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## **Fundraising Issue of Ethnic Archival Institutions in NYC**

A Case Study on Jewish Institutions

### **Introduction**

The background and the method

Every archival process costs money: not only for the purchase of the collection, but also for the assessment, cataloging, preservation, and access—there is no exception. During this semester MIAP students had several chances to hear about the economic situations of archival institutions in New York City from guest speakers: the New York Historical Society has removed its preservation part after a long struggle with financial crisis; the American Museum of Natural History is facing critical difficulty from abruptly reduced grants; the Museum of Modern Arts does not complete a specific collection before having a specific fund granted. There is hardly an archival institution which is profitable or fully self-funded. Moreover, the major task that archival institutions are in charge of is considered rather non-commercial. They are always vulnerable to financial problems.

This paper will address how different types of archival institutions in U.S. manage fundraising issues through case studies of the Jewish institutions<sup>1</sup> in New York City. Facts and information about the Madoff Scandal, the major public funds, and the interesting case of the

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1. To address the common cases, the popular landmark-like museums and libraries in NYC were excluded for this case study. For the category which might cover the fairly small sized institutions with relatively robust identity and stable aim the concept of 'ethnic institution' was used. The main reason that I chose to research 'Jewish Institutions' is that they do not have an integrated system or a hierarchy with an existing nation. By observing their cases, one can see how different structures at each archival institution affect its funding.

Rubin Museum of Arts, which sprouted from my research into this issue, will be explained and discussed in the appendix. All the information from these case studies was obtained by face-to-face interviews with a staff member of each institution, and research from its official websites.

### The List of the Interviewees

Naomi Steinberger : Director of Library Services, **The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary**

Susan L. Malbin: Director of Library & Archives, **American Jewish Historical Society**

: Former advisor, **Institute of Museum and Library Services**

Benjamin H. Sacks: Assistant Development Manager for Foundation Relations, **Center for Jewish History**

Tim McHenry: Producer, **Rubin Museum of Art**

## **The Case of the Embedded Library in the Educational Institution**

The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS)

Overall information <http://www.jtsa.edu/> 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027

JTS is the undergraduate and graduate school for Jewish culture and professional Rabbi training. Founded in 1893 to support not only the student but also the overall researcher, the Library of JTS is the second most important library for Jewish culture in the western hemisphere. Since the Library's collections are focused on paper materials, most of the audio-visual collections they preserve are limited to CD, DVD, and VHS; however, the 1300 pieces in their moving image collection also include film prints. In addition, the Library holds a fairly sizable music collection with more than 4,000 sound recordings.

### Budget and Financing

The budget for the Library this year is 1.7 million dollars; more than 85% of the annual budget is spent on human resources and 15% for purchasing books and materials. The regular

budget for library activities is allotted from the JTS institution while individual projects regarding archival collection is largely funded by grants.<sup>2</sup>

### Fundraising

The grants the Library relies on are classified into two types: the public grants from government funds and the funds from private foundations. Three major public grants that the Library regularly applies for are the National Endowments for the Humanities (NEH), the National Endowments for the Arts (NEA), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). In 2008 the Library was granted a 4700 dollar fund from NEH for the assessment of the sound collection, in which the MIAP program participated. One of the applications they are preparing now is for a NEH grant for another digitizing project.

One of the major funds the Library applies for is the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which is private but is usually considered to be like a public fund because of its large scope covering many fields. Some of the Mellon funds are endowed through open competition like government funds, while others are granted through private connections like private foundation funds. Because of the close relationship the JTS institution has maintained with the Mellon Foundation, the Library has had several chances to be awarded. The 0.5 million dollar grant for the conservation lab, which was bestowed on 2001 and lasted for 3 years, was one of those cases. The process for that fund was similar to that of the fund from private foundation, which took 3 or 4 months: the recipient gave the donor several options regarding which project the donor would support; both parties negotiated the range of the budget; the communication followed with a draft proposal before the actual proposal was submitted.

The major difference between the private fund and the public fund is that both parties

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<sup>2</sup> For example, all digitizing projects were completed by different grants: manuscripts and diaries by METRO, sound archive and rare books by private foundation, sheets of music by American Society of Jewish Music.

are aware beforehand that the fund will be executed during the application process. However, competitive situations could arise from this process. As for the regular grant from the private foundation which has maintained an intimate relation with JTS, the affiliated organizations under JTS—e.g., five different schools, the Library—need to apply for their particular project every three years. The Library is in the funding application process for private foundation for their film converting project. People might consider private funds to be irregularly endowed, but as you can see some funds are awarded regularly.

### **The Case of Individual Archival Institution** American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS)

Overall information <http://ajhs.org> 15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011

Founded in 1892, AJHS has collected the materials which show the history of the Jewish people and the Jewish life in U.S. from 1954 to the present. More than 20 million documents and 50,000 books, photographs, and artifacts including thousands of feet of film and tapes in different formats are held in the archive. AJHS do have their separate 12 story storage building at 17<sup>th</sup> street in Manhattan.

#### Budget and Financing

The annual budget of AJHS has been drastically reduced this year: from 2.7 million dollars last year to 1.8 million this year. Along with the economic recession, another direct reason for the financial slump is that Jewish institutions in NYC are dealing with the Madoff Scandal.<sup>3</sup> The regular sources of income are trustees, private donors and foundations. Like most other archival institutions collection purchases, in-house preservation projects<sup>4</sup>, and additional access activities

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<sup>3</sup> See the Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> The most basic level of re-housing management such as acid free process is the only archival process that AJHS can manage with their regular income.

such as exhibition are possible only with outside funding.

### Fundraising

The usual sources for fundraising of AJHS are mostly the same as those of the Library of the JTS; they regularly apply for NEH, NEA, and IMLS, and rely on private foundations and donors. Even though most of the exterior funds are individually granted to specific projects, there are several Federal grants for daily archival activity such as the personnel, the collection re-housing and digitization. Two competitive federal grants for two different projects are being executed by November 2009, and AJHS is preparing for an application to a third federal grant. The typical project they apply for funding for involves the conservation process for parchment paper or tape damaged paper.<sup>5</sup> AJHS has also been endowed a NEH grant for re-housing, finding aids and digitization of thousands of banker's boxes. Compared to public funds, grants from private sector tend to be more intensely focused on project-based activities.

## **The Case of the Institution with a Unique Structure** Center for Jewish History (CJH)

### Overall Information

CJH is the campus for its five partner organizations (the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Sephardi Federation<sup>6</sup>, the Leo Baeck Institute<sup>7</sup>, Yeshiva University

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<sup>5</sup> Save America's Treasures is the usual grant applied to for this kind of project. It is "for preservation and/ or conservation work on nationally significant intellectual and cultural artifacts and nationally significant historic structure or site" It maintains a partnership with NEA, NEH, and IMLS but is administrated by the National Park Service.

<sup>6</sup> According to the official website(<http://www.americansephardifederation.org>) the American Sephardi Federation "represents the heritage of all Sephardim from the Iberian Peninsula and the Balkans, to the Jews of North Africa and Muslim lands including Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, Ethiopia and Bukharian Jews" and its mission is "to promote and preserve the spiritual, historical, cultural and social traditions of all Sephardic communities."

<sup>7</sup> The official website (<http://www.lbi.org>) of the Leo Baeck Institute addresses that it is "devoted to studying the history of German-speaking Jewry from its origins to its tragic destruction by the Nazis and to preserving its culture."

Museum<sup>8</sup>, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research<sup>9</sup>), opened in 2000. As the ethnical and archival organization with an alternative system, the unique structure of CJH should be noted first.

Basically CJH started as the building for five different Jewish organizations, which were founded at different times in North-eastern part of U.S.<sup>10</sup> By moving into one building these institutions expected to provide their researchers with more integrated and abundant resources. CJH offers its partner institutions the reading room with an archivist and technical facilities such as computer systems. Obviously, this structure helped their members as well in managing chronic financial shortcomings: including the extremely high rental cost in NYC. However, CJH is not just the name of the building for five institutions—it also manages a separate annual budget and has around 30 personnel, as well as producing individual projects such as fellowships and lectures. This experimental structure of CJH has proved to be successful in the sense of user numbers: from 2007 to 2008, the number of online researchers has increased three times because of the integrated digitizing project.

### Fundraising

Even though the six institutions in CJH conduct separate budgets and apply for separate project funds on their own, three people are responsible for development for foundation relations and applying for grants on behalf of its partner institutions' archival processes. Aside from the general public funds most archival institutions in U.S. would apply for, there is an additional source of income, which suits CJH's ethnic identity: Conference on Jewish Material

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<sup>8</sup> The Yeshiva University Museum “provides a window into Jewish culture around the world and throughout history through its acclaimed multi-disciplinary exhibitions and award-winning publications.”—the official website (<http://www.yumuseum.org>)

<sup>9</sup> “Founded in 1925 in Vilna, Poland (Wilno, Poland, now Vilnius, Lithuania), as the Yiddish Scientific Institute, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is dedicated to the history and culture of Ashkenazi Jewry and to its influence in the Americas.” —the official website of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (<http://www.yivo.org>)

<sup>10</sup> The other thing they have in common is the fact that all of them are about the Jewish emigrants from Europe.

Claims against Germany.<sup>11</sup> Even though there is neither an official meeting table nor a hierarchical relationship among the six institutions, including CJH, they communicate with each other on daily basis using the advantage of residing in the same building. It might seem to be a difficult process to adjust and prioritize the need from each partner institution while applying for the exterior funds; however, since all the institutions under the umbrella of CJH obviously share the same mission, their interests hardly clash with each other.

### **The common features of the fundraising business of the ethnic institutions in NYC**

These three cases of Jewish archival institutions demonstrate several patterns regarding fundraising issues as ethnic archival institutions: the character of the outside funds, the differences between public and private funds, and the pros and cons of being ethnic institutions in NYC. This part of the paper will discuss how these patterns appear and affect the actual activities of the institutions.

As shown above most institutions rely on outside funds regarding non-regular archival activities. In other words, most of the outside funds are not used for routine daily work, such as regular re-housing and migration of the collections and payroll for reference and office staff. There is a rare case of grants for the human resources—one of the federal funds that AJHS has granted was for hiring an archivist for two years for a specific collection. Still, the archivist they were able to hire is only temporary in contrast to their permanent staff which is paid through internal funding. Even if you needed more personnel to manage proper archival activity for your holdings there is no way to cover the additional salary unless you increase the regular budget from regular sources—there is no outside grants for hiring full-time workers. This limitation

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<sup>11</sup> See the Appendix.

makes some archives reluctant to grant free collection donation if they cannot afford the additional processes to make it accessible.

Usually, whether it is competitive or not makes the major difference between public funds and private funds. As for funds from private foundations there is no open contact or address for application, and therefore no open competition. Since it is a person-to-person business being sociable and delicate in making close relationships is a fairly important ability. While dealing with private foundations requires somewhat marketing ability, in most cases private grants tend to be earmarked for a specific collection or project so that the name of the foundation or donor can be displayed publicly (for instance on a plaque, or name of the library.) This tendency also means that if you can make your seemingly routine archival process more attractive you will be likely to get a grant—i.e., persuasion skills and marketing ideas do matter. Most private funds, once it is decided that it will be executed, are negotiable for its usage and the way it will be granted. In contrast, public funding would require you to face several hundred pages of applications for months at a time. You will be notified the exact requirements and conditions for the specific grant so that you can be prepared. In addition, very act of being granted by the public sector can prove the importance and genuineness of the collection or project. Since many private foundations and donors tend to support verified projects, attaining public funding also means that you become favorable for private fund as well.

Lastly, what does it mean to be ethnic and located in NYC as an archival institution? You do not need to browse many fund and grant programs looking for your target. If your institution identifies itself as Jewish you can easily find funds using the Jewish Foundation Directory. Of course, you are still able to apply for non-ethnic funds; however, a limited list targeted specifically to your needs will make you more focused and your fundraising activity more efficient. The advantages that Jewish institutions in NYC experience seem considerably



substantial. As the city with one of the highest levels of Jewish population in U.S., most of the Jewish institutions in NYC occupy an advantageous position in a sense of their user numbers are higher in comparison to institutions located in cities with lower Jewish populations.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of being Jewish, most of the ethnic archival institutions in NYC share the same advantage: in a city which is well known for its large and diverse population of immigrants the user base for these archives seems particularly advantageous. Given that larger user numbers always help fundraising, the large number of potential users the ethnic institutions in NYC have would imply the greater potential asset as well.

## **Conclusion**

### Four tips for future archivists regarding fundraising

Tips for successful fundraising can be drawn from the case studies above. First, be prepared. Many public and semi-public competitive grants have official websites, which are filled with considerably detailed information about the application process. Considering that most public grants are given to applicants who meet specific requirements and criteria, which are stated clearly beforehand, research on your target fund is the first main step to fundraising. Being aware of the requirements is also important for the private sector as well. Complete understanding of specific private donors or foundations will guarantee the successful acquisition of proper funds.

Secondly, improve your marketing ability. As briefly mentioned before, marketing your project in interesting ways works to better tempt private investors. In most cases, showy

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<sup>12</sup> This feature affects the size of the institution's human resources, which could affect the quality of the archival service again. For example, there is only one archivist in AJHS in Boston whereas AJHS in New York has five full time archivists, three of which are responsible for reference work, and one part time archivist.

conferences and exhibitions are more interesting to investors and foundations than the rather slow and rigorous archival process; however, you also may contrive other ways to promote projects. A certain level of creativity in building relationships with the private sector, such as engraving the donor's name on specific finding aids, is required as long as it will not impair your institution's given identity.

Thirdly, find every possible way to get money. Previously rejected applications can sometimes be renovated; it may be used to apply to another competitive public fund after proper adjustment<sup>13</sup>. You can also consult with your state's representatives about grants you can obtain in the form of non-competitive public funds.<sup>14</sup>

Lastly, always keep yourself in the network. Maintaining a close network is important not only for the private fundraising; it is also critical for public funds. For example, getting your draft application proofread by a third party is always recommended. Especially if that person is someone who not only maintains a fair distance from your actual project, but is also reasonable and thorough enough to provide you with the different point of view.

## Appendix

### **The Talented Mr. Madoff** -01/24/2009 NYT Madoff Scandal and Jewish Institutions in NYC

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<sup>13</sup> A story how Benjamin H. Sacks, the assistant development manager for foundation relations in CJH succeed in NEH grant after nine month work will be the good illustration. In 2004, while examining the projects which were once rejected by public grants he realized CJH fellowship program would have become eligible for that grant if only couple of conditions had been adjusted. So he persuade his boss to apply again after adjustment and CJH was able to get granted by NEH.

<sup>14</sup> See the appendix about the major public grants

The global economic recession might not be the major reason for the financial difficulty many of Jewish institutions in NYC have suffered since late 2008. Susan L. Malbin, the director of library & archives of AJHS, addressed the Madoff Scandal as a prime suspect of AJHS' financial woes. Bernard Madoff is the former stock broker, financial adviser, and Chairman of NASDQ, and presently a federal inmate with the penalty of 150 years imprisonment and forfeiture of \$170 billion<sup>15</sup>. Having operated a Ponzi scheme with his wealth management business since the early 1990s (or as early as the 1980s according to the federal investigators) he pleaded guilty in March 2009. The known amount of potential financial damage has reached 65 billion dollars.<sup>16</sup> The more severe part for Jewish institutions in NYC is the fact that Madoff had been maintaining a close relationship with many potent private foundations, especially many Jewish foundations. In the endless list of victims, you can find Jewish federations and hospitals such as Yeshiva University, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Steven Spielberg's Wunderkinder Foundation, and even Tisch School of Arts. The tragic thing is that significant numbers of Jewish organizations are based on the East Coast, especially in the New York area. Major numbers of Jewish institutions suffered the reduction of appointed grants in a direct relationship to the financial damage caused by the scandal..

**Be As Prepared As possible**  
The Major Public Grants

There are not many public grants that most archival institutions need to be aware of:

NEH, NEA, IMLS, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) are

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<sup>15</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard\\_Madoff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Madoff) Many of the fact-s about 'Madoff Scandal and Jewish Institutions in NYC' were found on Wikipedia.

<sup>16</sup> The list of gravely affected clients whose loss was over 1 billion dollars presents the severity of this perfectly deceiving financial crime: Fairfield Greenwich Group (\$7.50 billion), Tremont Capital Management (\$3.30 billion) Banco Santander (\$2.87 billion) Bank Medici (\$2.10 billion) Ascot Partners (\$1.80 billion) Access International Advisors (\$1.40 billion) Fortis (\$1.35 billion) HSBC (\$1.00 billion)

the major funding sources for archives<sup>17</sup>. Most of them are independent federal agencies and have official websites, which provide fairly detailed information about the whole application process of the grants. You can research the applicable grants for organizations and individuals. Reviews of recent grant awards are also available.

Established by the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, NEH runs a 141 million dollars annual budget as of 2006. In 2009, eight kinds of grants have been awarded to more than 250 individuals and to more than 110 projects run by organizations. Mostly, individual grants are based on the fellowship or stipend whereas organization grants are based on specific projects lasting more than one year. The regular grants which might suit the archival institutions are Preservation and Access Awards; still, you have to thoroughly research since there are lot more grants in other categories.

As assumed from the title NEA, which was created in 1965, supports projects especially regarding exhibiting artistic excellence. Even though the total amount of grants 60 museums were awarded equals more than 2.5 million dollars for the fiscal year of 2010, the portion allotted to archival organizations seems to be limited. Given that nearly 150 million dollars are awarded annually in the name of NEA grant, NEA is less relevant for the archival institutions or at least for projects based on routine archival process.

Along with NEH, IMLS is often considered a usual source of funds by many archival organizations in U.S. It was established by the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996, which combined the Institute of Museum Services (which had existed as the part of the Department of the interior since 1976) and the Library Programs Office (which had existed as the part of the Department of the education since 1956). As its main mission is to support the professional

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.neh.gov/> (NEH), <http://www.nea.gov/> (NEA), <http://www.imls.gov/> (IMLS), <http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/> (NHPRC) —most of the fact-finding is based upon the official websites of those agencies.

archivists and the advance of the professional knowledge its annual budget (247 million dollars as of 2007) is mainly awarded to the preservation process. This identity of IMLS makes the major difference between the grants from NEH and IMLS; if your target project will be executed by special cutting edge technologies or the archival process itself has significant value, to apply for IMLS will be reasonable where as NEH is suitable for the project in which the collection itself is considered noteworthy American heritage.

Even though the major concerns of NEH and IMLS differ from each other and the available amount of the funds is also differentiated—usually, NEH provides much larger grants, double application is also possible if you emphasize different features of your project; of course, being granted from both funds is not allowed. While submitting two different applications it is worth remembering the distinction in the screening process. In the case of IMLS, you can have feedback on your draft application if you submit it two months earlier than the given deadline.

The fact that non-competitive grants are always accessible in the name of IMLS should be addressed. You can request and apply for a congressional grant from your own state, which is operated more like a pork barrel. As the congressional earmark has been slightly increased in the total IMLS funds,<sup>18</sup> this non-competitive trial seems to be worth considering. Applying to the pertinent state council on the arts or humanities is also recommended since many of IMLS grants are awarded from the state as well.

Other than major public grant applications there are a couple more competitive grants you need to keep in mind when you plan fundraising. NHPRC, the grant-making arm of National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has awarded over 4,200 grants since 1963. If your institution has a somewhat differentiated identity such as ethnic institution, extra thorough research on available funds will be helpful. Claims Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against

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<sup>18</sup> From 15.5 million dollars in FY 1999 to 32.5 million dollars in FY 2004

Germany is an example case for Jewish institutions. As the organization whose mission is to bring justice for Jewish victims of Nazi persecution since 1951, it has the institutional allocations regarding Holocaust research, education, and documentation.

The preparation for the application process for competitive funds usually takes tens of hours a day for couple of months, say the fundraising people in archival institutions. It is demanding and highly competitive since most institutions in the U.S. apply to the limited funds every year; however, it is worthwhile to give closely look at the fund information and to make sure you meet all the given requirements. It is also advisable to grasp the characters not only of each agency but also of the different types of grants from the same agency. For example, the applications for digitization projects that may seem to be the same need to be written in a different way depending on whether your institution has the identity of library or museum.

### **The Case of the Almost Self-Funded Ethnic Institution** Rubin Museum of Arts (RMA)<sup>19</sup>

Whether RMA can be considered an ethnic institution or not might be somewhat problematic. Founded in 1999 and opened to the public in 2004, RMA is a museum devoted to Himalayan art. Its collection includes more than 2,000 works of Himalayan paintings, sculpture, textiles, ritual objects, and prints and covers many areas with different ethnic identities around Himalayan mountains including Afghanistan, Myanmar (Burma), Tibet Autonomous Region, Nepal, Mongolia, and Bhutan. Even though its collections do not maintain a consistent ethnic identity, the way that those collections are defined seems rather ethnic based on regional definition. Most of all, it seems obvious that the exotically ethnic way RMA present itself to public works well.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.rmanyc.org/> , 150 West 17th Street, New York,

When RMA was first founded by Don Rubin, who is the founder of Multiplan, the nationwide health care company, with his 1500 pieces of the collection most of the staff members were well aware that the number of people who are interested in Himalayan art would initially be quite limited. Therefore, their first goal was to make their collection as attractive as possible with the seemingly vague but apparently broad concept of their motto: everything is relevant in the name of arts. Under this motto you can provide your users with literally anything in the museum: from The Red Book of C.G. Jung<sup>20</sup>, the current exhibition which will run till next February, to Cabaret Cinema<sup>21</sup>, the screening program on every Friday night. Other than these diverse events and exhibitions, RMA also manages many kinds of education programs regarding Himalayan arts, culture, and religion on a daily basis.

The regular sources of income of RMA are not that unique compared to other institutions: trustees, public grants such as NEH and NEA, as well as membership and admission fees. According to their official website their private foundations also vary: the Donald J. Trump Foundation, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, JP Morgan Chase, The Starr Foundation, etc are all listed as donors. Therefore, the distinctive feature of RMA might be found in their active way of promotion. The main job of the Producer of RMA, Tim McHenry, is showing examples of the various popular activities that bring users to them. McHenry is responsible for designing many programs and events, as well as inviting celebrity guests. Many fashionable events such as Cabaret Cinema and the Red Book Dialogue<sup>22</sup> are presented by him. McHenry explains that the basis of his successful programming is to invite celebrities and to let them experience the

<sup>20</sup> It is “first public presentation of what may be considered psychology’s most influential unpublished work, *Red Book*. RMA address that they present this exhibition since it is the book started from “Jung’s fascination with mandala—Tibetan Buddhist representations of the cosmos used to help reach enlightenment.”

<sup>21</sup> It is the movie screening event with \$7 bar minimum introduced by the artist who recommended specific film. From *Blue Velvet* to *In a Lonely Place*, any film which is assumed to take any inspiration from Jungian themes can be shown.

<sup>22</sup> It is the dialogue on the stage between the guest and the psychoanalyst as the respond to Jung’s Red Book. Total 27 conversations with the guest such as Smashing Pumpkins lead Billy Corgan, film director Jonathan Demme, screenwriter Charlie Kaufman, novelist Alice Walker, and philosopher Cornel West, is being held from October 19. Most of the \$25 tickets were sold out so far.

museum and share that experience with other people who are influenced by them; for instance, Elvis Costello, having been invited to RMA got impressed and mentioned RMA during his concert causing lots of fans of Costello to visit the museum for the first time.

Of course, this way of promotion does not suit every ethnic institution. Still, the diverse strategies of RMA might be considered one method to take as much advantage of NYC and its unique identity as possible. By enlarging the number of users and becoming famous RMA could also occupy a privileged position in the fundraising business as well. What the RMA case shows is simple: as long as it will not impair your institution's ultimate mission or goal, trying to expand the spectrum of your users by hosting various programs will always help your fundraising.