



**Canada's Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival
SUBMISSIONS RESUME FOR INAUGURAL MUSIC AWARDS**

Category Addition: International Award Submission

Music celebrating excellence, artistic voice & legacy of diverse & international Indigenous cultures

For immediate release

Ottawa, Ontario, January 25, 2021: The Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival (SSIF) announced today the Festival is resuming its call for submissions for the first annual Summer Solstice Indigenous Music Awards (SSIMA). Submissions to 18 awards categories are open until April 1, 2021. Indigenous solo artists, duos or groups from across Canada are invited to submit applications online at ottawasummersolstice.ca/musicawards. In addition, an International Award Submission category has been established to acknowledge and celebrate artists who identify as Indigenous, but not First Nations, Metis or Inuit, and who may reside anywhere in the world including Canada.

The Festival would also like to announce its partnership with The International Indigenous Music Summit which further underscores the mandate of the Music Awards to celebrate Indigenous artists from across Canada and internationally. The Awards showcase the diverse and growing music and culture of Indigenous artistic expression as well as accomplishment within the global Indigenous community.

"The International Indigenous Music Summit is honoured to be a partner in the launch of the inaugural Summer Solstice Indigenous Music Awards. We look forward to bringing the community together to celebrate our incredibly talented artists and affirm the sovereignty of our songs. Despite the significant challenges of this time, we are invested in the incredible opportunity to build community and connect in the year ahead," stated ShoShona Kish, Founder of The International Indigenous Music Summit.

SSIMA Category winners will be announced and honoured at a special ceremony and show at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa on Saturday, June 12th with viewing parties hosted in multiple locations across Canada to accommodate smaller gatherings (as health protocol permits).

The Festival is excited to introduce an adjudicated awards process dedicated to promoting Indigenous music excellence. As host city, Canada's Capital provides an excellent opportunity to reach out not only to Canadian audiences and media but to invite international visitors as well to participate in this new, significant celebration of Canadian music and legacy with both live and virtual events. An event like SSIMA is poised to become an integral part of Canada's cultural presence in years to come, and ensures Indigenous music is experienced by an ever-wider audience.

Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival is a multi-disciplinary arts festival that has taken place in Ottawa for over two decades. With the pandemic, the Festival migrated online this past June and celebrated National Indigenous History Month in addition to National Indigenous Peoples Day. With an impressive audience of over 527,000 attending our first virtual event throughout last June, an online presence in 2021 is a given. It will remain to be seen how future programming will be shared and celebrated. However, there is no question that music and the new Music Awards are a significant part of the Festival component going forward.

“Presenting and promoting Indigenous music has been a cornerstone of our Festival for over 23 years, so we felt that it was a natural connection to spark this celebration of Indigenous music in recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day and National Indigenous History Month. We are particularly excited to partner with the National Art Centre and the International Indigenous Music Summit for our inaugural event,” said Trina Mather Simard, Producer and Executive Director of Ottawa’s Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival.

SSIF is produced by Mather Simard’s Indigenous entertainment and tourism firm, Indigenous-Experiences.ca on behalf of the National Indigenous Peoples Day Committee comprising six (6) organizations that represent Indigenous communities across Canada. An Artist Advisory Committee made up of Canadian Indigenous music leaders has been created to collaborate with and provide direction to the SSIF on this new initiative.

“The Summer Solstice Indigenous Music Awards will provide an excellent platform for artists to be recognized for their hard work and artistic voice. Ottawa being the Nation’s capital is a great portal to the World and can share the continued wave of Indigenous expression,” noted Artist Advisory Committee member Vince Fontaine.

Some of the 18 award categories hold special significance. Musical Legacy and Contribution, Youth Leadership in Music, Social Voice, and The Rising Star categories recognize individuals and groups that have impacted artistic and cultural heritage within the Indigenous community, mentorship of youth through music and/or raised awareness of social and environmental issues to inspire positive change.

“The SSIMA and these special award categories never before seen in a music awards show, pay homage to the unique social impact of our artists and communities. It’s time to celebrate Indigenous voices once again!” added Elaine Bomberry, Artist Advisory Committee.

For a complete list of SSIMA categories, eligibility rules, and criteria, visit

<https://www.ottawasummersolstice.ca/music-awards/>

All submissions MUST be received by End of Day 11:59 PM EST April 1, 2021. For a complete list of SSIMA categories and eligibility rules visit: [Summersolsticefestivals.ca](https://www.summersolsticefestivals.ca)

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About Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival

Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival is a multi-disciplinary arts festival that has taken place in Ottawa for over two decades. With the pandemic, the Festival migrated online last June and celebrated National Indigenous History Month with an impressive **audience of over 527,000 participating in the extensive and interactive virtual programming.** Virtual Festival programming included Education Day expanded to welcome over 16,000 students and 500 teachers online; live entertainment; interactive arts and crafts, culinary and cultural workshops with kits delivered to homes of registered participants; a virtual competition pow wow thanks to Social Distance Pow Wow; and a Virtual Indigenous Marketplace which reopened for the holiday season until June 2021. Summer Solstice Festivals are produced by Indigenous Experiences on behalf of the National Indigenous Peoples Day (NIPD) Committee comprising the following six (6) organizations representing Indigenous communities across Canada: Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Council of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

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