

Dr. Daniel Caron
Deputy Head and Librarian and Archivist of Canada
Library and Archives Canada
395 Wellington St.
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N4

March 1, 2013

Dear Dr. Caron:

On behalf of the Board of the Canadian Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Centres (CAML), I am writing to express our profound concern with the present and future mandate of Library and Archives Canada. During your presentation at the International Association of Music Libraries (IAML) in July 2012 in Montreal, you mentioned several initiatives. We seek clarification in order to understand the practical implications of these initiatives.

Over the past year, you and your executive team have presided over devastating cuts to collections and services that have left us wondering about the future of LAC. As music librarians, archivists, and scholars, we rely on LAC to provide resources and services to help us, and to help us provide research assistance to others throughout Canada.

Music librarians and archivists across Canada have always had a close and productive working relationship with the staff of the Music Division/Section and the music cataloguers. LAC has always played a pivotal role in the discovery and preservation of Canadian heritage and culture, including music. The late Dr. Helmut Kallmann edited *The Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* while Director of the Music Division. The *Encyclopedia* is recognized both nationally and internationally as a landmark in scholarship. Dr. Kallmann and the staff of the Music Division also developed exemplary music-related collections and *fonds* during his tenure and until recently. Dr. Kallmann was a founding member of the Canadian Association of Music Libraries, and our national award in music librarianship is named after him. We would like to understand your plans for continuing this legacy, which is of great value to current and future music researchers. We were saddened by the fact that there was no official mention of Dr. Kallmann's passing on the LAC site, and no official participation in the various tributes that took place.

We have some questions about your principles of modernization (from <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/about-us/modernization/Pages/Principles.aspx>)

- “LAC is using a more collaborative approach to fulfill its mandate. A growing network of libraries, archives and other institutions share the responsibility for our documentary heritage.” Most of the music collections at LAC are unique. We would like more information on how this responsibility will be shared. How does your collections policy relate to Legal Deposit? Will the terms of legal deposit be changed?
- “LAC is redefining how it selects items to be acquired, based on how well they represent the whole of Canadian society.” Many musical items that might be acquired represent the interests of a subset of Canadian society (for example, music of a certain genre, or music of a certain cultural group). How will your collection development policy for music provide sufficient

breadth and depth to preserve musical artifacts to benefit all Canadians, and represent our rich musical communities to the rest of the world?

- “LAC is improving access to its holdings, by making descriptions simpler and more relevant.” We do not understand how simpler descriptions improve access; there is significant research available that disproves this. You indicate elsewhere on your web site that you will be asking creators and users to provide metadata; this kind of “crowd-sourcing” decreases standards and consistency, which will result in *decreased* access. We are disappointed that many music cataloguers and archivists are no longer employed at LAC, a fact which contradicts your statement that staffing levels have remained stable.
- Recently, LAC ceased its long-standing support of the RILM database. By ceasing the systematic indexing and abstracting of Canadian writings on music, this decision has jeopardized world-wide awareness of, and access to, scholarly research in this area. With few professional music cataloguers, and a “crowd-sourcing” approach, how will LAC maintain international library standards? LAC has always taken a lead role in the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing, as well as on the JSC. How will LAC continue in this role?
- “LAC is ensuring digital as well as analogue preservation.” While you seem to have plans to preserve non-digital material, there does not seem to be a plan to ensure that it remains accessible.
- “LAC is building its capacity to manage and fully carry out its mandate.” We are concerned that your mandate really only includes digitized material, and that you have no plan (or the ability) to digitize material that is not born digital.

We are also concerned that LAC’s Interlibrary Loan department was closed. LAC holds much unique musical material that is no longer accessible to anyone unless they are able to make an in-person visit. Will your digitization strategy allow for digitization and electronic delivery of requested materials? How will you provide digital access to unique material that is still under copyright? We are unclear on the scope of your digitization strategy. LAC has an opportunity to be a leader in digitizing Canada’s important musical heritage, but such a strategy requires a commitment to financial and specialized human resources. Will your digitization strategy include a financial commitment to state-of-the-art equipment and specialist staff such that LAC can truly play a leadership role in this area? This is of great concern to the Canadian library community.

We do appreciate that LAC staff have been holding regular conference calls with stakeholders on a variety of subjects, and realize that you must ensure that services are cost-effective and relevant to Canadians. However, these stakeholder consultations are happening after much cost-cutting and service cancellation has been done. The perception among music librarians across the country is that LAC has abdicated responsibility. We hope you can clarify some of the above issues for us, and that we can work with you to ensure LAC can once again become a leader in acquiring, documenting, preserving Canada’s musical heritage, and ensuring that it is accessible to all.

Sincerely,

Janneka L. Guise
President, Canadian Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Centres