

Ainsley Friesen has spent much of her life following her curiosity, sometimes into unfamiliar territory, and most often into a song. In her early years, when adventure called, she went looking for it, meeting unusual characters along the way. New experiences and different people taught her things about herself, and those discoveries found their way into her songwriting.

At seventeen, Friesen won a songwriting competition that awarded her professional studio time, leading to the recording of her debut album, *Scattered...Inspired*, released in 1998. The album attracted local media attention and introduced her music to a wider audience. Friesen took naturally to the recording studio, singing and playing guitar or piano simultaneously, often completing a song in just one or two takes. The project was produced by her friend Daryl Pierce, who was just beginning his career in audio engineering. It was his first recording project, too. Nearly thirty years later, Pierce continues to mix and master her recordings.

Her studies in film at NSCAD University and in composition and voice at Brandon University helped shape her creative practice, bringing together songwriting, performance, arranging, recording, and production. Her commitment to an independent artistic life eventually led her to establish a music teaching studio in rural Saskatchewan, where she has built a livelihood rooted in music while contributing to the creative life of her community.

Over the years, she has developed the skills to bring her musical ideas to life with increasing independence. A multi-instrumentalist as well as a songwriter, she plays piano, guitar, and bass, building arrangements and recording much of her own material before collaborating with others to complete the recordings. Her body of work includes four albums, two EPs, and four singles. She is also preparing to release her next single, "Off the Map," before the new year.

An artist's life has not always been the easiest path, but she has continued to choose it, knowing that any other would have let her down. Through more than one new beginning, Friesen has kept making music, with perseverance and a tremendous amount of hard work. After five years of debilitating carpal tunnel syndrome that severely limited her ability to play, Friesen underwent surgery on both wrists. Her return to music marked more than a physical recovery. With a renewed sense of purpose and an awareness of how precious her creative time had become, she began writing with greater urgency, turning her attention toward social issues, human experiences, and perspectives beyond her own. The years that followed have been among the most productive of her recording career. She continues to encourage others to take risks in their artistic expression, while pushing against her own creative limits and challenging herself to discover new ways of making music.