

THE LONG ROAD BACK: March 27 concert shows the way to safe re-opening of music industry through rapid COVID-19 antigen screening

March 16, OTTAWA — The Ontario Festival Industry Taskforce (OFIT) in collaboration with DNA Live—and with support from the Canadian Live Music Association, Ottawa Festivals Network, and the National Arts Centre—today announced THE LONG ROAD BACK, a live in-person concert using rapid COVID-19 antigen screening. The event will take place at Lansdowne Park, March 27, 2021 and feature the super Soul sounds and Motown rhythms of THE COMMOTIONS. Fans of live music can expect an evening that will bring the joy of music to Ottawa, along with a sense of escape.

“As we look ahead to the summer of 2021 and beyond, establishing best practices for live music events *now* is critical,” says OFIT chair Mark Monahan. “In order to produce summer and fall events, rapid COVID-19 antigen screening is needed to demonstrate live concerts *can* happen safely.”

“The National Arts Centre is proud to partner on this initiative that will help pave the way to the safe return of live music events in Canada,” said Heather Gibson, Executive Producer of NAC Popular Music and Variety. “The learnings from this event will be invaluable as our industry prepares to safely welcome audiences back to our performance venues.”

How it will work

The innovative nature of the March 27 event will allow attendees to participate in a safer environment, with the added layer of rapid COVID-19 antigen screening, and will be the first of its kind in Canada.

THE LONG ROAD BACK concert will take place at Lansdowne Park, in an area known as the Casino Lac-Leamy Plaza. The proposed rapid COVID-19 antigen screening will be limited to 100 attendees and organized in conjunction with Shoppers Drug Mart.

Screening will be offered at participating Shoppers Drug Mart stores 48 hours before the event—between the hours of 3:30 p.m. on March 25 to 3:30 p.m. on March 27.

Organizers are producing the event under the guidance of Rapid Test & Trace Canada and their team of well-respected epidemiological and biomedical experts, including Dr. Caroline Colijn (Simon Fraser University), Dr. David Juncker (McGill University), and Dr. Michael Mina (Harvard University) with the cooperation of the City of Ottawa, the Province of Ontario and the corresponding health authorities.

Tickets and protocol information will be available at: www.ofitaskforce.ca

About OFIT:

The Ontario Festival Industry Taskforce (OFIT) is a coalition of Ontario festivals and partner organizations chaired by Mark Monahan and formed in the midst of tremendous uncertainty due to COVID-19 – with the aim of supporting the Government of Ontario to meet recovery goals.

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