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For Immediate Release

TD Amplify Cabaret *Venus: Future Love* Showcases Afrofuturism, Romance and Local Talent this February

All-Black cast of local artists takes the stage in cabaret that centres on self-love and emotional expression in variety show curated and hosted by Sargeant x Comrade.

January 24, 2023 - CALGARY – The outer space talk show featuring a lineup of cutting-edge interdisciplinary artists from **Arts Commons Presents** returns next month with ***Venus: Future Love***, the second presentation in the 2022-23 season of the TD Amplify Cabaret series. Helmed by vocalist Yolanda Sargeant and producer Evgeniy "Comrade" Bykovets, aka **Sargeant x Comrade**, the evening plays with a retro-futuristic vibe to highlight the incredible homegrown musical, spoken word, and multimedia talent on stage. Join us for ***Venus: Future Love*** on **February 10 & 11 at 8pm** in the **Engineered Air Theatre**. New this season, audiences are invited to meet the artists following each performance in a post-show lobby reception, featuring music by Catfishthewizard (Feb. 10) and DJ Jadé (Feb. 11).

Venus: Future Love is an uplifting celebration of Calgary's Afro artists set to a backdrop of a lo-fi futuristic cabaret broadcast from the depths of space. Hosted by the charismatic Sargeant x Comrade, the show features live performances by synthwave trio **Lost Decade**, hip hop and R&B artist **Bubba B the MC**, spoken word poet **aloT of Poetry**, and visual projections by **Mackenzie Bedford**, as well as a special guest appearance by rapper and videographer **Gbohunmi**. The second performance in the 2022-23 season of TD Amplify Cabarets, all hosted and curated by Sargeant x Comrade, Yolanda Sargeant and Evgeniy Bykovets looked to themes of both love and Black experiences for their February show, a month intrinsically linked with Valentine's Day and Black History Month.

"Calgary has a thriving community of people from all different countries, a mosaic of Afro history that has been thriving long before the more recent civil rights movements. We're just bringing that to the forefront with the artists that we've selected for this cabaret," says Yolanda Sargeant. "We want to explore what love looks like in the future through the lens of Afrofuturism."

"The process of bringing this cabaret together is very collaborative. Tola [a.k.a. aloT of Poetry] and I are working to produce original beats that she's going to recite poetry over," says Evgeniy "Comrade" Bykovets. "Each of the artists brings something unique whether it's Lost Decade who use sounds from the past in a modern-day context, or Bubba B the MC who has roots going way back in Calgary's rap community."

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 upcoming ***Venus: Future Love*** (Feb. 10 & 11, 2023), ***Earth: Mothership*** (Apr. 21 & 22, 2023) and ***Moon: Indigo Child*** (June 2 & 3, 2023). 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 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 – ***Venus: Future Love***

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Where: Arts Commons, Engineered Air Theatre
When: Friday, February 10 & Saturday, February 11, 2023 at 8 p.m.
Who: Arts Commons Presents
Tickets: 403-294-9494 or visit artscommons.ca/venus

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

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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 this idea and 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.

Adetola "aloT of Poetry" Adedipe is a Nigerian-South African artist who found her way to poetry after immigrating to Calgary in 2015. After struggling to communicate in her new environment and navigating the world as a Black Woman she uses empathy at the core of her words. "Less complex words and more communication" is her mantra towards her writing.

While completing her degree in Kinesiology at The University of Calgary, she began exploring her love for performance and decided to expose herself more to the arts community. Working with partners and events such as: Arts Commons Cabarets,

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The Grand, AuArts, Galley@501, Ethnik Festivals, Calgary Poetry Slam, People's Poetry Festival, University of Calgary, Alcove Centre for the Arts, TheVenue at High River, Pitbull Poetry Reading Series, Indie YYC, expressions at Koi and more.

Inspired to give back to the arts community by poets such as Bethel Afework, MelVeeX, Wakefield Brewster & Titilope Sonuga, she became an Artist Facilitator of "Black Kid Joy" as well as Co-Producer of 'Dreaming in Black', a Black youth Artist showcase in February 2020. She is currently working on a collection of poems called A Lot of People inspired by contributions by people all over Canada and the world, which gained her a spot as a feature at the 2021 Afro Indie Book fair as a poet and soon-to-be author.

Through sharing her laughter and pain, she encourages everyone to listen to the stories of others, love themselves and be unapologetic about it.

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 projection mapping 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.

An award-winning artist and certified Dragon's Den slayer, **MC Bubba B** has been performing in Winnipeg and Western Canada with his unique brand of educational and uplifting "family friendly entertainment" for over 10 years. He's worked with GRAMMY nominated artist Fresh I. E. on tours and community outreach programs to areas as far north as Cross Lake, MB, as far east as Toronto and in various locations in Saskatchewan since he arrived in Winnipeg.

gbohunmi is a Nigerian-born artist who moved to Canada when he was five. From a young age, he has been in love with music and film; as he grew older, he pursued those passions to create his music and videos. In 2020 he released his first album, a lo-fi hip-hop album called, "Sounds to Warm up to"; in 2021, he released his second hip-hop album, "Rhyme Without Reason." He has shot, directed, and edited his music videos; He has also created a vast array of experimental and artistic videos, which he posts on Instagram.

He loves creation. He loves creating music and videos and taking pictures.

Lost Decade is a Canadian synthwave trio from Calgary, Alberta. With soulful vocals and catchy melodies, Lost Decade draws a unique blend of 80's and 90's synth music. Formed in 2019, the band is composed of Chenelle Roberts, Brandon Smith (He/Him), and Derek Leugner (He/Him). Evelyn King, Chromeo, and Peter Gabriel are just a few of the artists that influenced Lost Decade's eclectic, retro approach to their original music. Lost Decade released their debut single in October 2022 and are working on a full release in early 2023. Their music will give you a contemporary take on electronic music, lost in sounds from decades past.

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