

---

# *buffy sainte-marie*

## R U N N I N G F O R T H E D R U M

*The first new CD in 13 years from the award-winning singer-songwriter and Native American activist includes DVD bio documentary and marks Appleseed's 100<sup>th</sup> release!*



Buffy Sainte-Marie has been running for the drum practically her whole life, pursuing its internal call to life, love, independence, creativity and activism. That drumbeat has led her to multiple careers and *finally* drew her back into the recording studio to create ***Running for the Drum***, her first new recordings since 1996.

Response to the new CD has been overwhelming: it has earned Buffy her second **Juno Award** (the Canadian Grammy) for Best Aboriginal Album, the **Aboriginal People's Choice Music Award (APCMA)** for Best Album, and four **Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards** for Best Female Artist, Best Album, Best Single ("No No Keshagesh") and Best Songwriter. Buffy also became the first person to win the **APCMA's Lifetime Achievement Award** and was the 25<sup>th</sup> inductee into the **Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame**.

Since her recording debut 45 years ago, Sainte-Marie's original songs have attracted cover versions by artists including Elvis Presley, Barbra Streisand, Janis Joplin, Cher, Roberta Flack, Neko Case, Courtney Love, and seemingly half the folksingers of the 1960s. Her co-written "**Up Where We Belong**," the theme from the 1982 movie **An Officer and a Gentleman**, won her an **Academy Award** and a **Golden Globe Award**.

The multi-talented Sainte-Marie recently shifted her focus from her work as a visual and digital artist, an educator, and a Native American sociopolitical activist to record ***Running for the Drum*** in her home studio in Hawaii. With musician Chris Birkett as her co-producer, as he was on her last two CDs, including *Up Where We Belong* (1996), Buffy crafted eleven original songs and an expanded version of "America the Beautiful" into what she calls her "usual whiplash collection of many styles – pop, protest, country, rock, dance-remix, rockabilly and big love songs."

Using electronic samples and drum programming as well as more conventional instruments, primary musicians Buffy (keyboards, percussion, guitar) and Birkett (guitars, bass, percussion) match their music to Buffy's eclectic songs. Her contemptuous putdowns of corporate greed ("**No No Keshagesh**," which **Buffy performs in a new video posted on YouTube**) and the political establishment ("Working for the Government") are set to whirling electronica and wailing "powwow" vocals, as is the jubilant "Cho Cho Fire." There are contrastingly gentle arrangements of love songs "Too Much is Never Enough" and "Still This Love Goes On"; a boisterous "I Bet My Heart on You" features Buffy and guest **Taj Mahal** dueting on pianos; the quietly comforting "Easy Like the Snow Falls Down"; an amped Elvis approach to "Blue Sunday," and appropriately acoustic treatments of "America the Beautiful," outfitted with new lyrics to reflect the Native American community, and a lovely re-recording of a Sainte-Marie classic, "Little Wheel Spin and Spin."

Packaged with ***Running for the Drum*** is a DVD documentary, ***Buffy Sainte-Marie: A Multimedia Life*** (Cine Focus and Paquin Pictures). The biography traces Buffy's fascinating path from her birth on a Cree reservation in Saskatchewan to her early success in the Greenwich Village folk scene, her subsequent musical and political activism, which earned her a spot on the government's blacklist, and to her current role as artist, educator, unstinting activist and timeless musician. Directed by Joan Prowse, the documentary includes interviews with such influential artists as Joni Mitchell, Robbie Robertson, Bill Cosby, Randy Bachman, Appleseed labelmate Eric Andersen, and Steppenwolf's John Kay.



## About *buffy sainte-marie*

It's no coincidence that Buffy Sainte-Marie's first album, released in 1964, was entitled *It's My Way!* As a Native American born on a Cree reservation in Saskatchewan and raised in Maine and Massachusetts, Buffy was a cultural outsider from the start, following her own creative instincts. "I was always a musician," she told writer j. poet. "I remember playing piano when I was three. It became my substitute for the Barbie dolls that interested other kids. I was a recluse, in love with animals, art, dance, writing and music . . ."

At 16, Buffy started playing guitar and writing the songs that would eventually stock her early albums, but she didn't consider a professional career as a musician, graduating from the University of Massachusetts with a degree in Oriental Philosophy, a minor in education, and a plan to go to India to continue her studies. But with three years' experience performing in coffeehouses during her college career, the call of an "open mike" night in Greenwich Village was too much to resist.

After a year or two of Village performances, Buffy's recording debut, *It's My Way!*, established her internationally as a distinctive vocalist with a unique vibrato and as a powerful songwriter, earning her Billboard's "Best New Artist" award in 1964. The bitter "Now That the Buffalo's Gone" led off the album as Buffy's first of many songs to confront the situation of Native Americans as second-class citizens. Two other originals would become folk standards – the anti-war "The Universal Soldier" was an early hit in England for Donovan and received multiple cover versions, as would "Cod'ine," one of the few anti-drug songs of the Sixties, which was recorded by Quicksilver Messenger Service, Janis Joplin, and Courtney Love, among others.

By age 24, Buffy had toured throughout the US, Canada, Asia, and Australia, winning awards and fans as well as interacting with Native peoples around the world. "Until It's Time for You to Go," a wistful love song on her second album (*Many a Mile*, 1965), expanded Buffy's reputation in other musical genres through numerous versions by Elvis Presley, Barbara Streisand, Neil Diamond, Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra, and many more.

Buffy's outspoken stance toward Native American issues was a mixed blessing for her musical career. During the Kennedy administration, she was invited to Washington, D.C.'s Upward Bound program, participated in Rupert Costo's First Colloquium of American Indian Scholars, and worked with American Indian Movement (AIM) founders Dennis Banks, Russell Means and others. "Although they were unenlightened about women and elders," Buffy told an interviewer, "they spectacularly educated urban Indians about legal and civil rights."

But what was commendable to one administration was anathema to the following regimes. Buffy's Native American activities categorized her as "an artist to be suppressed" by Lyndon Johnson, and she also was placed on Richard Nixon's infamous Enemies List. The blacklisting, which included Eartha Kitt, Taj Mahal and other politically active musicians, denied her airplay and gagged her television appearances; her albums of the early Seventies were barely distributed.

At a commercial impasse, Buffy stopped recording in 1976 and devoted her time to her artwork, studying electronic music and raising her son, Dakota Starblanket Wolfchild. During this period, Buffy and Dakota were regulars on TV's "Sesame Street" for five years, teaching viewers about child-rearing and Native American lifestyles. She continued to tour outside the country, appeared at numerous grassroots concerts, AIM events and other activist benefits in Canada, taped television specials, and scored movies, winning **Academy** and **Golden Globe Awards** for her co-written composition, "**Up Where We Belong**," the theme music to 1982's hit movie, "An Officer and a Gentleman."

Buffy returned to recording with *Coincidence and Likely Stories* in 1992, a busy year in which she helped establish a new Juno Awards category for music of Aboriginal Canada (an award she has since won twice), was named "International Artist of the Year" in France, and was chosen by the United Nations to proclaim 1993 as "International Year of Indigenous People." She also headlined a tour of Scandinavia by Indigenous artists, televised in various European countries, and even starred with Pierce Brosnan in the made-for-television film, "The Broken Chain."

Her interests and achievements have never stopped. She has continued her academic life, adding a PhD in Fine Arts to her resume; she lectures at colleges and civic venues on an array of topics including film scoring, electronic music, Native American studies, women's issues, and the Cradleboard Teaching Project, which involves enriching the



learning curriculum with Native American perspectives. An early Macintosh pioneer in digital art and music, Buffy's huge electronic paintings are exhibited in numerous museums and galleries. Juxtaposing her traditional cultural heritage with modern technology, Buffy Sainte-Marie has become a model of unquenchable artistry and activism.

