

Highlands wilderness attracts Yukon musician



Yukon musician Kate Weekes entertained at the Arlington on April 8, during a weekend stop over before she will be returning to Northern Canada for guiding and the summer festival scene. Photo by Christian Kuntz, supplied by Kate Weekes

Yukon musician Kate Weekes enjoyed the Hastings Highlands over the weekend, with her visit culminating on Friday at the Arlington with a live performance of songs from her album *Frost on Black Fur*.

A dog musher in the Yukon for eight years, as well as an avid canoeist, Weekes sought out the Highlands after spending time in Vermont. There she met Aleks Gusev, who runs the Toronto Wilderness Canoe Symposium and has a cabin on the Madawaska. "A group of us are getting together for a chilly spring paddle this weekend," said Weekes. "That is how Maynooth worked its way into my tour schedule."

Weekes's vocals are a fusion of folk, jazz and soul, with a wide range of tones and harmonies that are reminiscent of Joni Mitchell's early years. They are also divergent, like Canadian singer Valerie Gore.

Weekes featured well known collaborations like *Beneath the Yukon Moon* on Saturday night, as she took her place on the Arlington stage, known as the stomping ground of several Juno award-winners such as Mary Milne, Howard Baer and Jane Bunnett.

"Over the years I've had the opportunity to perform shows that are geared toward paddlers and outdoor enthusiasts," said Weekes. "In February of last year I performed at the Wilderness Canoe Symposium in Toronto, as well as at the Northern Paddlers Gathering in Vermont."

Weekes arrived to Bancroft on the heels of a residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta. "The time at the Banff Centre was a great start to the winter. Since then, it's been a whirlwind of Canadian landscape, lovely people and excellent music."

Lyrics like "Something in this winter has everyone losing their heads," from the song "Trees Comin' Down" "trees that are weighted by winter and weary from waiting for spring" captured the mood in the Highlands after Wednesday's snow squall.

Weekes has been touring in western Canada for much of the winter, followed up by a Home Routes house concert tour in B.C., plus a CD release tour with Yukon fiddle trio Home Sweet Home in Saskatchewan.

Weekes is a popular musician in northern Canada, where she used a kickstarter campaign to fund her new album, which incorporates themes from her travels.

The Arlington continues to establish itself as the venue for artists on the festival scene, as well as the likes of Weekes who made the trek for a personalized outdoor adventure.

The Arlington, which draws patrons from Lake St. Peter, Killaloe, Wilno, Bancroft, and cottage country lakes, boasts a comprehensive roster of musicians who have been known to drop-in, off-the-cuff, when the time is right.

Upcoming shows which are sure to delight include Ray Spoon and LAL, musicians who explore themes of gender identity and social activism through their music.