

Drezus is an Indigenous rapper and activist based in Calgary. He grew up facing multiple stints in jail, living within a violent circle—a drug-induced street life. But he found deep direction in his life through culture, spirituality, and rap-hip hop music. His life changed through traditional ceremony, which he shares through his music, to bring light to others who've fallen into darkness. In the early 2000s, Drezus was invited to become a founding member of the group Rezofficial, which would include some of the former members of War Party. Their debut CD, *The Foundation*, would go on to win the Canadian Aboriginal Music Award for Best Rap Hip Hop album of 2004. Their next big break would come in the form of an invitation to perform at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games. Drezus, however, was not able to perform as a result of a distribution charge that called for five years in jail. It was while attending a drug rehabilitation in 2012 he took a cultural course that opened his mind to Cree Anishinaabe teachings. As a result, he learned traditional songs and began to care about who he was as an Indigenous man. Committing to music and a new life, his 2013 album, *Red Winter*, won multiple awards and an invite to speak to government agencies such as the Calgary Young Offender Center. His accomplishments that followed include awards for Best Music Video, Best Producer/Engineer, Best Rap/Hip-Hop Album, and Indigenous Entertainer of the Year. Many of these awards followed the success of his album *Indian Summer*, released in the summer of 2014. In 2017, his skills as a rapper and community advocate received the attention of Taboo from the Black Eyed Peas. Drezus alongside Taboo with Mag 7, won an MTV VMA Video Award for “Best Fight Against the System” in the summer of 2017. Since his success, Drezus has worked hard on giving back to his community. Today, he tells youth that they are young warriors and have a special place in this world as light givers, to always find a way out of dark places that prevent happiness, to be yourself, love hard and work harder. He shares that a light can guide you and show you a whole different world full of opportunity and goodness. In August of 2019, Drezus appeared in the American television series *Yellowstone* Season Two as himself, and he continues to create music, record, and connect with Indigenous youth. Drezus’ voice is a positive instigator for change and is recognized within NMC's Speak Up exhibition.