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**YOUNG PERFORMER ALUMNUS SHEENA GROBB TO PLAY AT WINTER WASSAIL**  
**Primary Fundraising Event for Winnipeg Folk Festival's Education and Outreach Programs**

Winnipeg, November 16, 2009 – The Winnipeg Folk Festival's annual Winter Wassail takes place on Thursday, November 26. British Troubadour and political activist Billy Bragg will be honoured with the Winnipeg Folk Festival 2009 Artistic Achievement Award, and will perform during the evening.

Since the Winter Wassail is the primary fundraising event for the Winnipeg Folk Festival's Education and Outreach Programs, it's fitting for an alumnus of the Young Performers Program to take the stage. This year, Winnipeg singer/songwriter Sheena Grobb will perform a song at the Winter Wassail. She is an artist who truly epitomizes the Winnipeg Folk Festival's mandate for artist development.

**ABOUT SHEENA GROBB**

Sheena participated in the Young Performers Program from 2002 to 2005. She made such an impact that she was invited to perform at the Winnipeg Folk Festival in 2006. The festival then nominated her for Bootlegger's National Generation B Campaign, and also for a Winnipeg Arts Council Award in the category of 'On the Rise'.

Sheena has gone on to release the successful debut EP *Safe Guarded Space*, nominated Outstanding Pop Recording at the 2007 Western Canadian Music Awards. She performs to audiences ranging from ten people at a private house concert to 17,000 festival fans in a field. With more than 150 tour dates under her belt, she has shared stages with Bedouin Sound Clash, Melanie Doane, Nathan, and Randy Bachman, and toured with Allison Lickley, Craig Cardiff, and others. Her second album, *Grow*, is scheduled for release in early 2010, promising even more potential for this young artist who credits the festival for contributing to her career development.

"The Winnipeg Folk Festival's Young Performers Program gave my songwriting a chance to take form. It provided me with the opportunity to try on performing as a career, and introduced me to the invaluable concept of artist mentorship – an integral step in my professional development," says Sheena.

**ABOUT THE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

A success story like Sheena's is the very reason why the Winnipeg Folk Festival offers Education and Outreach programs: "True to folk tradition, the Winnipeg Folk Festival has long been committed to fostering the next generation of musicians. We created the Young Performer's Program to enhance the mentorship that happens so naturally in our community and to support young artists like Sheena as they realize their artistic dreams," says Executive Director Tamara Kater.

The Winnipeg Folk Festival's Education and Outreach Programs benefit the community in many ways, and are designed to achieve four goals:

- DEVELOP FUTURE ARTISTS – programs include Young Performers, Young Artists, Folk Retreat, Folk School.
- MAKE MUSIC ACCESSIBLE – programs include Guest for a Day, Music in the Library, Music in the Market.
- DEVELOP NEXT GENERATION OF AUDIENCES/VOLUNTEERS – programs include Little Folk, Apprentice Program, Festival Family Area.
- BRING MUSIC TO WINNIPEG YEAR-ROUND – programs include Folk Exchange, Folk Festival Music Store.

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### ***ABOUT THE WINTER WASSAIL***

The Winter Wassail raises money for the Winnipeg Folk Festival's Education and Outreach Programs, which reach more than 10,000 people each year. Proceeds from the Winter Wassail go towards:

- Distributing over 600 free tickets for the 2010 Winnipeg Folk Festival through local community organizations.
- Investing in the training and development of more than 200 young performers and visual artists.
- Offering more than 25 free noon-hour concerts and family workshops in partnership with the Winnipeg Public Library at the downtown Millennium branch.
- Teaching 3,500 children the value of music and artistic expression through the 2010 Winnipeg Folk Festival Family Area and our year-round family concerts.
- Sustaining the development of future Education and Outreach programs.

The 2009 Winter Wassail takes place at the Winnipeg Convention Centre on Thursday, November 26, featuring dinner, silent auction, and medieval-themed music and animation. Call 204-231-0096 for tickets (\$125 each). A tax receipt is issued for a portion of the ticket price.

### ***ABOUT THE WINNIPEG FOLK FESTIVAL***

The Winnipeg Folk Festival is one of North America's premier outdoor music festivals, happening the second weekend of every July in Birds Hill Provincial Park, Manitoba, Canada. It is also a year-round arts organization in Winnipeg, Manitoba, presenting the best in live music, music training, and arts events, and operating a folk music store in Old Market Square. The Winnipeg Folk Festival is a not-for-profit charitable organization.

[www.winnipegfolkfestival.ca](http://www.winnipegfolkfestival.ca)

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