



**SASKO MUSIC**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

APRIL 1

MARCH 31

**2024-2025**

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## SASKMUSIC

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Threads - [www.threads.net/SaskMusic](https://www.threads.net/SaskMusic)

Spotify - follow SaskMusic Listen

YouTube - [www.youtube.com/saskmusic](https://www.youtube.com/saskmusic)

Bluesky - <https://bsky.app/profile/saskmusic.bsky.social>



**CREATIVE  
SASKATCHEWAN**

**FACTOR**

THE FOUNDATION ASSISTING CANADIAN TALENT ON RECORDINGS

This project has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada. Ce projet a été rendu possible en partie grâce au gouvernement du Canada.

**Canada**



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Reflecting on the past year, it's hard to know what to highlight in this report. The Saskatchewan Music Awards were certainly a milestone celebration of our province's talent. But the work that our team at SaskMusic accomplished in the past year is so much more than one excellent award show.

The numerous international and national showcases that Kaelen organized; the multiple educational and training initiatives that Ben, Rooky and Denny coordinated with the support of Kevin; the marketing initiatives that Miguel is now facilitating; all of the behind-the-scenes efforts and grant writing and financial management and relationship-building that Lorena stickhandles so expertly...the hard-working people at SaskMusic continue to support the growth of our provincial industry in very tangible and meaningful ways.

With the financial support of Creative Saskatchewan and FACTOR, we have managed to recover from a significant deficit of two years ago and are now planning to expand our efforts. We look forward to Roxie returning to our team after her mat leave, and plan to make the Indigenous Program Coordinator a permanent position. This will be the strongest team in SaskMusic's history.

Your Board of Directors continue to provide oversight and guidance to the organization, and we are looking forward to completing the development of a new five-year strategic plan and a new economic impact study in 2025-2026.

As always, I encourage you to support Saskatchewan music...go to the live shows...buy the vinyl and T-shirts...and attend every workshop and learning opportunity our team delivers!

On behalf of your Board of Directors, here's to another great year for Saskatchewan music,

**Marian Donnelly,**  
**President**

# TREASURER'S REPORT



Now that we are officially past the mid-point of the decade, it is safe to say that the 'COVID-19 era' has ended. Not without an entirely new set of modern challenges in the music industry, SaskMusic has emerged from the period with a hard-fought financial stability, achieved through a combination of re-sponsive actions and careful austerity measures. While arts organizations dependent on grant funding are never entirely insulated from financial volatility, we are now in a significantly stronger position than we were a few years ago.

Over the past two fiscal years, SaskMusic has posted cash surpluses - an encouraging development that allows us to shift focus from mere survival to strategic growth. This positive financial position opens the door to important initiatives aimed at strengthening our long-term sustainability. Examples include bolstering our reserve fund and expanding our outreach by increasing staff capacity.

Additionally, the long-anticipated transition to digital payments is underway, with completion expected in the coming fiscal year.

Core funding from Creative Saskatchewan continues to be a solid base for us, with consistent operations and programming support. Additionally, we are pleased to report that our relationship with FACTOR remains strong. Their ongoing support continues to play a crucial role in our programming, including funding that allowed us to hire an Indigenous Music Program Development Coordinator. While the timing of grant receipts can affect how our financials appear, we have already received over half of our \$113,000 FACTOR request for the past year, with the balance pending.

The audit prepared by MWC Chartered Professional Accountants LLP confirmed that SaskMusic remains in good financial health. Their review has helped our Finance Committee affirm our current stability and readiness for the future.

As I will not be seeking re-election to the Board in the upcoming term, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Treasurer of the SaskMusic Board over the past two years. It has been a privilege to contribute.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Erik Mehlsen, BBA, CGP**  
**Treasurer**

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



This year has flown by incredibly fast with a jam-packed year of programming. As you look through our Annual Report you will see a focus on three main areas: education, export development, and artist supports.

We continue to see Saskatchewan artists surprise and impress those in the national and international music industry, with strong export showcase appearances and award nominations. For a province with a relatively tiny population, we represent above our weight in many aspects. Export remains a priority for our organization and our funding agencies, and we have been expanding our strategy to develop export-ready artists from the ground up, which will be a further focus in the new year.

The recovery from the pandemic continues, and we unfortunately saw a number of venues and festivals across Canada no longer able to continue, including the beloved Regina Folk Festival. Audiences have slowly been returning to live music, and venues in the province have stepped up with jam-packed calendars, many booked out many months in advance. With performance being a key revenue source for a great many of our artists, the importance of a sustainable live music sector cannot be overstated. We are encouraged by and support the efforts of colleagues like the Canadian Live Music Association to bring awareness of music's impact on not only the quality of life for

Canadians, but its economic importance.

On the educational side, we presented many hands-on events this year from workshops to songwriter meetups to Work Together, encouraging members to gather together in person. We successfully held our first sync summit, Screen/Music, in Saskatoon with future plans to repeat a sync event every 2 years. The world of music placement in film and TV has been in our opinion overlooked in our province, and this is something we want to help change.

Our staff and mentors were busy once again this year with hundreds of one-on-one consults, helping artists work through their goals, grant applications and many different questions. We responded to thousands of emails, DMs and phone calls on a diverse range of topics, and further developed relationships with colleagues in music across Canada. We also presented more concert events this year than we have since the pandemic, with a goal of introducing a diverse range of genres and artists to new audiences. Our social media accounts are constantly sharing opportunities, new releases, and industry news, and we have exciting plans for the expanded marketing of Saskatchewan music in the new fiscal with the help of our new Marketing & Communications Manager, Miguel Fenrich, joining the team.

The Saskatchewan Music Awards held in Regina were another highlight of the year, and the culmination of many months of work and community outreach. Now several years deep into the event, it's time for a check-in with our members and industry to determine if we're on the right track, with a survey forthcoming this summer.

A much-longed-for position was created as we brought on board our Indigenous Music Development Program Coordinator, Denny Blackstar, with funding support from FACTOR Canada. It has been wonderful to create new and stronger relationships with Indigenous artists and industry as the Indigenous Music Series commenced, and we look forward to listening and developing this programming in a good way this coming year.

We say this every year, but we as staff and board feel truly honoured to be working on behalf of our talented and hard-working music industry members. We believe in your strengths, and we believe we can continue to do better as an organization in serving your needs. We enter the new fiscal optimistic, determined, and up for the challenge.

I heartily thank our entire staff, board, and Indigenous Advisory for being wholeheartedly invested in the success of our music community, and our organization. You offer your time and expertise generously and we are grateful!

In closing, if you ever have questions, suggestions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

**Lorena Kelly**  
**Executive Director**

# SASKMUSIC PROFILE

## MANDATE

To assist in the development and promotion of Saskatchewan musical artists and the industry on a provincial, national and international level.

To increase recognition of the Industry as a vital element of the economy and cultural identity of the Province of Saskatchewan.

## VISION

We envision a future where Saskatchewan's music industry is vigorously healthy; progressive; and musically and culturally diverse;

Where its value and quality is acknowledged with pride at home, and with acclaim beyond our borders;

And where all benefit from Saskatchewan music.

## MISSION

SaskMusic stimulates growth and development in the Saskatchewan music industry through leadership, promotion, training, advocacy and partnership.

## CORE BELIEFS

Saskatchewan's music industry has enormous creative talent;

Music industry professionals are entitled to fair and equitable compensation;

Music is an integral part of Saskatchewan's cultural identity;

Saskatchewan's music industry has the capability to succeed on a global scale;

The music industry is a major contributor to Saskatchewan's economic development.

## KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

**Communications, Public Relations and Marketing:** to ensure that the promotion of the Saskatchewan music industry is effective in raising awareness of the talent and capacity of the industry locally, nationally and internationally.

**Partnership Development and Management:** to ensure that current partnerships and key relationships remain strong and that SaskMusic actively strives to forge new and meaningful partnerships within the cultural sector, the private sector, and tourism sector.

**Education, Professional Development and Training:** to ensure that Saskatchewan artists and music industry professionals have access to the tools and knowledge needed to assist them in succeeding in their career or business development.

**Organizational Development and Management:** to ensure that the infrastructure and mechanisms for strong and focused organizational growth are in place.

**Funding Development and Management:** to ensure that SaskMusic actively seeks to establish and secure the funding needed to realize the goals of the organization in sector development.

**Artist and Industry Professional Focus:** to ensure that the policies, programs and resources of SaskMusic are focused on supporting and assisting artists and industry professionals in achieving their goals and aspirations.

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS & STRUCTURES

Universal benefits for all membership categories include:

- One-on-one consults (Music Mentors) with our staff and mentors, including guidance with funding applications;
- Information including member-only releases and opportunities, newsletters, and preferential placement of your news/new releases/features;
- Ability to apply for SaskMusic-member-only opportunities such as Export Opportunities and compilation projects;
- Enhanced Directory and live show listings on our website;
- Free photocopying/printing (up to 100 pages/month per member);
- Discounts on advertising;
- Discounts or free admission to events and SaskMusic workshops;
- Discounts or fee waivers to SaskMusic performance opportunities.

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

Youth: (For those 19 years of age or younger)

- All universal benefits.

Individual:

- All universal benefits;
- Nomination and voting eligibility for BreakOut West;
- Nomination and voting eligibility for the SaskMusic Board of Directors.

Band: (Equal to two individual memberships)

- Two people each receive all individual and universal benefits;
- Additional band members will receive access to workshops and consultations.

Corporate: (For companies who have an office in Saskatchewan)

- Two individuals of the corporation each receive all individual and universal benefits;
- Company members receive access to workshops and consultations.

Memberships are valid for 365 days from date of purchase. For more information, visit [www.SaskMusic.org](http://www.SaskMusic.org) > About Us.

# BY THE NUMBERS

## 2024-2025 FISCAL BY THE NUMBERS

*All numbers approximate as of fiscal year end*

Members: 461

E-Release Subscribers (free level + members): 3000+

Facebook Page followers: 15,109

Facebook Reach, annual: 563,000 (paid and organic)

Instagram followers: 9800

Instagram reach, annual: 371,000

Number of attendees at educational events: 386

Number of educational events (by individual date): 22

Number of attendees to Careers in Music career fairs: 5900

Number of individual career + legal consults conducted: 222

Number of export initiatives attended or participated in (by event title): 12

Number of artists/bands directly impacted by our participation in export initiatives (artists showcasing at SaskMusic events, in official showcases, etc): 23

Concert/show presentations: 17

Awards shows presented: 1

Other supported/co-sponsored events: 17

Website page views, approximate: 200,000



# YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE

## YEAR-ROUND

- Board Meetings and committee meetings
- BreakOut West Board representation
- FACTOR and Women in Music Canada regional representation
- Participation in various committees and consultations including CCMIA and ADVANCE
- Member consults; replying to inquiries for artists, music usages, media requests and more
- Marketing and advocacy for the music industry, including tracking and promoting the many online intakes and workshops presented by our partners and colleagues across Canada
- Social media features/promotions for artists and managing our Live Music Calendar

## APRIL 2024

- Regina Songwriters meetup April 24 with guest Merv xx Gotti, Regina and online
- Participate in "Try a Career Expo", Moose Jaw
- Final funding reports and audit preparation

## MAY 2024

- Attend, co-present Pre-TGE London showcase and partner to present The Great Escape (Canada House) showcases
- Staff attend "Thread" online conference by Saskatoon Open Door Society
- Staff attend SK Arts' "Arts of Celebration" event
- Regina Songwriters meetup May 26 with guest Amy Nelson, Regina and online

## JUNE 2024

- Co-present Indigenous History Month concert

in partnership with Regina Folk Festival, Regina.

- Work Together: Exploring Creative Saskatchewan Grants, with Program Advisor Brittney MacFarlane (June 5 Regina, June 6 Saskatoon)
- Sponsor of International Indigenous Music Summit
- Present pre-National Indigenous Peoples Day concerts in Prince Albert (June 17), Regina (June 19), Saskatoon (June 20)
- Attend Saskatchewan Country Music Awards in Lloydminster
- Present The Art & Business of Songwriting, with Ila Barker workshop June 18 (online)
- Sponsorship of events for PRIDE month – Regina, Prince Albert, Battlefords
- First Peoples Creating playlist promoted
- Sponsor Passion2Action youth event in Regina/online June 22
- Sponsor CFCR Sled Island showcase, Calgary
- Sponsor SaskMusic speaker (Zochi) at The Grand River Black Music Festival & Symposium, Ontario
- Our AGM is held June 25 in Regina and online

## JULY 2024

- We support AfroFest, Regina
- Summer Jams playlist promotion
- Sponsor of SaskTel Jazz Fest's Jazz Jam, Saskatoon
- Partner with Country Thunder to present the Saskatchewan Songwriters Showcase, July 12-14, Craven

- Kevin Kyle joins staff as Roxie Riffel heads on maternity leave
- Adult Introductory Songwriting Summer Class begins July 27 (led by Megan Nash), in partnership with the City of Regina

## AUGUST 2024

- Teen Introductory Songwriting Summer Class begins Aug 12 (led by Dara Schindelka), in partnership with the City of Regina
- We sponsor the IndigiFemme Urban Music Festival, Saskatoon
- We present workshop, Showcasing and Mastering Conferences, with Misfit Music Management (August 28, online)

## SEPTEMBER 2024

- We attend Treaty 4 150 Anniversary Celebrations, Fort Qu'Appelle
- We attend Canadian Country Music Week and present co-present showcases with Manitoba Music, Manitoba Country Music Association, and Sask Country Music Association
- We sponsor Songs for Nature camp, Prince Albert
- Staff attend BreakOut West in Saskatoon, and co-present a mixer with ADVANCE Music Canada on Sept 28
- Regina Songwriters meeting/songshare Sept 22
- We attend and co-sponsor Reeperbahn showcases (Canada House), Germany
- Participate in career fairs in Moose Jaw and Assiniboia

# YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE 2024-2025

## OCTOBER 2024

- Regina Songwriters meeting “Song Prompts” Oct 27, Regina and online
- Work Together: Booking Gigs, with Kevin Kyle (Regina Oct 23, Saskatoon Oct 24)
- Participate in Regina and Swift Current career fairs
- We attend and sponsor OSAC Showcase, Saskatoon
- We attend and sponsor the Saskatchewan Indigenous Music Awards

## NOVEMBER 2024

- Denny Blackstar joins staff as Indigenous Music Development Program Coordinator
- Regina Songwriters meeting November 24, Regina and online
- We attend Creative Sask’s 10th Anniversary event
- We offer JUNO submission bursaries for Sask applicants
- We present Cadence Weapon keynote talk and breakfast in partnership with Regina Folk Festival, Nov 8, Regina
- We attend and partner to present Come Together showcase, Toronto
- Attend FACTOR National Advisory Board meetings in Toronto
- We attend and co-sponsor M for Montreal showcase and VIP event
- Saskatchewan Music Award intake opens

## DECEMBER 2024

- Sask Holiday playlist curation
- Songwriter Night, Regina Dec 3
- Work Together: Artist Photoshoots Dec 15, Regina
- We sponsor Bandswap, Dec 27, Regina
- Processing Sask Music Award submissions
- Regina Songwriters workshop with Zhe the Free cancelled due to storm

## JANUARY 2025

- Work Together: Artist Photoshoots Jan 5, Saskatoon
- Regina Songwriters workshop with Zhe the Free “Writing with Rhymes”, Jan 19, Regina and online
- Saskatchewan Music Award nominees announced, January 21 and public polls commence

## FEBRUARY 2025

- Sponsorship of Black Professionals and Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon) and Love Jazz (Regina) events Feb 15; promote Black History Month playlist
- Songwriter Night, Regina Feb 18
- Indigenous Music Series Session 1, Feb 6 online: Introduction
- Indigenous Music Series Session 2, Feb 13 online: Finding Mentors, Grants, Opportunities, and More
- Attend and co-present artists at Folk Alliance International, Montreal
- Sponsor and attend Black in Saskatchewan mixer, Regina
- Work Together: “Tax Tune-Up for Music Folks” February 11 Saskatoon and February 12 online (Regina in person cancelled due to weather)

## MARCH 2025

- Saskatchewan Music Awards held in Regina, March 2
- We host a Black Music Mixer, March 1 in Regina
- Indigenous Music Series Session 3 with Matt Maw, March 22, Saskatoon and Online
- Promote playlist for Women’s in Music Saskatchewan
- Present 6 concerts around Sask with 24 artists in celebration of International Women’s Day
- We present the Screen/Music Sync Summit March 22-23, Saskatoon

# GENERAL OPERATIONS

## OUR OFFICES & STAFF

SaskMusic has staff in Regina and Saskatoon. We strive to offer access to all our programs and services regardless of where someone is located in the province, which is often facilitated via video conference. Our Regina office is located in the John Hopkins Soundstage heritage building at 1831 College Avenue, where we are co-located with SaskBooks, Sask Galleries, the Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association (SMPIA) and Creative Saskatchewan, among others.

In staff updates, **Roxie Riffel** started maternity leave in July 2024 and **Kevin Kyle** joined us in the Administrative Assistant position. **Denny Blackstar** joined as Indigenous Music Program Development Coordinator in November. Our communications role was vacant for a while, but we welcome **Miguel Fenrich** as Marketing & Communications Manager starting April 1/2025.

Our current staff bios can be found at <https://www.saskmusic.org/about-us/meet-the-staff>.

## BOARD NOTES

The SaskMusic Board of Directors met four times in this fiscal year.

At our AGM on June 25/2024, elections were held for the SaskMusic Board of Directors. We welcomed new directors **Arjun Shankar**, **Chris Tessmer**, **Katie Newman** and **Xuan Deng**. Continuing on the board were re-elected **Uzochi (Zochi) Ifeanyiukachu** and **Katie Sahlu** (re-elected), along with **Brad Bellegarde**, **Mike Davis**, **Marian Donnelly**, **Walter Jeworski**, **Jackie Kroczyński** and **Erik Mehlsen**. Departing directors with the AGM were **Andrea An**, **Jamie Anderson** and **Orion Paradis**. **Uzochi** departed the board in April 2025.

Our current board list can be found at <https://www.saskmusic.org/about-us/meet-the-board>.

## INFORMATION SERVICES

Though we'll mention this in the Education Section of this Annual Report as well, one of our core activities to our membership (and public) is providing solid, consistent information about the Saskatchewan music industry to everyone about the music industry who calls, emails, or DMs our office. Often, questions require a lengthy response, such as researching, gathering information, or consulting with colleagues.

We like to say, "If we don't know the answer, we'll find out." Staff invest significant time into continual learning: federal legislation, developments in AI, submission opportunities, among other changes in our industry. See more information later in this report under Education, Music Mentors.

## INDIGENOUS ADVISORY

SaskMusic's Indigenous Advisory is a permanent, advisory standing council. Advisory members contribute based on their professional and personal experiences. The purpose of the Advisory is to provide advice and make recommendations to our board regarding the activities and direction of SaskMusic. We seek to nurture long-term trust in the music community by offering guidance based on the experience, expertise, values, and world-views of its individual members. Members of the Advisory this fiscal were board reps **Brad Bellegarde**, **Marian Donnelly**, and **Jackie Kroczyński**, and from the community, knowledge keeper **Joseph Naytowhow**, **Dale McArthur**, **Thomas Roussin**, **Aaron Tootoosis**, **Lindsay Knight**, and **Cheryl L'Hirondelle**.

We are grateful to these individuals for offering their time and knowledge to our association and our members.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION

SaskMusic is committed to representing music industry members of our province across race, gender identity, age, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. We believe a broad mix of minds, musical styles, cultural backgrounds and individual experiences makes for a stronger industry. As a membership organization, we strive to encourage, support, and celebrate the many voices of our community, with intentional strategies to welcome engagement from historically marginalized identities and people within our industry.

# GENERAL OPERATIONS

## CODE OF CONDUCT

At SaskMusic, we believe that people of all races, genders, ages, religions, physical abilities, and sexualities have the right to be and feel safe, respected, and welcome to participate in our programming. We will not tolerate any form of racism, discrimination, bullying, harassment, or violence.

If we are witness to or are informed of someone engaging in these behaviours, regardless of whether these behaviours take place during/in relation to a SaskMusic program or in reference to their general conduct, the board of SaskMusic may elect to immediately terminate that person's membership, end their involvement in an event or project, and/or remove them from an event, followed by further review of the concerns and allegations. Review of conduct may also take place by a separate committee designated in this role for specific projects/programming offered by SaskMusic.

SaskMusic:

- Has offered and will continue to offer safer spaces, antiracism, and related training for staff, board, and membership, and will continue to provide opportunities for board and staff to engage in safe spaces, anti-racism, and DEI training and awareness;
- Will prioritize the use of accessible venues that effectively implement safe spaces policies and/or codes of conduct;
- Will broadly apply a code of conduct to current members;
- Will identify specific programs where those seeking participation are required to agree to adhere to our **code of conduct statement** as follows:

I affirm that I have not and will not engage in conduct prejudicial to SaskMusic and its members, and/or the good health and welfare of our music community, including but not limited to:

Performing acts of sexual, physical or discriminatory\* violence, including actions which could be described as sexual misconduct, without thereafter acknowledging and accepting responsibility for these actions, and participating in some form of demonstrable rehabilitative counseling.

\*verbal and/or physical harassment of, and sexual and/or physical assault of any person "because of the ancestry, Nationality or national origin, Ethnic background, race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or age" (as defined by the Canadian Human Rights Code)

## WOMEN IN MUSIC SASKATCHEWAN

[Join our Facebook group:](#)

[www.facebook.com/groups/WomeninMusicSask](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WomeninMusicSask)

WIMS is a group intended to be a gathering point. We are now affiliated with Women in Music Canada and meet with colleagues under that banner. We promote WIMC activities and opportunities, and will be refocusing on our local chapter activities in the coming fiscal.

Also see info on our International Women's Day Concerts in this report!

## AFFILIATIONS

SaskMusic is connected with provincial and national organizations, formally and informally. Here are a few of our formal connections:

### THE CANADIAN ACADEMY OF RECORDING ARTS AND SCIENCES (CARAS) / THE JUNO AWARDS

[www.carasonline.ca](http://www.carasonline.ca)

SaskMusic is the provincial representative of CARAS. We assist in promotion of the JUNO Awards process to our province, and provide input to CARAS on our members' behalf. For the 2025 submission process, we once again offered a bursary to help offset the costs of our Sask artists/labels/industry submitting for nominations.

CARAS' mandate is to promote and celebrate Canadian music and artists. The JUNO Awards is Canada's premier awards show, which includes a week-long celebration of Canadian music, culminating in The JUNO Awards Broadcast where Canadian artists are recognized for excellence of achievement in recorded music.

MusiCounts is a music education charity associated with CARAS.

MusiCounts' mission is to make music education sustainable, accessible, and inclusive by providing instruments, equipment, and resources.

### CANADIAN COUNCIL OF MUSIC INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS (CCMIA)

The CCMIA is a national council representing the provincial and territorial music industry associations across Canada, including SaskMusic. The mandate of the CCMIA is to act as the national voice of the provincial and territorial music industry associations in all matters concerning the music industry and to provide national programs and services for MIA members across Canada.

We participate in regular meetings to discuss issues of shared importance to the national music industry, and provide a collective voice on issues such as legislation being considered by the Federal government; pandemic relief funding; federal music grants; and more.

### CREATIVE SASKATCHEWAN

[www.creativesask.ca](http://www.creativesask.ca)

SaskMusic is one of seven Saskatchewan creative associations that receives funding from Creative Saskatchewan. Creative Saskatchewan is the economic development agency for Saskatchewan's creative industries. They unlock the potential of the creative industries and fuel the economic engine of homegrown talent, converting creativity into cashflow. The agency's investments via programming and community sponsorship propel creative entrepreneurs as they create, perform, innovate, and export in their pursuit of commercial success.

Creative Saskatchewan provides SaskMusic with support for our core operations, as well as programming activities via a Business Capacity Grant (for our Educational initiatives) and a Market & Export Development Grant.

# GENERAL OPERATIONS

## THE FOUNDATION ASSISTING CANADIAN TALENT ON RECORDINGS (FACTOR)

[www.factor.ca](http://www.factor.ca)

FACTOR is a public/private partnership that supports the production of sound recordings by Canadian musicians and helps Canadian music companies make recordings available to a wider public.

FACTOR is dedicated to providing assistance toward the growth and development of the Canadian music industry, administering funds from the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada Music Fund, and from Canada's private radio broadcasters. FACTOR has been managing federal funds since the inception of the Sound Recording Development Program in 1986 (now known as the Canada Music Fund).

Support is provided to Canadian recording artists, songwriters, artist managers, record labels, music publishers, distributors, and event producers through numerous programs. FACTOR supports the infrastructure that must be in place in order for artists and music entrepreneurs to progress into the international arena.

FACTOR is based in Toronto, along with Regional Education Coordinators (RECs) located across Canada with SaskMusic being the REC for Saskatchewan. RECs are engaged in providing one-on-one consultation about FACTOR and its programs to local artists and music entrepreneurs, running local workshops and seminars, and in recruiting and training FACTOR jurors.

FACTOR is governed by a Board of Directors with representatives from the radio broadcast and independent music sectors, with consultation from its National Advisory Board (NAB), comprised of representatives from the provincial and territorial music industry associations (for SaskMusic, Lorena Kelly), the Canadian Independent Music Association, the Canadian Music Publishers Association, and the Music Managers Forum.

The NAB's purpose is to assist FACTOR in developing policies and procedures that remain responsive to the Canadian independent music industry on a national level, and to act as a regional resource for FACTOR's programs to applicants across the country.

In consideration of our role as REC and NAB participants, SaskMusic receives \$40K annually from FACTOR. We apply for additional (new) annual program funding under a provincial music industry association grant.

## WESTERN CANADIAN MUSIC ALLIANCE

[www.breakoutwest.ca](http://www.breakoutwest.ca)

The Western Canadian Music Alliance is a pan-western organization created by the Alliance member music industry associations (MIAs) of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, The Northwest Territories, the Yukon Territory, and in partnership with Nunavut, to promote and celebrate western Canadian music. WCMA annually hosts their core artist and industry development event, BreakOut West.

Every year BreakOut West (BOW) is held in a different western Canadian city, with a music conference, festival, and announcement of the Western Canadian Music Awards. BreakOut West is where industry gathers to celebrate, develop and support best western Canadian artists, which are developing sustainable careers of national and international scope. (The precursor to BOW, presented by Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, was All Indie Weekend, which led to the formation of Prairie Music Alliance Inc. and Prairie Music Week.)

The BreakOut West brand has expanded in recent years to serve as an umbrella for numerous joint export missions by Western Canadian MIAs.

SaskMusic is a founding member of the original Prairie Music Alliance and WCMA. SaskMusic has a permanent seat designated on the WCMA board and contributes on committees. All voting members of SaskMusic are automatically voting members of the Western Canadian Music Alliance. We participate in board and planning meetings year-round and, from an administrative standpoint, work with WCMA staff to promote the nominations and submissions processes, encourage conference attendance, assemble voters' lists, and educate our members about the processes. We look forward to BreakOut West 2025 happening in Winnipeg.

## ADVANCE MUSIC CANADA

Rooky Jegede participates as a Saskatchewan regional representative to ADVANCE, committed to bridging the gap for Black artists in Canada. Rooky serves as a liaison between ADVANCE and the local community, fostering connections, amplifying voices, and facilitating opportunities for artistic expression and advancement.

His role involves advocacy, giving and seeking opportunities for Sask-based memberships, community engagement, and strategic collaboration to empower Black artists, promote cultural diversity, and foster a more inclusive arts landscape across the region. Rooky provides information on the entertainment landscape in Saskatchewan, helping ADVANCE when making plans for its nationwide programming.

While this is not a SaskMusic-affiliated role, SaskMusic offers work time for Rooky to participate in ADVANCE advocacy.

## ADVOCACY

We join colleagues across Canada in monitoring and advising on issues related to government policy, copyright and funding models. Most recent news articles/issues can be found on our website under the News section.

**The Unison Fund** provides counselling and emergency relief services to the Canadian music community in times of hardship or difficulties. For over a decade, Unison has been committed to helping producers, engineers, singers/songwriters, musicians, production crews, and thousands more through our financial assistance and counselling and mental health solutions programs. For more information, please visit: [www.unisondfund.ca](http://www.unisondfund.ca).

# COMMUNITY

## PROVINCIAL/LOCAL

SaskMusic often works with other organizations, sharing resources and knowledge, educational programming, and marketing. In a typical year, we may work with festivals and other cultural organizations that feature Saskatchewan talent in their programming, and provide various kinds of support including assistance with promoting their call for submissions, help coordinating lineups, promotion, presenting workshops, or small sponsorships.

We have found partnerships to be an excellent way to reach new audiences, whether musicians or music lovers. Through various partnerships we have been able to present or co-present events with greatly reduced costs, and have received exposure at a wide range of events.

Examples of typical partnership situations include:

- co-presenting workshops that would be of interest to SaskMusic members, through assistance with promotion and sourcing speakers
- assisting with programming of Saskatchewan artists into live performance lineups at festivals
- creating an opportunity to enable a SaskMusic presence at an event, i.e. using a SaskMusic staff or board member as a moderator or panelist
- providing playlist or artist booking suggestions

Stand-alone concerts and artist tours are not generally supported due to capacity, however, we have helped with (for example) benefit concerts which contribute to a charity or the greater good.

Several years ago with grants from FACTOR Canada we began work on special annual projects that would begin to address and add focus to underserved communities within our music scene. These have thus far included ambitious initiatives for Black History Month, Women's History Month, National Indigenous History Month, and Pride Month, from educational panels and roundtables, to creation of promotional videos for artists, networking events, and live concerts.

These are activities designed to amplify the voices of musicians from underserved communities. Projects may include those that promote the career development of Indigenous artists and Canadian artists from equity-deserving groups.

## PRIDE MONTH, JUNE/JULY 2024

For PRIDE 2024, we supported 3 regional Pride celebrations, with funding specifically intended to go towards supporting live music at the events.

### QUEEN CITY PRIDE FESTIVAL (REGINA)

**JUNE 7-16/2024, REGINA**

The annual 10-day Queen City Pride Festival features workshops, social gatherings, a pride parade, and multiple performances from local artists.

2024's festival had 61 community events, 10,000+ attendees, 122 pride parade entries, and hundreds of thousands of social media impressions.

Our support helped make possible main stage performances on June 15 for the "OUT in the Park" main event including **Amy Blom, Hotwired (band), Elle & Jules**, and more.

### BATTLEFORDS & AREA PRIDE WEEK (BATTLEFORDS)

**JULY 22-28/2024, THE BATTLEFORDS**

Our support helped present headlining artist **Lady T & Big Fat Calico Cats** at their outdoor event on Saturday July 27 for 2024 Battlefords Area Pride

Week. Additional musical artists included **Jackie K** and **Gypsy Moonbird**. While there was inclement weather on this day, they still saw an attendance of around 800 people.

It was a positive family-friendly successful event for participants of all ages, all demographics, and all sociology-economic backgrounds.

### PRINCE ALBERT PRIDE MONTH (PRINCE ALBERT)

**JUNE 1-30/2024, PRINCE ALBERT**

Our support went towards three events held as part of Prince Month attended by approximately 400.

- Pride in the Park and Pride After Dark (June 1/2024)
- Pride at the Rock Trout (June 6/2024)
- Gender Expression Workshop (June 8/2024)

Pride in the Park is Prince Albert Pride's biggest Pride Month event, featuring a pride parade, speeches, drag performers, vendors, and more. Pride After Dark is a 19+ drag and music show held that same evening and featured music from **D.J. Ariana Giroux** and performances from Sad Sally, Karma K, Kasarah Desert, and Paris of the Prairies.

Pride at the Rock Trout was an all-ages, vibrant concert event hosted by local musicians **Burning Pallets, Cupid's Heart, and LJ Tyson**.

The Gender Expression Workshop featured drag performers Via Grant and Annalynne Mockho. The event gave youth and adults the opportunity to try on drag make-up, clothing, and strut their stuff with the help of experienced drag queens

## BLACK MUSIC INITIATIVES / BLACK HISTORY MONTH, FEBRUARY 2025

For our 2025 plans we supported Black-led community organizations' Black History Month events, specifically facilitating the inclusion of live music in the events.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH SHOW WITH BPES FEBRUARY 15/2024, SASKATOON

Held at Lakeview Church, the show featured performances from 12 talented Saskatchewan-based Black musicians and performers in genres including pop, jazz, reggae, R&B, and indie, along with a mini marketplace with food during intermission. The event primarily targeted music enthusiasts, local community members, and industry professionals who are passionate about the local music scene in Saskatchewan. The Music Show was designed to highlight a diverse range of musical genres and showcase emerging Saskatchewan artists. The show included performances from both solo artists and bands, offering a platform for local talent to engage with the community and industry.

Music artists included **Rita Idowu, Rachael Owojori, Rooky Kamiz, Oral Fuentes Reggae Band, Mr. Sugarman, BEN AM, ADEOLUWA, Meen-ahMo, Morit Music, and CJ Chris**. Attendance: Approximately 250.

### THE LOVE JAZZ GALA DINNER AND EVENT IN REGINA FEBRUARY 15/2025 AT QUEENSBURY CENTRE, REGINA.

Presented by Afro Tribes Festival Inc., it's a showcase of local talent, community connection, and cultural celebration. It included an elegant three course meal, and musical performances by **Elev8, Carter Powley, Ola Dada, K Queens, and DJ Solsax**, along with a Kizomba Workshop by Flany B. The event also had a silent auction, art display and more.

# COMMUNITY

## THE BLACK IN SASKATCHEWAN (BIS) EVENT AND MIXER FEBRUARY 28/2025, REGINA

This was held at The Studio at the Cornwall Centre and featured time for networking, several guest speakers on the history of Black Canadian history (specifically in Saskatchewan); and musical artists **Nini Jegz, Itohan Agbator** and **Melodna**.

This event was designed to be an educational and public engagement activity, fostering conversations throughout our community, particularly with the youth and young adults, but also with everyone in the Saskatchewan community.

BIS is a youth-led community organization created to contribute to the holistic growth of the Black community in Saskatchewan by addressing systemic issues, connecting members to various networks, and educating on Black experiences. The organization is committed to addressing systemic issues, contributing to and amplifying education on Black experiences, and fostering the growth of a thriving community for all.

## BLACK MUSIC MIXER MARCH 1/2025, D'CALABASH REGINA

On March 1, the evening before the Saskatchewan Music Awards in Regina, we hosted a Black Music Mixer at D'Calabash, Regina for Black music artists, professionals and allies in Saskatchewan. Music was provided by **DJ DTM**. Snacks and non-alcoholic beverages were provided. We added ADVANCE Music Canada as a partner on the event, as we occasionally collaborate with the organization on events for the benefit of the Black music community.

## OUTREACH AND BLACK HISTORY MONTH PLAYLIST

As well, we curated and promoted a Black History Month playlist and promoted it on our social media.

In this fiscal we continued direct outreach work to ensure that artists knew about specific opportunities such as industry showcases/events, encouraged them to apply for awards such as the JUNOs and Western Canadian Music Awards, were invited to educational events, and more. We are assembling our preliminary Black Music Advisory to help steer our focus and gain insight into areas that need extra support.

## NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH 2024

### NIPD LIVE CONCERT SERIES

We have done a wide range of types of projects for our past NIPD programming, and felt this would be a good year to present a live concert series.

For this project we partnered with the Saskatchewan Indigenous Music Association, who assisted us with delivery of one of the events and promotions. A call for submissions went out to our members and Indigenous artist contact list. We programmed 12 artists into concerts into 3 cities during the week leading up to National Indigenous Peoples Day. (We intentionally avoid June 21 to avoid conflicting with other established community events.)

This was an opportunity for emerging and established artists to take the stage together and network. Artists were compensated at union scale plus travel allowance where applicable. As celebratory events, they were free admission..

Our three celebration concerts included:

- **Donny Parenteau, Mykal Gambull, the New Dawn Drum Group** and

**Roland Corrigan**, Prince Albert, June 17, <https://www.facebook.com/share/9FAFAXgm1Pdh3KMw/>

- **Big Tones, Jarrid Lee, Mahihkan Music** and **Melodie Gliem**, Regina, June 19, all ages, <https://www.facebook.com/share/7FzMJL1TqH68MafD/>
- **All Girl Chill, Braided Waves, Raven Reid** and **Siren City Ent (Donny Sage)**, Saskatoon, June 20, <https://www.facebook.com/share/snDfe-V36phPX5XxZ/>

## INTERNATIONAL INDIGENEOUS MUSIC SUMMIT SPONSORSHIP

We sponsored a panel at the International Indigenous Music Summit in Toronto (June).

## REGINA FOLK FESTIVAL X SASKMUSIC CONCERT

We partnered with the Regina Folk Festival to present a concert: Aurora Wolfe, Sunset Embassy, LJ Tyson, on June 1 at The Exchange, <https://reginafolkfestival.com/june-1-indigenous-history-month-celebration>

## NIPD CURATED PLAYLIST

We curated an updated version of our First Peoples Creating playlist on Spotify and YouTube.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CONCERTS AROUND SASK

### MARCH 2025

SaskMusic was pleased to present six concerts in celebration of International Women's Day and Women's History Month, taking place in Indian Head, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, and Swift Current. Each was a benefit with proceeds going to a charity in their region; over \$6000 was distributed through ticket sales.

Each concert featured four artists from different areas of the province and a mix of musical styles. Our goal was to offer opportunities where possible for artists to play in new-to-them venues, make connections with peer artists, and demonstrate that Sask has an abundance of talented, women-led performing groups available for performance opportunities.

- We also hoped that fans attending would hear and fall in love with new artists, and be exposed to genres that may be outside of their standard listening. Thanks to the financial support of FACTOR Canada and Creative Saskatchewan, we were able to pay artists, venues, and support crews and provide all ticket proceeds to the charities noted for each. The concerts were empowering and inspiring. They also enabled SaskMusic to connect with some venues that we haven't had the opportunity to present in previously, and strengthen our engagement with a few communities outside of Regina and Saskatoon.
- Indian Head March 7: **Eileen Laverty, Fiyin Obayan, Amy Nelson, Annette Campagne**. At the Grand Theatre. Proceeds to Qu'Appelle Haven Safe Shelter
- Moose Jaw March 7: **All Girl Chill, Last Birds, Rhonda Gallant-Morari, Kriss Atcheynum**. At the Moose Jaw Centre for Arts & Culture. Proceeds to Moose Jaw Transition House
- Prince Albert March 14: **Amy Blom, Jackie K, Itohan, Emily and Eden Beaulac**. At Rock Trout Events. Proceeds to Prince Albert Safe Shelter for Women
- Regina March 8: **Halle Ponton, MeenahMo, Tubbsman Junction, Victory Howard**. At The Artesian. Proceeds to the Regina and Area Sexual Assault Centre
- Saskatoon March 8: **Karly Cat, Anna Haverstock, Jovan, MELODNA**. At

# COMMUNITY

Amigos. Proceeds to Girls Rock Saskatoon

- Swift Current March 7: **Kara Golemba, Cupid's Heart, SoulTribe, Nini-Jegz**. At the Lyric Theatre. Proceeds to Southwest Crisis Services

## PLAIN A.I.R. (ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE) RADIO ON CFCR AND CJTR

We're proud to support Plain A.I.R., an artist-in-residence program on CJTR and CFCR. Each month the program features a different local artist, DJ, musician, band or community member as a guest host who programs a month's worth of live, weekly radio shows. Plain A.I.R. contextualizes air time as a creative space similar to a laboratory, studio or venue and encourages creative expression and experimentation. The program increases community access to the stations' airwaves among local artists, musicians and community members. Plain A.I.R. also provides listeners with an opportunity to hear unique live performances, radio plays, conversations and to garner information about local culture from those who make it.

The program airs every Sunday from 11PM-12AM on CFCR (90.5FM, [cfc.ca/onair](http://cfc.ca/onair)), and Saturday from 3PM-4PM on 91.3 FM CJTR in Regina (91.3FM, [cjtr.ca/live](http://cjtr.ca/live)).

### PLAIN A.I.R. Featured Artists:

- April 2024: Big Tones
- May 2024: Amy Swallow: The Wasted Daisy Segment
- June 2024: dead ex girlfriends
- July 2024: ka lok
- August 2024: Love Handle Confidential: Shawn Cuthand
- September 2024: Sunset Embassy
- October 2024: Lindsay Arnold "Look At The Music"
- November 2024: Blind Commentary
- December 2024: The December Cafe with Holly Luning
- February 2025: Saskatchewan HomeGrown, a monthly live music event recorded in Saskatoon at Studio 12 for broadcast
- March 2025: FABRIC\* radio with MONK

## OSAC SHOWCASE

### OCTOBER 18-20/2024, SASKATOON SK

We supported the OSAC (Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils') annual Showcase event. Showcase is a booking conference for visual and performing arts, and includes a trade show area (Exhibitor Exchange), opportunities for networking, and professional development. Artists come to Showcase from across Saskatchewan, Canada, and the United States.

Attendees include performing arts and school presenters, visual artists, managers, agents, OSAC Members, industry representatives, and government funding partners. Two days, with three Showcases of curated work, provide a forum for presenting performances to arts council bookers and delegates in attendance. This year's performers from SK included **Teagan Littlechief, The North Sound, and Katelyn Lehner**.

## SASKATCHEWAN INDIGENOUS MUSIC AWARDS

### OCTOBER 12/2024 PRINCE ALBERT SK

The second annual SIMAs, presented by the Saskatchewan Indigenous Music Association (SIMA), was a night dedicated to honouring and celebrating the remarkable talents within the Indigenous music community. Live performances from **Don Burnstick, Rebecca Strong, Big Tones, JJ Lavallee, Dillon Gazandlare, The Board, Sundance Brass, and Melodie Gliem**, were interspersed with award presentations in categories including Youth,

Pow Wow Drum, Song of the Year, Emerging Artist, Indigenous Language Recording, Gospel Recording, Instrumentalist, Country/Roots, Rock/Heavy Metal/Blues, Rap/Hip Hop/Electronic, Female Artist, Male Artist, and Fan's Choice. SaskMusic was pleased to attend and be sponsors of the event.

## ART NOW FINE ART FAIR 2024

### SEPTEMBER 19-22/2024, SASKATOON SK

We supported the 9th annual Art Now fine art event fair presented by our creative colleagues **SaskGalleries** in Saskatoon. Art Now, the only show of its kind on the prairies, provides local, national, and international artists and galleries with opportunities to gain exposure at a highly professional venue. The show features an opening night reception, artist talks, family programming, and more. Exhibitor booths are open to all commercial galleries committed to showcasing the work of established and emerging artists and artisans from across Canada.

Art Now's mandate is to provide an accessible and comfortable fine art experience showcasing Saskatchewan's commercial galleries and the quality of Saskatchewan art, and to provide education and promote Saskatchewan's vibrant fine art industry.

## COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIPS

- We sponsored the inaugural annual AfroFest summer indoor festival, Regina (July 2024).
- We sponsored SaskTel Jazz Festival's "Jazz Jam," Saskatoon (July).
- We sponsored the inaugural IndigiFemme Urban Music Festival, Saskatoon (August).

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

SaskMusic often partners with other music industry associations in Canada, especially western Canadian music industry associations (sometimes under the BreakOut West umbrella), for Canada House events with the **Canadian Independent Music Association**, and with other MIAs and partners. This includes joint export missions with shared resources and marketing initiatives, nationally and internationally.

On a national level we also partner with the **Canadian Council of Music Industry Associations (CCMIA)** on lobby issues such as copyright reform and immigration work permit issues in Canada, and education initiatives. Internationally, we frequently work with the Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA) on market/export events. Additional details on these events can be found under Export and other areas of this report.

## !EARSHOT DIGITAL MUSIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

**In partnership with the National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCRA/ANREC)**

<https://earshot-distro.ca/>

Along with other national and provincial music associations, we have been partnering with the NCRA since they rolled out their new !earshot Distro system in spring 2021. Musicians, artists and labels across Canada have an environmentally friendly way to distribute their music to stations. To help populate the system with both catalogue material and new releases, SaskMusic members receive discounted upload access through promotional periods. Discount codes, when offered, can be found on the SaskMusic website when you login ("Backstage").

# INDIGENOUS MUSIC SERIES

Our Indigenous Music Program Development Coordinator **Denny Blackstar** was brought onto the team in November 2024 to implement this new program. Denny started by conducting outreach and planning the series and a sign up form was launched to gather participants.

The Indigenous Music Series is a set of events designed to aid Indigenous artists, musicians, songwriters and other industry members in navigating and accelerating their careers in the music industry. Events have been held both online and in person.

Participants of the series meet online to discuss, learn, and practice new skills. It is meant to be taught by influential Indigenous artists, musicians, and industry members who continue to pave a way for Indigenous artists to practice and express their arts. Participants signing up receive updates, links to resources and information as program events are announced. New participants continue to be accepted into the program and educational presentations are recorded for later viewing.

Below are the events that have taken place only in the 2024/2025 fiscal. The series is continuing into spring 25/26 with plans for resuming in fall 2025 with continued educational offerings, opportunities to gather, and professional resources such as social media reviews.

Funding for the series has been provided by FACTOR Canada and Creative Saskatchewan.

Our coordinator is responsible for guiding this pilot program supporting a cohort of Indigenous artists and industry members in working toward their professional goals, including coordinating industry mentors, conducting outreach to identify needs and opportunities, and guiding participants towards grants, educational programming, and other resources.

## SESSION 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

**FEBRUARY 6/2025, VIA ZOOM**

With: **Dale McArthur, Joseph Naytowhow, Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Lorena Kelly**

In this session, we introduced the Indigenous Music Series, and some of the people involved with SaskMusic and the Indigenous Music Series. Attendees had the opportunity to introduce themselves and share their musical journey. We discussed how SaskMusic can provide assistance to those in the music community, and talked about expectations for this series.

## SESSION 2 - FINDING MENTORS, GRANTS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND MORE

**FEBRUARY/2025 13 VIA ZOOM**

With: **Rhonda Head, Lorena Kelly, Ben Valiaho**

In this session, artists got a tour of the SaskMusic website as a valuable resource, and highlighted tools available to musicians/industry in Saskatchewan. We explored the possibilities for recording, funding, showcasing, and

mentorship opportunities listed within the website. Mentors Rhonda Head shared her story and how they could aid an artist through mentorship.

Forty-eight-time international award-winning Mezzo-Soprano vocalist, Rhonda Head is from the Opaskwayak Cree Nation in northern Manitoba. Rhonda released her fifth album on August 2024, *Aski*. Rhonda's album is about nature, choosing what is right and admiring beautiful people.

## SESSION 3 - HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MUSIC RELEASES

**MARCH 22/2025 IN PERSON AT THE ALT HOTEL IN SASKATOON AND VIA ZOOM**

With **Matt Maw, President & Lead Artist Manager at Red Music Rising**

Red Music Rising is based out of Toronto ON. Matt oversees artists such as Sebastian Gaskin, Boogey the Beat, Nimkish, and many other amazing Indigenous talents. Matt gave a jam-packed presentation on music promotion and "How to Get The Most Out of Your Music Releases."

Matt Maw (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation) is the President & Lead Artist Manager at Red Music Rising. Matt brings well over a decade of multi-faceted music industry experience to RMR, along with a passion for artist development and a mission to amplify Canada's Indigenous artists on the global stage. Throughout his career, Matt has worked with some of Canada's most celebrated artists, Indigenous and otherwise, and now oversees a label and management roster including Sebastian Gaskin, Boogey The Beat, Nimkish, Wolf Saga, Reuben & The Bullhorn Singers, Drives The Common Man and LOR. A graduate of the Harris Institute for the Arts, Matt currently sits on the board of Music Managers Forum Canada and the BreakOut West Indigenous Advisory Committee. Matt has worked alongside organizations including Warner Music Group Canada, Universal Music Canada, Arts & Crafts Productions, Six Shooter Records, Collective Concerts, Field Trip, and Minoshkite.

## SESSION 4 - GRANTS

**MARCH 29/2025 VIA ZOOM**

With: **Creative Saskatchewan, Canada Council for the Arts and SK Arts**

In this session, representatives from arts funding organizations were invited to speak about grants available to Indigenous musicians and industry. These being Creative Saskatchewan (represented by Program Advisor, Charles Umeh), SK Arts (represented by Program Consultant, Geoff Smith), and Canada Council for the Arts (represented by Program Officer, Marty Ballentyne). Each organization presented/spoke about their organization and the grants that they offer. (Note, we intend to present a separate FACTOR session at a future date of the series.)

# PROMOTIONS

**There is often crossover of activities that serve multiple purposes - some are both promotions and export, or promotion and education for example. Some are advocacy-driven. We've loosely grouped activities in this report under their primary purpose.**

We promote Saskatchewan artists and our industry widely to provincial, national and international audiences. This is an ongoing focus and key staff activity. We are source of information and resource for not only our members, but the Saskatchewan industry as a whole, and the general public.

Our marketing activities include press releases when there is celebratory news (ie JUNO nominations for Saskatchewan artists), and taking media interviews speaking about the Saskatchewan music industry. We promote Saskatchewan artists who are participating in any kind of official showcase or award ceremony (whether we have an active role in that event or not), major achievements of Saskatchewan artists (such as Gold records or other notable milestones), promoting items to our international contacts and with targeted social media buys, and in general, raising the profile of both the industry as a whole and of our unique, individual artists.

We ramp up promotions when there is a public voting component happening for our artists. We dedicate resources to maintaining a live music event calendar, which promotes shows to the music-loving public.

A significant portion of staff resources are also devoted to promoting opportunities that are available to our members in the line of showcase submissions, contests, and more. In certain cases we also do concentrated outreach, for example to artists with eligibility for WCMA or JUNO nominations, or who are suitable for a specific export opportunity.

We invest a lot of effort into our social media profiles, promoting individual artists with Featured Singles, Albums, and Videos; educational events (both our own presentations and those offered by industry colleagues), general tips and information for those working in the industry, specific playlists based on genre/seasonal/event, and much more. We strive to be perceived as a primary source of information for those working in music in Saskatchewan.

Our website provides an opportunity for members to submit press releases for posting, and we maintain the Saskatchewan Music Directory so that those in the industry can locate resources and be found by the general public.

We also produce SaskMusic-branded promotional items for distribution at both local and export events.

As well, we provide services to those seeking Saskatchewan music for various usages. For example, we filled several music-for-synchronization briefs, pitching various Saskatchewan music for consideration for specific usages.

## LIVE MUSIC LISTINGS

We continued to maintain our Live Music Listings calendar for Saskatchewan, the most comprehensive guide to shows in the province. We dedicate staff time to tracking and inputting listings with a goal of including every show that's happening. Artists and presenters can submit their own shows for the calendar - for which we'd be very thankful.

View the calendar at [www.saskmusic.org/events](http://www.saskmusic.org/events), and to submit events, login to your account at [www.saskmusic.org/login](http://www.saskmusic.org/login).

## COUNTRY THUNDER SONGWRITERS SHOWCASE

**JULY 12-14/2024, CRAVEN SK**

SaskMusic was pleased to partner with Country Thunder Saskatchewan for a second year of the Songwriters Showcase. On the afternoons of July 12-14, performances were held in a showcase stage tent on the 'main street' of the CT grounds. Artist performance fees and an administrative fee for SaskMusic are covered by Country Thunder, and SaskMusic has staff on site to help present the event. Through this intimate songwriter-in-a-round style event, songwriters take turns sharing their songs and the stories behind them. Each afternoon, a different set of 4 artists performed in this intimate, stripped-down setting.

SaskMusic welcomes this opportunity as an avenue to help CT present more, and diverse Sask. country/roots artists at the prestigious annual festival. The lineup includes artists contributed by CT organizers, and curated by SaskMusic. (SaskMusic posted a call for submissions to our members to help us locate interested artists.) The lineups reflect a mix of emerging and established songwriters, and included **Brody Siebert, Chris Henderson, Conor Cassidy, Eli Barsi, Jarrid Lee, Jeffery Straker, Kendra Kay, Mark Smith (of the Poverty Plainsmen), Morgan Robertson, Teagan Littlechief, Tenille Arts** (SK) and MB's Quinton Blair.

## PLAYLISTS

We've always got a new playlist going on Spotify and YouTube! To find us easily, visit [www.saskmusicspotify.ca](http://www.saskmusicspotify.ca) and give us a follow! Our Spotify were promoted including these, which can be found on our Spotify account [www.saskmusicspotify.ca](http://www.saskmusicspotify.ca) and YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/saskmusic](http://www.youtube.com/saskmusic): Apple Music playlists are also available for some.

- First Peoples Creating (updated for Indigenous History Month in June)
- Summer Jams
- PRIDE month (featuring Saskatchewan artists who are part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community)
- We also maintain a regular new releases playlist on Spotify and our YouTube channel.

# PROMOTIONS

## SASKMUSIC ONLINE

**E-release:** The goal of the e-release is to provide timely news and announcements that we feel are important to our subscribers, to highlight information posted on our socials, and reference back to the Events Calendar and other areas of our website. Research is continually undertaken to locate opportunities for our members and make sure our subscribers receive this information. We also provide information on crucial “big picture” news that we feel is important to our industry, and promote the efforts of our members through items such as Featured Videos and Singles. Advertising space is available in the e-release, on our website, and elsewhere.

**www.SaskMusic.org:** Our comprehensive website also contains the databases housing our membership information. Members can self-manage their contact information, as well as submit to several different components of the site such as **Saskatchewan Music Directory** listings, **Live Music Listings**, and press releases.

A few highlights of the site:

- Our **Live Music Listings** calendar is the most complete list of a) live dates by Saskatchewan artists and b) live shows in Saskatchewan, covering events throughout the province. We dedicate staff time to research and post every live show we can locate, with an aim to being the most comprehensive resource available. This resource generates a significant amount of traffic to our site. <https://www.saskmusic.org/events/>
- Extensive archive of **articles and how-to's** on songwriting, copyright, touring, marketing, showcasing, past feature artists and more.
- Members can submit their own **videos and press releases** to accompany their music directory listing, some of which we will choose to feature on our homepage.
- We have a great list of **funding options**, plus **submission deadlines** for various opportunities <https://www.saskmusic.org/news/sound-opportunities>
- We also have a streaming player, and host specific playlists of Saskatchewan music such as Summer Jams, Holiday Music, and genre-split categories.
- Everyone working in the Saskatchewan industry is invited to submit, or update, their listings for the **Saskatchewan Music Directory**. Members receive more enhanced listings, but even non-members receive free listing space. This is also a big traffic area of our website.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** Social media is heavily utilized by our members, so we keep our feeds very active with timely information and tips. The main channels we used this year were Instagram, Facebook, Threads, Spotify and YouTube. Look for us more on TikTok in the new fiscal!

# SMA

## SASKATCHEWAN MUSIC AWARDS

### THE SASKATCHEWAN MUSIC AWARDS

The Seventh Annual: March 2/2025, Regina

[www.saskatchewanmusicawards.ca](http://www.saskatchewanmusicawards.ca)

The seventh annual awards honoured excellence in the Saskatchewan music industry and celebrated the achievements of our music industry members over the past year.

The awards were initiated to draw greater public recognition to the amazing and multi-faceted music being created in our province. With newly updated award categories for this year, we invited Saskatchewan recording artists and industry members working in all styles of music across the province to make their submissions. We were once again excited to celebrate and share the excellent work of our talented artists and industry personnel at this year's SMAs.

The seventh edition of the Saskatchewan Music Awards took place March 2/2025 before a packed house, celebrating the Saskatchewan music industry at the Regina Performing Arts Centre.

Awards in twenty-one categories were handed out, accompanied by performances from current and former SMA nominees **Beau Nectar**, **Big Tones**, **The Radiant**, **Rooky Kamiz**, **Teagan Littlechief**, Indigenous Music Achievement Award recipient for 2025 **Erroll Kinistino**, and our Youth Performer for this year, **Ashlyn Wilder**. Ashlyn was chosen after a call was put out for the youth performance spot, with the intention of giving a spotlight to an amazing upcoming talent in our province

Award recipients were chosen by music industry jurors and peers from across Canada, with public voting also contributing to the selections in the categories of Album of the Year, Industry Achievement, Music Company or Organization of the Year, and Venue or Festival of the Year.

The show was opened with a special performance of the Treaty 4 Flag Song by **Aaron Tootoosis**. Colleagues representing many different cultural organizations from around the province were invited to present award categories and take part in the show.

A key event of the show was the tribute to the Indigenous Music Achievement Award honouree, **Erroll Kinistino**, presented by **Dale McArthur**.

A double winner of the evening was **Jess Moskaluke**, taking home Country Artist of the Year and Single of the Year for the second SMAs in a row.

Album of the Year was selected through a combination of public voting and an industry jury, and went to **Ella Forrest** for her release, “Butterflies.” This category is based on an album, as a whole, released during the period of September 15, 2023-November 30, 2024, in any genre.

The awards program was recorded for later broadcast on **AccessNow TV**, and aired for the first time on March 12. After its broadcasts on AccessNow conclude, the show will be available on SaskMusic's YouTube channel.

# PROMOTIONS

**Erroll Kinistino** is Saulteaux with membership on the Ochapowace First Nation near Broadview, bordering the historic Qu'Appelle Valley in South East Saskatchewan. He was born in Whitewood, and graduated from Grenfell Consolidated High School. Erroll is both an actor and musician with credits including numerous theatrical productions, and known for film and TV roles as Leon Deela on North of 60 (1992-2002), Phil the bartender on Corner Gas (2006-2008), Cold As Ice in Out In the Cold (2005), Kenny Bearclaw in Moccasin Flats (2003) and Sol in This Time Last Winter (2009). He has been active in Saskatchewan's theatre and music scenes for many years as an actor, director, singer and acoustic guitarist.

As a musician, Kinistino plays a variety of instruments: acoustic and electric guitar, drums, and harmonica, to name a few, and he also sings traditional songs with a hand drum. He sings and plays his own songs, such as Kokum's Kaddilac, Shuk Sha Ki-Nuk, and 24 Hours. He recently recorded Kokum's Kaddilac with the Billy Joe Green band, which went to Number One on NCI FM. As Dale McArthur noted, "Many of us starting out were comforted, supported, and inspired (by Erroll). He continues to inspire the next generation with his music, theatre, radio plays, and kindness that he known for by Indigenous communities." Erroll Kinistino MC's many events on the prairies and across Canada, and acts as an elder at various ceremonies. He can always be found performing in and supporting others in the music scenes in Regina and Saskatoon. A constant humanitarian, he speaks and represents his people with pride everywhere he goes.

Sampler playlists related to the Saskatchewan Music Awards can be found on our Spotify and YouTube channels ([www.saskmusicspotify.ca](http://www.saskmusicspotify.ca), [www.youtube.com/saskmusic](http://www.youtube.com/saskmusic))

SaskMusic thanks Creative Saskatchewan and AccessNow TV for their support of the SMAs and SaskMusic.

## THE 2025 SASKATCHEWAN MUSIC AWARD WINNERS

Afrobeats Artist of the Year (Tie): **Melodna** (Regina) and **Rooky Kamiz** (Saskatoon)

Album of the Year: **Ella Forrest**, "Butterflies" (Regina)

Contemporary Indigenous Artist of the Year: **Teagan Littlechief** (Carlyle)

Country Artist of the Year: **Jess Moskaluke** (Langenburg/Rocanville)

Electronic Artist of the Year: **Tim Damage** (Regina)

Hip Hop Artist of the Year: **HarveyDent** (Saskatoon)

Indigenous Music Achievement Award: **Erroll Kinistino** (Ochapowace First Nation)

Industry Achievement Award: **Community Arts Mentorship Program** (Saskatoon)

Inspirational or Spiritual Artist of the Year: **Elenee** (Lloydminster SK)

Instrumental or Ambient Artist of the Year (Tie): **West Of Mabou** (Moose Jaw) and **Sean Bougie** (Saskatoon)

Metal or Hard Rock Artist of the Year (Tie): **Grimelda** (Saskatoon) and **Kelevra** (Regina)

Music Company or **Organization of the Year: Organization Of Saskatchewan Arts Councils** (OSAC) (Regina)

Music Professional of the Year: **Marvin Chan** (Regina)

Music Video of the Year: **Joshua Stade** (North Battleford) for "Gimme One More," The Gladstone

Pop Artist of the Year: **Beau Nectar** (Moose Jaw)

Producer of the Year (Tie): **Bart McKay** (Saskatoon) and **Chris Dimas** (Regina)

R&B Artist of the Year: **Katie Tupper** (Saskatoon)

Rock Artist of the Year: **Dump Babes** (Saskatoon)

Roots or Folk Artist of the Year: **Jake Vaadeland** (Cut Knife)

Single of the Year: **"Go Get Er," Jess Moskaluke** (Langenburg/Rocanville)

Venue or Festival of the Year: **SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival** (Saskatoon)

A list of all the nominees can be found here: <https://www.saskmusicawards.com/2025-nominees>.

The 2025 guidelines can be found here: <https://www.saskmusicawards.com/2025-submission-guidelines>.

## ALBUM OF THE YEAR RUNDOWN: THE LONG LIST

Album of the Year, also formerly known as The Best Saskatchewan Albums of the Year poll, is in its tenth annual iteration. This category recognizes an album-length project released by a Saskatchewan artist, released during the period of September 15, 2023-November 30, 2024, in any genre.

The Long List of 36 albums included:

- A R I E - Homage
- Aurora Bella - Persephone
- Autopilot - Here Comes the Pressure
- Beau Nectar - Two Lips DELUXE
- Big Tones - Existence
- Blake Berglund - What's Left of the Right
- Cassandra Stinn - Returnings
- Crowvonn - Rebirth
- Dreyspurpo - LIFE LOVE MELANCHOLY
- Dump Babes - Known Liar
- Elenee - elenee.
- Ella Forrest - Butterflies
- Ember Belladonna - The Grove
- Factor Chandelier - Cold, Cold World
- Halle Ponton - Is This What Real Life Is?
- Jake Vaadeland - Retro Man...More And More (Expanded Edition)
- Jess Moskaluke - Heartbreaker EP
- Jesse Brown - in the deep
- Katelyn Lehner - Dirt Road Dancing
- Kelevra - Oneiric
- Last Birds - Endless Turn of Day Into Night
- Lova Lamp - extensions of U
- Man Meat - You Deserve Better
- Merv xx Gotti - Guitar Songs
- MJ Meehan - Spells
- Nige B - U R What U R -, Vol. 2
- Nyle Segovia - catharsis
- Patrick Hardy - Elsewhere
- Patrick Hardy - Tiny

# PROMOTIONS

- Raven Reid - Waiting For Change
- Rooky Kamiz - IRIDESCENT
- Sèdèzè - Redlines
- TOVA & vbnd - Everything, In Its Time
- Tracy Waters - Who The Fuck Is Tracy?
- Velvet Threads - Sunday's Best
- Wolf Willow - Soul of Slippery Butte
- Yarbo - Husband
- Yovel Worship - Echoes Of Freedom
- Zochi – Afrikaanman Fairytale

## PROCESS NOTES

Preparations for this year's SMAs started with a review of the awards guidelines and categories. This resulted in some updates and new categories.

Nomination submissions opened November 22 and ran to December 11, starting a busy period of verification of the submissions and preparing packages for category jurors. The nominees were announced in January, with public voting open on three industry categories plus Album of the Year.

## THE SASKATCHEWAN MUSIC AWARDS 2025 NOMINEES

Artists and industry professionals were invited to submit themselves for nomination consideration through an open call that closed on December 11/2024. Eligible submissions for all categories, with the exception of Single of the Year and the Indigenous Music Achievement Award, went to juries comprised of peers and music industry professionals across Canada. Single of the Year nominees and winner are determined solely by industry data points, while the IMAA recipient has been selected by SaskMusic's Indigenous Advisory.

### AFROBEATS ARTIST OF THE YEAR:

- MeenahMo
- MELODNA
- NiniJegz
- Rooky Kamiz
- VOFALOGO
- ZOCHI

### CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Berk Jodoin
- Eekwol
- Jah'kota
- JJ Lavallee
- Raven Reid
- Teagan Littlechief

### COUNTRY ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Hunter Brothers
- Jess Moskaluke
- JJ Lavallee
- Katelyn Lehner
- Teagan Littlechief

### ELECTRONIC ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Emilio Del Canto
- FOOTWURK
- The Corner Hotel
- Theo Noble
- Tim Damage

- Velcro Stories

### HIP HOP ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Big Tones
- HarveyDent
- Nige B
- Pimpton
- RaytheNihilist
- Skizza & AK Productions

### INSPIRATIONAL OR SPIRITUAL ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Elenee
- Servant
- The Uplift Duo
- Winsome Kind
- Yovel Worship

### INSTRUMENTAL OR AMBIENT ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Annette Campagne
- Ember Belladonna
- Jesse Brown
- Sean Bougie
- West of Mabou

### METAL OR HARD ROCK ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Grimelda
- Kelevra
- Man Meat
- Riversleem
- Roughsleeper
- Zayd

### POP ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Beau Nectar
- Greg Orrè
- Halle Ponton
- Lova Lamp
- Patrick Moon Bird
- Vikki Minor

### R&B ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Ella Forrest
- Katie Tupper
- Lyssa & The Try-Tones
- TOVA & vbnd

### ROCK ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Autopilot
- Blu Beach Band
- Dump Babes
- Fame Fatale
- GreenWing
- The Radiant

### ROOTS OR FOLK ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Alexis Normand
- Jake Vaadeland
- Jeffery Straker
- Last Birds
- Merv xx Gotti
- Wolf Willow

### SINGLE OF THE YEAR

# PROMOTIONS

- “Female Body,” Farideh
- “Go Get Er,” Jess Moskaluke
- “i don’t want it,” Elenee
- “Need Nothing,” Katie Tupper
- “Train - Station Edition,” Hunter Brothers
- “Under A Tree,” Jesse Brown
- “What I Wouldn’t Do,” Shantaia

## **MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR**

- “And Now We Sleep In Endless Ocean” performed by Makari, nominee Dylan Hryciuk of Versa Films
- “Dumb Enough” performed by Aurora Bella, nominee Eyecatcher Video
- “Gimme One More” performed by The Gladstone, nominee Joshua Stade
- “I Won’t be Leavin’” performed by Velvet Threads, nominee Prehistoric Productions
- “July Again” performed by Blu Beach Band, nominee Carter Vosper
- “Open Ya Eyez” performed by Big Tones, nominee Captured Beyond Today Media
- “Partir Pour Revenir” performed by Ponteix ft. Laurence-Anne, nominee Owen Assman of Light/Dark Media
- “Peace” performed by Cupid’s Heart, nominee Jonathan Harrison-Kendrick
- “Perfect Soul” performed by Spiritbox, nominee Dylan Hryciuk of Versa Films
- “Train (Station Edition)” performed by Hunter Brothers, nominee Adler Irwin of Irwin Films

## **INDIGENOUS MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

- Erroll Kinistino

## **PRODUCER OF THE YEAR**

- Aspen Beveridge
- Bart McKay
- Chris Dimas
- Madison Nicol
- Matt Stinn
- Riley McLennan
- Walter Jeworski

## **MUSIC PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**

- Jayson Brinkworth
- Joel Rohs
- Mac Ulmer
- Marvin Chan
- Scott Roos
- ZHE the Free

## **INDUSTRY ACHIEVEMENT**

- Brian Manz, Blue Door Recording
- Community Arts Mentorship Program
- Marvin Chan
- North Sask Music Zine (NSMZ)
- The Digital Media Studio at Regina Public Library

## **VENUE OR FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR**

- Moose Jaw Centre for Arts & Culture (Mae Wilson Theatre)
- Northern Lights Bluegrass & Old Tyme Music Festival
- SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival
- The Broadway Theatre
- The Exchange

## **MUSIC COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR**

- Captured Beyond Today Media Inc.
- Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils (OSAC)
- PR Productions
- University of Regina Conservatory of Performing Arts
- Western Seer Records

# SHOWCASES

Please find below a general list of known showcase events that included Saskatchewan artists (April 1/24-March 31/25) for reference purposes.

This is not intended as a list of SaskMusic-supported nor Creative Saskatchewan-funded events.

Any omissions are unintentional.

## **AMERICANAFEST**

**September 17-21/2024 Nashville TN**

- Canada House
- Ellen Froese
- Jeffery Straker

## **BREAKOUT WEST**

**September 26-29/2024, Saskatoon SK**

- Autopilot
- Beau Nectar
- Dump Babes
- Grimelda
- Last Birds
- Marissa Burwell
- Merv xx Gotti
- okimaw
- Rooky Kamiz
- The Garrys
- The Radiant
- TOVA
- Vikki Minor

## **Devil Duck x SaskMusic showcase**

- Gunner & Smith
- Marissa Burwell

## **COUNTRY MUSIC WEEK (Canadian Country Music Awards)/**

**September 15–19/2024 O**

### **Official event appearances:**

- Shantaia – CCMA Songwriters Showcase
- Jess Moskaluke – CCMA House, CCMA Pre Show
- Country Crawl
- Jordyn Pollard
- Justin Labrash
- Kateryna Grace
- Teagan Littlechief

### **SCMA/MCMA/SaskMusic Showcases (Country Crawl)**

- Adam Johnson
- Brock Andrews
- Bruin
- Darryl Anderson
- Evan Baxter
- Jordyn Pollard
- Karissa Hoffart
- Katelyn Lehner
- Kateryna Grace
- Miles Canyon
- Teagan Littlechief

### **Additional unofficials:**

- Adam Johnson
- Brock Andrews
- Jordyn Pollard
- Josh Stumpf
- Katelyn Lehner
- Shantaia
- Teagan Littlechief

## **CANADIAN MUSIC WEEK (CMW)**

**June 1-8/2024, Toronto ON**

- Autopilot
- Ellen Froese
- Katie Tupper

## **COME TOGETHER**

**November 25-26/24, Toronto ON**

- Merv xx Gotti
- Vikki Minor

## **COVENANT AWARDS**

**November 17-19/2024, Kitchener ON**

- Elenee
- Yvonne St. Germaine

## **FOCUS WALES**

**May 9-11/2024, Wrexham Wales**

- The Garrys

## **FOLK ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL (FAI)**

**February 19-23/2025 Montreal QC**

### **Official:**

- Eliza Mary Doyle
- Alexis Normand

### **Private showcases:**

- Alexis Normand
- Berk Jodoin
- Eliza Mary Doyle
- Lancelot Knight
- Raven Reid
- The North Sound

## **FOLK MUSIC ONTARIO**

**October 3-6/2024 London ON**

- Lancelot Knight
- Last Birds
- The North Sound

## **JUNO AWARDS**

**March 27-30/2025, Vancouver BC**

- JunoFest:
- Ellen Froese
- Grimelda
- Jake Vaadeland and the Sturgeon River Boys

## **M FOR MONTREAL**

**November 20-23/2024 Montreal QC**

- Grimelda
- Merv xx Gotti

## **NEW SKOOL RULES**

**May 31-June 2/24, Rotterdam NL**

- Pimpton

## **OSAC SHOWCASE**

**October 18-20/24, Saskatoon SK**

- Katelyn Lehner
- Teagan Littlechief
- The North Sound

## **REEPERBAHN**

**September 18–21/2024, Hamburg Germany**

### **Canada House**

- Grimelda
- Katie Tupper

## **SASKATCHEWAN MUSIC AWARDS**

**March 2/2025, Regina SK**

### **Show performances**

- Ashlyn Wilder
- Beau Nectar
- Big Tones
- Erroll Kinistino – Indigenous Music Achievement Award
- Rooky Kamiz
- Teagan Littlechief
- The Radiant

## **SCREEN/MUSIC SYNC SUMMIT SHOWCASE**

**March 22–23/2025, Saskatoon SK**

- Brian Baggett
- CJ Chris
- Kara Golemba
- Last Birds
- Raven Reid
- Ray the Nihilist

## **SLED ISLAND CFCR/CJTR SHOWCASE**

**June 19-23/2024, Calgary AB**

- Manmeat
- Pop Pop Vernac
- Respectfulchild
- TOVA

## **SXSW**

**March 7–15/2025, Austin TX**

- Merv xx Gotti

## **THE GREAT ESCAPE**

**May 15-18/24, Brighton UK**

- Jake Vaadeland and the Sturgeon River Boys
- Marissa Burwell

### **Pre-TGE Canadian Music Showcase**

**May 14/24, London UK**

- Jake Vaadeland and the Sturgeon River Boys
- Marissa Burwell

## **YOUR ROOTS ARE SHOWING**

**January 15–19/2025, Belfast Ireland**

- Jeffery Straker

# AWARDS

## 24-25 SASK. AWARD WINNERS AND NOMINEES

**NOMINEES ARE LISTED. WINNERS ARE INDICATED WITH A (W) UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.**

This is a general list of awards with Saskatchewan connections (presented during the period April 1/24-March 31/25) that we have identified to celebrate and promote these achievements.

With the exception of the Saskatchewan Music Awards, these are not Sask-Music-presented events. If we are missing someone, please let us know!

### **YOUNG CANADIAN SONGWRITERS 2024**

- Kateryna Grace with "Then I Left" (W)

### **TD INDIGENOUS SONGWRITER AWARDS 2024**

- Special Distinctions: Falynn Baptiste (W)

### **2024 NATIVE AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS**

- Best Blues Recording: Trent Agecutay "Do You Wanna?"
- Best Hip Hop Recording: Jah'kota "Decolonial Love Songs"

### **THE 10TH ANNUAL JOSIE MUSIC AWARDS**

- Musician of the Year - Guitar: Nigel Bell (Nige B)

### **2024 CANADA'S GOT TALENT - SEASON 3**

#### **MAY 13/2024**

- Rebecca Strong (W)

### **CANADIAN LIVE MUSIC INDUSTRY AWARDS**

#### **JUNE 4/2024**

- Best Teamwork in a Small Arena (1000-18,500 capacity): SaskTel Centre
- Best Teamwork in a Soft Seat Theatre/Performing Arts Centre: The Broadway Theatre
- Major Festival of the Year (15,001+): SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival
- New Touring Artist of the Year: Jake Vaadeland & The Sturgeon River Boys
- Production Manager of the Year: Chad Guy
- Festival Buyer of the Year: Shannon Jisdal

### **JIM BEAM INDIES**

#### **JUNE 6/2024**

- Roots/Folk Artist of the Year: Andy Shauf

### **35TH SCMA AWARDS (WINNERS ONLY)**

#### **JUNE 24/2024**

- Group of the Year: Munro & Patrick
- Female Artist of the Year: Teagan Littlechief

- Male Artist of the Year: Jake Vaadeland
- Indigenous Artist of the Year: Teagan Littlechief
- Songwriter of the Year: "I Ain't Going Back to Nashville" by Jake Vaadeland
- Emerging Artist of the Year (TIE): Darryl Anderson
- Emerging Artist of the Year (TIE): Joshua Stumpf
- Country Album of the Year: "Exes and Friends" by Shantaia
- Alternative Country Album of the Year: "Endless Turn of Day Into Night" by Last Birds
- Video of the Year (TIE): Director – Sawyer Edworthy; Artist - Jake Vaadeland "I Ain't Going Back to Nashville"
- Video of the Year (TIE): Director – Prehistoric Productions; Artist – Justin LaBrash "Running Away"
- Interactive Artist of the Year: Jake Vaadeland
- Bass Player of the Year: Luke Hunter
- Drummer of the Year: Dusty Hunter
- Guitar Player of the Year: Terry Lasko
- Keyboard Player of the Year: Jeffery Straker
- Radio Station of the Year – Major Market: 92.9 The Bull - Saskatoon
- Radio Station of the Year Secondary Market: GX94 - Yorkton
- On Air Personality of the Year: Matt Ryan
- Music Director of the Year: Courtney Fielder
- Record Producer of the Year: Bart McKay for "Love Me Like An Outlaw" by Kalsey Kulyk
- Recording Studio of the Year: Skullcreek Studio
- Country Music Person of the Year: Bart McKay
- Music Venue of the Year: Hank's Tavern
- Music Festival of the Year: Country Thunder Saskatchewan
- Humanitarian Award: Jordyn Pollard
- National/International Artist: Jess Moskaluke
- Fans' Choice Entertainer of the Year: Hunter Brothers
- Legend and Legacy Award: Poverty Plainsmen
- Single of the Year: "What Colour You Drive" by Hunter Brothers

### **CBC SEARCHLIGHT - TOP 50 ELITE**

#### **JULY 30/2024**

- "I Don't Want It" by Elenee
- "Tears On Love Letters" by Nige B

# AWARDS

## **2024 ISSA AWARDS (INTERNATIONAL SINGER SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION)**

### **AUGUST 24/2024**

- International Male Rising Star: Nige B
- International Male Album of the Year: "U R What U R - Vol. 1 " by Nige B
- International Male Single of the Year: "Hold Your Heart (ft. Txreek)" by Nige B
- International Male Songwriter of the Year: Nige B
- International Male Emerging Artist: Nige B
- International Sound Engineer of the Year: Nige B
- International Band of the Year: Synthetik Blonde
- International Female Album of the Year: "Pieces" by Stefani Kleppe
- International Female Single of the Year: "Manic Mind" by Stefani Kleppe
- International Female Music Video of the Year: "Dreams Of You " by Stefani Kleppe
- International Female Emerging Artist: Stefani Kleppe

## **INTERCONTINENTAL MUSIC AWARDS 2024**

### **AUGUST 25/2024**

- American Roots: That's How You Country by "Jarrid Lee"
- Country: "Up On Stage" by Jarrid Lee
- Native American Music: "Let's Get Gone" by Jarrid Lee

## **CANADIAN COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS**

### **SEPTEMBER 14/2024**

- Group or Duo of the Year: Hunter Brothers

## **UNSIGNED ONLY MUSIC COMPETITION**

### **SEPTEMBER 16/2024**

- Country - Kalsey Kulyk

## **\*SASKATCHEWAN INDIGENOUS MUSIC AWARDS (WINNERS ONLY)**

### **OCTOBER 12/2024**

- Youth Award: Julianna Parenteau
- Pow Wow Drum Group of the Year: Cree Canaries
- Song of the Year: "Earthside " by Sédézë
- Emerging Artist of the Year: Nige B
- Indigenous Language Recording of the Year: "Grandparents" by Leonard Adam
- Gospel Recording of the Year "Sundance Brass" by Sundance Brass
- Instrumentalist of the Year: J.J. Lavallee
- Country/Roots Artist or Group of the Year: J.J. Lavallee

- Rock/Heavy Metal/Blues Artist or Group of the Year: Lancelot Knight
- Rap/Hip Hop/Electronic Artist or Group of the Year: Nige B
- Female Artist of the Year: Julianna Parenteau
- Male Artist of the Year: Dakota Favel
- Fan's Choice Award: Sédézë
- Willard Ahenakew Award: Rebecca Strong

## **2024 CANADIAN RADIO AWARDS**

### **DECEMBER 18/2024**

- Music Director of the Year: Courtney Rae, 106.1 The Goat - Lloydminster (W)

## **CBC TOP 100 CANADIAN SONGS OF 2024**

### **DECEMBER 18/2024**

- "Jiujitsu" by Merv xx Gotti
- "Need Nothing" by Katie Tupper

## **SASKATCHEWAN MUSIC AWARDS**

### **MARCH 2/2025**

- See information above under Promotion (pg. 16)

## **2025 JUNO AWARDS**

### **MARCH 30/2025**

- Traditional Roots Album of the Year: "Retro Man ... More and More" by Jake Vaadeland (W)
- Contemporary Christian/Gospel Album of the Year: "Elenee" by Elenee

# ALBUMS & EPS

SaskMusic attempts to track all albums and EPs being publicly released by Saskatchewan artists, for promotional, statistical, and historical reference. This list of albums released between April 1/24-March 31/25, as researched by SaskMusic, includes projects that are at least 25 minutes in length, OR at least 5 tracks + longer than 18 minutes in length.

If we are missing someone, please let us know!

*No affiliation or endorsement between the artists and SaskMusic is implied.*

ADAM BEITEL	Until the Sun Erupts	DAN CUGNET	steal the shade
ADAM JOHNSON	For The Record	DARKSOL	A Fortress in Memory
AETHER'S RIFT	Eclipsed by Infinity	DEAD SHIT EARTH	Self Annihilation Prophecy
ALEXIS NORMAND	Empreintes	DEL SUELO	Quench
ALYSSA JOHNSON	Beginnings	DREN	Safrez Instrumentals
ANNETTE CAMPAGNE	Creation Canvas- A Light Language Odyssey	DREYSPURPO	Life Love Melancholy
ARIANA GIROUX	Death & Rebirth	DUMP BABES	Known Liar
AUTOPILOT	Here Comes the Pressure	DYELLE	Therapy Session Vol.1
BANASTRONAUT	Liminal Spaceman	EEKWOL	TMRWS
BEACH BODY	Count Every Bird	ELDER COLOSSUS	I - V Alive
BEAU NECTAR	Two Lips DELUXE	ELENEE	Elenee
BERK JODOIN	Fly Away	EMMA AMBER	demolitious (volume three)
BIG TONES	Existence	ENDERBYL	ive from the Backyard
BIRTHDAY CAKE TREBUCHET	Sweet Teeth	ÉTIENNE FLETCHER	Kauai O'o
BITBITBIT	Sounds of Sunnyside	EVAN BAXTER	My Waste of Time
BLACK THUNDER	Good Batch	FACTOR CHANDELIER	Cold, Cold World
BLUE FANTASY	Dial Straight Through To My Heart	FALYNN BAPTISTE	Cree Songs for Children
BLUE LIGHT VALLEY	Blue Light Valley	FAME FATALE	Darkest Hour
BLUTO THE BARBARIAN	the factory	FATALFLAW.	DUNGEON CRAWLING (fatalflaw. x Couini)
BONFIRE MOON	Watch It Burn	FATALFLAW.	fatalflaw.
BRAD PROUDLOVE	Nuisance Ground	FATALFLAW.	Proper Songs
BREAD JONES	Wave 8	FATALFLAW.	TAKETHEPOWERBACK!
BRIAN PAUL DG	On Our Own Together (Act 3 of 3)	FATALFLAW.	WILLPOWER
BRIAN WARREN	Torrents of Spring Reverb	FATALFLAW. & RORYSRACINGCAR	NIGHT OWLS
BTHEGHOST	Catching the Frog	FRANCIS DIXON	Life God Faith
BURNING PALLETS	Vol. 1 - (Extended Cut)	FUX	WRDNRD
CARLTON LARSEN	Teotihuacan	GLASS HAND FAMILY BAND, THE	Live at the Black Cat Tavern
CHESTERFIELD	Infinite Expanse and Raccoon	GLENN SUTTER	Truth and Lies
CORNER HOTEL (THE)	In	GO BWAH	Nü Wave
CORNER HOTEL (THE)	Us birds of fire	GREG ORRÉ	I Am In It, Raw
CORPSE FIGHTER	The Great Noise	GREG ORRÉ	I Am In It, Vol. 2
CROOKEDFOOT	The Adventurous Road	HARVEYDENT	4Life
CROWVENN	Rebirth	HAUNT ERA	Psychic Honey
DAN CUGNET	Stagecoach to Alpha Centauri	HEAVNSNT	hiveofdeath (deluxe)
		HEAVON	BrainWave
		HIRCINE	A Crown of Wildflowers
		HIRCINE	Luna & the Light
		HOLLOW OAX	Another Dose
		IBECOMETHEWICKED	Temperance
		JAKE VAADELAND	Retro Man...More And More (Expanded Edition)
		JEFFERY STRAKER	Great Big Sky

# ALBUMS & EPS

JESSE BROWN	In the Deep	RESPECTFULCHILDREN	藥
JULIE ELLA	Awake After Midnight	RICHARD O. BURDICK CD78:	Beethoven & Reicha arranged for natural & valves horns.
KALE	BrainWave	RICHARD O. BURDICK CD92:	Victor Ewald Four Brass Quintets
K-ANTHONY	MIRACLES	RICHARD O. BURDICK	Symphony for Timpani, Brass and a Couple Other Musicians, Op. 333
KAT THOME	A Heart Place	RICHY ROY	The Royal
KATELYN LEHNER	Dirt Road Dancing	RIPPER AND THE JESSES	Kyle
KRISTJAN EASTMAN	Power Man and Astro Girl	ROEM	LLDP
LAND SKAP	Pass	SĚDĚZĚ	Redlines
LANDFALL	A Short Hike to the Badlands	SHEEPDOGS, THE	Hell Together
LONDON JORGENSON	Steered Weird - Original Soundtrack	SHEEPDOGS, THE	Paradise Alone
LITTLE DARKNESS	Little Darkness	SKIP JR. CAMPBELL	Nuvenusians
LOVA LAMP	Extensions of You	SKIZZA & AK PRODUCTIONS	Summer League
LYLE DIGITAL	The Game	SKYDEVXYZ	GIZMOLOGIES
MARY LIV	Hello There	SPOOKYMADEIT	NOT AN ARTIST* DELUXE
MERKZ	handful of songs	SYNTHETIK BLONDE	Dark Side of Your Love
MIGHTY RHINO & SKIZZA, THE	northernflavalisticmetropassmuzik	TENILLE ARTS	To Be Honest
MORDICHIA	Ley Lines	TRACY WATERS	Who The Fuck Is Tracy?
MORDICHIA	MSTR-LP	UPLIFT DUO, THE	The Hope of Christmas
MORGAN MOATS	Looking For	VC VIBES	The Power to Break
MORGAN ROBERTSON	Eighteen	VELVET THREADS	Sunday's Best
MZ. MUZIK	Growls & Giggles	VERMICULITES, THE	Here At The End Of All Things
N4K3D D1G1TS	00110000	VIKTOR VON VULGAR	OK,GREAT
NICKELTREE	The Long Drop	WASTED CATHEDRAL	MONDAY MORNING FALLING DOWN
NIGE B	U R WHAT U R -, Vol. 2	WOLF WILLOW	Soul of Slippery Butte
NYLE SEGOVIA	catharsis	WORKPRINT	Non-Fantastical Western
PATRICK CORMACK & MATTHEW MARTIN	The Legend of Coughing Cuthbert's Treasure	YARBO	Husband
PATRICK HARDY	elsewhere	ZAYD	Deceit and Desecrate
PATRICK HARDY	tiny	ZOCHI	Afrikaanman Fairytale (AFT)
PATRICK MOON BIRD	A Sweet Smell		
PAUL KUZBIK	The Miracle Of Being		
PAULINA SALISBURY	Flame		
PAULINA SALISBURY	Flame - Instrumentals		
PIMPTON	Kcmkv3		
PLAYGROUNDS AT NIGHT	The Call To Maybe Reach You		
POP POP VERNAC	A Cold Beer and a Couple of Grapes		
PROMISED LAND BAND, THE	Pictures		
PYTHONIC	EP1		
QUIET AMITY	Suicide Rocket		
RADIANT, THE	Table 3		
RAVEN REID	Waiting for Change		

In SaskMusic's current Strategic Plan, the first key action is to ensure that the promotion of the Saskatchewan music industry is effective in raising awareness of the talent and capacity of the industry locally, nationally and internationally.

## MARKET PREPARATION AND ANALYSIS

One of our core beliefs is that Saskatchewan's music industry has the capability (talent level) to succeed on a global scale if supported with sufficient marketing resources. Thus, a key objective is "To assist in the development and promotion of Saskatchewan commercial musical artists and the commercial music industry on a provincial, national and international level."

Our market access and development plan positions Saskatchewan music industry professionals in the national and international marketplace. SaskMusic staff, and artist-members who we present or support in their showcase activities, attend and market the Sask industry.

Presenting events in different markets to key industry representatives creates new business opportunities for Saskatchewan artists and their creative products, which may include label or agency deals, live performance opportunities, and licensing deals. The events support a foundation to establish and/or develop contacts and partners in these regions to further develop future Saskatchewan exports.

In a now-global industry, artist analytics are now viewed on more of a global basis (i.e. worldwide streaming numbers) than ever before. Our province has established a strong reputation at many international events, with numerous 'breaking through' in recent years.

Our export strategy aims to maintain strong market presence while exploring new opportunities. We remain adaptable to developments and add or replace market events as is practical, and as the effectiveness/success of events fluctuates over time.

Nearly all of our individual export missions involve partners, either with the presenting organization itself or as we present a multi-partnered showcase (such as working with other provincial music industry associations). In this case we work together to market/pitch our activities at the event and share presentation costs.

## BIRDS-EYE NOTES

SaskMusic selects our priority export events at the beginning of each fiscal year, based on experiences with those events in previous years along with trialing of new markets and/or new elements at established events, while leaving a buffer for potential support where Sask. artists are presented with opportunities at additional events not on our priority list for the year.

These events are also based on discussion with our counterparts across Canada and partnership opportunities. We distribute information on recognized showcase opportunities to our mailing list and provide consultations to artists looking into appropriate export markets/events for their career goals. In many cases, artists will be accepted into national or international events where SaskMusic will not have an investment or attendance.

Artists interested in pursuing export markets, domestically or internationally, are encouraged to contact us to discuss strategies and make us aware they are actively seeking opportunities. Even if we aren't scheduled to attend an event, we may be able to help support their activities, provide connections or direct you towards appropriate grants and more.

We are seeking to build out additional export supports this year.

In most cases, artist showcase selections are made by the main presenting organizer. For CIMA events/partnered showcases, there is generally an independent jury/committee making the selections. We avoid jurying Sask artist export showcase applications to maintain impartiality. You will see notes on how artists were selected on each export mission for transparency.

We have observed in numerous years that an artist will perform at one showcase and be seen there by another showcase organizer who then books the artist for their event, and this can continue on likewise through multiple events. Thus it often happens organically (and makes sense) that one artist may be selected for many events in a year. This is not something within SaskMusic's control - although it may seem unfair to those who are not selected for these events

Our goals, beliefs, and objectives have led to the development of an extensive market access and development plan to position Saskatchewan music industry professionals in the national and international marketplace.

For more than a decade, SaskMusic representatives have attended and participated in events to research and determine what events and markets are best suited for development of Sask. artists and our industry. SaskMusic uses the following criteria in selecting market development events:

1. Market Access: Are these markets open to doing business with Saskatchewan artists; are there opportunities for artists to build teams and tour in these regions?
2. Organizational capacity of the event: How administratively effective and legitimate is the event; does the event create an atmosphere to help artists enhance their business by networking to create new opportunities?
3. Partnerships and Key Contacts: What events and organizations are the most productive to work with? Will the potential partnerships work to create opportunities that will assist SaskMusic to develop the Saskatchewan commercial music industry?
4. Promotional Strategy: Does the event provide an opportunity to enhance SaskMusic's brand, and is there visibility at the event to effectively promote Saskatchewan artists.

Utilizing the above-noted variables and accessing its corporate experience derived over the past several years, SaskMusic chooses which events to focus on as part of our market development strategy. The purpose of this program is to expand the reach and export markets of Saskatchewan music-based cultural products.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

1. To expand the reach and commercialization in export markets of Saskatchewan music-based creative products.
2. To develop partnerships and relationships with industry in export markets.
3. Professional development and increased export readiness.

## EXPORT MISSIONS THIS FISCAL

*The following are descriptions of projects undertaken by or supported by SaskMusic in this fiscal. We participate in select strategic domestic and international events where there is potential for our artists to grow their markets.*

**SaskMusic's export activities are made possible by Creative Saskatchewan and The Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings (FACTOR).**

### THE GREAT ESCAPE FESTIVAL & CONFERENCE (TGE)

**MAY 14/2024, PRE-TGE SHOWCASE, LONDON UK**

**MAY 15-18/2024, BRIGHTON UK**

[www.greatescapefestival.com/](http://www.greatescapefestival.com/)

SaskMusic and Saskatchewan artists **Jake Vaadeland and the Sturgeon River Boys** and **Marissa Burwell** attended TGE this year with official showcase invitations, as well as attending our industry showcase in London en route to TGE.

SaskMusic's Export Manager Kaelen Klypak was on the ground participating in B2B meetings, roundtable discussions, and facilitating connections on behalf of the Saskatchewan music industry. This is one of the premium international showcases that we participate in, with over 500 bands performing and 3000+ music industry in attendance. The festival is walkable, with lots of buzz around the bands performing, and venues are small (on average 200-300 capacity) so shows feel well-attended and engaged. Multiple countries such as Scotland, Australia, Spain, Japan, Italy, Morocco, etc host their own networking receptions or events.

Prior to the event, SaskMusic met with the artists and arranged for mentorship on the UK industry with Enki Music through our Next Wave program. On May 14, with local assistance from our export consultant/strategists Enki Music, and in partnership with music industry associations the Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA), Music Ontario, Music BC, Music Nova Scotia, Manitoba Music, Alberta Music, and Quebec Creates, we presented 14 Canadian artists on 3 stages for a pre-TGE showcase and networking event at the historic Strongroom Studios (Curtain Road, London), from 4-11:30pm.

Performers for this event included Aysanabee, Begonia, Desiree Dawson, Fold Paper, **Jake Vaadeland & the Sturgeon River Boys**, Kuzi Cee, Marissa Burwell, Nicole Ariana, Nyssa, Soran, St. Arnaud, Vox Rea, Winona Forever, and Witch Prophet. Having conducted this pre-event over several TGE missions, we find it's an excellent more intimate event leading up to the chaotic TGE.

The purpose of this pre-event is to give SaskMusic and our artists face time connecting with London industry members, and it showcases our artists without the competition of 500 other bands. During one-on-one speed meetings prior to the performances, each province gets their own table to meet with UK Industry, exchange contacts and do a pitch. **Grimelda** was able to join in on this event while on tour in the UK. Our two Sask performers were very well received and played to packed rooms.

Then from May 15-18, SaskMusic took part in The Great Escape in Brighton. TGE is described as "the UK's premier new music and industry gathering, where sectors from the entire UK music industry come to network," showcasing 500 emerging artists from all over the world in over 30 walkable venues across Brighton, UK, plus a pop-up festival site on Brighton Beach.

Working in partnership with Canadian music industry partners such as CIMA, Alberta Music, M for Montreal, Manitoba Music, Music BC, Music Nova Scotia, MusicOntario, and SODEC under the established Canada House brand, with logistical support from Enki Music, SaskMusic networked and represented Saskatchewan music at international meetings and events, as well as taking in international industry discussion topics during the conference. CIMA helped facilitate entry into international music markets by working closely with key personnel from the Canadian music scene and enabling international export and import opportunities. 18 Canadian artists were selected for Canada House performances over 3 days (May 16-18) at venue The Green Door Store.

Artists performing at Canada House included Aysanabee, Begonia, Bon Enfant, Corridor, Desirée Dawson, Fold Paper, Haviah Mighty, Jake Vaadeland & the Sturgeon River Boys, Kuzi Cee, Maggie Andrew, Marissa Burwell, Moira & Claire, NYSSA, Soran, St.Arnaud, Vox Rea, Winona Forever, and Witch Prophet. Sask's **Ellen Froese** also had representation at TGE as they were in the UK for a Focus Wales showcase (and had performed at TGE in a prior year).

Enki Music does a great job in organizing Canada House, and also assist us and our artists with introductions to new industry members that they have invited. The venue is continuously packed during TGE.

Canada House artists also get a second official play at another festival venue. **Jake Vaadeland** also received a further booking to close out an additional venue as a headliner, with great coverage resulting.

TGE represents SaskMusic's primary market development event for the UK market, consisting of business to business networking events, an industry conference with key international music topics, and artist showcases.

"The team at Sask Music provided incredible support for our mission to grow our artist's career in the United Kingdom. They worked hard to facilitate important and effective introductions, provided relevant advance information on the territory, and provided great showcase and performance venues and opportunities. The result has been a strong increase in show offers, market interest within the territory, and critical revenue development that contributes to our overall global strategy." – Jake Vaadeland's team.

Our participation in this event was made possible through support from Creative Saskatchewan and FACTOR Canada.

### SLED ISLAND - CFCR/CJTR/SASMUSIC SHOWCASE

**JUNE 21/2024, CALGARY AB**

CFCR Saskatoon Community Radio presented their 12th Annual Sled Island Music & Arts Festival showcase, "Peace from One Province East" with support from SaskMusic. Sled Island is considered a tastemaker in the Canadian festival landscape and frequented by talent buyers and other music industry professionals looking for new music.

Taking place at Modern Love on June 21, 2-6 pm, this year featured two Saskatoon and two Regina artists: **Pop Pop Vernac**, **TOVA**, **respectfulchild**, and **Man Meat**.

Since 2007, Sled Island's thoughtful, eclectic programming and independent spirit have produced a one-of-a-kind festival experience. Each June, the five-day music and arts festival brings together a community of music, comedy and art as well as nearly 30,000 attendees across multiple venues, earning rave reviews from attendees, artists and media across the globe. "

“Since 2007, Sled Island has long been a Canadian music festival favourite for its eclectic programming, and 2024’s edition is no exception.” - Exclaim!

Artists for this event were selected by CFCR & CJTR. Our participation in this event was made possible through support from Creative Saskatchewan.

## COUNTRY MUSIC WEEK

**SEPTEMBER 15-19/2024, EDMONTON AB**

[www.ccma.org](http://www.ccma.org)

SaskMusic and numerous Saskatchewan artists and industry members attended Country Music Week in Edmonton. Staff Lorena Kelly and Rooky Jegede were on the ground to take part in educational panels, networking events, and represent the Saskatchewan music industry.

Country Music Week began in 1977 as an annual event created to heighten awareness and increase exposure for Canada’s country music artists. Today, Country Music Week is made up of three components: a music festival, which includes CCMA Fan Village, a Songwriters’ Series, talent showcases, FanFest, and the Legends Show; the CCMA Awards Show, which is a two-hour live, television special highlighting a year in country music; and an industry conference which allows the Canadian country music industry to honour those working behind the scenes via educational workshops and seminars, networking receptions, awards ceremonies and much more. Throughout the event there are also seemingly endless private networking and showcase events.

Saskatchewan artists performed throughout the week in numerous official and unofficial events. SaskMusic partnering on two showcase events:

September 13 with the Saskatchewan Country Music Association, at Delta Hotels Edmonton Centre, District 102 (Restaurant) and September 14 as part of the CCMA Country Crawl (a free official series held in various venues throughout Edmonton from Sept 10-14), with the Saskatchewan Country Music Association, Manitoba Country Music Association, and Manitoba Music, also at district 102. This showcase had support from the 2024 CCMA Host Organizing Committee, the City of Edmonton, Explore Edmonton, the Government of Alberta, and Bird Creatives’ Community Conduit, powered by Stagehand. Sask artists in these included **Evan Baxter, Kateryna Grace, Karissa Hoffart, Katelyn Lehner, Darryl Anderson, Adam Johnson, Brock Andrews, Bruin, Jordyn Pollard, Miles Canyon, and Teagan Littlechief**. From MB, Austin Ryder, Banned & Outlawed, Brandi Vezina, Desiree Dorion, Emma Peterson, Kendra Kay, Ryan Keown, and Sean Taylor.

Other official CCMA appearances for artists included other Country Crawl dates (**Justin Labrash, Teagan Littlechief, Jordyn Pollard, Kateryna Grace**), CCMA House and CCMA Pre-Show (**Jess Moskaluke**) and CCMA Songwriters Showcase (**Shantaia**).

This year’s Sask. CCMA award nominees were:

- Hunter Brothers - Group or Duo of the Year
- CJGX-FM (Yorkton) - Radio Station of the Year (Medium or Small Market)
- Jess Moskaluke’s Winter Wonderland Radio Special (Gunfighter Productions) - Country Music Program or Special of the Year

Our participation in this event was made possible through support from Creative Saskatchewan.

## AMERICANAFEST

**SEPTEMBER 17-21/2024, NASHVILLE TN**

[www.americanamusic.org](http://www.americanamusic.org)

Two Sask. artists **Ellen Froese** and **Jeffery Straker** performed for the Canada House showcase at AmericanaFest 2024. SaskMusic partnered with colleagues the Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA), Alberta Music, Manitoba Music, Music Nova Scotia and MusicOntario to present this event for Canadian companies and their artists. The AMERICANAFEST conference and festival gathers thousands of artists, fans, and industry professionals for five days of celebration through seminars, panels, networking opportunities, showcases and more each year, and Canada House has been part of it annually for many years.

Canada House took place September 20 from 11:30AM-5:15PM at InDo in Nashville, and was open to both AmericanaFest conference delegates and the general public. The lineup included Desiree Dorion, **Ellen Froese**, Mariya Stokes, Chad Price, Jade Turner, Elyse Aeryn, **Jeffery Straker**, Angeliq Francis, and Noeline Hofmann.

Held in the key music industry centre of Nashville, the event draws masses of international industry professionals and fans (an estimated 10,000-15,000), but can also pose challenging with in the sheer amount of artists (200+) showcasing. While SaskMusic staff did not attend this year’s event, we sponsored the presentation costs of the two Sask artists in Canada House.

This is an event that we scrutinize each year to determine if costs and returned impact are worthwhile. We do plan to take a break from supporting and attending it in its 2025 presentation.

Artist selections: A call for submissions for Canada House spots was run by CIMA, and juried by AmericanaFest, through which process the two Sask artists were selected. Note: AmericanaFest also runs a separate official showcase submission process each year to curate their official showcase artists.

The Americana Music Association® works closely with those in our industry, whether artists, labels, radio stations, retailers, print media, festivals, agents, publishers, etc. to help organize and build the infrastructure necessary for (the Americana) genre to achieve success both creatively and financially. To that end they host AMERICANAFEST (the annual Americana Music Festival & Conference), publish the weekly Americana Airplay Chart, produce the annual Americana Honors & Awards show, participate in other industry events and conferences, send member newsletters and marketing materials, conduct research about our industry and consumers, work to increase Americana’s profile and serve as an advocate on behalf of the Americana community. The Americana Music Association® works behind the scenes within the music industry to foster an environment for growth: building infrastructure, creating networking opportunities, and establishing channels that allow professional entities to work effectively and efficiently.

Our participation in this event was made possible through support from Creative Saskatchewan.

## REEPERBAHN FESTIVAL & CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 18-21/2024, HAMBURG GERMANY

[www.reeperbahnfestival.com/en](http://www.reeperbahnfestival.com/en)

Reeperbahn is one of the leading international showcases for emerging artists. Over 600 international bands participate and 3500 industry delegates attend the festival. Reeperbahn provides an innovative music conference for professional development, multiple networking events, and a place for artists and industry to share ideas and connect. Along with The Great Escape, Reeperbahn serves as a key gateway for Canadian artists to break into the European market. Participation in this event helps artists build international teams and unlock new touring opportunities.

SaskMusic was pleased to be a partner in presenting Canada House at the renowned UWE venue, coordinated by the Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA) and presented in partnership with Alberta Music, Manitoba Music, M for Montreal, Music BC, MusicOntario/Ontario Creates, Music New Brunswick, Music PEI, Paper Bag Records and Quebec Creates/SODEC.

The Saskatchewan artists selected by Reeperbahn for this official showcase were **Grimelda** and **Katie Tupper**, joining 22 other artists in the Canada House delegation.

Leading into Reeperbahn, SaskMusic Export Manager Kaelen Klypak consulted with the artists/teams and participated in German Market seminars. Kaelen was then on the ground participating in pre-Reeperbahn business events at the Canadian Embassy in Berlin on September 16.

These include business-to-business meetings, a networking reception, and roundtable discussions between German and Canadian delegates, with topics including sync, live touring, radio, marketing, promotions, and publishing. This event included structured networking sessions followed by a panel discussion featuring German industry leaders, focused on strategies for breaking into the local market. Berlin's strong music industry infrastructure makes these events essential for building connections ahead of the Reeperbahn Festival. In addition to the organized activities, SaskMusic also arranges its own targeted meetings in Berlin to further promote and pitch our export-ready artists.

Then through Reeperbahn itself, we supported and represented Saskatchewan artists, strengthened industry connections, and bridged gaps between markets through strategic relationship-building at multiple networking sessions and label mixers, including at Canada House.

The full Canada House lineup included: Tara MacLean, Shaela Miller, Devarrow, Housewife, Ammoye, Spooky Ruben, Dominique Fils-Aimé, Bibi Club, Yoo Doo Right, DVTR, Hotel Mira, **Grimelda**, Bleeker, Aysanabee, Logan Richard, Pallmer, Jesse Roper, **Katie Tupper**, Sebastian Gaskin, Slow Spirit, Ila Barker, Super Duty Tough Work, Altered By Mom, Cadence Weapon.

Artist selections: A call for artist submissions was made by Reeperbahn for official showcases and by CIMA for those interested in performing at Canada House. Reeperbahn selected artists for their festival - including those playing Canada House - through their own curation processes. SaskMusic is sponsoring the showcase presentation costs of the Sask artists who were selected for Canada House, but was not involved in the selection process.

Our participation in this event was made possible through support from Creative Saskatchewan and FACTOR Canada.

"Reeperbahn, through the support from SaskMusic, and the associated

travel in Berlin for further business meetings and connections was a great opportunity for myself and Katie Tupper's business growth in the market. We were able to finally meet and confirm several key partners in her touring business, and make connections for furthering her music around the world." – Bled Celhyka, Arts & Crafts

## BREAKOUT WEST/ WESTERN CANADIAN MUSIC AWARDS

SEPTEMBER 25-29, 2024, SASKATOON, SK

[www.breakoutwest.ca](http://www.breakoutwest.ca)

In its 22nd year, BreakOut West continues to develop, support and honour the best of Western Canadian music, with its annual conference, festival and the Western Canadian Music Awards. BreakOut West 2024 kicked off September 25 with the start of its five-day career development conference and international industry program. Offering immersive content, international market deep dives, one-on-one mentor meetings, workshops and more, the conference is a landmark event for both artists and industry alike, looking to gain insight into the ever-changing musical landscape, and make invaluable connections. Featuring the best in emerging talent from across Western Canada, as well as select international and Pan-Canadian acts, the 2024 music festival included 50+ artists performing at multiple venues across the host city.

Being in our home province this year, SaskMusic sent most of our staff and several board members to attend.

During BOW we also co-presented with Germany's DevilDuck Records an unofficial showcase on September 27, featuring **Marissa Burwell** and **Gunner and Smith** alongside Germany's Wisent. (DevilDuck is a past collaborator of ours, having helped us present events likewise in Germany for Sask artists.)

The nominees from Saskatchewan:

- Francophone Artist of the Year: **Alexis Normand** and **Beau Nectar**
- Global Artist of the Year: **Rooky Kamiz** (winner)
- Instrumental Artist of the Year: **West of Mabou**
- Roots Artist of the Year: **Jake Vaadeland** (winner) and **The Dead South**
- Video Director of the Year (Sponsored by Manitoba Film & Music): **Amy Mantyka - Beau Nectar "Two Lips"**
- Community Excellence Award: **Community Arts Mentorship Program (CAMP)** (winner)
- Heritage Award: **Zandra Kaszas** (winner)
- Kevin Walters Industry Builder Award: **Amigo's Cantina** (winner)

BreakOut West showcasing SK artists: **Autopilot, Beau Nectar, Dump Babes, Grimelda, Last Birds, Marissa Burwell, Merv xx Gotti, okimaw, Rooky Kamiz, The Garrys, The Radiant, TOVA,** and **Vikki Minor**.

BreakOut West is presented by The Western Canadian Music Alliance, an organization created by the music industry associations of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, The Northwest Territories, and the Yukon Territory to promote and celebrate western Canadian music. Every year the event is held in a different western Canadian city on a rotational basis.

Our participation in this event was made possible through support from Creative Saskatchewan.

## M FOR MONTREAL

**NOVEMBER 20-23/2024, MONTREAL QC**

[www.mpourmontreal.com/en/](http://www.mpourmontreal.com/en/)

SaskMusic returned to the renowned music industry event M for Montreal, presenting Saskatchewan artists **Grimelda** and **Merv xx Gotti** in official showcases. The artists were selected by M for Montreal organizers through M's official artist intake process, and their showcase appearances are sponsored by SaskMusic.

Our Export Manager Kaelen Klypak was on the ground participating in networking, business-to-business, and educational events while supporting our artists and representing the Saskatchewan music industry.

We were also pleased to co-present the "ALL TOGETHER NOW" networking dinner with partners under the BreakOut West banner. This curated industry mixer (November 21) for 150 delegates and our artists is becoming a highly anticipated piece of our presence at M, and the perfect time for industry and artists to gather with old friends and meet new ones.

"Established in 2006, M for Montreal is now recognized as Quebec's most important initiative for indie music exports. It is renowned as a showcase festival and international conference, taking place in November, as well as for its recurring satellite events in the main music markets around the world, M for Montreal orchestrates pivotal windows of opportunity for artists as well as essential business development rendez-vous for the local and international music industry."

We find this boutique event one of the best in North America for networking, building connections, and showcasing for our artists. Our artists participate in the official programming lineup at M for Montreal which means that they perform to all delegates in attendance with no competing events happening at the same time, and achieve consistently great outcomes. This year 529 delegates attended, including 159 international delegates curated by organizers from 20 different countries. Staff participated in music supervisor one-on-one meetings and delegate one-on-one meetings and took in the informative conference.

Our participation in this event was made possible through support from Creative Saskatchewan and FACTOR Canada.

"M for Montreal is my favourite showcase festival in the east, perfectly curated and executed immaculately, (with) intimate and finely crafted spaces for artists to connect with industry and industry with each other. It is essential for SK artists to play and attend M for Montreal." – Merv xx Gotti

"This was one of the best showcases we've been a part of. Curation focuses on interesting, high-quality music and industry delegates are encouraged to really connect and enjoy themselves. This created a consistent vibe that was exciting and welcoming." – Grimelda

## COME TOGETHER

**NOVEMBER 25-26/2024, TORONTO ON**

S Artists and industry professionals from across Canada converged in Toronto for the fourth annual celebration of live music at the Come Together showcases, educational presentations and industry meetings. Eight music industry associations - SaskMusic, Alberta Music, Music BC, Manitoba Music, Music/Musique NB, Music Nova Scotia, Music Ontario, and SODEC, Quebec - joined forces to spotlight Canada's powerhouse independent live music scene. SaskMusic's Kaelen Klypak and Lorena Kelly were in attendance.

On November 25 everyone gathered at ArtHaus for a welcome from Knowledge Keeper Kim Wheatley, followed by "Building Your Live Strategy and Developing International Markets" Presentation & Discussion with Liam Killeen (CMI), a Publishing, Sync, and Music Supervision Panel

"Since Toronto is at the heart of Canada's music industry, it is essential for SK artists to perform at Come Together if wishing to connect with Toronto's music scenes." – Merv xx Gotti

## NEXT WAVE UK/EU EXPORT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

### WINTER 2025 COHORT

**NEXT WAVE**, offered by SaskMusic in partnership with ENKI Music (UK), is intended to help Saskatchewan export-ready artists with knowledge, strategies, and resources to develop and accelerate their careers internationally, primarily in the EU/UK market.

After a successful spring 2024 cohort, we opened up space to run a further 5 applicants through the program. Two were automatically put into the program as showcasers at the upcoming The Great Escape Festival – **Grimelda** and **Dump Babes**. Three more were selected by SaskMusic with input from ENKI: **Ella Forrest**, **Adeola SMD**, and **Big Tones**.

Enki Music is committed to helping musicians cultivate business connections and develop strategy for future development in the UK market. The key outcomes of this program were to consult with artists who are at a pivotal point in their career to better understand their options, workshop a campaign strategy, and develop in-market infrastructure, including individual mentorship sessions with industry professionals.

The programme first involved a practical, hands on workshop to understand the needs and ambitions of the participants. Enki Music then identified key 'in market' music industry professionals and coordinated introductions and responsibilities in order to work with the artists through a short mentorship, consisting of one-on-one feedback sessions. Enki Music provided an overview and evaluation of their development that includes further suggestions for business development & other export opportunities. They were also sent a bespoke campaign planner with action points, mentor feedback and received a social media review. Key points and realistic actions for the artists to work towards were developed within the programme.

The program was very well received by the participating artists and was a good opportunity for them to create solid plans for their export journeys. Enki Music will also be available to the artists to provide connections when/if they proceed to make plans to perform and market themselves in the UK.

This program activity was made possible through support from Creative Saskatchewan and FACTOR Canada.

## FOLK ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL

**February 19-23/2025, Montreal QC**

<https://www.folk.org/>

SaskMusic and Saskatchewan showcasing artists **Alexis Normand**, **Eliza Mary Doyle**, **Berk Jodoin**, **Lancelot Knight**, **The North Sound** and **Raven Reid** attended the annual Folk Alliance International Conference, February 19-23, 2025 at the Le Centre Sheraton Montreal Hotel, Montreal, Quebec. The 37th annual conference provides the world's largest gathering point for folk music artists and industry from around the world, with an estimated attendance this year of 2,400 delegates from 46 countries. The event en-

compasses a wide array of genres including Appalachian, Americana, Blues, Bluegrass, Celtic, Cajun, Global Roots, Hip-Hop, Old-Time, Singer-Songwriter, Spoken Word, Traditional, Zydeco, and various fusions." Typically held in Kansas City MO, the event shifts location once every five years, so this year was a great opportunity to attend it while in our own country.

During the day, FAI conference panels cover relevant industry topics, along with networking and peer gatherings for agents, labels, festivals, and artists, speed meetings, artist mentorship meetings, and Affinity Group sessions for communities like BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, Women, Folks 55+ Folks with Disabilities, and more. In the evenings, Official showcases present an event-curated selection of artists chosen from thousands of international submissions, while Private showcases turn hotel rooms into tiny music venues, with presenters from around the world offering their curated selection of artists in an intimate, acoustic setting.

For this year's conference, SaskMusic partnered with Alberta Music and Manitoba Music under the "Prairie Export" banner to sponsor an official showcase stage on Saturday February 22 at Salon 4/5 Level 2. Marketing for our event included on-site signage such as branding wraps on elevator doors. **Alexis Normand, Eliza Mary Doyle, and The North Sound** were selected for Official Showcases by Folk Alliance International through the organization's own submission process for this opportunity.

While attending, SaskMusic staff member Ben Valiaho supported our Sask artists in their showcases, attended many conference panels and events, and conducted networking on behalf of the Sask music industry. Dozens of great connections were made by both our staff and the artists, with their Country Connection one-on-ones and 'Meet the Folk DJ' speed dating events found to be particularly beneficial.

Sask artists also applied for and received numerous private showcase spots with various presenters – that list can be found here: <https://www.saskmusic.org/news/the-latest/view/article/7642/saskatchewan-artists-at-folk-alliance-international-2025>.

The Annual Folk Alliance International Conference is the largest gathering of folk musicians and music industry professionals in the world. This is an experience like no other. Music is around every corner. Legends, rising stars, and industry innovators share career-boosting insights. This year's event featured artists and industry representation from Australia, Burkina Faso, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, England, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Lithuania, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Northern Turtle Island, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Trinidad/Tobago, Turkey, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Wales. The Official Showcase lineup featured 183 artists from 46 countries showcasing the music of various genres including bluegrass, blues, Americana, Celtic, global roots, and more.

Navigating the labyrinth of hotel rooms that hosts the private Showcases is always a joyous way for attendees to discover new talents from around the globe. This year continued this time-honoured portion of conference programming with 80 private showcase hosts, 715 private showcase artists, and 2,532 private showcases.

Our participation in this event was made possible through support from Creative Saskatchewan.

"Being able to have the support of SaskMusic on the ground in Montreal during (FAI) really brought a sense of community, stability and stress relief

for myself during the event. I could count on them to be promoting my showcases and material, and to be in attendance during my performances. In a sea of strangers, it was beautiful to have a community surrounding me, it made a world of difference to the confidence I brought to the shows, and a calmness to the event." – Eliza Doyle

## JUNO Awards

**March 28-30/2025, Vancouver BC**

[www.junoawards.ca/](http://www.junoawards.ca/)

Export Manager Kaelen Klypak attended 2025 JUNO Awards events to network and represent Saskatchewan on the ground. It was a great time to reconnect with colleagues from across Canada and we were proud to be present to see two artists recognized with JUNO Award nominations: Elenee, nominated in Contemporary Christian/Gospel Album of the Year, and Jake Vaadeland, nominated in Traditional Roots Album of the Year. Jake and crew were awarded the win for "Retro Man...More and More (Expanded Edition)". Performing in JUNOFest official shows this year were **Ellen Froese, Grimelda, and Jake Vaadeland and the Sturgeon River Boys**.

Once again this year, SaskMusic offered bursaries to help offset the costs of JUNO submissions for artists, in an effort to raise engagement with the awards.

More than an awards show, this year's JUNO Awards cycle celebrated Canada's diverse musical culture with over 220 performers across more than 50 live experiences. Marquee events included the 2025 JUNO Awards Gala presented by Music Canada, and The Road To The JUNOS series and the JUNO Songwriters' Circle presented by FACTOR & SOCAN in association with Music Publishers Canada, created memorable experiences for emerging artists and fans alike. The road to The JUNOS for Canadian artists starts with their nomination, and this year's Awards celebrated 208 Nominees across 46 categories. New voices were front and centre with 67 first-time nominees including 17 winners. During JUNO weekend, JUNOFest presents Canadian artists while labels and music industry companies present multitudes of private showcase and networking events.

SaskMusic is the provincial rep of CARAS, The Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, a not-for-profit organization created to preserve and enhance the Canadian music industry and promote higher artistic and industry standards. CARAS' mandate is comprised of four key pillars: Educate through our music education charity, MusiCounts, programs and initiatives; Develop emerging artists through mentorship and development programs; Celebrate Canadian artists with year-round JUNO Awards showcasing; and Honour music industry icons through the Canadian Music Hall of Fame. The 54th annual JUNO Awards Broadcast took place in Vancouver at Rogers Arena on Sunday, March 30, 2025.

# EDUCATION

SaskMusic's educational activities are made possible by Creative Saskatchewan and the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings (FACTOR). We are grateful for their support!

## WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS

See upcoming events at [www.saskmusic.org/workshops](http://www.saskmusic.org/workshops)

SaskMusic has offered professional industry workshops since its inception. Our goal is to offer an educational program to address the current trends and knowledge requirements of the Saskatchewan music community. We want to help artists and industry professionals develop the marketing, business and creative skills needed for long-term sustainability in the music industry.

Our educational programming covers topics both current and those of essential knowledge for those working and creating in the Saskatchewan music industry.

Events were presented in-person, online, and as hybrids this fiscal. Subjects are reviewed on a regular basis and revised based on feedback from members. We seek to present a variety that will offer something of interest to those at varying levels of experience/skills, and with different interests in the industry. Our end goal for the series is to develop professionalism, knowledge and skills to navigate a complex industry. Activities under the Educational stream include: General Workshops & Work Togethers

- Songwriter development. Songwriting is a foundational skill and key revenue generator (through royalties) for our industry, and a segment in which we hope to develop more business skills and marketable material.
- Music Mentors: one-to-one professional consultations for members
- Careers in Music: providing information to youth
- Legal Program
- Partnered activities. Each year partner with other organizations for educational programming related to the music industry. These allow us to broaden our reach to a community of interest and/or offer more opportunities to our members.
- Special Event: The Screen/Music Sync Summit. Special Events includes projects that are larger in scope and may be presented in rotation in every two years or as standalones.

## REGINA SONGWRITERS GROUP X SASKMUSIC

The Regina Songwriters Group began as an affiliate of the Songwriters Association of Canada, with SaskMusic providing meeting space and support to bringing in occasional workshop leaders. In recent years SaskMusic has taken a more hands on role to co-lead/plan the Regina events. Our goal is to draw members of the community together from different genres and skill levels to work collaboratively and network, as well as to continue to develop the quality of their songwriting and professionalism. The meetups generally consist of a presentation or hands on exercise followed by an opportunity to share individual material with the group.

The following sessions were held during this time frame. These events are free to all and intended for songwriters at any level of development levels to find a casual, welcoming place to learn more about songwriting and share ideas. (Note: Saskatoon Songwriters also have an active group with similar programming, hosted by Studio XII in Saskatoon.)

Group page: <https://www.facebook.com/ReginaSongwriters>

## SONGWRITER/ARTIST TALK WITH MERV XX GOTTI APRIL 24/2024, SASKMUSIC OFFICE AND ONLINE

"Merv will discuss his organic approach to songwriting, his artistic path and release strategy, and how collaborations with others (both in his own artistic practice, and in his work through the Trifecta Sound collective) inform his approach to life and music. Merv has a wealth of experience to share as a critically-acclaimed songwriter, as well as an export-ready artist with substantial performance credits at festivals around the world. Following the chat we'll have a song share - bring your latest pieces or those that you'd like feedback on to share with the group."

Merv xx Gotti is the award-winning Canadian multi-genre artist behind the solo singer-songwriter dream-pop project, "Guitar Songs." He is also the singer of hip-hop/R&B duo, Samurai Champs, as well as alternative-emo band, GHOSTFORM. Additionally, he is the Founder and Artistic Director of Canadian DJ & artist collective, Trifecta Sound Co.

His debut solo singer-songwriter release, Guitar Songs EP, was released March 2024 in anticipation of his debut performance at SXSW (Austin, TX). The EP explores a more minimal sound, emphasizing his androgynous, dreamy vocals to deliver vulnerable, sincere songwriting. The EP has since amassed over 150,000 streams on Spotify, with the project's first single, "Jiu-jitsu," being played on 21 CBC stations across the country, the biggest syndication pick-up for a Saskatchewan artist in the past 5 years.

With Samurai Champs, Merv xx Gotti has toured internationally, performing at festivals such as SXSW (US), Music Matters Live (Singapore), NXNE (Canada), The Great Escape (UK), Reeperbahn (Germany), Tallinn Music Week (Estonia), and more. His music has been featured on CBC Canada, Gigwise, Exclaim!, and VICE Noisey. He has also received multiple artistic awards and nominations from both the Western Canadian Music Awards (WCMA's) and Saskatchewan Music Awards (SMA's).

In his role as Artistic Director of Trifecta Sound Co., Merv xx Gotti has been recognized for his work in community building. He has spoken at conferences such as BreakOut West (Kelowna BC), Wavelength Festival (Toronto ON), and the Congress of Humanities & Social Sciences (Regina SK), as well as received accolades from CBC's Future 40 and TD Bank's Creative Entrepreneurship Incubator.

In 2023, he was featured nationally on CBC Canada during Asian Heritage Month. The same year, Trifecta Sound Co. was awarded a double-win at the Saskatchewan Music Awards for both Industry Achievement and Music Organization of the Year.

## SONGWRITER/ARTIST TALK WITH AMY NELSON MAY 26/2024, NEIL BALKWILL CIVIC ARTS CENTRE (REGINA) AND ONLINE

"SaskMusic and Regina Songwriters welcome songwriters, artists, and those interested in the world of songwriting to join us for this month's meetup with special guest, country artist Amy Nelson. Amy will be chatting about her approach to songwriting, co-writing with others, tips & tricks for songwriting, as well as her experience with a lengthy career in the Saskatchewan (and international!) music scene. Following the chat, we'll have a song share. Bring your latest pieces or ones that you'd like feedback on to share with the group in a fun, low-pressure environment."

Canadian country artist Amy Nelson has proudly waved the Canadian flag on stages all over the world. With a focus on the Australian market, she

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has completed ten tours down under and achieved two Top 10 singles on Aussie country radio. Amy's career has been highly recognized in Canada throughout the years, including 49 Saskatchewan Country Music Award nominations.

Amy has performed at the Calgary Stampede, Canadian Music Week, Country Thunder Saskatchewan, AmericanaFest, BreakOut West, JUNOFest, Australian Music Week and hundreds of other events, festivals and venues. She is also helping to shape the next generation of artists through the company she founded, Sing Like A STAR, which teaches music lessons and has helped to build the skills and confidence of over 3000 children across Saskatchewan. More info about Amy Nelson at her website, [www.amynelson.ca](http://www.amynelson.ca)

## FALL SONGSHARE

### SEPTEMBER 22/2024, NEIL BALKWILL CIVIC ARTS CENTRE (REGINA)

"Show off what you have been working on over the summer. Bring your instrument, your lyrics sheet, and share with your fellow songwriters in this casual environment!"

## WRITING TO PROMPTS

### OCTOBER 27/2024, NEIL BALKWILL CIVIC ARTS CENTRE (REGINA)

Song Prompts writing: focus on a number of fun inspiring songwriting prompt exercises for participants to try out. As well, we will break into small groups to collab with other members in creating lyrics and the start of a beautiful song. These prompt exercises are meant to help get the creative juices flowing, try out a new songwriting style, new perspective of writing, and more to add to your song writing tool kit. A couple of fun lines from one of these prompts are all you need to set off your next great song!

## WRITING WITH RHYMES

### JANUARY 19/2025, NEIL BALKWILL CIVIC ARTS CENTRE (REGINA) AND ONLINE

**ZHE the FREE** is a multi-disciplinary artist, community builder and explosive performer. Growing up on Treaty 7 Land, she extends her fire from mountains to prairies. ZHE ignites the crowd from the moment she touches the microphone and brings the strength of the feminine alive. As an artist, and National Music Centre 1st place winner in the 50th Anniversary of Hip Hop track competition, she loves inspiring others about the power of their voice. From freestyle, to brilliant storytelling, ZHE the Free pulls you in with her strong command of words and captivating stage presence.

ZHE connects with audiences on a deep level through the realness she brings to her music, exploring emotions and addressing social issues. She is an experienced Artist Mentor and Program Coordinator, working with Community Arts Mentorship Program, Chokecherry Studios, Kilburn Hall and Paved Arts. ZHE brings incredible enthusiasm; "Hip hop saved my life, and I aim to inspire others to use creativity as a positive outlet."

## WORK TOGETHER WORKSHOP SERIES

In 2024 we launched this new series of casual workshop. Each meetup has a different focus of interest, with the idea being it is more fun and motivating to work on necessary industry stuff like grant applications, artist bios, and tour strategies with peers, in a space where you have a mentor at hand and can bounce ideas around. Each Work Together starts with a tutorial or presentation on the subject of interest (led by someone experienced in the subject matter), followed by time for discussion and workshoping. They are free to attend.

## EXPLORING CREATIVE SASKATCHEWAN GRANTS

### With Program Advisor **Brittney MacFarlane**

#### June 5/2024, SaskMusic Office, Regina and

#### June 6/2024, Cliff Wright Library, Saskatoon

This Work Together focused on exploring the Creative Saskatchewan grant applications that are relevant to those in the music scene. We went through guidelines for the grants, frequent questions about applying, evaluation criteria, best practices, and more. After working for nearly a decade at SaskMusic, **Brittney MacFarlane** now helps the Creative Saskatchewan team in supporting artists of all mediums in accessing funding for their projects. As Program Advisor she helps clients to understand the application process for Creative Saskatchewan's grants and programs, from the pre-application stage to final reporting.

Our goal for the event was for artists to gain a better understanding of the funding available, how grants are awarded, requirements for submissions, questions, and to introduce members to Creative Saskatchewan staff and feel comfortable approaching the agency for assistance. The target audience was new and emerging artists who were new to grant systems, or artists who had submitted previously who had questions.

"I have attended several events with SaskMusic through the years. Each time I felt welcome, learned something new and made some new connections. Thank you SaskMusic! I felt questions were answered in a very honest way and that Brittney had great knowledge of the topic." Did the event answer your specific question? Yes and beyond." – Marie-Veronique Bourque

## BOOKING SHOWS

### with SaskMusic's **Kevin Kyle**

#### October 23/2024, SaskMusic Office Regina and

#### October 24/2024, Cliff Wright Library, Saskatoon

We focused on how to self-book shows, the steps to get the right venue for the gig and then make it a success. Kevin shared tips on finding places to play, how to reach out to bookers, door splits, contracts, and payments, and following up with venues after the gig. It was a lively and engaging discussion with the do's and don'ts of booking shows, with practical examples and pitch examples.

**Kevin Kyle** is a Sask artist originally hailing from the Belleville/Tyendinaga region of Ontario, who's been active in the Saskatchewan and International music scene for more than 20 years. Kevin's experience includes working as a booking agent, music publicist, video editor, music teacher, and freelance musician. Inclusivity, community, and a love of the arts are the passions that Kevin brings along with his industry experience. Covering practical advice and examples from Kevin's 20 years on the road booking national/international shows and tours, from Canada and the U.S. to Japan.

Our goal was for artists, bookers, managers, and others to gain an understanding and learn some real world examples of how to book shows, with details for reaching out and confirming shows. We hope those in attendance will feel more confident in booking their own shows and be successful in securing more shows and repeat bookings.

"Kevin did a fantastic job of bringing to light the various techniques and approaches required to book one's band in a variety of venues. His seminar is a great introduction to taking a proactive approach in building success in performing to live audiences." – Chris Tessmer

"I am so grateful for SaskMusic offering these educational events at a price

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a startup musician can afford! I appreciated the swag & snacks, and the easy delivery. I felt comfortable to ask questions, which is not my default." - Joule Tallman

## ARTIST PHOTOSHOOTS

with **Chris Graham**

**December 15/2024, Revival Music Room, Regina**

**January 5/2025, YXE Night Market, Saskatoon**

For this Work Together we provided very hands-on experience for 12 artists/bands, with a free, professional promotional photo shoot. Having current band/artist photos is important for festival applications, grant applications, venue outreach for bookings, media opportunities, promoting your shows, and for your EPK in general. These events provided a dedicated time, space, and pro for artists to come away with photos to use in their marketing ventures. A call for submissions invited participants in the series.

Our goal was to professionalize artists' promo kits with great shots, an important piece of their marketability, and to illustrate their importance for the artists. For many of the participants it was their first professional shoot, and frequently the cost of such photos can be out of reach. The results from seasoned pro Chris Graham, who has shot countless numbers of artists in studio and live settings, were outstanding and we saw artists immediately sharing them and using the results in their promotions for their shows and other activities. He was able to capture a large number of great shots in a short period of time with each artist, demonstrating poses and creative uses of spaces that were tailored to bring out the unique personalities of each artist and their music.

**Chris Graham:** Born and raised in Estevan, and schooled in the Photojournalism program at SAIT in Calgary, Graham has become one of Regina's most in-demand photographers for his keen visual artistry and attention to detail. A self-professed music-nerd, he has been a proponent of the Saskatchewan music scene and has worked with countless local artists to help realize their vision since he put down roots in Regina in 2006. Chris is also well known for his live music festival photography, not just in the province, but around the world, and his work has been seen in world-class publications, including Rolling Stone Magazine.

"The photos came out even better than I anticipated. Very happy with the experience as well as the result. This photoshoot was an amazing opportunity and I am so thankful that SaskMusic was there to provide it!" – Joseph McLellan, Regina Event

"Marketing is a costly fact for any professional musician that wants to get their music out there; this professional photo-shoot exemplifies SaskMusic's endeavours to help its members do just that." – Gillian Snider, Saskatoon Event

## TAX TUNE-UP FOR MUSIC FOLKS

with **Martina, Backbeat Bookkeeping**

**February 11/2025, Rusty Macdonald Library Saskatoon**

**February 12/2025, SaskMusic office (cancelled due to storm)**

"Tax season is coming up! Brush up on your numbers, budgets, and money questions. Join mentor Martina (BackBeat Bookkeeping / artist Martina Music) for an interactive and fun (yes we said fun!) session to better understand your artistic financial questions."

Due to the cancellation of the Regina event, we also offered individual financial consults with Martina.

Our goals were for music industry folks to better understand their music budgets, the tracking of income, and tax implications for an independent artist or band; ensure they had key knowledge necessary to handle grant reports and other responsibilities; as well as to empower them to feel more confident in filing their own taxes and being their own bookkeepers.

**Martina Hayden** is a self-proclaimed data and numbers geek, with 30 years professional experience in bookkeeping, records and financial management, project planning, and process improvement from a variety of sectors including non-profit, education, and government. She has Diplomas in Administration, Bookkeeping, and Entrepreneurship, 2 year university courses in Accounting and Psychology, as well as numerous professional development opportunities in facilitation, project management, and business. Martina is also a DIYer in her own songwriting, acoustic performing, and sound recording projects, as Martina Music. Since 2016 she has been combining a deep respect for the history of the music industry, while studying the complexities of the current digital & data-driven music industry.

In experiencing both the frustrations and time-saving benefits of manual and digital bookkeeping systems, Martina combines her strengths and passions in BackBeat Bookkeeping. Based out of Saskatoon, she provides consulting services with integrity and patience, assisting musical creatives in all capacities in building resilience by understanding the numbers behind their artistic endeavors.

## THE ART & BUSINESS OF SONGWRITING WITH ILA BARKER

**JUNE 18/2024, ONLINE**

Led by Winnipeg-based artist **Ila Barker** on the process of songwriting, her methods, and tips on the business side of songwriting. Ila was a great presenter with a casual but informative approach to the songwriting process, sharing what works for her as well as some approaches that were passed on to her throughout her career. Ila took the time to perform a couple songs and took questions from attendees.

Ila's workshop description noted:

Welcome to the art and business of music! Join us for a hands-on workshop designed for musicians of any skill level to learn and develop their songwriting abilities. In addition to creative techniques, we'll cover business best practices that have worked for me, along with valuable tips and tricks. This workshop is your opportunity to enhance both your artistic and professional skills in the music industry.

In 2017, Winnipeg-based Anishinaabe and settler folk-soul musician Ila Barker held a guitar on her lap as a friend confided in her the details of an abusive relationship. Barker sang her friend's words back to her, softly strumming the strings and turning anguish into a serendipitous self-serenade. Eventually that song became the title track of Barker's debut full-length album, 'Fool Under Water', a tough-but-tender testament to the possibility of survival, forged as she swam ashore herself.

To write 'Fool Under Water', Barker spent seven years reflecting on her own survival, alongside that of the women around her. The elegantly rugged candor at the heart of the album's storytelling was amassed through experience.

"My first thought as I started packing my bags to leave was 'what am I going to do?'" says Barker. "My second thought was 'but damn, these are gonna be some good songs.'"

Barker's astute observations and vulnerable introspection create a safe

basin for those still swimming their way through rough waters. “I want listeners to have a moment to grieve the things that they’ve gone through, but also to picture a future that is brighter,” she says.

On lead single “Intuition,” Barker sagely sings “Trust yourself, you know best,” reminding all of us to listen closely to our own truths when we feel we might be sinking. After years of writing, Barker recorded ‘Fool Under Water’ at Winnipeg’s No Fun Club studio alongside producers Sierra Noble and Rusty Matyas in August 2021. “A lot of people think I took a break from music. The truth is I was in survival mode,” she says.

Barker has played the Regina Folk Festival, the Winnipeg Folk Festival, the sākīhiwē festival, and opened for Jeremy Dutcher’s sold out performance at the Indian River Festival in PEI. Through her work as founding curator with AIRsessions, a series of free music workshops for youth, Barker advocates for gender equity and Indigenous representation in music. “I have found a deeper connection with my community and the Indigenous music community through my music journey,” she says. She has showcased at SXSW, Folk Alliance International, SXSW Sydney, BreakOut West, NXNE, and Indigenous Music Summit; charted on Iearshot Folk/Roots/Blues chart, the Indigenous Music Countdown, the Indigiverse and more.

## INTRODUCTORY SONGWRITING

**FOUR CONSECUTIVE SATURDAYS, JULY 27-AUGUST 17/2024, AT THE NEIL BALKWILL CIVIC ARTS CENTRE (REGINA)**

For the summer of 2024 we tested two class offerings for the general public in partnership with the City of Regina. These were listed in the City of Regina Summer Leisure Guide with registration processing and the majority of instructor fees handled by the City. Our goal with these was to fill a gap we perceived in what was available for those interested in the subject of songwriting, and engage in a broader way with the general public. This was our first time trying something like this.

“Songwriting can be a powerful form of self-expression and creativity. Writing our stories and feelings can be cathartic, as well as a lot of fun. Whether you’re interested in songwriting strictly as a creative outlet, or aspire to sharing your music with the world, this class is your entrance to the craft of songwriting.

Join us as we dive into the art of spinning melodies and lyrics that speak to the soul. From heartfelt verses to catchy choruses, we’ll explore song forms and composition, and lead you through the process of writing a song, from inspiration to presentation.

No prior musical experience? No problem! This class is designed for beginners, welcoming anyone with a passion for music and a desire to express themselves.”

“Megan Nash is writing some of the most beautiful songs in this country right now” - Tom Power on CBC’s Q

**Megan Nash** has been nominated for four Western Canadian Music Awards, has taken home two Saskatchewan Music Awards, and is a JUNO-losing proud dog mother to her geriatric pup Shiloh. Nash is currently listening to a “Best of Radiohead” compact disc that she borrowed from the Moose Jaw Public Library.

Examples of discussion topics:

- Overview of songwriting as a process
- Listening to great song examples from different genres

- Creative writing exercises
- Anatomy of a song – verses, choruses, hooks, bridges and more
- Different approaches for different genres
- Song forms
- Melody writing
- Editing your songs
- Co-writing exercises
- Chord progressions
- Sharing what we’ve written
- Do’s and don’ts for songwriters (copyright, releasing music) and next steps.

Class feedback was great, with most respondents expressing a desire for a longer course and additional music subjects. This will likely be something we present again in the future.

Presented in partnership with the City of Regina, with class leader Megan Nash.

## INTRODUCTION TO SONGWRITING, AGES 13-18 YEARS

**FIVE CONSECUTIVE DAYS AUGUST 12-16/2024, AT THE NEIL BALKWILL CIVIC ARTS CENTRE (REGINA)**

Our second class offering was geared towards youth.

“Ever thought about turning your thoughts and feelings into songs? Get ready to dive into the world of songwriting! It’s not just about putting words to music; it’s about expressing yourself in the coolest way possible. In this beginner-level class, we’ll take you on a journey through the craft of songwriting. We’ll break down what makes a song work – from informative verses and catchy choruses to killer hooks and bridges. You’ll learn to form lyrics that tell a story, create memorable melodies, and try out co-writing with others.

No musical background? No problem! This course is open to all creative souls, whether you’re a seasoned musician or just love jotting down your thoughts. All you need is a passion for writing and music. Ready to unleash your inner songwriter and let your imagination run wild? This class is for you.

Dara Schindelka is a singer/songwriter with a touch of the north and the pull of the prairies. With three albums and a fourth on the way, she has travelled across Canada with her music and enjoys playing both solo and in band settings. Dara is also an educator who works in the public education system, and is a singing instructor at the University of Regina Conservatory. She is excited to share her experience and enthusiasm for songs with those who join the class!

While attendance was light for this first year, the class was ranked “very cool” by attendees and we’ll consider offering this class again.

Presented in partnership with the City of Regina, with class leader Dara Schindelka

## SHOWCASING AND MASTERING CONFERENCES

**AUGUST 28/2024, ONLINE, WITH CLAIRE BONING, MISFIT MANAGEMENT**

This in-depth webinar presented on how to effectively prepare for and make the most of an artist showcase invitation and music conference activities. Whether you're new to showcasing or looking to refine your approach, this session covered things you need to know, including:

- Understanding official showcases and what export readiness means
- Setting realistic goals and expectations
- A comprehensive showcase timeline: preparation, on-site, and post-event strategies
- Tips for reaching out to industry targets and securing meetings
- Exploring available grant funding and travel best practices
- Networking essentials and health & safety tips at conferences
- Effective follow-ups and relationship building

Claire provided great info, tips, and steps to pass along to artists, taking questions and sharing info via a presentation that was shared with participants after the workshop. Artists attending noted that they felt better equipped to make the most out of these events for their professional career; including artists who had already performed at a showcase or attended a music conference.

Claire Boning is co-owner of and artist manager/consultant with Winnipeg-based company Misfit Music MGMT. Their full-time roster includes Super Duty Tough Work, Leonard Sumner, and Kelly Bado. Through Misfit's Artist Evolution Program she works with emerging and professional artists to instill confidence and broaden their reach. Claire spent six years prior to this position at the Manitoba Music Industry Association as an export and membership coordinator, youth mentor and more. She continues to work in the live sector as a stage manager and has been a recording and touring artist for the past fourteen years.

Misfit Music Inc. puts joy in the journey. With an honest art-first, industry-second approach, Misfit helps music creators set realistic expectations, find sustainability in super-fans, and celebrate the milestones we help them reach. With a strong team of music professionals and a diverse management roster, the company's primary focus is highlighting and supporting underrepresented artists with a priority on Western Canada. Through the innovative Artist Evolution program, the team works with self-managed artists building strategies, connecting them to a network of industry pros, professionalizing their tool kits, and developing the skills and confidence needed to manage their own careers.

"I really enjoyed how the workshop was presented. There were many gems of advice I gathered that will help me properly prepare and navigate an upcoming conference, ensuring I get the most value out of the event." – Jovan Larre

## CADENCE WEAPON KEYNOTE TALK & BREAKFAST

**NOVEMBER 8/2024, UNIVERSITY OF REGINA AND ONLINE**

"Join trailblazing artist and author Cadence Weapon for a special Keynote Talk presented by the Regina Folk Festival and SaskMusic. He will share his experience of getting into making music, what it takes to have a creative life and read excerpts from his book *Bedroom Rapper*. There will be plenty of time to ask questions and interact."

We particularly wanted to present this event being one of interest to the

hip hop/rap and electronic music community. Cadence was in town for a RFF concert which provided a great opportunity to have him speak.

Cadence Weapon is Edmonton-born, Toronto-based rapper, producer, writer and poet Rollie Pemberton. His 2021 album *Parallel World* won Canada's Polaris Music Prize.

The son of a pioneering hip-hop radio DJ, Pemberton grew up around a diverse library of music. Splitting his time between Edmonton's experimental electronic and underground rap scenes as a teenager, Pemberton eventually developed a hybrid of both styles. Cadence Weapon has released five albums, all of which have been nominated for the Polaris Music Prize, with *Breaking Kayfabe* (2006), *Hope In Dirt City* (2012) and *Parallel World* (2021) being shortlist nominees. Pemberton has toured extensively following the success of these albums, playing festivals like Glastonbury, Lollapalooza, Pitchfork Music Festival, Roskilde and Primavera Sound and performing shows with artists such as Public Enemy, Diplo, Questlove, De La Soul and many more.

Pemberton's music is known for pairing groundbreaking production with incisive, socially conscious lyricism. Pemberton served as Poet Laureate of Edmonton from 2009 to 2011, making him the literary ambassador of his hometown. His poem "The Garden" was incorporated into a bronze sculpture at the Alberta Legislature Grounds in Edmonton in 2018. Pemberton was the narrator and a writer for the VICELAND television series *PAYDAY* and *Mister Tachyon* and he has hosted lectures and conducted live interviews for CBC q and Red Bull Music Academy. Pemberton's debut book, *Bedroom Rapper*, is a personal account of his life in music as an artist, critic and fan amid a changing digital landscape. It was released in early 2002 by McClelland & Stewart.

## MUSIC MENTORS

[www.saskmusic.org/how-to/book-a-consult](http://www.saskmusic.org/how-to/book-a-consult)

SaskMusic is a source of information for and about the music industry of Saskatchewan and beyond. Our staff fields countless inquiries on a wide range of topics over phone, email, and social media DMs. Questions we receive are diverse, interesting and often challenging, frequently requiring research to track down a contact, answer, or service.

When more comprehensive answers or additional points of view are beneficial, and to manage our limited staff availability, we offer personalized, confidential meetings through the Music Mentors program.

This program offers confidential, individual consultations for artists with industry professionals. Members can book time with our skilled staff and/or mentors through this program to discuss a wide variety of music industry questions and strategies. Consultations are held in person, via phone, or video chat. Staff and mentors take on average more than 200 consultations each year.

This is one of our key and actively-utilized member benefits. Members can discuss overall career plans, marketing strategies, touring plans, release strategies, songwriting and copyright issues, industry trends, and receive grant preparation assistance and feedback. Consultations are free for our members, and the mentor is paid an honorarium by SaskMusic. We enlist music industry professionals/mentors from our community and outside Sask who have differing knowledge bases in a variety of music subjects. Appointments with mentors are facilitated through our offices.

Our mentors are versed in a range of expertise and perspectives. The list

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of mentors shifts with folks' availability throughout the year, with approximately 30 mentors on our roster at any given time. The list of currently available mentors is posted at [www.saskmusic.org](http://www.saskmusic.org) > How To.

## CAREERS IN MUSIC

[www.saskmusic.org/programs/careers-in-music](http://www.saskmusic.org/programs/careers-in-music)

Our youth outreach program offers young people their often first introduction to SaskMusic and the concept of a provincial music industry. We meet thousands of youth through these events, many of whom are curious about the possibilities of pursuing music/music industry roles as a career option. We answer questions, including on potential post-secondary education options, internships, self-instruction, and volunteer opportunities that they can seek out to investigate a career in the commercial music industry. We are also able to engage with teachers and fellow booth presenters through these events.

This program sees us setting up a booth at career fairs or visiting individual classes to talk to students about the many different roles that contribute to "the music industry." It is our intention to open the door for students to look further into music if it's of interest to them, and to know that they are welcome to ask questions and find further support whenever they need it through SaskMusic. With few linear paths into the music industry, it can be difficult for those aspiring to work in music to know how to gain access, what training opportunities are available to them, and what different types of careers are available, aside from the obvious roles as musicians and songwriters.

Careers in Music is specifically targeted to the high school+/13-19-year-old demographic. This age group is a natural starting point for encouraging serious consideration of how and where they can contribute to the province's music scene.

Events we participated in:

- April 30/2024 - Prairie South Schools Try a Career Expo 2024, Moose Jaw. Attended by 1200 Grade 10 & 11 Students in the Prairie South School Division
- (Had to miss due to staff illness) - May 8/24 – Roads to Success Career Fair 2024", Rosetown. Attended by 800 Grade 10-12 Sun West Division students (Beechy, Biggar, Davidson, Kindersley, Outlook, Plenty, and more). Bi-annual, we plan to attend in 2026.
- (Cancelled due to school division labour conflicts) May 14-16/2024 – "Grade 9 WorkSafe Try a Career", Balgonie (3 days). Typically attended by 3700 students – we will attend in fiscal 25/26.
- September 10-11/2024 – Treaty 4 Gathering -150 Year Celebration, Fort Qu'Appelle. Attended by 500 youth. While not a career fair in format, we had a booth in the student activity area with students attending from surrounding regions.
- October 1/2024 – "Prairie South Schools", Moose Jaw. Attended by 1200
- October 3/24 – Regina Public Schools "Post-Graduation Fair", Regina. Attended by 500 "Regina Public high school students with their families"
- October 9/2024 - Chinook School Division Career Expo 2024, Swift Current. Attended by 1300 students in Grades 10-12, teachers, and parents in Southwest Saskatchewan.
- October 2/2024 – Assiniboia & District Chamber of Commerce: 2024

Career & Business Expo, Assiniboia. Attended by 500.

- December 3/2024 – Post-Secondary Institution Information/Career Fair, St. Joseph High School, Saskatoon. Attended by 700.

## LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

[www.saskmusic.org/programs/legal-service-program](http://www.saskmusic.org/programs/legal-service-program)

Through this program, up to 2 hours of free legal services annually (per fiscal year) are available for SaskMusic members to access, via top entertainment lawyer **Kurt Dahl** of **Miller Thomson LLP**. Kurt provides an allocation of pro bono time, supplemented by a purchase of hours by SaskMusic. It is a first-come, first-served program and legal assistance is limited to matters related to the music industry – such as contract interpretation and negotiation, drafting of agreements, and intellectual property advice.

This program is an important offering as it encourages due diligence, professionalism and business skill development in our members. Music/entertainment law is a highly specialized practice and there are unfortunately numerous opportunities for members to experience negative to severe career impacts should they not obtain good advice on legal documents, contracts, or deals due to the financial barriers involved. This program provides members with an easy access point to legal advice, and greatly increases the number of artists who will have contracts and other matters professionally reviewed.

The Program was accessed by 44 members in this fiscal, with over 80 hours of legal advice provided. That advice was diverse, from straightforward phone call discussions regarding various legal matters, to in-depth contract drafting and negotiating. Some of the specific matters that were covered include:

- Offering strategic guidance on the use of AI in music creation, including its legal implications in areas such as songwriting, production, copyright infringement, and intellectual property.
- Advising creators and rights holders on maximizing revenue opportunities from TikTok and other short-form video platforms.
- Handling YouTube-related matters, including disputes over copyright claims and the proper way to release cover songs.
- Supporting clients through artist-related platform issues, such as resolving disputes on Spotify or recovering deactivated Instagram accounts.
- Navigating artist and band conflicts, such as disputes over band names or ownership of streaming profiles.
- Assisting with SoundExchange registrations, revenue claims, and preparing letters of direction for rights management and distribution.
- Providing legal advice on royalty allocations between artists and producers, as well as clarifying songwriting splits among collaborators.
- Drafting and negotiating a wide range of agreements, including Producer Agreements, Band Agreements, Co-Writer Agreements, and Session Musician contracts.
- Reviewing and negotiating complex music industry deals, such as Recording Agreements, Publishing Administration Agreements, and Booking Agent contracts.
- Offering opinions and guidance on digital distribution contracts and

online monetization platforms.

- Advising on mechanical licensing for song reproduction and drafting sync and master use licenses for audiovisual placements.
- Negotiating music placements in film and media—from independent projects to major studio productions.
- Counseling clients on co-publishing arrangements and the intricacies of music publishing rights.
- And much more—covering a full range of legal and business issues facing modern music creators and rights holders.

Kurt Dahl of Miller Thompson LLP has been actively involved in the Canadian music industry for the past 20 years as a touring musician, board member, and entertainment lawyer. He wrote his Master of Laws thesis in 2009 on the future of the music industry, and practiced entertainment law in Vancouver starting in 2010, later returning home to Saskatoon.

A founding member of One Bad Son, Kurt has toured the world with the band, sharing the stage with The Rolling Stones, Def Leppard, Judas Priest and more. The band landed their first #1 single in Canada with the song Raging Bull. By day, Kurt is one of the preeminent entertainment lawyers in Canada, working with the biggest names in the music industry from coast to coast. Kurt is passionate about utilizing his knowledge as artist and lawyer to help others in the entertainment industry make the most of their careers. He shares his knowledge in the articles he writes on cutting-edge issues in the music industry which have been published around the world by Canadian Musician, Canadian Lawyer, SOCAN, Drum Magazine and more, and can be found on his website [www.lawyerdrummer.com](http://www.lawyerdrummer.com).

## EXTRA EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS SUPPORTED/ SPONSORED

Artist and SaskMusic board member Zochi attended as a panelist and performer at **The Grand River Black Music Festival & Conference**, Kitchener ON, June 14-16/2024. Canada's first not-for-profit Black music festival and conference, the event presented a lineup of artists and industry professionals with live performances, exchanges of industry wisdom, film screenings, and more, geared to empowering emerging Black artists, producers, digital creators, and future filmmakers living in Ontario. Panelists shared their experience of the music business through workshops, lectures, and other highly informative sit-downs.

We sponsored spots for two Indigenous songwriters to attend **Songs for Nature** camp, September 12-15/2024 in Prince Albert National Park, presented by the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. Facilitators: **Glenn Sutter, Megan Nash, Forrest Eaglespeaker, Kara Golemba**. "The multi-day retreat provides a chance to spend time in nature and learn about songwriting as you create and share original, nature-inspired songs. You will also be contributing to valuable research about creativity and nature connection."

Passion2Action "INSPIRE": On June 22/2024, we sponsored the performances of youth artists **Isaiah Artavia** and **Love Live the Glory**, and presented at Passion2Action's INSPIRE youth empowerment event in Regina. The event aims to create a platform to champion young leaders and introduce students to local community role models, through speakers/presentations and live music.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

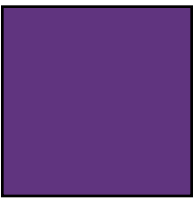


**Thank you to the following directors who volunteered their time on our board during this fiscal:**

**Brad Bellegarde (Regina)**

**Second term: June 2023-2025**

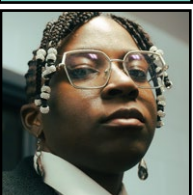
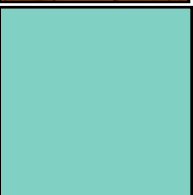
CCBC Future 40 Award Winner and Neechie Gear Role Model, Brad Bellegarde aka InfoRed has been a featured artist at events such as Aboriginal Music Week in Winnipeg, Manitoba, APTN's Aboriginal Day Live and Vancouver's Olympic Games celebrations. Brad is a proud Nakota/Cree member of the Little Black Bear First Nation who calls Regina, SK home. A true believer that education is the new Buffalo, his work in schools gave him a unique opportunity to present his methods of education at the VIII International Conference of Intercultural Education in Indigenous Contexts in Temuco, Chile. In 2012, InfoRed performed for His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall during their Royal visit.



**Mike Davis (North Portal)**

**First term: June 2023-2025**

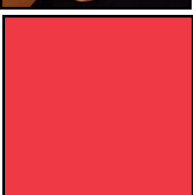
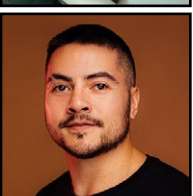
Mike is a singer-songwriter with over 25 years of experience as a guitar player and vocalist. Mike has been working as a musician since the age of 16 when he toured the US and Bermuda with The Continentals. In recent years, Mike has been a member of the folk trio, Hook & Nail. The band's debut album which Mike co-produced was nominated for a Canadian Folk Music Award. In 2019, he and his wife formed Last Birds. The duo was nominated for multiple awards in 2021 and 2022, including a Saskatchewan Music Award for Roots/Folk Artist of the Year as well as Saskatchewan Country Music Association's Group and Alternative Country Album of the Year. His success in music can be attributed in part to his business sense. He operated his own construction company in Estevan for over 10 years.



**Marian Donnelly (Regina)**

**Second term: June 2023-2025**

Marian has worked in the creative industries since 1975. Between 1976 and 1996, Marian worked as an artist manager, concert and festival producer, music publisher and tour manager in Winnipeg, Toronto and Vancouver. In 1996, she returned to Regina to work as Executive Director of SaskMusic. In 2002, she worked as Cultural Industries Consultant to the Province of Saskatchewan, and was then hired as General Manager of Globe Theatre from 2003-2005. In 2006, Marian returned to school and earned her MBA. As a consultant, she facilitated and developed strategic plans for organizations across Canada, including the Atlantic Presenters Assoc. and the Canadian Gospel Music Assoc. She wrote a municipal cultural plan for the City of Yorkton and was an associate consultant on the development of a cultural plan for Saskatoon. She also renovated a heritage building in Regina's downtown, which opened in 2011 as the Creative City Centre, home to artist studios, a visual art gallery and small performance venue. The CCC presented 150-200 shows per year at this vibrant but intimate venue. With the pandemic lockdown, the CCC transitioned from performance venue to production studio and creating digital content for artists..



**Uzoichi Ifeanyiukachu (Regina)**

**First term: June 2022-June 2024**

ZOCHI is a rising Afrobeat sensation whose artistry transcends borders and genres. In May 2024, she released her debut 8-track EP, Afrikaanman Fairytale (AFT), which immediately made waves by debuting at #1 on !earshot Distro's Campus Radio Charts. With a sound that blends soulful vulnerability and rhythmic power, ZOCHI is capturing hearts and stages across Canada and beyond. Her breakout single, "Alone (Whole Again)," was accompanied by her first official music video and was featured as Song of the Day by !earshot Distro. The single also earned placement on the official Bob Marley: One Love Soundtrack Spotify Playlist, accumulating over 100,000 streams and 1,000+ Shazams across major platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, SoundCloud, and Audiomack. ZOCHI's talent has been recognized by industry giants, having been a two-time opening act for Canada's Walk of Fame recipient July Black and hip-hop legend Solitaïr at Ontario's Black Music Conference. She was a 2025 tour artist with July Black on the Songs and Stories Tour and performed at major showcases like Nuit Blanche YQR, Creative Saskatchewan's 10-Year Anniversary, and NXNE Toronto 2025. A proud ambassador for CEAMA (Canadian Emerging Artist Music Awards), ZOCHI is cementing her role as a trailblazer for Afrobeat and emerging Black Canadian voices. With her fearless expression and dynamic artistry, ZOCHI is not just making music, she's making a movement.

**Walter Jeworski (Regina)**

**First term: June 2023-2025**

Walter is a Music Production & Engineering graduate of Berklee College of Music in Boston. With experience at the renowned MSR Studios in NYC, he has worked on sessions with GRAMMY award-winning artists. He currently resides in his hometown of Regina, Saskatchewan, where he engineers, mixes and masters records for clients both local and international including Marina Satti, The Atlanta Opera, TOVA, Samurai Champs, Jeffery Straker, and more.

**Jackie Kroczyński (North Battleford)**

**First term: June 2023-June 2025**

Jackie is a multitalented artist originally hailing from Saskatoon, known for her lifelong passion for music and storytelling. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and a Bachelor of Arts (Visual Art) and has showcased her musical talents as both a performer and conductor in Concert and Jazz Bands across Western Canada and Europe. Her newest album, She's A Story was released on March 8, 2023. Jackie has served on the board for Saskatchewan Music Educators Association and has been a Councillor for the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation. Jackie currently serves as a board member for The Scene (formerly the Battlefords Jazz Society). She has been a teacher writer for the new SK. Band 10,20,30 curriculum and wrote the Arts Ed 20 Virtual Course for Living Sky School Division. Currently based in North Battleford, Jackie's creativity has allowed her to travel many places, including a recent showcase at Your Roots Are Showing in Ireland with her husband Tom Kroczyński. Jackie

PHOTOS: BRAD BELLEGARDE, MIKE DAVIS, MARIAN DONNELLY, UZOCHI IFEANYIUKACHU, WALTER JEWORSKI, JACKIE KROCZYNSKI

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

is grateful for the support that she has received from FACTOR, Canada Council for the Arts, SK Arts and Creative Saskatchewan.

## **Erik Mehlsen (Regina)**

**First term: June 2023-June 2025**

Erik is a songwriter, performer, label-owner, gear-hauler, theory-teacher, merch-seller, what-it-takes jack of all trades who has tried nearly every music-related job at least once. With several hundred performances and festivals across Europe, USA, UK, and Canada, a number of JUNO and WCMA awards, four published books, a songwriting app, and a diverse publishing catalogue, Erik has quietly amassed an impressive music resume. Spending less time touring in recent years has meant his focus has shifted more to mentorship, label work, and music production. He currently runs Sharp 5 Records, is a partner in Wrist Shot Records and Books, teaches private lessons, and has spent several stints teaching in remote communities in Saskatchewan's north..

## **Katie M. Newman (Saskatoon)**

**First term elected: June 2024-2026**

Katie is a lawyer practicing in Saskatoon with a profound passion for music. Prior to becoming a lawyer, Katie obtained a B. Mus in Cello Performance from McGill University and was an active performer in both Regina and Montreal. Born and raised in Regina, Katie began playing with the Regina Symphony Orchestra in 2008 and went on to play with many different ensembles such as the National Youth Orchestra of Canada and Orchestre de l'Agora. She has also toured with several musical theatre productions, and has performed with and recorded for a number of pop and indie artists. Today, Katie balances her legal career with her love for music, driven by a commitment to nurturing Saskatchewan's arts community.

## **Katie Sahl (Regina)**

**First term: June 2022-June 2024**

Katie is a Canadian Hot 100 songwriter with an honours diploma in Entertainment Business Management from Metalworks Institute of Sound and Music Production. She has worked with various recording labels and agencies while based in Toronto. She has served as a JUNO Awards judge and has been a FACTOR Juror for a number of years. With a focus on urban music, she enjoys dedicating time to consult with artists to help with grants, marketing, songwriting/beat selection, etc. and has recently relocated back to her home province of Saskatchewan.

## **Arjun Shankar (Regina)**

**First term elected: June 2024-June 2026**

Arjun is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, producer and session player. Having grown up surrounded by world music and East Indian rhythms and ragas, Arjun got into jazz and funk bands in his youth where he played on the road and in studios for the better part of 15 years. These days, Arjun's primary instrument is the electric bass and he's always looking for dedicated musicians to collaborate with. By day, Arjun is a Senior Crown Prosecutor with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, and has been a lawyer for about 14 years.

Arjun lives in Regina with his (not so little) cat Brennan, and is super excited to be a part of SaskMusic.

## **Chris Tessmer (Regina)**

**First term: June 2024-June 2026**

Chris (he/him) has been involved in Saskatchewan Music for over 20 years and has a passion for the industry and community. Over his career, he has owned and operated a successful concert promotion company, managed and tour-managed artists, operated a record label with national distribution, managed large-scale productions, interviewed acts of all shapes (local to international) for multiple media publications, and much more. Presently, he owns and operates The Analog Group, a talent-bookings and event production management company that regularly works with clients like Casino Regina/SaskGaming, SGI, Molson Coors, Saskatchewan Roughriders, and numerous others. Chris is passionate about the big picture, but also willing to dig into the minutiae, to ensure the best possible outcomes. He also has multiple years of board experience working with a multi-million dollar non-profit, pushing to safeguard the best interests of the organization and its membership. His experience working acts large and small, and collaborating with multinational organizations and local groups gives him a wide breadth of insight and knowledge that will be greatly beneficial to SaskMusic and its membership.

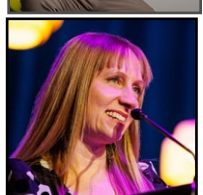
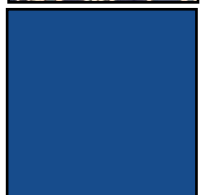
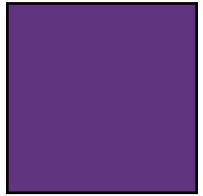
## **STAFF**

### **Lorena Kelly, Executive Director**

Lorena has worked in various roles at SaskMusic, and loves helping to promote the awesome music of our province and helping members navigate this often-confusing industry. She's had experience in a variety of things, from programming lineups and coordinating large-scale conferences and events, to running juries, licensing initiatives, advertising and advocacy campaigns, economic studies and more, in addition to participating on numerous boards and committees. Most recently she had been overseeing our association communications, marketing initiatives and office operations. Lorena took over as Interim Executive Director in October 2022 and moved into the permanent role in June 2023. Prior to SaskMusic, she studied classical piano, then keyboards at Professional Musicians' College. She has toured across Canada, the U.S. and internationally, backing up numerous artists in genres such as country, folk, and pop, as a freelance keyboard player/vocalist in addition to releasing her own albums; and has also worked in advertising, layout and web design.

### **Kaelen Klypak, Export & Program Manager**

Kaelen received his Arts and Entertainment Management Diploma from Capilano University in North Vancouver, and now resides in Saskatoon. He has been actively involved in the Canadian music industry for the past 22 years as an artist manager, consultant, touring drummer, musician, production manager, promoter, and publisher. He is currently an active drummer and has performed at notable festivals such as Sled Island, BIG Winter Classic, The Great Escape, C/O POP, SaskTel Jazz Festival, and Taste of Chaos. He has a new solo synth-based project called



PHOTOS: ERIK MEHLSSEN, KATIE M. NEWMAN, KATIE SAHLU, CHRIS TESSMER, ARJUN SHANKAR, LORENA KELLY, KAELEN KLYPAK

# STAFF

June Thresher. Kaelen is also a jury member for various music organizations, and contributes on numerous cultural boards including being co-director of the Derek Bachman Foundation.

## **Ben Valiaho, Education & Program Coordinator**

Ben grew up working within the Regina music community and is excited to keep developing his skills and supporting Saskatchewan artists in his position at SaskMusic. Ben first got his start working in the industry as producer and volunteer host at 91.3FM CJTR Regina Community Radio over fifteen years ago, and still hosts two radio shows at Regina Community Radio today. Ben was also involved on the Community Radio Board of Directors for eight years (2013 to 2020) in various capacities including President and was honoured to receive the "Lifetime Achievement Award" in 2020 from the station. His commitment to music continued within the halls of the University of Regina where he enrolled in the Interdisciplinary Studies Masters Program with a focus on live performance. While attending the university, Ben was also Research Assistant at the Interactive Media & Performances Labs, teaching workshops and hosting community hours for those who wanted to learn how to make electronic music, scratch records, or record. Ben has been a turntablist for over fifteen years and hosts DJ nights in Regina, some video game Twitch streaming, old skool Games Workshop fan, as well as DJing a number of events in and around Regina as part of the duo 2Beats.

## **Oghenerukevwe "Rooky" Jegede-Ikpen, Community Engagement Coordinator**

Born Oghenerukevwe Jegede-Ikpen, Rooky is a multi-talented Nigerian-born artiste, songwriter, producer and creative executive based in Saskatchewan. Before moving to Canada in 2019 for studies, as an on air personality he has had over 3 years in radio/TV presenting and content curation. He has also worked with numerous brands such as Guinness, Smirnoff, Globacom and MTN Nigeria as a brand influencer. Aside from creating and performing music, Rooky enjoys curating shows/concerts and aiding in community projects focused on building, promoting, advocating and diversifying the music industry. He is the Saskatchewan provincial representative for ADVANCE (Canada's Black music business collective), and has participated as a juror for numerous organizations. He holds multiple University degrees from Nigeria and Canada respectively. Rooky is very passionate about discovering, making and listening to music and creating visual imagery; he sees them as a medium of expression and a way for people to connect with one another regardless of background or race.

## **Roxie Riffel, Administrative Assistant (Maternity Leave)**

Roxie has always had a love of the arts. She quickly discovered a passion for helping support artists and the arts community in the province through her multi-disciplinary work as a program coordinator and arts administrator at the Creative City Centre in Regina. During her tenure at Creative City Centre, Roxie was responsible for developing and implementing various music programs such as the Behind The Songs songwriter in the round monthly concerts, the Empty Room video series, the

SMMART (Social Media Marketing for Artists) training program, the Community Kitchen Party Concert series and the Outside the Spotlight podcast. She also aided in the programming of spoken word and visual art events as well as marketing and communications. Roxie is excited to continue developing her skills and supporting Saskatchewan artists through her new role at SaskMusic. In addition to her work as an arts administrator, Roxie is a singer-songwriter, performer, recording artist (performing under the name Roxie Lenton) and an advocate for mental health.

## **Denny Blackstar, Indigenous Music Development Program Coordinator**

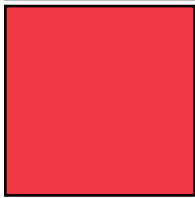
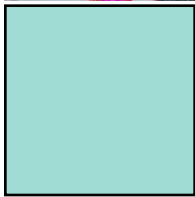
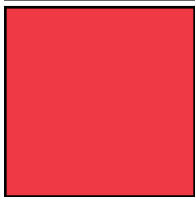
Denny Blackstar joined us in November 2024. He has been responsible for guiding a pilot program supporting a cohort of Indigenous artists and industry members in working toward their professional goals, including coordinating industry mentors, conducting outreach to identify needs and opportunities, and guiding participants towards grants, educational programming, and other resources. Denny is an Indigenous Musician from Pelican Lake First Nation. He enjoys learning new things about the music industry and music in general. He is the singer/songwriter for his band "Boss of Three" based out of Moosomin First Nation. He has a background in education and is currently studying for his master's degree in educational administration. Denny has a love for both music and education and is always trying to find new ways to promote both aspects in positive ways.

## **Kevin Kyle, Administrative Assistant**

Kevin is a Sask. artist originally hailing from the Belleville/Tyendinaga region of Ontario, who's been active in the Saskatchewan and International music scene for more than 20 years. Kevin's experience includes working as a booking agent, music publicist, video editor, music teacher, and freelance musician. Before taking on this role, Kevin helped launch and develop the Digital Media Studio audio/video workspace at the Regina Public Library. Inclusivity, community, and a love of the arts are the passions that Kevin brings to SaskMusic along with his industry experience. Kevin has jumped in to help SaskMusic with numerous projects over the past few years, so we are excited to bring him onboard in a new capacity.

## **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

Our bookkeeper is **Carlee Whitlock of Prairie Sky Bookkeeping Services.**



PHOTOS: BEN VALIAHO, OGHENERUKEVWE JEGEDE-IKPEN, DENNY BLACKSTAR, ROXIE RIFFEL, KEVIN KYLE

**advice.**  
**education.**  
**export.**  
**assistance.**  
**advocacy.**

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