

BIG JOHN AND THE NIGHT TRIPPERS

THE LIBRETTO

2025_1

**Big John
Morris**



Inside this Issue:

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NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING APRIL 28

Official Journal of the Hamilton Musicians' Guild



Trade, Tariffs, and Traveling to the US for a Gig

by Allistair Elliott, AFM Vice President from Canada

The trade relationship between the US and Canada is the largest in the world. According to statistics on Wikipedia, the goods and services traded between our two countries totalled \$923 billion in 2023. US exports were \$441 billion, while imports were \$482 billion, for a US \$41 billion trade deficit with Canada. Canada historically held a trade deficit with the US every year since 1985 in net trade of goods, excluding services. The trade across the Ambassador Bridge, between Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, Michigan, alone is equal to all trade between the US and Japan. Energy trade is the largest component of this cross-border commerce. Canada has the third largest oil reserves (after Saudi Arabia and Venezuela). The US has historically been Canada's only foreign market for natural gas, oil, and hydro. Agriculture (specifically dairy products) has been a source of tension in recent years, as is the importation of less costly prescription drugs from Canada to the US. Due to the Canadian government's price

controls, the cost of prescription drugs can be a fraction of the price paid by consumers in the US, where the market is unregulated. Over the years, other commodities, such as lumber, have been the subject of trade disputes in this chess game.

What does this have to do with our industry? Well, buried way down in the list of trade issues are media and culture. While generally low on both governments' priority lists, these are of high interest to our industry.

For Canadian musicians, travel to the US for work requires a visa for all types of musical engagements. Expanding their careers into this larger market is a goal for many Canadian musicians. They currently face many challenges even after taking all the right steps to obtain a visa.

Since June 2024, the process to apply requires more and more lead time due to longer processing times and administrative changes at US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The delays seem to occur randomly in about 50% of the applications with no way to predict which ones will be delayed.

The cost also continues to increase because growing backlogs and delays require the Premium Processing fee to be paid more frequently. AFM lobby efforts, both solo and with a committee of other US industry representatives and immigration attorneys, worked hard to prevent costs from increasing astronomically. (From \$460-\$510 for a P-2 visa, versus USCIS proposed \$1,615, when new fee rules were implemented in April 2024.) Although costs are burdensome for all our members working in the US, this is a huge issue among independent, touring freelance musicians in Canada. And when they do not receive their visas in a timely manner, they can see entire tours crumble.

With the new administration in power in Washington, DC, and the threat of higher tariffs looming, governments on both sides of the border are posturing, puffing out their chests with statements that threaten this, that, and the other.

We are two countries, but we are one union. AFM staff continues to work together on both sides of the border to represent all members. Our P-2 visa staff work tirelessly

to process visa applications, while pivoting to face processing hurdles USCIS throws in the way. We understand that this is a stressful time for members awaiting information on their visa status. Rest assured that our staff continue to work in a timely and efficient manner on their behalf.

AFM Director of Government Affairs Ben Kessler and Executive Director AFM Canadian Office Liana White are the key point persons for the P-2 visa process, in respect to both lobbying and administrative work.

At the AFM, we are collectively holding our breath on how trade will be affected between the US and Canada as the plans of the new US administration unfold. We will continue to work together as the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada to facilitate our Canadian musicians traveling to the US to work.

Throughout history, as governments change and politics interfere with this critical piece of our world, we adjust, pivot, and endeavor to work together to do our best to make the lives of professional musicians better.

Commerce, tarifs et déplacements aux États-Unis pour travailler

par Allistair Elliott, vice-président de l'AFM pour le Canada

Les échanges commerciaux entre les États-Unis et le Canada constituent le plus important marché international au monde. Selon les statistiques de Wikipédia, les biens et services échangés entre nos deux pays se sont chiffrés à 923 milliards de dollars en 2023. Les États-Unis ont exporté pour 441 milliards et importé pour 482 milliards de dollars, les laissant avec un déficit commercial de 41 milliards avec le Canada.

Historiquement, le Canada a un déficit commercial avec les États-Unis chaque année depuis 1985 en échange net de biens, excluant les services. Les biens qui traversent le pont Ambassador entre Windsor, en Ontario, et Détroit, au Michigan, équivalent à eux seuls à tout le commerce entre les États-Unis et le Japon.

C'est l'énergie qui occupe la plus grande part de ce commerce transfrontalier, le Canada détenant les troisièmes plus importantes réserves de pétrole au monde (après l'Arabie Saoudite et le Venezuela). Les États-Unis ont toujours été le seul marché étranger pour le gaz naturel, le pétrole et l'énergie hydroélectrique du Canada. L'agriculture,

particulièrement les produits laitiers, a été une source de tensions dans les dernières années, tout comme l'importation de médicaments d'ordonnance, moins coûteux au Canada qu'aux États-Unis. En effet, en raison du contrôle des prix exercé par le gouvernement du Canada, les médicaments coûtent parfois une fraction du prix que paient les consommateurs aux États-Unis, où le marché n'est soumis à aucune régulation. Au fil des ans, d'autres biens tels que le bois d'œuvre ont fait l'objet de disputes commerciales dans ce jeu d'échecs.

En quoi cela concerne-t-il notre industrie? Eh bien, vers la fin d'une longue liste d'enjeux commerciaux se trouvent les médias et la culture. Bien qu'ils occupent le bas de l'échelle des priorités des deux gouvernements, ils sont très importants pour notre industrie.

Les musiciens canadiens qui voyagent aux États-Unis pour y travailler doivent obtenir un permis, quel que soit le type de leur engagement musical. Étendre sa carrière dans cet important marché intéresse beaucoup de musiciens canadiens, mais ils font actuellement face à de nombreux défis,

même après avoir fait tout ce qu'il faut pour obtenir un permis.

Depuis juin 2024, les demandes doivent se faire de plus en plus à l'avance en raison de délais de traitement plus longs et de changements administratifs aux USCIS, les services de citoyenneté et d'immigration des États-Unis. Les très longs délais semblent se produire au hasard dans environ 50 pour cent des cas, sans qu'il soit possible de prévoir quelles demandes seront touchées.

Les coûts continuent d'augmenter aussi parce que l'accumulation des demandes et les délais obligent plus souvent les membres à recourir au traitement Premium. L'AFM, par des initiatives de lobbying en son propre nom et comme membre d'un comité réunissant d'autres représentants américains de l'industrie ainsi que des avocats en matière d'immigration, a travaillé très fort pour éviter que les frais n'augmentent de manière astronomique (de 460 \$ - 510 \$ pour un permis P-2 à 1615 \$ comme proposé par les USCIS au moment de la mise en œuvre des nouvelles règles, en avril 2024.) Bien que ces frais soient lourds à assumer pour tous nos membres qui travaillent aux États-Unis,

ils constituent un enjeu particulièrement difficile pour les musiciens de tournée qui sont des travailleurs autonomes indépendants au Canada. Lorsqu'ils ne reçoivent pas leur permis en temps opportun, il arrive que toute une tournée s'effondre.

Avec la nouvelle administration en place à Washington et la menace de tarifs plus élevés à l'horizon, les gouvernements des deux côtés de la frontière jouent de posture, bombant le torse et menaçant de faire ceci ou cela.

Nous sommes deux pays, mais un seul syndicat. Nous travaillons ensemble des deux côtés de la frontière pour représenter tous nos membres. Notre personnel dédié aux permis P-2 continue de travailler sans relâche pour traiter les demandes et composer avec les obstacles que leur lancent à tout moment les USCIS. Nous comprenons que c'est une période stressante pour nos membres qui attendent de savoir où en est leur demande de permis. Soyez assurés que notre personnel travaille efficacement et en temps voulu en votre nom.



January 13, 2025
Ottawa, Ontario

The Canadian Conference of Musicians' is proud to announce an agreement with ARTISTI!

ARTISTI is the Canadian licensing body that has been managing the collection and managing of neighbouring rights for musicians and artists in Quebec since 1997.

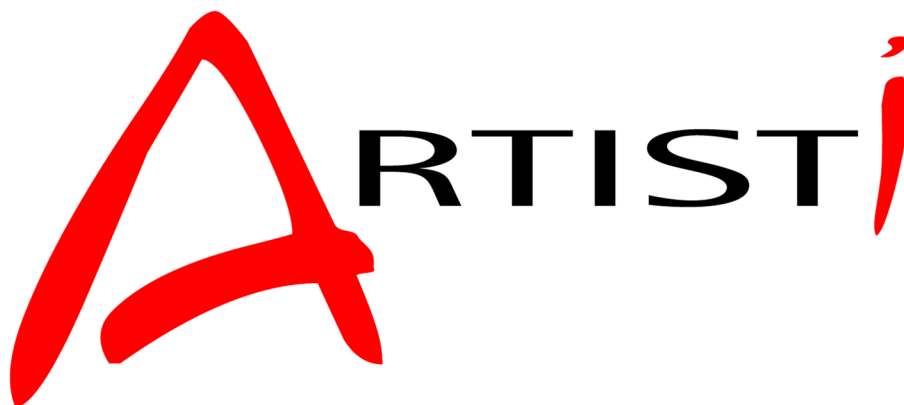
Upon the winding down of business by our former partner, MROC, ARTISTI has welcomed the vast majority of former MROC members and has approached the Canadian Conference to form an agreement similar to the one we had with MROC.

After productive negotiations we are delighted to announce that talks were successfully concluded in late December 2024.

This achievement was possible because of the positive relationship among all the parties involved.

Canadian Locals will direct all CFM members, to join forces with ARTISTI to ensure that their rights and royalties are protected and efficiently managed while enjoying personalized support and exclusive resources.

All HMG members are encouraged to sign up at <https://www.Artisti.ca/en/>



WE BE JAMMIN'

**CALLING ALL HMG MEMBERS TO A JAM SESSION
APRIL 28 AT 7:00 pm**

**WE ARE HAVING AN ACOUSTIC JAM SESSION
DURING OUR NEXT GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING**

**BRING YOUR GUITARS, BANJOS,
CAHONS, SAXES, FIDDLES
AND ANY OTHER INSTRUMENT
—AS LONG AS IT IS ACOUSTIC**

SORRY—NO DRUM SETS—NO ELECTRONICS!

PLUS:

**THERE WILL BE THREE (3) \$ 25 DOOR PRIZES
\$ 25 GIFT CERTIFICATES AT PICKS 'N STICKS!**

**GENERAL MEMBER MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2025**

**COACH & LANTERN
ANCASTER**

STARTS AT 7:00

Welcome to the Newest HMG Executive Board Member— Haley Marie

MUSICIAN, PLAYWRIGHT, STORYTELLER

Haley Marie is a Yale-educated musician with three sold-out performances at Carnegie Hall. She is a trained classical flutist and pop pianist who is fascinated by that which makes us human.



A storyteller who takes audiences behind the scenes to answer one question: what could've inspired these artists so much that they were driven to write music that seems to have made them immortal?

Haley Marie's passion has always been learning how to break the rules in her own meticulous way.

The little girl who initially refused classical piano lessons became the young woman roaming the halls of both McGill University and the Yale University School of Music.

She is now obsessed with telling audiences about the day-to-day lives of musical masterminds: uncovering hidden histories of personal turmoil, quirky relationships, emotional struggles, tumultuous friendships and inspiration from the most unexpected places.

Her curiosity led to the creation of the **Men Behind the Music** series.

Countless hours are spent pouring over projections, storytelling and music to create these live musical documentaries. Analyzing everything from Bach to the Beatles, Haley Marie reveals the seemingly ordinary moments of artists' lives that drove them to become extraordinary.

Haley Marie, Touring Musician & Producer
M.Mus. Yale University
Artistic Director, Aurelia Productions
Examiner, Royal Conservatory of Music
<https://linktr.ee/haleymarieaureliaproductions>

Hamilton Musicians' Guild



Reg Denis
1st Vice Pres



Larry Feudo
President



Paul Panchezak
2nd Vice Pres



John Morris
Sergeant-At-Arms



Ryan McKenna
Director



Ron Palangio
Marshall



Lorelee McGuirl
Director



Haley Marie Donald
Director



Bruce Tournay
Director



Michael Bittle
Office Admin



Notice of Election of Officers—HMG Executive Board -2025 Election Year-



2025 is an Election Year for all Positions on the Hamilton Musicians' Guild Executive Board:

- **President**
- **First Vice-President**
- **Second Vice-President**
- **Sergeant-at-Arms**
- **Marshall**
- **Three (3) Directors**

NOTES (from the HMG Bylaws):

- 1) No member shall be eligible to be nominated for the office of President unless they have served on the Executive Board for a minimum of one (1) term.**
- 2) No member shall be eligible to be nominated for offices other than President unless they have been a member in good standing of the Guild for the preceding 12 months.**
- 3) The nomination of officers shall be held at the second General Meeting of each election year.**
- 4) No member, who is not present, shall be eligible for nomination unless he/she has given proper sanction to stand for office, in writing, prior to the meeting. No member may stand for more than one office.**
- 5) No member may nominate him/herself.**
- 6) Prior to the nominations, it shall be made known to members that, by virtue of election and/or appointment to the office of President and First Vice President, they shall also be delegates to conventions and conferences of the AFM as per Article IX, Section 1 of the Guild Bylaws. If the First Vice-President is not able to attend, the Second Vice-President shall take their place.**
- 7) The term of office for all officers shall be for a period of two (2) years commencing January 1st after the election.**
- 8) The election of officers shall take place at the last General Meeting of each election year.**

Hamilton Musicians' Guild

March 2025 President's Report



Larry Feudo
President

I'm happy to report that much like the weather, things here at the Local continue to improve with more members joining and the finances continue to trend upwards.

We've been holding monthly orientation meetings here at the office to acquaint our new members with all the services and benefits of membership. We've found that a lot of the attendees have had their eyes opened to all the possibilities that HMG membership provides. In fact, I'd recommend that all our members should attend a session if they can in order to get the full value of being a member.

Engaging with the Local is essential to having a strong union with a well-informed membership.

I recently wrapped up negotiations with Concerts in Care Ontario which provides music for senior citizens homes. This will offer a significant amount of jobs at good pay for singles, duos and trios.

They are a well-respected organization that brings music to seniors and has a research aspect in their work. We are happy to work together with them in this worthy cause.

This year we'll continue to work with the Downtown BIA and the Concession Street BIA. Joining us anew this year will be the Waterfront Trust, It's Your Festival and the Dundas Cactus Fest.

We've also worked with the Hamilton Public Library to present performances by Big John and the Nite Trippers for Black History Month, and new members Garnetta Cromwell and DaGroovmasters for International Women's Day; both gigs met with rave reviews from patrons and Library management.

Jazz in April will also return once again to various Hamilton Public Library locations for 14 performances featuring members from our Local.

These have all been funded through the Music Performance Trust Fund at 100%.

For all these MPTF gigs be sure to have your group listed in the Talent Directory of the Hamilton Musicians' Guild to be considered by the promoters.

I wish everyone a happy and productive spring and summer season.

Yours in solidarity,

Larry Feudo



NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING MONDAY APRIL 28

7:00 pm COACH AND LANTERN

Followed by an Acoustic Jam

Office Admin Report



I feel like 2025 was a really busy year, and it's still only the beginning of April!

I'm going to report on three things:

- (1) MPTF gigs;
- (2) Financial Statements; and
- (3) looking ahead for 2025.

(1) **MPTF gigs** – The MPTF funding year runs from May to April. So far this year, we have sponsored or co-sponsored 66 MPTF gigs; mostly in cooperation with the Hamilton Public Library and the BIAs for Downtown and Concession Street.

Every MPTF gig means money in the pocket for HMG members, and most gigs have 4 or 5 members. HMG members can get up to 3 gigs a year. What surprises me is the number of HMG members who haven't approached us about doing their 3 gigs.

Looking ahead for the rest of this MPTF year, we just sponsored a gig for Black History Month in February, another for International Women's Month in March, and have 15 gigs lined up for Jazz Appreciation Month in April. At the same time, we are sponsoring a raft of gigs for local charities, senior's residences, long-term care facilities, and other venues where the emphasis is on (1) getting gigs for HMG members and (2) presenting free, public concerts within the Hamilton, Burlington and Oakville regions. We are again sponsoring school concert tours through the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Financials – At the next General Meeting, I will be handing out an Income/Expense statement for 2024. Compared to 2023, our **TOTAL INCOME is up almost \$ 30,000**, Membership Dues are up over \$ 12,000 and MPTF Funding is up almost \$ 11,000—this is money that ends up in our members' pockets!

Our AFM Loan Payments decreased by \$ 3,000, thanks to Larry Feudo successfully getting our AFM loan annulled. Our Per Capita payments have increased slightly due to our increasing number of members, Our annual Work Dues payments to the CFM decreased by over \$ 4,000, since these were paid in error for many years. Cost cutting measures brought our telephone expenses down \$ 1,000, our MPTF payments to musicians increased by \$ 12,000, and Pension payments for HMG members increased by \$ 4,000!

As a result, Local 293's net worth is up over \$ 50,000—in just one year!.

I believe we are on a solid financial footing but there is still room for improvement in some areas, and I have begun tightening up procedures for receiving and filing MPTF and Pension contracts, and as your Office Administrator that is one area where I wish to continue improvements in 2025.

Looking ahead for 2025 - We continue our monthly **New Member Orientation Sessions** on the first Tuesday of each month. On the membership side of things, we currently have 675 members, which represents 32 new and reinstated members so far this year. The new credit card feature continues to be very popular, with about 20% of our membership choosing to use it rather than etransfer.

We are looking at mounting another new membership campaign; it would be nice to have over 700 members.

On other matters, we may be looking at an office move again this June, as the street scene situation vs cost of staying downtown has been deteriorating for sometime. More on this later.

Later this year we will hold elections for the Executive Board . Given the happy state of our financial affairs, I expect more than minimal interest for potential new Board members. Nominations for all Board positions will occur in the second general membership meeting (likely September), and will be announced in the next two Librettos, and the election will be held in the 3rd general membership meeting (likely in November). Look for the NOMINATIONS notice elsewhere in the Libretto. The term of office for all positions is two years, beginning January 1, 2026.

CFM Locals Active Membership Roster Comparison Chart

<u>LOCAL #</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>February 28, 2025</u>
<u>406</u>	<u>Montreal</u>	<u>3211</u>
<u>149</u>	<u>Toronto</u>	<u>2997</u>
<u>145</u>	<u>Vancouver</u>	<u>1571</u>
<u>390</u>	<u>Edmonton</u>	<u>704</u>
<u>293</u>	<u>Hamilton</u>	<u>675</u>
<u>180</u>	<u>Ottawa</u>	<u>597</u>
<u>547</u>	<u>Calgary</u>	<u>569</u>



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NEXT STEPS PLANNING



CIPF
Canadian Investor Protection Fund
MEMBER



2023 Female Trailblazer of the Year
2024 Excellence Award for Philanthropy &
Community Service by Wealth Professional.

WEALTH ADVICE
RETIREMENT, ESTATE PLANNING
PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS
INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS *

*Insurance offered through NSP INC



WEALTH ADVISOR
MARIE PHILLIPS
B.A. (Hons), RRC, CFDS, PFP, FCSI, MFA-P
marie.phillips@ipcsecurities.com
905-648-2425

As an amateur musician, Marie has channeled her passion for the arts into philanthropic endeavours that enrich her community.



Membership Matters

Membership Activity November 28, 2024 to March 14, 2025



WELCOME: NEW MEMBERS

Gordon Aeichele
 Patrick Anderson
 Carolyn Burton
 William Byers
 Brian Dahl
 Spencer De Man
 Alyss Delbaere-Sawchuk
 Samuel DeRosa
 Nicholas Distasi
 Kelsey Erwin
 Robin Houston
 Mark Howe
 Jon Ingalls
 James Kahane
 George Kaloxilos
 Kevin Lower
 Adrienne Marcucci
 Dan Maslowski
 Legacy Mills
 Alexander Miskas
 Gina Monaco
 Jeremy Mote
 Jeff Rivera
 Bennett Rouleau
 Jonathan Royce
 Michael Stevenson
 Dr. Gwyneth Thomson

RESIGNED

Daniel Balamut
 Miriam Cacciaccaro
 Zachary Clarke
 Hannah Edgerton
 Camila Milla
 Gemma New
 Patti Zonta

DECEASED

Paul Wurster

EXPELLED MEMBERS

Timothy Allard
 Braden Bales
 Joel Lawrence Cassady
 Richard Marsella
 Keith Mckeown
 Robert McLay
 Chelsea McWilliams
 Daniel Glen Monkman

REINSTATED MEMBERS

Ken Augustine
 Mackenzie Clarke
 Angus McMillan
 Michael Travale
 Jeffrey Wilson

SUSPENDED MEMBERS

David Carrillo
 Jesse Doreen
 Philip Jones
 Don Oakie
 Mario Anthony Pacheco
 Frank Rocchi

Don't be left in the dark!

The HMG Local 293 Office sends out important advisories to members by email 'coz we want to make sure you're not left in the dark!



But we need you to notify us of any changes to your contact information.

This includes any changes to your email address, phone number or home address.

Call **905-525-4040** or (better yet) email (office@HamiltonMusicians.org) to make sure we have your correct contact information.

Manage your AFM Profile

You can also update your contact info online by going to:

<http://www.afm.org/>

and on the right hand site of the home page,

under **Links** click on

'Manage your AFM Profile'

Local 293 StreetBeats..... Spotlight on ‘Big John’ Morris

A few years back we ran a series of columns introducing our readers to Local 293’s Executive Board members. In the time since, we have seen the introduction of a few new board members. John Morris (currently Sergeant at Arms) has been tripping the night fantastic at local nightclubs and halls for quite a few years.

As the leader of Big John and the Night Trippers he entertains crowded dance floors with classic soul music that calls to mind artists like Otis Redding, Sam Cooke and Ray Charles.

Born and raised in Hamilton’s north end on, on Hess St. North, John has hometown roots that go back generations. At an early age he began singing with his brothers as a means of bringing home a little cash to his mom in order to help out with household expenses. His brothers aside he cites his mother as the real musical inspiration at home. “She used to sing to us a lot.” he says.

The informal musical performances with his family whet John’s appetite for striking out to establish his own identity. That identity was formed, he says, by his earliest musical influences. He mentions The Platters, Louis Armstrong, Little Richard and Chuck Berry as being inspirational.



Paul Panchezak



John Morris sings the blues at the HPL Central Library Celebration of Black History Month

In the ensuing years, John has played hundreds of shows in the Local 293 area. “My first paying gig I remember was at the old Elmar Hotel.”, he recalls. Aside from fronting his own groups over the years, John also was happy to share the stage with many notable local celebrities including Ray Smith of “Rockin’ Little Angel” fame, the flamboyant wrestler/ singer/ entertainer Sweet Daddy Siki, former Local 293 executive and band leader Jack Carter, and talented family members like half brother Harrison Kennedy and extended family like Hamilton’s musical royalty the Washingtons – Bobby, Jackie, Reg and Dick.

When asked which of that multitude of gigs stand out as particularly memorable John can’t pinpoint any one performance. “All my gigs are favourites,” he says, adding, “I enjoy making people happy.”

Nowadays, aside from his work with the Local 293 Executive Board, John still keeps very active with Big John and the Night Trippers playing concerts, nightclubs and legion halls.

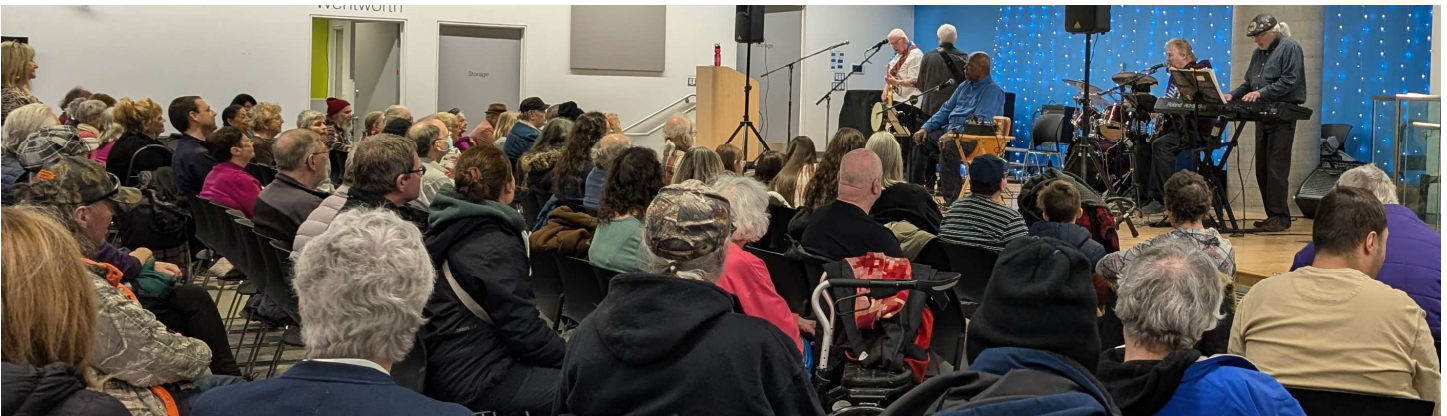
Although his main instrument is his soulful voice, he does accompany himself with a tambourine, rooted strongly in the gospel tradition and reminiscent of legendary Motown session man Jack Ashford.

'Big John' Morris

As he advances in years the chance to bring live music to appreciative audiences keeps Big John young in spirit. It worth noting that John regularly includes Local 293 members in his band. Among them notable names such as Russ McAllister, Brent Malseed and Local 293 President Larry Feudo.

Finally we asked John if, based on his many years of musical experience, he had any advice to impart to players just getting started in the music business. "Yes I would like to say you may have hard knocks and be knocked down but always pick yourself back up !!!"

John Morris – a welcome addition to your 293 Executive Board. I would encourage members that when they attend the next general meeting come up and introduce yourself to John. I'm sure he would be glad to meet you as would all our board members.



An appreciative audience of over 200 R&B aficionados fill the Hamilton Room at the Hamilton Central Library on February 28 for a noon hour concert by Big John and the Night Trippers to wrap up Black History Month, courtesy of the Hamilton Musicians' Guild and the Music Performance Trust Fund.

**Trying to break
into the
professional
music business?**

**Join up your band
members—save
money and get
MPTF gigs,**

One is the loneliest number ...



*When 2 or more new members join the HMG at the same time,
they save \$ 105 each in Initiation Fees!*

Only the lonely pay more.

*Get a friend, neighbour or your band members
to join the Hamilton Musicians' Guild with you
and save \$\$ big time!*

Phone: 905-525-4040

Email: local293hmg@bellnet.ca

www.HamiltonMusicians.org

Upcoming MPTF Gigs

The MPTF (Music Performance Trust Fund) provides grant money to AFM members who give free, charitable, public music performances. The purpose of the trust fund is to promote “live music” and to provide music where music is the prime purpose for public attendance. Some of the basic criteria for a member or band to receive this grant funding include:

- 1) The member (or majority of band members) must belong to the Hamilton Musicians’ Guild. All band members must belong to the AFM. (AFM members may not play with non-members).
- 2) The Music Event must be open to all members of the public and must be free for everyone attending the event.
- 3) The Music Event cannot be held in conjunction with a religious celebration, fundraising event, private event, or political events,
- 4) For more details, contact the HMG office or visit our website
<https://www.HamiltonMusicians.org>

So far in 2024/25, the HMG has financed or co-sponsored about 60 bands and musicians:

Coalescence
Arthur
Big John and the Night Trippers
Garnetta Cromwell and DaGroovmasters
Jay Erlich
Patti Payne Trio
Senior Moments
Emma Rush
Karen Agro
Ginger Graham
The Wishful Thinkers
Kyle Pacey Band
Paul Coombs Duo
Mike Maguire
Hayley Verrall
Tim Gibbons and the Swampbusters
Steve Foster Trio
Smokewagon Blues Band
Alyssia Dupuis
Brian Jantzi

Don & Lily
Sterling Stead
Gabriel Giammaria
Loralee McGuirl
Carolyn Credico
Trickbag

Upcoming Events—Jazz in April

The HMG is pleased to present a series of 14 jazz performances throughout the month of April at various branches of the Hamilton Public Library, beginning with the sweet, smooth sounds of Carolyn Credico and wrapping up with the colourful and exotic musical palette of Johannes Linstead and his Guitar of Fire.

Carolyn Credico Quartet: Friday, April 4, 2025
12:00-1:00 at the Hamilton Central Library

Gypsy Spirit: Friday, April 4, 2025, 2:00-3:00 Ancaster Library

Henry Strong Trio: Saturday, April 5, 2025, 1:00-2:00, Turner Park Library

Rob Santos Quartet, Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 2:30-3:30. Sherwood Library

Trickbag: Friday, April 11, 2025, 12:00-1:00, Hamilton Central Library

Strat Andriotis Trio: Friday, April 11, 2025, 2:00-3:00, Concession Steet Library

Jay Burr Project: Saturday, April 12, 2025, 1:00-2:00, Waterdown Library

Ron Palangio Quartet: Monday April 14, 2025, 12:30-1:30, Saltfleet Library

Jazz—The Big Band: Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 6:00-7:00, Valley Park Library

The Hive: Thursday, April 24, 2025, 10:30-11:30, Dundas Library

Darcy Rolston Hepner Quartet: Friday, April 25, 2025, 2:00-3:00, Barton Street Library

Patti Payne Trio: Friday, April 25, 2025, 3:30-4:30, Terryberry :Library

Trout Lily: Monday, April 28, 2025 1:00-2:00, Binbrook Library

Guitar of Fire: Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 12:00-1:00, Red Hill Library

FRI APR 4
Noon-1:00pm
Central Library
*Carolyn Credico
Quartet*

FRI APR 4
2:00pm-3:00pm
Ancaster Branch
Gypsy Spirit

SAT APR 5
1:00pm-2:00pm
Turner Park Branch
Henry Strong Trio

WED APR 9
2:30pm-3:30pm
Sherwood Branch
*Roberto Santos
Quartet*

FRI APR 11
Noon-1:00pm
Central Library
Trickbag

FRI APR 11
2:00pm-3:00pm
Concession Branch
Strat Andriotis Trio

SAT APR 12
1:00pm-2:00pm
Waterdown Branch
Jay Burr Project

MON APR 14
12:30pm-1:30pm
Saltfleet Branch
*Ron Palangio
Quartet*

WED APR 16
6:00pm-7:00pm
Valley Park Branch
Jazz the Big Band

THU APR 24
10:30am-11:30am
Dundas Branch
The Hive

FRI APR 25
2:00pm-3:00pm
Barton Branch
*Darcy Hepner
Quartet*

FRI APR 25
3:30pm-4:30pm
Terryberry Branch
Patti Payne Trio

MON APR 28
1:00pm-2:00pm
Binbrook Branch
Trout Lily

WED APR 30
12:00pm-1:00pm
Red Hill Branch
Guitar of Fire Trio

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Music: The Ultimate Workplace Motivation and Productivity Tool

Dr. Karen Agro, BScPhm, PharmD, MSc

I was sitting in a cold, cheap hospital chair where I had spent the night—crumpled and folded up like a pretzel beside my comatose father, who was receiving palliative care due to the consequences of dementia.

As a healthcare professional, I had always relied on science and medicine to solve problems, but in that moment, I was utterly helpless. There was nothing more I could do. So, I played my classical guitar at his bedside.

Out of the darkness, my father came back for just a moment and uttered the name of the piece I was playing. In that instant, I understood the true potency of music—it tapped into a part of his brain that was still very much alive. That moment transformed the way I viewed my life's work.

Coming Back to Music: From Science to Sound

At age 18, after years of classical guitar study that culminated in the recording of an album, I was at a crossroads – would I go to school for music or pharmacy? I chose pharmacy, but with a promise to return to music. However, before that return, I spent over 30 years gaining my Doctor of Pharmacy and Master of Science, building an accomplished career in both the pharmacy and pharmaceutical industries and speaking on stages across the country.

Then, in 2018, while in San Francisco, I fell 15 feet off of a rock-climbing wall. I was rushed to San Francisco General and, after critical care assessment, learned that I had smashed my elbow and would need reconstructive surgery.

Faced with the real threat that I may never be able to play guitar again, I was determined to find a way to make both health and music part of my life.

Music for Workplace Well-Being and Performance

I began delving into the research behind music's profound impact on the brain—how it can reduce stress, improve focus, and even enhance productivity. This journey eventually led me to complete a professional diploma through the British Academy of Sound Therapy. Armed with this knowledge, I started developing programs for employee resilience that leverage music as a tool for well-being and motivation.

One of the most fascinating aspects of my work has been seeing, firsthand, how music changes the way people feel, think, and work. I've watched skeptical executives become engaged participants in a drumming exercise, feeling the rhythm sync up their heart rates and breathing patterns.



I've seen healthcare professionals in high-stress environments use music as a microbreak tool to restore focus between patients. I've even had workshop participants reach out, excited to share how music helped boost their energy to face a stressful day.



As musicians, we understand the transformative power of music. But beyond the stage, music has an untapped potential to revolutionize workplace well-being. In a world where burnout is rampant and traditional solutions like bonuses and spa certificates often fall short, music offers a sustainable, science-backed way to support employees' mental and emotional health.



The Journey So Far

Today, I deliver corporate workshops and keynotes that teach professionals how to use music strategically to improve their work performance, manage stress, and unlock creativity. These sessions combine music and sound therapy principles with actionable strategies that integrate seamlessly into daily routines—no extra time required. Attendees walk away with techniques they can immediately apply, from simple music-enhanced microbreaks to holistic approaches like productivity and serotonin playlists, as well as workplace sound audits.

This philosophy extends beyond my corporate work. Recently, I had the unique opportunity to be a finalist in North America's largest inspirational speaking competition – Speaker Slam – where I combined storytelling and live performance on the stage of the Glenn Gould

Studio at CBC Toronto. It was a powerful reminder that music is not just something we hear—it's something we feel, something that connects us, and something that can transform our perspective on what's possible.

For me, it all started in that hospital room. I understood what my father had shown me—music isn't just entertainment. It's medicine. It has the power to shift mood, regulate emotions, and reach people when nothing else can.

Let's Connect

Whether you're curious about this work or looking to bring music into your workplace, I'd love to continue the conversation.

To learn more about music's impact in the workplace, follow me on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and X @karenagroguitar and on LinkedIn @karenagro.

To learn more about my speaking, visit karenagro.com/speaking, or for workshops visit karenagro.com/corporate-workshops.

Submitted by Dr. Karen Agro, BScPhm, PharmD, MSc
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Garnetta Cromwell and DaGroovmasters had their audience up and dancing in their seats during the International Women's Day concert at the Hamilton Public Library Central Library on March 7, 2025.



Musicians and Taxes

Most Canadian musicians are considered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to be self-employed entrepreneurs since they independently contract their services and are classified as operating a music “business” as a sole proprietor for tax purposes. This provides an opportunity to claim deductions against your earned income and reduce your tax liability to the CRA.

Membership fees (like HMG dues) to professional associations, professional services necessary for your business, and travel, lodgings, meals, and attendance fees for industry functions are deductible.

TAXES FOR MUSICIANS

(YES, YOU CAN
DEDUCT YOUR
MUSIC EQUIPMENT!)



Instruments are usually considered capital expenses, and you may be able to claim the cost over time (up to 20% a year).

Costs of tickets, transportation, and parking when attending other musicians' performances are deductible (keep your receipts).

Your Studio or Workspace

Running a music business likely requires certain monthly expenses, and you can claim these as deductions to reduce your tax liability. These include things such as:

- booking fees for recording studios
- rent for classroom or teaching space
- utility costs for your workspace
- Launching and maintaining your music business usually involves paying some basic business expenses, and you can deduct these on your tax return. Note that expenses related to a home studio are deductible, as are:
- the costs associated with registering for a business license
- maintaining insurance
- fees associated with maintaining your website, like domain registration and monthly hosting
- website expenses

Other allowable deductions include:

- professional services necessary for your business, such as lawyers' fees and the business portion of your tax preparation costs

Note, too, that when you attend functions sponsored by industry associations like the National Association of Music Merchants, or NAMM, and Audio Engineering Society meetings, your travel, lodgings, meals, and attendance fees are deductible business expenses as long as there is a business reason for you to attend.

Keep all documentation in the form of bills and receipts and review income and expenses monthly to spot any missing documentation.

Instruments and Performances

As a musician, some of your biggest costs—your instruments, cases, bows, music stands, even your record/CD library—are usually considered capital expenses. You'll pay for them upfront, but use them over several years, as opposed to regular, ongoing costs like rent and utilities.

While you might not be able to claim the entire upfront cost as a business expense, you may be able to claim some of the cost in small increments over time (a process called depreciation).

Keep all receipts for travel to lessons, recording sessions, and performances, as you can claim the expense come tax time. Instrument upkeep and repairs, and the cost of consumable goods like rosin, are also deductible expenses.

Musical Events

Deductions often overlooked by musicians are the costs of such things as tickets, transportation, and parking, incurred when you attend other musicians' performances. You attend these performances in order to enjoy them, but also to learn about musical trends, which makes them deductible.

Strategies for Success

For all the expenses you plan to deduct, you'll need documentation in the form of bills or receipts. Keep all of your receipts in a series of folders (or in a shoebox).

For example:

Put home utility bills in one place so you'll be ready to calculate your home office deductions at tax time.

Review income and expenses monthly, organize your bills and receipts as needed, and ensure you're setting aside enough money for your quarterly estimated tax payments if you are required to pay them. Monthly review and adjustments helps spot any missing documentation.

When in doubt, contact your local AFM office. No doubt they will be able to help you, or put you in touch with a fellow AFM member who understands taxes.

5 Top Tax Tips for Musicians



1. Instruments, Gear, and Equipment

Musicians invest a tremendous amount of money in their instruments, musical gear, and equipment. Whether it be your guitar collection, strings, amp, cables, cases or stands, all of these things and more are usually considered **capital expenses**. These are major purchases you pay for up front, but use over many years to earn money in your music career.

Then for any other items of which the full upfront cost cannot be claimed as a business expense, you may still be able to claim it in smaller increments over time through **depreciation**. Eg: a guitar would be a capital expense which you could 'write-off' at 20% a year, but a guitar string would be a business expense which you could write-off entirely in the year it was purchased.

This is a huge money savings over time! And always remember to keep your receipts — even things like instrument repairs, gear upkeep, recording equipment, and the cost of consumable goods like rosin count toward lowering your tax bill.

2. Travel to Rehearsals, Music Events, Performances, and More

From your gas and parking fees, to public transit and Uber costs, **travel expenses** are also an often overlooked deduction opportunity for musicians.

For driving, you can write off your mileage and related costs for using your car to get to and from rehearsals, shows, and even going to see other artists perform! Your vehicle can be depreciated as well, along with taking other deductions toward the insurance, repairs, etc. As long as your travel is toward your music career purposes, it is deductible.

Even the cost of going to a concert can be deducted, as this is not only enjoyable, but also consti-



MUSICIANS, *STOP GIVING YOUR MONEY AWAY!*

tutes research and education toward current musical trends. Overnight stays at places like hotels and Airbnbs, and your costs to get to an audition, co-writing session, educational workshop, or recording studio can also be used as write-offs since business travel is 100% deductible for tax purposes.

Keep all receipts for such expenses, especially for gas. Credit card statements are not enough. And keep a car travel log if you can.

3. Home Workspace and Office

Your music career likely runs you some regular monthly costs that are associated with your home workspace, studio, office, or rehearsal room. If you want to take advantage of the **home office deduction** allowed by the CRA, you'll first have to figure out how much of your space would qualify (what percentage of your space that is dedicated solely to this part of your business), and then you'll get to write off all related costs like mortgage/rent, rent, utilities, and insurance.

If you work outside of the house, any other costs associated with places you rent (like for a rehearsal room, teaching space, equipment storage facility, or booking fees for recording studios, etc.) would also be eligible for a tax deduction.

4. Meals

Whether you are sharing a meal over a potential collaboration, tour prepping, brainstorming your next album, or talking business with an agent, promoter, producer, lawyer, accountant, manager, or anyone else working with you on business, you are entitled to a **50% deduction** on that bill. This adds up tremendously over time (and may sway you over the fence on ordering that extra side of parmesan truffle fries!).

But honestly, any time you are going out to grab a bite to discuss anything related to your music career, keep those receipts along with a written record to document your discussion so you can enjoy all the benefits when tax time comes!

5. Basic Business Expenses

Every serious musician gets to the point when it's time to professionalize their craft. The costs associated with doing so are also going to be beneficial deductions you'll want to be aware of.

Some of these incurred expenses would be:

- Registering for a business license,
- Starting an LLC,
- Maintaining insurance,
- Membership fees to professional organizations (like AFM, ASCAP, NAMM, the Recording Academy, etc.),
- Professional services from accountants and lawyers,
- And the cost of maintaining your website, phone, email accounts, and more.

Being organized with the money you spend on your music business is key in making sure you're earning and saving as much as possible, and making the most out of all of the tax deductions

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Nobody Does it Better—The Music of James Bond

Darcy Hepner arranged and conducted "The Music of James Bond" to a sold out show at Hamilton Place on Feb 8. Darcy spent two years arranging this performance where he used 60 members of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra 6 vocalists, 4 backup vocalists and 4 additional musicians.

On this concert, guest conductor Darcy Hepner said, "I am thrilled to present The Music of James Bond with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. I've been preparing this program for nearly two years, and I can't wait to hear these iconic melodies come to life, just as they were experienced in the recording studio all those years ago.

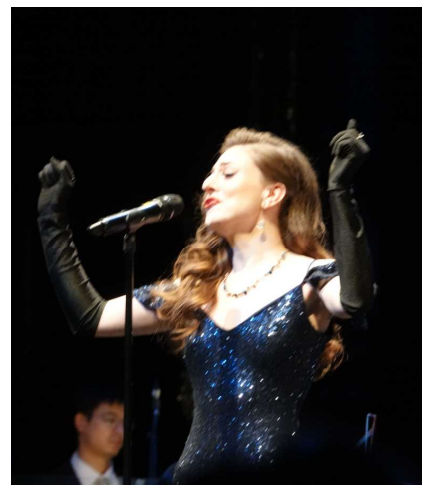


Darcy Hepner, Conductor
Heather Bambrick, Vocalist
Camilla Hepner, Vocalist
Queen Mary the Artist, Vocalist
Suzie McNeil, Vocalist
John Neudorf, Vocalist
Jeremy Wright, Vocalist
Ted Quinlan, Guitar
Dusty Micale, Piano
Paul Inston, Bass
Joel Haynes, Drums
Aisha Barrow, Back Up Vocalist
Aoife-Louise Doyle, Back Up Vocalist
Leah Karowski, Back Up Vocalist
Staphanie Sloss, Back Up Vocalist
John Farr, Visuals/Video
Jamshed Turel, Score Reader



The program featured 15 songs, 9 classic instrumentals, 6 extraordinary vocalists, a fantastic 60-piece orchestra, and one of the finest guitarists in the country, Ted Quinlan!

With original graphics by Hamilton artist John Farr, this was a most powerful way to experience the excitement of Bond outside the movie theater."





Marie Phillips

Marie Phillips, BA (Hons), RRC, CFDS, PFP, FCSI, MFA-P, has been in the financial services industry since 1992.

Wealth Professionals named Marie as the 2023 Female Trailblazer of the Year & as well as placing her amongst the leading Top 50 Women in Wealth. She has received the IPC Cares Award for Community Service, Value of Advice Awards, Best Client Experience Awards, and the George R. Robinson Award (from the Hamilton Musicians' Guild), and has been published / profiled in a wide variety of articles including BNN, the Investment Executive and the Wealth Professional.

Marie was a recipient of a music bursary and, although she did not pursue a career in music, the ARTS sector is where her philanthropy is focused. An active member in her community, Marie volunteers her time advocating for financial literacy and supports many more initiatives that helps recognize achievement and advancement for the Arts.

A graphic with the word "MUSIC" in large letters. The 'I' is replaced by a photo of Marie Phillips speaking at a podium. Below the letters, it says "FINANCIAL LITERACY IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY". To the right is a photo of a group of people, and below that is a poster for "TOM WILSON MOHAWK SYMPHONY".

"She opened their eyes to some enlightening concepts that were unfamiliar to them."

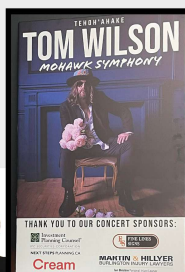
Marie actively volunteers her time advocating for financial literacy and philanthropy in the arts sector and is also an amateur musician.

CONTACT US

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Marie Phillips, B.A. (Hons), RRC, CFDS, PFP, FCSI, MFA-P
Wealth Advisor



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**It is with our deepest regrets
that we announce
the closing of
The Acoustic Room
on March 29, 2025**

**In-store Retirement Sale
229 Locke Street South**



P2 Work Permit FAQs:

1) USCIS Fees: The fees for the US **Department of Homeland Security** are as follows:

Regular Processing: \$510 USD

Premium Processing: \$510 USD + \$2805 USD (the two payments must be separate)

2) Processing Times:

Please note that processing times are determined by the US government, not the American Federation of Musicians. To view USCIS processing times click here <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>: -> Select "I-129 Petition for a Non-immigrant Worker, then, -> Under Form Category, select "P – Athletes, Artists, and Entertainers. The processing time noted is the length of time any specific USCIS Service Center took to complete 80% of files over the prior 6 months. Therefore, the file may be approved within that timeline, or in less time than that noted.

USCIS determines, through its central processing office in Texas, which Service Center (California or Vermont) the petitions are forwarded to. Approximately 35-days after the file has been in processing, the AFM will be advised which office is adjudicating the Visa, thereafter we will be able to provide a rough estimate of processing time remaining. In addition to USCIS processing times, please add additional time for the AFM office to review, process and courier the petition to USCIS.

While we try to submit all applications to USCIS within 72-hours of our office receiving them, there can be delays due to the volume of applications, holidays, or shipping delays.

*If you are a Permanent Resident, please take into consideration Visa Appointment Wait Times when you are preparing your application.

3) Transfer Notice: If you check the status of your application online and see that USCIS has "transferred" your file, this is normal. All applications are sent to the Texas USCIS office, and they transfer cases as needed to the Vermont and California offices. These are new procedures that the USCIS has implemented and will not affect the processing time of your application.

4) Consulate Interviews (Permanent Residents): Only P visa applicants with a prior visa who are applying in the same classification within 48 months of that prior visa's expiration date are eligible to have their interview requirement waived.

5) Canadian Banks Not Issuing USD Money Orders: Some banks across the country, most notably RBC, have stopped issuing USD Money Orders. If you are unable to obtain a USD money order through your Canadian bank, you may consider the following:

- * Obtain a money order from a US-based bank - you must hold an account or have other access to a US financial institution
- * If you hold or have access to a credit card issued by a UNightd States Bank, the fees may be remitted under the USCIS form at the following link: <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450>
- * Obtain a money order from the UNightd States Postal Service
- * Inquire with a close personal or business contact who may have the ability to assist in obtaining a money order through either their Canadian or US financial institution.
- * If none of the above is possible, please contact immigration@afm.org or (416) 391-5161

Tuning up for airport security

Boarding an airplane with a precious musical instrument can be a worrying experience, but it doesn't have to be. And while some musicians are frequent fliers, others may never have taken an instrument in the air before.

CATSA knows that instruments can be rare and fragile, and wants to work with you to make sure you, and your instrument, arrive safely at your destination. Here's what you need to know, and the steps you can take, to make the security-screening process harmonious.



Passengers *do* have some choices about how to go through security.

Carry-on or checked?

You can choose between checking your instrument with the airline or bringing it into the cabin as carry-on luggage.

Consult your airline ahead of time to determine if your instrument qualifies as a carry-on (depending on its size, it may have to be checked).

- Remember that most airlines limit the number of carry-on items you may bring.
- The airline may give you the option of purchasing a separate ticket for your instrument.
- If you opt for carry-on, you must comply with the rules for permitted items.

Whether carry-on or checked, it is up to you to ensure that fragile items are packed properly and safely.

X-ray or manual search?

If you opt to bring your instrument as carry-on, or purchase a separate ticket, you'll bring it with you through the security screening checkpoint. You have a choice here as well: you can allow your instrument case to be scanned with the X-ray machine or you may request a manual search.

Kudos to Local 180 The Harp for first seeing this notice.

Adoro ^{S.D.G.} Silent Sticks

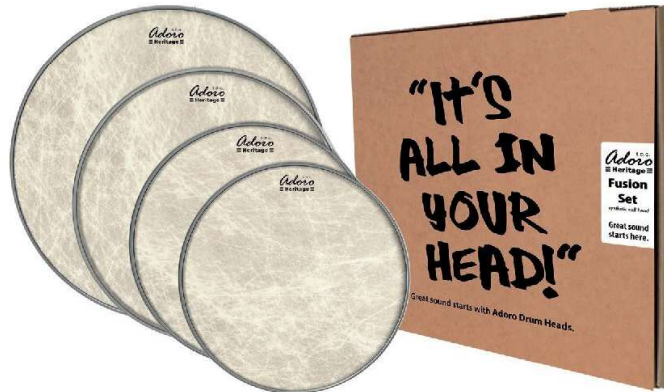


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‘We’re Expecting a Shitshow’: Canadian Musicians Grapple With Trump’s Threats

As the U.S. hikes tariffs and floats the idea of annexing our next-door neighbor, artists are facing tough decisions about their ability to tour here

By David Browne

March 20, 2025

Rolling Stone

At this year’s just-concluded SXSW, hip-hop/pop artist Kimmortal was scheduled to play a showcase with other rising acts from Canada. About a month before, though, they heard the event had suddenly been canceled over concerns related to Donald Trump’s escalating threats toward Canada, including tariff hikes. That meant Kimmortal, an indie artist, would have had to travel from their home in Vancouver to Austin for only one set. “I’m thinking, ‘I’m spending too much to go to the States and do one show,’” they recall. “I’m doing the math in my head and going, ‘Wow.’ There was this sense of feeling lost.”

Kimmortal ended up venturing to Austin anyway, where they were able to book a last-minute additional gig to offset travel costs. But the situation highlights a new, troubling, if also untested reality for the Canadian music scene, as musicians, promoters, agents, and others grapple with 25 percent tariffs placed on Canadian goods sold in the U.S. as well as unexpected hostility toward their country from the Trump administration. The scenario could result in anything from fewer American acts booked in Canada to added visa hassles and less profitable merch for Canadian artists.

“It’s more expensive and things are more bureaucratic, especially for independent artists,” Kimmortal says. “It feels heavy, like, ‘Why should I even try?’ There’s a sense of vagueness and of fear.” The impact of Trump’s tariffs on Canadian goods is still being played out. “We’re getting a lot of questions about this, and there’s still a lot of uncertainty,” says André Guérette of the Paquin Artists Agency, a leading Canadian talent and booking agency. Guérette says he is hearing from Canadian artists who are concerned about the shirts, CDs, and vinyl they would haul across the border to sell at their shows. Guérette estimates that tariffs could increase the costs of selling T-shirts by as much as 50 percent. “That’s a major source of revenue,” he says. “And if they suddenly have a tariff on that, that effectively eliminates any margin they make on their merchandise. A lot of artists survive on that.” (In Austin, Kimmortal opted to bring stickers to avoid the hassle. “People said, ‘Yo, do you have any shirts?’” they say. “I had to say, ‘No, it’s a hurdle to bring my own stuff.’”)

Canada House, the SXSW showcase that was intended to showcase Kimmortal and others, was canceled over general concerns about the current climate, according to Andrew Cash, CEO of the Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA), which hosted the annual event. After Trump’s re-election, Cash took note of the ramping up of anti-Canada rhetoric (which has also included repeated threats to annex the entire country). “It was unclear to me at the time how viable it was going to be to spend a chunk of Canadian taxpayer money, where I was unsure if it would be a welcomed and safe event,” Cash says. “There were a lot of unknowns, and you want to know some basic boxes were checked. We never had any concerns about those boxes being checked before.”

In February, just before CIMA had to start finalizing its plans and writing checks, Cash made the decision to cancel. “Was I being overly cautious?” he says. “Yeah, I sure was. And I don’t regret that. It could have been the case where Canada House would have been widely celebrated and we would

have had a warm welcome, which is probably the more likely scenario. But I did what I had to do. The guy with the biggest megaphone on the planet starts trashing you, and I have the responsibility of making a decision affecting a lot of people.”

Other impacts of the tariffs are already becoming more evident. Guérette notes that visa processing delays have “exploded,” adding, “There’s a massive backlog now when artists are applying for O and P visas” — meaning non-immigrant work permits that apply to artists. “What used to take two to three months is suddenly taking five to eight. That’s a lot of uncertainty and risk to put into an already very difficult budget. It’s forcing people to change their plans or delay tours.” Kimmortal confirms those fears: “My last visa was approved a week before I had to leave Canada for my first show. It was extremely anxiety-inducing. And that was before Trump was inaugurated. Now we’re getting messages it will take longer and be more expensive.”

Fluctuations in the currency, meanwhile, could cause promoters in Canada to shy away from paying U.S. dollars or presenting American acts in their country. Kerry Clarke, artistic director of the Calgary Folk Music Festival, says the currency rate has already impacted the booking process for her event. “We have a \$1.1 million artistic budget, and \$235,000 of that disappears with just the current exchange,” she says of the rates. “That’s money we’re not spending on artists. The low dollar has a real impact.” As a result, the festival may not have the funds to book what she calls “marquee” American acts.

The tariffs could make themselves known in less obvious ways as well. At Canadian festivals overall, Clarke says she wouldn’t be surprised to see ticket prices going up thanks to the new costs associated with American-made supplies. “If a company got their fencing brought in from the States, or if the porta-potties were made in the States and the company we use for them has to now buy ones, they pass that cost on to us,” she says. “And then we have to try and pass it on to the audience.” Kimmortal says their keyboardist had to talk a border crossing official down from charging \$400 for transporting that instrument in and out of Canada — a large increase — but was able to talk them down to \$300.

Canadian artists can’t ignore the American music market entirely, since the leap in audience sizes and income is sizable. Plenty of Canadian bands, including Cowboy Junkies and Theory of a Dead Man, are touring the U.S. or will be soon. “America is such a big market,” says Guérette. “There are 10 times more people, and 10 times more money. It is very hard to develop an artist career globally without touring in America, at least on a worldwide scale.”

Other Canadian acts are thinking twice about crossing the border, at least for the foreseeable future. The Toronto noise-art band Gloin also played at SXSW. But for the rest of the year, the group will be devoting its time to shows in Europe. “We’ve never been there before, so we wanted to concentrate on that,” says singer-guitarist John Watson. Another factor, he admits, was potential hassles in the States. “What were the visa costs going to look like, and how much will the merch I get made in Canada be tariffed?” he says. “We were expecting it to be a shitshow.”

But like other musicians as well as promoters, Watson maintains that he’s eager to resume his band’s relationship with the States. “I’ve had people close to me saying, ‘Why do you still want to go there?’” says Watson. “But we love going to the States. It’s so fun and the fans come out and the people you meet every day are awesome. I don’t want to punish the United States by not going there.”

Performing in the U.S.A.

— Visa Information for Canadian Musicians

What does the tightening of security measures mean for musicians who wish to showcase their talent in the U.S.?

A common concern in U.S. immigration currently is the tightening and enhancement of security measures by the Department of Homeland Security's United States Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS") division and Customs and Border Protection ("CBP") officers.

Part of this concern is for Canadian musicians who have received travel bans from the U.S. for relatively minor infractions and increased regulations for Canadians applying for work visas for the U.S.



While many of the horror stories are centred on individuals who are travelling to the U.S. for business or pleasure, the additional security measures that have been formally and informally installed impact all travelers including those artists and performers who want to showcase and play gigs in the U.S.

Fortunately, USCIS offers a variety of visa options for musicians under subsections of the P and O visa categories. These include visas for internationally recognized artists, artists with extraordinary talents or artists that are performing as a culturally unique program.

Emerging Canadian artists who may not yet be recognized on an international scale or perform in a culturally unique capacity can still qualify for a U.S. visa under the P-2 category. P-2 visas are temporary "work" visas that allow musicians to do work as a performer. This does not require that the shows or performances are paid performances and rather, that the type of "job" being performed would normally be a paid job. The common misconception that an unpaid gig does not qualify as work, and therefore does not require a P visa, is incorrect. Whether the scheduled gigs are paid or unpaid, the performer must secure a P-2 visa before entering the U.S.

P-2 visas are available for individual performers or groups, with each member receiving a visa. In addition, essential members of the artists' crew or team of technicians can also apply for accompanying P-2 visas. **Having a visa does NOT guarantee entry into the USA.**

Eligibility and criteria for P-2 Visas

Not all musicians, performers or bands can apply for a P-2 visa. The fundamental requirement of the P-2 visa is that a reciprocal exchange organization (such as the AFM) prepare and file a petition on the applicant's behalf. To qualify for the necessary reciprocal exchange program sponsored by the organization, an applicant must also "possess skills comparable to those of U.S. artists and entertainers taking part in the program outside the U.S."

If the artist or band has multiple performances planned in the U.S. an itinerary must be filed with the petition indicating the location and date of all performances. There must not be any gaps in

performances of over 45 days.

On the other hand, if an applicant does not have performances scheduled at all, their application for P-2 visa will likely be denied. The purpose of the P-2 visa is not for the applicant to enter the U.S. to seek out gigs or other work.

With that said, a freelance musician or band can apply for their own P-2 visa(s) in order to perform with more than one band, group or performance but must include an itinerary of all expected performances with all bands, and copies of all contracts with the initial petition for the visa.



Timing

If you are eligible and wish to apply for a P-2 visa, be sure to contact immigration counsel a minimum of four to six months prior to your scheduled trip. Often times, applications require 90 days or more to prepare, send for processing and receive a response. It is helpful to seek legal advice as soon as possible to ensure that all required documents can be obtained prior to submitting the P-2 visa.

Applicants should note that the petition cannot be filed more than

six months before the date of the first performance or engagement.

P-2 visas can be valid for the time required for the artist or band to complete their shows in the U.S for a period of up to one year. In order to receive a visa for the entire year, the performer must show proof of regular engagements in the U.S. throughout that year. After the initial period of validity, a P-2 visa may be extended in additional increments of up to one year.

Visa Interview

Once the visa petition is approved, you must apply for the physical P-2 visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. It is important that sufficient time is allowed as each Embassy and Consulate schedule visa appointments based on their individual schedules, which can have wait times of a few weeks to several months. An interview is usually required for any applicants between the ages of 14-79.

If you are planning a trip to the United States to perform a gig, be sure to seek legal advice as soon as possible to ensure that all required documents can be obtained prior to submitting the P-2 visa. Our immigration team in the CFM in Toronto can provide guidance on obtaining P and O visas for musicians travelling to the U.S.

AFM members are fortunate that our immigration team handles all this work for a very small fee, compared to hiring a lawyer for \$ 4,000 or more.

Another example of why it pays to be a member.

CFM Head Office

Monday - Friday 9:00AM - 5:00PM

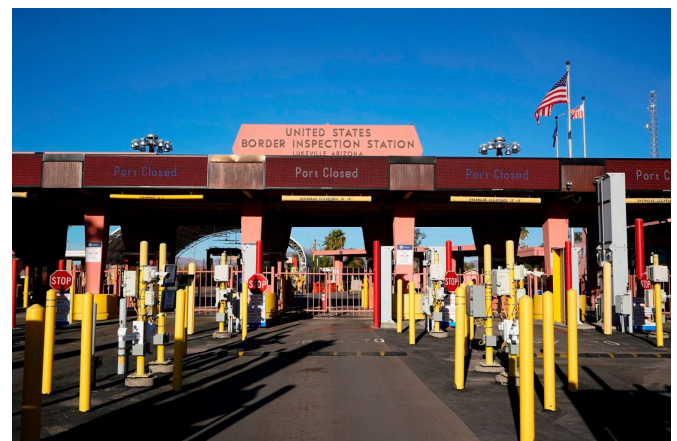
Our offices are open with reduced capacity, and open to the public for scheduled appointments only.

**150 Ferrand Drive, Suite 202
Toronto, Ontario M3C 3E5**

Phone: 416 391-5161

Toll Free: 1 800 463-6333

Fax: 416 391-5165



Sending your instrument through the X-ray

If the instrument case is small enough to go through the X-ray machine safely, place it in a bin – don't hesitate to ask for assistance if you're not sure, and mention if the item is fragile.

Choosing a manual search

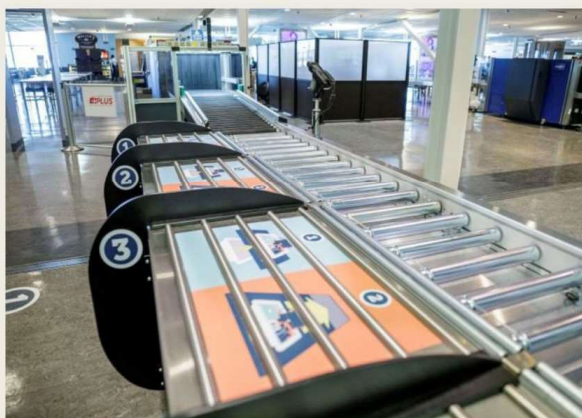
If the case is too large for the X-ray machine, or if you prefer to bypass the machine, your case and instrument will be manually searched by a screening officer.

- The screening officer will be careful with your instrument, however you should mention to the officer that the item is valuable, and if it is fragile.
- You may ask the officer to explain each step of the process before taking the action, so you can provide any special handling instructions.
- The officer will need to remove the instrument from its case in order to conduct a visual inspection of the instrument and a manual inspection of the case, including an explosive trace detection swab.
- Afterwards, the officer will offer to repack the case or let you repack it yourself.

Screening officers handle all passengers' belongings with care, but please let the officers know how important your instrument is to you and provide special handling information as early as possible during the screening process.

Be ready for automated screening lanes — at home and abroad

New CATSA Plus security lines have been installed at some airports in Canada, and there are similar automated lines in other countries. The new lines allow several passengers to divest their belongings at once, all sending bins to the X-ray machine. This makes the process more efficient, but travellers should be aware that it also means their bins may be interspersed with those of other passengers, and they may lose sight of their bins momentarily as they travel along the conveyor belt and through the X-ray.



At CATSA Plus lines, remember:

- You control how your items are divested and can choose to put your instrument case in your final bin so you can watch for it exiting the X-ray.
- As with regular screening lines, you may request a manual search so your instrument case does not need to be placed on the conveyor belt.

Kudos to Local 180 The Harp for first seeing this notice.

EVERY GIG WILL BE A UNION GIG!



Net wages will be at or above the local union's wage scales, and Locals will receive both work dues, if applicable, and contracts — and we'll handle all communications with potential purchasers.

AFM Entertainment is now accepting registration from AFM members who are solo artists or leaders of self-contained bands and ensembles, in every genre of music.



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