



History, mission and strategic plan

A brief history

Founded in 2000, Folk Music Canada operated for a decade as Folk Alliance Canada (FAC), and was closely affiliated with Folk Alliance International (FAI). Although FAC was incorporated, had an active board and sought project funding, it did not develop an administrative structure, nor did it hire any employees until after it was re-organized, and re-named Folk Music Canada, in 2009.

Even without staff, FAC delivered many networking and showcase events at conferences throughout the 2000s. At the height of its activity, FAC organized two national folk conferences, held in Halifax (2004) and Vancouver (2005). After 2006, lacking funding, and experiencing internal fatigue, the organization scaled back its activities. In 2009, a newly invigorated board was elected, and, after establishing some short-term strategic priorities, the organization chose a new name, secured funding sources, hired its first employee and began to develop its own membership, while keeping close ties with FAI.

Since the re-organization of FMC in 2009, our energies have been focused on building internal capacity and a solid administrative base, developing a membership structure, a website and expanding our board of directors. At the same time, we have made steady progress in building partnerships and further defining our 'place' in the fabric of the national folk and arts community.

With a strong growth in our following (official membership is 400, e-newsletter subscribers total 900 and social media followers total more than 2500), we have forged close partnerships with other folk organizations (Canadian Folk Music Awards, OCFF) and music associations from all provinces/regions. We have collaborated to present buyer's programs (OCFF), information sessions (OCFF, FAI), national listing of folk festivals (Penguin Eggs) and to lead the presentation of Canadian musicians at the annual FAI conference (convening 14 music associations to collaborate under a single brand of Canadian folk music).

In 2012-2013, we launched several programs to support the export development of the Canadian folk music sector, including hosting showcases at major contact events such as OCFE and Folk Alliance. In February 2013, our Export Development Program brought more than 30 international 'buyers' together with Canadian folk artists at the Folk Alliance conference. This program resulted in an estimated \$1.2 million of bookings and business.

Having established a growing membership base, cemented an organizational structure, been designated a NASO by the Canada Council, and hired an Executive Director, in late 2011 Folk Music Canada set out to build a new three-year strategic plan, which was finalized in March 2012, and is detailed below.

Mission

Folk Music Canada is a member-driven organization that supports and promotes the Canadian folk music community, and is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance, diversity and cultural value of the folk music community in Canada.

Strategic Goals



1. Develop an Online Resource Centre

Both presenters and performers are under-resourced in finding the information, networks and linkages they need to accomplish their goals. Folk Music Canada will work to develop online resources that will empower performers and presenters to achieve their objectives and maximize their efforts to work with one and other.

2. Partner at Signature Events

Rather than creating a new national music conference, Folk Music Canada will work with existing signature events to ensure that resources are channelled where they are most needed, and that the Canadian folk music community benefits from service delivery in many regions.

3. Market Development

Market growth is critical to the long-term sustainability and development of Canadian folk music. The globalization of the music industry combined with an increased interest in Canadian folk music, because of its artistic excellence, provides opportunity for strong growth in Canadian folk music exports. There is also increased interest in Canadian folk music because of its quality, brand and diversity.

Folk Music Canada will create and support initiatives which boost the profile of and demand for Canadian folk music both domestically and internationally, including the use of touring, the internet, television and radio.

4. Expand Member Benefits

Folk Music Canada will support the Canadian folk music community by offering value in three areas: professional development, membership discounts, and benefit packages. Wherever possible, Folk Music Canada will partner with existing programs to maximize value, and avoid duplication of services.

Strategic Objectives

In addition to these four areas of development, Folk Music Canada will work to address these objectives in realization of all of the strategic goals:

- Develop and enhance the brand of Canadian folk music;
- Grow membership base of Folk Music Canada;
- Advocate for Canadian folk music where needed;
- Network to increase connections;
- Keep Canadian folk music vibrant and thriving.