wincon

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF INDEPENDENT MUSIC!

TORONTO, CANADA NOV 9-11

Monday 9th

SOCIETY CLUBHOUSE
967 College St
Toronto M6H 1A6

WINCON + LABEL SUMMIT

WINCON program shared with CIMA's Label Summit.
All sessions open to WINCON delegates and CIMA label members.

9:45 - 10:00 Registration

10:00 - 11:30

From Advocacy to Ownership: How Independent Music Builds Durable Power

Brodie Conley, Dan Nevin (Merlin), Helen Smith (IMPALA), Ian Harrison (A2IM), Justin West (Secret City), Tak Yamazaki (IMCJ)

As consolidation and financialization reshape the music industry, independents are exploring new ways to build collective power through ownership and investment in the infrastructure they depend on. This session examines that shift, its potential to strengthen independence, and the questions it raises around access, representation, and governance.

11:30 - 11:45 Coffee Break

11:45 - 13:15

Streaming in Focus: What's Next for Independents?

Céline Lepage (FÉLIN), Gee Davy (AIM), Helen Smith (IMPALA), Mark Kitcatt (Everlasting Records/IMPALA), Mark Meyer (Random Sounds/AMI-PY), Paul Mornon (WIN), Ruth Koleva (ANMIP), Tony Kiewel (Sub Pop)

What is the independent community's response to the key developments shaping the digital music landscape? We will present an update on WIN's Streaming Group and its work to improve Spotify for Artists, insights from the BRIDGE project and IMPALA's Digital Music Plan, and will discuss the ongoing challenges around discoverability, streaming fraud, and the flood of generative AI content.

13:15 - 14:30 Lunch Break

14:30 - 17:30

Label Summit: Distribution & Independence

This year's summit will focus on the evolving landscape of music distribution and what it means for independent labels navigating an increasingly complex industry.

20 years of independence · CIMA Canadian Independent Music Association · Make It Music · Global Affairs Canada / Affaires mondiales Canada — CIMA is supported, in part, by a contribution from Global Affairs Canada's CanExport Associations program. · MERLIN · IMPALA Independent Music Companies Association · Co-funded by the European Union

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Tuesday 10th

THE GREAT HALL
1087 Queen St W
Toronto M6J 1H3

WINCON + MAKE IT MUSIC

WINCON program shared with CIMA's Make It Music. All sessions open to WINCON and Make It Music delegates except those marked in green (WIN members only).

10:00 - 10:45

WIN Annual General Meeting

Mark Kitcatt (Chair), Marty Ro (Vice Chair), Maria Amato (Treasurer), Helen Smith (IMPALA), Mark Meyer (AMI-PY), Andrew Cash (CIMA), Noemí Planas (WIN), Nerea Serrano (WIN), Paul Mornon (WIN)

The WIN Secretariat, Chair, and Treasurer will give a brief update on the organization's projects, activities, working groups, and financials. The meeting will also feature updates from WIN's APAC Alliance and LATAM Network, a Postcard from Europe, and a North America update from our host – an opportunity to share key developments and priorities across regions.

10:45 - 11:30

Navigating Merlin Membership: A Practical Guide for Trade Associations

Dan Nevin (Merlin)

Designed specifically for our trade association partners, this session aims to demystify Merlin membership, including the application and onboarding process. We will cover what Merlin is (and isn't), review real-world approval and rejection criteria, examine the operational shift of leaving major-owned distributors, and share guidance to help you effectively advise and assist your members on what is their best path for independence.

11:30 - 12:30 Lunch Break

12:30 - 12:45

Make It Music Welcome Remarks

Andrew Cash (CIMA)

12:45 - 13:45

Keynote: A Better Way Forward: New Models for a New Music Economy

Liz Pelly

13:45 - 14:45

Music Streaming in The Age of AI: Discovery, Monetization and the New Music Marketplace

Felippe Llerena (Nikita Music/ABMI), Gee Davy (AIM), Jason Peterson (GoDigital), Marty Ro (Sound Republica/LIAK), Rollie Pemberton (CIMA), Sujan Hong (Qobuz)

Generative AI is accelerating content creation, contributing to an unprecedented oversupply of music and intensifying the challenge of discovery. At the same time, streaming platforms are evolving beyond one-size-fits-all subscription models, experimenting with tiered pricing, artist-centric payouts, AI-driven personalization, and new approaches to monetizing superfans.

This session will explore how AI is reshaping the streaming marketplace itself, from what audiences discover and how they listen, to how platforms create value and what it means for artists navigating a more complex and competitive landscape.

14:45 - 15:30 Networking Break

15:30 - 16:30

How Indie Labels Are Reshaping the Future of International Growth

David Barnes (Rhymesayers Entertainment), Josh Madell (Secretly Distribution), Justin West (Secret City Records), Simon Mortimer-Lamb (Nettwerk Music Group), Zena White (Partisan Records)

Independent labels are no longer niche players, they are driving some of the fastest growth in the global music business. With nearly 40% market share and rising, the independent sector is leveraging digital distribution, data insights, and global platforms to scale artists internationally without traditional gatekeepers. This session explores how indie labels are building agile, globally connected networks, forming strategic partnerships, and redefining what international success looks like in a streaming-first world - often outpacing major label models in speed, flexibility, and cultural relevance.

16:30 - 17:30

Stronger Together: How Independents Can Unlock the Global Value of Music

Andrew Cash (CIMA), Gord Dimitrieff (Aporia Records), Hubert Léveillé Gauvin (Panorama), Noemí Planas (WIN), Pierre Gourde (MétaMusique)

Neighboring rights are an often-overlooked source of revenue that can meaningfully affect labels' bottom line, yet many independents still don't fully understand how to capture them. Using Panorama's partnership with CIMA as a case study, this session looks beyond the mechanics of rights management at how collective action between CMOs, trade associations, and independent rightsholders can overcome fragmentation, improve access to international revenues, and help independents capture more of the global value of music.

17:30 - 19:30

Cocktail Mixer Presented by Panorama

19:30 - 22:10

Global Toronto Showcases

20 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT MUSIC ASSOCIATION
Global Affairs Canada Affaires mondiales Canada
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Evolving Together: How Trade Associations Are Adapting to New Definitions of Independence

Alexander Hirschenhauser (VIMÖ), Andrew Cash (CIMA), Jakob Sørensen (DUP), Jörg Heidemann (VUT), Lisa Hresko (A2IM), Nerea Serrano (WIN), Sonia Durán (UFi)

As the independent music sector evolves, so must the organizations that represent it. Drawing on experiences from different markets, this session explores what it means to be independent in 2026 and how associations are adapting their structures, services, and funding models to stay relevant, sustainable, and representative of an evolving independent base.

11:30 - 12:30 Lunch Break

12:30 - 13:30

The Evolution of Artist Managers as CEOs

Brodie Conley, Carlos Pineda (MCMXVI), Joel Gouveia (Sincerely Management)

Today's artist managers are no longer just facilitators - they are operators, strategists, and growth architects. As artists build multi-platform careers spanning streaming, touring, brand partnerships, and direct-to-fan ecosystems, managers are increasingly acting as CEOs overseeing diversified portfolios. With AI tools enabling artists to control production, marketing, and distribution independently, the manager's role is shifting toward data-driven decision-making, rights management, and long-term business development. This session examines how management is evolving into executive leadership, and what skills, structures, and mindsets are required to compete in a decentralized, artist-led economy.

13:30 - 14:30

Community, Worldbuilding & Ownership – Fans as Stakeholders

George Ergatoudis (The Sound Hack), Lauren Wirtzer (EVEN), Orri Sachar (Monstercat), Rob Sealy (Openstage)

The relationship between artists and fans is evolving from passive consumption to active participation. New models powered by direct-to-fan platforms are enabling fans to invest in, influence, and co-create alongside artists, transforming them into stakeholders in the music ecosystem. At the same time, streaming platforms and emerging services are experimenting with community-driven discovery and fan-directed revenue allocation. This session examines how fandom is becoming a form of ownership, and how artists can build sustainable careers through deeper, more engaged communities.

14:30 - 15:30 Networking Break

15:30 - 16:30

Redefining Music Rights in the Age of AI: Ownership, Consent, Licensing and Compensation

Caroline Jonnaert (Robic), Edward Ginis (OpenPlay), Margaret McGuffin (Music Publishers Canada), Sean Power (Musical AI)

The rise of generative AI is forcing a fundamental rethink of music ownership, attribution and compensation. As AI systems are trained on vast catalogs of existing works and generate, remix and transform music at unprecedented scale, questions around consent, licensing, rights management and fair remuneration have become central to the future of the music industry. New models are emerging to bring greater transparency and accountability to an increasingly AI-driven creative ecosystem, from direct licensing and collective approaches to rights management, attribution and new data infrastructure. But how should creative contributions be identified and valued when they become part of an AI-generated work? And how can we ensure that the ability to generate music at scale translates into sustainable and equitable compensation for the creators whose work makes it possible? This session will bring together perspectives from across the emerging AI-music ecosystem to explore how intellectual property and music rights are being redefined, and what it will take to build a sustainable, transparent and equitable AI-powered music industry.

16:30 - 17:30

Culture Over Content: The New Economics of Music Partnerships

C.Y. Lee (Music Nerd), Derrick Ross (Slaight Music), Melissa Vincent (music journalist), Trung Hoang (Public Records)

As AI-generated music floods the market with commodified content, could human-made music become a premium cultural asset? This session will explore what that shift means for music and the relationships emerging around human creativity. As traditional revenue streams become more fragmented, forms of investment and partnership are emerging to support artists, music and the cultural ecosystems around them. From patronage and values-based investment to strategic partnerships with brands, these approaches are creating different ways to generate value around human creativity. For partners, these relationships can offer more than exposure: they provide authentic connections to audiences, communities and cultural scenes, while creating pathways to support and sustain the music itself. Can these models build a more sustainable economy around culture, connection and craft over scale and algorithms?

17:30 - 19:30

WIN 20th Anniversary Celebration powered by

Join us for an anniversary mixer celebrating the 20 years of WIN, powered by Beggars. Great connections, big energy, and a toast to what's next.

19:30 - 22:10

Global Toronto Showcases