



# AUK/BLOOD TAGAQ

"Tanya is directly musically in touch with something that is almost a ghost. To me, it is something that is so special and so much a part of the earth and the land and the environment." –David Harrington, Kronos Quartet

"[Tanya's music is] like Edith Piaf or something...totally emotional." –Björk

When Tanya Tagaq Gillis' music fills your ears -- either in person or on her new CD Auk -- she is genuinely one of those rare artists whose sounds and styles are truly groundbreaking. 'Inuit throat singer' is one part of her sonic quotient. So are descriptions like 'orchestral' 'hip-hop-infused' and 'primal'...but these words are not usually used collectively. In the case of Tagaq, however -- especially on her sophomore disc Auk-- they are.

Auk is a considerable expansion upon the work she created with her debut, Sinaa; while that was largely focused on her individual chants and vocals, this new record is perhaps more reflective of what Tagaq brings to her passionate and powerful live performances, specifically the energy and beauty that comes from collaboration. This new CD -- recorded in Pontvedra, Spain and Calgary, Alberta -- brings an assortment of guest vocalists to the mix, from Juno Award-winner Buck 65 to Faith No More/Lovage frontman Mike Patton (who is releasing Auk in the U.S. on his own Ipecac label) to dynamic human beat box artist Shamik. Juan Hernandez once again produces the disc, as he did for Tanya's debut. The collaborative process is like oxygen for Tagaq, who has flourished recently co-writing and throat singing with the Kronos Quartet on a project aptly titled Nunavut. A rare and recent performance of the work was described by a Los Angeles Times reviewer as "extraordinary" and "remarkable."

The diversity and sum composite of creative collaborations have clearly provided Tagaq with the opportunity to grow and expand the musical landscape upon which she treads; Auk is proof positive of that. Ranging from whispers and haunting melodies to full-force passion and power, the diversity and depth on Auk is self-evident: the thread that ties it all together is Tagaq's candor and passionate commitment to her music. "I'm interested in baring everything...that to me is reality, and hopefully other people can sense that."

## TAGAQ AUK/BLOOD (JBM 0801)

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- Fox ~ Tiriganiak 3:45
- Fire ~ Ikuma 5:07
- Growth 5:27
- Gentle 4:52
- Tategak 5:41
- Force 3:22
- Growl 2:27
- Want 3:11
- Hunger 6:33
- Burst 3:25
- Blood ~ Auk 3:43
- Construction 2:10
- Sinialuk 2:50



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## Filling in the blanks - a.k.a. Frequently Asked Questions

(For those who wish to, please feel free to use Tagaq's quotes below in interviews.)

### What is traditional throat singing?

“Traditional throat singing is a game between two women that is an emulation of the sounds from the land. It is a very complicated game where you are making two sounds and you have to go back and forth alternating the sounds. The leader can change the song to the next verse anytime they want to, so you have to be able to follow them. It is not emotional, although it may sound that way. It is a game, you giggle afterwards.”

### How did you and Björk meet and come to work together?

“I went to this festival in Inuvik for my paintings and there was a gap in the performances as somebody didn't make it, so they asked me to fill in the spot. I went and sang by myself and I freaked out – I've always been a ham and loved the attention. Some people came up to me afterwards and asked to film me. They said 'we're from Iceland, this is really cool we want to tape you' and after I was done filming they said that they were friends with Björk. The next year I got a phone call from Björk's manager wondering if I would go to New York City to audition for the Vespertine tour. Since then, I've recorded with her three more times: for her Medúlla CD, for my disc Sinaa and on the soundtrack for Drawing Restraint 9.

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## BIOGRAPHY

'Indescribable' is not an appropriate word to begin an artist's bio, nor is it suitable as a description of a musician. The problem is this: when Tanya Tagaq Gillis' music fills your ears—either in person or on her new CD *Auk*—she is genuinely one of those rare artists whose sounds and styles are truly groundbreaking. 'Inuit throat singer' is one part of her sonic quotient. So are descriptions like 'orchestral' 'hip-hop-infused' and 'primal' ...but these words are not usually used collectively. In the case of Tagaq, however—especially on her sophomore disc *Auk*—they are.

So much has happened to Tagaq since the release of her debut CD *Sinaa* (meaning 'edge' in her ancestral language of Inuktitut) in 2005. The Nunavut-born singer has not just attracted the attention of some of the world's most groundbreaking artists, they have invited her to participate on their own musical projects, not just singularly, but repeatedly. Tanya has recently recorded once again with Björk (specifically on the soundtrack for the Matthew Barney film *Drawing Restraint 9*) having already appeared on Björk's *Medúlla* CD in 2004 and accompanied her on the *Vespertine* tour. In 2007, another monumental collaborative project came to fruition when the world-renowned Kronos Quartet invited Tanya to participate—as co-writer and performer—on a project aptly titled *Nunavut*, which has been performed at select venues across North America, from its January 2008 debut at the Chan Centre in Vancouver, BC through to New York's Carnegie Hall. Acclaim and respect has followed Tagaq on her solo ventures as well: *Sinaa* was nominated for a Juno Award (Best Aboriginal Recording) and won in three categories at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, including Best Female Artist.

With *Auk* (meaning 'blood' in Inuktitut) Tanya has taken her love and respect of the ancient musical tradition of throat singing and mixed it with a powerful infusion of contemporary—and contemporary classical—styles. This new CD is a considerable expansion upon the work she created with her debut, *Sinaa*; while that was largely focused on her individual chants and vocals, this new record is perhaps more reflective of what Tagaq brings to her passionate and powerful live performances, specifically the energy and beauty that comes from collaboration. Respected West Coast musicians Jesse Zubot (violin) and Cris Derksen (cello) form the backbone of the melodic instrumentation, while Graeme Peters and Mike Clark contribute the drums and electronic beats/samples respectively. Additionally, *Auk* contains an assortment of esteemed guest vocalists, from Juno Award-winner Buck 65 to Faith No More/Lovage frontman Mike Patton (who is releasing *Auk* in the U.S. on his own Ipecac label) to dynamic human beat box artist Shamik. Juan Hernandez once again contributes his production skills to the mix, as he did for Tanya's debut. The collaborative process is like oxygen for Tagaq, who hopes to continue making music with others—both in the studio and on tour—for years to come.

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"In my head, I have 500 records and I don't want to do that alone! I want to embrace the other beautiful musicians to help me pursue my goal of making all the music I dream of making. When I do music with somebody, it is so intimate and beautiful to find people that think the same way that I do."

*Auk* is truly the culmination of Tagaq's still-young but full career of music-making. Throat singing was something in her periphery while growing up in the incredible, extreme conditions of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. When Tanya left home to attend art school in Halifax, Nova Scotia, however, she found herself homesick for her family and friends. In a care package sent from her mother, Tagaq discovered the inclusion of throat-singing tapes and found herself mesmerized by them. "My mom was sending me these packages with tapes of people throat singing on it because she knew I missed home. I was crying, put it on and listened and just thought 'how are they even doing that?' I couldn't even wrap my head around it, I was just amazed! So I tried to pick it apart and I found that the noises came quite easy to me. I'd sing in the shower every day, teaching myself and playing with the sounds. Prior to that, I had never even sung before." While the basis of throat singing is usually a back-and-forth play between two people, Tagaq was literally and figuratively on her own. Her debut of throat singing in public occurred when taking the stage along with a DJ at a friend's post-wedding rave, then subsequently winning a local talent show with a friend in 1999. Those humble beginnings contributed to a chain of events and experiences that brings Tanya to where she is today: an exciting, full-bodied live performer that is able to move fluidly between genres, from a night of classically-infused music to an active participant in a rhythm-pumping house music party.

The diversity and sum composite of creative collaborations have clearly provided Tagaq with the opportunity to grow and expand the musical landscape upon which she treads; *Auk* is proof positive of that. Ranging from whispers and haunting melodies to full-force passion and power, the diversity and depth on *Auk* is self-evident: the thread that ties it all together is Tagaq's candor and passionate commitment to her music. "I'm interested in baring everything...that to me is reality, and hopefully other people can sense that."

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