

## Olympic ambitions

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INUVIK - Leanne Goose isn't afraid to admit she's got a lot to learn as a musician, but the Inuvik-born artist isn't afraid to tackle those challenges head on.

Goose is back in the classroom in Winnipeg. Even after her latest album *Anywhere* - recorded here in Inuvik - garnered her nominations at the 2008 Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards and Aboriginal Peoples Choice Awards, she said she still has more to learn.

"I have been in this private music instruction program for about a year and a half now and it's awesome," she said. "I'm actually learning something. It feels great.

"When I chose to pursue original music and to finding my own voice, I felt weak in the areas of understanding music as a whole and learning to read and write music and learning to relate my ideas in my songwriting. Now after working with my voice, learning to play other instruments such as the piano and guitar, I'm able to exude my personality and deliver my songs much more at ease. That's what I thought I was lacking."

She's also working closely with country music legend Ray St. Germaine on some new material.

Goose will put some of that extra training to good use when she performs with 14 other artists from across the Northwest Territories at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver. The crew, which includes the region's finest guitarists, fiddlers and story tellers, was unveiled by the territorial government on July 15 as part of its Olympic promotional plan.

Though scheduling hasn't been finalized, Goose said she will perform in a victory celebration for athletes as well as NWT Day during Northern Weekend. The diverse group of artists were chosen from more than 30 applicants by a team of NWT residents with expertise in music, television, theatre, live performance and management.

Goose views the nod to represent her hometown and territory as not only an honour but as a great opportunity to finally perform with the Inuvialuit Drummers and Dancers, who will also perform at the international sporting spectacle.

"It's always been one of my dreams to be in a show with our drummers and dancers, and showcase the amazing talent and culture of the Western Arctic."



After being chosen to perform at the 2010 Olympics, Leanne Goose hopes to keep reaching people with her music. - photo courtesy of Aboriginal Music Program

A fiercely proud Inuvialuit and Dene woman, Goose remains firmly committed to her roots. She's quick to point to her father Louis Goose, a well-known local musician, as being a great influence on her. Leanne's work is eclectic, dipping into a range of genres such as rock, rhythm and blues and a bit of country. She said she can't forget her background.

"My culture and my roots make me who I am today," she said. "I can't imagine my life having not grown up in the North. My family comes from up the Mackenzie Valley and into the Arctic coast. It definitely reflects in my music."

While her popularity and artistic skill set develops, Goose still finds time to give back.

She puts on music workshops throughout the NWT for youth and amateur artists. The sessions can last between two to five days while focusing on everything from voice and instrumental lessons to recording demos, to assembling promotional packages as well as on introduction to applying for grants.

She said it's been satisfying connecting with youth and tapping into potential that might otherwise never be honed.

"I feel obliged to come home and share my skills and talk about what I've been learning and do my best to pass on the knowledge," she said. "Back home there's not a lot of music enhancement programs for the youth and it's important to do that, to share artistic endeavours so we keep creating."

"There's so much talent in every community in every region of the North, there's just not a lot of programs to help cultivate it to keep boosting those people to the next level, to keep pushing them and helping them to develop themselves to world class musicians."

Anywhere is in the running at the 2009 Indian Summer Music Awards (ISMA), in the rock category. The winners for each category will be announced at the Sept. 12 awards show in Milwaukee, Wis., where she will perform with other artists.

As her career continues to grow, Goose hopes to pile up the accolades. But she said it's mostly about creating and sharing the music.

"I think if I can sustain myself with my music career I'll be successful," she said.

Her uncle, Roy Goose, said he's thrilled with his niece's recent success and that her talents will be showcased for the world to see.

"She's always finished what she started," he said. "I'm proud that she's representing us so well by showing off her intelligence and relaying great music for the rest of the world to see."