

Following is the text of a letter that was sent by Amy Sky, Marc Jordan and Marie Denise Pelletier to all Members of Parliament and the Senate on March 18, 2009.

Support for Canada's artists became a front-burner issue in 2008. Unfortunately, we're still waiting for fair compensation for our work. We are hopeful that 2009 is the year that this happens.

Despite the political heat that was generated around arts-related issues in last fall's federal election campaign - fanned in large part by the elimination of federal grants and programs to promote Canadian culture - we're still waiting for real reforms to the copyright legislation which impacts tremendously on our livelihood.

While grants and support programs are extremely important to artists, especially in the early stages of building a career, they are only one part of the bigger picture when it comes to living - and, more to the point, *making* a living - as an artist in this country.

We are singers, songwriters and recording artists. Like so many other Canadians who make and market something, we make our living from the sale and use of what we create. Some people make furniture, or footwear, or even wireless hand-held communication devices. We make music.

Just like the clever folks who created Birkenstocks or the Blackberry, Canada's songwriters and recording artists are proud of the music they create. It has value, in both the artistic and monetary senses of the word. But unlike the creators of other things, artists don't enjoy the same kind of safeguards to ensure they are fairly compensated when their work is copied and used.

When the last election was called, legislation regarding Canada's copyright legislation died on the order paper. Modernizing the Copyright Act remains an unresolved issue.

The Copyright Act is important legislation for Canada's songwriters, recording artists and other rights holders because it sets the rules around the copying and use of music, and how the artists who create it are paid for their work.

The last time the legislation was updated was in 1997. Some significant changes were made at that time, especially with respect to private copying of music.

Did you ever make mix tapes of favourite songs? Prior to 1997, that was against the law - even though every stereo system was designed to do it. But the '97 reforms addressed that issue in two ways: first, it permitted home taping or otherwise making copies of music for private use. And second, it entrenched in law the fact that private copies have a tangible value - and it provided compensation for the creators of the music through the Private Copying Levy. The levy was applied to blank media like audio cassettes, CD-R's and Mini-Discs, which were the popular technologies of the day used to copy music.

Since then, more than \$150 million has been paid to songwriters, composers, recording artists and other rights holders for the copying of their music. This money has been paid to over 97,000 rights holders, most of whom would not be able to continue their careers without this revenue. This isn't money from government, but an important source of earned income for musicians - one of the ways they can make a living from the music they create.

Today, the technology is dramatically different. Mp3 players like the iPod are the new standard for making and playing copies of music. One of the problems with the most recent proposed amendments to the Copyright Act was that it did not treat these devices the same as CD-Rs and the other now largely outdated technologies covered by the 1997 legislation.

If Canada's songwriters and recording artists are going to be able to make a living from the music they create, they need copyright legislation which is designed to reflect the technologies people are using now, and which is also flexible enough to accommodate future changes. Measures to properly protect artists' work, and to ensure that they receive fair compensation for the copying and use of their music, make it possible for them to earn a living. Without the needed changes, many Canadian songwriters and artists won't be able to afford to continue to create music at all.

Canada's MPs are focused – and rightly so - on finding ways to support various sectors of our economy, with the goal of ensuring that they remain viable amid the global economic turbulence. Modernizing Canada's Copyright Act so that Canada's songwriters and recording artists can continue to earn a living from the use of their music is essential for our sector of the economy.

The government seems to understand this, as evidenced by this quote from November's Speech from the Throne: "Cultural creativity and innovation are vital not only to a lively Canadian cultural life, but also to Canada's economic future."

We're not asking for a multi-billion dollar bailout. We're just asking for copyright legislation that will let us continue to have our livelihoods amid the technological realities of the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Amy Sky

Marc Jordan

Marie Denise Pelletier

Enclosure

MARC JORDAN

Marc Jordan is a Toronto born songwriter, singer, guitarist and producer. Marc has enjoyed a successful career as both a pop songwriter and a recording artist. His songs have been recorded by such popular US and British artists as Cher, Chicago, Joe Cocker, Kansas, Manhattan Transfer, Bette Midler, Juice Newton, Diana Ross and Rod Stewart. His 'Rhythm of My Heart', written with John Capek (one of several Jordan collaborators), was a major international hit in 1992 for Stewart. Canadians who have recorded Jordan songs include [Susan Aglukark](#), [Holly Cole](#), [Jeff Healey](#) and [Amanda Marshall](#). Marc won a [Juno award](#) in 1994 as producer of Reckless Valentine, and the first Canadian Smooth Jazz award for male vocalist in 2005.

MARIE DENISE PELLETIER

Marie Denise Pelletier has been enchanting audiences for the past 20 years. Placing first at the Festival de la chanson de Granby in 1982, she became known throughout Québec thanks to her role as Stella Spotlight in the rock opera Starmania. In 1993 she won the Grand Prix FRANCOVISION in Paris with the song "Inventer la terre". Over the years, Marie Denise has recorded ten albums, including several hit songs such as "Tous les cris", "les S.O.S." and "Pour une histoire d'un soir". In 1994 she won the Félix award for "Best Pop Album of the Year" for her album Entre la Tête et le cœur. To date, Marie Denise Pelletier has sung on four continents, in such places as Vietnam, Corsica, West Africa and South America.

AMY SKY

Singer songwriter Amy Sky is a Toronto native, who burst into the national limelight in 1996, with her debut recording COOL RAIN. This and her subsequent four CDs, launched a string of radio hits that make Amy one of the most familiar voices on radio today.

Amy writes for herself and for dozens of other international recording stars such as Olivia Newton John, Anne Murray and Reba McEntire. As both writer and performer, Amy has been nominated for Juno, SOCAN, East Coast, West Coast and Canadian Independent Music awards. The themes of family, spirituality, and relationships, highlight Amy's interest in and commitment to personal growth.

Amy's passion for communication has led her to act as spokesperson for causes close to her heart. In addition to her role as host of Rogers TV parenting series THE BABY HOUR, Amy has spoken out extensively on her own experience with post partum depression. In 2006 she was awarded the CAMH Courage to Come Back award for her commitment to helping remove the stigma from mental health issues.

Amy is also committed to artists' rights. She has testified in Ottawa on behalf of songwriters and copyright owners, and was awarded the first ever CRIA Applause award, for her "passionate and unwavering commitment to artists' rights".