

Born in 1940, Métis producer, television host and recording artist Ray St. Germain began playing music while growing up in St. Vital, a suburb in Winnipeg, Manitoba. As a teenager he began performing on the accordion but soon switched over to guitar because, as he said, it looked a little silly jumping all over the stage with an accordion. As a teenager Ray emerged as a popular rockabilly performer, at the age of 14 he took the stage at local talent shows then at 16 he was asked to join a traveling show with country star Hal Lone Pine, Betty Cody and their son, soon to be Jazz legend Lenny Breau. During this period, Ray performed on bills with such greats as Johnny Cash, Porter Wagoner, and Johnny Horton. Ray earned the nickname "Winnipeg's Elvis". In 1958 he entered Arbuthnot Studios in St. Boniface with Lenny Breau on lead guitar to record a song he penned "She's a Square" the 45 record was released to radio and hit the top ten in Manitoba. "She's a Square" by Ray St. Germain.

### **"She's a Square" Ray St. Germain**

That was "She's a Square" by Métis sensation Ray St. Germain here at the NMC Speak Up! Exhibition. Ray's tremendous onstage charisma led to a television career that began when he was just 18 years old, winning a cross Canada CBC TV National Talent contest called "Talent Caravan". This led to many television series including, "Like Young" and "Music Hootenanny" that ran from 1964 to 1966. Then in 1969 Ray was the host/performer of "Time for Livin'" a national CBC television show produced in Toronto. His voice, name and face became synonymous with music of the times, one duet he fondly remembered was with Ann Murry. Here is an example of a song that showcases Ray's signature country sound, "Dynamite Woman" released in the 1980's which contributed to his reputation as a Canadian country artist.

### **"Dynamite Woman" Ray St. Germain**

That was "Dynamite Woman" by Métis artist, Ray St. Germain, here at the Speak Up! Exhibition. Ray's television career further grew with the 1970 CBC series "My Kind of Country" which featured many of the biggest names in country music. By 1978 Ray wrote, produced and hosted the "Big Sky Country" television series for Global Television which won the Can-Pro Gold Award for "Best New Variety Show," it aired nationally up until 1990 with some 200 shows over thirteen years syndicated nationally.

Connecting to his Métis heritage as an adult became fundamental to Ray, he utilized his platform to not only celebrate his people but to bring about an understating of the Red River Métis culture. His iconic song "I'm Mighty Proud I'm Métis," was first released in 1973 and soon became an anthem for the Métis Nation, this song embodies the resilience and spirit of the Métis Nation.

### **"I'm Mighty Proud I'm Métis," Ray St. Germain**

That was "I'm Mighty Proud I'm Métis," by Ray St. Germain here at NMC's Speak Up Exhibition, Ray also recorded other Métis themed songs including "Whatcha Gonna Call Me"

and "The Métis" which earned him an Aboriginal Order of Canada in 1985. In his later years Ray hosted the weekly radio program "Métis Hour X2" on NCI-FM.

Ray received numerous awards throughout his career, a few include being inducted into the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame in 2010, the recipient of the Order of Manitoba in 2013, and a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards in 2013. Ray journeyed on June 25, 2024 and his legacy as a Métis artist continues here at NMC's Speak Up! Exhibition.