

Black Music Month

June 2023

WHEREAS Black Music Month is a time to highlight the contributions of African Canadian musicians to Canada's cultural heritage. Black musicians have played a vital role in shaping Toronto's music identity and continue to innovate and create in our diverse city. Black music has helped shape our city's culture, carrying history in the lyrics and heritage in the melodies.

The richness and variety of African music, derived from countries and cultures throughout Africa, has had an important influence in Canada and especially in large urban centres such as Toronto. Caribbean music has also been a major influence: musicians like reggae queen Nana McLean, and jazz greats Eddie Bullen, Archie Alleyne, Connie Maynard, and Sonny Greenwich have added to Toronto's foundation of iconic Black artists. Their legacy and work, and that of countless others, paved the way for the growth of a rich array of sounds, including soul, calypso, and reggae.

More recently, modern icons like Maestro Fresh Wes, Jully Black, Kardinal Offishall, and Michie Mee laid the groundwork for the massive worldwide attention now paid to Toronto-based Black pioneers in hip hop and R&B. The songs and personal stories of global superstars like Drake and the Weeknd, as well as newer voices like Haviah Mighty and Daniel Caesar, have come to define "the Toronto sound" around the world.

As we celebrate Black Music Month, we must continue our ongoing commitment to confronting anti-Black racism. We must remain committed to ensuring sustainable and innovative opportunities for Black music and the artists and industry it helps support. Toronto is a place where arts and culture thrive, and the City of Toronto invests in programs to ensure all residents have access to and the opportunity for cultural participation.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie on behalf of Toronto City Council, do hereby proclaim **June 2023** as "**Black Music Month**" in the City of Toronto.



Jennifer McKelvie
Deputy Mayor of Toronto