

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FROM ARRIVING AS A GUATEMALAN REFUGEE TO
APPOINTED INTO THE ORDER OF CANADA — 38 YEARS TO THE DAY.
SUNFEST FOUNDER ALFREDO CAXAJ HONOURED AT CEREMONY IN OTTAWA**

MEDIA: Images from ceremony ([here](#))

Stock images of Alfredo Caxaj ([here](#))

Video interview between CTV and Alfredo Caxaj ([here](#))

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Image courtesy of Sunfest

London, Ontario [Thurs. Dec. 11] — Sunfest is proud to announce that its founder and Co-Artistic Director, **Alfredo Caxaj**, will be formally appointed into the **Order of Canada** this Thursday in Ottawa; one of the nation's highest civilian honours.

For Caxaj, the moment is both deeply meaningful and profoundly full-circle. Alfredo and the Caxaj family arrived in Canada as political refugees from Guatemala in 1985, seeking safety and the chance to rebuild their lives.

“I received a phone call (about the appointment) on November 21 (2023), which is the exact date my wife, son, and I arrived in London 38 years ago. To get this news all these years later is so significant and really incredible,” he said in a 2023 CBC interview.

He dedicates the appointment to **immigrants and refugees across Canada**, encouraging those who are starting from scratch to remain hopeful, persistent, and proud of everything they build. This national recognition is an especially bright beacon of hope during a time of hardship and danger for so many across the globe.

Reflecting on the honour, Caxaj shared:

“This is one of the highest honours you can receive in Canada and I'm still digesting the news because it's so fantastic, not just for us but for the entire community!”

Since establishing **SUNFEST** in July 1995, Caxaj built **one of the most important global music festivals in Canada**, drawing more than **115,000 unique visitors** to London's Victoria Park every year to experience 40+ bands from all over the world, carefully curated food and craft vendors focusing on international treats and art, all with free admission.

“It's not just another festival but it's a social project aiming to bring different communities together and after 31 years, I think we've created a lasting impact in the community.” - Alfredo Caxaj

His influence extends far beyond London and Canada. Alfredo is regularly invited as a panelist and thought leader at major national and international music conferences, including **WOMEX**, the largest world music expo.

Sunfest, its partners, artists, volunteers, and the broader community extend their heartfelt congratulations to Alfredo on this historic and well-deserved honour.

With no plans to slow down, the music and arts community eagerly awaits what he and the next generation, his daughter Mercedes Caxaj, Sunfest Co-Artistic Director, have in store for the future of music and community-building. ###