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For Immediate Release

Arts Commons Presents' *Earth: Mothership* Looks Inward as Intergalactic 2022-23 Season of TD Amplify Cabaret Series Brings Us Home to Planet Earth

Local cast of artists celebrate Earth Day by reflecting on what it means to be human on our precious planet as it speeds through the vastness of space - curated and hosted by Sargeant x Comrade.

March 30, 2023 - CALGARY – The outer space talk show of interdisciplinary artists from **Arts Commons Presents** returns to our planet with ***Earth: Mothership***, the third presentation in the 2022-23 season of the TD Amplify Cabaret series. *Earth: Mothership* showcases local music, spoken word, and multi-media talent under the direction of vocalist Yolanda Sargeant and producer Evgeniy "Comrade" Bykovets, aka **Sargeant x Comrade**. Join Arts Commons Presents for ***Earth: Mothership*** on **April 21 & 22 at 8 p.m.** in the **Engineered Air Theatre**.

Earth: Mothership is an energizing and introspective evening of music and spoken word performances that are inspired by the idea of homecoming and reflect on what it means to be human when faced with the immensity of space. Hosted by the charismatic Sargeant x Comrade, the show features an unmissable roster of performers including R&B musician **Zenon** who is known for his bold rhythms and powerful vocals, music and spoken word poetry duo **Walter MacDonald White Bear** and **Shone Thistle** who will be performing a theatric translation of the +15 Soundscape installation, and the incredibly versatile violinist **James Watson** who has performed everything from contemporary classical to art-pop and post-hardcore metal. Plus, it will feature the video compliments of **Stefan Lewis** and vibrant and visually dynamic projections by **Mackenzie Bedford**.

Featuring the interdisciplinary artists of the 22-23 TD Incubator cohort, the TD Amplify Cabaret series opened with *Mars: Second Home* in November 2022, followed by the Black-love centric *Venus: Future Love* in February 2023. Now we journey back home to celebrate Earth Day with ***Earth: Mothership*** (Apr. 21 & 22, 2023) and look skyward to our nearest neighbour with ***Moon: Indigo Child*** (June 2 & 3, 2023).

"We travel to all of these different planets with an introspective look at human nature through the gaze of these planets, of outsiders. We focused on love with Venus and the twins with Mars, and now we're under the microscope ourselves," says Yolanda Sargeant. "We're supposed to be grounded here, but what does that mean? What is Earth, really? And how does that relate to what it means to be human?"

"The spirit of exploration among the artists in our TD Incubator cohort this season has been extraordinary - particularly how they've leaned into the artistic vision and theme of 'lo-fi future' from Sargeant x Comrade," says Joshua Dalledonne, Associate Director of Social Impact. "Audiences have embraced the collaborations of these artists and the format of this intergalactic late-night talk-show and the feedback has been a resounding: "more, more and more!" Luckily for us, this next line-up of artists is set to deliver."

Now in its fifth season, the TD Amplify Cabaret series has an established reputation for engaging local artists in conversation with the most pressing cultural, social, and artistic questions of today. Exploring subject matter as diverse as drag shows to the experience of Black artists living in the prairies to love notes to the universe, TD Amplify Cabarets

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push the boundaries of live performance. Learn more about the full lineup of the 22-23 season cabarets at artscommons.ca/cabarets.

What: TD Amplify Cabaret – *Earth: Mothership*
Where: Arts Commons, Engineered Air Theatre
When: Friday, April 21 & Saturday, April 22, 2023 at 8 p.m.
Who: Arts Commons Presents
Tickets: 403-294-9494 or visit artscommons.ca/earth

To purchase tickets to *Earth: Mothership*, or any of the TD Amplify Cabaret series, please call 403-294-9494 or visit artscommons.ca/cabarets.

Arts Commons wishes to express our sincere appreciation to the Naming Sponsor of the of **TD Incubator** program and Title Sponsor of the **TD Amplify Cabarets** as well as the **Canada Council for the Arts**.

For media inquiries, high resolution images, or more information contact:
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Arts Commons Presents invites you to discover the transformative power of the arts. As the programming arm of Arts Commons, Arts Commons Presents encompasses the programming and presenting of our in-house series: BD&P World Stage, Classic Albums Live, National Geographic Live, PCL Blues, TD Amplify Cabarets, and Jazz. Arts Commons Presents programming also includes the work that we do alongside and in collaboration with community partners, like the summer outdoor pop-up performance series, ArtsXpeditions, and professional development programs to support Calgary's local artists.

The **TD Incubator program** is designed to support the artists who are increasingly choosing to move between and blend artistic forms – musicians who make their own films, dancers who are blending movement with visual art, actors who are expanding into spoken word poetry. Prioritizing artists from communities who reflect the diversity and vibrancy of Treaty 7 territory, the mission of TD Incubator is to accelerate these artists' careers. As the largest arts centre in Western Canada and a gathering space for all artistic disciplines, Arts Commons is uniquely positioned to grow, celebrate, elevate, and learn from these artists.

BIOGRAPHIES

Sargeant X Comrade is a collaboration between the Queen of Lo-Fi Soul, **Yolanda Sargeant** and producer **Comrade (Evgeniy) Bykovets**. Lo-Fi Soul was the new genre that the duo pioneered after not being able to find an appropriate label to fit their eclectic style. Sargeant X Comrade infuses jazz, soul, funk, dancehall, hip-hop, as well as other genres into a unique sound that combines the old with the new. Sargeant's rich vocals take centre stage while Comrade's production takes you on a multi-layered, genre-bending journey from beginning to end. Add some high-profile musicians and features in the mix and you have the Sargeant X Comrade rich formula for their own unique brand of music which has earned them multiple awards in 2021 and 2022.

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Mackenzie Bedford is a telescope for queer space. The universe, by nature, is mysterious and queer. Exhausted by perspectives that lack the imagination and diversity it demands, she is revealing the queerness of the cosmos through colour, light, and movement.

You can find them animating, painting murals, or mapping projections across Alberta. In their free time, they are learning to perform burlesque. Their influences stem from growing up as a closeted queer kid in a small town, using an early 2000s internet connection to connect, explore and escape.

Stefan Lewis is a multidisciplinary artist that loves oil painting, ceramics, DJing, podcasting, and beat-making. He currently hosts a show on CJSW 90.9 FM called Knotted Roots as part of a DJ duo known as Shaolin Sundays.

Walter MacDonald White Bear is a Cree singer-songwriter, educator, and motivational speaker originally from the First Nation of Moose Factory, Ontario. With over 25 years of experience working within the education system – social services sectors as an advocate for First Nation Youth and Families, MacDonald White Bear is a bridge between cultures, confusion, and healing.

A student himself of the traditional teachings, Walter was raised in a home shadowed by residential school trauma. His story brings understanding to those working with and trying to understand the challenges and history of today's First Peoples in Canada. Using traditional Indigenous music, singing, lore and symbolism, his workshops are held in welcoming ways so that everyone is free to explore questions, stories, legends, myths and misunderstandings.

His work shares an introductory knowledge of native spirituality and how it effects journeys of culture, governance, and place in the Canadian mosaic. Walter uses his gifts as a sweat lodge holder and pipe carrier to convey messages about the power of choice, compassion for all world views and the "special gift" that all human beings were born with.

Shone Thistle is a Queer poet and multidisciplinary artist. Once described as a "feminist folk poet," Shone's poetry credits range from radio to jazz concerts, festivals to conferences. Poetic highlights include representing Calgary at the 2007 Canadian Festival of Spoken Word, competing to receive perfect scores at the world-famous Nuyorican Poets Café in 2016, and performing with jazz quartet Red Line Trio+1 during the 2019 Brightside Festival. Shone's poetry can also be found in several anthologies, including Mic Check: An Anthology of Canadian Spoken Word Poetry and, more recently, in YYC POP: Poetic Portraits of the People.

Shone played an integral role in brokering Calgary's first permanent Pride and Trans crosswalks and was an active voice in the establishment of Canada's strongest municipal bylaw against conversion therapy. Shone currently sits on the board of the Calgary Spoken Word Society. Her superpower is taking disparate content and weaving it into a cohesive story. Shone works on her spoken word and visual art practice from her home in Mokinstsis, on Treaty 7 territory, colonially known as Calgary.

James Watson is a new member of Calgary's professional music community. He started playing the violin at the age of 7, and now, since completing his Bachelor of Music (minor in linguistics), he is a full-time freelance member of Calgary's music community, working as a teacher, mentor, composer, recording, and performing artist, with new roles lurking around every corner.

His stand-out work as the composer-in-residencies at the cSpace and GRAND theatres, respectively, provided his first platforms as a composer and sparked his enthusiasm. He's also worked on recording projects which range from a JUNO-nominated orchestra album with Orchestre de la Francophonie to art-pop to originals. He has performed with the Rocky Mountain Symphony Orchestra, Key 30 Orchestra, and Symphony of the Kootenays and is a founding member of Stringendo as well.

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Additionally, his diverse performing experience has led him to perform alongside accomplished musicians in varying fields, such as two-time Canadian Fiddle Champion Scott Woods, jazz legend Dr. Jeremy Brown and Calgary's Timepoint Ensemble.

ZENON is a bi-racial musician who listens to a massive range of music from all over the world and has a unique style borne from this very diversity. They offer original alt. R&B that cleverly dips into other time signatures and delivers the story with rich, soulful vocals and smooth power.

Serious about a music career, ZENON studied music and graduated in 2019 with a BMus Degree. As a writer and vocal coach, their lyrics and vocal expression is wide, having studied music their pen crosses all genres and songwriting for others is another offering in their artistic portfolio.

ZENON is the recipient of the 2022 YYC Solo Artist of the Year Award and the 2021 YYC Prophets of Music Emerging Artist Award. They take pride in having self-released three singles; Something About (rel. Feb 2020), What It Was (rel. May 2021) and Smoke In My Lungs (rel. Sept 2022) and now their debut album titled GENRE Z, a six song EP showcasing their diverse songwriting skills, unique vibes & unforgettable voice.