



**SASKO MUSIC**

**STRATEGIC PLAN  
2008/2009**



# PREAMBLE

**In early 2007 SaskMusic** proposed the “capture the spotlight” initiative, which outlined what we felt was needed to move the Saskatchewan music industry forward. This proposal included the development of a Market Access Strategy, a live performance tax credit, the development of a Music Industry Post Secondary Training program, the creation of a venture capital fund, and increased funding for SaskMusic to expand our much needed programs.

In 2007 SaskMusic was consulted as part of the Music Industry Review and we supported the final report, which concluded the music industry of Saskatchewan was underfunded, lacked a strategic approach and was disconnected within itself. One voice was needed to represent the entire industry and the recommendation was that SaskMusic was best positioned to be that voice. Following the release of the report the government announced increased funding to SaskMusic and the Saskatchewan Arts Board which would now be the funding agency for the cultural industry sector and would manage the investment portfolio created to support business growth across the cultural industries.

Following this announcement, SaskMusic swung into high gear and launched a program and organizational development phase that resulted in:

- o The drafting of a communications strategy that focused not just on our member and industry base but our key stakeholders and the public.
- o The development of an extensive market access and development plan to help position Saskatchewan music industry professionals in the global marketplace;
- o The hiring of more staff;
- o The opening of a second office in Saskatoon;
- o The writing of a business plan for the Music Industry Certificate Program (developed in partnership with the U of S CCDE Unit);
- o Commissioning an Economic Impact study to establish the size of our current industry and set the benchmarks from which we could chart our success.

In the fall of 2007 there was a provincial election and the new government’s budget did not support the funding increases to SaskMusic and the Arts Board in 2008. Over the next several months the new department of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport created the Creative Industry Growth and Sustainability Program with the purpose of facilitating the commercial development of the creative industries and making sure they are ready for growth. It’s objective is to support the creation, production, promotion and sales of quality cultural product with outcomes being greater financial success and market opportunities within the sectors, increased capacity to compete locally, nationally and internationally, the creation of high quality products with commercial viability, increased pride in Saskatchewan cultural product, and greater appreciation, partnerships and collaborations between the industries, the private sector, tourism and the cultural sector as a whole.





# INTRODUCTION

In August 2008, following the creation of the Creative Industries Growth and Development program, our move from lottery funding to tax-based funding and the funding reduction of March 2008, the Board of Directors was tasked with creating new strategic directions and a forward plan for SaskMusic. Our larger growth and development plans were no longer fundable, but the board felt that going backwards or maintaining the status quo was not an option, and therefore committed to moving forward in some capacity regardless of the loss of funding. We had to establish priorities within our capabilities.

The original purpose (as outlined in our bylaws) of the organization was re-visited, our key statements were re-worked and five key strategic areas of activity were identified.

## THE CORE PURPOSES OF THIS ORGANIZATION AS PER THE BYLAWS ARE:

- a) To assist in the development and promotion of Saskatchewan musical artists and the industry on a provincial, national and international level.
- b) To increase recognition of the Industry as a vital element of the economy and cultural identity of the Province of Saskatchewan.

## OUR KEY STATEMENTS INCLUDE:

### VISION:

- We envision a future where our music industry is vigorously healthy; progressive; and musically and culturally diverse
- where its value and quality is acknowledged with pride at home, and with acclaim beyond our borders;
- And where all benefit from the gifts of Saskatchewan-made music.

### MISSION:

SaskMusic stimulates growth and development in the Saskatchewan music industry through leadership, promotion, training, advocacy and partnership.

### WE BELIEVE IN...

- fair and equitable compensation for music industry workers;
- the role of music as an integral part of Saskatchewan's cultural identity;
- the capacity of our industry to succeed on a global scale;
- the capacity and potential of the music industry's contribution to the province's economic development agenda;
- the enormous creative talent of our industry.

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IDENTIFIED FIVE KEY AREAS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE.

### THEY INCLUDE:

- Education, Professional Development and Training
- Communications, Public Relations and Marketing
- Partnership Development and Management
- Organizational Development and Management
- Funding Development and Management

They identified Communications and Partnerships as a high priority for the current year with Education a medium priority and Organizational and Funding development in maintenance status.

#### THE KEY RESULTS IN THESE AREAS ARE:

- **Communications, Public Relations and Marketing:** to ensure that the promotion of the Saskatchewan music industry is effective in raising awareness of the talent and capacity of our industry locally, nationally and internationally.
- **Partnership Development and Management:** to ensure that current partnerships and key relationships remain strong and that we actively strive to forge new and meaningful partnerships/relationships within the cultural sector as well as with the private sector and tourism.
- **Education, Professional Development and Training:** to ensure that Saskatchewan artists and music industry professionals have access to the tools and knowledge needed to assist them in succeeding in their career or business development.
- **Organizational Development and Management:** to ensure that the infrastructure and mechanisms for strong and focused organizational growth are in place.
- **Funding Development and Management:** to ensure that the organization actively seeks to establish and secure the funding needed to realize the goals of the organization in sector development.

## OPERATIONAL PLANS FOR 2008/09

The following programs and services are proposed to fulfill the goals within the strategic pillars:

### COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING

A communications strategy based on our strategic goals and objectives has been completed. It focuses on our need to more broadly and more deeply raise awareness and understanding of our industry and our wealth of talent.

#### THE BIG PICTURE

Communications in general was deemed a high priority strategic pillar at the Board retreat, and was prioritized in the top third of the prioritization survey.

Considering our new role as the 'voice of the industry' (i.e. speaking much more to the public than we have in the past), and the shifting financial sands under which we currently labour, the need for a significant shift in what and how we communicate to both our members and the public is obvious.

We need to communicate more effectively – in terms of all the expectations of our stakeholders – funders, members, the broader industry, our partners and the public. To do this, we must be accountable – meaning, we must set measurable goals in a communications plan, and implement ongoing evaluative tools to ensure that we are meeting those expectations.

Though we have historically done the best job we can with limited staff and dollars, we now need to evolve to a more sophisticated approach – a strategic communications plan. This plan (a first for our organization) will outline not only what we are trying to achieve with our communications activity, but also how we will achieve it, and how we will benchmark and measure its success against those goals. (A quick note: In the recent communications Best Practice Review conducted by Paschall Arts, we learned that we're not the only Music Industry Associations operating without a formal communications plan – in fact, many of our colleagues have not yet developed this critical strategic foundation – so with this activity, Sask-Music has another opportunity to show industry leadership in terms of organizational development and operations.)



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEW PLAN

## WEBSITE

The new website will be the keystone of this shift. The development of web-based technologies has transformed the way the music business operates. We need to embrace these changes and get into the web 2.0 world. There are many music-based web sites that have shown us the potential (and rising expectations) of the public in terms of learning about, accessing and supporting musicians. These include the music section of MySpace, ReverbNation, CDBaby.com, and literally hundreds of digital distributors, radio stations, and others – not to mention artists themselves, who are using these technologies to promote their music; develop and promote an identity; sell and transport their music to others in the industry; create new revenue streams through online merchandise sales; collaborate in the creation of music; and build active and engaged fanbases on a global, not local, basis. We need to use the best of these examples in the creation of our new site.

Our new website will be our primary communications and data maintenance tool. The face of the website itself will have a much more public-friendly look and function with lots of news and information on the Saskatchewan music scene. We will feature articles on local artists/bands, local venues, and local industry. We will showcase new releases and have value-added features like a radio station, downloads of the week, blogs, and perhaps podcasts, aimed primarily at the potential Saskatchewan music fan or the industry professional shopping for talent. The website will continue to house the Saskatchewan Music Directory and our pan-industry promotions will promote the site as the source for all things “Saskatchewan Music.”

The website will continue to house all the important information that members are looking for including industry articles and how to guides, SaskMusic program information and applications, and members’ news and postings, all within a secure members-only section. One thought is to launch our first official resource centre online with member access to an online version of our face-to-face career consultation program, which would accommodate those members unable to travel to Saskatoon or Regina.

## PRINT & EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Other communications vehicles such as The Session and our current bi-monthly e-release and monthly national e-release will be streamlined and focused on this new Saskatchewan music news format and used primarily to push and pull readers to the website. The focus of all these communications will be to tell our “Saskatchewan Music” stories and share our successes as broadly as we can.

We have identified that increased awareness of our industry and our talent is needed. Our new website will need significant promotion and marketing to pull new audiences to the site in order for it to be successful, especially in the launch and critical first year of its new life. That, coupled with the need to extend significant promotion of members to the broader public (one of the purposes of our existence according to our Bylaws), calls for a creative, multi-media public service campaign.

## PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The goals of this campaign will be to promote members; pull folks to the web site; build awareness and understanding of the industry by using data from the Economic Impact Study to be released early in 2009; and contain a ‘call to action’ by the public in terms of a contest competition, or other measurable ways to engage the public in support of our industry.

This campaign will be 6 months to 1 year in duration, and will create content that is used and cross-marketed in radio, television, print, on our web site, and in all our own print communications. It will involve media sponsorship, and have the added benefit of beginning to educate the media on the “new” SaskMusic as a source for news and story ideas from and about the music industry.

## INDUSTRY PROMOTIONS

Marketing of our industry will extend to include pan-industry promotions and hosted events at major music industry events as outlined in the Sector Development plan and the Market Development and Showcase/Travel Support programs. These may include sponsored showcases, event-specific promotions, targeted music distribution via comp CDs etc. or hosted networking events.

In 2008/09 (given our limited budget) this will take the form of a CCMA download card, sponsored Ontario Council of Folk Festivals showcase, and the distribution of the 2008 compilation “In Tune” CD to WCMA delegates; and some targeted promotional support for bands showcasing at SXSW, CMW, NXNE and other recognized industry events throughout the remainder of the year. Specifics yet to be determined pending budget.



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

It is clear that another area of communications that must be more strategic is our relationship building and communication with government and related organizations. We plan to continue our current discussions with the Saskatchewan Arts Board on how best to move our sector forward, how best to position our concerns for increased support from government and the private sector and how best to utilize our current funding through program harmonization.

## PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

Declared a high priority by the board at the strategic planning retreat, the staff and board will continue to build on the existing relationships and partnerships but will proactively seek out new opportunities. These would include the new partnership between the U of R and SaskMusic with the Flatland Scratch Series, which is delivering a variety of workshops and presentations this fall and in the New Year. It would also possibly include a partnership with CBC to present (and record for re-broadcast) a concert featuring new and emerging artists from Saskatoon.

Partnership development will also include the investigation of potential partnerships with local radio, the development of a targeted sponsorship program which looks to the public sector to support the growth of existing programs (Export Strategy) or development of new programs (Aboriginal Music Program).

These new relationships will be developed through various networking methods, including face-to-face meetings, industry sector summits and round table discussions with focus groups.

This is a key area because of its potential to create new revenue streams, thereby reducing some of our dependency on government, and to open new opportunities through stronger partner relationships. The Communications Plan contains a section on beginning to define our "sponsorable" products; identify key partner and sponsor potential; build the necessary documentation; and make the pitches to begin these discussions. This may in the short term, center on the sponsorship of the proposed Public Awareness Campaign, but will extend (especially in Year 2-3) to other activities and programs.

## EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING:

Education, PD and Training was declared a medium priority pillar while Business Training and PD ranked most important to members, followed by the Grant Program. We propose to maintain many of these existing programs as close to current levels as possible, especially the Grant Program and the business workshop series.

In addition, the Market Development and Showcase Support programs proposed in the Sector Development Plan, were ranked high as important to develop so we will be developing and launching this program as outlined in the sector development plan with some modifications required by budget levels.

There will be some pan-industry promotion as outlined in the Communications and Marketing Section, there will be at least one sponsored showcase event (2008 OCFE) and SaskMusic will continue to have a presence (by attending and networking) at major industry events (pending budget). This year that will include CCMA, OCFE, WCMA and possibly CMW or NXNE, depending on the number of Saskatchewan artists showcasing at these events.

SaskMusic feels that given the momentum created in 2007 and the increase in invitations our artists are receiving to showcase at major events, it is most important that a Showcase/Travel Support program also be created. This year, that would include the WCMA Bursary program and a small general travel grant budget. This program would have a separate application process from the regular grant program and would require (in the case of showcase support) that applicants also access other funding available in support of these activities, such as FACTOR and possibly the Saskatchewan Arts Board or the Canada Council.

In addition to the launch of this program, SaskMusic will enlarge the Career Tracks program by engaging several local industry professionals in both Saskatoon and Regina to be available for one on one consultation with members. This would provide members with a wider selection of expertise and further engage our professional community with the organization. We would build this program slowly (one new consultant a month) and introduce each new addition with a featured profile on the website and an introductory workshop to showcase their area of expertise.

Further to these two additions to current programming we continue to work with the UofS on the development of our Music Industry Certificate Program and have recently decided to partner on a pilot Music Business Course in the spring of 2009. This is a cost-recovery enterprise, and we will be counted on to develop the basic course outline and source the potential instructors to deliver the content.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT**

This strategic pillar was given “maintenance” status by the board for 2008/09 as much has been accomplished over the past few years in this area. The board recognizes that our new funding structure will present new processes related to reporting and accounting on our activities. Once we know what this will entail, we will make the necessary adjustments to our procedures and processes.

## **FUNDING DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT**

Declared a medium priority at the planning retreat, we will continue down our current path regarding securing increased provincial funding as a client of the Arts Board and the new CIGS program. Once we know what the potential is for growth within that structure we will better be able to assess our position. In the meantime, we will begin looking to the private sector (through a sponsorship campaign) and to other government programs or agencies (grants) to increase our current budget.

## **CONCLUSION:**

These plans address the strategic pillars identified and prioritized by the SaskMusic Board of Directors in August 2008 and are harmonized with our current funding levels. As increased funding is secured a review of the current and proposed programs will be reviewed and adjustments made. The Board of Directors approved these plans and the 2008/09 budget at their last board meeting in November 2008, and these were presented to the membership at the November 2008 AGM.







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