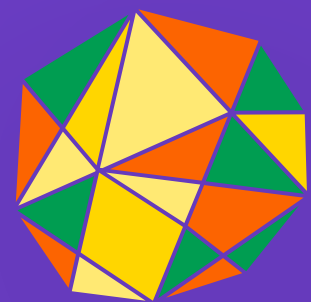


small
world
music
incubator
2024



meet the Small World Music team



Alan Davis

Founding Director



Umair Jaffar

Chief Executive Officer



Safura Nouman

Finance & Admin Manager



Danielle Parris

Program + Production
Coordinator



Sara Khajeh

Program Manager
Global Toronto



Liberty Bhaloo

Head of Development



Reza Moghaddas

Technical Director



Jieun Jung

Technical Coordinator



Thao Nghiem

Marketing Manager



Shrishti Chouhan

Creative Lead

meet the Incubator coordinators



Neda Mohamadpour

Incubator Programming
Coordinator



Paula Sofía Morales

Incubator Outreach and
Marketing Coordinator




Retreat

Friday Sept 6th - Sunday Sept 8th

YMCA Cedar Glen Outdoor Centre





The retreat is a crucial space for the whole cohort to better know each other, spend time together, share music and experiences to build a strong foundation for the rest of the program

This retreat will be space for:

- Overview of the music journey each artist has had so far
- Reflection
- Showcases where cohort members introduce themselves, and their stories, through music
- Free Time - creation, wandering, sharing, playing, reflecting

small
world
music
incubator
2024

program's
sessions &
facilitators

River of Life: Reflecting on Your Artistic Journey

This introspective session invites musicians to map their "River of Life," reflecting on their artistic journey. Through guided activities, participants assess their current stage as artists, celebrate past achievements, and identify pivotal moments that shaped their paths. The session also encourages envisioning future goals and aspirations, helping musicians chart a course for growth. By fostering self-awareness and clarity, this workshop equips artists to navigate their careers with intention and purpose.

Shereen Ashman

Cultural Innovator & Educator

Shereen Ashman is a multi-awarded social enterprise, educator and cultural consultant. Surviving gun violence sparked her purpose in social innovation. Since then, Shereen has collaborated with nonprofits, corporate and public institutions to deliver socio-economic programs to equity deserving communities. She cofounded the charity CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals, SisterTalk Village and has participated on the board of several charitable organization in Toronto.

As an educator and speaker, Shereen is practiced in adult learning and cultural curriculum. Shereen has delivered training and keynote address in college, community and corporate settings amplifying topics related to cultural inclusion and belonging; community development, and ancestral wellness.



Exploring Career Pathways & Getting the gig ready

This session provides an overview of opportunities in each area, helping emerging musicians identify their interests and strengths. Gain insights into building a versatile career that aligns with your goals while diversifying your professional opportunities.

We will also have an overview on the essential materials musicians need to secure gigs, including a professional bio, high-quality images, and a detailed rider.

Umair Jaffar

Chief Executive Officer at Small World Music

Umair brings two decades of experience working in the arts, heritage and culture sector. Since immigrating to Canada in 2014 he has worked in curatorial and management roles at the Aga Khan Museum and Harbourfront Centre. He is a fellow at Toronto Art Council's Cultural Leaders Lab and Business / Arts Executive Leadership program. He has an MBA from University of Adelaide and a MSc Cultural Anthropology from the University of Oxford. He serves as a board member for Canadian Association for the Performing Arts (CAPACOA), North York Arts and MusiConnect Asia.



Navigating Music Festivals: Toronto and Beyond

This session aims to equip musicians with strategies to apply for and perform at festivals, enhancing visibility and career growth. We will cover types of festivals, preparing standout applications, and planning engaging performances. Participants will also learn how to network, promote their performances, and leverage post-festival opportunities for long-term success.

Josh Grossman

Artistic Director at Toronto Jazz Festival

Since graduating from the University of Toronto's Jazz Performance Program, Josh has gained a wealth of experience in the worlds of music performance and administration, as a trumpeter, bandleader, board member or staff member. Working with organizations including Toronto Downtown Jazz, Continuum Contemporary Music, Young Voices Toronto and The Royal Conservatory, he has managed hundreds of concerts, from initial concept to the final curtain.



Danielle Parris

Program + Production Coordinator Small World Music

Danielle is a Toronto-based arts manager, researcher, and writer with 7+ years' experience in administration. Dedicated to community service, her work is grounded in community engagement, arts education, and programming, as well as creating inclusive and accessible spaces that amplify BIPOC voices and communities. She has worked with various arts organizations to facilitate workshops, create programming, and develop fundraising capacity. Danielle has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Ryerson University and received her Graduate Certification in Arts Management from Centennial College.



Ewelina Ferenc

Folk singer, agent and manager

A Toronto-based folk singer, agent, and manager, born and raised in Katowice, Poland. After receiving her M.A. degree in communications, she pursued ethnomusicology, focusing primarily on Polish traditional and global music.

Since immigrating to Canada, she has become a prominent folk and global music member, artist and manager. Ewelina has performed regularly with Polky, presenting and promoting the new global approach to Polish and Eastern European music to Canadian and North American audiences. She launched Sweet Beets Music agency in Toronto, focusing on Eastern European and global music artists and promoting women, immigrants and Toronto-based artists.



Just Prince

Musician and Singer Songwriter

Toronto-based singer-songwriter, Just Prince, is known for seamlessly blending Western and Eastern sounds into a harmonious tapestry. With a captivating style that defies genre constraints, his music weaves elements of folk, rock, blues, and Hindustani classical music into a mesmerizing experience. Just Prince's evocative compositions take listeners on a sonic journey, transcending cultural boundaries and resonating with the soul. Through his innovative approach, he crafts a musical landscape that bridges worlds with the intention of genuine songwriting and experimental expression.



Navigating Music Conferences

This session will focus on providing emerging musicians with a comprehensive understanding of music conferences and how to leverage them for career advancement. Participants will explore key conferences such as WOMEX, Global Toronto, Mundial Montreal, and Indigenous Summit understand their unique aspects. The workshop will guide attendees through the application process, offer tips for crafting strong applications, and cover strategies for effective networking. Additionally, it will provide insights on preparing for showcases and maintaining relationships post-conference, helping musicians make the most of these valuable opportunities.

Frank Klaffs

WOMEX representative and Owner of Piranha Records

Frank holds a masters degree in business administration and has gained practical experience in the music business for over 25 years as copyright and label manager for Piranha Musik (Berlin) as well as an independent music publicist for artists like Juanez, Robert Wyatt, Staff Benda Bilili, The Klezmatics, Tinariwen and for the international WorldMusicExpo WOMEX. Frank was also founding coordinator of the Berlin Label Commission. Besides his position as co-ceo of Piranha Arts, Frank is part of the Piranha Records team as well as of the educational and consulting branch and as cultural consultant for clients as Goethe Institute (Dakar/Senegal, Juba/ South Sudan and Beirut/Libanon) and for COSCAP/Eastern Caribbean with the collaborative project "Calypso in Berlin".



Maude Salome

Program Manager at Mundial Montreal

Maude is an artist manager, booking agent and project manager based in Montreal, Canada. She is currently working as manager for Ramon Chicharron and Bye Parula, as a project manager and booking agent with Impresaria and as the manager of the professional program at Mundial Montreal. Her approach with the artists she represents is highly personalized to ensure optimum development of the artist's career to reach national and international levels. In an industry where there is often too much homogeneity, she values diversity, bridges between cultures and artistic approaches that go off the beaten track.



Raeesa Lalani

Prismatic Artistic Director

Raeesa Lalani is an arts professional, leader, and artist, flourishing as the Artistic Director of the Prismatic Arts Festival. After an extensive varsity volleyball career at university, the arts industry called her back as a professional, as Raeesa has long been active as an actress, singer and has been known to tickle the ivories too

Her education and experience in the field of journalism and broadcasting for many years was the starting ground for her work in arts presentation leading to expertise in understanding media and communications, telling stories, outreach and audience development, fundraising, and social media development.



Nicole Auger

Manager of Programming & Community Engagement at International Indigenous Music Summit

Nicole Auger is the Manager of Programming and Community Engagement at the International Indigenous Music Summit, and a member of the Advisory for the National Indigenous Music Office. Prior to joining the IIMS family, Nicole was Project Manager for the Canadian Live Music Association's national study, "Closing the Gap: Impact and Representation of Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour Live Music Workers in Canada." A recipient of the 2023 Women in Music Canada (WIMC) Honour Roll Award, Nicole serves on the Music Canada Advisory Council and on the Board of Directors for Women in Music Canada and Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO).



Meet local presenters panel

Preparing for a live music performance involves understanding the venue type, from intimate pop-ups and bars to mid-sized auditoriums, festivals, and stadiums, each requiring tailored strategies for setup and sound. This session will provide the tools to create a clear stage plot and tech rider, specifying equipment, inputs, monitors, and lighting needs, are crucial for smooth coordination. We will hear from local event organizers and their take on best practices for artists.

Kristyn Gelfand

Programming Director at Uma Nota

Kristyn is a Toronto based, self-taught producer and arts administrator with over two decades of experience creating spaces for music and expression. From her early start in the vibrant techno scene of the late 90s, she has sought to create fun, liminal, and meaningful events, bringing audiences together to enjoy music from around the globe. She has worked as administrator and bookkeeper at Toronto's iconic Lula Lounge from 2015 to 2020. Since 2012, she has worked with Uma Nota Culture in a variety of roles, including her ongoing role as marketing and managing director. She brings many years of organizational understanding to Uma Nota.



Rory McLeod

Artistic Director of Xenia Concerts

Rory McLeod is a musician, entrepreneur, and concert designer who takes joy in creating authentic human connections through shared musical experiences. As Executive and Artistic Director of Xenia Concerts, he works with a variety of stakeholders in the disability and neurodiversity community, presenting partners, and performing artists to co-create concert experiences that are inclusive for people who face social and systemic barriers to inclusion. Determined to widen the circle of inclusion in the performing arts, Rory is currently pursuing his Master's in Inclusive Design at OCAD University. Rory is also the founder and Co-director of Pocket Concerts, an organization that presents intimate concert experiences in alternative venues all over the GTA.



Moudy Schricker

Founder of Link Music Lab

Mahmood Schricker is a musician, producer and founder of Link Music Lab, which supports the promotion and creation of Iranian-Canadian music through genre-crossing collaborations and innovative series like Polotechnics and Experimental Link Series. As a Canadian-Iranian born of Austrian heritage, Schricker unites elements of the different worlds he is part of.

He has transformed the setar into an electronic instrument to expand the possibilities for Persian music to integrate minimal ambient and dub sounds with Persian melodies.



Networking in the Music Business: Building Authentic Relationships

This workshop redefines networking as a meaningful and value-driven process. Learn how to build genuine connections, effectively communicate your professional value, and foster lasting relationships. Gain tools for navigating virtual and in-person networking spaces, making effective introductions, and collaborating authentically. This session equips participants with sustainable communication strategies that prioritize integrity while opening doors to exciting career opportunities in the music industry.

Nora Rahimian

Anticapitalist business coach

is a creative consultant who helps entrepreneurs achieve success on their terms, without giving up creative control, financial freedom, or personal integrity. #CultureFix is a global network of artists, activists, and entrepreneurs who use their platforms for social impact, and she produces an annual hip hop festival dedicated to giving independent musicians a meaningful platform.



Introduction to Cultural Education in Canada

Discover opportunities for musicians in cultural education beyond the stage. This session explores pathways such as teaching, arts administration, and creating educational programs. Learn how to build a multifaceted career by balancing performance and education work, securing certifications, and finding funding options. Participants will gain insights into networking strategies and how to establish meaningful contributions to the community while diversifying their career prospects.

Tim Walker

Educator and Senior Manager

Tim Walker (he/him) is currently the Director, Learning Programs at the Ontario Science Centre. He oversees School Programs and Educator Engagement, Program Resources, Volunteers, Community Engagement and steers the Broadening our Reach strategy to take programming into communities beyond the physical walls of the Ontario Science Centre. Prior to this, he was the Senior Manager, Education at Harbourfront Centre. In this role, he oversaw both the School Visits and Recreational Learning teams to deliver inclusive, accessible and engaging programming to children and youth.

He held the Manager, School Visits role for six year prior to this and Education Officer, Camps and School Visits for seven, where he taught a number of Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Urban Studies and Media Studies programs throughout the school year. In addition, Tim serves as a board member at Arts Education Network of Ontario and Prologue Performing Arts, as well as serving as the Co-Chair for the Music Advisory Committee for Children's Album of the Year at the JUNOS.



Building Your Booking Strategy

Andrew J. Kwan

Andrew Kwan Artsits Management - Agent, educator

Andrew Kwan is a highly respected arts executive, educator, and mentor with over 30 years in the performing arts. Known for his extensive influence across Canada's cultural sector, he lectures at top music schools and serves on boards, selection committees, and juries. As the founder of Andrew Kwan Artists Management Inc., he has built an esteemed roster of Grammy-nominated and JUNO-winning artists, producing over 100 concerts and earning multiple "Agent of the Year" awards. Kwan's passion for arts education led him to help develop Centennial College's Music Industry Arts and Performance Program, where he served as Advisory Chair.



Ahmed Moneka

Moneka Arabic Jazz - Incubator Alumni

Ahmed Moneka arrived in Toronto from Baghdad five years ago and has since collaborated with many artistic institutions including the Canadian Opera Company, Tarragon Theatre, Aga Khan Museum, Tafelmusik, Driftwood Theatre Group, Toronto Jazz Festival, Koerner Hall, Modern Times Stage, Jabari Dance Theatre, Toronto Laboratory Theatre, Theatre Centre, and TRIA Theatre. He is one of the founders of the band Moskitto Bar and is the creator and leader of Moneka Arabic Jazz – a 2019 Stingray Rising Stars Winner at the Toronto Jazz Festival. He joined KUNÉ in 2020.



Master the art of securing gigs with this session on booking strategies. Learn the differences between working with agencies and independent booking, and discover practical approaches to identifying and securing performance opportunities. This workshop equips emerging musicians with the tools to navigate booking processes effectively, ensuring they can build a sustainable performance schedule that enhances their visibility and career growth.

Leen Hamo

Kazdoura, Singer songwriter - Incubator Alumni

Leen Hamo is a Toronto-based Syrian artist, musician, singer and violin player. Leen started her music education (playing on violin, choir, practice-music theory) at the age of 10 at the "Arabic Musical Institute" in Aleppo-Syria. She has studied music for more than 7 years and participated in many concerts with other students on the stage of the "Culture Centre" in Aleppo. She graduated from University of Aleppo-Syria Fine Arts Faculty in 2014, specializing in Visual Communications. Leen started her musical career in 2011 as a vocalist with various local Arabic music bands in Syria, in different styles such as flamenco, classic and rock fusion.



Paula Sofía

Singer songwriter - Incubator Alumni

Paula Sofía is a Guatemalan singer-songwriter based in Toronto, whose Latin American Pop folk music brings vibrancy and connection to every stage she graces. Known for her playful, inviting presence, Paula creates performances that blend intimate storytelling with interactive charm, transcending language barriers and inviting audiences into a shared, heartfelt experience. Through soulful lyrics, vivid imagery, and quirky touches, she crafts songs that resonate deeply, celebrating both the lively and reflective sides of the human journey.



Introduction to Music Managers: Finding the Right Manager

Explore the vital role of music managers and how they can advance your career. This session provides insights into finding the right manager, understanding their responsibilities, and leveraging their expertise to navigate the industry. Emerging musicians will learn what to look for in a manager, how to establish productive working relationships, and the benefits of having someone dedicated to guiding their professional journey.

Amie Therrien

Executive Director, MMF Canada

Amie Therrien leads the Music Managers Forum (MMF) Canada team, supporting managers and self-managed artists with professional development, mentorship, networking opportunities, export missions, and advocacy.

Amie brings management experience from her time running Balsam Pier Music, an artist management and development company where she worked primarily with folk, roots, and Americana artists. She has worked in marketing and management at Coalition Music and as the program coordinator for Folk Alliance International and has served on the boards of Folk Music Ontario and MMF Canada, and is an alumna of the Artist Manager Program with Canada's Music Incubator.



Performing Arts Technical Knowledge Basics & Venues

Prepare for seamless live performances with this comprehensive session. Learn how to tailor setups for different venues, from intimate pop-ups to large-scale festivals. Explore the importance of stage plots, tech riders, soundchecks, and efficient communication with venue staff. Discover tips for protecting instruments, managing travel logistics, and creating a polished EPK to enhance your booking opportunities. This session equips emerging musicians with the knowledge and tools to deliver impactful, professional performances.

Reza Moghaddas

Programming Director at Small World Music

Reza is a Toronto based record producer, sound engineer and musician. During his 27 years of studio work he produced, recorded and mixed over 1500 albums and single tracks. Reza is a board member and co-founder of Godot Art Productions, one of Toronto's leading multi-disciplinary art foundations. Since 2008 he has worked as the lead technician with some of major live venues and festivals in Toronto such as Small World Centre, Tirgan Festival, Harbourfront Centre and Aga Khan Museum where he worked with artists like Zakir Hussain, Angelique Kidjo, Tory Lanez, Kayhan Kalhor, and many more.



Production Basics & Home Studio set up

Learn how to achieve industry-standard recordings from the comfort of your home studio. This session covers essential tips on selecting equipment, optimizing acoustics, and mastering production techniques to create high-quality tracks. Participants will also explore the professional recording facilities at Small World Music Centre, including booking options, support services, and the venue's box office capabilities. Whether working at home or in a studio, this session provides the knowledge and resources to elevate your music production.

Reza Moghaddas

Programming Director at Small World Music

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Music Publishing and Copyright 101

Dive into the fundamentals of music publishing and copyright in this comprehensive session. Learn about the various types of royalties in the music industry, how they are earned, and the processes for collecting and distributing them. This workshop equips emerging musicians with the knowledge needed to maximize their revenue streams and protect their intellectual property, providing a strong foundation for managing their careers and navigating the complexities of music rights.

Zara Abbasi

Rights Manager, Sub Management Group

Zara Abbasi has been on the business side of music since 2016. Before then, she was a classical musician, completed a degree in history and political science with a focus on the Balkans, and even had a stint as a data analyst at a tech company. That all prepared her for the world of music royalties and copyright, which has been her main focus since 2018. Currently, she is a rights manager at Sub Management Group, where she is part of a team of experts and specialists in global rights management



Houtan Hodania

Creative Executive at SOCAN

Houtan Hodania is a seasoned professional in the music industry with extensive experience in creative and operational roles. Currently serving on the Board of Directors for Young Music Professionals since June 2024, Houtan also holds the position of Creative Executive at SOCAN since October 2019, where prior roles included A&R Representative. From December 2016 to October 2019, Houtan was a DJ and Talent Buyer at Safe & Sound Entertainment. Houtan is an alumnus of Capilano University and completed secondary education at Handsworth Secondary, earning a High School Diploma.



Andrea England

Associate Director of Publisher Engagement and Strategy at the CMMRA

Andrea England is fully immersed in both the creative and business sides of the music industry. She is an award-winning songwriter landing cuts / cowrites with a wide variety of artists, from CCMA Award winners, Meghan Patrick and Don Amero, to international Popstar/Pussycat Doll, Nicole Scherzinger; the founder, curator, and host of critically-acclaimed songwriter series, Four Chords & amp; and an artist.

Andrea is also the Associate Director of Publisher Engagement and Strategy at the Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency, a SoundExchange company, where she brings a unique and holistic perspective - as a creator, educator, and music business analyst.



Introduction to Music Supervisors

Uncover the role of music supervisors in industries like film, TV, advertising, and gaming. This session introduces emerging musicians to the world of sync licensing, offering strategies for effective collaboration with supervisors. Learn how to approach supervisors, pitch your music effectively, and maintain professional relationships that can lead to long-term opportunities in sync licensing.

Michael Perlmutter

Music Supervisor, President of Guild of Music Supervisors

Michael has placed thousands of songs in tv shows, feature films and documentaries, seen and heard around the world. He has been working in the music/film/tv industries for 20+ years.

Michael has been asked to moderate and speak on panels around the world: Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Miami, New York, Cannes, Halifax, Toronto.

Currently, he is the president of the Guild of Music Supervisors, Canada and a 2-time award-winner at the inaugural Canadian Sync Awards in 2018



Telan Wong

Music Supervisor & Content Manager at Vapor Music

Telan has a superpower, it's the ability to listen. With a Bachelor of Music with a major in cello, she is constantly immersed in sound. As a Music Supervisor at Vapor Music / Long Division, Telan is an engine of creativity with any project that crosses her desk, be it advertising, film, or television.

She consistently delivers new and creative ideas, seeking to uncover those "glass slipper" moments between picture and sound. Telan has worked on various advertising campaigns with clients including Scotiabank, Ikea, Joe Fresh and Sick Kids Hospital.



Warren Bray

Bassist, Composer, DJ, Music Supervisor

Warren Bray is a music supervisor, musician, composer, DJ and music encyclopedia. Born and raised in Scarborough, Ontario, Warren has been playing music and reading album liner notes since he was a kid.

As one of the founding members of Toronto band Grand Analog, he's played shows all over the world, performing with groups like The Roots, Big Boi from Outkast, Shad, The Halluci Nation and more. Warren has over a decade of experience in the licensing world and has written music for commercials, film and TV. He also has a new soundtrack/prog band called Røisen.



Introduction to Music and Law

This session covers critical topics like business structure, registration, music publishing, and copyright basics, giving emerging musicians the tools to protect their work and manage their careers effectively. Participants will gain practical strategies to understand their rights and responsibilities, ensuring they are well-prepared to handle the legal aspects of their artistic endeavors with confidence and professionalism.

Liana White

Executive Director AFM/CFM

Liana White is the Executive Director of the Canadian National Office of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (AFM/CFM). She is involved in every aspect of the union's operations, from lobbying and negotiating on behalf of musicians, to mentoring them. With over 25 years' experience helping musicians to navigate the legal requirements to perform cross border, White has become recognized within the music industry as a leading authority on the subject.



Mohamed Khimji

Strategic Academic Leader & Law Professor

Mohamed Khimji is the David Allgood Professor in Business Law at Queen's University and a Director at Small World Music. In 2025, he will introduce an exciting new course, Law (Taylor's Version), which has garnered national media attention. This innovative course will explore Taylor Swift's significant impact on music law, delving into her high-profile legal disputes and business decisions.



Grant Landscape: Introduction to Grants in the Canadian Music Industry

This session introduces emerging musicians to the grant landscape in Canada's music industry. Participants will explore key funding opportunities and develop strategies for crafting successful grant applications. Gain insight into how to effectively engage with funders, understand their priorities, and position your project for success. By the end of the session, attendees will be better equipped to navigate funding processes and secure financial support to bring their creative visions to life.

Noora Rizvi

**Program Manager of Arts Across Canada at
the Canada Council for the Arts**

Noora Rizvi is the Program Manager of Arts Across Canada and Arts Abroad at the Canada Council for the Arts. As an arts producer, marketing professional, audience development specialist and strategy consultant, Noora has over twenty years of management experience in the Canadian cultural sector.

Noora has produced large-scale multidisciplinary national and international festivals, directed non-profit organizations, and provided strategic guidance to artists and organizations in her capacity as a public funder and board member. Her work has involved leading diverse teams, complex project and financial management, and multi-level stakeholder engagement.



Umair Jaffar

Chief Executive Officer at Small World Music

Umair brings two decades of experience working in the arts, heritage and culture sector. Since immigrating to Canada in 2014 he has worked in curatorial and management roles at the Aga Khan Museum and Harbourfront Centre. He is a fellow at Toronto Art Council's Cultural Leaders Lab and Business / Arts Executive Leadership program. He has an MBA from University of Adelaide and a MSc Cultural Anthropology from the University of Oxford. He serves as a board member for Canadian Association for the Performing Arts (CAPACOA), North York Arts and MusiConnect Asia.



Tiran Bay

Artist & INcubator alumni

Tiran Bay is a first-generation SWANA region Canadian singer-songwriter and electric cellist who challenges the status quo of conventional pop and classical music through thrilling, passionate performances. Her soulful vocals and fearless lyrics promise to soothe while awakening the spirit deep within us. A self-described genre-bending and genre-fluid artist, Tiran presents an Art-Pop, Avant-Pop, and Global-Pop musical experience to the delight of her audience. Tiran Bay is boldly creating her own lane and will soon be releasing her debut Album, Summer 2025.



Meet the Funders

Delve into the world of funding organizations within the music industry in this engaging session. Learn about the various types of funders, their specific programs, and how to align their opportunities with your music goals. Participants will explore strategies for researching potential funders and mastering the core components of a strong grant application, including project descriptions, budgets, and artistic statements. Equip yourself with the tools to build meaningful relationships and craft compelling applications

Christy DiFelice

Program Manager at Toronto Arts Council

Appointed in 2010 to the position of Music Program Manager, Christy came to TAC from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, where she was the Manager of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra. A graduate of York University (MA, Ethnomusicology/Musicology; 2008), her studies focused on musics and cultures of the African Diaspora, with a specialization in North American Jazz and Blues.

In addition, she has previously worked with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, the Fine Arts Cultural Studies Department at York University, and as a music copyist. Since its inaugural season (2008), she has sat on the Board of Directors of the Brantford International Jazz Festival. She is particularly passionate about advocating for diversity, arts education, and community development through the arts.



Marcus Tamm

Director of Communications at FACTOR

30-year music industry veteran – started as artist management office coordinator, went on to being tour manager before leaving the road for Universal Music Canada (near 20 years over two tenures) and has been almost four years at FACTOR as Director of Communications. Also a lifelong hobbyist musician.



Marketing & Branding 101

In this session, emerging musicians will learn how to develop and communicate a strong personal brand that resonates in the music industry. Discover practical strategies to define your identity, establish an authentic connection with your audience, and effectively market your work. From visual aesthetics to storytelling, this session provides the essential tools to create a cohesive and impactful presence that enhances your career opportunities and sets you apart in a competitive industry.

Ala Stasiuk

Marketing & Communications manager

Alicja (Ala) Stasiuk gained her experience working in marketing roles at Lula Music and Arts Centre, The Royal Conservatory of Music, Small World Music, and most recently Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto Jazz Fest, and currently holds a position of Marketing Manager at Luminato Festival Toronto. Originally from Poland, before moving to Canada in 2016, she worked as a Social Media Manager for PROMNI Dance Company at Warsaw University of Life Sciences. She finished American Culture studies at University of Warsaw in 2016, and Arts Management Program at Centennial College in 2018.



Pratishtha Kohli

Supervisor of Special Events

Pratishtha Kohli (she/her) is a Supervisor of Special Events with City Cultural Events for the City of Toronto, with experience in large-scale civic cultural events, such as Nuit Blanche and Doors Open Toronto. She is also the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the Tawoos Initiative, a not for profit cultural organization that specializes in showcasing independent artists of South Asian origin.



Juana Hermida

Programmer, Artist Liaison and Festival Coordinator

Juana Hermida is a Toronto-based music programmer, artist liaison, community connector, festival coordinator, producer and vinyl selectress, originally from Cali, Colombia. Through her work with Lulaworld Records and Lula Music and Arts Centre, she supports and presents both emerging and established Canadian Latin, Brazilian and global roots artists, working to promote their recordings and compositions internationally. She helped to spearhead the Sonic Sancocho initiative, an incubator for new projects, collaborations and approaches, that encourages musical excellence, experimentation and cross-cultural pollination.



Nishar Mansuri

Digital content creator & Advertising Professional

Nishar Mansuri (he/him) is a digital content creator, social documentary filmmaker, and advertising professional based in Toronto, specializing in creating impactful campaigns and narratives. He is the Founder of a marketing and digital ad production company and serves as the Marketing and Communications Lead for The Tawoos Initiative, a non-profit organization showcasing South Asian music and culture.



Reflecting and Looking Ahead

In this culminating session, participants reflect on their journey through the program, evaluating how far they've come since the beginning. Together, they'll revisit their initial goals, celebrate progress, and identify key lessons learned. The session creates space to share excitement for future possibilities, acknowledge lingering worries, and discuss strategies for navigating challenges ahead. Through meaningful reflection, participants will recognize how the program has empowered them, provided tools for growth, and helped them overcome obstacles with confidence.

Treasa Levasseur

Performer, Facilitator, Educator & Administrator

Treasa Levasseur is a busy creative who wears many hats with enthusiasm. She is a JUNO-nominated songwriter, a seasoned side person, and has self-released 4 albums throughout her career as a front person. These days she is finding fresh inspiration in her work as a community music facilitator, program administrator, and arts educator, as well as being an in-demand emcee and pop-up choir leader. Treasa helmed the Developing Artist Program at Folk Music Ontario for six years and recently completed a six-year stint at Folk Alliance International. Elle est une fierte Franco-Ontarienne and a proud Hamiltonian.



Conferences the cohort attended

**GLOBAL
TORONTO
MUSIC
FESTIVAL**

Sept 28th - Oct 1st

folk
music ontario

Oct 3rd - 6th

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Gloria Gift Nankunda

Alumni Cohort 2020

Gloria Gift Nankunda is an innovative folk soul musician, producer, director, curator, voiceover artist and festival performer. Gloria creates music & art that reflects her unique sound, which is rooted in a mix of her Ankole-Uganda traditional background, different African genres, languages and cultures.



Natasha Roldán

Alumni Cohort 2023

Natasha Roldán is a Colombian-Canadian singer-songwriter who travels with her voice through the landscapes of Latin American folk, jazz, and Colombian rhythms with an alternative touch.



Just Prince

Alumni Cohort 2023

Toronto-based singer-songwriter, Just Prince, is known for seamlessly blending Western and Eastern sounds into a harmonious tapestry. With a captivating style that defies genre constraints, his music weaves elements of folk, rock, blues, and Hindustani classical music into a mesmerizing experience. Just Prince's evocative compositions take listeners on a sonic journey, transcending cultural boundaries and resonating with the soul. Through his innovative approach, he crafts a musical landscape that bridges worlds with the intention of genuine songwriting and experimental expression.



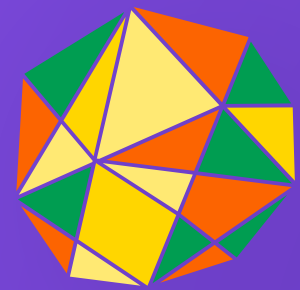
Jerusa Leao

Alumni Cohort 2021-22

Brazilian Canadian singer-songwriter JER fuses psychedelic grooves, northeast Brazilian rhythms, Tropicalia, and Canadian indie music, creating a sound that redefines traditional Brazilian music.

Born in Bahia, her captivating vocals, soulful melodies, and magnetic stage presence have made her a rising star in contemporary music. With deep roots in Brazil's cultural tapestry, JER has spent over a decade developing diverse musical projects that span genres and continents. Her ongoing contributions to Canada's music scene reflect her unyielding passion and artistic integrity, solidifying her status as a unique and influential artist.

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meet our
**Indigenous
Community
Leaders**

meet our Indigenous community leaders



Cat Criger
Indigenous Elder

Cat Criger is an Indigenous Elder, Traditional Teacher and Knowledge Keeper from the Cayuga Nation, Turtle Clan, as well as having German and English ancestry. Cat was taught traditional ceremonies, teachings, circles, counselling, healing and plant medicines, Indigenous philosophies and pedagogies by an Anishnawbe Elder and uses these gifts to help all people.

Cat has worked as an Elder and advisor in many Indigenous agencies, government ministries, non-profit organisations and corporations. He is retired from the University of Toronto, where he last held the position of Indigenous Advisor within the offices of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the Mississauga Campus. Cat served as part of the chaplaincy for the Pan Am and Invictus games in Toronto providing Indigenous spiritual support to athletes



River Christie White

Indigenous dancer, musician, and
Independent audio engineer

River Christie-White is a First Nations youth from Oneida Nation of the Thames. He is a hoop dancer, fancy dancer, flute player, singer presenter and motivational speaker. He has spent the last eight years traveling the Pow Wow trail to educate audiences on autism.

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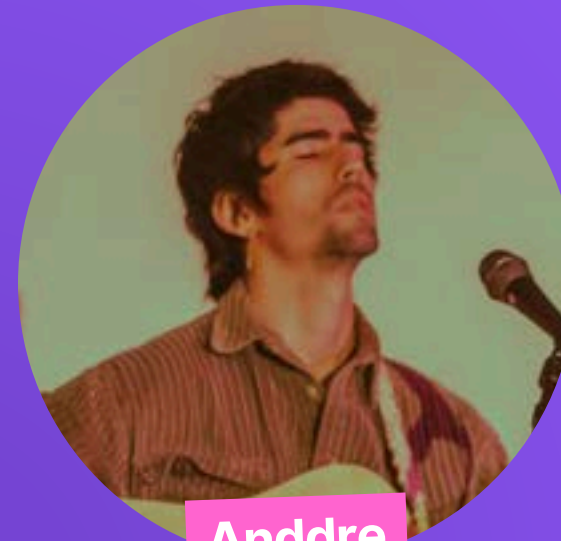
meet our
cohort

meet our 2024 Incubator cohort



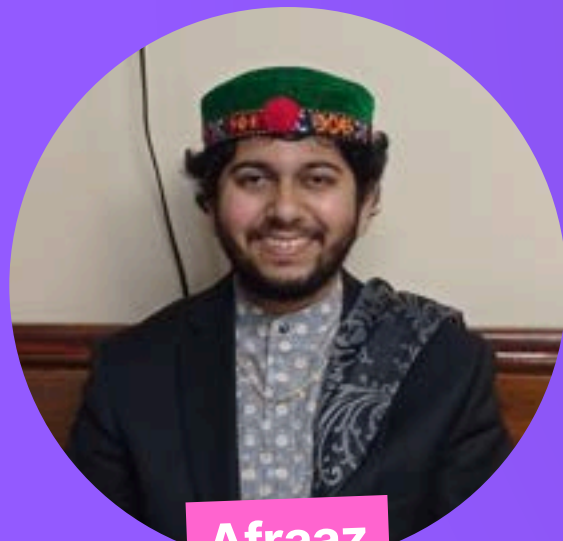
**Aaleem
Mohammed**

Alternative hip-hop artist, fusing genres. Mainly creates music that reflects a hip-hop, rock and reggae blend. Has created workshops that help build community, guiding youth toward positive release of stress through music and writing. Aaleem has developed community festivals, which have served the community at large and has supported young artists overcoming negative core-issues through these opportunities.



**Anddre
Mafra**

Crossing the lines between North and South America, Anddre Mafra brings dream folk to an intimate reality. Originally from Brazil and now based in Canada, Andre blends Latin American roots with folk influences, bringing diversity to the folk music scene. Through a repertoire of original songs in both English and Portuguese, he weaves together stories and emotions, exploring themes of acceptance, love, and growth. Andre has captivated audiences with his intimate performances, sharing stages with notable acts like Cowboy Junkies and Andy Shauf.



**Afraaz
Adam Mulji**

Afraaz Adam Mulji, hails from Tanzania and currently resides in Toronto, Canada. Overcoming visual impairment from a young age, Afraaz's career has evolved vibrantly from his early days as a child prodigy, captivating audiences with his musical prowess since the age of three. His performances, gracing royalty and diplomatic communities worldwide, showcase his exceptional talent and resilience. Composer & Performer (multidisciplinary & interdisciplinary) Artist-Curator & Philosopher



**Atish
Mukhopadhyay**

As a performing musician and educator specializing in North Indian Classical music, Atish bring over 20 years of professional international experience to the table. His journey in music has taken him across various countries, enriching his understanding and mastery of this art form.

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**Behzad
Danesh**

Behzad Danesh is an Iranian musician and guitarist whose work blends traditional Iranian music with jazz. Drawing on improvisation as a common thread, he experiments with microtonal scales and jazz-inspired harmonies, seeking to harmonize both worlds. His project, Saffron Tea, reflects his goal to innovate within Iranian music, enriching tradition with contemporary sound.



Emad Saedi

A passionate composer and producer from Iran, Emad Saedi blends classical and electronic music to create immersive storytelling experiences. His unique ability to evoke emotions through sound takes listeners on journeys beyond boundaries. Currently crafting his debut EDM album exploring life, anxiety, and self-growth, he also plans a Persian-inspired piano solo album and an orchestral suite about the solar system. Emad's work spans podcasts, films, and media, showcasing his diverse musical vision.



Chinyi

As a Singapore-born, Southeast Asian immigrant, she draws from a global journey spanning the US, East Asia, and North Africa to create folk-pop music steeped in universal themes of grief, joy, and rebuilding. Classically trained in piano and self-taught on guitar, she has opened for Asian-American film festivals, played in Moroccan bands, and released her debut EP in 2022. Chinyi is passionate about uplifting underrepresented voices through music.



Empire Thief

Empire Thief is an emotive band bringing a high energy blend of original contemporary folk and rock featuring piercing vocals on a lush bed of perfectly blended guitars. The songs and lyrics attach to themes of love, wandering, introspection, contempt, envy and emancipation.

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Eunice Keitan

Eunice Keitan's latest EP fuses Southeast Asian soundscapes with Neo-Soul, offering a distinctive blend that challenges the limited representation of Asian artists beyond mainstream genres. Her live performances amplify this diversity, featuring songs in English, Cantonese, Malay, and Spanish, reflecting her multicultural roots. Now based in Toronto, she's eager to share her unique perspectives and contribute to the city's vibrant and diverse cultural tapestry.



Hinad Alshuhuf

Hinad Alshuhuf, a skilled oud player, has captivated audiences in Syria, Lebanon, and Canada, performing with ensembles like Diar and Diwan to bridge cultural divides. Passionate about preserving musical heritage, he has worked with UNESCO on Syrian music preservation and mentored refugee children through music education. Dedicated to cultural advocacy, he sees music as a path to healing and connection, embodying the spirit of community and equity in the arts.



Gandhaar Amin

Gandhaar Amin has been immersed in Indian classical music since the age of four and began performing at sixteen. With over a decade of experience in music production, he creates electronic music infused with a distinct Indian melodic identity, blending tradition with modernity in a unique and captivating way.



Illarra

A singer-songwriter from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, now based in Toronto, Illarra draws deeply from Classical Arabic, Sufi, and Arabian Peninsula folklore music. He is finding his voice in fusion music, blending origins with new genres, and seeks to grow as a professional musician while enriching his art through collaboration.

meet our 2024 Incubator cohort



**Isaiah
Farahbakhsh**

Isaiah Farahbakhsh, a queer, non-binary mixed-race Iranian musician and composer, bridges European classical training, contemporary jazz, and traditional Iranian music. Their improvisational practice blends free improvisation with Iranian musical elements, reflecting a deeply personal and innovative approach. Currently learning the kamanche, they aspire to become a knowledge holder and educator of Iranian music in Toronto. Recent collaborations exploring diasporic traditions highlight their passion for cultural exchange and creative co-creation.



Joshua Lopez

Joshua Lopez represents the intersection of the Filipino-Canadian community, Toronto's vibrant music scene, and the blues genre. With 20 years of experience in singing, guitar, and composing original material, he combines a well-honed skill set with a commitment to growth. Actively engaged in Toronto's music community, he seeks to deepen his industry knowledge, build essential networks, and navigate the music business effectively, making this program a pivotal step in advancing his career.



**Janiah
Hines-Brown**

Janiah Hines-Brown, a indie artist with six years of experience, this performer has honed her craft through open mic nights, talent shows, gigs, and festivals. Passionate about both singing and songwriting, she aspires to make a lasting impact with her work. Eager to grow, they embrace opportunities to deepen their knowledge of the music industry, build connections, and pursue her dreams of achieving recognition and success in her artistic journey.



Japs

A first-generation Filipino-Canadian artist and producer, he is part of the equity-deserving musicians this program seeks to support. While creating music comes naturally to him, navigating the business side of the industry remains a challenge. Eager to grow as a performer and composer, he seeks guidance to monetize his work and build a sustainable career.

meet our 2024 Incubator cohort



Luis
Anselmi

Luis Anselmi, skillfully merges his Venezuelan roots with diverse world music influences. Proficient in playing the Venezuelan Cuatro, piano, and lending his voice to both singing and songwriting, he performs with his band 'GRATITUD'. Together, they create a vibrant Latin-World sound that seamlessly blends each member's unique cultural background. With intricate rhythms and uplifting lyrics, their music is a captivating celebration that will inspire you to dance!



MILKNDHONEY

Carolina Leite, also known as MILKNDHONEY, moved to Toronto in 2016 after winning a scholarship through a poetry contest, sponsored by Experimento and "89 a radio rock." Growing up in a Brazilian favela, she faced social inequality, violence, and personal loss, fueling her drive for success and justice. A former business student, Carolina's love for Motown music inspired her to learn English and pursue her passion for music.



Mehdi
Rostami

Mehdi Rostami has been immersed in music since the age of six, performing on stage since nine, and has held hundreds of concerts throughout their career. Passionate about becoming part of Toronto's music scene and contributing to Canadian culture, he brings extensive experience as a performer, arranger, and songwriter.



MINT

MINT is a groove-based guitar and drum duo who bring a blend of melodic and rhythmic elements of R&B, soul, hip hop, funk and jazz while adding their individual inspiration to the mix. MINT creates a chill, vibey, head bobbing atmosphere which encompasses dreamy reflection and storytelling. Based in Toronto, MINT formed in 2019 and have been writing and creating with their efforts culminating into their EP titled "Of This World".



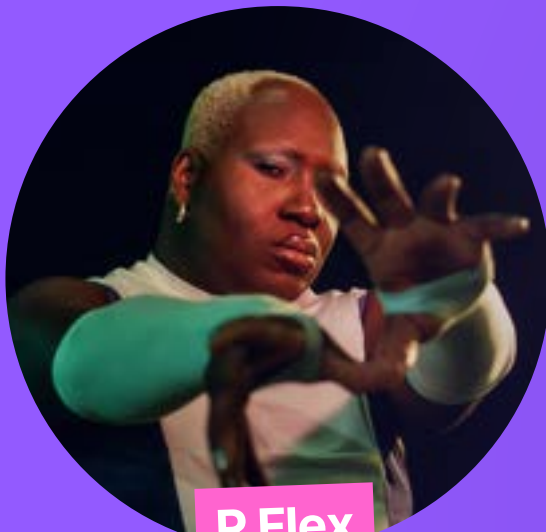
Lady Ruby

Lady Ruby is a self-taught Canadian harpist, singer-songwriter and creative. Currently working as a Toronto based artist, she began her journey with the harp in Montreal in 2014. Exploring an alternative folk-pop fusion; she's named her unique style "harp-hop" Ruby's sound has best been described as melancholic, progressive and hypnotic.



Toussaint

Meet Toussaint: a boundary-breaking singer/songwriter at the intersection of electronica and alternative realms. As an alumna of the BC X Artscape Launchpad Music Entrepreneurship Program, she's not just an artist but a savvy entrepreneur. In her pursuit of a debut album. Toussaint continues to learn and refine her artistry, pushing the boundaries of what it means to be an artist. With a passion for world-building, her music invites listeners into expansive emotional landscapes



R Flex

Named as Now Toronto's Artist to Watch in 2022, R. Flex is scrupulously revealing their vision for 2022. Having just released their trailblazing 3rd EP ONCE UPON A FLEX, R. Flex is ready to change the shape of R&B. Simply put, R. Flex is an underground star in the making. Their arresting live performances also helped them build a name in Canada's music scenes opening for the likes of Above Top Secret, Silla & Rise, & Le1f. CHECK THE FLEX!



Zamira Lacosta

Zamira Lacosta is a Cuban singer and songwriter who has been based in Toronto since 2014. With a music career spanning back to the age of 18, she brings years of experience and artistry to her craft. Ready to fully embrace her solo career and explore her full potential, she sees opportunities like this program as pivotal to achieving her dreams and advancing her journey as an emerging solo artist.



Seu

Seu is a mexican singer-songwriter who currently lives in the city of Toronto Canada. He is Known for being the founder of projects like Pachedub Collective, La Vibra Roots and many more, where the main genres he plays go by Reggae, Funk, Rock, Reggae Dub and Boleros. In this past year, he received an economic support from the local culture secretary and he decided to invest in producing his very first album as a solo artist. Taking his influences mainly, he decided to launch it by the name "Roots"

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meet our alumni & invited guests

Nour Kdn



Karla García



Tarek Ghriri



Matías Recharte



Ivan Santiago Escobar





CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Eduard Sadi

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Aden Kishor Mohammed
Chen Chen

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Kandice Brown

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Michelle Bostant

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Mines El Hachimi

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Eric Bracher

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Eduard Sadi

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
H. Lopez

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Camila Lacosta

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Carolina Diaz

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Eduard Sadi

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Sophia Korneeva

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
Jorge Moran





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