

Ferron is Métis and was born Debbie Foisy. She is an acclaimed folk singer, songwriter, and poet who is recognized as one of Canada's most prolific folk musicians. As an influential writer and performer her voice became a major influence on later musicians such as Ani DiFranco and the Indigo Girls. As an outspoken advocate for social justice issues, one of Ferron's first hits 1980s *Testimony* became an unofficial anthem for the post folk woman's music movement and woman everywhere, looking to see themselves in powerful artistic form. Ferron learned to play guitar at age 11 and left home at 15 and attended Total Ed, an alternative high school in Vancouver, graduating in 1973. She made her professional debut in 1974 playing the song "Who Loses" at a benefit for the Women's Press Gang. She subsequently established her own record label, Lucy Records, and released her debut album in 1977. The album *Testimony* was her first professionally produced record and brought her much interest in the U.S., particularly in the women's music community. Ferron's unique voicing, phrasing and poetic songwriting brought favorable comparisons to Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen. One review summed up Ferron's status by calling her the Johnny Cash of lesbian folk singing. Her 1984 album, *Shadows on a Dime*, received a four-star review, the highest rating from Rolling Stone magazine. She was also awarded a Canada Arts Council grant to further develop her musicianship. In 1990, she released *Phantom Center*. The album featured backing vocals by a then unheard of Tori Amos. It was later re-released as a duet with the Indigo Girls. Between 1992 and 1994, Ferron released three albums on her own Cherrywood Station label. *Driver* was picked up by EarthBeat! Records and was highly acclaimed by critics as a masterwork and nominated for a Juno in 1995. Warner Brothers record signed Ferron. She released *Still Riot*, which received an OUTmusic Award for lifetime achievement at the Gay & Lesbian American Music Awards in 1996. As a benefit for the Institute of Musical Arts, otherwise known as IMA, Ferron released *Inside Out* in 1999, covering well-known tunes from the fifties to the seventies. She also self-published a book, "The Hunger Poems", while she was teaching songwriting at IMA. Ferron is also prominently featured in the documentary on women's music "Radical Harmonies", released in 2002. In 2008, Ferron released *Boulder*, produced by popular underground artist Bitch. Featuring duets and collaborations with Ani DiFranco, the Indigo Girls and Le Tigre and others. In 2004, Ferron returned for longer stints to the very island where some of her earliest recordings were made off the B.C. coast. Today, Ferron continues to tour and teach master classes in writing. Ferron's voice is a positive instigator for change and is recognized within NMC's Speak Up exhibition.