

For Immediate Release

Arts Commons Presents Announces Double Bill with Queens of the Blues: Shemekia Copeland and Dawn Tyler Watson

Duo of unmatched multi-award-winning blues musicians comes to the Jack Singer Concert Hall this February for Black History Month

August 10, 2023 - CALGARY – Showcasing singers from both north and south of the border, Arts Commons Presents is thrilled to announce a double bill evening of blues with two of the genre’s most exciting talents for *Queens of the Blues: Shemekia Copeland and Dawn Tyler Watson* on **Friday, February 9, 2024** in the **Jack Singer Concert Hall**. Learn more at artscommons.ca/queens.

GRAMMY-nominated New York-based soul and Americana singer Shemekia Copeland possesses one of the most instantly recognizable and deeply soulful roots music voices of our time. She’s been hailed as “The greatest blues singer of her generation” by The Washington Post and sings with “punchy defiance and potent conviction” (NPR Music). Her songwriting digs deep, with hard-hitting truths about the American Black experience, given passionate vibrancy through her powerhouse vocals. Copeland will be performing hits from her 25-year career including songs from her most recent releases *Uncivil War* and *Done Come Too Far*.

“This album [Done Come Too Far] was made by all sides of me — happy, sad, silly, irate — they’re all a part who I am and who we all are,” Copeland says about her latest album. *“I’m not political. I’m just talking about what’s happening in this country.”*

No stranger to Calgary, beloved Canadian blues musician Dawn Tyler Watson returns to remind us why she was recognized with the JUNO Award for Blues Album of the Year in 2020, as well as three Canadian Maple Blues Awards, nine Quebec Lys Blues Awards, and first place at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis in 2017. Called “one of Canada’s true Blues treasures” by Blues Music Magazine with a “fabulous voice and incandescent stage presence” (Journal de Montreal), Watson infuses her soul-stirring music with jazz, soul, rock, and gospel that pushes the boundaries of traditional blues.

“I love singing in front of real live people. I long to connect, to exchange energy, to ‘feel’ something. On stage, I practice letting go, and radical surrender to the present moment,” says Watson. *“Whether I make a mistake, or I slay it, it’s gone. I can’t ever recapture that moment - it all melts into the experience and what I share with the audience and they with me.”*

In recognition of Black History Month, Shemekia Copeland and Dawn Tyler Watson will be engaging in outreach activities with youth and local artists to share their experience and inspire the next generation of blues musicians. *Queens of the Blues: Shemekia Copeland and Dawn Tyler Watson* continue the Arts Commons Presents tradition of celebrating Calgary’s longstanding love affair with the blues. From GRAMMY and JUNO Award-winning artists to grassroots favourites and living legends, Arts Commons Presents has showcased the best of the blues with sell-out performances of Charlie Musselwhite, Taj Mahal, Ben Caplan, and Watermelon Slim.

MEDIA RELEASE



"This incredible double bill is for our true-blue Blues fans that have spent 25 years with us in the Engineered Air Theatre, and all other Calgary music lovers that want to be moved by the songs and stories of such a foundational genre. Elevating these two incredible women to the concert hall stage will ring out the rafters like we've never heard before," raves Stephanie Hutchinson, Associate Director of Presenting.

Tickets for this unbeatable duo are available now at artscommons.ca/queens.

What: Arts Commons Presents – *Queens of the Blues*: Shemekia Copeland and Dawn Tyler Watson
When: Friday, February 9, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.
Where: Jack Singer Concert Hall, Arts Commons
Tickets: 403-294-9494 or visit artscommons.ca/queens

Arts Commons wishes to express our sincere appreciation to ACP Special Presentation Engagement Sponsor The Royal Bank of Canada as well as our friends at The City of Calgary.

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Arts Commons Presents invites you to discover the transformative power of the Arts. As the programming arm of Arts Commons, the largest performing arts centre in Western Canada, Arts Commons Presents is one manifestation of this mandate, achieved through the programming and presenting of our in-house series: BD&P World Stage, Classic Albums Live, National Geographic Live, TD Amplify Cabarets, as well as special presentations and our outdoor pop-up series, ArtsXpeditions. Through this work, we are able to do our part to further enrich our city, as well as create opportunities for Calgary-based artists to perform, exhibit, reach new audiences, and grow on a multitude of levels.