



## SOUNDING ICELANDIC

Mykael Sopher  
Winnipeg, MB

# 11 Year-Old Bjornson steals the show at the Burton Cummings Theatre

On March 5th, 2011, the scene at the Burton Cummings Theatre in Winnipeg was like any other night: a young, excitable crowd of 1000 people sang along, word for word, with the songs played by the musician onstage.

Except on this night, there was one key difference. It wasn't the headliners of the four-act bill, Toronto-based rap/rock septet Down with Webster, that ignited such a fun, heady sing-a-long.

It was 11 year-old crowd opener Dane Bjornson.

Armed with just an acoustic guitar and a supremely confident stage presence, Bjornson dazzled the highly responsive crowd for a solid half-hour, performing a mix of original tunes and popular covers.

To earn such this prime opening slot, Bjornson – the son of Peter and Joanne Bjornson; grandparents, Don and Hedy Bjornson and Ken and Linda Duthie, all from Gimli – had to beat out all the competition in Hot 103's "Open for Down with Webster" contest.

It all started when his mom submitted to the radio station a YouTube video of Dane performing at the Interlake Nexus concert held in Gimli this past December. From there, Hot 103 forwarded all the entrees to Down with Webster, the headliners of the tour, so they could personally select the winner.

The band chose Dane Bjornson.

But when the official announcement came down, Dane had no idea he had won.

"Someone emailed my mom asking what my equipment needs (for the concert) would be," he explains, "and then she called me at my friend's house. I was bouncing off the walls!"

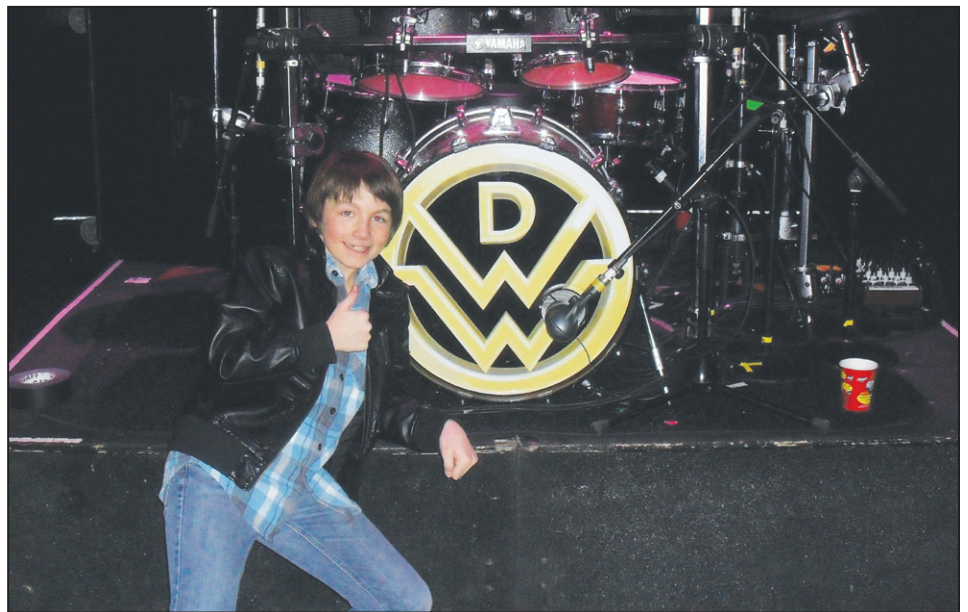
His enthusiasm is easily

understandable. Few 11 year-old aspiring musicians are presented with such a golden, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and even few still welcome the nerve-racking challenge of playing in front of a mass of people.

And when the big day finally arrived, Bjornson found a great way to shake any

Bjornson first picked up a guitar three years ago and learned his trade by intently listening to his favourite songs and figuring out their musical secrets. Assisting him in the process were his guitar teachers from The Music Cellar in Winnipeg, Tracy and Steve.

But it's not just his guitar teachers that



Dane Bjornson

PHOTO: MYKAEL SOPHER

last-minute nerves.

"I was jumping and doing push-ups backstage a few seconds before the concert," he admits.

Then the moment came. For the next half-hour the precocious songsmith impressed the audience with a pair of original songs, "Wannabee" and "48 Hours", and spirited cover versions of some of his favourites, including Green Day's smash hit "Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)" and Bruno Mars's ubiquitous breakout song, "Just the Way You Are."

count as influences in his life: Winnipeg's own Pushing Daisies have taken an interest in the young musician and are helping Bjornson write and record his debut EP.

"I'm planning on about five to nine songs," explains Bjornson.

While working on his first album is certainly a priority, he also has one other concrete goal.

"The dream gig for me would be singing O Canada at a Goldeyes or Moose game," he confesses. "Or maybe at a Jets game...if they come back."