



**Building a Digital Infrastructure to give Canada's Cultural IP a national and
Global Platform**

2017 Pre-Budget Submission

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Executive Summary

The Royal Conservatory of Music is pleased to present its recommendations for measures to be included in Budget 2017 to the House of Commons Finance Committee.

The Royal Conservatory, one of the largest and most respected music education institutions in the world, seeks an investment of \$12.5 million over five years that will build the digital infrastructure to leverage its substantial content base, and deliver it throughout Canada and the world.

The investment will: a) provide greater access to the extensive benefits of musical activity to Canadians in every community and thereby nurture the creative thinking that is needed to drive innovation and the mutual understanding that underpins social cohesion; b) enable the RCM to expand into foreign markets and establish Canada as the global leader in music education; c) achieve economic growth in the cultural sector.

The Conservatory is widely acknowledged as providing the definitive standard of excellence in music curriculum design, assessment, performance training, concert presentation and teacher certification. The Conservatory's systems and publications drive an industry of 30,000+ private music teachers across the country, operating as small business owners in urban, suburban, rural and remote communities – from coast-to-coast-to-coast.

The RCM also is a foundational element to the success of Canada in the field of the performing arts. The curriculum of the RCM has provided many of our internationally acclaimed artists with a competitive advantage in building their careers. Its Performing Arts Division provides a key platform for Canadian musicians and other arts organizations. With approximately 500,000 annual participants in its programs and five million alumni, The Conservatory is arguably the fundamental building block in the development of creativity and shared experiences among millions of Canadians.

In this submission, The Royal Conservatory will emphasize that building a digital infrastructure for Canadian IP will enable Canada to become a global leader and brand in an important economic arena. Our initiatives align closely with the

Government's commitment to invest in Canada's cultural and creative industries to create jobs, support the middle class and strengthen our rich Canadian heritage.

Introduction

Mounting evidence from the fields of education, cognitive neuroscience and brain imaging increasingly show that the study of music is a crucial intellectual building block in young people.

The arts are known to advance the development of a flexible mind that is open to the new. These are the very qualities necessary to drive innovation that will help Canada to stand out against ever intense competition.

Ultimately the arts strengthen societies and are the basis of human centred innovation. If Canada is to lead in the innovation economy globally, it is clear that extended participation in music and the arts by its young people will be essential for success.

Digital Technology - fostering a new era in educational effectiveness

The RCM sees an enormous opportunity to merge the extraordinary power of the arts with digital technology that will usher in a new era of creativity and innovation among all Canadians. We want to build a digital educational platform that promotes our Canadian IP to a vast international audience.

The RCM is a world leader in the development of learning systems, has a proven and successful business model and an established market consisting of 30,000 teachers and 500,000 students (with 20,000 in the United States). We have built a vast infrastructure for music education which spans the nation.

Our plan builds upon more than a decade of systematic experimentation and prototyping within contemporary digital idioms. It will result in the re-imagining and curation of the vast wealth of educational and performance based resources that reside throughout the organization and will draw on key collaborative partnerships with Canadian leaders in innovation, technology and cultural engagement.

A Digital Transformation

Our digital transformation will be focused on three key areas:

TEACHING

Developing high quality digital resources to support our cultural economy

The RCM's digital Professional Development platform and Music Teacher Certification Program will be the first of its kind, aggregating the best teaching tools, resources, and advice from the finest teachers around the world. This platform will enable tens of thousands of teachers to connect and learn from one another, build communities of teaching and practice, develop a stronger and more sustainable teaching business and attain greater impact in their communities. Significantly a digital presence will also enable us to attract hundreds of thousands of international teachers and their students to the RCM system, thus establishing Canada as a global leader in the music education space.

LEARNING

Creating digital tools and apps to engage and inspire youth and promote creative development

The advent of digital provides the RCM with the ability to connect directly with students in Canada and the world ways that were never possible before. With the opportunities provided by the digital sphere and mobile devices, in combination with our comprehensive system and curriculum of music education, we plan to reinvent the way students learn music and express their creativity.

ENGAGING

Connecting global audiences with the best of Canadian culture

New models for digital presentation and dissemination, from live-streaming to interactive and augmented reality experiences, are opening up never-before-thought-of ways to engage with culture. The RCM through its three large performance venues presents over 400 concerts a year and is consequently one of Canada's largest performing content creators. With the proper digital infrastructure in place, the RCM will bring the best of Canadian talent to an international audience.

Designed for Success

The Conservatory's plan focusses on four pillars: a) breadth of content b) high attention to UX design c) personalized experiences and; d) affordable access.

The Royal Conservatory has the expertise to oversee the building and management of this new cultural infrastructure:

- It has a superb team of instructional designers and subject area experts led by one of Canada's foremost e-learning experts, Chief Digital Officer Sarah Irwin a former leader of the educational arm of TVO.
- The RCM is the only music Conservatory in the world with an in-house Neuroscience lab which provides ongoing research to support and shape its early childhood education programs
- It has relationships with leading Canadian technology companies including social technology and app development providers.
- The RCM has a long and highly successful history, via its social innovation arm, Learning Through the Arts, of collaborating with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities to design culturally inclusive programming.
- It has connections to dozens of youth development organizations who understand how to activate and mobilize youth participation
- The RCM has generated over 200 publications with thousands of works supporting music education in all of its aspects
- The RCM through its performing arts activities in Koerner Hall has access to substantial content. To date 150 Canadian artists have been showcased and the music of more than 60 nationalities
- The RCM has demonstrated capabilities around partnership development and community engagement.

Recent examples of The Conservatory's work include:

A – Early Childhood Education Smart Start App for Parents

Understanding the significant cognitive benefits of exposure to music activity at an early age, the RCM is developing an App (to be launched next year) that helps parents to harness the power of music to develop spatial reasoning, language, movement and emotional intelligence in their babies. The App is based upon

three years of research conducted by Dr. Sean Hutchins, the Conservatory's staff neuroscientist and Dr. Laurel Trainor of McMaster University.

B – Building blocks of musical creation in the digital sphere

The RCM curriculum has always stressed listening skills and the development of the capacity to understand and hear chords and structures that make up music. With developed aural skills, a student can hear pop tunes on their mobile phone and then re-create their melodic and chord tones at an instrument and use the experience to write their own compositions. Already, more than 8,000 students from across the country are regularly logging hours building great ear training skills online with the RCM. We believe a large global market exists for this offering.

International Market Analysis and Penetration

The RCM is well positioned to take advantage of opportunities that exist in multiple levels of musical development across the globe. For example, there exists no comprehensive, nationwide authority on the study and assessment of the skills of music in the **United States**. What the RCM has achieved in Canada can be achieved in the USA through our state-of-the-art digital infrastructure. The appetite for the RCM curriculum was demonstrated by the participation of 20,000 American students after its initial, pre-digital launch. Initially, the RCM will focus on four key US markets where considerable interest has been shown already, California, Ohio, the Tri-State area and Texas.

The RCM's digital initiatives will bring its celebrated curriculum first to the United States and subsequently to China, and ultimately to other foreign markets such as India. In May 2015, Chinese President, Xi Jinping, called for "reform and innovation in education in line with development of information and communication technology to allow all people access to education anytime, anywhere." There have been heavy investments by the Government of China with over 4% of its GDP devoted to education and a 20% average growth in e-learning investments.

China's internal system of Examinations and Assessment in the area of music is provincial, not comprehensive, and cited as widely ineffective. The RCM's curriculum and comprehensive system, through our strategic partnerships with both Canadian and international firms, will bring our digital infrastructure to fill this identified gap.

Through digital expansion the RCM estimates it can add more than a million students when scaled internationally. This digital initiative will help bring the Canadian brand to the forefront of global music education.

Competitive Advantage

The RCM's digital initiative will provide a competitive advantage versus the current global leader, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music UK. The RCM's offerings are differentiated and superior in terms of its comprehensive ecosystem, its emphasis on cognitive development, advanced neuroscience research, early childhood and adult education practices, innovative teaching programs as well as its professional Conservatory training. In the race to establish national brands at strategic countries of growth, the RCM's digital infrastructure is of highest priority to sustain our competitive advantage in this space.

Conclusion: A Profound Impact on Canadian Culture and Global Leadership in Music Education

An investment in the digital infrastructure for teaching, learning and engaging with music will give Canadian content creators a platform on which to sustain and deepen their involvement with the creative economy. It will enhance opportunities for all Canadians to gain exposure to the beauty of music as an art form as well as the creative thinking and collaborative skills to succeed in the innovation economy, regardless of where they live and their cultural or socioeconomic background.

Our cultural and creative industries truly are a vibrant part of our national identity. An investment by the Government of Canada will strengthen Canada's cultural capacity, provide support for communities of all sizes to join in shaping the future of cultural engagement and allow a Canadian organization to expand globally.

Success in this initiative will create: highly skilled positions for platform designers, builders, and maintainers; for content creators; for teachers and educators; and for musicians and artists. It will boost the earning potential of tens of thousands of independent small business owners and allow the Royal Conservatory to have the financial resources to compete internationally.

An investment of \$12.5 million, over a five year period, to enable the realization of this important initiative will truly strengthen our rich Canadian identity.