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INDEPENDENT MUSIC HAS HISTORY & FUTURE

Independent music from across Ontario will have a home online, thanks to campus and community radio stations and a new organization with a dream to preserve Canadian musical history.

The Ontario Independent Music Archive will be a place for musicians to post and share their work with the public but will also collect and provide new life for independent music that was originally produced in small batches on vinyl, cassette and CD.

“It’s a natural fit,” says Shelley Robinson, Executive Director of the National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCRA) the lead organization on the new project.

“Community radio stations are where many independent musicians come first. We play their music and keep copies in our music libraries. Now we’re sharing it.”

Funded by a two-year, \$224,500 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, OIMA will start digitizing music and working with musicians across the province immediately while the new website goes live in late 2012. A leading grant-maker in Canada, the Foundation strengthens the capacity of the voluntary sector through investments in community-based initiatives. An agency of the Government of Ontario, it builds healthy and vibrant communities.

The idea first came from Jonathan Martel, a music fan who was studying history through popular music, but who found that local independent music was often hard to get.

“If I can’t be a musician, I want to do all I can to make our musical legacy last forever,” he says. “Until someone finds a way to put that flux capacitor into the DeLorean, this is the closet we’ll get.”

He then reached out to Mario Circelli, former station manager at CHRW-FM, the campus-community radio station at the University of Western Ontario, in London. Together Martel and Circelli formed the Music Association of Canada and approached the NCRA to partner.

“There is something special about hearing music you love that comes from your own community,” Circelli says. “We want to showcase local country music from Temiskaming, punk from Milton, and the local high school band album from 1967.”

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