**Climate action comes to the Junos with Music Declares Emergency**

*International coalition with Halifax connection**works to green up the music industry.*

By Elizabeth Peirce, Climate Story Network

The message is blunt: “No music on a dead planet.”

It’s the rallying cry behind Music Declares Emergency (MDE), a UK-based international not-for-profit corporation made up of musicians, music industry professionals, and organizations that have banded together to call for immediate government action on climate change. So far, eight thousand artists worldwide have signed the declaration, including Annie Lennox, Massive Attack, and Tegan and Sara — humanitarian award honorees at the 2024 Juno Awards in Halifax.

The Canadian chapter of MDE was launched in early 2021, thanks in part to the efforts of Kim Fry, a longtime climate organizer who now works as a Climate Change Specialist with HRM.

“It’s a declaration of being in an ecological emergency and a number of commitments that involve using the platform of musicians and the cultural capital of music to call attention to the climate emergency, but also doing work within the music industry to make it more sustainable,” Fry says.

The group has been a presence at conferences, panels, curated concerts, and music festivals — and now, with Canada’s premiere music industry showcase right around the corner, MDE is coming to the Junos.

“When I found out the Junos were going to be hosted in Halifax, we immediately reached out to the HRM climate department, where I now work, saying maybe we could do something together,” says Fry.

In the lead-up to the awards, on March 17, MDE will host a Climate Emergency Concert at the Rebecca Cohn Theatre. The show will honour two Canadian music legends known for their commitment to environmental advocacy: Joni Mitchell and Neil Young, and showcase the work of other artists who are speaking out about climate and the need for cultural change related to the environment. The first-ever Canadian Environmental Music Awards, taking place later this year, will also be announced at the show.

Another first? The Junos have a freshly minted sustainability subcommittee, co-chaired by Fry.

“We have a bunch of initiatives: a climate stage in front of the Halifax Central Library that’s all pedal-powered and solar powered. We’ve installed music-themed bike racks in front of music venues, and we’re running a campaign to encourage people to take public transit or active transportation to Juno events, and music events in general,” she says.

Music fans can enjoy free rides on Halifax Transit’s Free Junos shuttle to music venues during Juno week, which runs from March 21 to 24. Once at the venue, they’ll find “sustainable merch boxes” where they can recycle unwanted band t-shirts and merch or bring in blank t-shirts to be distributed to musicians for their own silk-screening projects.

The merch box initiative is part of a larger discussion about the environmental impacts of fashion, which is a key part of the music industry.

“We know that fast fashion is a climate problem, and we know that people watch award shows to see what people are going to wear on the red carpet. This idea that every time you show up at a new event, you have to have a whole new dress instead of being able to re-wear or re-purpose it — that needs to change,” Fry says.

With all eyes on Halifax during the Junos, Fry sees an opportunity to bring about positive change.

“People listen to musicians and actors. So how do we make good use of that, to actually start taking climate action more seriously, to mainstream it a little bit more to audiences that haven’t been as engaged?”

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*The Climate Story Network is an initiative of Climate Focus, a non-profit organization dedicated to covering stories about community-driven climate solutions.*