



Mr. Robert A. Morin
Secretary General
Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission
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27th Annual NCRC - June 2008
hosted by CJAM FM Windsor

Re: Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2008-16
Call for comments on the definition of emerging Canadian artists on
commercial radio

Dear Mr. Morin,

1. The National Campus and Community Radio Association/
l'Association Nationale des Radios Étudiantes et
Communautaires is a national not-for-profit association of
volunteer-based, non-profit, community-oriented radio
broadcasters. We have 53 member stations in urban and rural
locations across Canada.
2. We thank the Commission and CRTC staff for considering
our comments on the definition of emerging Canadian artists
on commercial radio, Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2008
– 16.
3. We acknowledge the August 2007 report by Laurence Dunbar
and Christian Leblanc, which states that campus and
community (“c/c”) radio broadcasters should be given a voice
in determining and defining “emerging artists” with the goal
of strengthening Canadian musical culture.
4. As community-based broadcasters, we often provide the first
opportunity for new and local artists to enjoy broad
listenership. We are interested in this matter because it serves
all broadcasting sectors and communities to have a vibrant
and diverse musical culture in Canada.
5. We believe that artists who enjoy wide exposure in the c/c
radio sector should have greater opportunity for airplay in the
commercial radio sector.

National Campus and Community Radio Association
L'Association nationale des radios étudiantes et communautaires

6. In the CRTC research report entitled *Emerging Canadian Artists on Commercial Radio*, all nine definitions of “emerging artist” relied upon artists charting within the top 100 of major industry charts. We submit that when an artist is charting within the top 100 of major industry charts, they have already “emerged” as an artist.
7. Any definition of “emerging artist” which allows an artist to be considered “emerging” if they are appearing on commercial charts is not in the interests of the broad pool of artists in Canada, nor the listening public. We question how regulating airplay of “emerging artists” defined in this way would necessarily enhance or broaden the variety of new and truly emerging artists on commercial radio.
8. Such a definition fails to acknowledge that many artists may have been “emerging” for years, even decades, before they achieve official “emerging artist” status.
9. This definition also fails to acknowledge that commercial success is not necessarily the desired goal of many artists, who may have reached great heights of musical talent and artistry while still being considered essentially a “non-artist” under this definition.
10. We suggest that a true emerging artist is an artist who is not yet widely known by the public, nor widely promoted or discussed in mass media. At this stage, an artist works within new and emerging musical genres, or adds new dimensions of technique and expression to existing musical forms, contributing to the development of musical talent and culture. Therefore, an emerging artist may have made a significant contribution without achieving recognition on any chart.
11. We recognize that commercial radio requires a more easily measurable definition in order to ascertain the extent of their airplay commitments, so we would like to draw the Commission’s attention to the charts published by the NCRA’s *!earshot* Magazine, based on weekly consolidated charts from 32 campus and community radio stations. The *!earshot* charts have been active for more than a decade, and are a reliable measure of the broad appeal of many artists, especially Canadian ones. Many artists who receive airplay by c/c broadcasters consider appearing on one of the *!earshot* charts to be a sign of success. There is currently no formal recognition by the commercial radio industry for artists who achieve recognition in the c/c sector through these charts.
12. Through a variety of initiatives, NCRA member stations provide a concrete and systematic mechanism for integrating independent Canadian musicians into the national radio and larger cultural landscape. In addition to compiling charts and reporting to *!earshot*, stations in the sector help develop local independent and emerging artists by providing airtime, interacting with independent artists and music labels, and providing promotion and coverage of independent recordings, local concerts and national tours. Our stations play a substantial role in the development of new and emerging Canadian talent, and we believe this should be taken into account in formulating a definition of “emerging artist.”

13. We therefore recommend that the Commission consider artists who have appeared on the *!earshot* charts for inclusion in the definition of “emerging artist” for commercial radio purposes, in order to support these artists and diversify the pool from which emerging artists are selected for commercial radio airplay.
14. We believe it is culturally and economically prudent to create new opportunities for artists who chart in the c/c radio sector. These artists have been broadly appreciated in the not-for-profit broadcasting environment, where airplay depends on a wide range of volunteer programmers across the country choosing these artists of their own accord. Their airplay is also influenced by listener requests in markets across the country, and by positive reviews in Canadian music magazines, online forums and so forth. For these reasons, the amount of airplay an artist receives in our sector is truly a reflection of what listeners enjoy and appreciate. These artists, once they have appeared on the *!earshot* charts, have been “tested and proven” across the country, thereby reducing the financial risk undertaken by commercial radio in providing airplay.
15. Further, these artists have often developed their distinct “sound” based on particular regional music environments. Giving these artists opportunities for commercial airplay in Canada will enhance the range of “Canadian” sounds to which the listening public is exposed. The commercial music industry could harness and benefit from the breadth of amazing and diverse Canadian talent emanating from the c/c sector, which would make Canada a leader, not a follower, in the development of musical trends.
16. The opportunity for commercial airplay for some of the artists who excel in our sector will provide more Canadian artists with the financial support necessary to develop their talents. These artists may be more likely to earn a living from making music, so they will not be reliant on subsistence work which distracts them from their craft. While not all artists focus on earning revenue from their art or define success based on commercial radio airplay, we support enhancing opportunities for artists from our sector who wish to pursue commercial success.
17. We also acknowledge that commercial radio attracts a larger listening audience than c/c radio, and we therefore support artists who have achieved success in our sector who wish to obtain greater exposure through increased opportunities for commercial radio airplay.
18. In this sense, the c/c radio sector can be seen as an intermediary between emerging artists and the commercial sector.
19. As mentioned above, the NCRA recommends that the definition of “emerging artist” include artists who have appeared on the *!earshot* charts. This information is easily available through the *!earshot* website at www.earshot-online.com and is published in the Canadian music weekly, *Exclaim!* Magazine. We would be pleased to consult with the commercial radio industry or the CRTC regarding the most efficient means of making the charts available for this purpose.

20. The nature of c/c radio charts and the continuous influx of truly new, innovative and emerging artists means that, if such a definition was adopted, commercial radio would have a constantly refreshed roster of emerging artists from various genres from which to chose.
21. Finally, the NCRA would like to take this opportunity to again stress the importance of ensuring that a licence and protected frequency are reserved or prioritized in every market in Canada where there is currently either no c/c radio station or one with unprotected status. The non-profit structure of our stations provides an excellent opportunity for truly emerging artists who want radio airplay to get airplay and larger audiences. The best place for them to start is within their own communities.

Respectfully,



Joanne Penhale
Director, Membership and Policy Portfolio
National Campus and Community Radio Association

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