



***Riversong* musicale puts Native performers center stage**

by Anna M. Pickett
Tundra Times staff

Picture a small Athabascan village on the Yukon River with a population of about 20, 17 of whom frequent the community's general store to sit around and chat, gossip, and to talk about fishing. In this village, mail arrives once every two weeks with the store's general merchandise . . . and catalogs!

Eve Bird, a 17-year-old Gwich'in Athabascan/Inupiat Eskimo from North Pole, portrays Alice, a young girl in love with the adventure of the big cities and a hometown boy named Daniel, played by C. Johan Brun, a 22-year-old Aleut from Seldovia. One of the biggest decisions of Alice's life is made when she chooses to head for the big city, leaving Daniel behind.

While seemingly dramatic, the quick wit and hilarious actions of the rest of the villagers bring laughter to audiences at the auditorium of AlaskaLand in Fairbanks.

"When Marydith 'Bunny' Beeman was alone in the wilderness, afraid of bears, working on the song *The Ptarmigan*, little did she realize that there was a 5-year-old in North Pole who would become her character 'Alice,'" said Peggy MacDonald Ferguson, production stage manager of *Riversong*.

Beeman wrote the book, lyrics and music for the musical, now being orchestrated with arrangements written by Eddie Madden as presented by the Fairbanks Light Opera Theatre.

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