



# LOREENA MCKENNITT

## Putting the music business on hold

*Plans to fight the negative impact of technology and climate change*

STRATFORD, ON - Multi-award-winning Canadian singer-songwriter and musician Loreena McKennitt, who has sold more than 14 million records worldwide, has announced she is putting her music career on hold to more fully focus her energy on the battle against the harmful effects of technology and threats posed by global warming.

*“As a mother and a citizen, it is hard to sit idly by,” says McKennitt. “I genuinely believe that we as citizens have been called to action, particularly on these two vital fronts, and we must be prepared to make sacrifices if we’re to be successful in dealing with them.*

*“I’m not quitting per se, just positioning these issues as higher priorities than my career,” adds the self-managed artist, who outlined her plans on Sept. 26 during a speech to the Rotary Club of Stratford.*

*“With respect to technology, clearly I am not averse to it. I use it every day in the operations of my career and my business and have witnessed its benefits across a range of disciplines.*

*“At the same time, I’m only too keenly aware of some of the unintended consequences. In the music business, we’ve seen an almost complete decimation of the ecosystem of professions, including the creative class. My little company also experienced the perils of ransomware this spring.”*

In her speech, *Facing the Music: Unintended Consequences of the Digital Age*, McKennitt talked about her career trajectory in the music business, but she predominantly focused on the unchecked proliferation of technology and how it has contributed to the erosion of democracies and the rise of fake news. She expressed concern over the compromising of privacy as a result of the misuse of personal data and surveillance capitalism. And she lamented its adverse, often devastating effects on children's mental health, education and self-esteem, and the disruption it brings to family life and connection with nature.

*"My overarching concern is that these technologies have been allowed to proliferate in an unfettered way in the absence of a truly democratic debate about their potential harms, as well as their benefits. I worry that we have not learned the lessons from adopting fossil fuels whole heartedly a century ago, only to discover decades later that they also come with great perils."*

Concern over these issues is not new for the artist. In April 2018, despite having 596,000 followers, McKennitt took a stand and removed her profile from Facebook following revelations of its misuse of personal data.

In a recent [interview with La Presse](#), she said the decision to put her music career on hold was not a snap decision, but in fact has been "long matured".

McKennitt has never shied away from challenging or controversial topics and has tackled issues related to [copyright](#) and [privacy laws](#). Going forward, she will be identifying her activities through her website, and through her [Stolen Child Project](#), which spotlights the effects of technology on children and families.

*"At the very least," she explains, "it is my hope to join forces with the growing number of experts and leaders across many professional disciplines, including from the tech industry itself, to bring about a greater public awareness of the perils of unfettered technology, and to urge our elected officials to move quickly to regulate the companies behind them."*

*"With respect to my efforts concerning our climate crisis, I have a lot of improvements to make in my personal and professional world. Even though I feel I have been trying to take serious steps over the last 10 years or so, there is much more to be done and I expect this will be a long work in progress."*

This redirection of energy comes near the end of one of the most successful tours of McKennitt's career. The *Lost Souls Tour* took her to three South American countries last fall, followed by shows in 16 European countries this spring and summer where more than 80,000 people saw her perform. Now, the final leg of the tour is taking her to parts of Ontario and Quebec this month, with the final performance on Nov. 3.

McKennitt is the owner and director of the [Falstaff Family Centre](#) in Stratford, Ontario, Canada. In 2014 she was appointed the [Honorary Colonel of the Royal Canadian Air Force](#). She is also a member of the Order of Canada and Order of Manitoba and was the recipient of Queen Elizabeth II's Golden and Diamond Jubilee medals. In 2013 she was appointed to the rank of Knight of the National Order of Arts and Letters by The Republic of France.

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