

Don Freed. (b. 1949)

Metis singer and songwriter, Don Freed was born in New Westminster, B.C., and raised in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. He began his musical career in 1966. In 1969, Don appeared with Johnny Cash in the documentary *Johnny Cash! The Man, His World, His Music*. He was subsequently signed by Capitol Records in 1972 and did one album which they did not release. Freed went on to record a number of albums in the early 1980s which were regionally popular in Western Canada including *Off in All Directions* and *Pith and Pathos*. Many of Freed's songs about prairie life have been incorporated into high school curricula throughout Saskatchewan.



In 1993, he produced *Young Northern Voices*, a series of songs written and recorded by students from the Northern Lights School Division in northern Saskatchewan. In 1996, he produced *Singing About the Métis*, which contains songs written by primary students from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. In 1999, Freed co-wrote *Sasquatch Exterminator*, a book (with accompanying CD) aimed at teaching Aboriginal language to children. It was produced by the Gabriel Dumont Institute. His CD, *The Valley of Green and Blue*, recounting the history of the 1885 Metis Resistance, was released by the Gabriel Dumont Institute in 2005.

Among performers who have collaborated with Freed on his recordings have been Colin James, Jane Siberry and actress Linda Griffiths. Don has also collaborated with Joni Mitchell on her album *Taming the Tiger*, co-writing the song "Crazy Cries of Love." Mitchell and Freed lived as a couple for seven years in the mid-1990s.



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute