



The voice of live
music in Canada
La voix du spectacle
musical au Canada

March 16th, 2020

**The Honourable William
Francis Morneau**

Minister of Finance
Department of Finance Canada
90 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

The Honourable Mona Fortier

Minister of Middle-Class
Prosperity and Associate
Minister of Finance
Department of Finance Canada
90 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

**The Honourable Steven
Guilbeault**

Minister of Canadian Heritage
15 Eddy Street, 12th Floor
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0M5

**The Honourable Navdeep
Bains**

Minister of Innovation, Science
and Industry
C.D. Howe Building
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

The Honourable Mélanie Joly

Minister of Economic
Development and Official
Languages
C.D. Howe Building
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

Dear Ministers Morneau, Fortier, Guilbeault, Bains and Joly;

As the government grapples with the incredibly difficult task of navigating such unprecedented times, Canada's live music industry, like others, is in a state of extreme difficulty. I am writing to you on the industry's behalf with an urgent request for fiscal intervention during this unparalleled time of crisis and disruption.

The Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) represents the breadth of the industry: the stages upon which artists stand, both indoors and out, and the supply chain that surrounds them. We represent those who own/operate small live music clubs to Canada's largest concert promotion companies, NHL arenas and festivals to performing arts centres and many others. This vibrant industry, with obvious and immeasurable ties to the tourism sector, contributes \$3.5b to Canada's GDP and creates 72,000 jobs - and this is before we take into consideration the myriad of indirect impacts and of course, the livelihoods of many, many artists for whom touring and live performance are their number one source of revenue.

Today we are asking for the deployment of relief efforts for our members.

Cautious estimates suggest that over 36% of our members will fail outright within the next 4 – 8 weeks, with others laying off approximately 76% of their current workforce. There are many for whom the situation is even more dire. Of the utmost importance to note is that, because there is no particular 'end in sight', 100% of our members are now projecting disastrous consequences due to forced cancellations and closures. The notion of "clawing back", attempting to retain staff, etc. without gate/ticket revenue while we wait things out, will be impossible. As things are changing by the hour, we expect more tough news from members in the coming days as our new reality sets in.

The economic, social and cultural output of the live music industry is entrenched in Canadian society – it is connected to many, many other sectors and its downfall will have a domino effect that we cannot yet conceive of. The severe damage done to the live music sector will send a ripple effect through our creative community and economy, one that will be hard to reverse.

We are therefore asking the Government of Canada to consider the following urgent recommendations to help safeguard live music companies and organizations to ensure that when we do finally emerge from this crisis, there will still be an industry at all.

COVID-19 Recommended Relief Measures for Canada's Live Music Industry

1. A large-scale compensation fund for concert and festival producers

Countries around the world are starting to introduce compensation funds. For example, the European Commission has recently approved a €12 million fund for Danish concerts and festivals. We ask the Canadian Government to introduce similar measures to support our live events to ensure businesses do not close outright, and that we can remain competitive on an international level.

2. Assistance for self-employed workers and small business

A huge number of self-employed workers and small businesses (artists, musicians and industry) are a part of the live music industry. This spring was projected to be an especially good season, with a large amount of activity taking place. They are exceptionally vulnerable.

3. Short-term work benefits

Ensure that live music workers, be they self-employed or otherwise, can quickly and easily access benefits such as EI.

4. Tax Relief

That any tax relief efforts being extended to other business sectors include music festivals, concert producers, agents and others working in the live music industry. (e.g. HST, payroll taxes)

5. Insurance

We ask the government to hold the insurance industry accountable, to insist they are following proper protocol by paying out on claims where legally applicable.

6. Eligibility for Grants and Loans

Canadian live music companies and organizations should be eligible for any grant/loan program being offered, regardless of "perceived risk".

If we lose our concert industry, we lose the heart and soul of who we are as a country. We simply cannot allow that to happen. For our artists, and for each other.

We also want you to know we are here for you too – to consult, share information and respond to efforts as needed. Please consider the live music industry a willing and supportive partner, anxious to help us all achieve common goals in the face of such uncertainty.

We know you are doing all you can to support industries like ours. We thank you for giving these recommendations your urgent attention. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 613.769.5559 or ebenjamin@canadianlivemusic.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin Benjamin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot above the 'i' in Benjamin.

Ms. Erin Benjamin

President & CEO

Canadian Live Music Association