

Well known Cree musician killed in Highway 44 collision

Northern Alberta News | Features | Commentary \$1.90

The FEVER

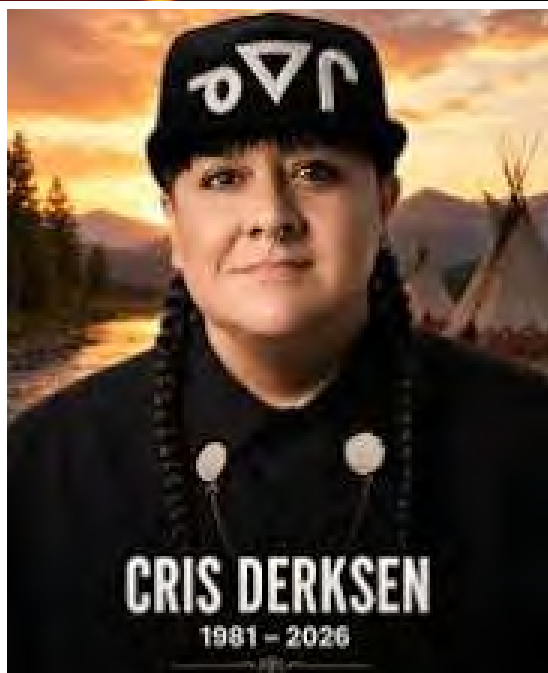
Volume 27, Issue 18

Thursday, May 21, 2026

IN THIS ISSUE:

**Lack of activity
can be really
bad for health**

**Sports betting
and its ads
get mixed
review**



Lots of Volleyball action
Friday through Sunday
in Wabasca!

**See Two Pages
of Photos & Results**

Fever 6 & 7

A world famous cellist from Tall Cree First Nation was killed in a head-on collision north of Slave Lake about 6:30 p.m., Friday, May 15.

Cris Derksen, a 45-year-old Cree/Mennonite composer, was a two-spirited performer on symphony stages both in and outside of Canada. She was a passenger in a southbound SUV driven by her wife, Rebecca, on Highway 44, near Township Road 684, when a northbound Audi SUV crossed the centre line and hit the other vehicle.

According to Slave Lake RCMP, Derksen was declared deceased at the scene of the crash by Emergency Medical Services.

The drivers of the two vehicles were transported to hospital with serious injuries.

Slave Lake RCMP have asked for any witness to the crash or the movement of the vehicles prior to it, or related dashcam video between 5:15 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., along Highway 44 to contact Slave Lake Detachment, 780-849-3045.

The musical couple were drawn to Slave Lake for Derksen's father's, Bernard Meenan, funeral services. He was a former Chief of Tall Cree First Nation. Her mother was a Mennonite. Derksen lived in Edmonton.

Accolades for a unique musician

By Sunday all type of tributes were coming forth from across Canada and from other countries where Derksen and wife

Derksen arrived onto the national music scene with her collaborations with Inuit singer/songwriter Tanya Tagaq.

"We were so young. Baby musicians. You've been part of my life for so long. You danced so hard you broke your foot, twice," Tagaq posted Sunday. "I miss you already. All our crazy adventures. The music. You helped me when my daughter was injured. I wish you were here still. I love you Cris."

"One of the defining works of her 20-year career cut way too short, will be their classical meets Indigenous traditional masterpiece Orchestral Powwow was another fellow musician's remark.

Premier Wab Kinew posted this on his Facebook: "I am very sad to hear the news about Cris Derksen. She was a wonderful person and extraordinary talent.

"She scored the TV series "8th Fire," which was instrumental in my broadcasting career, and I felt increasingly invested in her work ever since. She will be missed. My sincere condolences to her family and friend."

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra on Sunday provided an online broadcast in her Derksen's honour: "We are deeply saddened by the passing of Alberta composer, cellist, and collaborator Cris Derksen.

"Today, we are resharing War Cry, a powerful work she performed at the Winspear Centre alongside her wife, vocalist Rebecca Benson, as part of the ESO's Love Is A Battlefield concert. Most recently, her music was also featured as part of Love Letters to Alberta earlier this season.

"Cris' work carried strength, emotion, and connection, leaving a lasting impact on audiences, musicians, and communities across the country.

"Our hearts are with Cris' family, friends, collaborators, and the wider music community mourning this tremendous loss. Her voice and music will continue to resonate far beyond the stage."