



Hon. James Moore
Minister of Canadian Heritage
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

October 19, 2009

By post and email

Dear Minister Moore,

Re: Investing in Musical Diversity

I am writing to you today on behalf of the President and the Board of Governors of the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) to respectfully ask that you consider reinstating funding for the recording and distribution of specialized music, the termination of which was part of last July's otherwise welcomed announcement that the Canada Music Fund was being renewed for five years.

The CCA has publicly rejoiced in the fact that your government has committed to a five-year renewal of the Canada Music Fund and we welcome the fact that you have recognized the need to increase the money available for digital and international market development. Those two sectors of activity will certainly benefit from the increased money they will receive through FACTOR and MusicAction.

It is however unfortunate that this needed injection was done at the expense of what we deem to be an important strategic investment in Canadian cultural diversity. Additionally, these programs fostered the development of new forms of music which, while not necessarily commercially viable immediately, could eventually become so.

Why does the CCA invite you to seek new funding to maintain those programs? Fundamentally, because investing in what is deemed to be at the

fringe today may shape our culture tomorrow and secondly, because it is important for the federal government to help develop the incredible natural resource we have, namely the diverse cultural communities which weave the new fabric of Canadian society.

It is through the funding of such programs at home that Canada delivers the commitment to cultural diversity its successive governments have made by ratifying and internationally supporting the Unesco 2005 Convention. Cultural diversity starts at home, through supporting creativity in which it is rooted.

To address the economic argument alone, there are several examples of music genres which or musicians who have transitioned successfully from the cancelled programs to support from FACTOR or MusicAction, as they achieved more popular and commercially viable renown. Canadian Celtic music springs to mind, as well as a number of artists from culturally diverse origins like gospel, jazz or experimental contemporary music representing small catalogs of independent recordings. On the other hand, based on the information we have, there seems to have been very little overlap at any point in time between the abolished programs and those run by FACTOR and MusicAction.

The relatively small amount of \$ 1.3 million invested in the recording and distribution of so-called "specialized" music makes all the difference in the world for those artists, creators and small ensembles, several of whom have considerable notoriety without necessarily being "commercially" viable (please see list appended).

In your July 31, 2009 statement you say:

"Music industry business models are changing. Businesses that were once largely concerned with sales of physical formats need to diversify their revenue streams (for instance, through live music and merchandising) and use digital models (including online stores, subscriptions, over-the-air mobile downloads, and streaming) to promote and sell their content.

Promoting and selling music online is essential to open markets for Canadian music. Our music entrepreneurs and artists must ensure not only that their content is available digitally, but also that it is highly visible to aid its discovery among the wealth of content online. No less than 53 percent of Canadian internet users reported in 2008 that they could not easily find music by Canadian artists online. (Source: Decima Research)"

We could not agree more with you, and this is why we submit to your attention that the cancelled programs are just as important as is increasing those administered by FACTOR and MusicAction.

Many artists are already recording, performing, touring, promoting and distributing through the internet, but they cannot move this work to the next level of commercial viability without the support programs like the ones which were terminated.

A recording for “specialized” creators and ensembles is a business card. It is the promotion of a tour. It may be the gateway to successful distribution through the internet. The latter is something those artists are now most unlikely to achieve. A point in case is the demise of the non-profit Distribution Services of recordings administered by the Canadian Music Centre (CMC) thanks to financial support from the Department of Heritage.

At a cost of \$ 150 000 a year, the CMC Distribution Services makes it possible for over 1300 titles produced by 168 small independent Canadian labels to achieve international distribution. By grouping together catalogs too small to be considered individually by distributors, the CMC-DS has been able to negotiate on their behalf with the likes of NAXOS or the Independent On-Line Distribution Alliance (IODA), which gives those Canadian artists access to 300 on-line distribution services and to 2000+ public libraries subscription services. The program supports the development of markets for those Canadian niche formats which would not otherwise be able to reach their audiences. The CMC will have no choice but to close the Distribution Services of these recordings if the money is not available on April 1, 2010.

We submit to you that \$ 1.3 M a year is a very reasonable public investment to make so that emerging and experimental forms of Canadian cultural expression may take advantage of the famous “Long Tail” of the new internet economy.

The CCA therefore urges you to seek replacement funding, if not increased financial support for the two programs abolished. We thank you for the consideration you will give to this request and remain at your disposal should you want to discuss this further.

Best regards,



Alain Pineau
National Director

Sample list of Canadian artists and ensembles

distributed through CMC'S Distribution Service

- Hannaford Street Silver Band
- I Musici de Montreal Ensemble
- Kitchener - Waterloo Symphony
- James Campbell (jazz)
- Orchestre Metropolitain
- Winnipeg Symphony
- Toronto Mendelssohn Choir
- Elmer Iseler Singers (choir)
- Espirit Orchestra
- Vancouver Chamber choir
- Rivka Golani (soloist, viola)
- Penderecki String Quartet
- St. Lawrence String Quartet
- Gryphon Trio
- Winnipeg Chamber Music Orchestra
- Aventa Ensemble
- Elektra Womens Choir
- Dave McMurdo Jazz Orchestra
- Nathaniel Dett Chorale
- Evergreen Gamelan Ensemble
- True North Brass
- Hugh Fraser Quintet
- Molinari String Quartet
- Musica Viva
- NEXUS
- Nimmon's n.Nine Jazz orchestra

**List of 2008 recipients of a Canada Council of the Arts Grant for
Specialized Music Recording**

See pdf document attached.