Detroit Sound Conservancy.

This segment aired on August 23, 2022.

MUSIC

A second act for the Blue Bird Inn

The Detroit Sound Conservancy hopes revitalizing a legendary jazz club could be a catalyst for new development on the west side — and highlight all Motor City music

By Lee DeVito

Detroit's historic Blue Bird Inn has a new lease on life.

Once a jazz venue where legends like John Coltrane and Miles Davis performed, by the early 2000s the building at 3024 Treenan Ave. on Detroit's west side was abandoned, and later threatened with demolition. But now, the building's prospects are looking up. The Detroit Sound Conservancy nonprofit acquired the building in 2019, and it earned a historic district designation from the city in 2020. The DSC put a new roof up late last year, allowing for the nonprofit to move onto the next phase of actually bringing life to the building.

Fully replacing the roof was a huge step for really bringing it back," Joseph Radum-Silverstein of the Detroit Sound Conservancy tells Metro Times. How bad was it? "You could see daylight," adds Michelle Jahra McKinney, also of the DSC.

Not just with the Blue Bird, but with any building that sits, every day is one day closer to kind of its own destruction," Radum-Silverstein says. "So the roof in and of itself was a really big step for us."

The roof repair was made possible through an internal fundraising campaign, Radum-Silverstein says. "We found some great support from some known places, and kind of some unknown places," he says. Now, the DSC has launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise \$30,000 to bring the project into the next phase. Funds will be matched by a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"To make the vision a reality, the organization has tapped Sandra Little of Quinn Evans Architects. She's an award-winning Black woman architect," McKinney points out.

Little's renderings depict a venue with a cafe and performance space. McKinney says the DSC could use the space for musical performances, art exhibitions, educational workshops, and other community events.

She says the design was the result of many conversations with members



Residents and community partners stand in front of the Blue Bird Inn on Labor Day 2019. COURTESY OF DETROIT SOUND CONSERVANCY

of the community to ask what they wanted in the space.

"I think kind of what's pretty ingenious about the design is this flexibility and ability for it to serve many uses, while also becoming Detroit's only music archive," Radum-Silverstein adds.

The back of the building will house the Detroit Sound Conservancy's library, which includes books and other documents about Detroit's many contributions to the world of music. So the new Blue Bird Inn won't only be a jazz space.

"Our organization is cross-genre," McKinney says. "I think it's probably going to mainly be jazz and blues, but we got Motown right down the street, all kinds of Black music — we have techno, and reggae, there's the African folklike community. There's so many different communities that would be able to use that archive. ... I was hoping that we could develop it into a place where [people from] all the genres felt comfortable coming and experiencing the archive."

"It will surely be a kind of cross-genre, genre-agnostic venue and performance space," Radum-Silverstein says. "But I think the ethos will probably go back to the kind of legendary jazz days of close listening and intimacy, and peer-to-peer mentoring of the youth, but in terms of kind of the music itself, it will be expanded to any and all music that is being made and performed and enjoyed in the city now."

Radum-Silverstein says the hope is that the project will be shovel-ready by the end of the year. "The truth is, there's a lot of pieces that need to fall in place," he says.

The building's iconic blue exterior will be preserved. The venue's small Art Deco-style stage has already been salvaged and used by the DSC for on-site activations elsewhere. When the space is ready, it will be returned to the Blue Bird Inn.

Otherwise, not much else was left to be rescued.

"When you leave a building vacant for 10 to 20 years, every year, and every day, there's less to salvage," Radum-Silverstein says.

Beyond the building itself, the DSC says the hope is the resurrected Blue

Bird Inn could help them draw more traffic and development to the community. "They need a grocery store and other stuff there," McKinney says. "And something like this, I think, could attract that."

But Radum-Silverstein sees the project as an important way to preserve Detroit's musical legacy. "It's much more about how do we support our culture in a way that can really sustain and have longevity, and usher in the next generation in a way where, you know, kids growing up down the street actually know that techno was invented here, or actually know what the Blue Bird Inn was down the street from where they live," he says. "We're so driven by this project because it's the physical version of this deep commitment to this work, celebrating, advocating, and preserving Detroit music history — the most important innovative music city in the world, yet people in Detroit don't even know that."

More information about the project is available [detroitssound.org/bluebird](#).

Preserving Detroit's United Sound Systems via WBUR Radio Here and Now



Date Night | Under the Radar Michigan Full Episode

Under the Radar Michigan Full Episode via Under the Radar Detroit Public TV

Rehab of historic Detroit jazz club the Blue Bird Inn enters next phase via Metro Times

LOOKING FORWARD:

WHAT'S NEXT FOR DSC?

In 2023, we will begin construction rehabilitation at The Blue Bird Inn with an eye towards a grand opening in 2024. In terms of programming and our collections, we are focusing on building deep and lasting trust within the community to foster true cultural heritage preservation. All of our programs will connect to awareness raising and trust building.

Organizationally we are looking towards implementing our strategic vision to become a sustainable organization through Board development and staffing expansion and hiring.

If you'd like to get involved further or know anyone you might want to recommend as a board member or strategic advisor, drop us a line at info@detroitssound.org.

THANK YOU

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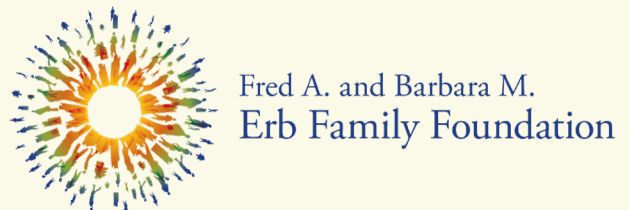
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