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Breaking the States: Windsor's Gateway Radio Market (1967-1999)

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By

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ABSTRACT

Windsor, Ontario was the most important gateway radio market within Canada throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The successful integration of two of its commercial radio stations within the highly competitive Detroit radio market, CKLW “The Big 8” and 89X “The Cutting Edge,” provided Canadian recording artists with an exceptional opportunity to break into the potentially lucrative U.S. popular music market. While the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission’s nationalist policies would prove challenging to implement within the borderlands context and require plenty of compromise, its Canadian content regulations nevertheless further enhanced the gateway radio opportunity for Canadian recording artists.

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INTRODUCTION

The Canadian content regulations imposed upon Canadian radio stations in 1971 opened the commercial airwaves to the country's recording artists in an unprecedented manner, greatly improving the odds of sustaining careers domestically. However, a limited population and distantly separated major urban centres, combined with the allure of the rich American musical legacy, continued to drive Canadian artists' attention south of the border. Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, one radio market in particular was uniquely positioned to provide an exceptional opportunity to break careers beyond national borders and into the potentially lucrative U.S. popular music market.[1] Windsor, Ontario, located across the river from Detroit, Michigan, is the only Canadian city immediately adjacent to a major American city. With its proximity to the Detroit metro region, as well as Toledo and Cleveland, Windsor's radio stations provided access to a potential audience of upwards 8 million, largely American listeners.[2] In 1971, that would equate to an audience the size of nearly 40% of the entire population of Canada.[3] Windsor was the only domestic radio market which could provide access to such a large American audience. This made it the gateway radio market of Canada. Numerous careers were significantly impacted, with some outright transformed, as a result of support from the market's two most successful commercial

[1] Kelli Korducki, "They're Listening: Border-town Radio Stations Remain A Vital Southern Link for Canadian Musicians," *This* 45, no. 4 (Jan/Feb 2012): 27; Ritchie Yorke, "Artist Claims CKLW's Keen Interest Affects U.S. Hits in Popularity and In Sales," *Billboard*, May 19, 1973, 58.
[2] "Radio Station CKLW Renewal of Licence 1969," *Canadian Radio and Television Commission*, Ottawa, February 4-6, 1969, 83.
[3] The Canadian population in 1971 was 21,568,311; "1991 Census Highlights," *Statistics Canada*, March 1994, 4, accessed September 11, 2019, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/statcan/rh-hc/CS96-304-1994-eng.pdf.

stations, CKLW "The Big 8" and 89X "The Cutting Edge." These stations have been credited, to varying degrees, with opening the American popular music market to artists such as The Guess Who, Skylark, Gordon Lightfoot, Edward Bear, Tragically Hip, Barenaked Ladies, Our Lady Peace and Sloan.

CKLW "The Big 8" is Windsor's most celebrated radio success story. It launched its rebranded format in the spring of 1967 and quickly came to dominate the Detroit radio market, remaining the #1 ranked station for five years.[4] CKLW has been considered one of the most influential North American radio stations of the era and is recognized for its role in helping revolutionize the way in which modern radio was delivered.[5] By the mid-1970s the station began its long and slow decline, finally folding its hit music format in 1983. The Canadian content regulations have been unfairly centred out as the main reason for the demise of the station's popular music format. But an increasingly fragmented radio market, resulting from the rise in popularity of FM radio, combined with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)'s strict FM format regulations, also played critical roles in the AM station's inevitable fall in ratings.[6] CKLW was also not the only important commercial radio station of note within the border market, though its grand success has mostly overshadowed the others. The largely forgotten CJOM-FM, was the rebellious and experimental radio station throughout the 1970s and 1980s that agitated for the

[4] *Radio Revolution: The Rise and Fall of the Big 8*, DVD (Toronto: Markham Street Films Inc., 2005).
[5] Ibid.
[6] Charlie O'Brien, "The Demise of the Big 8: Laying a Giant to Rest," *The Classic CKLW Page*, accessed August 1, 2019, https://www.thebig8.net/demise.html; "CKLW: Double Market Dilemma," *Billboard*, August 7, 1982, CKLW-6.

regulatory changes which would pave the way for Windsor's next great radio success story. In 1984, CJOM daringly stared down the CRTC, the radio regulatory and licencing body, blatantly disregarding its "Promise of Performance."[7] This forced the Commission's hand to properly consider the unique challenges experienced within the highly competitive and tightly contested border radio market. Its bold efforts led to numerous exceptions created for the Windsor radio market alone, most importantly the development of a new class of experimental FM licence. Other key changes were a reduction in required Canadian content, news and talk, and permitting a higher hit music percentage than elsewhere within Canada.[8] The resulting "flexible approach" towards the border market allowed for its two FM stations to more easily compete with the unregulated American stations blasting their signals across the border from a mere one mile away. With the benefit of these changes, 89X "The Cutting Edge" launched in 1991 and took the Detroit market by storm, reviving the gateway radio market once again.

It was through CKLW and 89X's successful integration within the Detroit radio market which the exceptional opportunity for Canadian recording artists to break into the U.S. was presented. The Guess Who in 1969 scored a regional Detroit hit with the single "These Eyes," following CKLW's support. This quickly led to an American deal with

[7] "Public Notice CRTC 1984-23," *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission*, Ottawa, July 23, 1984, accessed July 22, 2019, https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1984/pb84-23.htm.
[8] "Canada Agrees to Ease Programming Rules of Some FM Stations," *Wall Street Journal*, September 26, 1984, 1.

RCA and the song eventually becoming their first Top 10 *Billboard* hit.[9] But The Guess Who was an exception to the rule. Until the Canadian content regulations of 1971, few Canadian artists gained access to the country's commercial radio stations, including those stations alongside the U.S. border. However, the cultural nationalist policies proved to be more challenging to implement within a borderlands context. Any CRTC regulations which hindered a border radio station's ability to compete within the regional American radio markets, especially Windsor, threatened stations financial viability, lessened the potential for Canadian recording artists to reach a large American audience and in some cases dramatically eroded the Canadian audience. Most Canadian radio markets were more insular, meaning the regulations applied to all. But in a marginal market like Windsor, where it had to compete for listeners with over 50 unregulated Detroit stations, the CRTC regulations were less effective. Imposing regulations upon border radio stations to force a Canadian orientation then, required a significantly more flexible and nuanced approach than throughout the rest of the country. It was through this compromise that the gateway opportunity for Canadian recording artists was further enhanced.

While the impact of the Canadian content regulations have been well documented and considered within national borders, missing from the historiography is the impact the regulations have had beyond the national border. By focusing on the Windsor radio market, it is hoped to reposition the perspective towards an outward

[9] Susan Whitall, "Burton Cummings Brings Long List of Pop Hits to Caesars," *The Detroit News*, March 3, 2016, accessed September 11, 2019, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/statcan/rh-hc/CS96-304-1994-eng.pdf; "The Hot 100: The Week of May 31, 1969," *Billboard*, accessed July 10, 2019, https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/1969-05-31.

looking orientation and add an international angle to the existing Canadian content narrative. The paper will first, provide a brief overview of the regulations and explain why they were deemed necessary. Next, the main reasons for Canadian recording artists' continued interest in expanding into the U.S. market will be highlighted. Third, attention will be given to CKLW "The Big 8" and its impact within the market, influence upon the next generation of radio, and a reconsideration of its demise as a hit radio station. Finally, 89X "The Cutting Edge" will be drawn into the gateway radio narrative, highlighting its parallels with CKLW and role in launching the next generation of Canadian recording artists into the Detroit radio market and beyond.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHODOLOGY

Since the mid 1980s, Canadian popular music has increasingly registered upon the radar of Canadian academia. The first wave of historians looked to the transitionary period of the late 1960s into the 1970s and focused on how the Canadian State, riding a groundswell of rising nationalist sentiment, intervened within the domestic music industry, imposing Canadian content regulations upon the nation's radio stations. Consideration was given to the role and purpose these regulations performed in the process of nation building, the impact the regulations had upon the domestic recording industry and how it successfully spurred an immediate flurry of economic activity.[10] A

[10] Barry K. Grant, "'Across the Great Divide': Imitation and Inflection in Canadian Rock Music," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 116-27; Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Robert A. Wright, "'Dream, Comfort, Memory, Despair': Canadian Popular Music and the Dilemma of Nationalism, 1968-1972," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1987): 27-43; Will Straw, "The English Canadian Music Industry Since 1970," in *Rock and Popular Music: Politics, Policies, Institutions*, edited by Bennett, Frith, Grossberg, Shepherd and Turner (London: Routledge, 1993): 52-65.

great deal of focus has been centred on the aesthetics of Canadian popular music produced during the cultural nationalist experiment throughout the second half of the twentieth century, and it has generally concluded that the Canadian content regulations failed to deliver a truly unique Canadian sound.[11]

Beginning in the 2000s, a new generation of historians began to shift their focus away from an inward looking perspective towards a more continentalist approach and began considering how the cultural interventionist State evolved and adapted throughout the 1990s, adjusting for the rise of austerity-driven governments.[12] Bart Testa and Jim Shedden went as far as saying that Canadian content regulations were obsolete and should be discarded, proclaiming "the protective scaffolding of Cancon had done its job and had become irrelevant, musicians are now stronger than the rules themselves."[13] This argument is no less controversial and divisive today than it was twenty years ago upon delivery. Throughout the scholarship, not surprisingly, there also tends to be a pre-occupation with the ever-present U.S. cultural influence upon Canada, though this was not a domestic concern alone. Internationally, scholars have studied how various countries responded and tried to limit American cultural hegemony, illustrating that Canada did not act in isolation while imposing their own cultural nationalist agenda. Countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Zimbabwe, France and

[11] Edwardson; Wright.
[12] Bart Testa and Jim Shedden, "In the Great Midwestern Hardware Store: The Seventies Triumph in English-Canadian Rock Music," in *Slippery Pastimes: Reading the Popular in Canadian Culture*, ed. by Joan Hicks and Jeanette Sloniowski (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2002): 177-216; Monica Gattinger and Diane Saint-Pierre, "The 'Neoliberal Turn' in Provincial Cultural Policy and Administration in Quebec and Ontario: The Emergence of 'Quasi-Neoliberal' Approaches," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 35, no. 2 (2010): 279-302.
[13] Testa and Shedden, 207.

South Africa enacted similar policies, all in an attempt to offset the impact of American cultural influence and to provide protection for their domestic recording artists and industry.[14] Yet the Canadian experience is somewhat unique in that it borders directly with the U.S. and thus many Canadians have developed a complex relationship with their American neighbours, especially those living within the border communities.

While this may be a marginal borderlands circumstance, it is not one which is inconsequential. It can be argued that for Canadian recording artists, the Canadian content regulations imposed upon radio have been the most important and impactful pieces of legislation enacted to date. The legislation significantly improved opportunity for artists to live and work domestically. While maybe not its intent, the legislation also helped to expand opportunities beyond national borders, through the country's gateway radio markets situated alongside the U.S. border. This potential was most significantly realized through the programming support of Windsor's two most successful commercial radio stations, CKLW and 89X. A continentalist approach is necessary in order to consider the movement of cultural influence, especially the rarely considered reverse direction, from Canada into the United States. The voices of government and media tend to be most prominently heard throughout the existing scholarship, so a concerted effort will be made to place the musicians' perspective within that dialogue. Concerns over aesthetic integrity will be left to the music critics

[14] Martin Cloonan, "Pop and the Nation-State: Towards a Theorisation," *Popular Music* 18, no. 2 (May 1999): 193-207; Marcel Machill, "Musique as Opposed to Music: Background and Impact of Quotas for French Songs on French Radio," *The Journal of Media Economics* 9, no. 3 (1996): 21-36; Shane Homan, "Local Priorities, Industry Realities: The Music Quota as Cultural Exceptionalism," *Media, Culture and Society* 34, no. 8 (2012): 1040-1051.

and not be considered here whatsoever, only of interest will be the impact the legislation has had upon the country's recording artists. The CKLW story has received an immense amount of attention over the past decade and there will be an attempt to further build upon that narrative and reconsider the impact cultural nationalism had upon the station. An attempt will also be made to lay the foundation for the next generation of the CKLW story, bringing in the success of 89X on the FM dial into the equation. For sources there has been a focus on newspapers, music trade journals and radio interviews to pull out the perspectives of both musicians and the radio stations. The CRTC archives have proven to be a great resource for balancing out that dialogue providing the government perspective. It is hoped that this paper will add to the overall understanding of the impact of the Canadian content legislation upon Canadian recording artists and the Windsor radio market since its enactment.

CANADIAN CONTENT REGULATIONS (Cancon)

The pre-Canadian content regulations era has been well summarized by Eric Spalding "as a dark age for Canadian popular music on the radio."[15] Within an increasingly vibrant national music community, which began developing in the 1950s and would thrive throughout the 1960s, serious frustration set in amongst those involved within the domestic music industry. This frustration revolved around Canadian recording artists' inability to gain access to the domestic commercial radio airwaves. In 1969, the major national radio markets "were programming less than one per cent of

[15] Eric Spalding, "Turning Point: The Origins of Canadian Content Requirements for Commercial Radio," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 50, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 670.

local talent."[16] This had to do with a few reasons. Most importantly, commercial radio stations did not wish to risk programming unproven domestic material, especially when they had access to sure-shot hits from the U.S. market through their subsidiaries in Canada. It was guaranteed advertising dollars by sticking to the proven *Billboard* ready-made hits supplied from the United States.[17] As a result, domestic artists got the squeeze as stations were unwilling to take chances with the untested. Also, the major broadcasters were generally hostile towards any outside pressure to consider Canadian artists for airplay, "we have asked [the major stations] to evaluate each Canadian release on its merit alone, they reply 'Don't ram Canadian down our throats.'"[18] It is under these circumstances that an attitude developed within the radio industry that Canadian artists were "lacking, somehow inferior."[19] Folk singer Murray McLauchlan was quoted as saying, "the art being produced, no matter its quality, was destined for the trash, just because it was homegrown."[20] Even gaining an audience with a music director from the commercial radio stations seemed beyond reach for most Canadian recording artists. There was little chance for a fair shake and this had an immense impact upon both the music creators and producers of content.

This exclusion from the domestic airwaves led to an exodus of creative domestic talent south of the border. It also crippled the domestic music industry and resulted in

[16] Ritchie Yorke, "Legislated Radio," *RPM* 10, no. 19 (6 January 1969): 8, accessed April 1, 2019, http://rpmimages.3345.ca/pdfs/Volume+10-No.+19-January+6%2C+1969.pdf.
[17] Ibid., 8.
[18] *RPM* 1, no. 14 (25 May 1964): 2, accessed April 1, 2019, http://rpmimages.3345.ca/pdfs/Vol+1%2C+No.+14+-+Week+of+May+25%2C+1964.pdf.
[19] Bernie Finkelstein, *True North* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2012), 88.
[20] Ibid., 1.

significant economic losses for the country. Despite the scene in Toronto's Yorkville in the 1960s, including such notable acts as Neil Young, Gordon Lightfoot, Joni Mitchell, Ian and Sylvia, and Buffy Saint-Marie, all now considered international music icons, at this time there was no English-Canadian recording music industry of any strength that could facilitate establishing careers domestically and beyond. As creator of *True North Records* Bernie Finkelstein put, "in the end there just weren't the opportunities here to make a career, never mind a record, so they left."[21] So, many of the country's best and brightest recording artists left in a "heavy exodus" out of necessity as it was nearly impossible to establish a commercial career of any significance north of the border.[22] Exclusion from the airwaves also crippled the domestic recording industry. Rock critic Ritchie Yorke put it this way, "[g]etting right down in the nitty gritty, no manufacturer creates merchandise that is not going to be exposed in the public. It doesn't matter whether he's in the business of selling baked beans, tractors or records; he must have an outlet."[23] So while a number of companies took an initial chance, it was impossible to sustain such financial efforts when there was little hope of receiving exposure on the public airwaves, the essential medium for record exposure and sales. The result being that a domestic English-Canadian recording industry could never gain traction, despite numerous efforts and no shortage of talent. Along with the flight of artists leaving for the U.S., so too did a lot of money. Foreign ownership ruled the domestic popular music industry. In 1969, it was estimated that "98% of the rights to production, artist

[21] Ibid., 70.
[22] "Legislated Radio," *RPM* 9, no. 10 (4 May 1968): 2, accessed April 1, 2019, http://rpmimages.3345.ca/pdfs/Volume+9-No.+10-May+4%2C+1968.pdf.
[23] Ritchie Yorke, "Legislated Radio," *RPM* 10, no. 19 (6 January 1969): 8, accessed April 1, 2019, http://rpmimages.3345.ca/pdfs/Volume+10-No.+19-January+6%2C+1969.pdf.

performance, composition and publishing [were] foreign owned," and as a result "a great amount of this impressive total leaves Canada in the form of royalties."[24] With total foreign dominance of the commercial airwaves, production and publishing of music, this led to a situation where "the biggest export is money, and talent would be second."[25] But riding the rising tide of cultural and economic nationalism, the newly elected Trudeau-led Liberal government of 1968 actively formulated policies to address the increasing "concerns about foreign ownership of Canadian resources and the Americanization of culture."[26] As a result, for the first time, the music industry caught the attention of the federal government.[27] Despite an aggressive campaign to delegitimize the push for legislated radio by the commercial broadcasters and their supporters, the Liberal government nevertheless passed the Broadcast Act of 1968.

The Broadcast Act of 1968 was designed to "Canadianize the broadcast sector" and placed the newly formed Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) to oversee the policing and licensing of domestic media.[28] It recognized the arts as an industry of important significance deserving protection and it also tightened ownership rules to ensure that 80% of any radio station was Canadian-owned.[29] Through the Liberal-appointed Pierre Juneau-led commission, an amendment to the Broadcast Act

[24] "Legislated Radio," *RPM* 9, no. 15 (8 June 1968): 2, accessed April 1, 2019, http://rpmimages.3345.ca/pdfs/Volume+9-No.+15-June+8%2C+1968.pdf.
[25] Ibid., 2.
[26] Spalding, 673.
[27] Edwardson, 199.
[28] Ibid., 199; In 1976 the CRTC would be renamed as the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.
[29] This would present a significant challenge for CKLW in 1968, as at the time the Windsor station was owned by RKO General, a division of the American conglomerate Rubber Tire Company. RKO protested and requested an exemption for the Windsor radio market but it was denied by the CRTC. They were forced to sell the station off to Canadian company Baton Radio.

was enacted in 1970 mandating that AM radio be obligated to program 30% Canadian content beginning in 1971.[30] To determine what qualified as Canadian, the MAPL system was created.[31] MAPL breaks down as the following: musician, artist, production and lyrics. Two of these four categories had to be met in order for a song to be considered Canadian content. The very simple but effective Canadian content regulations provided the struggling domestic recording industry with protection and control over a new burgeoning market. It resulted in a major economic boom as investors raced to generate the homegrown content which radio stations were now required to program. Historian Robert Wright coined it as "the great scramble." [32] The quota system dramatically increased the domestic recording industry's activity. With the regulations being a great boost for the domestic recording industry, dramatically increasing their odds of recouping investments, they were just as importantly highly beneficial for the recording artists. Gaining access to the national airwaves would make it easier to break out beyond regional success and build an audience on a national scale, help sell records and better facilitate national tours. As intended, the legislation ensured that significantly more song and performance royalties would remain within the country instead of being funnelled out through foreign international companies.[33]

[30] Edwardson, 200.
[31] Ibid., 200.
[32] Wright, 30.
[33] Martin Melhuish, "The 30% Solution: Still Music to A Lot of Ears," *Maclean's* 89, no. 3 (February 23, 1976): 53.

WHY STILL GO SOUTH?

Even while the Canadian content regulations successfully opened the national airwaves to Canadian recording artists, positively impacting numerous careers and outright creating others, the lure of the U.S. market remained strong. This can be attributed to many factors but first and foremost, at its root was money.[34] The U.S. population is roughly ten times the size of that of Canada, so just the sheer potential of tapping into such a large market could be career transforming. As well, the major U.S. urban centres are situated geographically much closer to one another, which is logistically advantageous for touring. In Canada, for acts that perform the major concert venues like Toronto's famed Massey Hall, the next major stop westward would be Winnipeg. That is a distance of over 2,000 kilometres and roughly twenty continuous hours of driving, to perform in a city with a total population of 652,354.[35] Following that is Calgary, which is another 1,400 kilometres and over twelve more hours of driving. The effort and cost alone is obviously rather prohibitive, especially once you factor in crews, transportation and accommodations. Instead, if you head southwest from Toronto to Detroit, a four-hour drive and 420 kilometres, you arrive in a city of over a million people. Within a five-hour drive of Detroit you could be in any of Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis or Columbus. Within twelve hours, you have got Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Nashville or Kansas City. So logistically speaking, touring the U.S. with its more closely situated urban centres, provides the

[34] Sarah Chauncey and Sander Shalinsky, "O' Say Can You See? Canadian Musicians Crash Their Southern Border," *Canadian Musician* 20, no. 1 (Feb 1998): 34.
[35] "1991 Census Highlights," *Statistics Canada*, March 1994, 7, accessed August 12, 2019, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/statcan/rh-hc/CS96-304-1994-eng.pdf.

potential to dramatically cut travel and associated costs. This ideally results in increased earnings. The buying public within Canada is also a tenth of that of the U.S., meaning less potential for record and merchandise sales. Along with this, there are also a limited amount of venues to perform within. For an act that has grown beyond barroom capacity, it does not take long to cycle through the major venues nationally, and then again and again and again. During the height of their popularity within Canada, Chris Murphy from Sloan was quoted as saying, it is "like every second show seems to be at the University of Guelph."[36] In order to continuously work, it is necessary to revisit the major centres and tour stops possibly more often than some would like, and this can lead to market burnout.[37] So, while the Canadian content regulations significantly increased the odds of economic survival for recording artists within the national boundaries, certainly not a situation to be brushed aside but to be celebrated, nevertheless the limitations resulting from a smaller population and the geographical absurdity of the national touring circuit continued to drive Canadian recording artists' attention southwards towards the larger U.S. market, in hopes to more securely establish their careers.

U.S. validation also drove artists south of the border and those acts which successfully obtained the U.S. stamp of approval often experienced a significant boost within their domestic career profiles following such recognition.[38] It goes back to the era before Canadian content regulations came into effect, Canadian artists were inherently

[36] Gail Robertson, "Bring on the Night: Sloan in Control of Careers, Finally," *Windsor Star,* June 20, 1996, X3.
[37] Christopher Jones, "Divide and Conquer," *Words and Music* 5, no. 8 (Sep 1998): 10.
[38] Chauncey and Shalinsky, 34.

somehow considered to be second class artists by their fellow Canadians, as well as those within the national print media and radio, that is of course, unless they struck out for the U.S. and achieved success there first. Rock critic Larry LeBlanc noted in 1968, "Canadians remain here as sub-stars unless accepted by the American public."[39] It has been a difficult legacy to shake, a legacy that only began losing its credibility in the 1990s with the rise of national-only successes like the Tragically Hip and Blue Rodeo.[40] Yet old attitudes die hard and such notions continued to plague Canadian artists well through to the end of the century. It is a situation that many artists are keenly aware of. It is not uncommon to hear Canadian artists openly expressing their awareness of the situation with comments such as "we really want to go there, first of all to validate us," or by acknowledging the challenges of being respected domestically with "it's hard to ignore American success."[41] Being recognized in the U.S., where it is ten times more difficult to become established, is often more validating for the artists themselves than success based solely on the national scale. Endless amounts of evidence also illustrate that that was even more the case for Canadian citizens and the national media throughout much of the twentieth century.[42] The impact of U.S. recognition as a rule provides a positive boost for a domestic career. Our Lady Peace's experience in the 1990s is one of numerous examples. Their first two singles released nationally performed moderately well, but once their third single "Starseed" blew up in the U.S.

[39] Larry LeBlanc, "Problems in Canada," *Hit Parader*, 1968, in *Rock's Backpages*, accessed July 4, 2019, http://www.rocksbackpages.com/Library/Article/problems-in-canada.
[40] Don Lajoie, "Coming of Age," *Windsor Star*, June 29, 1998, A1.
[41] See Robertson, X3; Jones, 10.
[42] Gordon Matthew Donald Capel, "'Damned If They Do and Damned If They Don't': The Inferiority Complex, Nationalism, and *Maclean's* Music Coverage, 1967-1995" (master's thesis, University of Waterloo, 2007), 41.

they felt an immediate and significant bump nationally following the American recognition.[43] It is an infallible, tried, tested and true approach for success within Canada – go to the U.S. first, establish success there and then Canadian acceptance will follow.

CKLW AND THE BLUEPRINT FOR BREAKING THE STATES

One key gateway for Canadian recording artists attempting to break into the lucrative American popular music market, throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, was through Canadian border radio stations, especially those next to Seattle, Buffalo and Detroit. Windsor, being next to Detroit, was the most impactful on the three. Of the many border stations, one in particular stood in a class of its own and that was CKLW-AM. It was the "most powerful *border station* licenced in Canada."[44] With its proximity to and focus on penetrating the Detroit market, combined with its powerful 50,000-watt transmitter, CKLW proved to be immensely popular and profitable while at the same time providing an unprecedented opportunity for Canadian recording artists to gain a foothold within the United States.

CKLW-AM began broadcasting at the height of the depression in 1932, with a 1,000-watt transmitter, originally with the call letters CKOK. The following year it made the switch to CKLW and boosted its signal to 5,000-watts.[45] Throughout this period its

[43] Lajoie, A2.
[44] "Radio Station CKLW Renewal of Licence," *Canadian Radio and Television Commission,* February 4-6, 1969, 38.
[45] "CKLW-AM," *Canadian Communications Foundation*, accessed August 12, 2019, http://broadcasting-history.ca/listing_and_histories/radio/cklw-am/.

broadcast range was limited and locally focused on Windsor and Detroit. In 1949 this all changed when the station began broadcasting from a newly constructed 50,000-watt transmitter, located just outside of Harrow, Ontario, 40 kilometres east of Windsor. CKLW was now regional and could be heard clearly throughout Southwestern Ontario, Southeastern Michigan and parts of Northern Ohio. At night, with the right atmospheric conditions, it could be heard in upwards of a dozen different states, with reports of people calling in requests as far away as Florida.[46] The new transmitter dramatically expanded CKLW's potential audience, which in 1969 was calculated to be roughly 8 million people.[47] By the mid-1970s, the weekly listening audience was 2.3 million people.[48] CKLW's broadcast range included, along with Detroit, large urban centres like Toledo and Cleveland. If you consider the entire population of Canada in 1971, which was 22 million people, this one station alone had the potential to reach 8 million people within its range, an audience the size of 36% of the entire Canadian population, with 90% of that audience being American. Focusing on the U.S. market offered immense financial potential and when the American company RKO General bought the station in 1956 it orientated itself towards that market. It would become the only radio station in the country "primarily dependent upon a United States market for its livelihood," with 88% of its advertising revenues coming from across the river.[49] CKLW had over a million

[46] "Applications by CKLW Radio Broadcasting Limited for Renewal of Its Broadcasting Licences for CKLW Windsor and CKLW-FM Windsor," *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission,* September 30, *1976*, 218.
[47] CRTC 1969, 83.
[48] CRTC 1976, 202.
[49] CRTC 1976, 202.

more daily listeners than the next largest Canadian radio station, CFRB in Toronto.[50] But it takes much more than just a powerful signal and a large market to achieve market dominance.

In April 1967, CKLW rebranded itself as "The Big 8" and within the year it became the #1 ranked station within the Detroit market and remained firmly in that spot well into the early-1970s. The newly implemented Drake format with its bold radio style helped revolutionize not only how radio and media was delivered but how it would be consumed. Michael McNamara's documentary *Radio Revolution: The Rise and Fall of the Big 8* explores in depth the inner workings of CKLW "The Big 8."[51] At its core was excitement and speed, "a never-ending sledgehammer pulse."[52] Its format relentlessly pumped out Top 40 hits in assembly line like fashion. Its newscasters made the news as exciting as the music and the "audio wizardry" of its engineer Ed Buterbaugh pushed the capabilities of the AM frequency, sonically separating the station from all others on the dial.[53] CKLW resonated with the rising power of a youthful new generation that demanded to be listened to just as much as the station did itself. CKLW was "the station" in Detroit for a time. There was never a dull moment on CKLW and it could be heard everywhere, blasting out of cars passing by and from homes and businesses. It was the all-pervasive hum of the region.

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[50] Robert Martin, "Super-Monster Rosalie Trombley is Queen of the Top 40 Charts," *Globe and Mail*, January 13, 1973, 25.
[51] *Radio Revolution*, DVD.
[52] Ron Base, "What Rosalie Likes, Almost Everybody Likes," *The Globe and Mail*, May 26, 1973, A7.
[53] Dave Taylor, "The Three Who Made The Big 8 Great," *Dave Taylor*, January 14, 2017, accessed July 10, 2019, http://www.dave-taylor.ca/the-three-who-made-the-big-8-great/.

This was also the period when Detroit was establishing its great music mythology, and CKLW is deeply woven into that fabric. It played all the Motown hits from Stevie Wonder, Martha Reeves & the Vandellas, The Temptations, Diana Ross & the Supremes and many more. It also played the foundational Detroit rock 'n' roll stuff too, from The Stooges, MC5, Bob Seger, Mitch Ryder to Alice Cooper. Many if not all of these artists would cross the border into Windsor to do promotional spots on CKLW, as airtime on the #1 station in Detroit was highly coveted and could significantly impact one's career, regionally and beyond. CKLW combined R&B and rock 'n' roll in a way no other station within the market was programming and as a result of its integrated playlist it became known as the "blackest white station in North America."[54] This was key to their market dominance through pulling in swaths of both African American and white listeners in a way other stations were not. The music produced in Detroit throughout the 1960s and 1970s helped establish Detroit as arguably one of the most important music cities of the twentieth century, and to this day it still carries a certain amount of cachet which few cities around the world can match.

While it may appear that CKLW turned its back on the Canadian market, and on a level this is certainly true, it is important to note that the Windsor market alone is only capable of only supporting so many stations. Had CKLW focused exclusively on the Windsor market it would have likely financially failed, or at the very least, been greatly challenged. Radio broadcasts do not respect international boundaries, as CKLW had proved by becoming the #1 rated station within the Detroit, Toledo and Cleveland

[54] *Radio Revolution*, DVD.

markets simultaneously.[55] But the situation also works in reverse. Out of market tuning was rampant in Windsor and continues to be so to this day, especially with the rise in popularity of FM radio beginning in the late 1960s. Windsor residents would have a choice of upwards of 54 locally originating Detroit radio stations, and a 120 in total when counting the surrounding area.[56] This is a market concentration unlike anywhere else within Canada. By the early 1980s, a study concluded that 75% of Windsor residents at any given time were listening to American radio stations.[57] The Windsor and surrounding areas potential listenership was between 450,000 to 500,000.[58] Only a quarter of that Windsor regional population was tuning into Canadian radio, meaning, if the Windsor stations solely focused on the Canadian audience alone then the four commercial stations within the market would be fighting over a very small pie indeed, all the while there being a huge potential audience of 8 million people regionally left ignored and within listening range. CKLW chose to centre itself on the American market, it had the broadcast capabilities and resources to pull it off, and it did so very successfully. This in turn helped the other Windsor stations by providing them with a niche to more properly service the Canadian audience.

Music was the driving force behind CKLW's success and behind the scenes picking the hits was the trailblazing single mother of three, from Leamington, Ontario. Rosalie Trombley started out as a receptionist and switchboard operator and eventually

[55] Ibid.
[56] Larry LeBlanc, "Border Stations Feel U.S. Squeeze," *Billboard*, February 8, 1992, 36.
[57] "Public Attitudes and Preferences to Radio Programming in the Windsor-Detroit Area," *Joint Communications Corp* (Toronto, June 1984), 9C.
[58] CRTC 1969, 83.

rose through the ranks to become its famed music director and known within the media and music industry as "the girl with the golden ear."[59] Rosalie for a time was "the single most powerful female in the pop music business" because of her ability to identify hits.[60] She was known within the industry as tough as nails when it came to dealing with the relentless waves of record label promotional salesmen always selling the next big thing.[61] When Rosalie added a song to the CKLW Big 30 playlist, stations from across North American took note. She programmed for the regional market, and in order to do so, she relied upon her musical instincts and a vast local network for precise data collection on the regional music buying and listening habits.[62] At this time Detroit was a trendsetting market which other U.S. markets looked to and with CKLW at the top of the heap, what it programmed mattered.[63] Her golden touch impacted careers as diverse as Elton John, Diana Ross & the Supremes, Bob Seger, Kiss, and Alice Cooper. Bob Seger immortalized her with his 1973 song "Rosalie," which Irish rock band Thin Lizzy would go on to have a minor hit with in 1975. But Rosalie's knack for picking a hit was not limited to American and Detroit artists exclusively. When Rosalie identified a Canadian hit, she programmed it and with the largest listening audience of any Canadian radio station, which also happened to be mostly American, this provided an exceptional opportunity for Canadian artists to expand their audience stateside.

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[59] Bob Talbert, "CKLW's Rosalie – The Most Powerful Lady in Popdom," *The Detroit Free Press*, October 10, 1971, 7.
[60] Ibid., 7.
[61] Ron Base, "What Rosalie Likes, Almost Everybody Likes," *The Globe and Mail*, May 26, 1973, A7.
[62] "Rosalie Trombley: Record Breaker, Hit Maker," Billboard, August 7, 1982, CKLW-2, accessed September 9, 2019, https://www.americanradiohistory.com/Archive-Billboard/80s/1982/BB-1982-08-07.pdf.
[63] Talbert, 8; Walter Ivan Romanow, "The Canadian Content Regulations in Canadian Broadcasting: A Historical and Critical Study" (PhD diss., Wayne State University, 1974), 196.

Gordon Lightfoot acknowledged the impact the border station had upon his career in a *Detroit Free Press* interview saying that because of the support of CKLW, "Detroit was the first major urban American city you could find yourself in."[64] In the late 1960s, CKLW played a notable role in breaking Canadian artists into the Detroit market and beyond. Legendary Canadian music producer Jack Richardson, the producer of The Guess Who's hit single "These Eyes," in an interview said, "oh yes [Rosalie] played it, in a matter of fact it broke out of that market. Detroit was the breakout market. We sold more recordings in the Detroit area than we did in the entire country here in Canada."[65] With the breaking of "These Eyes" into Detroit, we can see how important and financially lucrative CKLW's support could be, as the result of gaining the backing of its music director Rosalie Trombley. Following their regional hit with "These Eyes," The Guess Who would almost immediately sign an American deal with RCA, a major U.S. record label.[66] The song would then be re-released stateside and earn the band its first Top 10 *Billboard* hit, peaking at #6 and selling a million copies in the process.[67] Within a year, The Guess Who would hit #1 on the *Billboard* charts with "American Woman." Without CKLW's support, it is hard to imagine any of this would have happened. Burton Cummings of The Guess Who, while introducing the Walt Grealis Special Achievement Award for Rosalie said, "[s]he was an unbelievable supporter of us… I've had an unbelievable ride in show biz for close to 50 years now. Without Rosalie Trombley in

[64] Alfrieda Garibou, *Lightfoot* (Toronto: Gage Publishing Ltd., 1979): 26.
[65] *Radio Revolution*, DVD.
[66] Susan Whitall, "Burton Cummings Brings Long List of Pop Hits to Caesars," *The Detroit News*, March 3, 2016, accessed September 11, 2019, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/statcan/rh-hc/CS96-304-1994-eng.pdf.
[67] "The Hot 100: The Week of May 31, 1969," *Billboard*, accessed July 10, 2019, https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/1969-05-31.

those early days, I really don't think I'd be standing here talking to all of you tonight."[68] There is possibly no better example to illustrate the potential impact a border radio station could have upon a Canadian career than with CKLW and The Guess Who. Their success in the Detroit market and ability to spin it into international success provided an exciting blueprint for other Canadian recording artists, as they demonstrated what could potentially be achieved through success within the Detroit market as the result of Canadian border radio support.

The passing of the Broadcast Act of 1968 and its subsequent amendment in 1971, requiring all Canadian AM radio stations to program a minimum of 30% Canadian content, opened the door for Canadian artists largely excluded from Canadian airwaves previously. While you can point to examples such as The Guess Who which found success on CKLW previously to the content regulations, they were an exception to the rule. Few Canadian acts received CKLW support before 1971. This presented the first wave of Canadian acts following the state legislation with an exceptional opportunity to break into the lucrative Detroit market and significantly expand their audience beyond national borders. Rosalie commendably unearthed numerous Canadian hits which performed very well in the market and would break beyond the Detroit market to enjoy wider success, such as Edward Bear's "Last Song," Gordon Lightfoot's "If You Could Read My Mind," The Bells "Stay Awhile" and The Stampeders' "Sweet City Woman."[69]

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[68] "Backstage at the 2016 JUNOS: The Weeknd, Buffy Sainte-Marie Snag Early Wins," *NMC Amplify*, August 3, 2016, accessed July 10, 2019, https://amplify.nmc.ca/backstage-at-the-2016-junos-the-weeknd-buffy-sainte-marie-snag-early-wins/.

[69] David Carson, *Rockin' Down the Dial* (Troy, MI: Momentum Books, 2000): 236; Ritchie Yorke, "Artist Claims CKLW's Keen Interest Affects U.S. Hits in Popularity and In Sales," *Billboard*, May 19, 1973, 58.

Bachman-Turner Overdrive, The Poppy Family, Five Man Electrical Band, Motherlode and Burton Cummings also found notable support from the station. CKLW's desperation to fulfill its mandated quotas provided a number of Canadian acts with an opportunity for airtime which they likely would have previously been excluded from.

One particularly interesting case is Vancouver's Skylark with their 1973 hit single "Wildflower." Rosalie Trombley had passed on the original single being pushed by their record label Capitol and instead picked up on that song. After programming it for three months straight, the only station in North America to do so, "Wildflower" became a regional Detroit hit. Capitol took note and then pushed the song U.S. wide following Rosalie's support and this resulted in the single hitting #9 on the *Billboard* charts and going gold in Canada.[70] It is unlikely Skylark would have broken through into the U.S. in such grand fashion without the Canadian content legislation opening up room for them to be programmed. But the Skylark example is interesting for another reason as well. It also perfectly illustrates the difficulties CKLW had in fulfilling the mandated Canadian content quotas. CKLW was a heavily R&B focused hit station and Skylark provided R&B content during a time when there was an incredible dearth of Canadian produced R&B. You have to wonder if it almost became a hit by accident. The Canadian music industry was still very much in its infancy and was incapable of delivering the hit quality R&B, week after week, which CKLW relied upon for its market dominance.[71] This would eventually force CKLW to largely drop R&B from its playlist, losing their African-

[70] Nat Freedland, "Skylark Flying on 'Flower' Power," *Billboard*, September 15, 1973, 17.
[71] *Radio Revolution*, DVD.

American audience in the process, and would play an important role in CKLW's declining ratings.[72] Those within the radio industry fully blame the imposition of Canadian content regulations as the main factor for dooming the station. Poking a hole in that narrative is the fact that CKLW continued to improve upon its market ratings throughout the first two years of the new quota law, which would suggest it was possible to accommodate Canadian music while managing to remain successful within the Detroit market. But that may have had as much to do with the various tactics the station employed to burn off their Canadian content requirements in order to remain within compliance, such as programming the Canadian songs at nighttime when the audience numbers were less meaningful and splicing songs down into one-minute lengths. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that by not being allowed to program music that resembled the region, forcing the station to drop its heavy R&B focus, handcuffed CKLW and this had an incredibly negative impact upon the station.

The Canadian content regulations are an easy target for which to place the entire blame of CKLW's demise upon but by doing so would be to ignore that the radio market was beginning to rapidly fragment at the time that CKLW's ratings began to slip. The rise of FM was a significant factor in their ratings decline. The superior sounding quality of FM stereo was much more suited for broadcasting music than AM and as car radios and home receivers became equipped with the FM band, the music audience began to defect in droves over to the superior sounding FM stations. Significantly, it was the youth audience that was rapidly gravitating towards FM. They were attracted by its

[72] Ibid.

higher quality sound and less formulaic free-form presentation which featured longer deeper album cuts with a much greater variety than could be heard on the tightly programmed AM hit stations. FM was exciting and new. Advertiser influence over the format was also not yet as dominant as it was upon AM since there was still little audience data collection available for FM in its early ascendency.[73] This allowed for more room to experiment throughout the early days of FM. CKLW was aware of the increasing importance of FM as is evident with their application to the CRTC to flip their hit music format from AM over to FM and re-launch as "The Fox."[74] The CRTC denied their request since the Commission's regulations required that FM stations program less than 50% hit material. Thus, it could be argued that the rise of FM radio combined with the strict Canadian FM format regulations had as much to do with CKLW's demise than the challenges of programming Canadian content did. With the denial of their FM application and following a long period of hemorrhaging money CKLW raised the white flag, fired its staff and switched formats to what is referred to as "Music of Your Life," that of big band music.[75] CKLW's decline was inevitable with the rise of FM but there is no doubt that the CRTC regulations prevented the station from properly adapting to the changing marketplace. CKLW's lobbying of the CRTC for market exemptions and relief fell upon deaf ears. In ignoring the station's repeated calls of warning, the CRTC played a significant role in prematurely ending the station's once dominant reign over the Detroit radio market.

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[73] Christopher H. Sterling, "Decade of Development: FM Radio in the 1960s," *Journalism Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (Summer 1971): 228.
[74] *Radio Revolution*, DVD.
[75] Ibid.

CRTC AND THE "WINDSOR RADIO REVIEW"

Following the demise of CKLW in 1984 it became apparent to the CRTC that imposing a strict cultural nationalist agenda upon border radio markets such as Windsor would prove to be challenging and largely a failure. With the Canadian audience largely abandoning the Windsor stations for Detroit stations, the CRTC was forced to reconsider the challenges of the market and this resulted in the recognition of its unique situation. While it was too late for CKLW as a hit radio station, the CKLW example remained a warning to the CRTC that it must create certain exemptions for markets such as Windsor if it wished to not lose radio signals outright. The CRTC's denial of the FM application completely ignored the regional circumstances of existing within an unregulated major American market, and the Commission remained stuck upon the belief that a forced Canadian orientation in programming would actually result in an increased Canadian audience.[76] But the reality was, by the early 1980s, over 90% of the youth market in Windsor were tuned into American FM radio.[77] Canadian FM stations required to program less than 50% hit material could not compete with the unregulated stations of Detroit. As a result, Canadian youth simply tuned out and switched the dial over to the U.S. stations where they could hear the music they wished. This ruling marked a low point for the Windsor radio market and their relations with the CRTC but it also proved to be a turning point, since following the ruling the CRTC was forced to begin to seriously consider the challenges of the market.

[76] CRTC, "Decision 83-897."
[77] "Public Notice CRTC 1984-233," *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission*, Ottawa, September 25, 1984, accessed July 22, 2019, https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1984/pb84-233.htm.

Behind the CRTC's acknowledgment of Windsor as a unique market was the very real threat of losing radio stations within the market. From 1981 to 1991, all four commercial radio stations in the market were operating at a loss.[78] Trillium, then owners of CKLW and CKLW-FM, warned the CRTC of the potential of their stations seizing to even exist following a decade straight of financial loses. With this looming threat a real possibility, the CRTC decided to more closely examine the challenges of the border radio market. This led to the "Windsor Radio Review" in 1984, which would acknowledge the unique challenges of the Windsor radio market as a result of intense competition from unregulated Detroit stations and from existing within a heavily congested radio market. It was a situation unlike anywhere else within Canada.[79] The review would provide the foundation for which all future CRTC decisions would be based upon. Even while acknowledging the challenges of existing so closely to a major American market, the CRTC was still "[n]ot persuaded that the audience and revenue problems described at the public hearing [were] caused by its policies and regulations," though the rampant out of market tuning by the Windsor youth searching for a format that was not allowed by the CRTC would suggest otherwise.[80] Coming out of the review was the recognition that the Windsor radio market required "an exceptionally flexible

[78] "Decision CRTC 93-38," *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission*, Ottawa, January 29, 1993, accessed July 22, 2019, https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1993/db93-38.htm.
[79] CRTC, "Public Notice CRTC 1984-233."
[80] CRTC, "Public Notice CRTC 1984-233."

approach."[81] Numerous Windsor-only market exemptions and exceptions would follow over the next decade.

CJOM, Windsor's most important and successful FM station to this point, forced matters to the fore when it "spearheaded the 1983 rebellion against the CRTC."[82] Perhaps thinking it had nothing left to lose, following years of staggering financial losses, or that it had no other choice considering the hardline stance the CRTC took with denying CKLW's move to FM, CJOM went rogue and openly disregarded the CRTC regulations. The station began to broadcast a popular music format and programmed "significant departures from the station's authorized Promise of Performance," programming only 14% Canadian content, 78% hits instead of the less than 50% required and changing its format towards a younger audience.[83] In response, the CRTC softened its stance and began to show some flexibility towards the Windsor market as a result of CJOM's open defiance. The CRTC created "a new class of FM licence, namely an experimental licence."[84] This allowed stations such as CJOM and CKLW-FM to experiment with their format to figure out what will work within such a tightly competitive market. This ruling also allowed for a higher percentage level of hits and repeat factor. Of great importance to the Windsor stations, which they relentlessly lobbied for over the years, was that the CRTC reduced their Canadian content

[81] "Decision CRTC 85-158," Canadian Radio-television and Communications Commission, Ottawa, March 29, 1985, accessed July 22, 2019, https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1985/db85-158.htm.
[82] Henry Mietkiewicz, "Windsor Wooing Back Listeners" *Toronto Star*, Feb 15, 1986, F1.
[83] "Public Notice CRTC 1984-23," Canadian Radio-television and Communications Commission, Ottawa, July 23, 1984, accessed July 22, 2019, https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1984/pb84-23.htm.
[84] "Public Notice CRTC 84-316," Canadian Radio-television and Communications Commission, Ottawa, December 21, 1984, accessed July 22, 2019, https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1984/pb84-316.htm.

requirements from 20% down to 15%.[85] This relief was provided to allow the stations to be more competitive with the American stations. The Windsor stations would go further and push for 10% and at times even 5% but did not receive the results that they had hoped for, with instead the Canadian content requirements being eventually raised back up to 20%.

There were other forms of CRTC regulations relief as well. While the CRTC placed a heavy emphasis on the importance of news on the Windsor stations to help maintain its Canadian orientation, even this aspect was reduced. Whereas Canadian stations were expected to broadcast a minimum of 3 hours of news per week, the Windsor stations were provided relief down to 1 hour 30 minutes.[86] The CRTC also allowed a radio ownership concentration unparalleled in any other market. The traditional approach had been to only allow for two stations to be owned within one market by any one company. Yet with the very real possibility of losing a station or two within the Windsor market, the CRTC provided an exception for CHUM to buy all four commercial radio stations in 1993, as it was deemed that CHUM was best positioned to ensure the financial viability of all four stations within the market.[87] In 1997, for CHUM's two FM holdings, the CRTC would go one step further and approve format freedom, allowing them "to move from any type of programming to another, without application to the

[85] "Decision CRTC 85-666," Canadian Radio-television and Communications Commission, Ottawa, August 19, 1985, accessed July 22, 2019, https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1985/db85-666.htm.
[86] CRTC, "Decision CRTC 93-38."
[87] "Decision CRTC 93-37," Canadian Radio-television and Communications Commission, Ottawa, January 29, 1993, accessed July 22, 2019, https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1993/db93-37.htm.

Commission."[88] This was done to address the reality of the competitive nature of the Detroit market and the need to be able to move quickly in the event of a necessary format change to fill a niche within such a concentrated market. All these exemptions for the Windsor market were changes made by the CRTC in recognition of the unique circumstances of the market. They were created to help ensure the Windsor station's financial viability as well as to attempt to repatriate Canadian listeners and to ensure that Canadian listeners still had Canadian orientated programming options available within the market. These exceptions for the Windsor stations appear to have been successful. They initially provided the results as hoped, with a rise in ratings and the return of the Windsor audience in increasing numbers.[89]

With all these Windsor market exceptions it would be easy to conclude that these developments were negative for Canadian recording artists, especially with the reduction in the Canadian content requirements. The Canadian Independent Recording Production Association argued this point successfully, resulting in the Windsor FM stations being required to fulfill an increase of Canadian content up to 20% from 15%, though still the less than the 30% required across the rest of the country.[90] Yet the other side to this is that the less competitive the Windsor stations were within the Detroit market meant the less opportunity there was for Canadian recording artists to break out into the lucrative U.S. market, or even to be heard by Canadian listeners for that matter. A station without an audience is of course no use to Canadian artists looking to expand

[88] "Decision CRTC 97-678," Canadian Radio-television and Communications Commission, Ottawa, December 23, 1997, accessed July 22, 2019, https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1997/db97-678.htm.
[89] Mietkiewicz, F1.
[90] CRTC, "Decision 93-38."

their market reach. With improved ratings as a result of the flexible approach developed for the Windsor market, this improved opportunity for Canadian artists while also helping to better financially solidify the Windsor stations and more properly position them to become profitable again.

THE NEXT GENERATION: 89X "THE CUTTING EDGE"

While Windsor's most celebrated radio station is CKLW "The Big 8," another station within the market also deserves its due for its role in laying the foundation for the next generation of radio within the market. CJOM-FM is possibly the most interesting commercial station the Windsor market has ever offered. At the very least it was certainly the most unpredictable. As FM stereo became "the chosen format of young, music-hungry listeners," CJOM was Windsor's strongest effort filling this demand.[91] From its beginnings, it had been a station of an experimental nature. Throughout the first half of the 1970s, CJOM was the last free-form radio station left standing within the Detroit radio market, making it "the hippest, most avant-garde radio format in town."[92] Free-form radio is best suited for the music connoisseurs and adventurers. The tighter formats are more conducive for selling advertising, the commercial radio station's lifeblood. But CJOM at this time had yet to succumb to the tighter format controls and programmed a large variety of blues and rock 'n' roll and whatever else the DJ fancied. Such individual freedom also came with its risks, as a few of the radio personalities seemed to employ rather questionable on-air practices and

[91] Dan Westall, "Windsor Radio Stations Face Problems," *The Globe and Mail*, February 29, 1984, 5B.
[92] Bob Talbert, "One Win One Loss For Young Talent," *Detroit Free Press*, August 28, 1975, 15A.

programmed songs which were perhaps considered of a distasteful nature in certain quarters. With laxer broadcast laws regarding lyrical content in Canada than in the U.S., this led to a number of listener complaints originating from the American side of the river.[93] As a result, the entire staff at CJOM was suspended for their on-air conduct in the fall of 1972, quite likely over concerns that such programming might prove to be detrimental come the station's CRTC licence renewal hearing the following month.[94] Nevertheless, the laxer Canadian laws provided CJOM with a certain amount of exoticism for their American audience, a situation 89X in the early 1990s would once again have working in their favour.[95] During this period of free-form radio, CJOM experienced a fair amount of success within the Windsor market, cornering 20% of the audience.[96] These are impressive numbers considering that within the decade an estimated 90% of the Windsor youth market had abandoned Canadian radio and tuned to American stations.[97]

In 1971, CJOM attempted to carve out its own niche within the tightly contested Detroit radio market through programming Canadian music, in an attempt to both differentiate itself from its Windsor competition CKLW and the American stations.[98] Perhaps it was also caught up in the patriotic nationalism of the day. Interestingly, the

[93] Charlie Hanna, "Charlie Takes It On the Chin," *Detroit Free Press*, November 6, 1972, 10B.
[94] John Weisman, "Windsor Rock Stations Fires All Its DJs," *Detroit Free Press*, October 22, 1972, 6D.
[95] MarkPants, posted August 22, 2016, comment on garvus123, "What Was 89X Like During the Early to mid 90s?" *Reddit*, August 21, 2016, accessed, June 22, 2019, https://www.reddit.com/r/Detroit/comments/4ywxce/what_was_89x_like_during_the_early_to_mid_90s/.
[96] Gary Graff, "Regulations Muffle Canadian Radio," *Detroit Free Press*, October 30, 1983, 6C.
[97] "Canada Agrees to Ease Programming Rules of Some FM Stations," *Wall Street Journal*, September 26, 1984, 1.
[98] "Prog. Station for Windsor," *Billboard*, June 12, 1971, 51.

station embraced Canadian content before the CRTC had yet mandated its performance upon FM, which would not happen until 1975.[99] One effort in particular was through a promotional concert in 1971 which featured 15 different Canadian acts, drew 14,000 people and resulted in 21 hours of live Canadian-performed radio.[100] The concert aspect of this was an important precedent for the station as in its later rebranded form it would regularly throw concerts as an important promotional strategy to ingratiate itself within the Detroit market. But CJOM's attempt to differentiate itself within the market through programming higher levels of Canadian music appears to have failed. These early efforts gave way as the station swung hard in the opposite direction and began leading the charge to reduce the Canadian content regulations, an effort which eventually led to the creation of the Experimental FM Licence and a flexible approach towards markets such as Windsor, as previously discussed. Following the experiment in programming Canadian music, and then becoming a leading voice of dissent against the CRTC's mandated Canadian content regulations, CJOM in 1983 "almost" became the first new wave station in the area, in what the *Detroit Free Press* suggested "may have been the best radio station that never happened."[101] But at the last minute CJOM owner and eccentric media mogul Geoff Stirling got cold feet and pulled the plug on the planned switch, fearing the CRTC might strip the licence if the unapproved format change was launched.[102] The great DJ free-reign-of-the-airwaves abruptly ended in 1975 when owner Stirling mass fired the entire on-air staff, this time through recorded message,

[99] Edwardson, 200.
[100] "Canadian Station Hold Country Fest," *Billboard*, October 2, 1971, 44.
[101] Gary Graff, "Canadian Radio Station Stuck Between Rock and A Hard Place," *Detroit Free Press*, October 30, 1983, C1.
[102] Graff, C1.

providing for such great headline fodder as "A Canned Canning."[103] The station would switch to a middle of the road format and then later to a Top 40 format. With its progressive beginnings firmly in the past, this resulted in a decade of radio that is largely unnoteworthy. The most important development during this period was an increase in broadcasting power. In 1987, CJOM moved its broadcast tower from downtown Windsor, on top of what was then the city's tallest building (i.e. the Viscount Hotel), to just outside of Windsor where the CKLW towers were located. They rented the second top rung which allowed the station to increase its broadcast capacity up from 83,000-watts to 100,000-watts, the most legally permissible on FM.[104] This increase in broadcast power and range would be key to the station's future success.

In 1990, CJOM's call letters were switched to CIMX and the station was rebranded as "The Mix," featuring an adult contemporary format. The station was performing very poorly and barely registered in the Detroit ratings.[105] Desperate to boost their ratings the station turned to a Detroit DJ who would in short order dramatically alter the station's fortunes, launching what has been referred to as "the last great Detroit radio story."[106] Greg St. James left the popular Detroit rock station WRIF and accepted the position at CIMX on the condition that he would become the Program Director (PD) of the new evening format. St. James was part of the team that "almost" launched Detroit's first new wave format on CJOM back in 1983. Seven years

[103] "A Canned Canning," *Detroit Free Press*, August 26, 1975, A3.
[104] Harry von Vugt, "CJOM-FM Goes After Power," *Windsor Star*, February 2, 1987, B5.
[105] Lex Kuhn, "Slacker Holiday: A Re-post – How I Got 89X Started (OT)," *Lex Kuhne 60 Second Blog*, August 29, 2008, accessed August 16, 2019, https://blog.lexkuhne.com/2008/08/slacker-holiday-re-post-how-i-got-89x.html.
[106] Ibid.

later, he would finally program a variation of that format on the same frequency.[107] Initially the evening program was only four hours in length and called "The Cutting Edge." The program was reminiscent of CJOM's free-form days as it featured a wide variety of music in what could best be described as "big tent." As its popularity rapidly increased, so too did the length of the show. The new format was an undeniable success and in May 1991 it went full time with the station being rebranded as 89X "The Cutting Edge," with a promoted St. James as its full-time station PD. No station in the Detroit market was programming 1980s music at that time, bands like Jane's Addiction, Pixies and The Cure, and the format was an immediate hit within Detroit.[108] 89X was born in opposition to the tired and overly formulaic 1980s rock that the stations within the Detroit market were playing and it "hit the entire Windsor-Detroit market like a runaway-train."[109] It quickly rose to #2 within the Detroit market for the 18-34 listenership.[110] The station was fresh and exciting and featured programming unheard anywhere else regionally. The switch in formats paid immediate dividends.

With a winning format and a 100,000-watt signal, like CKLW had two decades earlier, 89X fully integrated itself within the Detroit market and this was the essential factor that provided the foundation for the station's success. 89X opened up a sales office in Birmingham, Michigan and had a staff of four salespeople at its beginning.[111] At

[107] Gary Graff, "Regulations Muffle Canadian Radio," *Detroit Free Press*, October 3, 1983, 6C.
[108] Scott Vertical, "The Seeds of 89X," *The Vertical Files*, May 29, 2014, accessed August 16, 2019, https://www.theverticalfiles.com/verts-blog/the-seeds-of-89x.
[109] Ted Shaw, "Adapt or Fail," *Windsor Star*, March 6, 1998, B3.
[110] Shaw, "Adapt," B3.
[111] Ted Shaw, "Up in the Air: Al Pervin, General Manager of CKWW and 89X, Hopes to Boost the Windsor Audience with More American Content," *Windsor Star*, January 23, 1993, F1.

the height of the station's popularity the majority of their advertising was American, once again reminiscent of CKLW. The cost for advertising was so high that few Canadian businesses could afford to advertise on the station. Detroit may have slipped in the rankings a few points by the early 1990s, but it was still the 9th largest American media market and success within the market mattered. To drive up listenership and thus profits, 89X aggressively launched numerous promotional activities within Detroit, most notably through sponsoring large concerts such as CJOM had initiated in the early 1970s. The most popular of these were the annual *89X Birthday Bash* and *The Night 89X Stole Christmas*. These were held throughout the Detroit area and would often feature a host of major American and Canadian acts. The Tragically Hip, Sloan, Odds, Rusty, Jale, Hardship Post, Gandharvas, Our Lady Peace, and Barenaked Ladies all performed in Detroit as part of these concerts throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. They shared billing along with such international acts such as Beck, Patti Smith and Silver Chair. Beyond the successful promotional concerts, 89X hosted numerous regular weekly events throughout the Windsor-Detroit area as well, such as the popular weekly *X Club* which took over the State Theatre Saturday nights on Woodward Avenue in downtown Detroit. With the station's successful integration within the Detroit market, this made it very profitable, something the Windsor stations had struggled to do mightily since "The Big 8" days. Just as importantly, for Canadian recording acts, 89X's success provided an exceptional opportunity to gain exposure within the major American market.

While the rise of FM stations significantly fragmented the radio market by the 1990s, at its height 89X was still reaching 464,000 weekly listeners, with the majority of

these being American.[112] Along with the station's successful integration stateside, this revived the Windsor radio market as a key gateway market for Canadian artists to break into the United States. The days of being able to sell a million copies within the region from radio support alone, like The Guess Who had in 1969, may have been over but its potential impact was still very significant. The band that best demonstrated this potential was Toronto's Barenaked Ladies. Following their initial success within Canada, the country had largely lost interest in the band.[113] But 89X remained a supporter of the band and in part because of that programming support, the Barenaked Ladies established a very strong audience within the Detroit market. Following a performance they had done in Windsor in 1996 to about 400 people, the next week they performed a sold out show at Detroit's Pine Knob Music Theatre, a 13,000 seat venue, to a largely American audience.[114] The general manager of 89X at the time said, "we can take credit for the Barenaked Ladies, who do more business in Detroit than they do anywhere else in the U.S."[115] This may have been a slight over statement, as much of their success within the U.S. can be attributed to their extensive and targeted touring, as well as another Detroit radio station, "The Planet 96.3," had picked up on the band too.[116] Yet working radio was a key part of that approach and partially through border radio support the Barenaked Ladies were able to make early inroads within markets like Buffalo and Detroit. They worked those markets relentlessly and successfully crossed over onto American media and into major international commercial success. The

[112] Craig Pearson, "Monopoly vs. Wheel of Fortune," *Windsor Star*, May 15, 1997, X12.
[113] Chauncey and Shalinsky, 34.
[114] Tom Harrison, "U.S. Embraces Ladies: They're Pulling In Big Crowds," *The Province*, June 19, 1996, B3.
[115] Craig Pearson, "Monopoly vs. Wheel of Fortune," *Windsor Star*, May 15, 1997, X12.
[116] Christopher Jones, "Dived and Conquer," *Words & Music* 5, no. 8 (September 1998): 10.

Barenaked Ladies are an interesting case as they had mostly relied largely upon an American audience within Michigan for their support. Other bands throughout the 1990s would do well in these border communities as well, but it was through the combined support of both the American audience along with Canadian day trippers, who popped across the border to support their favourite Canadian bands. The Tragically Hip would fall into this category.

Well known for their voracious Canadian fan base, the Tragically Hip's dedicated Canadian following heavily supported the band when it performed in the major border towns of Buffalo, Seattle and Detroit. The band also developed a strong American following throughout Michigan as well, largely having to do with the support border radio stations had provided over the years, most significantly 89X within Michigan. And like so many others, Detroit's music mythology held strong sway over the band. The musical history, combined with the unique character of the city, made Detroit a favourite tour stop for the band.[117] 89X was a major supporter including broadcasting live an invite-only hour-long concert held in downtown Detroit in 2002 to promote their album *In Violet Light*. The Tragically Hip's first live recording *Live Between Us*, released in 1997, was recorded at Detroit's famed rock venue Cobo Arena to a sold-out crowd. They also performed sold out shows at Detroit's Pine Knob to over 15,000 concert goers. Unlike with the Barenaked Ladies, where their audience was largely American, with the Tragically Hip it was a strong mix of both Canadian and American support, and it was the

[117] Ted Shaw, "The Tragically Hip: They Love Their Fans and Keeping Them Happy is a Big Priority," *Windsor Star*, July 11, 2002, C5.

border radio stations that played a key role in creating and expanding their audience Stateside. Their manager Jack Gold acknowledged just that when interviewed, saying that "Our sales in Detroit are based on core fans and support from 89X and the River," Windsor's other FM station.[118]

While the Tragically Hip are a phenomenon on their own, 89X got behind numerous other Canadian acts, helping to open the Detroit market to them. This had much to do with the Canadian content regulations imposed upon the station. Very few of these artists would go on to cross over onto the American stations. Still, with support from 89X, numerous acts were able to expand into the Detroit market. It is hard to image a band like London, Ontario's Gandharvas would have had their single "First Day in Spring" programmed relentlessly on 89X over the years had the Canadian content regulations not existed.[119] One major challenge with the Canadian content regulations is that too often radio stations will overplay certain Canadian songs, instead of programming a variety of selections, in order to meet their mandated requirements and this certainly seems to have been the case with the Gandharvas. Another rather obscure band finding regular support from the station was Vancouver's 24 Gone, with their song "Girl of Colours" becoming an audience favourite.[120] Numerous other smaller and independent Canadian acts would also find an audience within Detroit through the

[118] Ibid., C5.
[119] Callmevelvet_thunder, "The Gandharvas – First Day of Spring [mid-90s alt]," *Reddit*, June 8, 2015, accessed July 10, 2019, https://www.reddit.com/r/Music/comments/393wjm/the_gandharvas_first_day_of_spring_mid90s_alt/.
[120] Cristina, "24 Gone Issue 'The Spin' On Vinyl for Record Store Day," *…Hang the DJ*, March 3, 2015, accessed August 10, 2019, http://www.cristinarocks.com/2015/03/24-gone-issue-spin-on-vinyl-for-record.html.

support of 89X as well, especially through the Sunday night program "Canadian Exports," such as Hayden, Mystery Machine, Killjoys, Shadowy Men on A Shadowy Planet, Art Bergmann, The Super Friendz, and The Flashing Lights.[121] The station repeatedly over the years pointed out to the CRTC that it "is fulfilling its mandate by providing an outlet for Canadian rock bands in the U.S.," thus deserving of leniency and a reduced Canadian content rate in order to be more competitive within the market and keep listeners.[122] This argument was partially accepted by the CRTC, resulting in a reduced rate to 10% less than what the rest of the country was required to program. Whether that was a genuine interest of the station or a convenient argument come licence renewal time is up for debate. Nevertheless, as noted with the CKLW experience, had there been no content quota laws it is very unlikely that the station would have continued to program Canadian music to such an extent. Some listeners appreciated the uniqueness and variety that the Canadian content regulations provided within the Detroit market, while numerous others virulently despised it as much as the station did itself.

While bands such as the Tragically Hip and Barenaked Ladies had success selling out major 15,000-person capacity venues within the market, another band carved out its own unique niche, especially finding support within the city's music community.

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[121] tspaceman, posted on June 20, 2011, comment on Clarkofile, "Canadian Bands from the 89s/90s," *Steve Hoffman Music Forums*, June 29, 2011, https://forums.stevehoffman.tv/threads/canadian-bands-from-the-80s-90s-54-40-grapes-of-wrath-13-engines-blue-rodeo.255345/; garvus123, "What Was 89X Like During the Early to mid 90s?" *Reddit*, August 21, 2016, accessed, June 22, 2019, https://www.reddit.com/r/Detroit/comments/4ywxce/what_was_89x_like_during_the_early_to_mid_90s/.

[122] Ted Shaw, "Up in the Air: Al Pervin, General Manager of CKWW and 89X, hopes to boost the Windsor Audience with More American Content" *Windsor Star*, January 23, 1993, F1.

Halifax's Sloan connected with the Detroit market in a manner which few other Canadian acts have successfully achieved over the years. For many Americans, their first introduction to the band was through 89X. Eddie Baranek, lead singer of Detroit's The Sights, clearly remembers the first time he heard Sloan. It was "I Hate My Generation," on 89X while riding in the backseat of his family's car. When it came on the radio he thought, "oh my God… this is real, this is speaking to me. This is music on the radio that is relevant to me right now."[123] Along with regular radio support, the station also included Sloan as part of one of its popular *89X Birthday Bash* concerts in 1996, further helping to introduce the American audience to the band. Through a combination of support from 89X, along with regular performances at venues such as Saint Andrew's Hall, over time Sloan developed a reputation within the city as "cross-border rock heroes."[124] The band leads somewhat of a double life. They are well known within Canada, from having achieved a certain degree of commercial success, yet they remain in relative obscurity within the United States. Except that is, within Detroit. They are revered there by many and have no difficulties drawing an audience. The band's first appearance in Detroit in 1991 was shortly following their brief signing with American record company Geffen. It was at a record store that was rammed packed, lined around the corner, and band member Chris Murphy thought at the time, "we're going to be fucking huge!"[125] It did not exactly work out that way, but still, they have developed an extremely dedicated American following within the city. Through the combination of

[123] Eddie Baranek, interview by author, Detroit, July 6, 2019.
[124] Chris Handyside, "Power Pop-Era," *Metro Times*, September 29, 1999, accessed April 23, 2019, https://www.metrotimes.com/city-slang/archives/1999/09/29/power-pop-era/.
[125] Chris Handyside, "We're So Pretty," *Metro Times*, May 29, 2002, accessed April 23, 2019, https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/were-so-pretty/Content?oid=2173822.

Canadian radio support, helping to connect them with a Michigan audience, and a healthy contingent of Canadian day trippers, Sloan successfully infiltrated the Detroit market making the city a major tour stop for the band over the past twenty years.

Sloan has also become a reference point band regularly referred to within the Detroit weekly arts newspaper *Metro Times* to describe and explain what a band or an album sounds like. Their cult status is reaffirmed as they are regularly grouped in with bands such as XTC, Big Star and Badfinger. A few interesting passages include, "imagine the Dirtbombs cover Sloan," or they sound "like Sloan and the Beatles smoking from a large hookah that's be carefully packed by Stephen Malkmus," or plainly just "Sloan-esque," or "Sloan disciples."[126] These are just a few examples corroborating the band's cult rock status within the city. Sloan has also been an influence on a number of the city's musicians as well. Many young kids "grew up fascinated not by Canada's lowered drinking age, but by the rock 'n' roll sounds that sprang" from the other side of the border.[127] Founders of Plumeline Records, Nicole Allie and Mike Chavarria, in 2005 released an album which paid homage to the Canadian bands that they grew up listening to. The compilation CD was called *One Scene to Another*, a take on Sloan's 1997 release *One Chord to Another*. It featured 16 different Detroit bands, all "Paying Tribute to Canadian Indie Rock."[128] Canadian bands covered included Sloan, Eric's Trip, The

[126] Nate Cavalieri, "Sha Sha," *Metro Times*, March 27, 2002; Doug Coombe, "Motor City Cribs," *Metro Times*, September 24, 2008; Robert Gorell, "Soap," *Metro Times*, January 23, 2002; Aaron Warshaw, "Spindle," *Metro Times*, June 14, 2000.
[127] Ryan Allen, "Bands Across the Water," *Metro Times*, April 13, 2005, accessed April 23, 2019, https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/bands-across-the-water/Content?oid=2191175/.
[128] *One Scene to Another: Plumline Record's Tribute to Canadian Indie Rock* (Detroit: Plumline Records, 2005), CD.

Super Friendz, Jale, Thrush Hermit, Hayden, Plumtree and more. Its front cover artwork was inspired by The Super Friendz's album cover of their 1995 release *Mock Up, Scale Down*. Sloan was the accessible entry point for many Detroit indie rock kids, which in a number of cases led to furthered exploration of Canadian indie rock from the 1990s.

It is important to note that 89X was far from the only radio station in the market introducing the American audience to Canadian bands, though it was by far the most listened to station of the group. Other important venues included CBC radio, CIDR "The River" and the University of Windsor campus radio station CJAM. CIDR "The River," 89X's sister station, modelled itself after the 89X success and integrated itself within the Detroit market, targeting an older listening audience. It was the first Triple AAA, or Adult Alternative radio station within Detroit and Canada. While lacking the ratings of 89X, the 100,000-watt was still a significant outlet for introducing Canadian acts into the market such as the Cowboy Junkies, Jann Arden, Philosopher Kings along with programming crossover bands from 89X like the Tragically Hip and Barenaked Ladies. The River got into the concert promotions game as well, hosting numerous *River Fests* bringing Canadian acts into Detroit to perform like Odds, Grievous Angels, Jann Arden and Big Rude Jake.[129] Throughout the mid-1980s into the 1990s, CBC radio's late-night show "Brave New Waves" had a legion of fans within Michigan, introducing a vast array of Canadian artists from coast-to-coast, often rather obscure acts, to the American audience. And lastly, the small University of Windsor campus radio station, which could

[129] "CIDR RiverFest," *The Concert Database*, June 29, 1997, accessed August 1, 2019, https://theconcertdatabase.com/concerts/cidr-riverfest.

be heard not much beyond downtown Detroit was also an important site for Detroiters looking for fresh new sounds.[130] For a lot of Michiganders within listening range of the Windsor broadcasts, Canadian music was part of their American experience growing up. Numerous Canadian recording artists have benefitted from the situation. Throughout the 1990s, no Canadian station had a greater impact than 89X.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the historiography plenty of concern has been centred upon the aesthetics of Canadian music created throughout the second half of the twentieth century, and how it failed to separate and distinguish itself from American popular music. An aesthetics approach seems almost absurd when considered within a borderlands context such as Windsor though, which is so heavily integrated regionally with its American neighbour. The cultural fluidity of the region is extensive, as seen through the daily cross-border flow of business, workers, leisure seekers and the numerous intermarried Canadian-American families on both sides of the border. To imagine a uniquely distinct Canadian culture developing separate of this daily experience is unimaginable. Thus the aesthetics-based arguments on Canadian music are non-applicable within such a borderlands context. Cultural influence crosses the border freely in both directions and this is experienced especially through the media broadcasting. This reality would prove to be a significant obstacle for the federal

[130] Craig Pearson, "Playing to A Different Tune: What Do You Expect From A Station Whose Slogan is 'Smashing All Preconceived Notions'?" *Windsor Star*, November 9, 1995, X10.

government in applying its cultural nationalist agenda and would result in a watered-down version for the border communities.

In spite of the challenges of implementing cultural nationalist policies within the borderlands context, the legislation did help to increase the odds of Canadian recording artists to expand their audience beyond the limited national audience. Buffalo, Seattle and Detroit would become key entry points for many Canadian artists looking to gain a foothold within the lucrative U.S. popular music market. The American audience within these border towns became familiar with Canadian music as a result of Canadian border radio stations beaming signals across the international border. This familiarity with Canadian music provided Canadian artists an exceptional opportunity to expand Stateside. Through radio support, combined with Canadian day tripping concert goers, these three major urban markets were opened to Canadian artists. In a sense you could say, that through these stations the Canadian national touring circuit had been expanded to include Buffalo, Seattle and Detroit.

The commercial radio stance that mandated Canadian content is unworkable, a major hindrance and should be abandoned within these market lacks the evidence to back up such an argument. Both CKLW and 89X were dominant within the Detroit market while adhering to Canadian content quota laws. It is too convenient of an argument which completely absolves the stations from any responsibility for their ratings whatsoever. There are numerous unregulated American stations that struggle within the tightly contested Detroit market as well. Possibly it speaks to the issue that

was pointed out by rock critic Ritchie Yorke back in 1968, that the Canadian music industry lacks the ability "to determine the big ones" as well as it lacks the infrastructure to do so.[131] It was cheaper to rely on the deep pocketed American-funded industry information than to create your own. Or maybe the attitude that Canadian artists are second-class artists persisted within the media right through to the end of the century. Whatever the case, 89X illustrated throughout the 1990s that programming Canadian music was not of any particular hindrance to its success. They had a much deeper talent pool to select from, following two decades of domestic recording industry development, than CKLW had the benefit of in the early 1970s. Perhaps a reduced Canadian content rate is warranted in order to compete with the American stations, or perhaps the Canadian content regulations provided the stations with something unique and exotic and thus offered more variety within the market, helping to pull in new listeners.

The CRTC was correct in providing both acknowledgement and relief on certain levels in order for these border stations to better compete within the Detroit market, such as the FM experimental licence and absolving the two Windsor FM stations from format switch approvals in order to quickly adjust for market challenges. It was proven that if the Detroit stations offered what Canadian border listeners desired, that audience would tune Stateside.[132] Originally the Canadian FM stations were required to program significantly more talk and informational airtime and less than 50% hit music. The Canadian audience simply abandoned the local stations in dramatic fashion, tuning

[131] Ritchie Yorke, "Hits We Got – But Pickers Don't Cotton," *RPM* 15, no. 23 (July 24, 1971): 6.
[132] "Public Attitudes and Preferences to Radio Programming in the Windsor-Detroit Area," *Joint Communications Corp* (Toronto, June 1984), 39.

into the unregulated American competition instead. Considering the challenges of the market, the CRTC has appropriately reconsidered its early failures in recognizing the Windsor radio market as unique and by implementing a flexible approach for the challenged radio market. These regulatory changes helped the four commercial radio stations to compete more successfully within the regional radio market.

The Canadian content regulations alone were insufficient in capturing the American audience for Canadian recording artists looking to break into the U.S. market. The essential key to this scenario functioning were the border radio stations ability to compete and achieve ratings success within the American market. No two Canadian stations demonstrated this formula better than CKLW and 89X. It was through CKLW and 89X's successful integration within the Detroit market that a large American audience was opened up for the country's recording artists to tap into. Bands from The Guess Who, Skylark, Edward Bear, Sloan, Tragically Hip to the Gandharvas all benefitted significantly. Through a difficult balancing act of competing interests, requiring plenty of compromise, the CRTC eventually implemented a reasonable approach to the market challenges allowing an opportunity for all parties a chance to succeed with their mandates.

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