

Kashtin truly broke new ground internationally as Indigenous musicians. The duo is made up of Claude McKenzie and Florent Vollant, who became friends while living in the Malinotnam First Nation, located on the North Shore of the Saint Lawrence River in Québec. It was around 1983, that they began by playing cover tunes, but they also included traditional songs sung in their Innu language. Their voices magically melded together and Kashtin officially formed in 1984. Kashtin in the Innu language means Tornado, which was very telling of the effect their music would have in the world. The duo increasingly became well-known in Northern Québec playing clubs and bars and many festivals.

A Montreal based film crew made their trip up north to record the festival and capture footage for a documentary about music in northern Québec. While making their television debut, Kashtin caught the eyes and ears of Guy Trépanier, head of Montreal's Groupe Concept Musique. Guy arranged for them to come to Montreal at Studio Concept and directed and produced their first album. The self-titled Kashtin, was released across Canada and quickly sold one hundred thousand copies just within Québec. Regardless of the fact that the entire album was in Kashtin's Innu language the album went double platinum in Canada, this is very historic as fewer than 13 thousand people speak the Innu language. The album included many hits that included "My Childhood", and also "Song of the Devil" and "Ourselves" which has been described as an Innu anthem.

Kashtin were suddenly in demand worldwide, they toured extensively across Canada, South Korea and in Europe. In 1990 they achieved Top 10 in France, a country that widely celebrated their music and live shows. They made their debut in France in 1989, returning some 15 times by 1991. One engagement saw them in Paris for 5 days as they were on tour with The Gypsy Kings and well-known producer, musician Daniel Lanois.

In 1991, Kashtin released their second album titled "Innu", with a growing fan base and glowing reviews they toured across Canada and again were doing shows in Europe and the United States. Kashtin signed with Columbia Records for their third album "Akua Tuta" which was simultaneously released in the United States and Canada in 1994. The title track was chosen by Robbie Robertson for his television soundtrack "Music for the Native Americans" and was also used in "Due South" in the episode "Hawk and Hawksaw". Their music also appeared on soundtracks like "Dance Me Outside" and in television series like "Northern Exposure". "Akua Tuta" received a Juno nomination for Best Aboriginal Recording at the Juno Awards in 1995. All three of their albums have been nominated for Junos. Following their last album, Florent announced that he wanted to take a break from music and Claude released a solo debut album "Innu Town" in 1996. Florent reemerged in 1999 with a solo album "Nipaiamianan", as a duo they have not released another album as Kashtin since, although they do continue to perform occasional live shows together.

Kashtin's legacy is a First Nation duo who took their music to the world by storm.

Kashtin recognized by the National Music Centre.