

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

Women in Music Canada

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Women in Music Canada is producing ground breaking programs that are moving the needle in equitable change in the music industry. Their tireless work for their over 2100 national members is making real impact and showing success across all sectors of the music industry. Specifically for this award, I wish to recognize their Leadership Accelerator Program. Presented with liaison partners ADVANCE Canada's Black Music Industry Collective, the International Indigenous Music Summit, and ArtHaus, this program prepares women and gender-diverse professionals for executive leadership roles.

Based on the vision that true, sustainable change will only be seen when we change the face of leadership across the music industry, this program takes 16 mid-level industry professionals through interactive, case study based learning that prepares them for the next steps in their careers. Each participant participates in 10 interactive learning modules with lvey level instructors, 1:1 executive coaching, a 360 review and character wheel assignment and moves through the program building a strong, supportive leadership community that lives on long after the program end. In the most recent year of the program 25% of participants advanced to promoted levels in their companies within the fits two months after graduation proving the program is working.

The program was built passionately and is structured and curated with an equity lens, and focus on advancing a diverse mix of leaders. The results are told best by the graduates themselves.

Testimonials from past Leadership Accelerator graduates:

"I am truly grateful for the transformative experience I had in the Women In Music Canada leadership accelerator program. This program not only honed my leadership skills but also provided invaluable networking opportunities, new leadership insights that I have started to use and propelled my ongoing career trajectory forward. Through mentorship, coaching and guidance, I gained the confidence to navigate challenges unique to women of colour within the corporate environment. Today, I stand stronger, more empowered, and better equipped to lead as a dynamic innovative thought leader. This accelerator program has been a game-changer, opening doors and paving the way for my continued success." Sharon Hinds

"The WIMC Leadership Accelerator was an invaluable experience. Learning from a wide range of industry professionals helped me build confidence in my decision-making and leadership skills, and provided practical tools that I know I'll carry with me throughout my career. Just as importantly, the bond formed within our cohort was incredibly strong — I'm grateful to have made lasting professional relationships with a group of peers who understand the unique challenges and opportunities of working in this industry. I'm incredibly grateful for the support system I know I'll carry with me for the long haul!"

"The Women in Music Canada Leadership Accelerator did exactly what it promised: I entered as a competent, experienced, but perhaps tentative professional and emerged with new confidence, new skills, and a new network that will help propel me into the next stage of my music industry career. The world-class faculty delivered a curriculum that prepared me for real-world challenges and helped build the emotional intelligence

and self-awareness to make me an effective leader. Perhaps the most rewarding, however, are the relationships I built with fellow participants. We now have a close-knit, trusted group of peers and continue to build upon the open dialogue we fostered in the program. The leadership accelerator was, in a word, transformative."

"The Women in Music Canada Leadership Accelerator was a transformative experience that gave me the confidence, knowledge, and community support I needed to grow as a leader in music, while also connecting me with an inspiring group of women. Participating in the WIMC Leadership Accelerator was one of the most meaningful experiences of my career. Connecting with women and gender-diverse professionals from across the music industry and nationally, broadened my perception of what leadership truly looks like. Leadership isn't defined by a specific role or style - it's rooted in authenticity, resilience, and a willingness to grow. The program gave me not only practical tools but also the confidence to step further into my own leadership style. Through mentorship, collaborative sessions, and honest conversations, I gained new perspectives which has strengthened my strategic thinking in my day-to-day. The Leadership Accelerator has genuinely elevated how I show up in my work, and it continues to motivate me to contribute to a more inclusive and empowered music industry. "

"My experience in the inaugural Women In Music Leadership Accelerator program was truly transformative, both professionally and personally. The program provided an invaluable platform for women across Canada to hone in their leadership skills, specific to the music industry, fostering a supportive environment for growth and collaboration. Through insightful sessions and mentorship, I gained a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities for women in this field. The connections I made and the knowledge I acquired have empowered me to navigate and excel in my career with newfound confidence and clarity. I am immensely grateful to the Women In Music team for the opportunity to have been part of this enriching program."

It is for these reasons and these lives changed through programming that I nominate Women in Music Canada as an Agent of Change.

Please also see the program video created with the past graduates of the program:

<https://vimeo.com/1092597585?fl=pl&fe=cm>

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Submission #2

EnterGain

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For over a decade, EnterGain has been the go-to choice for music companies with hiring, upskilling, and strategic human resource needs. We partner with founders and senior executives to grow their businesses, mitigate risk, and drive a welcoming, diverse environment where their employees can contribute to culture, so that they can better meet the needs of their customers, artists, and fans.

Within the Music Biz community, EnterGain has supported many member companies in fostering a more inclusive workplace. Our work to build and strengthen diverse teams is seen through, but not limited to the following projects:

- A growing record label wanted to expand its revenue generation by directly approaching the sync music market. EnterGain helped them identify and hire an experienced woman to manage this area of their business and drive future revenue.

- An industry leading rights management company, hired EnterGain to place 6 Vice Presidents, half of whom were women and/or persons of color, to lead significant areas of growth and key elements of their ongoing business. Additionally, working with the senior management team last year, EnterGain facilitated an inclusive process to refresh the company's values, mission, and vision statements, gathering input from all levels and departments.

A European-based private-label music distributor enlisted EnterGain to identify and hire their first Chief Operating Officer with the remit of growing the business by scaling the organization's infrastructure and reaching across cultures globally.

- A funded start-up engaged EnterGain to guide them as they assembled their complete HR stack – identify and evaluate industry standard employee benefits and select a PEO to support the benefits needs of a growing remote workforce. This role as a trusted HR business partner continued until the company was sufficiently large to hire their own full-time HR staff. In addition to helping with many initial hires, EnterGain has placed their General Counsel and Head of Finance and BD, both of whom come from different diverse backgrounds.

- EnterGain worked closely with a diverse US team at a European consumer tech company to strengthen their cultural intelligence. We developed and delivered bespoke upskilling sessions on inclusive communication, fostering trust, working across cultures, and delivering on mutual commitments. Months later we connected with program participants at an industry conference where they were still quoting the models and tools from the sessions, and shared successes in how they were applied for improved workflows, collaboration, and decision- making across teams.

- EnterGain partnered with a trade organization to create an exclusive program for the senior leaders

from select companies in their membership community focused on leadership upskilling. The three-part program included modules on working across personalities, inclusive communication, and situational leadership. The program led to follow up work with several of the companies that the leaders represented.

- The CEO and the Chairman of a UK based global rights and technology organization worked with EnterGain to review their HR practices for market competitiveness and, where possible, to equitably harmonize employee compensation, benefits, policies, and practices globally. EnterGain introduced several best practices and bespoke solutions. EnterGain's senior team crafted and implemented several solutions around policy, total rewards and org design, and was available for ongoing fractional CHRO guidance. The organization was able to attract, retain, develop, and promote key staff, while launching new features, negotiating more partnerships, and attracting more clients globally.

Our work highlighted above is a fraction of what EnterGain does to be a committed leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Internally, EnterGain is 50% woman owned and our team is made up of 50% female employees and 33% employees of color. It is our diverse team that allows us to provide our clients with the right tools they need to be inclusive organizations and leaders.

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Submission #3

Adarga Entertainment Group

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Adarga Entertainment Group is an independent minority-owned company with over 200 clients, 14 thousand music assets, 11 billion video views, and 12 billion audio streams. Adarga's clients have been recognized in major music awards, including GRAMMY®, Latin GRAMMY®, Dove Awards, Monitor Music Awards, and Premios Arpa. The company boasts a 65% female workforce, including its CEO, Alexandria Davila. Its core services are music consulting, artist development, marketing, event production, publishing, and distribution to independent artists and record labels. Founded in 2007, the team is based in Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Guatemala City, and Bogotá.

Vision: Create an artist-centered music industry.

Mission: Represent artists through a productive, dedicated, honest, and equal partnership.

"Advance your Talent and Creativity"™

VIDEO: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DJq_yry_xMcsqN00gVQiAV7V-PO8D_FS/view?usp=drivesdk

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Submission #4

Down in the Valley

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I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to nominate the remarkable store "Down in the Valley" for the prestigious Agent of Change Bizzy Award. This store has truly made an incredible impact on their community through its unwavering support for marginalized groups.

Their dedication to advocating for equality and justice is inspiring. They have consistently taken a bold political stand against the current situation in Minneapolis, using their platform to voice the need for change and support those who are often affected.

The Store Down in the Valley has become a beacon of hope and progress. Their efforts in promoting social justice and equality make them a deserving candidate for the Agent of Change Bizzy Award. I am confident that their recognition will further inspire others to follow in their footsteps and contribute to positive change in our society.

Thank you for considering this nomination.

Erik Freeman, Alliance Entertainment
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Submission #5

The Orchard

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Now in its sixth year, The Orchard's employee-led Council for Equity and Progressive Action (CEPA) tackles issues of equity and inclusion to drive change within the company and beyond. CEPA's primary goal is to ensure The Orchard is an overall equitable and inclusive organization by upholding these three pillars: minority representation, employee retention and elevation, and social reform - in collaboration with the departments of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and Human Resources.

Since its initial launch in 2020, CEPA has presented to and educated the global company many times by sharing goals, resources and opportunities to help strengthen The Orchard community as a whole. CEPA created and hosts a hub on the internal company website to ensure that all documents and resources are easily accessible to employees around the globe, which includes a Hiring Manager Toolkit developed to avoid bias in hiring decisions. Additionally, CEPA has compiled several books, articles, podcasts, videos and documentaries that are informative as it relates to antiracist development.

CEPA led the charge on implementing company-wide inclusivity training. Broken up into seven cohorts, each group was invited to share their own stories in two engaging workshops titled, "Building a Culture of Belonging" and "Authentic Allyship vs. Performative Allyship." With over 300 participants, across 14 sessions, these sessions fostered a safe space for individuals to reflect and listen to their coworkers, share their experiences, and learn how they can become better, authentic allies.

The Orchard also created the role of Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion shortly after CEPA launched. This individual leads the CEPA Council and implements their expertise throughout the organization and community. Below is a testimonial from Naledi Nyahuma Seckwho fills this role:

As Vice President of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at The Orchard, I've seen firsthand the powerful impact of CEPA since its founding in 2020. What began as an employee-led initiative has grown into a driving force for equity across our company. Through their focus on Representation, they've partnered with departments to improve how we hire and develop talent, including creating a Hiring Manager Toolkit to reduce bias. With Retention & Elevation, their ELEVATE program has empowered emerging leaders through mentorship and coaching. And through Social Justice, CEPA has extended our impact far beyond our walls—supporting 35 organizations globally through the Sony Social Justice Fund and hands-on community work. CEPA embodies what's possible when people come together with purpose. Their dedication continues to shape a more inclusive and equitable future for The Orchard—and I'm proud to support their mission every step of the way.

Renee Oliver, The Orchard
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Submission #6

Women in Music Organization (WIM)

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We are proud to nominate Women in Music Organization (WIM) for The Agent of Change Award, celebrating their outstanding commitment to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the music industry. For over forty years, Women in Music has educated and celebrated its diverse members and built communities across borders. More recently, Women in Music's innovative initiatives, such as the WIM Safe(r) Spaces Initiative, WIM Mentorship Program, WIM Ambassador Program, WIM Workplace Initiative, WIM Internship Program, and ongoing educational and career development programming stand as a testament to their dedication to educating, empowering and advancing women in the music industry to make a lasting impact.

The WIM Safe(r) Spaces Initiative (Resource Directory [here](#)), seeks to create a safer, more supportive environment for individuals facing the trauma of sexual harassment and abuse. The first phase of the initiative produced the WIM Safe(r) Spaces Resource Directory, which serves as a critical guide, bridging the gap for those feeling isolated or unsure of where to seek support, and highlights Women in Music's proactive approach in building an inclusive, compassionate music community.

Additionally, the WIM Mentorship Program exemplifies a commitment to diverse, inclusive leadership by equipping women of all career stages with essential skills to move into influential decision-making roles. The program's personalized mentorship structure ensures that each participant receives tailored guidance, while broader programming reaches a wide audience, empowering the next generation of industry leaders. Women in Music's continuous work towards an equitable, inclusive music industry makes them an exemplary candidate for the Agent of Change Award.

Our WIM Ambassador program was created to engage, highlight, and celebrate women of distinction in our industry who may not have time to volunteer with WIM in a day-to-day or committee capacity, but who are passionate about our mission and able to advise and participate in occasional WIM events and initiatives.

In 2025, WIM will launch the WIM Workplace Initiative, a groundbreaking effort aimed at creating a more inclusive, transparent workplace culture across the music industry. This program will enable WIM to analyze industry trends while maintaining an independent repository of data, empowering members to freely share experiences without feeling pressured to report through internal company channels, such as HR. By taking this approach, WIM aims to provide music companies with aggregated, data-driven perspectives on workplace culture, all while prioritizing member anonymity and inclusivity.

The WIM Internship program is designed to help build greater equity across the music industry. By leveraging Women in Music's global community and industry network, the program provides meaningful career and educational opportunities for qualified, passionate interns driven by curiosity, ambition, and a genuine desire to make an impact.

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Submission #7

SonoSuite

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SonoSuite is nominated as Agent of Change because it treats diversity, equity, and inclusion as a strategic driver of sustainable growth rather than a standalone initiative. The company has embedded equity into its hiring, leadership development, and promotion practices, achieving gender parity across the organization in 2025 and maintaining a balanced workforce as it continues to grow.

Beyond representation, SonoSuite demonstrates structural commitment through near-parity at senior management level, transparent promotion criteria, active Employee Resource Groups for women and the LGBTQIA+ community, and formal reporting channels that reinforce psychological safety and accountability. Initiatives such as SheBeats further amplify impact by increasing the visibility and influence of female talent across the organization and the wider music tech ecosystem.

This sustained, measurable approach has been externally recognized by IMPALA, which selected SonoSuite for its Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Report in both 2024 and 2025. Together, these actions position SonoSuite as a company driving meaningful, long-term change in how equity is built into business performance and leadership in the independent music sector.

https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/266-23e0771286fbdfa63f4e63e07eba4d50/2026/01/Agent-of-Change-SonoSuite.pdf

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Submission #8

Vinyl De Paris

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Vinyl De Paris is committed to green environmental practices and local community employment. See the presentation deck attached regarding our efforts.

https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/266-23e0771286fbdfa63f4e63e07eba4d50/2026/01/Vinyl-De-Paris-presentation-deck.pdf

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Submission #9

Merrithew Music Co.

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I am nominating Jacob Merrithew for the Agent of Change Award because he is a young artist making a profound impact on his community and the broader music industry through his work. Jacob wrote and independently released the song "988," which centers on mental health awareness and suicide prevention, inspired by the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

What sets Jacob apart is his ability to transform music into a movement for social good. Since releasing 988, he has reached thousands of listeners, sparked meaningful discussions around mental health, and encouraged people to seek help and support when they need it. Beyond the music itself, Jacob has actively engaged his audience through social media, lyric videos, and community outreach to amplify the song's life-saving message.

Jacob demonstrates exceptional leadership, initiative, and empathy, taking full responsibility for his music career while ensuring his work drives positive societal change. His dedication to using his talent to help others embodies the essence of an Agent of Change in the music industry, inspiring both peers and audiences alike.

For his creativity, impact, and commitment to making a difference through music, Jacob Merrithew is a standout candidate for the Agent of Change Award.

<https://open.spotify.com/album/2briKU4NdfkLeXdxRUYMH0?si=mdwG03NeTheW1wZ-KXRuSQ>

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Submission #10

Sassy Records Ltd

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I am nominating Saskhia Menendez / Sassy Records Ltd for the Bizzy Awards in recognition of transformative work advancing equity, inclusion, and workforce empowerment in the music industry. Saskhia Menendez is a music industry professional, recording artist, songwriter, podcast host, and diversity and inclusion advocate, best known for her work on equity and trans inclusion globally, including founding the Global Trans Charter for the Music Industry.

Saskhia's early life shaped her resilience and advocacy. Born to deaf parents and raised partly in care before living with her grandparents, both WWII veterans, she overcame communication barriers and social inequality. She became a young parent at 18 and holds an MA in International Music Marketing (2021), studied songwriting at Berklee College of Music, TESOL at Cambridge, and earned a BA in Events, Music & Media Management.

Through the Global Trans Charter, Saskhia has created actionable frameworks supporting trans and non-binary professionals. Since its launch in May 2025, the Charter has garnered support from 34 countries, over 1,345 downloads, and 600 supporting signatures, illustrating its international impact. She mentors emerging talent, advises industry stakeholders, and leads initiatives that reshape industry standards worldwide.

Saskhia hosts Music Industry Insights Worldwide, contributes to parliamentary inquiries on misogyny and safety in music, and speaks at international conferences and events including WOMEX, Reeperbahn Festival, IMS, ESNS, MMF Canada, SoundGirls, and other global speaking engagements. Her digital influence includes 78% audience growth, 999% increase in new listeners, 50% more followers, and 47% top-fan loyalty.

Her achievements include International Trans Champion (2025), Policy & Advocacy Award – Global Trans Charter (2025), Night Time Economy Ambassador (2025), Global Recognition Award for Music (2024), and induction into the Roll of Honour – Women in Music (2023), among many others. She has also been invited to the United Nations CSW for her work in equality and empowerment.

By combining creativity, advocacy, and leadership, Saskhia Menendez and Sassy Records Ltd exemplify the spirit of the Bizzy Awards: advancing the music industry while fostering a workforce culture that is inclusive, equitable, and forward-thinking.

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Submission #11

EMPIRE

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EMPIRE has an exceptional track record of hiring practices that exemplify diversity. Their staff is over 50% female and the overall staff is primarily POC. The staff exemplifies diversified hiring. The company has also been very focused on developing both POC and women into executive roles. Compared to the rest of the music industry EMPIRE has culture of supporting diversity in both hiring and development of staff. There are multiple programs in place around both all rooted in a strong belief that team members that are part of the culture we help support is integral to our success.

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