



Submission to
Canadian Content in a Digital World consultation
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Respectfully submitted by

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Orchestras Canada welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on Canadian content in a digital world. We agree that it is a timely and important conversation for all Canadians, particularly those in the creative sector, to engage in.

The Canadian Heritage consultation paper, asks a series of questions. Orchestras Canada has considered these questions through a variety of means, including consultation with individual members, an informal review of the experience of orchestras internationally and a review of the consultation questions by a Committee of the Board. We offer the following comments and observations.

In putting forward our comments, we'd like to stress that orchestras are simultaneously a collective of individual artists and skillfully-managed not for profit organizations. They are not a classic intermediary whose business model depends on successful exploitation of artists' work. Orchestras invest, then re-invest, in artists, and are continually seeking ways to expand meaningful contact between artists and the public. We urge the Department of Canadian Heritage to recognize the importance of not for profit arts organizations, their contributions to the creative eco-system, and the fact that an orchestra's success in the digital realm is directly and simultaneously tied to compensation to artists *and* impact on Canadians and international audiences. Our comments are premised on the importance of this collective, which values and is built upon the creativity and excellence of the individual artists involved, while uniting them in an artistic expression that is even greater than the sum of its parts.

The importance of technology for the distribution and dissemination of orchestral work is longstanding. Canada's public broadcaster, CBC/Radio Canada, has played an important role in extending the reach of orchestral activity, facilitating the development of a national star system, and expanding the reach of regional ensembles and artists. This activity and support has diminished in recent years, the result being less access to the diversity of Canada's orchestras and the artists they engage. While we recognize the broadcast environment has changed, we must stress that many international peer orchestras still enjoy strong support from their national public broadcasters. While we are excited about the expanded potential offered by digital technology, orchestras would absolutely welcome a renewed and strengthened relationship with our unique public broadcaster.

Digital technology presents an opportunity for Canadian orchestras, and the artists they engage -- one that is vital to their ongoing impact and reach in their own communities and far beyond. While the live experience remains an essential element of orchestral experience, digital technology now touches upon every almost every aspect of orchestral activities. It amplifies and extends

- artistic practice
- backstage production
- communications
- distribution
- education

Our member and associate orchestras, whether large or small, are adapting digital tools to enrich the artistic experience and extend the reach of the music to audiences at home and beyond.

The opportunities afforded by digital technology going forward are particularly pronounced in finding and supporting complex touring and marketing opportunities beyond our borders. A robust digital presence and offering is the starting point for developing any national or international touring opportunities. Without comprehensive, imaginative, and high-quality digital assets, it is impossible to break into the broader national or international market. We would ask for an acknowledgment of the integral relationship between this consultation and the ongoing work by the Department of Canadian

Heritage to establish new guidelines and structures to facilitate international cultural promotion and export.

As orchestras look forward, and embrace the possibilities offered by digital technology, a number of themes and realities emerge.

- Workable business models and practices are not yet in place to ensure that orchestras are in the forefront of digital content production. Orchestras acknowledge the importance of fair compensation to artists, and are working to establish labour agreements that balance fair compensation with the new revenue realities.
- Resource constraints have prevented orchestras from experimenting or taking risks in this area, despite a recognition that new models have to be found. We are hopeful that the significant increase in resources to the Canada Council for the Arts will help address this challenge. We stress that accommodation must be made for taking risks, something that is currently not the case.
- In the short term, digital distribution of artistic product presents a cost, not a revenue stream. We fully acknowledge, though, that it is a key to reducing barriers to access of the music made by orchestras, and the excitement of the orchestral experience: important elements in our stability and long-term growth in other existing and complementary revenue streams both for live performance at home and in new markets.

These observations and comments all point to the need for a robust policy environment that **encourages experimentation and provides adequate resources**. As civic and community assets, orchestras submit that the longstanding relationship with government must adapt and be renewed to allow Canadians to fully benefit from the contribution they make in the digital world. We acknowledge, it's not 'business as usual'.

Orchestras Canada is pleased to have the opportunity to offer these comments and observations. We look forward to continuing the conversation with you.