



# Musicians of the Midnight Sun

Thank you for visiting the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website. Even though these blogs are being posted many weeks after the launch of the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website, my hope is that they will remain as a document along with the website itself with the intention to give a little bit more of a personal story of my relationships with these featured artists.

## John Tees

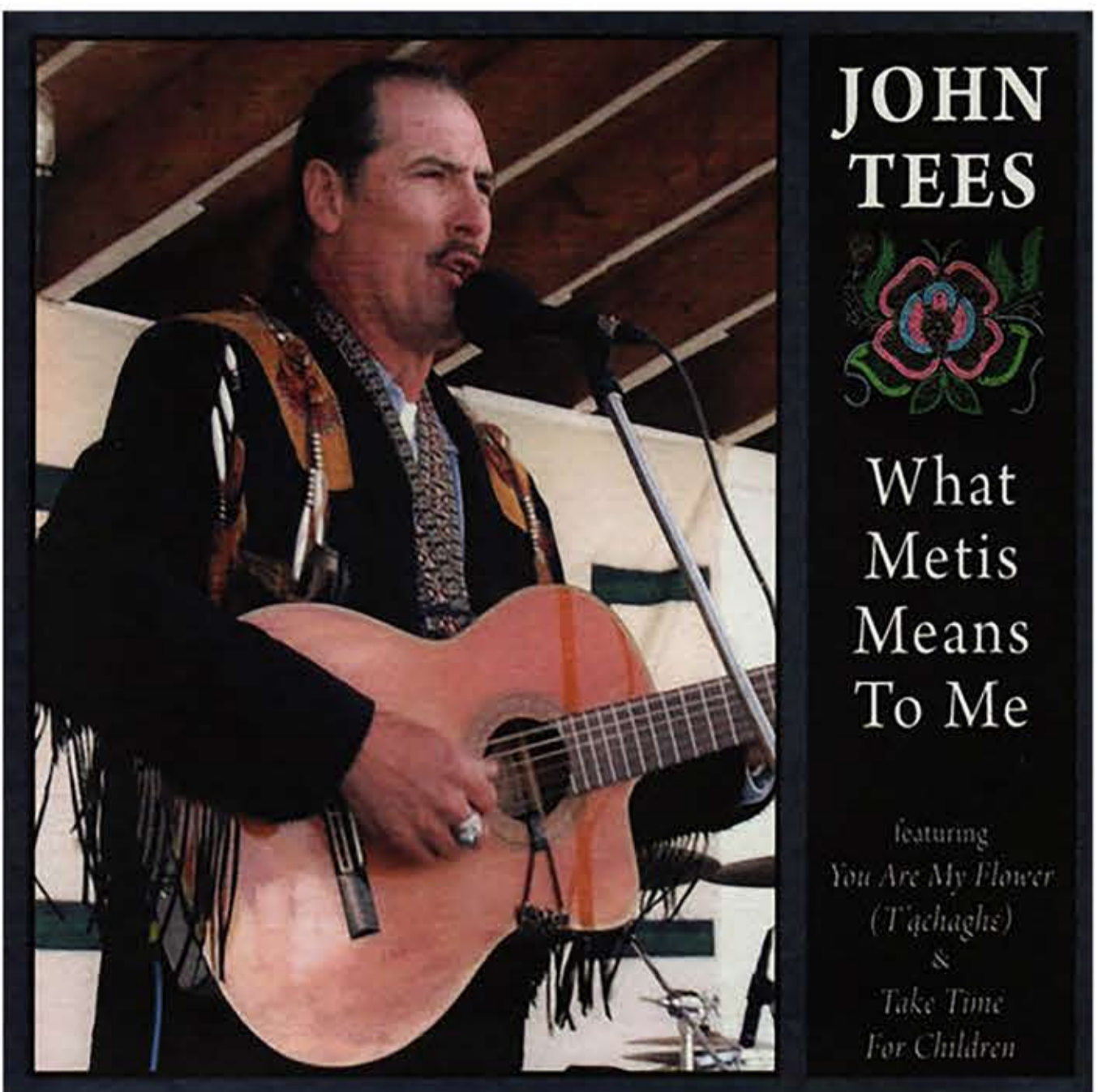
The *Tees* brothers, *John* and *Gary*, were the first of the Yellowknife born and bred musicians to embrace the popular rock and roll music of the 1960s. They both cut their teeth playing the traditional country songs with the more mature players in town but the excitement and irresistible groove of the Beatles, “Can’t Buy Me Love” drove them to put their own band together. *John* was the one with the ears and the chops to pick the parts from the LP or 45 records and to teach those parts to the other players in the band. Hearing some of the recordings from back then, I can hear that *John* sang and played those parts true to the original as opposed to interpreting them into his own rendition. There was a wide range of genres in his repertoire and that kept him playing for audiences young and old.



John Tees , St. Pat's school, Yellowknife, NT 1966, (photo courtesy Wayne Bertrand)

I can remember hiring *John* and *Gary's* band, “Stained Glass Illusion” for school dances and dancing to their music at the local teen events and hangouts but I never did get a chance to play music with him until much later. I was pretty focused on my own bands and back and forth to music college for the first 6 years or so I was playing Bass and around that time, *John* left Yellowknife to work and play in the south.

The next I heard of *John*, he was recognized along with 100 other songwriters in a Nashville song writing competition for his song, “What Metis Means to Me”. He moved back to town, played at events in town and I was impressed by his song writing chops as well as his attention, once again, to the melody and his intricate and accomplished fingerpicking style on his guitar. In the few discussions we have had outside of this interview, his passion for his music is still as strong as it was in his youth. Through our common experiences growing up here and sometimes blind obsession with our music, it is almost like talking with my musical brother.



John Tees, “What Metis Means To Me”, CD release, 2008

In this interview, *John* took me back to that time that I missed out on in the early Yellowknife music scene. He paints a picture of the places, the characters and the times of a small, northern mining town, transitioning into a government centre in the late 20th century. As with all of the interviewees, *John* was one of the prominent musicians, providing the soundtrack behind those changing times.