

Mastering of A Music City: DC Music Initiative

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Introduction

Washington, DC is home to a diverse and rich music legacy and community. It was home to some of U.S. music's greatest legends, including Duke Ellington, Marvin Gaye, and Ian MacKaye, to name a select few. The music scene today includes jazz, go-go, hardcore punk, hip-hop and everything in between, creating cultural hubs and communities that gather around these various genres. Traditionally, the DC government has supported the development of music in the city by hosting events, providing resources to artists, and allocating grants for individuals and nonprofit organizations. Grant allocation, specifically by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, has played a vital part in supporting some musical endeavors in DC and has been essential to keeping the music pulse alive. However, little scrutiny has been given towards the grant application, selection, and allocation process, raising questions on whether or not our current methodology of funding the city's music is representative of all genres, easily accessible, or even organized at a bureaucratic level. Given the importance of funding to the success of the Arts in the city, this analysis is vital and is long overdue.

The purpose of this study is to analyze and understand general patterns of grant allocation by the D.C. government to art and humanities organizations in DC. Specifically, we are interested in looking at how large of a portion of these funds are given to music in comparison to other artistic fields. Additionally, within the music organizations and individual artists receiving these grants, it would be interesting to see which ones are getting consistent attention and what areas and organizations are perhaps getting overlooked or ignored.

This study's results are intended for the DC government, and local music organizations & nonprofits. Sectors of the DC government that should pay special attention to this study includes the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities, the DC Office of Cable TV, Film, Music, and Entertainment, DC Public Schools, and the DC Office of Planning. Some notable organizations that we would encourage to consider the results of this study include organizations in all parts of the city that have historically applied for grants, with the hopes that bigger organizations such as the Kennedy Center, Words, Beats, & Life, and will pay special attention to our findings on their grant application patterns from 2012-2016.

Methodology

Our study analyzed openly-available datasets on DC city government grant allocations from 2013-2016. Our sample included every grant dataset about performing arts, art, or culture available on opendata.dc.gov on November, 2016. In total, our sample encompassed 15 grants, 3 of which had their individual and organization recipient datasets uploaded separately from one another, and contained 1212 recipients, 888 of which were organization recipients, 324 were individual recipients.

We used Excel to aggregate and clean the datasets, Tableau to create visualizations, and Rstudio to run basic analysis of the data. First, we downloaded each dataset from opendata.dc.gov separately and normalized the datasets so that they all contained the same variables. Second, after running some preliminary tests to assess the quality of the data input and variables, we added an additional column alongside "Discipline," titled "Discipline General." This was due to multiple datasets either missing information in their "Discipline" variable or the "Discipline" variable containing the discipline subgroup rather than the general category (e.g. a row in which "Discipline = opera" was recategorized in the discipline general column as "Discipline General = Music"). Additionally, disciplines with five or fewer recipients in that

respective discipline were recategorized under “Other,” in the “Discipline General” column.

Third, we split the single aggregated dataset up into three separate datasets: individual grants, organization grants, and music grants. For analysis, we leveraged Tableau to create visualizations of each dataset as well as the aggregate dataset, and used Rstudio to run basic functions as well as seek out, fill or reclassify rows with missing or mislabeled information.

Summary of Findings

Overall:

While a few organizations received far larger numbers of grants than others during the 2013-2016 period, we found that DC is home to a multitude of talent and disciplines. All in all, our data showed that grants went to 63 different disciplines, from jazz music to puppetry. Figure 1 shows all grant recipients, both individuals and organizations, broken up by discipline.

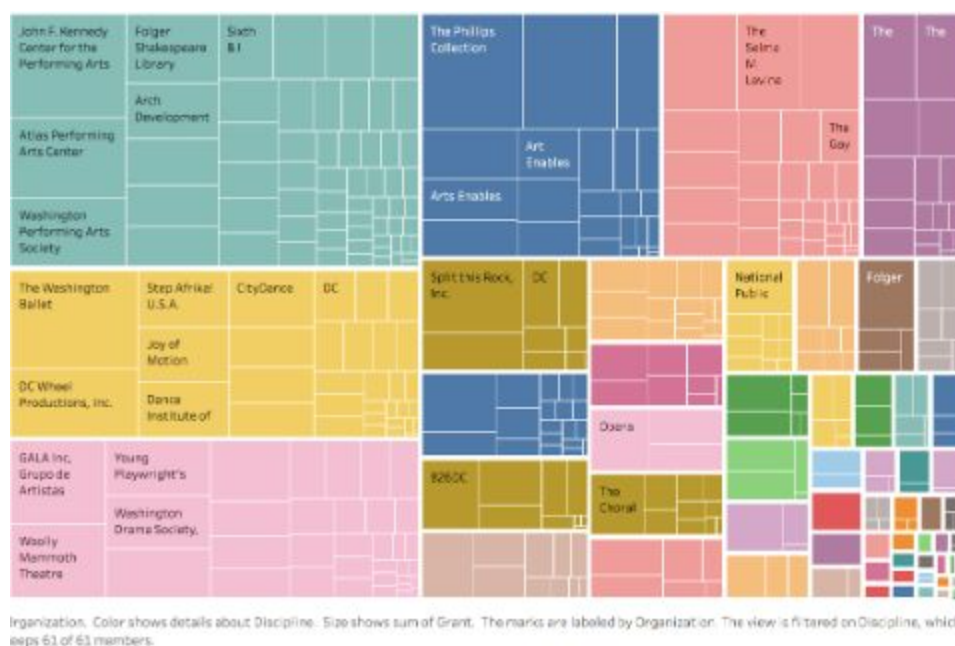
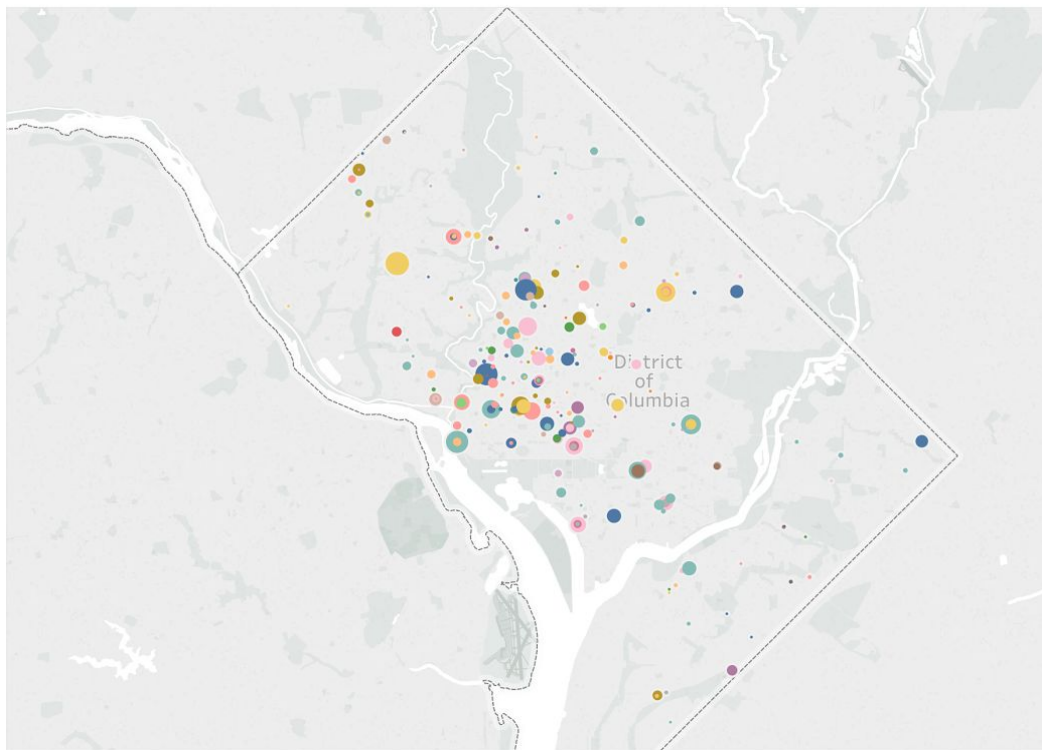


Figure 1

Sheet 3



Map based on average of longitude and average of Y. Color shows details about Discipline. Size shows sum of Grant. Details are shown for Organization and Discipline. The view is filtered on Discipline, which keeps 61 of 61 members.

Figure 2

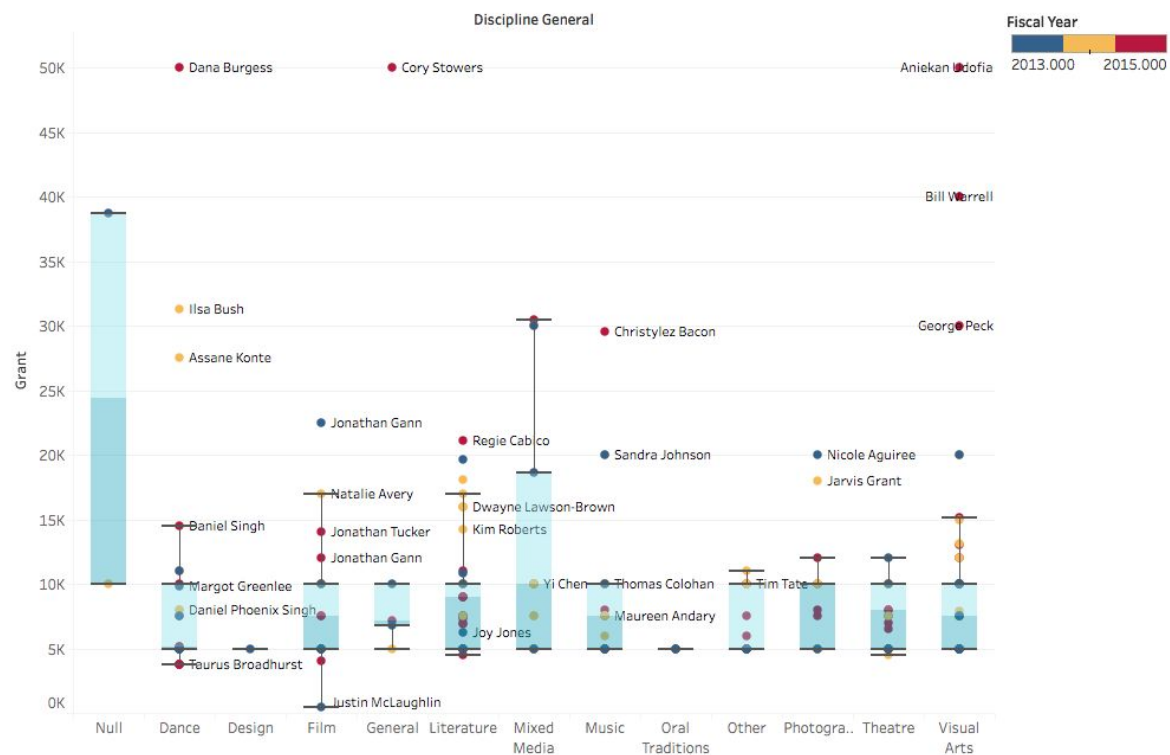
Our first area of interest was how grants were allocated throughout DC geographically. Figure 2 displays all grants as dots on the map; size of the grant corresponds to size of each dot, and color corresponds to type of grant.¹ There is a heavy concentration of grants in Northwest DC. While Northwest DC is undoubtedly populated with organizations and performance centers throughout it, if grant allocation were proportional to population density in DC, we would expect to see far more grants in Southeast DC as well.

¹ Dark blue represents visual arts, pink represents theatre, yellow/gold is dance, brown is literature, dark purple is opera.

Individual Breakup:

Examining individual grant distribution, we observed that while certain recipients garnered large grant sums, particularly in 2015, the majority of individual grant recipients received far smaller grants. The upper outliers: Burgess, Stowers, and Udofia, received grants from the Artist Fellowship Program (Burgess), and the Public Art Building Communities (Individual) grant (Stowers and Udofia). Figure 3 also shows a pattern throughout our study of unlabeled recipients, in this case, two individuals' names were missing and are categorized as Null.

Sheet 3



Sum of Grant for each Discipline General. Color shows details about Fiscal Year. The marks are labeled by Applicant. Details are shown for Discipline General and Applicant. The view is filtered on Exclusions (Applicant, Discipline General, Fiscal Year), which keeps 278 members.

Figure 3

Organization Breakup:

Sheet 4

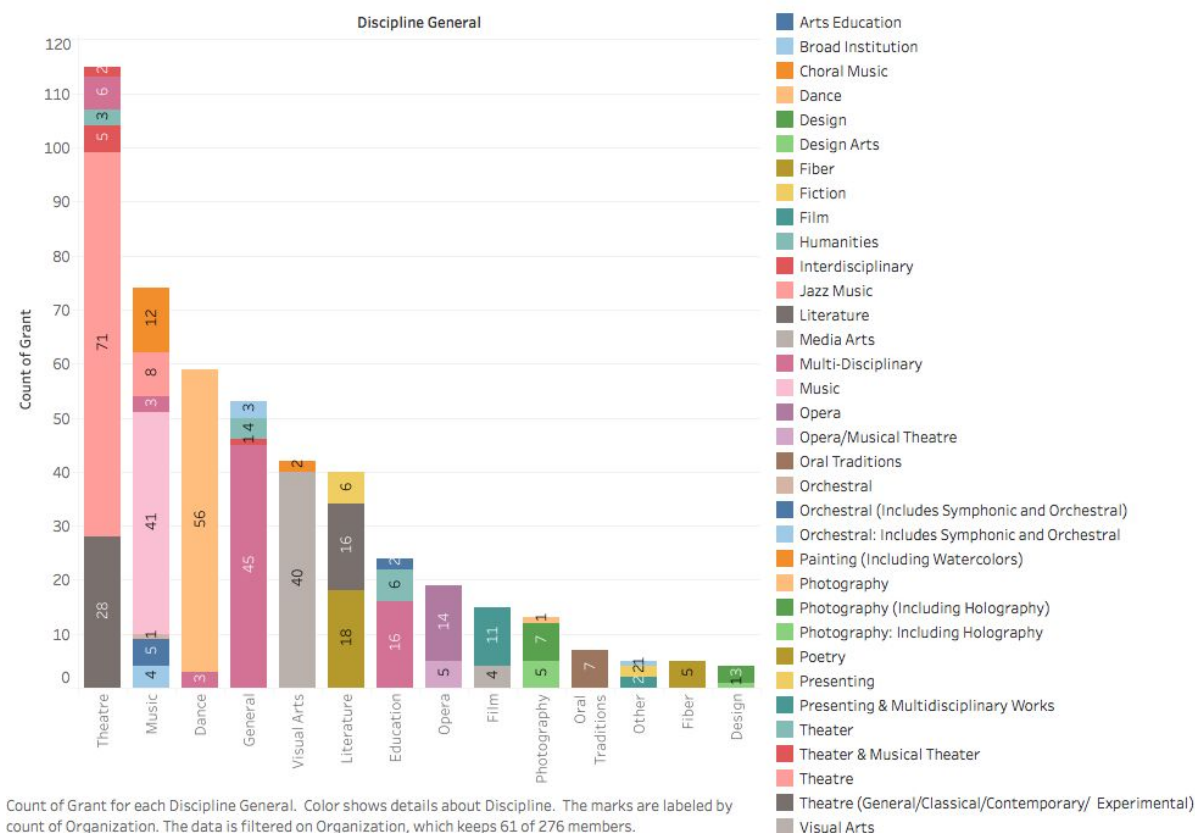


Figure 4

Theater received the most grant money over the 2013-2016 period, receiving \$6,073,422 total, nearly one-and-a-half times the amount that dance, the third largest discipline in terms of grant allocation, received. We continue to see similar issues as we encountered with individual grant distributions. “General” is considered a discipline alongside actual discipline names such as “Visual Arts” or “Music.” Although over three-quarters of “General” is filled by “Multidisciplinary” grant projects, in order to make more detailed assessments of DC grants, the category “General,” must be dealt with in future grant applications. Similarly, within many of the general discipline categories, the subgroup name is the same as the general discipline name.

Again, for more in-depth analyses of DC grants, this too should be remedied in 2017's grant application forms. Subdisciplines can be added as an additional dropdown menu in the application form, and can be populated by previous results from 2013-2016's discipline responses.

Music

Sheet 1

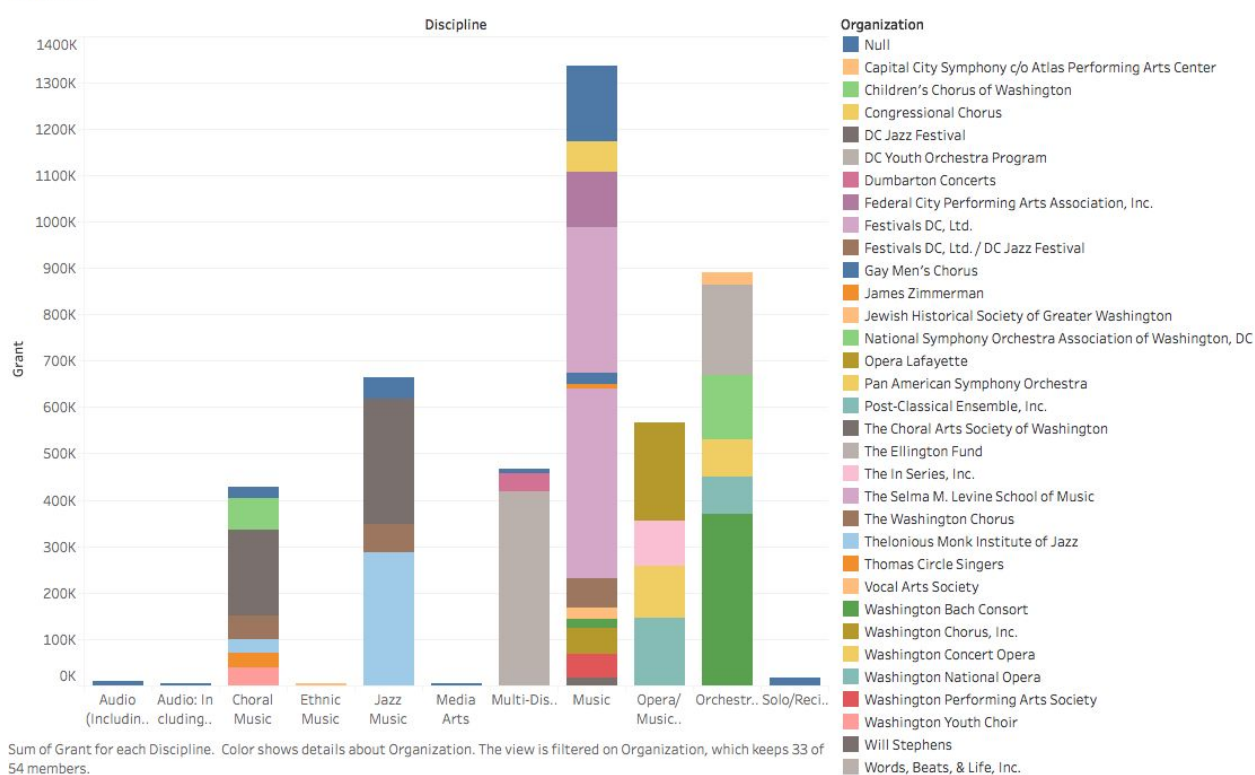


Figure 5

Within our dataset, we found 33 individual music grants versus 160 organization music grants. Figure 5 displays the organizational breakdown of music grant allocations. For clarity of the organization list on the right, Figure 5 only includes organizations with more than one grant in the 2013-2016 period. While losing detail on a comparative level between one-time grant recipients and recipients who have received more than one grant, Figure 5 shows how some

organizations manage to garner a large amount of grant money compared to even other fellow organizations who have won two or more grants. Organizations in the music bar in the visualization were not dispersed among the other music types because we could not be certain each organization was using the grant for the kind of music they usually deal with.

Sheet 1

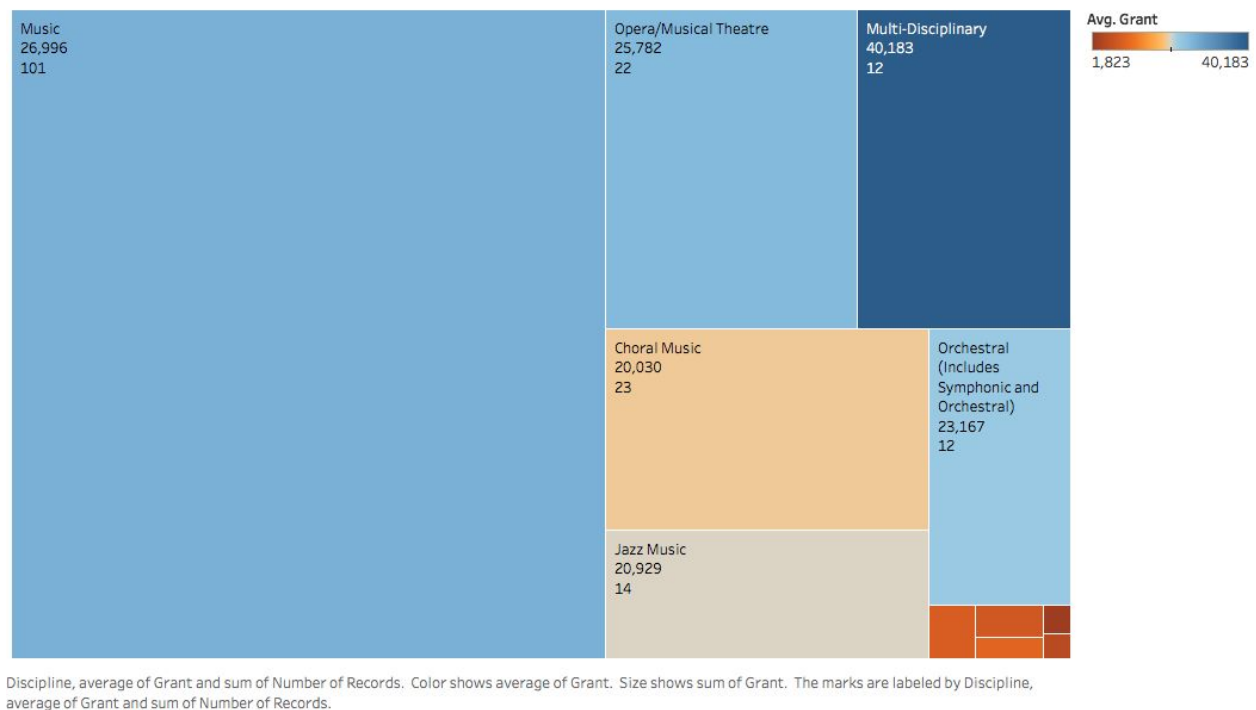
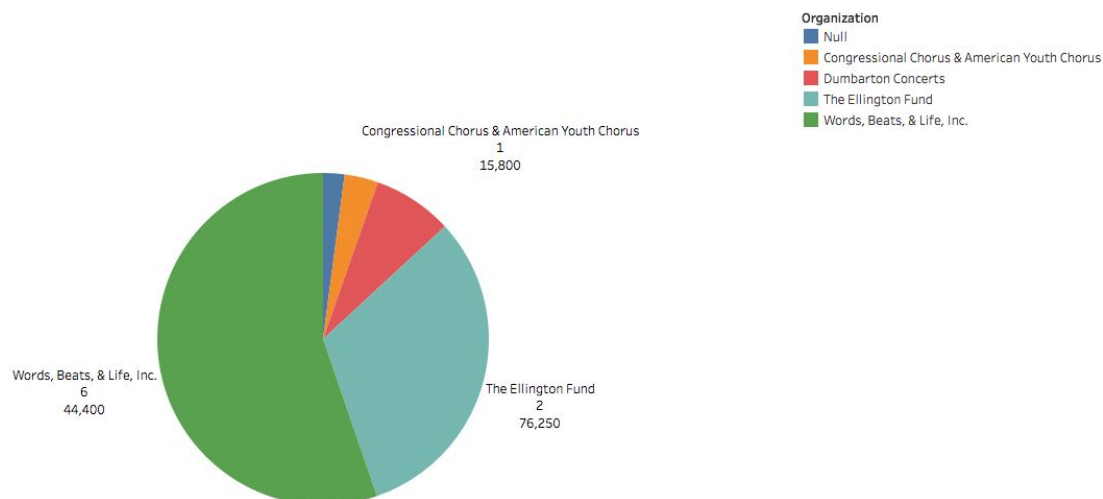


Figure 6

Visualized differently, Figure 6 also shows the aggregate sum of grant funding each music type received, this time by the size of the box. However, instead of displaying each organization's portion of grant funding within a music type, Figure 6 shows the average size of a grant within each music type; stronger intensity of orange corresponds to the smallest average grant size while stronger intensity of blue corresponds to a larger average grant size. The

average size of multidisciplinary music grants are around 1.5 times the average size of a general music grant and around 1.6 times the average size of an opera/musical theatre grant.

Sheet 1



Organization, sum of Number of Records and average of Grant. Color shows details about Organization. The marks are labeled by Organization, sum of Number of Records and average of Grant. The data is filtered on Discipline, which keeps Multi-Disciplinary.

Figure 7

Upon closer analysis, while the majority of multidisciplinary grants were given to Words, Beats, & Life, Inc.,² The Ellington Fund's average grant size was \$31,850 more than the average Words, Beats, & Life, Inc grant.

Questions, Observations & Recommendations

From our study, we came to six overarching take-aways that will be important to keep in mind when moving forward with grant allocation for the D.C. music community.

² The organization Words, Beats, & Life, Inc. was entered differently almost every time in the dataset, with missing or added commas and other punctuation differences.

1. **Music has not been a financial priority in DC.** Comparing funding given to musicians and music communities with other artist recipients in the city, it is clear that this art form gets relatively mediocre attention (less than 25% of the funding block given to Arts and Humanities). While more research needs to be done to assess music interest in comparison to other forms of art and literature advancement in D.C., this does not seem to match up to what we see visually in terms of music consumption and production in various parts of the city, where music is often the driver for cultural preservation.
2. **Little Representation in the NE.** Most grant allocation for music concentrates on Northwest DC and goes primarily to classical, conservatory, or jazz music. In areas of DC that have active music scenes and communities focused on other genres, mainly underground Deep House, Go-Go, Hip-Hop & Punk Rock, we don't see as much grant funding. This could be an issue of lack of applicants or biased allocation, but further research would again be necessary to properly assess this problem.
3. **Types of Music Applicants.** It would be interesting to find out why organizations like the Kennedy Center opt not to specify what they intend to use their grant money for. They only apply for grants under a "General" label and have never applied for a grant designated for Music. Questions we would have about this would be if they are simply not using any federal funds for music-related events they hold or why they choose not to specify when they do. Transparency is key to understanding D.C.'s music demographic, so this knowledge is important to clarify.
4. **Repeats.** Some organizations are receiving grant money multiple times by applying from different grant categories and for different events, sometimes using different variations of the same name. While their multiple initiatives are encouraged, inconsistent labelling makes it difficult for community members looking at data to see how much funding an

organization is actually receiving from the government, as there is no consistent documentation of such.

5. **Grant Applications.** Our most important recommendation to the DC Arts and Humanities Commission is to **normalize** their labeling process. There is a lack of specificity that is required of applicants when applying for a grant. There should not be an option to write in applying for a “General” grant because it erases any transparency the public has access to in terms of where government money is going. In addition, it should be important to specify purpose of fund use amongst Arts categories (for example, specifying funding for “Performance” or “Recording” under a “Music” grant). This would eliminate any confusion that arises, especially when analyzing bigger, all encompassing organizations such as The Kennedy Center that is receiving large chunks of grant blocks, but is using it for a multitude of artistic projects.
6. **Creating an Aggregate Data Set.** The data set that we received from the open source Data Portal was pretty inconsistent and disorganized, which someone defeats the purpose of a data portal in the first place. Owners need to be more consistent and specific when entering data for an initial aggregate data set so researchers can more easily access data for analysis and research.

Next Steps

While our study was the first to visualize DC creative grants using the city’s open data portal, and was able to better identify areas of improvement for future grant committees, this study is only half of the equation. The next step in this process would be to communicate with leaders in these fields: D.C. officials, heads of recipient organizations, and expert members of the community to discuss the findings of this study. Furthermore, combining a comprehensive survey or series of case studies representative of musicians, artists, performers, and successful

and unsuccessful grant applicants with our study would provide DC policymakers with a better understanding of how to assess, allocate, and track grant distribution in Washington, D.C.

Index: Additional Visualizations and Notes

Individual Grant Distribution Breakup by Discipline General

Sheet 1		<i>Out of all grant disciplines-- top 15 individual recipients</i>	
Discipline Gene..		Holly Bass 8	
Visual Arts	735,620	Kim Roberts 6	
Literature	405,259	Assane Konte 5	
Music	278,500	Christylez Bacon 4 **	
Dance	256,580	Regie Cabico 4	
Theatre	196,000	Ruth Stenstrom 4	
Mixed Media	174,100	Carmen Wong 3	
Film	160,050	Cory Oberndorfer 3	
Photography	140,450	Dana Burgess 3	
Other	139,450	Daniel Singh 3	
General	78,950	Dwayne Lawson-Brown 3	
Null	48,750	Ilisa Bush 3	
Oral Traditions	15,000	Jack Gordon 3	
Design	5,000	Jared Davis 3	
Sum of Grant broken down by Discipline General.		Jarvis Grant 3	
		...	
		Sandra Johnson 3 **	

** signifies musical artist

Organization Grant Distribution Broken up by Discipline General

Sheet 1

Discipline General	
Theatre	6,073,422
General	4,268,378
Dance	4,027,069
Music	4,015,480
Visual Arts	2,639,217
Literature	1,750,720
Education	1,705,823
Film	659,943
Opera	567,213
Design	509,700
Other	378,700
Photography	272,050
Oral Traditions	236,300
Fiber	83,200
General Operating Support	53,538
Fashion	18,000
Mixed Media	10,000

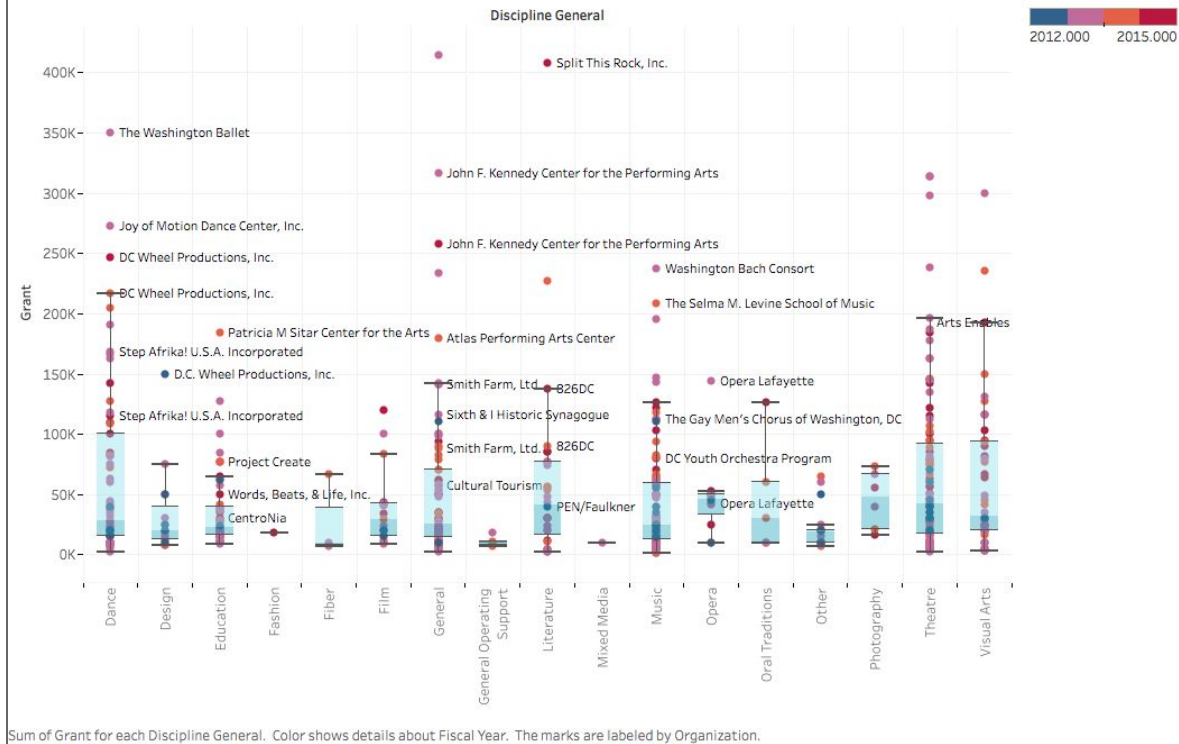
Sum of Grant broken down by Discipline
General.

Out of all grants-- top 15 recipient orgs

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts 16
 Atlas Performing Arts Center 15
 The Washington Ballet 13
 The Shakespeare Theatre 12
 Washington Performing Arts Society 12
 Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company 12
 The Selma M. Levine School of Music 11
 Washington Bach Consort 11
 Washington Drama Society, Inc. 11
 Ford's Theatre Society 10
 GALA Inc, Grupo de Artistas Latinoamericanos 10
 Opera Lafayette 10
 The Theatre Lab School of the Dramatic Arts 10
 CityDance 9
 Folger Shakespeare Library 9

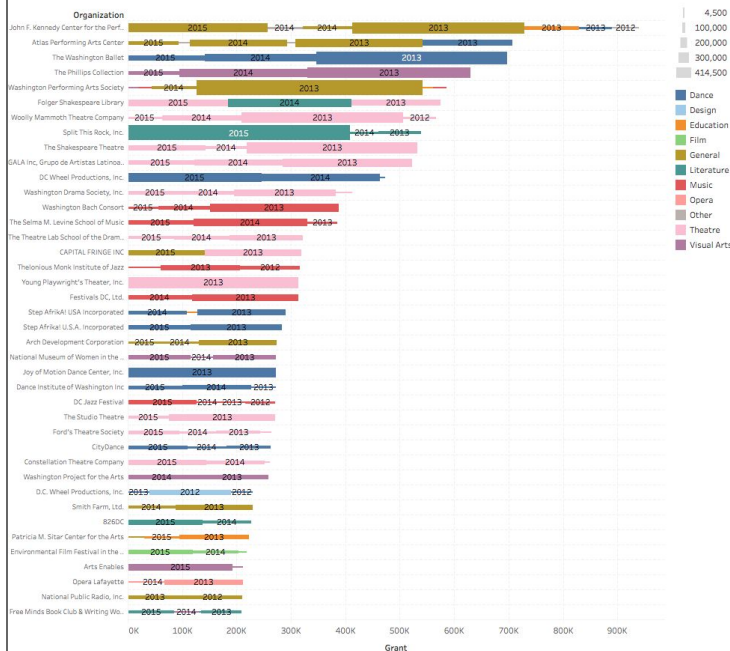
Organization Grant Distribution Box and Whisker Plot

Sheet 2



Organization Grant Distribution-- Largest Recipients

Sheet 1



Music Grant Tables

Sheet 2

Applicant	Number of Reco..	Grant	Avg. Grant
Christylez Bacon	4	34,500	8,625
Sandra Johnson	3	28,000	9,333
Frederic Yonnet	2	15,000	7,500
James Byers	2	15,000	7,500
Maureen Andary	2	12,500	6,250
Mickey Terry	2	17,500	8,750
Sara Curtin	2	12,500	6,250
Thomas Colohan	2	20,000	10,000
Will Stephens	2	20,000	10,000
Brian Settles	1	10,000	10,000
Carl Walker	1	20,000	20,000
Davey Yarborough	1	5,000	5,000
James Zimmerman	1	6,000	6,000
John Anderson	1	5,000	5,000
Karen R. Baker	1	10,000	10,000
Kristen Arant	1	5,000	5,000
Maurice Saylor	1	10,000	10,000
Noah Getz	1	10,000	10,000
Paul Thornley	1	7,500	7,500
Sam McCormally	1	5,000	5,000
Tatyana Safronova	1	5,000	5,000
Thomas Beveridge	1	5,000	5,000

Number of Records, Grant and Avg. Grant broken down by Applicant. The data is filtered on Organization, which keeps Null. The view is filtered on Applicant, which excludes Null.

Sheet 2

Organization	Number of Reco..	Grant	Avg. Grant
Washington Bach Consort	11	373,300	33,936
Opera Lafayette	8	181,313	22,664
The Selma M. Levine Scho..	8	364,750	45,594
Festivals DC, Ltd.	7	303,100	43,300
DC Youth Orchestra Progr..	6	194,400	32,400
Thelonious Monk Institut..	6	147,000	24,500
Thomas Circle Singers	6	30,400	5,067
Pan American Symphony ..	5	74,200	14,840
The Choral Arts Society of..	5	187,304	37,461
Words, Beats, & Life, Inc.	5	246,400	49,280
The In Series, Inc.	4	84,200	21,050
DC Jazz Festival	3	126,000	42,000
Jewish Historical Society ..	3	5,468	1,823
Federal City Performing A..	2	112,500	56,250
Washington Concert Opera	2	91,700	45,850
Post-Classical Ensemble, I..	1	14,200	14,200

Number of Records, Grant and Avg. Grant broken down by Organization. The data is filtered on Applicant, which excludes Null. The view is filtered on Organization, which keeps 18 of 55 members.

General Discipline Categorization

Arts Education

{Arts Education}

Dance

{Dance, Dance:Ballet, Dance:Ethnic/Jazz, Dance:Modern}

Design

{ Architecture, Design, Design Arts}

Film

{Film, Video}

General Operating Support

{ Arts Administration/General Operating Support}

Literature

{Fiction, Literature, Poetry}

Music

{Audio (Including Radio and Sound Installations), Choral Music, Ethnic Music, Jazz Music, Music, Orchestral, Orchestral: Includes Symphonic and Orchestral, Solo/Recital}

Other

{Fashion, Fiber, Glass, Graphics: including printmaking and book arts, Museum, New (Includes experimental and electronic), Presenting, Presenting & Multidisciplinary Works, Puppetry, Research, Sculpture}

Photography

{Photography (Including Holography)}

Mixed Media

{Experimental (Including Conceptual and New Media), Mixed Media, Non-Fiction}

General

{Humanities, Interdisciplinary, Media Arts, Multi-Disciplinary}

Opera

{Opera, Opera/Musical Theatre}

Oral Traditions

{Oral Traditions}

Theatre

{Playwriting, Theater, Theater & Musical Theater, Theatre (General/Classical/Contemporary/Experimental), Theatre for Young Audience}

Visual Arts

{Painting (Including Watercolors), Visual Arts}