



LOFT ENTERTAINMENT AND OAK VIEW GROUP UNVEIL DEPARTURE: A REIMAGINING OF CANADIAN MUSIC WEEK

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Toronto, ON, November 12, 2024 - Loft Entertainment and Oak View Group (OVG) today unveiled **Departure Festival + Conference** – a reimagined and expanded vision of **Canadian Music Week** (CMW). Rooted in its rich music history, Departure marks a fresh era for the beloved festival with new innovative programming streams that include music, art, comedy, and technology. Since its inception in 1982, Canadian Music Week has been a leading music festival and conference in North America and Departure builds on this legacy as it steps into a new era.

At an industry and media launch event in Toronto, Randy Lennox, co-founder and CEO of Loft Entertainment; Tom Pistore President of OVG Canada; Kevin Barton, Executive Producer, Loft Entertainment; and Jackie Dean, Chief Operating Officer of Loft Entertainment, outlined the new vision for the festival. The launch event also welcomed Comedian Russell Peters as a special guest.

“Departure honours where we’ve come from and celebrates where we are going,” said **Kevin Barton, Executive Producer at Loft Entertainment**. “We’re creating a launchpad that opens doors to deeper, more inclusive conversations and showcases the richness of Toronto’s cultural scene, celebrates Canadian creatives, and welcomes global artists. We invite industry professionals, music and arts lovers and festival-goers to experience the event in a whole new way.”

Hotel X will host the Departure Festival + Conference from May 6-11, 2025. The festival will offer a robust lineup of events that reflect Toronto and Canada’s position as a cultural hub.

From electrifying performances to thought-provoking panels, Departure will deepen community connections, invite audiences to explore the city's diverse creative landscape and solidify its presence as a must-attend event for creatives from around the world. Radiodays North America Conference will return as part of Departure, bringing industries back together to learn and inspire those working in audio entertainment.

The reimagined CMW expands its footprint in the arts and culture, embracing a broader spectrum of artistic expressions, from technology to comedy in its inaugural year, and expanding into film and fashion in the near future. The festival will debut an enriched program including a songwriter showcase, comedy performances, and an enhanced culinary experience with boutique food trucks and outdoor activations. Additionally, a new festival app and digital infrastructure will improve the delegate experience with app-based meeting requests to facilitate meaningful connections between industry professionals, and extend access to a wider, more inclusive community with live streamed and on-demand content. The festival will reach new heights supported by Oak View Group's partnership resources in sales and sponsorships, and a refocused marketing and social media strategy.

Artist applications open on November 22, with waived application fees and paid honorariums for showcase performers, a testament to Departure's commitment to supporting and celebrating artists. Priority (VIP) and Conference Passes will go on early bird sale on departureto.com starting November 22, 2024 until January 24, 2025. Additional pass levels and ticketing information will be announced in the coming months.

About Loft Entertainment

Loft Entertainment invests in culture-defining talent and creative partners to tell their stories. Founded by industry veteran Randy Lennox in Summer 2023, Loft offers the world's leading artists creative, strategic and business services across all artistic and commercial touchpoints in the music, film and media. Visit loftent.com.

About Oak View Group

Oak View Group (OVG) is the global leader in live experience venue development, management, premium hospitality services, and 360-degree solutions for a collection of world-class-owned venues and a client roster of arenas, stadiums, convention centers, music festivals, performing arts centers, and cultural institutions. Founded by Tim Leiweke and Irving Azoff in 2015, OVG is the leading developer of major new venues either open or under development across four continents. Visit OakViewGroup.com, and follow OVG on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [X](#).