

Aboriginal Circle

MUSIC: PASSION AND TRADITION

Justin Chachai is a young musician from Obedjiwan, a small Attikamek village located in Northern Quebec. The Attikameks form one of the 11 Aboriginal nations of Quebec.

Justin is 22 years old and has been singing and playing the guitar since he was 12.

“My cousin gave me my first lessons, then I continued learning by myself!” he declares proudly.

His songs are inspired by traditional music, but have a modern sound. Sung in the Attikamek language, they give us a glimpse of everyday Attikamek life.



Justin demonstrated his many talents at the annual Festival “Innu-Nikamu,” which means “Human sings” in Montagnais (an Aboriginal language). This festival is held every August in Maliotenam, Quebec. For four days, approximately 30 groups of Aboriginal artists from Canada and the United States perform traditional and contemporary songs and music.

Music is a passion for Justin and is also a means of keeping his Attikamek traditions alive. Music has always been at the centre of Aboriginal gatherings and festivities.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Attikamek drums are made of birch bark and caribou skins. The skins are prepared and tanned using an ancestral method. Tradition states that, before making a drum, the musician must dream about it three times. Then he must hunt a caribou and use its skin to create his precious instrument.



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