

TiKA brings musical journey to Cultural Centre and you're invited along on the ride

As a former youth worker for more than seven years, there came a time where TiKA felt overextended.

Almost instinctively she turned inwards and began to explore what was deep within. She found her voice in doing so, turning her attention to music.

The musical journey has been a very personal one for the Montreal-based multi-disciplinary artist and, through the simple act of listening, her musical journey can become a very personal one for audiences as well.

Local music lovers are invited to come together with TiKA for the journey when she takes the stage at St. Andrew's College next Friday, May 20, hosted by the Aurora Cultural Centre.

'Embracing the genre rightfully coined as 'futuristic nostalgia,' TiKA's compositions offer 'ethereal sounds that wrap around you, reminding you of other memories,' says the Cultural Centre of the musician whose first album, *Anywhere But Here*, came out in 2019. 'Her songs address deeply personal relationships to ones inspired by TiKA's Jamaican roots, to others that are sonic representations of conversations with the self.'

These conversations weren't always easy. There was 'bitterness or resentment for the decisions made in the past,' she said, including having a lack of boundaries and not understanding the importance of self-advocacy and self-care.

There came a point, however, where these conversations became less difficult and gave way for a healing journey.

'It became more about healing, more of what I needed to heal myself and then, in turn, I learned I could be a conduit to assist in healing others' at first it was almost a resentment, I feel, from over-giving and not understanding that I have needs, too,' she explains. 'After maybe my first EP, *Carry On*, was released around there, it kind of awakened that it was deeper than just a performance or just songs; there are opportunities for me to connect and have a deeper and more meaningful connection to other people.'

'In a way, a lot of my music was initially ego-driven, I feel, and it starts to become a lot more personal when I released the album and felt there was a real purge. At that point, I hadn't really spoken musically or verbally about some of the experiences I had; I just wasn't that kind of person at all, prior. I was obsessed with having dominion over myself and awakening to that reality, and I didn't have this awareness before.'

Putting such a journey out there can be a difficult move for any musician, but when she found her very personal life experiences connected with audiences in a deep way, it was a feeling of 'affirmation.' It also awakened what she describes as 'being of service' to others through song.

As an artist, TiKA now looks at the music she creates through this lens of service, but says she's unsure whether that is a good thing or a bad thing.

'I was raised as a Pentecostal Christian, so there was always this 'What would Jesus do?' vibe,' she says. 'I think before I thought 'of service' meant I had to work because, quite frankly, that is how I was raised, but then I started performing more and seeing the reactions from people realizing this was healing for a lot of folks, I realized I am still of service and can treat this as a mode of service.'

All of the new music she is currently writing is intended to 'both heal the folks that I am on stage healing and connecting with, but also to heal myself.' In many ways it's like a continuum, a call and response, and ebb and flow of connection' and, indeed, creating

a circle of love and life.

?I want to be spoken into in a loving way,? she says. ?I wish to maintain relationships that are reciprocal where I am spoken to in a loving way and I am speaking to people I adore in a loving way and we create this continuous circle of love or life. Speaking life into others, speaking love into others in an intentional way. A lot of my music is soulful, affirmational music and I think folks really need that, especially during a time like this when things are so uncertain and the questioning of trust, like what is going to happen?

?I feel like one of the things I learned in my upbringing was the more we speak love into one another and the more we speak life into the earth, each other, ourselves? it is something I am really committed to at this point.

?I just want people to bring an open heart and an open mind and turn the phone off ? it's about connection, and it's about being present, and just staying open. We're going to go on the journey together.?

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents TiKA on stage Friday, May 20 from 7.30 ? 9 p.m. at St. Andrew's College. For tickets and further information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca/event/tika or call 905-713-1818.

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