

Mercedes Caxaj**Head of Programs, Small World Music & Artistic Co-Director, Sunfest-London Committee for Cross Cultural Arts****Toronto, Canada***1st Term*

For the past decade, Mercedes has been the Artistic Co-Director for Sunfest-London Committee for Cross Cultural Arts, which presents thoughtful, innovative global arts programming in London, Ontario. She is also now Head of Programs for Small World Music which produces the music conference, Global Toronto, and the Emergence Music Incubator, which showcase and support culturally diverse artists and partners in Toronto, Ontario. Mercedes has grown her career within the realm of arts and cultural work by contributing to the success of a range of arts and non-profit organizations and festivals across southern Ontario — and is responsible for logistics, development and partnership building, marketing and branding, as well as scouting and programming artists.

In addition, Mercedes has served as a jury member and panelist for both national and international music meetings, conferences and major granting agencies where she discusses artistic programming, community program development, cultural advocacy and strategy, and prioritizing representation. In 2019, Mercedes was awarded the Contributor of the Year Award from the Forest City London Music Awards for her work in the London music scene and has continued to serve as a contributing member of the City of London's Business of Music Committee, prioritizing programming with a focus on intersectional representations, all while also serving as a board member of Tourism London.

Born in London, Ontario, Mercedes' family first came to Canada as refugees from Guatemala. Over the years Mercedes has studied and worked in France and holds a Master of Arts in French Studies from the University of Waterloo with a post-graduate diploma in marketing communications from Conestoga College, and is fluent in English, Spanish, and French.