MUSIC TOURISM CONVENTION
by MUSIC CITIES EVENTS

CAPE BRETON ISLAND MUSIC TOURISM CONVENTION

29 – 31 MAY 2024



EXPERIENCE MUSIC TOURISM BEST PRACTICES

MUSIC TOURISM CONVENTION

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SCHEDULE OVERVIEW



WEDNESDAY: MAY 29TH

OPENING RECEPTION
Sacred Heart Downtown
7.00pm - 9.00pm

THURSDAY: MAY 30TH

MAIN CONVENTION DAY 1
Membertou Trade & Convention Center
9.15 am - 5.05pm

FRIDAY: MAY 31ST

MAIN CONVENTION DAY 1
Membertou Trade & Convention Center
9.15 am - 3.35 pm

CLOSING RECEPTION
Membertou Trade & Convention Center
3.55pm - 6:00 pm

AFTER PARTY
Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion
8.00pm - 11:00 pm

FULL SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29TH

Sacred Heart Downtown

7:00PM - 9:00AM

OPENING RECEPTION

Rob Hain, CEO, Sound Diplomacy (Canada)

Terry Smith, CEO, Destination Cape Breton (Canada)



MUSIC PERFORMANCE

MORGAN TONEY TRIO



FULL SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, MAY 30TH

Membertou Trade and Convention Center

9.15AM - 10.00AM

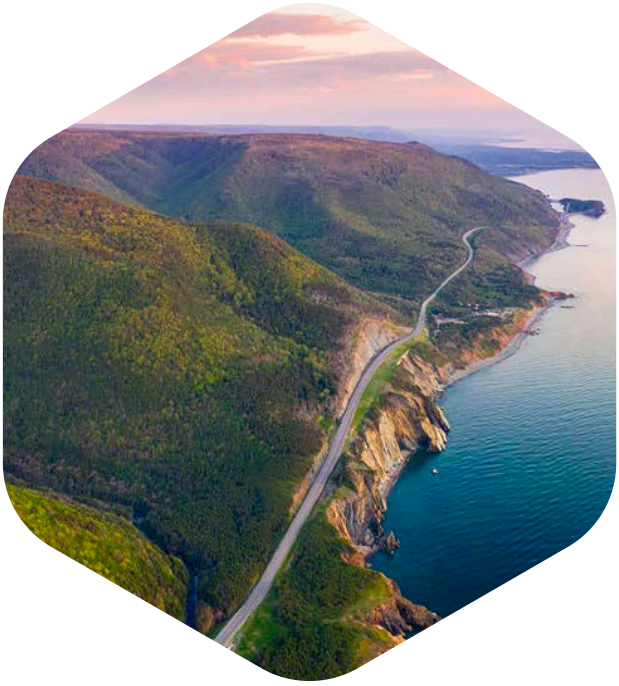
REGISTRATION

10.00AM - 10.15AM

TRADITIONAL GREETING

SONS OF MEMBERTOU





10:15AM - 10:30AM

OFFICIAL WELCOME

- **Rob Hain**, CEO, Sound Diplomacy (Canada)
- **Terry Smith**, CEO, Destination Cape Breton (Canada)
- **Amanda McDougall-Merrill**, Mayor, Cape Breton Regional Municipality (Canada)

LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCES

MAY 29TH, 7:00PM - 9:00PM

OPENING RECEPTION

MORGAN TONEY TRIO

Morgan Toney is a musician from the Mi'kmaq community of Nova Scotia, Canada. He seamlessly blends traditional Mi'kmaq songs with the fiddle, which has been adapted from Celtic traditions by the Mi'kmaq people over the years. Toney's debut album "First Flight," released by Ishkodé Records, showcases this unique fusion of cultures.





MAY 30TH, 11:55AM - 1:30PM

LUNCH BREAK

MEN OF THE DEEPS

The Men of the Deeps, a choir of coal miners from Cape Breton Island, has preserved the folklore of coal mining communities for over 50 years. They've released albums, been featured in films and books, toured globally, and were inducted into the Cape Breton Music Industry Hall of Fame, embodying camaraderie and cultural preservation.



The blues. It's still red-hot in Mississippi.

Hey, hey, the blues is more than all right here in Mississippi. Just a stone's throw from the legendary crossroads, you can catch performances from living legends and young sensations. And you can get deep down into the roots of American music at the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center, the Delta Blues Museum, and GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi. Find your rhythm at **VisitMississippi.org/Blues**.

#WanderMS

VISIT MISSISSIPPI

wanderers welcome

Jimmy "Duck" Holmes | Blue Front Cafe | Bentonia, Mississippi

FULL SCHEDULE
THURSDAY, MAY 30TH
Membertou Trade and Convention Center

10:30AM - 11:20AM

SONIC NOMADS: ELEVATING DESTINATIONS THROUGH ARTISTS AS DESTINATION AMBASSADORS

Moderator:
Afua Asantewaa Owusu Aduonum, Tourism Ambassador, Ghana Tourism Authority (Ghana)

- **Natalia Echenique Espinoza**, Focal Point, Concepcion City of Music (Chile)
- **Sarah Matthews**, Managing Director, E-Tourism Frontiers Ltd (Hong Kong)
- **Stephen Muise,** Conductor/Business Manager & Technical Director, Men of the Deeps (Canada)
- **Carmen Portela,** Founder, Polifónico (Puerto Rico)

Description: By leveraging the love that local stakeholders have for their hometown, 'Destination Ambassadors' can be a tool that places use to amplify the impact of their marketing strategies. These types of ambassadors can have a significant impact in promoting positive visitor experiences, protecting the destination's reputation and increasing its brand awareness.

In this panel, we will gather several experts to discuss the benefits that destinations can expect from developing a destination ambassador programme that is focused on musicians.

11:25AM - 11:55AM

PRESENTATION – MELODIC JOURNEYS: CRAFTING UNFORGETTABLE TOURIST EXPERIENCES THROUGH MUSIC

- **Rodney MacDonald**, Musician & President of the Colaisde na Gàidhlig / The Gaelic College (Canada)

Description: There are many reasons why people are drawn to a music tourism destination. It can be because of the power of its music legacy, all the way to the branding strategy of the destination. However, once visitors have arrived they must have an engaging and enjoyable experience. How can we ensure visitors attending music destinations have an unforgettable experience? What are the key elements to take into consideration when developing engaging experiences for tourists? What are some successful examples of this? In this presentation, Rodney Macdonald from The Gaelic College will share his long experience organising musical experiences to visitors arriving to Cape Breton Island.



CULTURE & CREATIVITY TAKE CENTER STAGE

For an **Authentic** Experience in Northwest Arkansas,
You Gotta **ExperienceFayetteville.com**





EXPERIENCE FAYETTEVILLE

FULL SCHEDULE
THURSDAY, MAY 30TH
Membertou Trade and Convention Center

11:55AM - 1:30PM
LUNCH BREAK
- Special performance by **Men of the Deeps**

1:30PM - 2:00PM
PRESENTATION: BEYOND BEATS: DECODING THE SOCIAL SYMPHONY OF FESTIVALS AND THEIR IMPACT

- **Jamie MacDonald,** Community Event Co-Coordinator, Tiree Music Festival (UK)

Description: The impact of a music festival goes much further than the economic impact it generates for the local area. Music festivals can be a place where members of a community can strengthen and expand their social networks. They can also be a space where different communities come together and are represented, local children are introduced to live music, and a tool for educating the community on various matters. In this presentation, Jamie MacDonald will present a case study of the Tiree Music Festival to better understand its perceived social impacts by both organisers, local authorities as well as the different stakeholders it has contact with.

2:05PM - 3:05PM
WORKSHOP: HARMONIOUS HORIZONS: NAVIGATING INCLUSIVITY IN MUSIC TOURISM EXPERIENCES

- **Bradley Sheppard,** Change Leader, Sheppard Training Inc. (Canada)

Description: Accessible tourism is a concept that addresses a growing segment of travellers with a diverse range of needs and requirements. However, accessible tourism is not just about providing facilities that are wheelchair accessible, but making sure that all people can have access to the tourist offer regardless of their age, size, ability, disability, identity or community group. In this roundtable session delegates we'll be exploring personal and professional experiences that ponder upon tourism accessibility. The goals of the session will be to identify those minority groups that are normally overlooked by tourism accessibility, as well as the biggest challenges and best practices available to develop tourism offers that are truly accessible for all visitors.

3:05PM - 3:30PM
COFFEE BREAK & NETWORKING



FULL SCHEDULE
THURSDAY, MAY 30TH
Membertou Trade and Convention Center

3:30PM - 4:00PM

PRESENTATION – ECHOES OF LEGENDS: MUSIC VENUES AS LIVING HERITAGE IN THE HEARTBEAT OF LOCAL CULTURE

- **Paris Martine**, Booker, John Curtis Hotel (Australia)

Description: This presentation will emphasise the historical resonance and cultural significance of music venues. Through the experience of Tote Hotel in Australia, our speaker will share how music venues can contribute to the living heritage of a community, acting as dynamic hubs that shape, reflect, and perpetuate local culture.

4:05PM - 4:55PM

PANEL: ORCHESTRATING SUCCESS: UNVEILING THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY'S KEY NOTES IN MUSIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Moderator:
Jennifer Currie, Faculty, Tourism Management, Cape Breton University (Canada)

- **Rob Cyrynowski,** CEO, Hotels Live (Canada)
- **Javier Puente**, President, Hotels Association of Mexico City (Mexico)
- **Katie Fox**, Owner, Marketing Technologist & PR Strategist (USA)
- **Alexandra Solea**, Founder, Solèart Management (Italy)

Description: The hospitality industry is a broad category of fields within the service industry that range from lodging, to food, to travel. It includes hotels, tourism agencies, restaurants and bars. For music tourism to expand it's necessary that the hospitality industry recognises its benefits and possibilities to bring income and better reputation to destinations. In this panel we will gather a group of experts to discuss how the hospitality industry uses music to improve the experiences and comfort that it provides to its clients, what the benefits of positioning music at the centre of hospitality planning and development are, and explore some of the best practices and successful examples of including music as a central element of the hospitality industry.

04:55PM - 5:05PM

CLOSING REMARKS & TRADITIONAL CLOSING



FULL SCHEDULE
FRIDAY, MAY 31ST

Membertou Trade and Convention Center



9.15AM - 10.00AM

REGISTRATION

10:00 - 10:10AM

OFFICIAL WELCOME &
TRADITIONAL GREETING





Macon, Georgia, is a city woven into the very fabric of American music. Our contributions, from the iconic sounds of The Allman Brothers Band to the soulful tunes of Otis Redding and Little Richard, helped write the soundtrack of our nation, and their legacies still echo throughout the corridors of countless museums and live music venues today. Needless to say, whenever you pull a seat at H&H or embark on a journey through our historic landmarks, you're following in the steps of greatness. Tune into the Macon Music playlist on Spotify, and get ready to discover the place **Where Soul Lives. Plan your visit today at VisitMacon.org**

MACON
GEORGIA

FULL SCHEDULE
FRIDAY, MAY 31ST
Membertou Trade and Convention Center

10:10AM - 10:40AM

PRESENTATION – SONIC REVIVAL: TRANSFORMING DOWNTOWNS INTO VIBRANT HUBS THROUGH MUSIC AND TOURISM

- **Hannah Smith,** Director of Marketing and Communications, Athens Conventions and Visitors Bureau (USA)

Description: As music and arts continue to be incorporated into tourism strategies of cities and nations, how do we ensure people enjoy their city centres? What makes a downtown vibrant and attractive to tourists? In this presentation Hannah Smith, Director of Marketing and Communications at Athens Conventions and Visitors Bureau, will share how the Athens Music Walk of Fame project is planning on using music tourism to revitalise the city's downtown economy while promoting its unique history and culture.

10:45AM - 11:15AM

PRESENTATION – CRAFTING A MUSICAL OASIS IN DINKELSBÜHL: TRANSFORMING SMALL TOWNS INTO VIBRANT MUSIC DESTINATIONS

- **Alex Härtel,** Head of Marketing & PR, Silverdust (Germany)

Description: Dinkelsbühl is a small town located on Germany's romantic route, an area traditionally known for its historic mediaeval sites. However, for the past 25 years, this town has also been the home of Summer Breeze Open Air Festival, an event that has evolved into becoming the biggest rock and metal festival happening in the South of Germany. With an attendance of more than 40,000 visitors per day and an impact on more than 3,400 job opportunities in the area, Summer Breeze has also moved from being a weekend event into being a major tourist attraction that is changing the way Dinkelsbühl is perceived as a tourism destination. In this presentation, Alex Härtel, Head Of Marketing & PR of Summer Breeze Open Air Festival, will tell us more about the festival, its connections with the local community and the economic and tourist impact it's had on the city.



FULL SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MAY 31ST

Membertou Trade and Convention Center

11:20AM - 12:10PM

PANEL – SONGS OF EMPOWERMENT: NURTURING INDIGENOUS VOICES AND STORIES IN MUSIC

Moderator:
Robert Bernard, Board Member, Destination Cape Breton & Executive Director, Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (Canada)

- **Rhonda Head**, Board Member at SOCAN (Canada)
- **Morgan Toney**, Musician (Canada)
- **Jade Turner**, Musician (Canada)
- **Beverly Jeddore,** Mi'kmaw Language Technician (Canada)

Description: As the cultural tourism trend continues to grow, the traditional music of many indigenous groups has been brought closer to millions of tourists searching for authentic & off the beaten path experiences. This can help to provide fruitful cultural exchanges and become a tool for empowerment. However, the commodification of indigenous traditions into tourist experiences also runs the risk of reducing their culture into exotic souvenirs that don't allow for a real engagement with visitors. In this panel, we gather a group of artists and experts on indigenous music and indigenous tourism to discuss how indigenous music should be best presented for tourists. What are the key challenges and best practices for doing so? Who should control such representations and marketing? How can music play a role in creating an image of a living culture, which celebrates the past and points to a positive future, but also notes on past repression?

12:10PM - 1:30PM

LUNCH BREAK





FULL SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MAY 31ST

Membertou Trade and Convention Center

1:30PM - 2:05PM

PRESENTATION: NOCTURNAL HARMONY: CRAFTING A VIBRANT AND HEALTHY NIGHTTIME ECONOMY FOR A SUCCESSFUL DESTINATION

- **Mathieu Grondin,** General Manager and Co-Founder, MTL 24/24 (Canada)

Description: All over the globe we can find cities branded as nightlife destinations. Live music shows, clubbing, white nights, light festivals and night markets are great examples of activities that could drive more tourists to a place, but creating a healthy night time economy can be a complex and demanding task, as associated risks and prejudices can include alcohol consumption, drugs, sexual harassment and more. How can cities ensure that night time activities are widely available while minimising risks? How much infrastructure, subsidies and funding is required by the government? What are the benefits of having a thriving nightlife economy, and how can tourism thrive alongside it? In this presentation, we're travelling to Montreal with Mathieu Grondin, General Manager and Co-Founder of MTL 24/24, who will tell us all about the night-time economy in the city, as well as his work on destigmatizing nightlife activities, supporting the local scene and creating a dialogue between the community, the public and political authorities.







2:10PM - 2:40PM

PRESENTATION: DECOLONISING RHYTHMS: UNLEASHING THE POWER OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN SOUNDSCAPES IN THE MUSIC TOURISM UNIVERSE

- **Layan Nijem,** Project Coordinator, DeCoSEAS - University of Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Description: This presentation seeks to explore and celebrate the rich and diverse musical traditions of Southeast Asia, while also addressing the impact of colonisation on these soundscapes. Focusing on the intersection of music and tourism, this presentation aims to shed light on the potential of Southeast Asian music to drive musical tourism and foster a deeper understanding of the region's unique sonic tapestry.

FULL SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MAY 31ST

Membertou Trade and Convention Center

2:45PM - 3:35PM

PANEL: "HARMONY UNLEASHED: ORCHESTRATING SUCCESS WITH MUSIC IN DESTINATION STRATEGIES"

Moderator:
Terry Smith, CEO, Destination Cape Breton (Canada)

- **Molly Rawn**, CEO, Experience Fayetteville (USA)
- **Catherine Swain**, Marketing, N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (USA)
- **Natalie Wakabayashi**, Director, Culture & Entertainment Tourism at Tourism London (Canada)

Description: Whether it is part of a city's brand awareness strategy, part of its legacy, or part of its cultural offering, music can have a positive impact on attracting people to a destination and increase their expenditure while in it. What are the types of destinations that can leverage music as part of its marketing strategy? What are the best practices to make the most out of it? In this panel, several experts will gather to discuss what turns a place into a destination and how music can help in this process. What are the benefits and challenges of this process? How can we best plan and maximise music's impact on tourism?

3:40PM - 3:50PM

CLOSING REMARKS & OFFICIAL MTC HANDOVER

3:55PM - 6:00PM

OFFICIAL CLOSING RECEPTION

Live music performances by:

- Rose Morrisson, Graham Marshall, Eric Angus Whyte, Màiri Chaimbeul & Ryan MacNeil

8:00PM - 11:00PM

AFTER PARTY: EAST COAST 'KITCHEN' PARTY

Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion,
Royal Cape Breton Yacht Club Room





LIVE MUSIC PERFORMERS

Official Closing Reception



ROSE MORRISON

Cape Breton's very own singer-songwriter and fiddler, Rose Morrison, adds a unique touch of her musical prowess to all musical collaborations. With her heartfelt original compositions and mastery of the fiddle, Rose brings a distinct flavour of Cape Breton's rich musical heritage to the stage. Prepare to be captivated by her artistry as she seamlessly blends tradition and innovation.



GRAHAM MARSHALL

Graham is Councillor and ambassador to Membertou and promotes the Mi'kmaw culture both locally and across North America. A voice bringing people together with warmth and wisdom.



ERIC ANGUS WHYTE

Eric Angus Whyte from North Sydney released his debut album in 2003 titled 'Always Home' and has since lived and performed internationally. He is masterfully skilled as a musician and songwriter.



MÀIRI CHAIMBEUL

Màiri Chaimbeul, a Juno-nominated harp player and composer from the Isle of Skye, Scotland, will be joining the lineup. Her exceptional talent, deep connection to Scottish heritage, and intricate harp compositions filled with grace and emotion have earned her critical acclaim and a spot among the world's most esteemed harpists. Prepare to be mesmerized by Màiri's captivating harp melodies that transport the audience to a realm of pure musical enchantment.



RYAN MACNEIL

Ryan MacNeil grew up in a musical environment in Sydney Mines. After spending a number of years recording and touring with Slàinte Mhath—a popular Cape Breton-based Celtic fusion band—Ryan and his brother Boyd joined their siblings in The Barra MacNeils. Although best-known for his innovative piano accompaniment, Ryan also plays percussion, Uilleann pipes, tin whistle, bodhran, and step dances.

SPEAKERS



AFUA OWUSU ASANTEWAA ADUONUM

TOURISM AMBASSADOR, GHANA TOURISM AUTHORITY (GHA)

Afua Owusu Asantewaa Aduonum, better known as Afua Asantewaa, is a Ghanaian media personality, journalist, and entrepreneur. She is the chief executive officer of Askof Productions Ltd and she was appointed as a Tourism Ambassador by Ghana's Tourism Authority.



ALEXANDRA SOLEA

FOUNDER, SOLÈART MANAGEMENT (ITA)

Alexandra Solea is a performing arts manager with 17+ years of experience in CCIs, living and working between Bucharest and Rome. High-profile positions, in public and private sectors, have rounded out her senior arts administration expertise, allowing collaborations with international top-level institutions in performing arts management and international cultural affairs, including: China Shanghai International Arts Festival, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, "George Enescu" International Festival and Competition (Bucharest), Teatro dell'Opera "La Fenice" (Venice), Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Rome), BOZAR (Brussels), Sadler's Wells (UK), U.S. Embassy to Italy. In 2014 she has founded the arts organization Solèart Management based in Rome, Italy, focusing of development of various international cultural project. Currently, she is Associate Professor and Program Director of the Master's degrees in Arts and Culture management at Rome Business School (Italy), at National University of Music in Bucharest (Romania), and International Relations Associate at TRG Arts (USA).

SPEAKERS



ALEX HÄRTEL

HEAD OF MARKETING & PR, SILVERDUST (DEU)

Coming from a label background at Roadrunner Records Germany, Alex has always been passionate about music and supporting bands on their professional journey. Since 2018 he acts as the 'Head of Marketing and PR' at Silverdust GmbH, organizers of Germany's largest independent metal festival: The SUMMER BREEZE Open Air in Dinkelsbuehl, Bavaria - annually hosting 45.000 guests. After two bitter cancellations of their Open Air the SUMMER BREEZE team celebrated their comeback after the pandemic and also their 25th anniversary in 2022.



AMANDA MCDOUGALL-MERRILL

MAYOR, CAPE BRETON REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY (CAN)

Amanda McDougall was elected Mayor of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality in October, 2020 - making history by becoming the first female Mayor of CBRM. She served as the former Coordinator of the Main-a-Dieu Community Development Association and became the lead on the campaign to have the derelict MV Miner removed from the shores of Scaterie Island. Prior to her election as Mayor, Amanda served as the Executive Director of ACAP Cape Breton, a local environmental non-profit organization. In 2021, she served as Acting President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) and as President in 2022 . Shortly after taking office as Mayor, Amanda and her husband Kevin welcomed another son to their family. It is her boys that serve as a constant reminder of how decisions around the Council table can impact the future of our communities and they residents she humbly serves.

SPEAKERS



BEVERLY (BUBBLO) JEDDORE

MI'KMAW LANGUAGE TECHNICIAN (CAN)

Beverly (Bubblo) Jeddore is a traditional kojua dancer & chanter, a Mi'kmaw hymn singer & Mi'kmaw Language Technician at Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey. She is an original Eskasoni Mi'kmaw dancer that travelled across Canada & US performing with her family alongside her mom the late Sarah Denny. The group performed for the opening ceremonies at the Jeux Canada Games in 1987 & attended an International Music & Dance Symposium as a presenter & performer in New York. Beverly also was involved in the Canada Arts Dance Symposium in Eskasoni in 2003 where they hosted various cultures, dances & songs with performers from all across Canada. Beverly is a mother of 4, Grandmother of 21 grandchildren & great-grandmother of 7 great-grandchildren. A fluent speaker and advocate for culture & traditions Beverly is proud of her Mi'kmaw heritage.



BRADLEY SHEPPARD

CHANGE LEADER, SHEPPARD TRAINING INC. (CAN)

Meet Bradley Sheppard. He is a passionate advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion. He is the owner of Sheppard Training Inc. where he lives his passion helping others through teaching and learning. Prior to this role, Brad worked supporting post-secondary students and was a leader in the Canadian Armed Forces. To date, Bradley has trained thousands of leaders in politics, health care, sports, education policing, and more. Brad has a Bachelor of Arts from Cape Breton University where he also holds a Certificate in Public Administration. He has completed a Master of Education along with courses in leadership, coaching, self-development, bystander training, and civil military cooperation.

SPEAKERS



CARMEN PORTELA

FOUNDER, POLIFÓNICO (PRI)

Carmen Portela, a visionary leader from Santurce, Puerto Rico, founded Polifónico PR to bridge tourism, indie music, and sustainability. With a background spanning tourism, communications, and digital marketing, including roles at the Puerto Rico Tourism Company, Carmen brings invaluable expertise. She also founded a tour operator emphasizing local culture and music. As Polifónico PR's founder, Carmen curates intimate concert experiences, providing indie artists a platform while prioritizing sustainability. Additionally, as the Executive Director of Fundación Amigos de El Yunque, she oversees cultural and educational programming at El Portal Center, hosting events for over 2000 people. Her meticulous event planning, budgeting, and sponsor outreach enhance Puerto Rico's appeal as a sustainable cultural destination. Carmen's adept management ensures resource efficiency and quality without compromising sustainability. Her commitment to community engagement enriches the region's cultural and environmental landscape.



CATHERINE SWAIN

MARKETING, N.C. DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES (USA)

Catherine Swain is the Director of Marketing for the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR's mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries and nature in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development. NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, three science museums, three aquariums and Jennette's Pier, 41 state parks and recreation areas, the N.C. Zoo, the N.C. Symphony Orchestra, the State Library, the State Archives, the N.C. Arts Council, the African American Heritage Commission, State Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology, and the Division of Land and Water Stewardship.

SPEAKERS



DEE-ANN KENTISH-ROGERS

MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT OF ANGUILLA (AIA)

Ms. Dee-Ann Kentish-Rogers comes from a mixed background of educators, lawyers and farmers who instilled in her a strong sense of the importance of education, empowerment, and community. A lawyer by profession, Ms. Kentish-Rogers was called to the Bar of England & Wales in 2018 whilst simultaneously becoming the first black woman to be crowned Miss Universe Britain. She was also Anguilla's first heptathlete representing Anguilla regionally and internationally at the Central America and the Caribbean Championships and the Commonwealth Games. Her most ardent work has been partnering as an ambassador with A-Sisterhood; a non-profit organisation that raises money for victims of acid attacks, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence. She is also the President of The Academy, a non-profit organisation that focuses on equipping young women with the tools to become purpose-driven members of society. Upon winning the 2020 election in Valley South, Ms. Kentish-Rogers was appointed as the youngest Minister in Anguillian history. Her current portfolio spans across Social Development and Education including youth, culture, sports, probation services, library services, creative industries, and gender affairs.

Her work thus far spans across setting a pan-African hair policy, retooling teachers for the tech age, decelerating learning to achieve deep learning and how to learn in a constantly hyper connected global environment. She is on the path of creating a new cultural direction for Anguilla with the oncoming creation of a cultural policy and programmes for young creatives.



HANNAH SMITH

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, ATHENS CONVENTIONS AND VISITORS BUREAU (USA)

Hannah Smith is the Director of Marketing and Communications for Visit Athens, Georgia. The college town of Athens is the birthplace of public higher education in America and is known for its athletics, academics, and live music scene. Athens may have burst onto the music scene in the 1970s and 80s with the B-52s, R.E.M., and Widespread Panic, but its music heritage stretches back to the early 1900s and forward into the 21st century. While representing destination Athens, Hannah has managed about a half dozen website relaunches, created the Visit Athens blog, started all of the social media accounts, and seen plenty of other changes in marketing, in the organization, in Athens, and in tourism.

SPEAKERS



JADE TURNER

MUSICIAN (CAN)

Country artist Jade Turner combines her fiery spirit and smooth vocals to bring a unique sound to the Canadian country music scene. Originally from Misipawistik Cree Nation (Grand Rapids, Manitoba), which is Cree for “Rushing Rapids”, Jade’s sound captures the same powerful and transformative flow of the force of water her home community is named for. Through her storytelling lyricism, Jade offers insight into Indigenous ways of knowing and being and light-hearted reflections on the rollercoaster of life. Recognized for her original songwriting and stunning music videos, she has established a diverse listening audience through her soulful vocals and singles like “Hangover Blues,” “Stay Wild Child and most recently, “Deadweight” which won Song (writers) of the Year and Single of the Year at the 2023 Manitoba Country Music Awards. Her album, North Country, was named Best Country Album at the Indigenous Music Awards and she has been nominated for 2 West Coast Music Awards in 2016 and 2022.



JAVIER PUENTE

PRESIDENT, HOTELS ASSOCIATION OF MEXICO CITY (MEX)

Javier Puente (1987) grew up in Cangas de Onís, Asturias, Spain, where he experienced the hospitality industry through the family cider house and hotel. He studied Business Administration at ESADE, Barcelona, and completed a Master's in "Social Marketing & New Enterprise Finance" at the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore, India. In Mexico, he has been active in various tourism and hospitality projects since the age of 24. Notably, he opened Casa Pepe Hostel Boutique in May 2018 and later joined Grupo Presidente's brand portfolio. As an influential figure in the industry, he has held positions such as President of Hospitality Sales & Marketing International: Mexico Chapter and Vice President of the Mexico City Hotel Association. Additionally, he has been involved in legislative and protocol development for the tourism sector. In 2021, Forbes Mexico recognized him as one of the 30 Business Promises of Mexico. He is the founder of the Faculty of Philosophy of Instituto Oviedo in Leon Guanajuato, México.

SPEAKERS



JAMIE MACDONALD

COMMUNITY EVENT CO-COORDINATOR, TIREE MUSIC FESTIVAL (GBR)

Jamie joined the TMF team following a successful internship as part of Event Scotland's Year of Young People's themed year that included support of TMF2018. A Fiddle player, Jamie, is a native of the Isle of Tiree and has grown up immersed in the music and culture of the island. Fluent in Gaelic, Jamie holds a First Class BA(Hons) in Applied Music from the University of the Highlands and Islands and an LLB Law at Robert Gordon University. His role within the TMF Team is focused around overseeing the delivery of the event, integration with the community and the development of the festival as a sustainable event.



JENNIFER CURRIE

FACULTY, TOURISM MANAGEMENT, CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY (CAN)

Jennifer obtained her undergraduate degree at Mount Saint Vincent University and her MA in Communication (Media and Culture) at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland. In addition to teaching full-time in the Bachelor of Hospitality and Tourism program, Jennifer is actively involved in the local cultural/music industry as a past-ten-year Chair of the Cape Breton Music Industry Co-operative and contract staff & volunteer with Celtic Colours International Festival. Jennifer has been involved with numerous conferences and production events both on and off the Island as the owner/operator of Hannah Banana Event Management. Prior to joining the Tourism and Hospitality faculty, Jennifer taught part-time for 14 years in the Communication Department at Cape Breton University.

SPEAKERS



KATIE FOX

OWNER, MARKETING TECHNOLOGIST & PR STRATEGIST, BLOOMING FOOTPRINT (USA)

Katie Fox, owner of the digital marketing firm Blooming Footprint in Denver, is a 20 year music business veteran. Her clients include very well known touring artists & bands plus music festivals across the globe. Thriving in a space where she helps build and execute integrated marketing strategies that align with her social and environmental values, Katie supports road warriors while feeding her love for on-site festival operations.



LAYAN NIJEM

PROJECT COORDINATOR, DECOSEAS – UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM (NLD)

Layan Nijem is the Project Coordinator of the transnational research project Decolonizing Southeast Asian Sound Archives (DeCoSEAS). They also currently serve as the interim curator of the Jaap Kunst Sound Collection at the University of Amsterdam due to the ongoing sick leave of the curator. By engaging with sound recordings, Layan's own research investigates the dynamics of cultural memory and the politics of narrative in relation to identity formation, sovereignty, and cultural agencies. In addition to their main job, Layan is a research assistant in Perverse Collections (PERCOL), a project that focuses on building Europe's Queer and Trans archives. Apart from research, Layan holds a Bachelor of Music in classical Viola performance.

SPEAKERS



MATHIEU GRONDIN

GENERAL MANAGER AND CO-FOUNDER, MTL 24/24 (CAN)

Mathieu Grondin has more than two decades of nightlife experience, producing more than 100 local events over the past 20 years. Cofounder of MTL 24/24, a non-profit organization that helps the City of Montréal to develop its nighttime economy, he is regarded as Montréal's unofficial "night mayor" and has spoken about at various events like the World Urban Forum in Katowice ('22) and Stadt Nacht Acht in Berlin ('21). Mr. Grondin is also a DJ and a renowned freelance director and editor, having collaborated in the past with prestigious brands and artists such as Céline Dion, Daniel Ricciardo, Red Bull, Bell Canada, Ford and McDonald's.



MOLLY RAWN

CEO, EXPERIENCE FAYETTEVILLE (USA)

Molly Rawn is the CEO of Experience Fayetteville, the city's destination marketing organization. She is responsible for the organization's 4.8-million-dollar budget and 20 full-time employees. During her tenure, the city has seen unprecedented tourism growth including its highest tourism tax collection month on record. She led efforts to secure a physical home for the nonprofit Folk School of Fayetteville, a community space for musicians to gather and host jam sessions, music lessons, workshops, listening sessions and small concerts. She is interested in the ways tourism can positively impact community building and is passionate about expanding opportunities for women in civic leadership.

SPEAKERS



MORGAN TONEY

MUSICIAN (CAN)

Mi'kmaq fiddler and singer Morgan Toney brings together the fiery fiddling of Cape Breton Island with the old songs and teachings of the Mi'kmaw People with brilliance and heart. First Flight, Toney's award-nominated debut album, celebrates language and heritage in Toney's transformation of traditional songs like the Ko'jua and the Mi'kmaq Honour Song alongside highly original songcraft. Ishkōdé Records introduced First Flight to the world on March 25, 2022.



NATALIA ECHENIQUE ESPINOZA

FOCAL POINT, CONCEPCION CITY OF MUSIC (CHL)

Natalia Echenique, Chilean, Audiovisual Communicator & Cultural Manager, is the Focal Point for Concepción, UNESCO City of Music, & heads the Concepción Musical Program at the Directorate of Culture. With over 15 years of experience in cultural institutions, she excels in planning, coordinating, and executing social, cultural, artistic, and tourism projects contributing to cities' sustainable development.

SPEAKERS



NATALIE WAKABAYASHI

DIRECTOR, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT TOURISM, TOURISM LONDON (CAN)

Natalie Wakabayashi is a marketing and communications professional and serves as the Director of Culture & Entertainment Tourism with Tourism London. Her portfolio includes promoting culture, arts, music, entertainment, and leisure tourism as well as overseeing all the marketing and branding for the organization. Natalie is also responsible for attracting and supporting small-, medium- and large-scale cultural and entertainment events in London. She recently oversaw the successful execution of the 2021 Canadian Country Music Awards – the first in-person, indoor awards show held in Canada since the pandemic began – and serves as the project lead on the City of London's largest recovery project to support local businesses.

A lifelong Londoner, Natalie is passionate about her community and getting others to get out and explore the best of what London has to offer. She was recently recognized for her innovation, career achievement, and community involvement by being named one of London's Top 20 Under 40 – a program that celebrates younger Londoners who are moving the city forward.



PARIS MARTINE

BOOKER, JOHN CURTIS HOTEL (AUS)

Paris Martine is an experienced music booker, event producer, and tour promoter with an 18-year tenure as a self-employed member of the industry. Originating from Melbourne, Australia, she is the proud owner of Contrary Agency, the creative booking force behind the vibrant entertainment scenes at esteemed live music venues, John Curtin Hotel and Howler. Paris's global ventures include touring China by bullet train with obscure 80s post-punks Primitive Calculators and bringing Japan's weirdo psych rockers, Acid Mothers Temple, as well as LA's surf psych melody makers, Allah-Las, to Australia for the first time. Her portfolio includes bookings at eight distinct venues throughout her city, ranging from intimate 150-capacity spaces to expansive 1,100-capacity venues, showcasing her versatility and passion for working with artists on their journey from small stages to theatres. Beyond her venue programming prowess, Paris has spearheaded a notable music conference and artist management endeavors. Her dedication to the music community transcends conventional boundaries, as evidenced by her advocacy efforts, engaging with policymakers, and coordinating impactful Save Live Music campaigns. Not one to shy away from the action, Paris has been spotted outside pubs, equipped with a postbox strapped to her back, championing the preservation of cherished buildings and band rooms that hold the heartbeat of her beloved city.

SPEAKERS



RHONDA HEAD

BOARD MEMBER AT SOCAN (CAN)

Multi-award-winning Mezzo Soprano - Rhonda Head is from Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Manitoba, Canada. Rhonda is an eleven-time International Music Award winner. She writes her lyrics in her Indigenous Cree Language and composes her melodies based on the landscape in her home reserve of Opaskwayak.



ROB CYRYNOWSKI

CEO, HOTELS LIVE (CAN)

He has been on the Canadian Country Music Association Board of Directors since 2017 and is currently the president/CEO of Livestar Entertainment Canada. During the pandemic, Rob found a way to safely bring back live, in-person concert events with his latest business venture, Hotels Live. The innovative entertainment concept set up concerts on hotel pool decks and atriums and transformed hotel balconies into front-row seats. Hotels Live became Canada's top-grossing concert promoter during the pandemic, producing over 80 live indoor and outdoor in-person concert events in Calgary and selling over 4,700 hotel rooms to more than 15,000 patrons, with Zero reported cases of COVID-19. The achievement earned the 2022 Outstanding Emerging Organization award from the Canadian Live Music Industry Awards.

SPEAKERS



ROB HAIN

CEO, SOUND DIPLOMACY (CAN)

Rob Hain is the Global Chief Executive Officer of Sound Diplomacy, the world's leading strategic consultancy providing its clients with the tools to measure, assess and unlock the economic value of music, leisure and hospitality, cultural infrastructure, placemaking and the night-time economy. Rob serves on the boards of several companies in the United States, Canada, Africa and the United Kingdom in the financial services, consumer products, advisory services and leisure industries. He graduated from the University of Toronto in Canada and Oxford University in England, lives in Nova Scotia and is married with two daughters who live in San Carlos CA and London UK.



ROBERT BERNARD

BOARD MEMBER, DESTINATION CAPE BRETON & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NOVA SCOTIA INDIGENOUS TOURISM ENTERPRISE NETWORK (CAN)

Mr. Robert Bernard is the Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITE'N). Incorporated as a not-for-profit volunteer organization in 2017, NSITE'N has been established to help support the growth of new and existing Indigenous-owned businesses through training, development, and a higher level of participation in the mainstream tourism industry in Nova Scotia. Robert has been one of the cornerstones for the growth of Indigenous tourism across Canada since 2014 through reconciliation efforts focused on creating meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with multiple partners within industry, government, corporate, and the not-for-profit sectors.

SPEAKERS



RODNEY MACDONALD

MUSICIAN & PRESIDENT OF THE COLAISDE NA GÀIDHLIG / THE GAELIC COLLEGE (CAN)

Hon. Rodney MacDonald, former Premier of Nova Scotia, held various government roles including President of the Executive Council and Minister of multiple portfolios. He is the President of Colaisde Na Gaidhlig/The Gaelic College & Beinn Mhàbu, a partnership with Cape Breton University, offering courses in music, language, dance, and more. He founded Beinn Mhàbu in 2023. Additionally, he is the President & Owner of RMD Development Incorporated. Mr. MacDonald established KitchenFest!, a music festival now in its 11th year, and CBFM Radio. A musician and composer, he has recordings and compositions featured by Cape Breton artists. With a background in education, he holds a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education, a teaching license, and an Executive Certificate in Local Government. Residing in Mabou, NS, with his family, he is actively engaged in community coaching and board service.



SARAH MATHEWS

FOUNDER, INFINITE WANDERS (HKG)

Sarah Mathews, affectionately known as the "Insight-Cyclopaedia," is a seasoned veteran in the digital marketing industry with over 30 years of influential experience. Her portfolio sparkles with collaborations with global leaders such as Tesla, Coca-Cola, Japan Airlines, and Singapore Airlines. A significant part of her career was her decade-long tenure at Tripadvisor, where Sarah refined her skills in big data analysis, using it as a tool to craft strategic business and marketing strategies that shaped the Asia Pacific region. This period also saw Sarah immerse herself in the world of travel-related digital marketing, becoming an invaluable asset to various tourism boards and a steadfast supporter of SMEs across the region. Her profound knowledge of digital marketing has been recognized globally, leading to numerous speaking engagements at UNWTO conferences and workshops and collaborations with the World Bank on several initiatives. As a member of the regional board of IAB SEA & IN and the youngest female chair of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Sarah advocates for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the marketing space. Her understanding of public-private collaborations goes beyond the surface, expertly integrating this knowledge with advanced digital technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

SPEAKERS



STEPHEN MUISE

CONDUCTOR/BUSINESS MANAGER & TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, MEN OF THE DEEPS (CAN)

Stephen Muise has been a full-time educator for nearly 30 years and holds degrees in both music and education, with a Master of Education Administration. In January 2017, Stephen accepted the role of Conductor for the world-famous Men of the Deeps, North America's only coal miners' chorus. His many contributions to arts & culture earned him the Canadian Band Association Community Builders Award in 2022, an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Cape Breton University in 2023 and in 2024, he was the recipient of the East Coast Music Association's Stompin' Tom Award for Cape Breton. Stephen also co-owns and operates a successful entertainment company along with his wife, and together they produce, organize, create and coordinate countless special events, shows, and tours and create opportunities for a long list of Cape Breton artists.



TERRY SMITH

CEO, DESTINATION CAPE BRETON (CAN)

Terry Smith has worked in the Cape Breton Island-Unama'ki tourism industry for the past 25+ years. In that time, as a marketing consultant, he has had the opportunity to work with such music tourism clients as the Celtic Colours International Festival, Rock the Dock, the Savoy Theatre, Strathspey Place and many others. Since 2015, he has worked with Destination Cape Breton, first in a senior marketing role and as CEO since 2019. In that time, Destination Cape Breton has partnered with many of Cape Breton Island-Unama'ki's performing artists, including Natalie MacMaster, the Barra MacNeils, the Men of the Deeps, Jimmy Rankin, Heather Rankin and Ashley MacIsaac. The organization only uses music composed by Cape Breton Island-Unama'ki writers in its promotional videos, including Grammy winner, Gordie Sampson and dozens of others.

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