ARTS AND CULTURE NUNAVIK ᓄᓇᕕᒃ

Festival favourites close out Aqpik Jam 2025

Niivi Snowball, Florant Vollant highlight end to annual Kuujjuaq music festival

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Local Journalism
Initiative Reporter

Kuujjuaq singer-songwriter Niivi Snowball was eyeing the end of Aqpik Jam Music Festival as the date to release a new album and celebrate it with a hometown crowd.

However, issues came up in the production, forcing a slight change of plans.

"Some of our files were corrupted and we lost a lot of the vocal takes that we did," the 17-year-old rock musician, who uses they/them pronouns, said in an interview before their set.

"It's all right to have setbacks," Snowball said. "I want to make sure that I'm 100 per cent proud of this album and I can feel good about putting my name on this project."

Snowball is looking at a release date next month, possibly around the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Sept. 30.

For now, the show must go on.

"Aqpik Jam is really special to me because I've done the festival almost every year since I was four years old," said Snowball, who has been on a tour this summer with stops in Nunavut, Montreal, Ottawa and Greenland.

Snowball was one of a few festival favourites who closed out this year's Aqpik Jam at the Kuujjuaq Forum on Aug. 15. The full-band set won the admiration of many small children up front and cheers from the hometown crowd.



Florent Vollant performs at the Kuujjuaq Forum on Aug. 15, the closing night of Aqpik Jam.

Florent Vollant — an Innu singer who formerly played in the duo Kashtin — made his return to the stage, also to an enthusiastic welcome from a familiar audience. The singer, who has played Aqpik Jam many times before, arrived onstage in a wheelchair, having recovered from a stroke a few years ago.

"Florent has worked very hard to get where he's at," said Johnny Adams, the master of ceremonies for the show.

And from the top, Vollant said he wanted to see the crowd get on their feet, which many in the audience did.

"I'm happy when I see you dancing," Vollant said.

"It's a good time to come back here in Kuujjuaq."

Earlier in the show, children who spent the last few days learning music with Nunavik Rocks — a local music education program — took to the stage. Much to the joy of kids and parents in the room, the future rock stars showed what they were working on, including covers of Lenny Kravitz's *Fly Away* and Bobby McFerrin's *Don't Worry, Be Happy.*

Other acts to take part in the festival's fourth and final night included Lucy Johannes, Matan, the Locals and a Doors tribute band called Feast of Friends.



Kuujjuaq's Niivi Snowball plays a hometown show on the final night of the Aqpik Jam Music Festival. The 17-year-old has been a regular at the Nunavik festival since the age of four. (Photos by Jeff Pelletier)



Instructors and students with the Nunavik Rocks Music program showcase their talents at Aqpik Jam in Kuujjuaq on Aug. 15.

Kuujjuaq Mayor Mary Johannes, who served as master of ceremonies for much of Aqpik Jam, said it was great to see so many people, and families from other communities attend the festival.

Next year, something big is in the works for the festival's 30th anniversary.

"We're looking forward to having a big reunion with all the performers that used to come," the mayor said.

"We're hoping to have more fans next year."



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