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Iquite Your Spirit



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Manito Ahbee Festival and the Indigenous Music Awards welcome open dialogue and perspectives from all communities and artists regarding our programming and procedures.

The Manito Ahbee Festival was gifted to all people, indigenous and non-indigenous to honour and celebrate art, music and traditions of the first people of Turtle Island (North America). We have been presented with a very difficult task, to decide if an individual artist is over stepping creative boundaries that some feel is not her right. We don't presume to agree or disagree on this matter at this time, as it requires great reflection, ceremony and discussions on how we move forward in a good way, to ensure that we as Indigenous people uphold our teachings, and do not provide a platform for negativity and separation. We have been taught that our gifts from the Creator should be honoured and that we do not 'own' what is gifted to us, but that it is our responsibility to share those gifts.

Process of submitting to the Indigenous Music Awards:

It is the responsibility of the artist to upload their submission which is then manually checked in-house to make sure they have uploaded all necessary documents i.e., bio, photos, music - they are only allowed to upload 3 songs, not the whole album. If they meet the criteria of the category they are submitting to, their submission is approved.

The selection of nominees and winners of each category is a very democratic process. The final choice of the nominees/winners in each category is not made by the IMA Committee, it is made by Music Industry Voters/Professionals. To become an music industry voter, you must apply, and provide information about your experience in the music industry. Music industry voters are not asked to disclose their heritage. Currently, we have approx. 90 music industry voters - 39 of which voted for the nominees in the Folk Album of the Year category. The music industry voters review each artist that has submitted in the category, by viewing their profiles and listening to their music. They rate them from 1 - 5, with top 5 (if there is more than 5 in the category) becoming nominees. The artist with the most points wins the category. Voting was complete in February 2019, and the list of nominees was announced. NB: We require a minimum of 3 submissions per category in order for it to be adjudicated. Music industry voters are made up of an array of indigenous, non-indigenous, male and female registrants.

Since the request of the Arnaquasaaq Collective was stated, the Manito Ahbee Festival has proceeded with due diligence. Engaging the Indigenous Music Awards Committee, the Elders' Committee, Inuit representatives and the Board of Governors, who made the decision that the nomination will stand for the artist in question – based on the current rules and regulations. Her nomination is in the Best Folk Album Category, and not in the Best Inuit, Indigenous Language or Francophone Album Category.

Proceeding, the Manito Ahbee Festival Board of Governors has presented to the Arnaquasaaq Collective, that we want to work together to address the issues and heartfelt

expressions of everyone involved. We have not dismissed this matter in any capacity. We recognize the importance of building representation and programming that shares common values. The Board has also made a decision to add an Inuit representative on the Board at its next AGM. According to Manito Ahbee's constitution, new members can only be added at an AGM. It is the Board's intention to develop a policy on Cultural Appropriation for all artists submitting to the IMA.

The Manito Ahbee Festival presents itself with transparency and will continue to provide a safe space for our people to express themselves and to honour their gifts. The Manito Ahbee Festival appreciates the concerns being brought to the table and will continue to put policies in place that serve all artists.

About the Manito Ahbee Festival:

The Manito Ahbee Festival was gifted its name from the sacred site in Whiteshell, Manitoba. Manito Ahbee 'Where the Creator sits' has been a gathering place for Indigenous people for centuries. The festival will celebrate its 14th year in May 2019.

Mission Statement:

In the spirit of its sacred site, Manito Ahbee is a gathering celebrating Indigenous culture and heritage that unifies, educates and inspires.

Vision Statement:

Manito Ahbee is recognized as a leader in transforming relationships in sharing Indigenous culture and heritage with the world.

About the Indigenous Music Awards (IMA):

The IMA program was born to acknowledge and support Indigenous recording artists to initiate and to continue their journey providing creative and business opportunities. The IMA program provides a grassroots and interactive environment, as well as a world stage with online uploading of recorded music, free online voting globally by industry professionals, performance and showcase opportunities; which provide notable additional media coverage, networking and collaborative exchange prospects.

Indigenous Music and Arts Program (IMAP)

Over the last thirteen years since the inception of the IMA/APCMA (Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards), the program has been highly successful in creating and building awareness of the artists who have submitted, to a global fan and music industry environment, resulting in abundant access to new and existing markets, collaborations, performances, licensing, labels and recordings. The program has received over 2,000 submissions from Indigenous Artists, who fully support and trust the mandate of the IMA to promote and acknowledge their creative artistry and cultural history.

Building on the lucrative, artist and music entrepreneur driven schedule of the Indigenous Music Awards, the Manito Ahbee Festival launched the Indigenous Music Conference in 2015, to provide Indigenous artists with multi-faceted programming to develop business and commercial outputs, as well as showcase their artistry.

Manito Ahbee Festival

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