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## **SKA FEST: BRINGING TOGETHER DIVERSE CROWDS, DISCOVERING HIDDEN GEMS**

**Victoria, BC:** Hailed as the “Festival of the People,” Ska Fest doesn’t disappoint and delivers something for everyone. A mix of ska, reggae, dub, hip-hop, and global roots, Ska Fest brings together big international artists, our best local talent, and huge crowds of young families, old rockers, and absolutely everyone in between.

“The festival reflects the music we play. It’s upbeat, high energy, and full of surprises. Every year we try and do something new. We bring in artists no one has ever seen before and show them performances they’ll never forget,” says Dane Roberts, Ska Fest founder and Creative Director.

“Ska Fest is all about discovery. It’s about opening up your eyes, broadening your horizons, and having an awesome time in a gorgeous place.”

This year, Ska Fest returns to Ship Point, in the Inner Harbour of downtown Victoria. It will also feature evening shows at Club 9ONE9 and Sugar Night Club.

The festival will host 30 different groups from across the globe – including Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and across Canada and the United States.

### **Ska Fest Exclusives**

Among the highlights are festival exclusives Dub Fx, Mad Caddies, the Planet Smashers, Katchafire, and J Boog. Other headliners include Tanya Stephens, Blitz the Ambassador, David Hilyard (of the Slackers), The Resignators, and Jon Middleton (of Jon and Roy).

### **Hidden Gems**

Keeping in the narrative of unexpected discovery, two of Ska Fest’s headliners this year’s have particularly interesting stories.

#### ***Dub FX***

Four years ago, Benjamin Stanford (Dub Fx) was a street performer in the UK. He was honing his talent and drawing larger crowds but was still a far cry from having made a full time career as a musician. Then YouTube discovered him. A video of him singing *Love Someone* took off. With 17 million views and counting, doors suddenly flew open

for the 27-year-old performer. Dub Fx has since gone on to perform at Glastonbury, Coachella, and numerous major European festivals.

### ***Sierra Leone Refugee All Stars***

The story of Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars is even more dramatic. As the name makes clear, their music was born out of civil war and fostered in a refugee camp. They were discovered by American filmmakers Zach Niles and Banker White, who followed their journey for three years. The resulting film was a critical success and launched the All Stars on an international trajectory, touring across Europe and North America, and even being featured on Oprah and in the New York Times.

### **Education and Innovation**

In addition to the music and music, there are also free workshops led by headline musicians – including Dub Fx and Blitz the Ambassador. This is a great opportunity for local musicians to come out, ask questions, and learn more about their craft.

### **Ticketing**

Just as in previous years Ska Fest will include a mix of both ticketed and free shows, giving everybody the opportunity to come check out what live Ska music is all about.

Tickets are available individual shows, but for those who want to see more of the festival for better value, there are two options:

- 1) The All Fest Pass, which gives access to all shows (19+)
- 2) The Harbour Pass, which gives access to all of our Ship Point shows but not the late night shows. (all ages)

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