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*APRIL 12TH, 2021*

*RE: NCRA AWARDS 2021 - LOCAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT SUBMISSION*

How has CKXU helped the local music scene?

Canadian musicians, not to mention local, independent and emerging musicians, are still fighting to be heard in their own communities. With the rise of streaming services, the lack of airtime on commercial radio stations for local musicians, and the inability to host music shows at local venues due to COVID-19, it's getting more difficult to support growing, independent artists. Without quality recorded content or a venue to perform in, local artists are struggling to make a name for themselves in their own communities. Since October 2020, CKXU has been running a CRFC-funded grant project called "For the Record" which is designed to provide solutions to some of the obstacles our local musicians face. Although it's marketed primarily as a radio show, "For the Record" is so much more.

At CKXU, our mandate is to showcase and promote cultural diversity throughout the Southern Alberta region. The Lethbridge and Southern Alberta community is bustling with folks of different backgrounds, histories, perspectives, tastes, and futures. Ultimately, we believe our programming should be a reflection of the kaleidoscopic beauty of our community - vibrant, bright, colourful, impassioned and dynamic. There are many underrepresented voices who have not had any opportunity to share a part of themselves with us or their community, as others have taken up that space. "For the Record" is CKXU acknowledging the lack of equitable artistic space in Lethbridge and carving out that space for those voices. When booking artists for the project, CKXU has put a focus on Southern Albertans who identify as members of underrepresented communities, such as Women, BIPOC, new Canadians, or LGBTQ2S+, with special cases provided to underrepresented genres of music. Every few weeks, we safely bring in an artist to record a performance and interview with our FTR Team. Each performance is then mixed and scheduled onto our airwaves in the coming weeks so our listeners can enjoy the intimate performance and discussion. Not only are we providing airtime to our local artists but we also provide a safe space for artists to perform their craft and share their journey with our community. Beyond that, each artist also receives the mixed and mastered audio files from the performance - this content can be used by the artist for future releases or projects. With our performances focused on amplifying the voices of the underrepresented in our community, it was important to CKXU that we continue to provide support to our established local musicians or those who may not suit the focus of the recording aspect of the project. In the off weeks of performances, our regular FTR host spends some one-on-one time with other local musicians by inviting them on to co-host the FTR radio program. The musician gets to assist in curating the playlist, sharing their musical inspirations, providing some local love to their musician pals and generally, getting to nerd out with another music lover.

As we ramp up to our next proposal of funding, we've received lots of positive feedback from musicians we have opened our studios and airwaves to. Included in our application, you will find a letter of support from Brenna Lowrie, a local musician who was a co-host. Also included is an audio excerpt from one of our live performance and interview sessions. In this interview you'll hear directly from local rapper LRev who shares in the interview his connection to CKXU, it's importance in the Lethbridge music community and a quick trip into the history of hip hop in Lethbridge.

"A cultural hub for independent artists to share their creations is not only important but necessary for a thriving community. Time and time again, CKXU has shown dedication to art and culture through specialized programming and regular events focusing on the area and its people. "For the Record" has done a beautiful job of showcasing the art and artists who are unable to perform and record due to very necessary restrictions around gathering and performance. Although this was not the initial intention of the program, it became respite for a community missing its contributors. Dai Hewison and "For the Record" are giving a voice and a platform to important and impactful creations of music, while highlighting indigenous, BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, femme and gender non-conforming folks."

*- Mickey Hayward, Local Musician*

CKXU has helped our local musicians by connecting with underrepresented Southern Alberta artists who hadn't previously heard about us or the opportunities we offer, providing studio recording time to artists who haven't had prior access to professional studio space, providing meaningful space for creative dialogue, and the regular weekly production of locally-focused musical programming. We're only a few months into our project, but since then the "For the Record" team has recorded 12 musical performances, aired 69 hours of Albertan based musicians and co-hosted with 10 locally based artists. We are still set to complete additional programming for this project such as 4 live stream concerts or outdoor mini-fest events this summer, as well as recording 10 more performances and 10 additional local co-host episodes. Despite the challenges COVID-19 has sprung our way, "For the Record" continues to be a shining star in, and for, the Lethbridge community. The artists in our communities provide us with beautiful, rich and creative environments. They take us out of a difficult present or past and thrust us into a brighter future. Through this program, we have the privilege to be a part of that artistic journey while also providing a dynamic and engaging platform for their art to be heard. For the record, we're proud to be a foundational step in our local music community and we look forward to being the next.

Sincerely,

Adrianna Smith  
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