

Private radio and the drive to stardom



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Winnipeg native Remy Shand took the world by storm last year with the release of his earthy, jazzy single, *Take a Message*. The public noticed and embraced his music. He received critical acclaim for his “fresh” and “soulful” sound. His album, *The Way I Feel*—written, recorded and mixed by Shand—has been certified Platinum in Canada.

Four Grammy Award nominations topped off a year of accolades and awards for Shand. Multiple nods at the Prairie Music Awards, four Canadian Radio Music Award nominations and, possibly, more than a few Juno nominations, also make up the year's acclaim for Shand.

Success like that of Remy Shand's is

not new. Canadian music performers are household names. Céline, Avril, Shania and Alanis attest to the vibrancy and originality of Canadian talent. The variety of genres, the originality of sounds, and the tremendous success of Canadian artists has proven that talent is not lacking in Canada.

Increasingly, though, it takes more than just talent to make it big. A star system that drives success—and album sales—is key. Ensuring that there is a healthy pool of well-funded, talented artists is key to the success of Canadian music. Canadian private radio is crucial to that process.

Before records are bought, new singles from established and emerging artists can be heard on various radio formats in the country. Radio provides name and song recognition to artists who often have little to no promotional resources. The love of music is what drives radio broadcasters to promote local artists.

Cancon requirements have a lot to do with the support of Canadian artists on-air. Currently at 35% all-day Canadian content, it ensures presence on-air. Cancon is sound public policy. But it doesn't propel artists to stardom. It doesn't go the extra mile to make stars that we can get excited about. Cancon is only one of a number of drivers at work, putting Canadian artists on top. In that spirit, private radio has led the way in the encouragement and support of emerging artists.

The Radio Starmaker Fund, or its French-language equivalent Fonds Radio-Star, as well as FACTOR, MUSICACTION and Canadian Heritage's Canadian Music Fund are key to the growth of Canadian talent, beyond the one-hit wonder. These funds are steps in the right direction to strategic and innovative ways to complement Cancon requirements.

Created in 2000, the Radio Starmaker Fund has made a substantial and discernable difference to the careers of Canadian artists. From a pool of benefits created from transactions in the radio industry,

Radio Starmaker directed funding to promising artists. This is the strategy that Canadian private radio broadcasters and the music industry have devised to propel the likes of Sum 41, Ron Sexsmith and Wide Mouth Mason to national and international stardom.

To date, over \$3.5 million has been awarded by the Radio Starmaker Fund. And in its last round of funding it committed more than \$600,000 to 10 artists, many of whom are already on their way to stardom thanks to investment by private radio broadcasters.

What's more, these investments work. They have produced results. Canadian artists are known worldwide and sought after. One way to evaluate the success of Canadian talent is to look at recognition from peers and by leaders in the industry. Canadians who received nods at this year's Grammy Awards include Avril Lavigne, Chad Kroeger of Nickelback and Remy Shand, Diana Krall and children's entertainer Cathy Fink.

This year the CAB presented the Sixth Canadian Radio Music Awards (CRMAs) March 1 during Canadian Music Week in Toronto. Among those nominated were Avril Lavigne, Crush, Jarvis Church, Glenn Lewis and Sam Roberts, to name only a few. Radio stations aired PSAs featuring artists talking up the importance of the awards and the important contributions they make to the artists' careers. Since their inception, the CRMAs have celebrated the success of Canadian talent and the cooperation between the music industry and private radio broadcasters.

The importance and the contribution of private radio in creating Canadian stars are often over-looked. Private radio-led initiatives like the CRMAs and the Starmaker Fund help nurture careers of talented Canadian artists, by encouraging them and assisting them to compete in the marketplace. Private radio introduces to its public, the stars of tomorrow. With these contributions, the smooth, soulful sounds of Remy Shand will endure.