

HONOURING NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

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Honouring
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showcases emerging artists in Manitoba communities

BY TRINA REHBERG BOYKO

Summer, live music, local talent and free admission.

Does it get any better?

It certainly does, when that local talent is made up of Indigenous artists who have signed on to share their gifts — and their stories — with communities throughout Manitoba.

The Indigenous Summer Tour is back, after its hugely successful first run in 2021.

So far, the tour has secured 10 dates, with the potential for more to come.

Headliner Jerry Sereda, a country musician of Métis decent, will perform, host pre-concert arts activities and mentor the Indigenous artists joining him on tour.

Growing up in the Parkland, or Treaty 1, region of Manitoba, Jerry spent time in Nashville before settling in the Treaty 8 lands of Alberta. He often returns home to Manitoba in the summer months, and this summer should prove to be extra special as he does what he loves in a place he loves.

Sereda is slated for a southern tour from July 24 to 31 and a northern tour from Aug. 9 to 18. Each tour will feature two Indigenous artist alumni from the RBC Emerging Artists Project, which helps budding artists showcase their strengths and connect with seasoned musicians.

One such musician is mezzo-soprano Rhonda Head from Opaskwayak Cree Nation. An accomplished artist herself, Head is a natural fit as Indigenous program co-ordinator with the Manitoba Arts Network — the organization behind the Indigenous Summer Tour.

Head provides mentorship, liaises with Indigenous communities to schedule tour dates and, if you're lucky, you might catch her singing one of her hits on stage (Kisahkihitin I Love You and 500 Years both earned bronze medals at the Global Music Awards).



She's passionate about helping up-and-comers have their voices heard, too, especially other Indigenous artists who she's connected with through the RBC Emerging Artists Project.

"It's such a blessing to see the artists go through the program and blossom in the music industry," says Head.

The host communities and the artists are just as eager for the live-music performances.

"It's a great pleasure to perform live and to get the energy flowing between the artists and the audience," says Head.

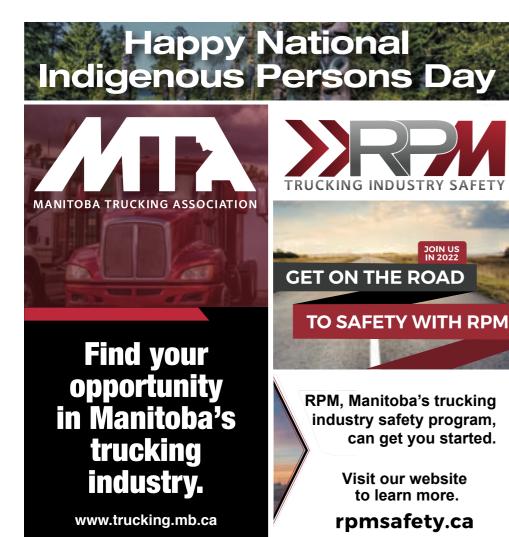
The idea for the tour was borne from a desire to see more Indigenous artists on stage in rural and northern Manitoba, according to Rose-Anne Harder, director of the Manitoba Arts Network.

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to learn more.



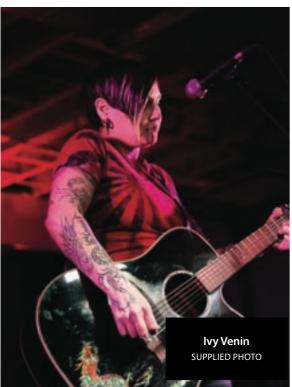


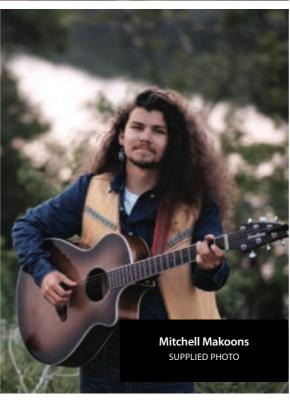


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"Our secondary but equally important goal was facilitating greater access to the arts in First Nation reserves and Métis communities that have been underserved," says Harder. "Prior to 2018, the Manitoba Arts Network was primarily working with settler communities. We realized as part of our reconciliation work, we needed to expand our reach and work with reserves and communities we have never worked with before to bring the arts to all Manitobans."

It was 2018 when the Manitoba Arts Network received funding from Canadian Heritage to launch an Indigenous special project, resulting in the mentorship program that has since produced 19 alumni.

The artists started out performing on a smaller scale, showcasing their talents in communities across Manitoba. The response was overwhelmingly positive.

Fast forward to 2021, when the Manitoba Arts Network applied to the Canada Council for the Arts to fund a 20-community tour. The funding was approved and, in fact, renewed for three more tours, with 10 dates in Indigenous communities and five dates in Manitoba Arts Network member communities each year. Manitoba Hydro has provided additional sponsorship, strengthening an already impressive tour lineup.

This year's tour will see artists Mitchell Makoons, lvy Venin, Kris Paul and Sherri Shorting perform alongside Jerry Sereda, while Sebastian Gaskin and Gator Beaulieu have been tapped to headline the 2023 and 2024 tours, respectively.

To learn more about the upcoming Indigenous Summer Tours, check out manitobaartsnetwork.ca.





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2022 Indigenous Summer Tour dates

The following dates have been confirmed. Each event will feature a music masterclass at 5 p.m., with the concert scheduled to start at 7 p.m.

July 24

Long Plain First Nation

July 26

Fisher River Cree Nation

July 28

International Peace Garden

July 30

Killarney Turtle Mountain Arts Council, Killarney

July 31

Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation

August 10

Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation

August 11

Misipawistik Cree Nation, Grand Rapids

August 12

Norway House Cree Nation

August 15

Opaskwayak Cree Nation

August 18

Arts Mosaic, Virden



