

# Songwriter teaches her craft

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SWIFT CURRENT

Carrie Catherine tells vivid stories in her soul-filled songs, and she wants to teach Swift Current teens to do the same.

The Saskatoon chanteuse recently released her third CD at a Blenders event in Swift Current. While she was here, she met with students at Maverick School, where she will be teaching songwriting workshops in the new year.

Catherine started writing songs as a child, and later wrote "a lot of really bad teenage poetry", she said. Her current writing process was born of that early experience. She grew up playing classical piano, but found her songwriting voice when she learned the guitar.

Her third album's name, "Green-Eyed Soul", is how Catherine describes her musical genre. Her sound is

influenced by artists like Al Green, Macy Gray, and Aretha Franklin, but also by her life as a prairie girl.

"They're prairie stories but I'm very influenced by soul music, and that deep funk and groove and something that really speaks to you on a number of different levels," she said, following her Swift Current performance at the Art Gallery. "That's where Green-Eyed soul came from: I've got green eyes, I'm living in the green prairie, and it's just my take on it."

Her songs tell simple stories from her life, and come from sentimental, meaningful events, to offhand comments she might hear during the day. She describes her songwriting process as walking into a library, with a wing full of musical ideas, and another full of lyrical ideas.



Photos by Aasa Marshall

Carrie Catherine played Blenders shows Nov. 16 and 17.

"I love the process of pulling out beauty in our day that we tend to overlook, and then just lighting it up," she said. "That's my process is walking into the library and seeing which books I'm going to pull out of the lyrical wing and the musical wing, and start to build some sort of emotion out of that idea."

Teaching people to write songs is difficult, she said, because everyone has to discover his or her own process. But she's had some practice now, after taking part in workshops in Saskatoon schools during the Junos, and again in Val Marie, where she did three sessions with students there.

Maverick has applied for an ArtsSmart grant through the Saskatchewan Arts Board to fund the workshops Catherine plans to hold in 2008. She stopped by the school November 16, before her Blenders appearances, to see the school, meet the

students, and play a few of her songs. In return, Maverick students played for her a few of their own tunes.

Now that she's visited the school, Catherine can't wait to get started.

"You walk through those doors [at Maverick] and you feel there's a lot of energy in there, but you also feel a real sense of community, so I'm so excited to be writing with them," she said. "Those kids so have something to say... I'm very impressed and I can't wait to see what they're going to teach me."

The students will also work with Dave Lang, who will begin a Musician in Residence program at the Lyric in January. Lang will help the students record their songs, and create music videos to go along with them.

Like last year, when the school got an ArtsSmart grant to do a pottery workshop, the school will hold a Coffee House and Art Auction at the Lyric at the end of the program, where the students can play their songs and their videos. The event is intended to be an annual fundraiser for the school, so it can fund ongoing arts training.