

The **Agent of Change Award** is presented to a company that exemplifies a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their hiring practices, executive development, and promotion structure.

Submission #1

EnterGain

mikal@entergain.com

Since its founding, EnterGain, the recruiting, upskilling and strategy firm for the music ecosystem, has filled hundreds of roles at all levels, always providing companies with access to the most diverse talent pools available. Over half of EnterGain's placements are women and nearly a third are diverse individuals.

EnterGain has facilitated numerous learning programs for music companies, and a number on a gratis basis to members of music industry trade associations. EnterGain's programs build skills in mentoring, inclusive leadership, balanced communication and more. These workshops support diverse workplaces and ensure that all individuals have the tools to achieve their full potential and contribute to enterprise growth.

And whether or not they are formally engaged in a project, EnterGain's founders and consultants have earned a reputation for being accessible, making themselves available to people on an informal basis as they navigate their careers in the music business.

Mikal Celentano, EnterGain
mikal@entergain.com | 9179225238

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Submission #2

United Voices 4 Peace

sabbagveronica@gmail.com

United Voices 4 Peace is a cultural diplomacy initiative fostering a universal culture of peace through music and the arts. Supporting underrepresented artists, it champions diversity and inclusion as catalysts for peacebuilding and social justice. In this context, the organization launched in 2023, its flagship and groundbreaking initiative, "Global Women in Music" in celebration of International Women's Day. It consists on a concert by the United Nations Symphony Orchestra, exceptionally conducted by a female conductor and featuring only music by female composers from around the world, to advance gender equality on the world stage.

UV4P has also produced the "Global Women in Music " documentary, streaming on Herflix, to raise awareness on the need to advance gender equality in the music and film industries.

Additional Links:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/d3nf5w0ci1lgpohb4a6oq/gwim_trailer_720p.mp4?rlkey=sn9hq99fq0lvryxu1wsbmeli7&st=e8o1tdqh&dl=0

https://www.herflix.com/custom-details-herflix?id=674d22f3e4b09b2c3bdc4a89&type=vod&fbclid=PAY2xjawlGZwRleHRuA2FlbQlxMAABpm-Ucz2VWsTckQ-QMeOISFDZGb0zwBvcPUBieFcf55lQA-wsvrcbDL5DBA_aem_22HHjObLWLwoUdhVDMJnJg

Veronica Sabbag, United Voices 4 Peace
sabbagveronica@gmail.com | 8456501903

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Submission #3

SOCAN Foundation

charlie.wall-andrews@socan.com

We are nominating SOCAN Foundation for the 2025 Agent of Change Award. SOCAN Foundation has long been at the forefront of promoting a more inclusive music industry, with a mission to support and celebrate Canadian music creators, while actively embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion principles across its awards, programs and partnerships.

SOCAN Foundation's awards, programs and grants are designed to empower creators from all walks of life, focusing on equity-driven initiatives that reflect the diversity of Canada's music industry. Below are just some of the programs and awards offered by SOCAN Foundation that directly support underrepresented communities:

- Her Music Awards: Highlights and celebrates female-identifying creators in the music industry.
- Indigenous Song Camp: Empowers Indigenous music creators to explore new writing styles, collaborate, build community, and showcase their work to Canadian music industry professionals.
- Equity X Production Development Program: Developed to address the lack of diverse representation among producers, this program provides training, resources, and access to networks to elevate marginalized voices in production.
- CBC & SOCAN Foundation Indigenous Music Residency: A four-week program that supports six First Nations, Inuit, and Métis music creators with mentorship, resources, and community engagement, culminating in a public showcase of commissioned works.
- Residency for Francophone Artists-Entrepreneurs Outside of Quebec: Addresses the Francophone minority situation in Canada by supporting Francophone artist-entrepreneurs outside Québec, helping to balance the artistic and administrative aspects of their careers.
- Black Canadian Music Awards: Designed to celebrate extraordinary Black Canadian music creators.
- Grants: SOCAN Foundation provides grants to Canadian music creators, publishers, and organizations, promoting the appreciation of Canadian music in today's society and beyond. In 2024 alone, \$811,000 in grants helped expose over 3 million people to Canadian music and supported the creation of 839 new works. An additional \$166,000 was distributed in award prizes, celebrating a variety of genres. These grants not only amplify Canadian voices but also help alleviate financial barriers, empowering artists who require assistance to participate in meaningful programs and opportunities.

You can learn more about SOCAN Foundation's awards, programs and grants at <https://www.socanfoundation.ca/about/>.

To ensure our organization remains committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in every initiative we support, SOCAN Foundation staff regularly participates in DEI training and development, such as Indigenous Protocols Training, to continuously learn about the issues faced by marginalized communities, grow our understanding, and ensure the music industry is an inclusive and safe space for everyone.

Dr. Charlie Wall-Andrews, Executive Director of SOCAN Foundation, is a dedicated leader in diversity and inclusion whose impact extends throughout the entire Canadian music industry. Among many other awards and distinctions, she recently received a Mitacs Award to study Canada's music industry's enablers, barriers, and challenges with the Diversity Institute. Her commitment to creating a better future for the creative industries shines through her leadership at SOCAN Foundation.

Additionally, as part of the SOCAN group of companies, we are committed to creating a workplace that is equitable, diverse and inclusive. You can read more about SOCAN's framework for change attached, or by following this link: <https://www.socan.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/SOCAN-EquityDiversityInclusion-and-Anti-Racism-Action-Plans-CPAMO-Summary-Report.pdf>

SOCAN Foundation exemplifies what it means to be an Agent of Change by ingraining DEI into our awards, programs, and organizational development. We actively strive to create a more inclusive future for Canadian music professionals and creators. We're excited to submit this application and are confident that our work demonstrates the importance of DEI in the Canadian and global music industry.

Additional Links:

https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/242-356fb1eb487abf4fd3b5dd1a78f06caa/2025/01/SOCAN-EquityDiversityInclusion-and-Anti-Racism-Action-Plans-CPAMO-Summary-Report.pdf

Britt Ralph, SOCAN Foundation
brittany.ralph@socan.com | 905-751-5888

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Submission #4

mtheory

ed@mtheory.com,

Part of mtheory's commitment to diversity and inclusion, the Equal Access program was launched in April 2022 to give artists and talent managers from underrepresented demographics [Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQ+, and women] the resources, training, and networking opportunities they are not always afforded in Country Music. Three years and three cohorts of six artists or managers later, the three pillars of Equal Access remain:

- Provide funding to all participants to help them grow their business.
- Provide the expert, personalized support mtheory is known for.
- Connect the participants with key industry leaders.

A fourth cohort is being selected now for 2025 ...

In addition, mtheory has invested funds and resources on internal DEI education. Our mission: to help make mtheory a place of diversity, inclusion, equality, and opportunity for all.

What we do:

- Educate staff around DEI and assist with DEI x HR related issues (by way of an external consultant)
- Create informational resources around DEI, shared monthly with the full staff
- Create DEI resources for new employees
- Work to diversify client roster.
- Determine organizations and charities for mtheory to donate to each year
- Overall make mtheory a more inclusive place by way of guided staff discussions, team-bonding events, etc.

Ed Rivadavia, mtheory
ed@mtheory.com | 9172870291

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Submission #5

DIMA

elle@dima.org,

DIMA prides itself on being a diverse association that is focused on opportunities and growth for employees of all backgrounds regardless of their race, ethnicity, creed, sexual orientation, and religion. We strive to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters creativity and engagement.

We are proud that our Board is comprised entirely of women executives who are leaders at both their own companies and within DIMA.

DIMA's staff is 60% female, and we strive to highlight diverse voices in all that we do.

Elle Walters, DIMA
elle@dima.org | 9046242523

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Submission #6

Collective Entertainment

emily@c-ent.com

The Agent of Change Award honors an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion—principles that Emily White has passionately championed throughout her remarkable career in the music industry. A true industry veteran, Emily has quietly and sometimes unknowingly worked to open doors for music industry professional from all backgrounds.

At Collective Entertainment, a boutique firm founded by Emily, she has cultivated a culture rooted in inclusion and empowerment. She has a remarkable track record of hiring and promoting talented individuals from diverse backgrounds, creating pathways for them to thrive in the industry, some like myself have gone on to win awards, recognition and honors in the industry, during or a few short years after working alongside or within projects founded by Ms. White. By offering opportunities both remotely and in person, Emily has ensured that professionals who might have been overlooked elsewhere are given the platform and tools to succeed.

As someone who was hired and mentored by Emily, I've experienced this commitment firsthand. Emily not only welcomed me into her world but also ensured I had a voice and a seat at the table—a table she has continued to expand with work that is now impacting voting rights and sparking conversation about the future of the music industry and activism. Her leadership and mentorship have profoundly shaped my career and the careers of countless others who have at one time or another interned, collaborated or worked with her. Emily and I met at a time where I was discouraged by the industry and had just lost opportunities due to covid. She immediately began identifying my strengths and developed opportunities for me within her own work at the time. It never felt like I was being given these opportunities on anything else but merit, however her efforts to help someone she had just met via a networking connection, quite literally changed my life.

Emily's dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion extends beyond her own team. During the pandemic, when much of the music industry was at a standstill, Emily co-created #iVoted with a team of music industry professionals from across the world and hundreds of students from diverse backgrounds. Together, we built an initiative that not only gave these individuals meaningful work but also produced the largest digital concert in history. Featuring hundreds of artists such as Billie Eilish, Run the Jewels, Los Lobos, and Trey Anastasio, #iVoted empowered communities in key swing states by booking talent based on voter turnout data. This effort brought attention to the importance of civic engagement while showcasing Emily's ability to unite people for a greater purpose. I'm currently the Event Director for #iVoted, which has since gone on to produce over 18 free concerts during the 2024 presidential election cycle, partnering with Live Nation Urban to further expand our reach.

Through #iVoted and the newly formed Music Votes Coalition, Emily has brought together professionals from BIPOC-owned firms, nonprofit organizations, major labels, indie agencies and the world's largest promoter Live Nation by fostering collaboration and amplifying diverse voices within the industry. These

initiatives exemplify her belief in using her platform to create inclusive opportunities and inspire meaningful change.

Beyond her leadership and initiatives, Emily is also a guiding light for independent artists worldwide. Her #1 music business podcast, *How to Build a Sustainable Music Career and Collect All Revenue Streams*, and her Amazon best-selling book of the same name have become essential resources for those navigating the industry. For indie artists who may not yet have the budget to hire a team, Emily's book—priced accessibly—and her podcast, which provides free, actionable advice, are invaluable tools. This work exemplifies her deep commitment to making knowledge and resources available to everyone, regardless of their current circumstances.

Though Collective Entertainment is a boutique firm, Emily's influence is felt across the music industry and she often operates quietly. Many who have worked with her have gone on to achieve incredible success, myself included. Emily nominated me to join Pollstar's 2024 Next Gen Impact Honoree list, not only did she do this without my knowledge or expectation but refused to take any credit when I thanked her for it. My name is now among a very short list of industry professionals who paving their way in the industry and advocate for impactful work.

Emily's leadership is a testament to what the Agent of Change Award represents. Her quiet yet transformative efforts have built are helping build a more inclusive, equitable, and collaborative music industry—one where talent from all backgrounds can flourish. For her tireless dedication to empowering others, fostering diversity, and creating lasting change, Emily White is truly deserving of this honor. You may not have heard of Emily in rooms where major labels are cutting deals or millions of dollars are being spent but in the rooms where independent artists, boutique firms, budding young talent and some of the most recognized entrepreneurs in the industry sit, there is likely a story one of them can tell you about an encounter with Emily White, and it's always one where unlikely collaboration fostered growth and impact.

Emily White, Collective Entertainment
lesly@c-ent.com | 3059049062

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Submission #7

Big Condo Records

Emilieculshaw@bigcondorecords.co.uk,

Big Condo Records has changed the lives of many people. putting on events such as “girls and their bands” “women in music showcase” supporting female artists in the industry. The forward thinking of the record company has made a name for itself with a passion for nurturing emerging artists and bands, investing time and effort into developing careers— a commitment often overlooked by more traditional labels.

Emilie Culshaw, Big Condo Records
Emilieculshaw@bigcondorecords.co.uk | 7757406962

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Submission #8

A2IM (American Association of Independent Artists)

lisa@a2im.org

At A2IM, diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values embedded in every aspect of our operations, from hiring to executive development. We actively seek a diverse pool of candidates, ensuring that our recruitment processes are free from bias and focused on attracting talent from all backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Recognizing that the music industry itself is historically rooted in the celebration of cultural and artistic diversity, A2IM prides itself on its commitment to fostering an environment where individuals from all walks of life can contribute, grow, and succeed. In our hiring practices, we prioritize fairness and accessibility, implementing strategies to eliminate systemic barriers and offer equal opportunities to individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups within the music business.

As this year ushers in our 20th anniversary, we are proud to share that over 60% of team A2IM consists of women in high level roles – a statistic that is overwhelmingly uncommon in this industry (even in 2025). Additionally, our executive development programs, such as the A2IM Mentorship Program, are designed to provide mentorship, growth opportunities, and leadership training to music business professionals of all identities and skill levels, ensuring a clear pathway for advancement in their respective fields. Our promotion structure is transparent and based on merit, with a commitment to recognizing and rewarding talent and potential, regardless of race, gender, or background. A2IM's comprehensive approach not only fosters an inclusive workplace culture but also drives innovation and influence that, hopefully, reverberates throughout the greater music industry as a whole.

Arielle Aslanyan, The Syndicate
arielle@thesyn.com | 2018640900

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Submission #9

Equal Access

cameo@mtreey.com

The Equal Access Development Program is a trailblazer in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the country music industry. With a mission to empower artists and managers from underrepresented demographics, the program provides critical financial resources, tailored training, and invaluable networking opportunities, dismantling systemic barriers that have historically limited access to success in this genre. Equal Access goes beyond surface-level initiatives, creating sustainable change by championing authentic representation and providing tools for lasting impact.

By prioritizing equitable access at all levels of the industry, from entry points to executive development, Equal Access exemplifies the principles of the Music Biz Agent of Change Award. Their innovative approach has not only amplified diverse voices but also redefined inclusion in country music, setting a new standard for others to follow.

Additional Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBfyqiKZxMw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0-TRXu7t-g>

Chantrel Reynolds, mtheory
chantrel@mtreey.com | 6155745721

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Submission #10

Saskhia Menendez

msaskhia@gmail.com

Saskhia is a dedicated advocate in the music industry, committed to breaking barriers, championing diversity, and fostering inclusion. With over a decade of experience, she has made meaningful contributions as an Innovator at Keychange and a former Board Member at The F List Music. Saskhia also has a voluntary role as a LiVE Diversity Expert Panel Member, which reflects her passion for improving representation, equity, and inclusion. She is a voting member for the Brit Awards in both 2023 and 2024.

Born into a disadvantaged family with two deaf parents, Saskhia faced early challenges. After spending time in care, she lived with her grandparents, both World War II veterans. A multi-racial trans woman who transitioned 14 years ago, Saskhia brings a unique perspective to her advocacy, working to reshape the music industry's landscape. She holds an MA in Music Marketing, completed in 2021, which supports her ongoing efforts in gender equality in music, particularly focusing on trans and non-binary inclusion.

Creating new tracks slated for release in 2025 and hosts the podcast "Music Industry Insights Worldwide." Her work has been recognised in various ways, an Inductee in the Roll of Honour Women in Music 2023. In 2024, awarded a Global Recognition Award for her services to music and entertainment and was nominated for the Access All Areas Inclusion and Diversity Award in both 2023 and 2024. Additionally, Saskhia featured in the book "Candid," discussing misogyny in music, and was part of the Misogyny in Music Inquiry in 2023. In addition to her music industry efforts, Saskhia is active in the digital space. Her YouTube channel, which has garnered over 320k views, serves as a platform for discussions on equality and diversity, amplifying underrepresented voices.

Saskhia plans to release a trans charter for the UK and worldwide, aiming to establish clear guidelines and support for trans individuals in the music industry. As a role model for the trans community, especially trans women, she is dedicated to building allyship across all underrepresented groups and highlighting the challenges faced in music and entertainment. Recognised as an LGBTQIA+ Role Model and a recipient of Global Diversity and Inclusion honours, Saskhia strives to create a more inclusive and equitable landscape in music and entertainment. Through her projects and collaborations, she continues to advocate for diversity and equality, making a positive impact on the industry.

Additional Links:

https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/242-356fb1eb487abf4fd3b5dd1a78f06caa/2024/11/27-Speaker-Story.png

https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/242-356fb1eb487abf4fd3b5dd1a78f06caa/2024/11/Misogyny-In-Music-Report.pdf

https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/242-356fb1eb487abf4fd3b5dd1a78f06caa/2024/11/Unite-Advocate-Thrive-updated-750x500.jpg

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https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/242-356fb1eb487abf4fd3b5dd1a78f06caa/2024/11/download-1.jpg
https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/242-356fb1eb487abf4fd3b5dd1a78f06caa/2024/11/AAA-CA2024-finalist-image.jpg

Rayez Webster Baidoe, Global Equality Collective
rayezwebster@gmail.com | 7407434644