

Eyes on the prize

John Goodman, North Shore News

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- Ben Sigston at The Cellar (1006 Granville St.) Thursday, Nov. 5 as part of the Peak Performance Project Concert Series. Doors at 7 p.m. 19 only. Tickets available in limited quantities at the door. Listen to 100.5 The Peak FM or live online at www.thepeak.fm for a chance to win tickets to the show.

North Vancouver musician Ben Sigston has competed at the highest levels as an athlete and now he intends to do the same thing as a musician.

For several years Sigston, 26, was a member of Canada's national cycling team. Growing up on the North Shore he attended Westover elementary and Argyle secondary schools and raced in the North Shore Mountain Bike League. But all the while he also kept up a keen interest in music and ultimately decided to pursue that as a career.



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Ben Sigston performs with his band at the Cellar on Nov. 5 as part of the Peak Performance Project, a contest created by 100.5 The PEAK and Music BC to develop emerging artists in B.C. Fans can vote for Sigston until Nov. 30 at www.peakperformanceproject.com.

NEWS photo Cindy Goodman

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Sigston recorded his first demos at NAL Sound in North Vancouver and shopped his music around. At one point he was close to signing a label deal but negotiations fell through and he decided to work as an independent.

He'd already finished recording his debut eight-track EP, Free Now, earlier this year with producer Warne

Livesey when he heard about the Peak Performance Project. The project, created by 100.5 The PEAK and Music BC to help with the development of emerging artists in B.C. sounded like it was the perfect fit for him. All he had to do was get in.

"I had heard through the grapevine that there was this program happening and you had to apply for it," he says. "They did submissions in June and they apparently got over 450 applicants."

Sigston and his band were one of 20 acts chosen to participate in the first year of the project which takes artists back to school to learn how to market and make music in the real world.

About a week after congratulating Sigston for getting into the program the first Peak communication asked the participants: "What have you done so far to take advantage of being involved in this program?"

"Right away they were doing PR stuff," laughs Sigston. "Everyone was freaking out and going, 'Oh what have I done?' Then they took us all to boot camp."

At the end of August the Peak Performance Project took their 20 chosen bands to an outdoor retreat for a week of intense sessions to learn more about the music business, live performance, songwriting, marketing and promotion. "It was absolutely amazing," says Sigston. "It was at this place called the Rockridge Canyon up near Princeton B.C. It was the perfect place to go with a bunch of musicians. It was picturesque perfection on the top of these mountains in this big, beautiful complex that has been built up there. We ended up bunking together in dorms -- that was a bit crazy too. They did enforce the dry camp so nothing too crazy happened."

Every day the musicians attended workshops to learn about different aspects of the music industry. "They had some really cool people up there," says Sigston. "Ken Beattie of Killbeat Music talked about doing a publicity campaign and gave us some hard facts about what it costs. Shaun Verreault of Wide Mouth Mason talked about touring and being on the road and conducting yourself in front of audiences. They had a rotating cast of faculty as different guest speakers came up. I think there was probably about 20 total over the week."

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