



For immediate release

**MAKE MUSIC MATTER FOUNDER DARCY ATAMAN AWARDED MERITORIOUS SERVICE CROSS
BY CANADA'S GOVERNOR GENERAL**

OTTAWA, July 1, 2020 – Darcy Ataman, founder and CEO of Make Music Matter has been recognized by Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada, with the Meritorious Service Cross, one of the highest honours for civilians in Canada. The prestigious decoration celebrates Ataman's outstanding humanitarian efforts and his commitment to defending human rights for all.

A native of Winnipeg, Ataman founded Make Music Matter with a belief that music can be an integral part of holistic healing for survivors of trauma and their community. His visionary leadership has brought transformative change to the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people.

Ataman created the innovative Healing in Harmony music therapy program for trauma survivors, helping them to heal, to tell their stories to the world, and ultimately to become advocates for change. The program has since scaled up to serve over 5000 individuals in 11 sites across 8 countries in Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

"I am humbled by this honour and thank the Governor General for this award that also recognizes the commitment of the entire Make Music Matter team and our partners on the ground," said Ataman.

Most recently, Ataman co-founded A4A Records and Publishing with Grammy Award-winning producer David Bottrill, with distribution through Warner Music Canada, to give Healing in Harmony artists access to professional platforms. A groundbreaking new publishing model makes it possible to collect royalties on behalf of songwriters living in extreme poverty and conflict zones.

The announcement of recipients was made today by the office of the Governor General. The official release can be read [here](#). The award will be presented at a ceremony to be held at a later date.

Attached:

- DarcyAtaman_headshot.png (*Photo by Platon for The People's Portfolio and Dr. Denis Mukwege*)

About Make Music Matter

Make Music Matter uses the creative process as a therapeutic tool to help empower marginalized individuals and communities. Its innovative Healing in Harmony program employs a unique blend of cognitive behavior therapy and music therapy that brings together trauma survivors with a local, trained psychologist and local music producer to write, record, and professionally produce songs about their emotions and experiences. The flagship program for survivors of sexual violence was designed at Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo alongside Nobel laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege.



The Healing in Harmony process helps participants to develop the potential for transformative change while building self-esteem and re-establishing their sense of identity and agency. Songs become tools for education and awareness, helping to combat stereotypes, stigma, and shame. Music is disseminated via local radio stations, community concerts, social media, and major streaming platforms through A4A Records, distributed through Warner Music Canada.

Make Music Matter works in 8 countries - DRC, Rwanda, Turkey, Guinea, South Africa, Uganda, Peru, and Canada. Target groups include adult, youth, and child survivors of trauma, including survivors of sexual violence, people living in poverty and conflict, displaced persons, those with mental and physical illnesses and disabilities, their caregivers, and others.

makemusicmatter.org

[Listen to music from the Healing in Harmony program](#)

About the Meritorious Service Decorations

The Meritorious Service Decorations (Civil Division) were established to recognize remarkable contributions in many different fields of endeavour, from advocacy initiatives and health care services, to research and humanitarian efforts. The contributions can be innovative, set an example for others to follow, or improve the quality of life of a community.

merit.gg.ca

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Contact Information

Rebecca Purver
Media and Communications Officer
Make Music Matter
514-578-2036
rebecca@makemusicmatter.org