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For Immediate Release

TD Amplify Cabarets Return to the Arts Commons Presents with Two Doors: Dispatches from the In-Between, curated by Jae Sterling and Contra

November 3, 2021 CALGARY – Suspended in time, held in a moment between here and an indeterminate future – it’s a feeling we’ve all known since March 2020. *Two Doors: Dispatches from the In-Between* is a cabaret that challenges audiences to embrace this moment of suspension in an immersive evening of music, spoken word, visual art and dance. What will you discover in between two doors? Join Arts Commons Presents for a cabaret that explores transformation, transition, and the unknown on **Saturday, November 20 for two performances at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.** in the **Engineered Air Theatre**.

After spending last season in the virtual realm, the TD Amplify Cabaret series from Arts Commons Presents is back for live and in-person performances in the Engineered Air Theatre at Arts Commons. This season, all four TD Amplify Cabarets will be curated by the inaugural Arts Commons Incubator Fellows, Jae Sterling and Contra, multidisciplinary artists, community leaders, entrepreneurs, and founding members of the THOTNATION/SANSFUCCS collective. Each upcoming cabaret will also feature participants in the Arts Commons Incubator program, a season-long professional development program for artists who move between performance and visual art genres. The TD Amplify Cabaret series is the perfect avenue for the Incubator cohort to find new audiences, flex their artistic practice, and explore creative intersections with their peers.



Jae Sterling and Contra, Photo by Asim Overstands.

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“Having the TD Amplify Cabaret series as a showcase for artists from the Incubator program is a natural and organic evolution of this boundary pushing series. The Cabarets were originally conceived as a way for genres, ideas, and audiences to cross-pollinate and Arts Commons Incubator encourages this same synergy among artists,” says Josh Dalledonne, Associate Director of Programming at Arts Commons. “We’re fostering artists who will define our future.”

Two Doors: Dispatches from the In-Between – the first of four TD Amplify Cabarets this season – was inspired by the sudden shutdown of global arts and culture industries at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. With unprecedented isolation and cancellations, this has been an anxious, painful time for artists in Calgary. And yet, it has also been a time of opportunity. This cabaret marks one of the first times Calgary artists can process and articulate the pandemic’s impact in a public performance, and audiences are encouraged to join them in an immersive, dreamlike atmosphere. Enter the here-nor-there with *Two Doors: Dispatches from the In-Between* for two performances on November 20 at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. And save the dates for three more TD Amplify Cabarets on February 26, April 30, and June 4, 2022.

“It [the cabaret] is really about creating this completely new experience for Calgary, telling new stories in new ways,” says Jae Sterling, Arts Commons Incubator Fellow and season co-curator of the 2021-22 TD Amplify Cabarets. “And we hope the audience will want to come back for more.”

The 2021-22 season of TD Amplify Cabarets, produced by Arts Commons Presents, is the fourth year of the innovative series elevating the voices of Calgary artists from equity-seeking communities, bringing new perspectives and different forms of live art to the Arts Commons Presents offerings.

For tickets, please call 403-294-9494 or visit artscommons.ca.

What: *Two Doors: Dispatches from the In-Between*
When: Saturday, November 20, 2021 at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.
Where: Engineered Air Theatre, Arts Commons
Tickets: 403-294-9494 or visit artscommons.ca.

For media inquiries, high resolution images, or more information contact:
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Contra is a multidisciplinary artist who navigates the Canadian arts and culture landscape as a musician, director, producer, and creative strategist. Her most prominent project to date is through her work in Cartel Madras, an expansive and experimental music project now signed under Sub Pop Records. As a founding member of the THOTNATION/SANSFUCCS collective her artistic journey has also brought her into the world of art direction, visual production, and creative strategy. Challenging cities, industries, and narratives to allow new voices in is at the very centre of how Contra pursues all her creative endeavours; furthering culture and allowing art to thrive.

Using her eclectic professional background within the creative sector, Contra has been able to combine her artistry with business strategy and marketing acumen with initiatives through her collective. Through her work in Cartel Madras, she has developed counter-culture showcases for new artists while touring extensively within Canada & The United States giving her an immediate, essential and thorough pulse of the underground across Canada. In 2021 she expanded her expertise into overseeing the creation and production of art exhibitions, digital series and documentaries.

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Jae Sterling is a multidisciplinary artist and founding member of the THOTNATION/SANSFUCCS collective. Beginning as a musician, he has extended his art form over the years to include painting (acrylic & oil), digital design & mixed media, streetwear design, and written essays.

Through his early years in Kingston, Jamaica to the landscapes of North America, Jae has spent the past few years developing his artistry by weaving his experiences growing up in Jamaica, South Florida, and coming into adulthood in Canada into all his projects. In 2019, his exploration in hip hop led him to be one of 10 artists selected for the National Music Centre's Alberta residency program. Sterling has so far released four music projects and has toured in Alberta & Ontario.

In 2020, Sterling embarked on an ambitious year-long multimedia exhibition, *Riding Horses with White Men (RHWWM)*. This exhibition debuted in Calgary in summer 2020 and is currently touring across Canada into 2021. The success of RHWWM led to him being one of Calgary's first Black muralists, painting *The Guide & Protector* in Chinatown.

Jae's more recent work, falling under the self-styled title of *BULLY*, veers towards examining race, sexuality, violence and art's ability to retell and heal histories while simultaneously violating them. In 2021 Jae intends to release a collection of essays from the RHWWM exhibition and launch *BIG BULLY* apparel.

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*, *National Geographic Live*, *PCL Blues*, *TD Amplify Cabarets*, and *TD Jazz*, as well as the work that we do in the community. Through this work, we are able to do our part to further enrich our city, as well as create opportunities for Calgary-based artists on a multitude of levels.

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