Five Applicants Awarded in the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts 2024/25 IMAGINE Arts Incubator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Kingston, ON … Five successful applicants have been selected for the 2024/25 IMAGINE Arts Incubator, hosted by the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts ("the Isabel") at Queen's University.

The IMAGINE Arts Incubator was developed in 2020 to foster creativity and innovation and to enable Kingston and national professional artists and creators to explore, invent, collaborate, and produce. The program supports artists and their projects through the granting of venue space, production staffing, and artist honoraria.

"The Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts is committed to supporting creativity that engages with culture, seeks a relationship with diverse audiences and artists, and aims to influence socially difficult issues." says **Gordon E. Smith**, Director of the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. "This year's IMAGINE Arts Incubator projects represent these goals and we are excited to support these artists in bringing their projects to life through the 2024/25 program."

Projects that have been selected for the 2024/25 program include album and video recordings, and residencies to create multi-disciplinary art pieces that explore themes of leadership, cultural synthesis, enforced disappearance, and immersive live music experiences. A full list of the projects and successful candidates is included below.

The 2024/25 IMAGINE Arts Incubator program is made possible through the support of Bader Philanthropies and the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts.

PROJECT LISTINGS

KUNE
Featuring **Kune – Canada's Global Orchestra and Demetrios Petsalakis**

KUNE, Canada's Global Orchestra, has embarked on a new artistic project titled "The Missing" which is a call to action through musical collaboration to free unfairly imprisoned artists, journalists and freedom fighters and to draw attention to cases of enforced disappearance around the world. KUNE will workshop and record these new songs for release in 2026.

GOOD FORTUNE

Featuring **Kelsey McNulty**

Good Fortune, led by Kelsey McNulty, will record a unique live performance of their music and stop-motion animations. This multi-platform show blends Good Fortune's retro pop music with cinematic visuals and improvisation, creating an immersive experience that engages both auditory and visual senses. Supported by a trio of talented musicians—Jon Hyde (drums), James Taylor (bass, guitar) and Kelsey McNulty (keyboards, voice, projections)—the performance will feature music in both English and French, designed to captivate diverse audiences.

The project, which began development in collaboration with Maylee Todd in early 2024, has been described by audiences as immersive and captivating thanks to the integration of vintage sounds and visual projections using CRT TVs. This performance is not only a showcase of Good Fortune's evolving sound but also Kelsey's development as a visual artist.

CANADIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Featuring **Drew Comstock**

The Canadian Chamber Orchestra (CCO), a fourteen-piece conductorless chamber orchestra will record its debut album with behind-the-scenes video for a documentary showcasing the recording process. The conductorless model is central to their artistic process, fostering a highly collaborative creative process that pushes boundaries of chamber music interpretation. Every musician is an active participant in shaping the sound, resulting in deeply dynamic interpretations. The CCO fosters intercultural dialogue and showcases Canadian music. Canadian Kevin Lau reimagines Romantic sensibilities through a cinematic lens with his work *Joy*. Dinuk Wijeratne's *Gajaga Vannama - Fantasia for Piano and Strings*, blends Sri Lankan traditional dance forms with Western classical techniques, creating a vibrant exploration of cultural synthesis and resilience that they will record with the composer. Elgar's Serenade for Strings is a pinnacle of refined, English warmth, and features Banff Grand Prize-winning Rolston String Quartet. This contrasts with Golijov's work *Last Round*, featuring a battle for the soul of Tango. Finally, Canadian Jocelyn Morlock's pandemic-influenced work *Solitude* reveals the inner emotional battle felt by all during that time.

NAXX BITOTA

Featuring **NAXX BITOTA**

NAXX BITOTA's musical project is a mediation between Congolese culture and various other cultures; her shows, workshops and conferences are a way for her to build a bridge between her culture of origin and the one that has welcomed her for over 16 years and of which she is a full-fledged member. Her music blends the traditional rhythms of the Democratic Republic of Congo with Afropop.

"*The language in which my music is expressed cannot be an obstacle to your enjoyment.*" NAXX BiTOTA

JESSE PLESSIS

Featuring **Jesse Plessis** and **Jonathon Adams**

"Wendigo: Halfbreed Hauntologies" is an anti-colonial love song to the land and water, and to our ancestors. Centering the compositions of Métis composer Jesse Plessis, Nistwayr (Jonathon Adams and Jesse Plessis) is joined by Cree experimental filmmaker Tyson Houseman in a program also featuring arrangements of John Dowland's songs by Plessis alongside pieces by Orlando Gibbons and Henry Purcell. We invite audience members of the Isabel Bader Centre to witness the world-premiere of "Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent" a new song cycle by Plessis with text by Toronto-based Anishinaabe/Settler poet, Liz Howard. This project

illuminates from many angles the ways Indigenous people and our occupied territories are haunted by colonialism, and in turn the ways Native worldviews critique, resist and haunt this dominating force. Houseman's filmic practice encompasses prerecorded projection and live film performance; both modes will be incorporated within "Wendigo: Halfbreed Hauntologies".

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