

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Performing Diaspora 2013: The History of Urban Music in Toronto**

The Performing Diaspora 2013 Organizing Committee will host the first public history event of its kind, when it showcases the scholarship of budding Canadian Hip Hop academics alongside the oral histories of Toronto's pioneering Hip Hop practitioners in order to explore and uncover the history of Toronto Hip Hop.

The Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples in partnership with York University's History Department, will present the conference, "Performing Diaspora 2013: The History of Urban Music in Toronto," at York University in Toronto on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013.

This full-day conference will include the work of academics and journalists, who will discuss how the culture and genre of Rap music has developed since the late 1980s. Given that *Performing Diaspora* is dedicated to celebrating and showcasing African Diaspora expressive culture, the event will most prominently feature the contributions of African Canadians in two roundtable discussions that will include prominent rappers, deejays, producers, artistic managers, journalists and radio and television personalities. These panelists include: Maestro, Michie Mee, Master T, Dan-e-o, Motion, DJ Mel Boogie, DJ X, Dalton Higgins, Chris Jackson, and Mindbender. In addition to the contributions of African Canadians, the conference will also explore the contributions of other Canadian Hip Hop forms that include, but are not limited to, Queer Hip Hop, First Nations Hip Hop and Sikh Canadian Hip Hop.

The conference will importantly promote research and share knowledge about the diversity and complexity of Hip Hop in Toronto, the challenges posed by the Canadian Music Industry, and the Black Canadian experience more specifically.

"The history of Toronto Hip Hop is incredibly unique, rich and multifaceted, and yet the stories of our practitioners and the ways in which the culture has developed since the 1980s in the Canadian context has largely been overshadowed by the dominant narrative of American Hip Hop," says Performing Diaspora Curator Francesca D'Amico.

"Though most Canadians have been exposed to some of the genre's history and personalities, we have yet to explore the range and fullness of

Toronto's Hip Hop history, particularly in the academic setting" she says. "Moreover, even less has been said about the complicated and problematic ways in which the Canadian Music market has supported, included, abandoned and in some cases, even rendered invisible the contributions of Hip Hop practitioners to Canadian Popular Culture."

"This conference event intends to bring greater exposure to the fullness of Toronto's Hip Hop history, while exploring how the Canadian music market and media has envisioned, and at times problematically failed to imagine and incorporate Hip Hop as part of its broader Popular Culture."

To register for the event, please visit:

<http://performingdiaspora.wordpress.com/registration/>

**About Performing Diaspora:** *Performing Diaspora* is a flagship project of The Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples that has been dedicated to celebrating Africanist expressive culture and supporting the development of valuable educational tools to enhance student understanding. Since its 2009 inception, *Performing Diaspora* has offered a series of workshops, presentations, artist talks and community events that serve as a catalyst to bring the university and community together to celebrate and engage with African and African Diaspora arts and culture.

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