

For Immediate Release: November 13, 2023

**CANADA BLACK MUSIC ARCHIVES (CBMA) LAUNCHES AS THE DEFINITIVE
DIGITAL REPOSITORY OF BLACK CANADIAN MUSICAL HERITAGE**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2023
CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES
255 SPADINA ROAD
4:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Canada Black Music Archives
www.thecbma.com

Canada Black Music Archives (CBMA) is excited to announce its official launch as a digital repository dedicated to preserving and celebrating the rich and diverse musical heritage of Black Canadians.

Founded in 2020, the CBMA stands as a testament to the enduring contributions of Black musicians to Canada's cultural landscape over the past 100 years. It aims to fill a crucial gap in Canada's historical narrative by providing a digital platform accessible to all, highlighting Black musicians' remarkable contributions, stories, and legacies across various genres.

Executive Director Phil Vassell of the Canada Black Music Archives states: “The CBMA stands as a testament to resilience, creativity, and cultural richness, amplifying the voices of Black musicians and redressing historical underrepresentation. Stemming from the legacy of WORD magazine and the roots of influential festivals, CBMA is a crucial step toward fostering understanding, appreciation, and a stronger sense of identity for all Canadians. Join us in this journey through over one hundred years of musical excellence that has played a pivotal role in Canada's diverse cultural tapestry.”

The CBMA is a rich educational resource for exploring the multifaceted history of Black Canadian music with an extensive collection of music, photographs, interviews, and historical documents. Our aim at CBMA is to raise awareness about the voices and experiences of Black Canadian musicians and promote a greater sense of identity, recognition, and belonging within the national narrative. We strive to showcase Black musicians' dynamic and often overlooked narratives and promote inclusivity, diversity, and cultural understanding in the Canadian arts and heritage landscape.

“The power of music can help bring people together, share stories of lived experiences, and spark meaningful conversations about the past, present and future,” according to Robyn Small, Senior Manager, Philanthropy, Sustainability & Corporate Citizenship of TD Bank Group. He further mentions, “Through the TD Ready Commitment, our corporate citizenship platform, TD is proud to support the Canada Black Music Archives in ensuring Black artists' rich and diverse voices

remain accessible for generations while creating space for emerging digital communications professionals to develop their skills."

In celebration of its launch, the CBMA invites the public to explore its digital archive and engage with this vital source of Canadian history, ensuring its preservation and dissemination for future generations. Experience an exceptional live performance by Liberty Silver, the first Black Juno Award winner in the R&B category, and other surprise guests. After thorough research, we compiled close to 200 bios of Black Canadian Artists and corresponding photographs and videos. The CBMA's goal is to add hundreds more artists and others in the Canadian music ecosystem who have contributed to the growth and development of these artists. We believe we have successfully closed a gap in creating a space for Black Canadian Artists and paying due recognition for their work through our archive.

Karen Thorne-Stone, President and CEO of Ontario Creates, states: "Ontario Creates is proud to support the development of the Canada Black Music Archives. With its cultural significance and legacy, the Archives has been thoughtfully and skillfully curated and aligns with Ontario Creates' vision to showcase our province's incredible diversity of talent. We congratulate Word Media Group for bringing this initiative to life."

The CBMA would like to express profound gratitude to TD Bank Group, Ontario Creates, Canada Summer Jobs, Ontario Skills Development Fund, and Public Address for their generous support. We thank WORD Magazine, Lake of Bays Brewing Company, our interns, supporters, organizations, and the City of Toronto Archives. Visit our website for more information and to explore the Canada Black Music Archives.

CONNECT WITH US:

Instagram: @the.cbma
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Facebook: Canada Black Music Archives
LinkedIn: Canada Black Music Archives
YouTube: Canada Black Music Archives

For more info:
647.483.2448.
info@the.cbma.com

