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Indian National Finals Rodeo

Ready-for-Release #5 --- COWBOY CROONER ARMOND DUCK CHIEF

For rodeo cowboy balladeer Armond Duck Chief, wrestling steers and making music are just a natural combination.

Born and raised in Blackfoot territory with 7 brothers, the Siksika Nation (Alberta, Canada) native grew up listening to country music legends and got comfortable behind the microphone following his initial appearance at a karaoke bar. Now in his early 30s, he started singing country tunes about 10 years ago and began writing country content about 4 years ago. Confident of his vocal abilities, his cousin helped him take up the guitar and he ultimately released his debut album (*Country Groove*) at the Indian National Finals Rodeo in 2011.

His overlapping worlds of crooning and cowboying are evident in that album that features song titles like "Ridin' the Rodeo," "Gold Buckle Dreams," and "Broken Down Cowboy." Recently Duck Chief took a break from his college business administration studies for some studio time to record his next release expected this fall.

"This CD will be a combination of cowboy music --- hurtin', lovin', losin' --- close to traditional country sound as I grew up listening to a fiddle and steel guitar. I wrote all the songs for this one which will be called...oh, something with *cowboy* in the title."

"He's a down home, feel good, country boy living a life honest to the land, working and playing in the dirt," according to the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA). "Living the country life has a close relationship with rodeo life and Armond clearly has his own connections with the roughrider culture (with not just one, but two versions of *Gold Buckle Dreams* on his CD)."

The Aboriginal Peoples Choice Awards web page notes, "His knack for the old country music is evident in his style of singing about life and rodeo." The inspiration for his music about being on the road and in the saddle chasing the gold buckle dream comes from his active participation in rodeos across North America.

His original creations reflect the music maker himself, steeped in country tradition about life, love, and the rodeo. Described by his Lethbridge College administrators as, “a successful rodeo cowboy, pow wow singer/dancer/drummer, hockey player, and father,” Duck Chief received the 2012 Blackfoot Arts Award in recognition for his contributions to tribal identity, pride and inspiration.

Acknowledging that his goals are to get his songs on main-stream radio and playing at the Grand Ole Opry, he had some tongue-in-cheek advice for others who wanted to pursue the same dreams. In an interview with *Iksokapi* magazine, he recommended: “Go wrestle a steer, and, if you live through it, write a song about it!”

He intends to continue doing both. Asked if he saw his future in the saddle or behind a microphone, he replied, “A combination of both, good Lord willing, because I love rodeo as much as I love music, and doing both is the best of both worlds, truly a blessing that I plan to continue doing for as long as I can.”

So while he records in the studio, he still saddles up in the arena. “Like every cowboy and cowgirl, I’m still chasing the gold buckle dream to strap one on my belt. After being shut out of the finals the past couple of years, I have my sights set on competing in this years’ INFR and right now, I’m just trying to make every run count.”

For those aspiring to follow in Duck Chief’s footsteps, he recommends: “Believe in yourself and your abilities and have the tenacity to grind it out --- no matter what obstacles come your way. Don’t give up on your dreams!”

