



Napoleon Conquers the Cultural Centre

by **Dan Davidson**

Art Napoleon as "Joe Indigenous". *Photo by Dan Davidson*

Art Napoleon provided an engaging two hour show of comedy and music at the Dänòja Zho Cultural Centre on the evening of March 28, bringing his self-deprecating humour and intense lyrics to the stage there.

Art is a Cree musician, writer and performing artist from Moberly, British Columbia who grew up with his grandparents and says he learned a lot about being a native from that experience. Though he quickly notes that that it was not all a bed of roses, he took away more good than bad from his youth.

Art is busy in a number of artistic endeavours. His stage presentation includes aspects of stand-up comedy, story telling and philosophising, as well as musical presentations in a number of styles.

His English lyrics tend to deal with the sadder side of aboriginal life, while his stories poke fun at any attempt to take that life too seriously. As Joe Indigenous, he performed a "Cree Rant" (can be viewed at <http://www.screenweavers.com>) which he made up as a spoof of the "I Am Canadian" commercial, and also read a short story which poked gentle fun at a group of "native elders" who were being taken way too seriously by people at a conference.

In media, Art has been involved with the Cree for Kids project (see <http://www.creeforkids.ca/>) for which he provides the voice of the elder puppet Mosum (granpa) Marvin.

Art likes to involve his audiences in his performances, so it was no surprise that locals Georgette McLeod and Dominic Lloyd ended up on the stage providing percussion for one of his Cree chanting songs.

The audience at the cultural centre appeared to have a great evening with Art. His humour and music seemed to strike just the right notes for a Friday evening out with friends.

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