



## CBC DIGITAL ARCHIVES



### Northern Lights recording 'Tears Are Not Enough'

Floods, famine, fire and drought — when disaster strikes at home and around the world, Canadians are ready to help. For musicians and actors, helping often means organizing large relief concerts. These shows are great entertainment and have raised millions of dollars. But at times, critics have questioned the long-term benefit of these extravaganzas. CBC Archives looks back at some of Canada's disaster relief concerts.



#### The Story

*We can bridge the distance  
Only we can make the difference  
Don't you know that tears are not enough?*

That's the message and catchy refrain of *Tears Are Not Enough*, a song recorded on Feb. 10, 1985 by more than 50 of Canada's top stars performing under the name Northern Lights. The song is Canada's contribution to a worldwide effort to assist victims of a devastating famine in Ethiopia.

As we see in this clip, the actual song is being kept secret while producers add finishing touches. But the recording session is no secret, and arriving performers must first run a gauntlet of screaming teenage girls. Nobody questions the value of the cause. But in the interview that follows this report, host Bill Cameron asks performers Salome Bey and Martha Johnson if some of the singers weren't also there to further their careers.



## Northern Lights recording 'Tears Are Not Enough'

Floods, famine, fire and drought — when disaster strikes at home and around the world, Canadians are ready to help. For musicians and actors, helping often means organizing large relief concerts. These shows are great entertainment and have raised millions of dollars. But at times, critics have questioned the long-term benefit of these extravaganzas. CBC Archives looks back at some of Canada's disaster relief concerts.



### Credits

Medium: Television  
Program: Midday

Broadcast Date: Feb. 11, 1985

Guests: Salome Bey, Martha Johnson  
Host: Bill Cameron, Valerie Pringle  
Reporter: Michael McIvor

Duration: 5:45



## Did You Know?

- In 1984, a two-year drought on top of 20 years of civil war caused a famine in Ethiopia that killed nearly one million people. The Marxist Ethiopian government was fighting a civil war in Eritrea and Tigre provinces and thousands were displaced or cut off from aid, many fleeing to Sudan.
- Despite a huge international relief effort, as many as eight million people faced starvation and death from disease.
- The Ethiopian government was accused of spending its resources on the war and not focusing on the famine, while Western nations were blamed for not responding quickly enough.
- In 1998 a border war with Eritrea broke out again, and in November 2002 Ethiopia warned that a famine worse than that of 1984 threatened the country. Millions still face starvation should the crops fail.
- The *Tears Are Not Enough* project was inspired by the November 1984 British fundraising song Do They Know It's Christmas under the collective name Band Aid. American musicians, using the name USA for Africa, recorded their own tune, *We Are The World* on Jan. 28, 1985. The Canadian song was included on the USA for Africa album.
- *Tears Are Not Enough* was released as a single in March 1985 and sold more than 300,000 copies.
- Performers included Bryan Adams, Salome Bey, Liona Boyd, John Candy, Robert Charlebois, Tom Cochrane, Bruce Cockburn, Rik Emmett, Corey Hart, Ronnie Hawkins, Honeymoon Suite, Tommy Hunter, Paul Hyde, Martha Johnson, Geddy Lee, Gordon Lightfoot, Murray McLachlan, Joni Mitchell, Kim Mitchell, Anne Murray, Oscar Peterson, Carole Pope, Paul Shaffer, Jane Siberry, Sylvia Tyson and Neil Young
- *Tears Are Not Enough* was composed by David Foster, with lyrics written by Bryan Adams and Jim Vallance, French lyrics by Rachel Paiement, and contributions from Paul Hyde and Bob Rock of the group Payolas.
- The eclectic group of performers was assembled by Vancouver agent Bruce Allen, who has managed Bachman Turner Overdrive, Bryan Adams and Anne Murray.
- On Dec. 22, 1985, CBC Television aired a 90-minute documentary on the *Tears Are Not Enough* recording, directed by John Zaritsky, which was later sold for home video.
- All told, the Tears Are Not Enough project is credited with raising more than \$3 million.
- There were many other international recordings to help Ethiopian famine relief efforts. Among them:
  - Germany: *Nackt Im Wind* (Naked in the Wind), by Band Für Ethiopia
  - France: *Ethiopie*, by Chanteurs Sans Frontières
  - South Africa: *Operation Hunger*
  - Australia: *EAT* (East African Tragedy)
  - Latin America: *Cantare Cantaras* (I Sing, You Sing)
  - Africa: *Tam Tam Pour L'Ethiopie*

(Source: Sunday Herald)