

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]



**EMBODIED SOVEREIGNTY: DIALOGUES WITH CONTEMPORARY
ABORIGINAL DANCE**

Katie Apsey

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts in Art History at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August 2009

© Katie Apsey, 2009



Library and Archives
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-63150-8
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-63150-8

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.


Canada

Abstract

Embodied Sovereignty: Dialogues with Contemporary Aboriginal Dance

Katie Apsey

Within Aboriginal communities, dance has a long history of embodying knowledge—operating as a way of psychologically infusing spaces with new energies, passing on knowledge systems and histories, and enlivening voice. The power of dance is evidenced by the way that colonial powers and hegemonic popular culture have simultaneously suppressed and (mis)appropriated dances originating in Native communities. By examining performance practice in relation to these traditions and histories, this thesis discusses Contemporary Aboriginal dance through a de-colonizing lens in order to demonstrate the capability performance has to create sovereign spaces for artists while considering dance within an Aboriginal context – as expressive visual culture with inseparable links to visual art, music, theater, and oral histories.

Foregrounded by Indigenous epistemologies and world views, Western theories of contemporary performance from academic discourses accompany writings by performers and artists of color to illustrate how such theories merely abstract concepts Aboriginal dancers have been enacting for millennia. Dialogues with dancers Sandra Laronde, Gaétan Gingras, Jerry Longboat, and Michael Greyeyes, as well as narrative experiences of specific dance works make up a significant portion of the work and express common themes within the movements such as: embodiment rather than performance; the creation of sovereign, sacred, and alternative spaces; working through trauma and healing with the body; combating stereotypes and expectations; access to Blood Memory; experiential learning; and dance as knowledge and history.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to express many thanks to the Concordia art history department for all of its support, funding, and patience throughout my graduate studies, especially when I was forced to take time away for personal reasons. The financial assistance they facilitated for the Hydro Québec Graduate Research Award and the Renata Hornstein Graduate Fellowship made my research possible; many thanks to these companies/groups for their support of the arts.

This project would also not have been possible without the intellectual and personal support of my advisor, Dr. Sherry Farrell-Racette. From the moment she first asked “why not write about what you love—dance?” to her feedback on my final draft, she has been there for me with patient advice, quotes, articles for me to read, dancers for me to watch, and warm bannock to soothe the stress. The monolithic amount of scholarly pursuits and diverse projects that Sherry is able to undertake truly inspire me. I am grateful to her for her time and for not giving up on this multi-year, multi-country project.

The understanding of my supervisors at the Brooklyn Museum (Joan Cummins, Ladan Akbarnia, and Kevin Dumouchelle) allowed me to work strange hours and take vacation time for last minute research trips. They have been supportive of my research, writing, ideas, and career and I am deeply indebted to them for their professional and personal encouragement.

Many people helped me by looking at chapter drafts and offering constructive criticism. I would like to thank: my fellow graduate students at The Chocolate Room, Ms. Neelofer Qadir and Ms. Jessie Shaffer for their general feedback; my work roommate Ms. Kasia Zurek-Doule for taking an “outsider” look at my work; Brooklyn Museum

Asian Art curator Joan Cummins for trying to help me sort through theory and for always asking such insightful questions; and London's newest Iran Heritage Foundation Executive Director Ladan Akbarnia, for helping me look at the big picture while reminding me of the small details like hyphens and commas. I would also like to thank my amazing roommates, Keonna Hendrick and Pablita Santos—two of the best art educators and future art historians New York City has—for their valuable feedback and late-night talks about cross-cultural research despite their own busy schedules.

Last, but certainly not least, it is imperative for me to thank all the artists involved with the creation of this thesis: Gaétan Gingras, Jerry Longboat, Sandra Laronde, Michael Greyeyes, and Rosalie Daystar Jones, and Byron McKim for sharing their art, time, DVDS and e-mail inboxes with me and for responding to my interview transcriptions, chapter drafts and questions over the years. Merci beaucoup. Níawen'kó:wa. Kinana'skomitina'wa'w (kitatamihin). Migwetch.

to Montreal for showing me the world, to Brooklyn for showing me myself
and to Jocelyn...may you grow up dancing proudly

Table of Contents

List of Diagrams and Figures.....	ix
Epigraph: <i>AJ; Dancing Brother</i> by Arnie Neskahi.....	xiii
Note on Language.....	xv
Introduction: Narrative: <i>Manitowapan</i>	1
Positioning.....	4
Embodied Sovereignty: Contemporary Aboriginal Dance.....	7
Methodology.....	10
Review of Literature.....	21
Chapter 1: Narrative: <i>Chinook Winds</i> opening segment.....	30
Revisiting History.....	31
Prohibition and Control.....	32
Modern Appropriations and Negotiations.....	36
A New Era.....	40
Chapter 2: Narrative: <i>Throw Away Kids</i>	54
Theoretical Approaches to Contemporary Aboriginal Dance.....	56
Reverse Appropriation and Re-infusion.....	58
Creation of Space.....	63
Performance as Mirror.....	67
Embodiment of Knowledge.....	69
Exposing the Hollowness of Stereotypes.....	72
Reclaiming the Physical Body.....	74
Indigenous Performance Theory.....	76
Chapter 3 Narrative: <i>Raven Stole the Sun</i>	82
Dance Group Focus: Red Sky and Sandra Laronde.....	86
To Exercise Culture.....	89
To Teach or Persuade.....	95
To Deal with Trauma and Healing.....	102
Chapter 4 Narrative: <i>Ma Père m'a Raconté</i>	109
Choreographer Focus: Gaétan Gingras and Jerry Longboat.....	112

	To Exercise Culture/To Create Culture.....	119
	To Make or Change Identity.....	122
	To Deal with Natural or Spiritual Forces.....	125
Chapter 5	Narrative: <i>Triptych</i>	130
	Dance Piece Focus: <i>Triptych</i> and Michael Greyeyes.....	133
	To Exercise Culture/To Create Culture.....	134
	Triptych.....	144
	To Deal with Trauma and Healing.....	150
	To Make or Change Identity.....	152
	To Deal with Racism/Romanticism.....	153
Chapter 6	Narrative: <i>Mesa 2.0</i>	156
	Conclusion.....	158
	Bibliography.....	164
	Images.....	174
	Appendix I: Naming.....	194
	Companies.....	194
	Artists.....	206
	Schools and Organizations.....	230
	Deceased Artists.....	233
	Now Defunct.....	235
	For Further Research.....	236
	Appendix II: Revisiting: Selected Relevant Historical Dates.....	238
	Appendix III: Thesis Consent Form for Interviewees.....	241
	Appendix IV: Traditional and Historic Dance References for Further Reading.....	242

List of Diagrams and Figures

Diagram 1: “The Indigenous Research Agenda” by Linda Tuhiwai Smith.....	19
Diagram 2: Timeline of selected dates relevant to Indigenous dance.....	53
Diagram 3: Lara Evans’ “Spheres of Performance specifically applicable to Native Performance Art”.....	77
Diagram 4: “Spheres of Performance” alongside Themes of Contemporary Aboriginal Dance.....	81
Figure 1: <i>Manitowapan</i> . Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Rolline Laporte. Date not given.....	174
Figure 2: <i>Manitowapan</i> . Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Rolline Laporte. Date not given.....	174
Figure 3: <i>Manitowapan</i> . Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Rolline Laporte. Date not given.....	174
Figure 4: Red Rhythms Conference promotional poster. Image courtesy of University of California Irvine. 2004.....	175
Figure 5: Buffalo Bill and Performers in Venice, Italy (Buffalo Bill, Black Heart, Rocky Bear, two unidentified men). 1890.....	175
Figure 6: Buffalo Bill and Performers in Venice, Italy (Black Heart, Rocky Bear, Buffalo Bill, two unidentified men). 1890.....	176
Figure 7: Martha Graham and Robert Gorham in <i>Xochitl</i> . Image Courtesy of the New York Public Library Digital Image Collection. Photograph by Hartsook. 1920.	176
Figure 8: Princess White Deer in <i>Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic</i> of April 1921. Image courtesy of Historical Ziegfeld website. Photograph by E.O. Hoppe. 1921.....	177
Figure 9: Molly Spotted Elk as she appeared in nightclubs in 1928. Image courtesy of Molly’s daughter, Jean Archambaud Moore. Date unknown.....	177
Figure 10: Molly Spotted Elk. Promotional portrait. Image courtesy of her daughter, Jean Archambaud Moore. 1930.....	178
Figure 11: Molly Spotted Elk and band leader Chief Shunatona dancing aboard the <i>Ile de France</i> en route to the Colonial Exposition in Paris. Image courtesy of United States National Archives (RG43). 1931.....	178

- Figures 12 and 13: Left: Maria Tallchief performing as Eurydice in *Orpheus*. Right: Maria Tallchief performing her famous role in *The Firebird*. Both images courtesy of the collection of Maria Tallchief; Firebird photograph by George Platt Lynes. Dates unknown.....178
- Figure 14: Marjorie Tallchief and husband George Skibine perform in *Idylle*. Photograph by Serge Lido. 1954.....179
- Figure 15: L-R: Native American Prima Ballerinas Moscelyne Larkin, Marjorie Tallchief, Rosella Hightower and Yvonne Chouteau pose outside the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma for the promotion of *The Four Moons*, a ballet which featured music by Native American composer Lewis Ballard. 1967.....179
- Figure 16: José Limón performing *Revolucionario* from *Danzas Mexicanas*. Image courtesy of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Photograph by John Lindquist. 1939.....180
- Figure 17: American Indian Dance Theatre promotional image of “Indian Women's Fancy Shawl Dancers.” Image courtesy of AIDT. Photograph by Don Pudue. Date unknown.....180
- Figures 18 and 19: Left: Rosalie Daystar Jones in *Prayer of the First Dancer*, University of California Irvine. Photograph by Philip Channing. Right: Rosalie Daystar Jones as Sky Woman in *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky*. Photograph by Norm Regnier. Images courtesy of Daystar. Dates unknown.....181
- Figure 20: Rosalie Daystar Jones in *No Home but the Heart*. Image courtesy of Daystar. Photograph by Jim Dusen. Date unknown.....181
- Figures 21 and 22: René Highway performing *New Song New Dance*. Toronto. Images courtesy of Highway family. Photographs by Cylla Von Tiedemann. 1987.....182
- Figure 23: Soni Moreno, Carlos Rivera, Kalani Queypo, Santee Smith, and Jody Gaskin perform in *Bones: An Aboriginal Dance Opera*. Image Courtesy of Banff Centre Aboriginal Arts Program. Photograph by Donald Lee. 2001.....182
- Figure 24: Carlos Rivera performing as Mean Thing in *Throw Away Kids*. Image courtesy of Banff Centre Aboriginal Arts Program. Photograph by Donald Lee. 1999.....183
- Figure 25: Picture of Bentwood boxes drawn by child at the performance of *Raven Stole the Sun* at the National Museum of the American Indian. 2008.....183
- Figure 26: Promotional poster for *The Girl Who Married a Ghost* starring Jerry Longboat and Janna Jo Scheunhage. Image courtesy of Cinéma Libre. 2003.....184

Figure 27: Darrell Dennis in <i>Tales of an Urban Indian</i> . Image courtesy of Native Earth Performing Arts. 2008.....	184
Figure 28: James Luna performing <i>Emendatio</i> (placing insulin needles and Spam around his performance space) during biennale. Venice, Italy. Image courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian. Photograph by Katherine Fogden. 2005.....	184
Figures 29 and 30: <i>Raven Stole the Sun</i> . Images Courtesy of Red Sky. Photographs by Cylla von Tiedemann. Date unknown.....	185
Figure 31: Michael Greyeyes and Carlos Rivera in <i>Shimmer</i> . Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph by David Hou. Date unknown.....	185
Figure 32: <i>Caribou Song</i> . Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph possibly by David Hou. Date unknown.....	185
Figure 33: Sandra Laronde in <i>Dancing Americas</i> . Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph by David Hou. Date unknown.....	186
Figure 34: Matthew Pheasant performs in <i>Dancing Americas</i> . Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph by David Hou. Date unknown.....	186
Figure 35: <i>Underworlds</i> . Image courtesy of Red Sky. Date unknown.....	186
Figure 36: <i>Tono</i> Image courtesy of Banff Centre and Red Sky. Photograph by Laura Vanags. 2009.....	187
Figure 37: <i>Tono</i> . Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph by Don Lee. 2008.....	187
Figure 38: <i>Ma Père m'a Raconté /My Father Told Me</i> . Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Mathieu Chartrand. 2007.....	188
Figure 39: <i>Ma Père m'a Raconté /My Father Told Me</i> . Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Mathieu Chartrand. 2007.....	188
Figure 40: <i>Ma Père m'a Raconté /My Father Told Me</i> . Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Mathieu Chartrand. 2007.....	188
Figure 41: Jerry Longboat performing in the Banff Chinook Winds Program. Image courtesy of Banff Centre. Photograph by Don Lee. 1996.....	189
Figure 42: <i>Blood Memory</i> . Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Nicholas Minns. 2008.....	189

Figure 43: <i>Blood Memory</i> . Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Nicholas Minns. 2008.....	189
Figure 44: Production stills of <i>Triptych</i> from “Dancing with Spirit” Series. Images courtesy of Soaring Heart Pictures. 2007.....	190
Figure 45: <i>Child of 10,000 Years</i> . Image courtesy of the artists. Photograph by Vincent Mancuso. 1994.....	191
Figure 46: <i>Night Traveller</i> . Image courtesy of the artists. Photograph by Kent Monkman. 1994.....	191
Figure 47: Installation views of <i>A Nation is Coming</i> by Kent Monkman featuring Michael Greyyeyes performance. Images courtesy of Kent Monkman. 1996.....	191
Figure 48: Promotional card for <i>The Threshing Floor</i> . 2006.....	192
Figure 49: Still from <i>Dance to the Berdashe</i> Installation video. Kent Monkman. 5 Channel video installation. 12 minutes. Edition of 3 plus 2 A.P. Image courtesy of the artist. 2008.....	192
Figures 50 and 51: Installation of <i>Dance to the Berdashe</i> by Kent Monkman. Left image courtesy of Urban Shaman Gallery, Winnipeg Manitoba. Right image courtesy of Bailey Fine Arts. Photograph by Christopher Chapman. 2008.....	192
Figure 52: <i>Mesa 2.0</i> press photograph. Image courtesy of the artists and Third Rail Projects. 2009.....	193
Figure 53: <i>Mesa 2.0</i> performance at the National Museum of the American Indian. Image courtesy of the artists. 2009.....	193

Epigraph

AJ;Dancing Brother

I watched you grow up
in that Circle
You took those songs
into your feet and
traveled with the
Holy Ones

I listened to grandfather's
stories of how Monster Slayer
and his brother
Born for Water traveled on
rainbows and lightning
and I dreamed
of how one might do this as
you *danced* amidst
those northern rainbows
and those southern *LIGHTNINGS*

I took the Drum Road
You took
the Dancing Trail and
with your
beaded mocassins

you pounded out

the courage of the People

you took our family's sorrow
sweated it back
to Mother Earth while
your outfit shone like a thousand
beaded stars

we were renewed

A Note on Language

Because I write from a dual position of being both a United States citizen and Canadian student—living in both countries while completing this thesis, I understand I will have readers from both cultural perspectives and that it is necessary to clarify my usage of terminology that is different across borders with varied political histories.

I use the adjectives ‘First Nations,’ ‘Native American,’ ‘Indigenous,’ ‘Native,’ and ‘Aboriginal’ interchangeably in my writing. All of these terms are descriptors for the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the United States, although ‘First Nations’ and ‘Aboriginal’ are more commonly used in Canada while ‘Native American’ and ‘Native peoples’ are more commonly used in the United States. In the United States, the term ‘Aboriginal’ is often used to refer to the Indigenous peoples of Australia, but within this thesis I use it to emphasize a shared cultural/political identity of diverse Indigenous peoples throughout the world. ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Indigenous’ are also more appropriate when speaking about/to the Inuit, Native Alaskans, Native Hawaiians, and Métis peoples. These communities are original populations in Canada and the United States, but they have unique histories and cultures that make them distinct. I will consistently capitalize all terms to emphasize their use as proper adjectives.

Both the term ‘band’ (a Canadian political term) and ‘tribe’ (a United States political term) refer to socio-political groups of Indigenous people connected by shared systems of values, culture, language, and familial ties. I attempt to avoid the use of ‘tribe’ because of its negative/racist connotations in Canada and use the term ‘nation’ instead to

emphasize each band/tribe's sovereign political status.¹ I use the term 'tribe' only to describe very specific instances such as "tribal council" or the dances of a specific Native American tribe (i.e., the Zuñi Buffalo dance, the Apache Crown dance) because such titles and dances are specific to legislatively recognized United States groups not found in Canada.

Native peoples around the world encourage others to use tribal self-names whenever possible (i.e., Hopi, Haudenosaunee (Mohawk), Anishinabe (Ojibway)) and adjectives like 'Indigenous' or 'Native' only when describing a specific shared political identity/cultural experience. This preference was recognized by the United Nations when it established the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2000) and passed the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). As a White writer, I do not use the word 'Indian,' because of its negative history and connections to racist language unless it is found in the title of a place or artwork (National Museum of the American Indian, "Tales of an Urban Indian") or in the quotes of Aboriginal artists themselves.

I will use the term 'reserve' when referring to Indigenous sovereign lands in Canada and 'reservation' when referring to these lands in the United States.

This thesis explores dance from the perspectives of art history and visual culture so I recognize most of my readers will come from these backgrounds and may be unfamiliar with dance terminology. I have tried, whenever possible, to define specific choreographic or stylistic terms in footnotes. In the same way that an art historian or critic discusses a painting or photograph in terms of *where* they see the action/color/line/light of an artwork (foreground, middle ground, background, left, right,

¹ Although the term 'band' is also used in the United States to refer to a sub-group of a tribe.

etc.), a performance writer also has to refer to *when* the action/choreography occurs and *how* the action occurs (since it can not be captured in photographs). This results in the long narrative descriptions used in this thesis.

With dance history being related to theatre and music history, dance writers often refer to segments or sections of a dance work as ‘acts’ (relating more to theatre or narrative) or ‘movements’ (relating more to music). These terms are used when there is an actual break between segments or the need for intermission in the performance. It is the choreographer/creator’s discretion to choose which term he/she would like to use. Here, I use ‘segment,’ ‘section,’ ‘act,’ and ‘movement’ interchangeably to denote different parts of a dance work when there seems to be a break in narrative, style, or action.

I use the term ‘presenter’ or ‘dance presenter’ to refer to a place, organization, group, or person that provides the financial support and venue to make a dance performance possible.

When I use the terms ‘Modern dance’ and ‘Contemporary dance’ in a capitalized fashion, I am not simply referring to dance occurring in the modern era or dance being created by my contemporaries; I am referring to specific dance movements with their own defined styles. For example, in the way that the term ‘Modern Art’ implies a specific time period, artists (Munch, Picasso, Chagall and Duchamp), and stylistic sub-groups (‘Cubism,’ ‘Expressionism’), the term ‘Modern dance’ implies a time period (early–late twentieth century) and the techniques of distinctive choreographers (Isadora Duncan, Lester Horton, Martha Graham, etc).

Introduction

In that space the stories are re-told, re-interpreting what was assumed understood. The performance space becomes part of the moccasin telegraph: a gathering place, a communal council fire. Grievances are aired. Relations are shown. News of the community is examined, the larger community of Indianess considered.¹

—Archer Pechawis (Plains Cree), Performance and New Media
artist, writer, curator, teacher

I rush to take my seat within the small black-box theatre. Although I know that my friends from Les Ateliers de Danse Moderne de Montréal (LADMMI) are most likely seated and that we can easily meet up at intermission, I am still flustered. I hate being late. And I hate being unprepared at dance performances. My LADMMI friends had insisted all week that I come to this performance, but gave little explanation as to why. Since moving to Montreal from the United States, I have been lonely. Not speaking French has left me feeling isolated; living in a larger city for the first time makes me homesick for the more rural mid-west. As a one-time semi-professional dancer, I have been turning more and more to dance performances to make me feel at home and to give me something that doesn't require constant translation. Watching dance pieces provides comfort; I know how to navigate performance spaces despite language and cultural barriers.

I glance down at the performance program with just enough time to notice frustratingly that the entire leaflet is in French before the space is plunged into darkness. The audience falls dead silent as I try to wiggle out of my heavy winter coat without making too much noise.

¹ Archer Pechawis quoted in Lara Evans, ““One of These Things is Not Like the ‘Other’”: Works by Native Performance Artists James Luna, Rebecca Belmore, and Greg Hill” (PhD dissertation, University of Albuquerque New Mexico, August 2005), 17–18.

It is so dark that I cannot see my hand in front of my face, but in the center of the stage, a dim yellow light begins to glow, illuminating a circular black dance floor. Amazingly, the outside of the dance floor begins to rotate slowly, entangling something in the middle under a black tarp that seems to meld with the floor. As the light grows brighter, I can see the lump is human-sized. The form begins to move, slowly rising out of black nothingness. In silence, it twists and reaches, and I cannot tell which body parts are being used or how the person's body is expanding and contracting so smoothly. At times the form appears human, like a mummy or a child hiding playfully under a blanket. At other times, it grows into inhuman shapes so indistinct that I think only of abstract movements like groping, struggling, or breathing. A sparse, mournful melody begins to play. I become so wrapped up in the beauty of the motion of shadows upon the black cloth as the form sways, grows to incredible heights, then condenses, that I forget that I had been so stressed moments ago. The images I see and feel remind me of creation stories, limbo, the womb, and burial shrouds all at once. When the floor tarp twists completely around the figure, it reveals a circular rotating wooden platform which maintains a steady clockwise motion. With a final stretch, the black shroud slithers down to reveal a female dancer. She begins her own circular rotation, facing different directions around the circle while expanding and contracting her upper body. She appears to gather something and to bring it into herself, or to breathe in space with her arms. At times, her arms waver towards the sky and she resembles a bird trying to take flight. Other times, her arms dangle and sway invoking the movement of water or breezes. Eventually, she returns to the ground and the black cloth in the center of the floor, lying with it momentarily, then gathering it and hugging it to herself. She picks up

the immense volume of the cover, faces the audience and starts to walk towards us. Yet, just as she reaches the revolving circular dance floor surrounding her, she lays down on it with her blanket, letting herself be taken away by its motion as though riding a merry-go-round. Before she makes a full revolution, the lights go dim again. When they come back on, an older gentleman dressed in casual pants and a ribbon shirt walks onto the stage carrying a hand drum. He launches into story. I pick up bits and pieces with my nascent French, but also realize that he is mixing in English and at least one Indigenous language. He switches back and forth effortlessly while he tells the stories. His voice is casual but serious and I am reminded of my grandfather telling stories about World War II while the grandchildren watched television. In my limited understanding, I try to follow the threads of the stories—one about his family, one about creation, one about dance, one about a bird—but I have a feeling that, like the languages, they overlap. As he narrates, the female dancer continues her choreography, moving from the back of the stage to inside the moving platform. The dancer and the storyteller never interact, but they do occasionally trade places on stage. Sometimes he is on the constantly rotating platform walking quickly against the rotation while she dances inside the circle; sometimes he sits inside the circle while she rides the platform, dancing with its motion. She is always silent, speaking only with her body; he is always speaking, sharing stories that seem to weave near and far from what she produces with her body. At times, the dancer appears wearing abstract masks. One recalls half of an owl's face or a weathered pelvic bone. Another simultaneously suggests fish fins and a bird beak. The storyteller appears with a third mask—an elderly face with deeply wrinkled skin and long, scruffy white hair. He places it on the rotating platform and lets it ride away from him. As it

returns, he picks it up, alternately speaking to it and bringing it towards his face as if to wear it. Sometimes, he appears to listen to it while becoming increasingly distraught or agitated. Towards the end of the piece, both the man and dancer begin to occupy the same space in the center of the platform and their two separate worlds begin to overlap. They look toward each other even though they do not seem to see each other. The dancer makes gestures as if to embrace the storyteller and he appears to relax. At the climax of the piece, she finally touches him, resting her weight on his head and shoulders. When she leaves him, he shakes his head and seems to wake from a dream. I begin to wonder: is she a spirit that he can feel and not see? Is he her ancestor and is he trying to tell her stories while she is too busy to listen? Are they simply two humans on a journey together? But with a single beat of the drum by the storyteller, the lights dim once again.²

Positioning

In Cree:

Mom tune ay chi kun = mind (the sacred place inside each one of us)

Mom tune ay chi kuna = wisdom (thoughts which come from the sacred place and can be given to others in stories (*achimoona*), songs (*nugamoona*), dances (*neemeetoona*) and art (*tatsinaikewin*))

These words sound the same because they all describe gifts that come from the sacred place inside.³

—Maria Campbell (Métis), author

² See figures 1–3 for images of *Manitowapan*. According to Tangente’s printed program, *Manitowapan* is “rooted in traditions of the First Nations People. The two essential elements of many native cultures: dance and storytelling are main subjects...For native peoples of the past the recognition of the spiritual side of every matter developed into profound ways of living a daily life that manifested in such simple rituals as dancing and storytelling. It was through them, that most of learning and teaching about the laws, beauty and wisdom of the spirit world was continually developing from generation to generation in many native traditions. Ultimately, they served as great healing rituals for individuals and whole communities, since the goal of a story or a dance was to recognize and to revere the presence of spirits in all worldly affairs, and through that simple act, to restore balance and unity.” (Sic. English version available at www.manitowapan.org/Creation.html).

³ Paraphrased from introduction of *Achimoona*. Words spelled phonetically by Maria Campbell. Maria Campbell and others, *Achimoona* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Fifth House, 1985), 1 of introduction.

The piece described above, entitled *Manitowapan*, was created by Gaétan Gingras after researching his Native heritage, which had been hidden from him as a child in Québec. Upon learning this, I understood why my friends insisted I come to the performance. They knew that, as an art history student I would revel in the visuality of the piece, and, as a dancer, I would appreciate the technical virtuosity of performers continuously executing choreography on a moving platform for thirty-five minutes. But they also invited me because of my interest in Aboriginal culture. One friend commented, “you seem so homesick, I thought this would make you see we have good Aboriginal art here, too.”

Growing up in rural Michigan near several Ojibway reservations with family members and friends in the Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa tribe, I was raised attending many Powwows and social dances. Later, in Montreal, I had teased one particular dancer friend when he got winded in rehearsals that if he wanted to see real athleticism, he should go watch a women’s Fancy Shawl Dance or a men’s Fancy Dance. Long before I decided to study art history, my monthly art shows had been church bazaars on the reservation and displays in the casino. My friends had seen the basketry and birch bark bitings that family members and friends had made for me and understood the value of such precious symbols of home.

Over drinks after the performance, as the questions flowed from my friends’ mouths, I realized that they had invited me to see *Manitowapan* assuming I could act as “translator”: What did the different masks in the piece mean? What was he saying when he was speaking that Native language? Is that how they dance in ceremonies? My friends asked. I had no answers. For my Quebecois friends, growing up near a reservation made

me an expert in Native culture. But proximity to Indigenous culture made me an “expert” as much as growing up near a medical school would make me a doctor. My sole Ojibway language class in college barely helped me say “hello” and “goodbye” to family and friends on the reservation, let alone allow me to understand the breadth and depth of the Mohawk, Micmac, and French languages used by the storyteller in *Manitowapan*. My Native American art history survey courses and experience at Ojibway art shows at the casinos could not have prepared me to understand the subtle Mohawk visual references held within the masks Gingras used. I told my friends I did not know. When they expressed frustration at my response, asking why an artist would create something with elements inaccessible to an audience of mainly French-Canadians, my mind went blank. All I could explain was what they already knew: the piece was amazingly multi-layered, both aesthetically beautiful and personally political for Gaétan. It was not until later I could articulate what I knew in the back of my head—it is perfectly acceptable not to have intellectual access to all aspects of a performance. Some parts of the piece contain references only dancers can appreciate, some that only Native community members can access through shared experiences or memories, and some to which only Gingras and his performers are privy. Portions of the story performed are based in Indigenous knowledge that Euro-North American world views like mine can not comprehend. I walked away from that night with a respect and appreciation for Contemporary Aboriginal dance and a desire to learn about more the movement. That night has turned into a wonderful journey full of thought-provoking conversations.

Embodied Sovereignty: Contemporary Aboriginal Dance

The Ghost Dance has never ended, it has continued, and the people have never stopped dancing; they may call it by other names, but when they dance, their hearts are reunited with the spirits of loved ones recently lost in the struggle...as the living dance, they are joined again with all our ancestors before them, who cry out, who demand justice...⁴

—Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo), novelist, poet

Aboriginal dance and ceremony have long been fetish objects of the Western gaze. Explorers obsessively painted and documented what they saw as the “exotic” and “pagan” rituals of Indigenous dance. Later, anthropologists meticulously documented and catalogued the dances of what they saw as “dying cultures.” When motion pictures were invented in the 1890s, some of the first subjects recorded on camera by Thomas Edison and others were Native American dances.⁵ The Wild West shows of the late nineteenth century flourished internationally while related worlds’ fairs and local craft exhibitions often included live performances by Indigenous peoples. Currently, Powwows, harvest festivals in Pueblo communities, and events like Crow Fair in Montana or Banff Indian Days in Alberta are sometimes so overrun with tourists that signs have to be posted with guidelines for photography.⁶ While it has been co-opted by tourism, anthropological study, and cultural capital, Native dance has simultaneously been actively targeted for legislative destruction.⁷ The prohibitions relating to Indigenous dance peaked in the late nineteenth century as Christian missionaries, United States Bureau of Indian Affairs

⁴ Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 724.

⁵ See Library of Congress holdings such as “Buffalo Dance” and Sioux “Ghost Dance” from 1894.

⁶ Some Powwows today have to post camera policies regarding when to take pictures and what is improper for tourists to photograph. Some event organizers have gone as far as to sell a limited number of photography passes. Photography of dances and ceremonies is an especially large problem for many Pueblo reservations in the Southwest. Some tribal boards limit photography to certain areas of the reservation or prohibit photography on feast days (e.g. Laguna, Jemez, and Ilseta), while some have a sketching, camera, or camcorder fee. Still others ban all cameras on reservation properties carried by non-tribal members (e.g. Cochiti).

⁷ See following section, “Revisiting History” in chapter 1 and appendix II for exact laws and details.

agents, and Canadian government officials fought to abolish customs they saw as injurious to the so-called assimilation and progress of Native peoples. In 1882, Secretary of the Interior Henry Teller wrote an urgent letter to one of his Indian commissioners reflective of the views of the time:

I desire to call your attention to what I regard as a great hindrance to the civilization of the Indian, viz, the continuance of the old heathenish dances, such as the sun-dance, scalp-dance, etc. These dances, or feasts, as they are sometimes called, ought, in my judgment, to be discontinued, and if the Indians now supported by the government are not willing to discontinue them, the agents should be instructed to compel such discontinuance. These feasts or dances are not social gatherings for the amusement of these people, but, on the contrary, are intended and calculated to stimulate the warlike passions of the young warriors of the tribe... Active measure should be taken to discourage all feasts and dances of the character I have mentioned.⁸

What is it about Indigenous dance that makes it such an important cultural form of expression—so important that colonial powers would see it as a hindrance to their assimilationist agenda? Why has it been a site of suppression and contention? Why would Euro-North American governments, legislature, and church systems seek to ban it? Is it because dance is a means of expression, a form of communication, and a potent carrier of Indigenous culture? It speaks to the power of dance that it has been both a focus of legislative abolition and an object of colonial consumption for centuries. It is this power that drew me into a conversation with Indigenous dancers and choreographers more than a hundred years after Henry Teller issued his condemnation. Luckily, legislation has failed in discontinuing Native dance traditions.

By examining contemporary performance practice in relation to these traditions and histories, this thesis approaches dance through a de-colonizing lens in order to demonstrate the power of Aboriginal dance to create sovereign spaces for artists. It

⁸ Henry Teller on December 2, 1882. Quoted in Francis Paul Prucha, Documents of the United States Indian Policy (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 160.

begins by exploring Aboriginal methodologies appropriate for research relating to Indigenous peoples while challenging the author's own examination of the subject as a White scholar. Within the introduction, different Aboriginal methodologies useful for cross-cultural researchers are introduced followed by a discussion of the lack of literature, discourse, and critical writing available on Contemporary Aboriginal dance. Chapter one revisits the history of Aboriginal dance in the United States and Canada from nineteenth-century suppression, legislation, and appropriation to the breadth of dance works being created in the twenty-first century in relation to the de-colonizing (post-colonial) writing of Franz Fanon.⁹ Chapter two introduces multiple academic theories that abstract phenomenon Aboriginal dancers have embodied for millennia. It concludes with the proposal of a sample theoretical framework for exploring Contemporary Aboriginal performance. This framework considers both Aboriginal epistemologies and the themes expressed through dialogues with Indigenous dancers discussed in chapters three, four, and five without the distortions to Indigenous practice caused by Western academic theories alone.

⁹ See pages 12–14 for discussion of the use of the term “decolonizing” in place of the term “postcolonial.”

Methodology

...it is crucial that researchers recognize the power dynamic which is embedded in the relationship with their subjects. Researchers are in receipt of privileged information... They have the power to distort, to make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate and to draw conclusions, based not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgments, and often downright misunderstandings. They have the potential to extend knowledge or to perpetuate ignorance.¹⁰

—Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Maori), writer, scholar

When studying the expressive culture of groups that are not my own, I am obligated to define my place within cross-cultural discourse, make the frameworks with which I approach my writing transparent, and render the lens I use to view these artworks visible. In doing so, I attempt to be ethical in my writing and to avoid conventional Western academic discourse that posits the author/academic/researcher as the authority and sole producer of knowledge in a research relationship. Within my writing and interaction with various artists and choreographers, I choose instead to position myself as a learner. I strive to recognize Aboriginal knowledge systems by privileging Indigenous methodologies. Coming from a non-Indigenous perspective, it was necessary for me to review the major publications on Indigenous methodologies and outline the authors' suggestions for cross-cultural researchers. Following their suggestions, I hope to create a personal picture of Contemporary Aboriginal Dance that is not distorted or harmful. I must also foreground the question I wrestled with throughout my conversations with Indigenous artists: Is it even possible for a non-Indigenous writer to privilege Aboriginal epistemologies and methodologies given her/his epistemological background? Simply framing academic or critical writing about Indigenous artists and artworks with a Western

¹⁰ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London and New York: Zed Books, Ltd., 1999), 176.

epistemological base without analyzing this practice is not acceptable.¹¹ However, as a White author referencing Indigenous knowledge systems, am I merely appropriating them? How do I honor Indigenous methodologies and epistemologies without problematic misappropriation? Although I can not easily answer these questions, I mean to foreground them in order to question the discourse found within this thesis.

To scrutinize my position as a Western student with an interest in Indigenous arts, I first turned to First Nations University ethicist and scholar Willie Ermine and his concept of “Ethical Space.” In a 1995 presentation for the National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge in Canada, Ermine theorizes the possibility for writers and researchers to create and relocate themselves to a space between the Indigenous and Western worlds—a space he considers a refuge from the undercurrents and histories dividing nations, located in the separation between cultures and world views.¹² Ermine states:

[T]he affirmation for the existence of two objectives, each claiming their own autonomous view of the world, and each holding a different account of what they are seeing across the cultural border, creates the urgent necessity for a common space of retreat, reflection and dialogue.¹³

The idea of locating oneself in the divide between contrasting perspectives on the world holds much potential for cross-cultural writers and researchers. Instead of positioning myself as an “insider” (assuming to understand Aboriginal knowledge systems conclusively and therefore appropriating them and perpetuating inaccuracies) or as an “outsider” (using Western knowledge systems, discourse, and language to write about

¹¹ Using Western academic language and discourse that is dichotomous and distances an “expert” researcher from the “researched/subject” has also been proven to be inaccurate and insensitive when writing about Indigenous cultures.

¹² Willie Ermine, “Ethical Space: Transforming Relations,” paper presented at the National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge, Wanuskewin Saskatchewan, June 7–9, 2005, http://www.traditions.qc.ca/docs_disc_ermine_e.cfm (accessed May 30, 2007).

¹³ Ibid.

Indigenous culture as something “Other,” thereby perpetuating oppressive and distorted writing), I position myself in an ethical space *between* cultural spheres where a more honest dialogue may occur—“a sustained and ethical reengagement of the two entities.”¹⁴ From this space, I first express my position and background; then I explain what I understand of Indigenous methodologies and how I wish to privilege them in my discourse. Finally, I discuss Contemporary Aboriginal dance by introducing artists from the Indigenous cultural sphere to join me for discourse and sharing in the common ethical space produced within this thesis.

Foremost among the concerns of Indigenous scholars is the importance of language for research and culture. Language can be a tool or a weapon. Our mother tongue shapes our understanding of the world and forms the basis of our epistemology. As Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o writes, “the choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe.”¹⁵ These relations through language shape epistemologies and identity. Because vernacular is intertwined with thought and representation (identity, speech, art), it is pivotal to empowerment. Indigenous knowledge systems and culture are best comprehended through related Indigenous languages. Unfortunately, through processes of colonization, Indigenous languages were suppressed—literally beaten out of children at residential schools, unrecognized by Western systems of commerce, and rendered invisible by Western academic “knowledge production.” Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o further says: “Language,

¹⁴ Willie Ermine, “Ethical Space: Transforming Relations.”

¹⁵ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey, Ltd., 1986), 4.

any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture.”¹⁶ Language is not separate from art production; it is intertwined because it shapes the world view of the artist. Culture embodies the moral, ethical, and aesthetic values of a people and all of these things are carried in language.¹⁷

Aboriginal languages are often verb-rich, process-oriented languages that emphasize relationships, “happenings,” and motion rather than objects.¹⁸ This movement-based world view is a critical element in this thesis because dance operates in a verb-rich, process-oriented, motion-based manner, and is therefore a cultural carrier and communication mode much like spoken language. Although Western dance is often experienced as a form of entertainment or diversion, Indigenous dance is traditionally an embodiment of knowledge and history—a visual, auditory, and emotional language that carries insight while embodying rather than merely displaying the memories of a group.

Due to the importance of language in discourse and practice, I have been particularly selective with my use of academic terms. Throughout this thesis, I will not use the terms “postcolonial,” “post-colonialism,” or “post-colonial theory.” Although I recognize the importance of “postcolonial” writers like Said, Bhabha, Spivak, and Dirlik, and the significance of their discourse within the academy, the term “postcolonial” implies the colonizer is no longer present and we have moved *past* colonial discourse. It further implies that theoretical spheres and philosophies of thought progress in a linear, temporal fashion (or evolve and improve). These implications and inferences do not hold

¹⁶ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 14–15.

¹⁸ Leroy Little Bear, “Jagged Worldviews Colliding” in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, ed. Marie Battiste (Vancouver/Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), 78; Margaret Kovach, “Emerging from the Margins: Indigenous Methodologies” in *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti Oppressive Approaches*, ed. Leslie Brown and Susan Strega (Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2005), 26.

true for our lived situation in North America. The colonizer has not left, land claims have not been recognized, Western knowledge systems have not admitted and accepted Indigenous world views, and sovereignty is still a daily issue for many Indigenous nations. Socio-political discourse in North America is rife with talk of “multiculturalism,” “equality,” and “anti-racism,” but these buzz words carry little weight in lived situations. Real lives and real experiences are often not reflected in “postcolonial” academic rhetoric.¹⁹

In keeping with the action verbs (and action nouns) of Aboriginal world views and recognizing the fact that the effects of colonialism are still a lived reality for millions of people around the world, I propose and use the “de” rather than “post” prefix (as in “decolonizing framework” or “decolonizing” agenda) in my writing, thereby implying a *process* rather than a state of being—something to be worked through and continually worked over rather than studied and examined from a distance. Culture is constantly changing, growing, and transforming; therefore, scholarship and discourse about culture should not be static.

Another important prefix in the writing surrounding decolonizing methodologies is the “re” prefix. Writers Verna J. Kirkness (Fisher River Cree) and Ray Barnhardt state the need for the Western academic system to re-evaluate itself and to revalue different forms of knowledge while exploring the under-representation of First Nations students in

¹⁹ Some academics even see Postcolonial discourse as a form of Neo-Colonialism or the new form of academic imperialism. Maori scholar Graham Hingangaroa Smith says, “I do not for believe for an instant that we are in a postcolonial period. I do not think that we have seen the last of colonization; on the contrary, it is very much alive and well. What has happened in recent years is the creation of an illusion that colonization is no longer practiced—that somehow the ‘white’ world now understands this phenomenon and is able to desist from it. This, of course, is a myth... What has happened is that the processes of colonization have been reformed in different and more subtle ways.” See Graham Hingangaroa. Smith, “Protecting and Respecting Indigenous Knowledge” in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision, ed. Marie Battiste (Vancouver/Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), 215.

colleges and universities. They emphasize a need for researchers and academics to respect First Nations cultural integrity by recognizing traditional knowledge such as oral or performed ways of knowing. In these epistemologies, “meaning, value and use are bound to the cultural context in which it is situated...thoroughly integrated into everyday life, and...generally acquired through direct experience and participation in real-world activities.”²⁰ Academic discourse needs to recognize and legitimize knowledge forms other than the written.

Here, I position dance as a legitimate source of knowledge—as a site of “knowledge production” and retention—and as a primary historical document. Kirkness and Barnhardt suggest the dichotomy between producers and consumers of knowledge in university settings (i.e. professor/student, researcher/researched) is not analogous with the reciprocal relationships and lived experiences important to Indigenous knowledge systems. Scholarship can start the process of decolonization through respect for knowledge relevant to Indigenous views of the world, reciprocity in relationships between researchers and the researched, responsible scholarship, and responsibility through self-representation. In accordance with Kirkness and Barnhardt’s “4 Rs,” I have attempted to structure my interviews with artists as conversations where the dancer/choreographer guides the discussion and shares only what she or he wants to and what they believe I am capable of knowing or understanding rather than allowing me to pry into areas such as sacred/religious dance to which I have no right or connection.

Researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Maori) questions the assumed nature of discourse and research in cross-cultural contexts and acknowledges that imperialism and

²⁰ Verna J. Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt, “First Nations and Higher Education: The Four Rs: Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility,” *Journal of American Indian Education* 30.3 (May 1991): 1–15, <http://jaie.asu.edu/v30/V30S3fir.htm> (accessed January 28, 2009), 4 of online version.

colonialism are inherent in the current system of Western scientific research. Smith speaks from her own experience as an Indigenous researcher and scholar within Maori communities and gives guidelines for cross-cultural investigations as well as sample projects for decolonization. After reiterating many of the “re” processes needed for academia hypothesized by Kirkness and Barnhardt, Smith adds some of her own: “Reclaiming a voice in this context [within the academy/as a researcher] has also been about reclaiming, reconnecting and reordering those ways of knowing which were submerged, hidden or driven underground.”²¹ To do this, researchers must go further than just recognizing their personal assumptions and privileged values while interacting with the people they are researching. They must ask questions continuously: “Who defines the research problem? For whom is this study worthy or relevant? What knowledge will the researcher gain from this study? What knowledge will the community gain? To whom is the researcher accountable?” Smith also questions “that most fundamental belief of all, that individual researchers have an inherent right to knowledge and truth.”²² To outline ethical research protocols that take these questions into account, Smith emphasizes culturally specific methodologies for the Maori called Kaupapa Maori research. Although she lists seven methods in her book, three are most pertinent to my research:

- 1) Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people)
- 2) Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face to face)
- 3) Titiro, whakarongo...korero (look, listen...speak).²³

Although these cultural protocols are specific to the Maori, they apply to the development of my research because they are based upon Indigenous knowledge systems and reflect

²¹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 69. Indigenous dance is one way of knowing that which has been historically submerged, hidden, and driven underground.

²² Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 173.

²³ *Ibid*, 120.

many concepts held in Indigenous epistemologies such as respect, shared experience, and an emphasis on the relations between people. These protocols help reduce unequal power relationships between the researcher and the person being researched, creating a more reciprocal relationship. To follow these protocols, I have tried, whenever possible, to use the actual words of the dancers and choreographers I am writing about instead of secondary sources. I have privileged essays, commentary, and theories by Indigenous authors and artists of color who deal with the issues of colonialism and racism from personal experience.

The bulk of my research has been completed through first-hand interviews, conversations, and experiences. Whenever possible, these interviews were conducted face-to-face; and during these meetings, I tried not to guide the conversations with a specific research agenda. Instead, I positioned myself as a learner and regarded the interviewee as a mentor (similar to the way I constructed relationships within the dance world between myself as dancer/learner and the choreographer as mentor). I asked participants what they would want various audiences (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) to understand about their work and then I looked, listened, and rarely spoke. This process allowed me to abandon the belief in an “inherent right to knowledge or truth.” In keeping with processual and cyclical world views, I recognize that the process of these meetings, e-mail conversations, and performance viewings was far more important than coming to any “conclusion” about the movement. The interactions with scholars and artists were more useful and theoretically rich than anything I could have found in books.

Smith also outlines a sample action-based Indigenous research agenda by creating a visual model. Diagram one below, specific to the experiences of Maori people, is based

on the metaphor of ocean tides (see below). Smith privileges Indigenous epistemologies by emphasizing how each of the four “directions” of her research agenda—Healing, Decolonization, Transformation, Mobilization—“are not goals or ends in themselves; they are *processes* which connect, inform and clarify the tensions between the local, the regional, and the global.”²⁴ Placing these processes in a circle also avoids the Western temporal trope that many research agendas follow of sequential development or “evolution” towards a conclusion.²⁵ Each direction of Smith’s agenda can be visited and revisited as needed for a particular research context. The four major tides—Survival, Recovery, Development, Self-Determination—represented in each of Smith’s directions are conditions or states communities move through while healing, decolonizing, transforming, or mobilizing.

These “tides” and “directions” all relate to a verb-rich discussion of dance. For example, the *survival* of a social and spiritual practice for a community (dance for instance) depends upon multiple ‘directions.’ It requires the *mobilization* of people who want to continue to practice dance, *decolonization* of the presentation venues and public discourse relating to the dances, *transformation* of both the dances and the people involved, and *healing* of past injustices such as laws forbidding the dances. The recovery, development, or self-determination of dance would also touch upon each processes’ direction (Healing, Decolonization, Transformation, and Mobilization) to some degree.

²⁴ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 116. Emphasis my own.

²⁵ Here, I should underscore that my characterization of Western Epistemologies and Western academic research is not without a certain level of generalization. I use “many research agendas” in my writing because the Western system has always had its “deviants.”

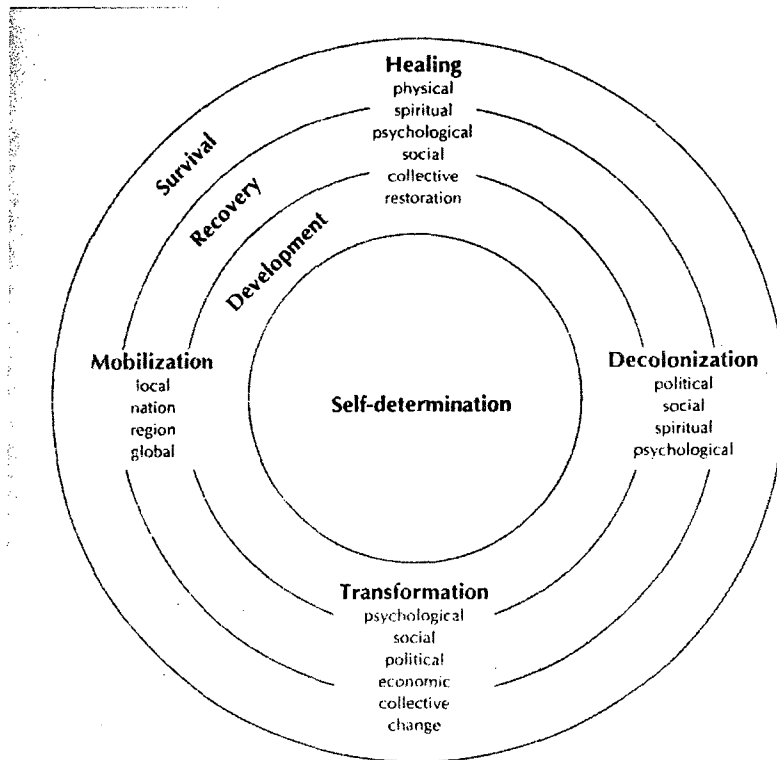


Diagram 1. "The Indigenous Research Agenda."²⁶

The way in which Smith's research agenda model is based on a naturally occurring movement, cyclical action, and multiple viewpoints is reflective of Indigenous world views. Smith's diagram applies to many cultural practices but it is especially useful for dance discussion. In addition to touching all of Smith's directions and tides, Contemporary Aboriginal dance is a research methodology that illustrates Smith's agenda within its practice. The dancers literally enact through their bodies what Smith says researchers should recognize in discourse surrounding Indigenous peoples. Western academia therefore can and should recognize the dancers' embodied knowledge through action as a form of research and practiced theory.

²⁶ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, 117.

The work of Kathy Absolon (Anishinabe) and Cam Willet (Cree) has also been organized around concepts beginning with the “re” prefix. Absolon and Willet specify eight important concepts for decolonizing methodologies: 1) Respectful representation; 2) Revising (re-contextualizing and reconsidering Aboriginal experiences and events as written in or hidden by Western history); 3) Re-Claiming Indigenous knowledge and avoiding the extraction of knowledge from communities; 4) Re-Naming (to make the English language work in a way that is congruent with Indigenous experiences and cultures); 5) Re-Membering (both to recall from memory *and* to reconnect with communities and each other—remember and re-member); 6) Re-Connecting (to community and to the goals of a community); 7) Re-Covering (of Indigenous paradigms and methods); and 8) Re-Search methods (affirming Indigenous paths for research through styles of writing such as narrative, storytelling, poetry, and self-location).²⁷

Absolon and Willet emphasize self-location as being of utmost importance for writers and researchers of Indigenous culture. “Ethnocentric writing can be avoided...if the writer reveals his or her epistemological location at the outset through a brief introductory biography.”²⁸ When I located myself through narrative at the beginning of this thesis, I revealed my own epistemological location. Instead of replaying Western scientific illusions of neutrality, distance, and authority in relation to Aboriginal dance, I revealed my emotional investment and interest and the responsibility I feel to friends and family members of specific groups. Following Absolon and Willet’s “re-naming,” I have included appendix one entitled “naming”—a compilation of brief professional

²⁷ Kathy Absolon and Cam Willet, “Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research” in Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti Oppressive Approaches, ed. Leslie Brown and Susan Strega (Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2005).

²⁸ Kathy Absolon and Cam Willet, “Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research,” 107.

biographies for Indigenous dancers, companies, and performers in North America. The incredible length of this appendix demonstrates the depth and diversity of the current Indigenous performance movement. Following Absolon and Willet's concept of "revising," I have dedicated chapter one to revisiting the history of Indigenous dance as it navigated the Western stage and appendix two to giving relevant historical dates for further exploration.

Review of Literature

Contextual validation makes our reality, experiences, and existences as Aboriginal Peoples visible.²⁹

—Kathy Absolon (Anishinabe, Flying Post First Nation) and Cam Willet (Cree/Scottish/British, Little Pine First Nation), educators, researchers, writers

Critical writing and discourse about Contemporary Aboriginal dancers, choreographers, and pieces are scant and hard to find in print. I posit that some Contemporary Western dance critics have been reluctant to pay serious attention to these works of art because they often dismiss them as presenting ethnic or folkloric subject matter to a specific audience or that the critics are unable to write about the pieces in a meaningful manner because they do not have the contextual epistemological framework to access them. The bulk of literature I found pertaining specifically to Aboriginal dance focused on the traditional and historic dance forms. Of these sources, most were written by Euro-Americans with an ethnographic/anthropological or appropriationist lens. Such texts can be useful for tracking down stylistic references and narratives found within the performances of Contemporary Native dance, but they often distort practices or

²⁹ Kathy Absolon and Cam Willet, "Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research," 117.

inaccurately portray Indigenous peoples. Most texts end their discussion of Aboriginal dance in the 1950s with the explosion in popularity of intertribal Powwows. The lack of writing on Indigenous dance forms after 1950 implies judgments by the White writers about the “authenticity” of Contemporary Native dance. Such writers do not take into account the living nature of culture and the way that expressive culture grows, mixes, and cycles. These writers and critics effectively deny that Indigenous cultures have the same entitlement to modification that is so celebrated in analyses of art by non-Indigenous artists.

Contemporary Aboriginal dance’s vibrant movement has been emerging since the 1980s despite largely being ignored by the academic discourses surrounding dance history, performance art, and visual culture. It seems the movement is too theatre-based for dance historians, too performance-based for visual culture theorists, too abstract for theatre historians, and too “family-friendly” for Performance Art writers. The few articles I found written specifically on Contemporary Native dance were authored by Aboriginal dancers themselves or by journalists concerned with introducing the very existence of the genre.³⁰ The bulk of the writing on dancers within the movement has been concentrated within smaller, Aboriginal magazines like Windspeaker (Edmonton, AB) and Native Peoples (Phoenix, AZ) or in small local papers as dance companies tour their towns performing. Articles in these publications are often very short. The articles are written based on first-hand experience with the dance works or on miniature interviews with the dancers, but focus heavily on the biographies of lead dancers in the related pieces and

³⁰ See Rosalie M. [Daystar] Jones, “Modern Native Dance: Beyond Time and Tradition;” Ned Bobkoff and Daystar/Rosalie Jones, “Living Ritual/World Dance Alliance Global Assembly: Connecting the Sacred and the Secular;” and Hollis Walker, “Contemporary Dance,” for best general coverage. Although even these articles are rather short and focus mainly on biographical sketches. See bibliography for a more extensive list.

contain little in-depth description, analysis, or critique of the artwork or performances themselves. For example, multiple articles have been published in Windspeaker regarding the Banff Centre's *Chinook Winds* Contemporary Aboriginal dance training programs of 1997, 2000, and 2002. The one or two-page articles, however, do not venture past naming the choreographers, dancers, titles of works, and performance dates of pieces.³¹ For example, one article by Kenneth Williams contains an interview with the then director of the Banff Aboriginal Summer Arts Program, Marrie Mumford, who first instituted the Aboriginal dance and performance program. At the time of the Windspeaker interview, Mumford was engaging in press conferences, preparing an essay for a small *Chinook Winds* publication, and speaking at many dance conferences about the aesthetic goals and cultural motivations of Contemporary Aboriginal choreographers. These conversations are unfortunately represented by only two questions in William's article: "How do we create an aesthetic that exists between our traditional and cultural dances with Modern and Contemporary dance? How do we create [Contemporary stage] dance rooted in our own Culture?"³² These are significant questions deserving further exploration, which they never receive in the article. The one-page format of the article and space needed to introduce the artists and pieces involved in the program required cutting Mumford's interview down to only a few sentences. Marrie also mentions dance works created in the 1980s by Alejandro Trujillo et al. She emphasizes the need for these pieces to be re-exposed to new audiences, but we never find out what these pieces are or how to re-create them.

³¹ See Kenneth Williams, "Arts Centre in Banff Outlines Aboriginal Summer Programs;" Cheryl Petten, "Aboriginal Dance Comes to Contemporary World;" and Debora Steel, "Banff Sparkles with Creativity, Quality Instruction." For more information on the Banff program, see appendix I.

³² Kenneth Williams, "Arts Centre in Banff Outlines Aboriginal Summer Programs," Windspeaker 15.2 (June 1997): Special Insert.

A more recent article in Windspeaker by an anonymous reporter explores a different Contemporary dance-related program, *Living Ritual: World Indigenous Dance Festival*, launched by Kaha:wai Dance Theatre in Toronto as part of the World Dance Alliance's Annual Global Assembly and Conference in 2006.³³ One would imagine that an international festival drawing groups from around the world would merit in-depth coverage, but the article only offers a list of names, titles, websites, and admission ticket prices.³⁴ In a 2006 Say Magazine article, the editors showcase the dancer Santee Smith (Mohawk, Turtle Clan, Six Nations) among other musicians and actors as part of a special Native performing arts issue. Santee is the only Contemporary dancer presented in the issue, and the article reads simply as a curriculum vitae.³⁵ Issues Santee often brings up in interviews about her practice, such as bodily memory, ancestral memory, reclamation of the body, and the interconnectedness of theatre, music, and dance are not addressed in the article.

Such short, news-style articles regarding Contemporary Aboriginal dance are currently the main source for information on the movement. Unfortunately, these news articles are often inaccurately written by reporters who do not have time to “check the facts” of artist biographies or think critically about the works they present. The dance movement deserves something more substantial. These superficial articles fail to address the deeper issues—particularly the importance of the new dance styles and their

³³ Kaha:wai is from Six Nations, Ontario and is directed by Santee Smith. See appendix I for more information on Santee Smith and Kaha:wai Dance Theatre.

³⁴ “Ontario to Welcome Dancers,” Windspeaker June (2006): 10–11.

³⁵ “Santee Smith” and “Michael Greyeyes,” Say Magazine 5.7 (Special Performing Arts Edition 2006): 19. Although Michael Greyeyes is also presented on page 26 of the same special edition as a “dancer/actor,” he retired from ballet dancing in 1993 to pursue acting full time and has only recently returned to the practice full time in 2008 (amazingly, dancing a duet with Santee Smith). He was not producing Contemporary dance at the time of publication other than his participation in performance art pieces with Kent Monkman.

continuation of Aboriginal epistemologies on the Western stage; nor are they able to provide critical feedback and serious discourse for the creators or choreographers.

Charlotte Heth's Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions (1993) was the first scholarly publication produced by the National Museum of the American Indian. An exception in the literature and discourse surrounding Aboriginal dance, it contains a closing chapter on Indigenous stage dance written by Rosalie Daystar Jones. The book discusses both traditional dance (as it was practiced historically and today) and Contemporary dance (emphasizing how it connects to tradition while innovating on the stage). Jones' chapter in this volume, "Modern Native Dance: Beyond Tribe and Tradition," goes beyond the superficial by contextualizing Contemporary dancers' work within a history of Modern dance and by showing the continuity of Native traditions found on the Western stage. She briefly explores non-Native Modern dancers' fascination with Native American dance and ends by listing newer dancers who had just started to perform at the time of publication. She asks if resources will be available to these newer dancers so they may continue the movement.

In 1997, the Banff Aboriginal dance training program spurred the creation of a small publication Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project, which investigates the experiences of the Contemporary performers participating in the Chinook Winds project through short articles, photographs, poetry, personal memoirs or biographies and interviews all written by the participants themselves.³⁶ Chinook Winds includes insights into practice and motivation as well as theoretical illuminations on how Aboriginal methodologies are practiced. The articles include: "Dancing a Higher Truth," by Jerry

³⁶ Heather Elton and others, eds., Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project (Banff, Alberta: The Banff Centre Press, 1997).

Longboat (Mohawk), which explores dance as a doorway to powerful wisdom and self-determination; “They Were Singing and Dancing in the Mountains” by Cheryl Blood (Kinaiki/Dene, Blood Reserve in Southern Alberta), which expounds upon the role of traditional dance within Indigenous cultures and its reason for being included in the Contemporary dance program; an article on the role of masking in dance by Karla Jessen Williamson (Inuit); and “Native Youth” by Rosa John (Taino Nation, co-founder of Kehewin Native Performance), about the role performance can play in community outreach programs by giving Native youth a forum to tell their own stories.

Another exception to the generally cursory treatment of Contemporary Aboriginal dance is The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Dance Histories.³⁷ As a full-length academic publication (the only one of its kind on Contemporary Indigenous stage dance), the book includes insightful texts on the history of anti-Native dance rhetoric, colonial government policy regarding dance, modern dance choreographers’ relationships with Native American dance, dance’s relationship to land claims, and Contemporary Aboriginal stage dance in the twenty-first century. The author, Jacqueline Shea Murphy, a dance historian and professor at the University of California, Riverside, first met pivotal players within the movement at the 1999 University of Calgary “Foothills and Footsteps: New Writings in Dance Studies” conference and has been writing about the relationship of Native American dance to Modern and Contemporary dance since the mid-1990s.³⁸ Shea Murphy is not Indigenous, but her

³⁷ Jacqueline Shea Murphy, The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

³⁸ Shea Murphy mentions meeting and first talking with Marrie Mumford and Jerry Longboat at the conference in her essay “Lessons in Dance (as) History: Aboriginal Land Claims and Aboriginal Dance, Circa 1999,” in Dancing Bodies, Living Histories: New Writings about Dance and Culture, ed. Lisa Doolittle and Anne Flynn (Banff, AB: Banff Centre Press, 2000), 134–137.

writings rely heavily on interviews with the artists themselves and on her experiences with dance programs in Canada. Her essays on historical dance and Modern choreographers “mine the archive” to expose the problems with Modern choreographers’ appropriations of Native American dance as well as reveal the agency that many nineteenth-century Native Americans still found in performance despite cultural prohibitions.³⁹ In 2004, Shea Murphy assisted in organizing an international conference on Indigenous dance: “Red Rhythms: Contemporary Methodologies in American Indian Dance,” a three-day event at the University of California, Riverside showcasing over fifty-seven performance groups, presenters, and speakers as well as round table discussions on themes such as “First Person/First People: Dance as Autobiography,” “Dance as Prayer/Dance as Document,” and “Process and Production.”⁴⁰ To date, this conference has received little critical and academic attention aside from brief mentions by Shea Murphy and Daystar Jones because the conference proceedings were never published.

Another troublesome issue with creating a literature review relating to Aboriginal dance is that dance is a *performing* visual art. It is ephemeral. There is no object left after a performance to be kept by museums, collectors, or families that can “stand in” for the artist. Dance is meant to be stored in minds, bodies, and relationships—not in photographs and videos; but these videos and performance records are still pivotal in engaging with the critical discourse of dance. The transient nature of dance provides many interesting theoretical discussions relating to representation and bodily presence.

³⁹ “Mine the archive” is used here as a reference to the writings and curatorial work of photographer Jeff Thomas who literally mined the National Archives of Canada for Indigenous imagery as a way of recovering lost histories.

⁴⁰ See figure 4.

When exploring a living/lived art form through scant writing and rarely documented performances that occurred many years ago, dance archives and videos of performances become precious. Anthropological videos, films, and recordings of traditional style Indigenous dance abound in libraries, archives, and universities, but it is extremely difficult to locate recordings of Contemporary Aboriginal dance. Even the New York Public Library of Performing Arts at Lincoln Center in New York City—the world's most extensive combination of circulating, reference, and rare archival collections in its field—only has three videos containing Contemporary Aboriginal stage dance and two archival folios on Contemporary Aboriginal dancers.⁴¹ Red Sky, the Toronto performance group discussed in chapter three, once featured a private archive of Aboriginal dance recordings accessible to researchers and community members. However, since their touring and production schedules have grown to enormous sizes, the archive has been disbanded to make room for more active community initiatives and “performance-based research.”⁴² The Banff Aboriginal dance and performing arts program contains a small collection of videos relating to pieces produced at the Centre, but this collection is only accessible to participants in the program or through appointments with the people currently working there. Little can be found in relation to recorded Contemporary Aboriginal dance without contacting the dancers and companies themselves.

This lack of critical discourse and performance documentation proves problematic for Contemporary Aboriginal dance. How can current artists and dancers grow and

⁴¹Films include: *Eagles Spirit: A Tribute to the Mohawk Steel Workers*, *The Shaman's Journey* by Raoul Trujillo, and the Santee Smith feature of the “Freedom” television series). One feature film, *The Girl Who Married a Ghost* (see figure 26), starring dancer Jerry Longboat, was also found in the archive. Archival folios covered dancers Rosalie Daystar Jones and René Highway. Highway's folio included only his obituary.

⁴² See Red Sky's website for more details. www.redskyperformance.com

continue to expand their oeuvres without critical feedback and in-depth media coverage? How can a dance movement important and large enough to be included in the World Dance Alliance assembly and international conferences warrant only three major publications and meager holdings in performance archives? How can something as integral to Aboriginal artistic and cultural expression and epistemologies as dance not merit more attention in mainstream media and be granted greater discourse within theoretical and critical literature? By not paying serious critical and historical attention to these artists, dance critics and art historians are ignoring the agency and voice rooted within these pieces. Contrary to this deficiency, the ethical space of this thesis works to contest this lack and contribute to the expanding discourse of Rosalie Daystar Jones, Jacqueline Shea Murphy and the Banff Aboriginal dance program.

1.

It is observed with alarm that the holding of dances by the Indians on their reserves is on the increase, and that these practices tend to disorganize the efforts which the Department is putting forth to make them self-supporting. I have, therefore, to direct you to use your utmost endeavors to dissuade the Indians from excessive indulgences in the practice of dancing. You should suppress any dances which cause waste of time, interfere with the occupation of the Indians, unsettle them for serious work, injure their health or encourage them in sloth and idleness...they should not be allowed to dissipate their energies and abandon themselves to demoralizing amusements. By the use of tact and firmness you can obtain control and keep it. And this obstacle to continued progress will then disappear.⁴³

—Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Canadian Department of Indian Affairs. 1921.

The screen fades from black and I see Inuit drum dancer Jeff Tabvahtah standing on a darkened stage, illuminated only by a dim spotlight. All is silent. In one hand he holds a giant drum, larger than his torso, by a handle only as big as his fist. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, he begins to sway, then bends deep into his knees and starts to rock back and forth, up and down. The drum moves with him, swaying and turning. Together he and the drum create an organic unit that moves through space as if swimming through water or riding air currents. Jeff hits the drum for the first time and it echoes richly, sounding out the initial beat of what will soon become a timorous, quick, rhythm complete with jumps, dancing, and cries of joy and/or pain. But a voice-over interrupts Jeff's rhythm as it starts. A young man begins to read a letter that, by now, has become unhappily familiar to Indigenous dancers: "It is observed with alarm that the holding of dances by the Indians on their reserves is on the increase, and that these practices tend to disorganize the efforts which the Department is putting forth to make them self-

⁴³ Excerpt from a letter written as a staff circular. December 15, 1921. Full copy of letter printed in Heather Elton and others, ed., Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project, 12.

supporting...” But the jolting condemnation does not slow Jeff. He bends lower into his knees, executing nimble hops synchronized perfectly with his beats on the drum. His cries become louder and more forceful. While the complete letter is read, he continues to dance, becoming more and more energized. The drum, oblivious to the negative narration, continues its steady back and forth rocking and turning. Other images of dancers who have defied this Department of Indian Affairs edict throughout time (Ghost Dancers, Sun Dance participants, early Powwow participants) appear on screen alternating with the images of Jeff dancing. The letter recitation stops and the exuberant Jeff, just now reaching the apex of his flight, fades from view. The scene changes to an aerial view of Banff Centre and the documentary about the first Chinook Winds Aboriginal Dance Program begins.⁴⁴

Revisiting History

...you have to protect Native cultures because we are the only cultures that come from here. If an Italian man doesn't want to lose his culture or language, he can go back to Italy to discover it. And that goes for any immigrant group that wants to discover their roots. But with Native people, this is our land, we're here too. But once our culture is gone, that's it. We cannot go anywhere else to protect our culture or discover our past. We have to fight to stand here and say "Protect us! ...This is our culture. This is what comes from years of being here."⁴⁵

—Gaétan Gingras (Mohawk/French Canadian), dancer

What about Indigenous dance has made it such a pivotal cultural form? Why has it been such an active site of legislative suppression? Why would colonial legislation aim to make it disappear? Revisiting history and questioning more closely why dance was so actively sought out for destruction by colonial and imperial powers is another way to

⁴⁴ This description is of the beginning of the documentary *Chinook Winds: The First Aboriginal Dance Program*. 1998. Directed by Alejandro Ronceria. See bibliography for video information and appendix I for information on Jeff Tabvahtah.

⁴⁵ Gaétan Gingras (dancer), in discussion with the author, May 2007.

demonstrate the importance and power of dance for Native cultures. Many Aboriginal dancers would suggest dance practice is threatening to colonial hegemony because it has long been a site of reclamation—a site of memory, self-determination, history, language, and sovereignty. Throughout colonial history, dance within Aboriginal communities has been recognized as a locus of cultural survival and renewal and has therefore been repressed and outlawed by church and government policies that aim to colonize and assimilate minority groups. Native cultures around the world have shared similar experiences through the outlawing of this physical expression of joy.⁴⁶

Prohibition and Control

In 1883, the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the United States implemented the “Indian Religious Crimes Code,” developed by Secretary of the Interior Henry Teller in which he prohibited Native American ceremonial activity and punished the “offense” with prison sentences.⁴⁷ In Canada in 1884, section 149 of the Indian Act banned participation in Potlatch and Tamanawas ceremonies as “wasteful,” “unproductive,” and “uncivilized.”⁴⁸ In 1889, the new United States Indian commissioner outlawed the Ghost Dance because government officials perceived the peaceful resistance movement as a “war dance” or “uprising.” Even after the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890, several

⁴⁶ For example, the Maori people of New Zealand had most dances, even their Tangai funeral ceremonies—made illegal by colonizers. African slaves brought to the United States were prohibited from performing traditional dances and ritual celebrations and were forced to hide far from plantations when holding events.

⁴⁷ For more information, see: Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975 and 2000), 187. Also see pages 159-161 for more of Teller’s words.

⁴⁸ Official legislation read: “Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the “Potlatch” or the Indian dance known as the “Tamanawas” is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not more than six nor less than two months in a jail or other place of confinement; and, any Indian or other person who encourages, either directly or indirectly an Indian or Indians to get up such a festival or dance, or to celebrate the same, or who shall assist in the celebration of same is guilty of a like offence, and shall be liable to the same punishment.” (An Act further to amend “The Indian Act, 1880,” S.C. 1884 (47 Vict.), c. 27, s. 3.)

dozen men believed to be leaders of the dance movement were imprisoned.⁴⁹ The prohibitions evolved. In 1895, the Sun Dance was essentially banned in Canada with the prohibition of physical endurance feats integral to the ceremony.⁵⁰ In 1906, the Canadian government banned all forms of traditional dance and in 1914; public appearances of any type in traditional dance attire were prohibited. The outlawing (by the government) and the demonizing (by missionaries) of dance was a way of simultaneously suppressing the art, religion, community, and history of Indigenous peoples. It attempted to remove a robust cultural voice in order to “assimilate” the various nations. Many traditional ceremonies that included dance were forced underground in order to survive. They were held in remote corners of reservations, at inaccessible winter homes, or at summer camps unknown to the police. Some families practiced door-to-door or “split potlatches” and

⁴⁹ The Ghost Dance and the Wounded Knee Massacre are both pivotal moments in Native American history. The Ghost Dance was a spiritual movement based on the circle dance form led by Paiute prophet Wovoka. In 1888, he started to spread word to tribal leaders that he had received visions from the Great Spirit telling him if enough people took up the dance, it would bring about the renewal of the earth, the return of the Buffalo, and the return of deceased loved ones. Leaders took this message back to their nations and the dance practice/religion spread. The movement emphasized peace, but United States Indian agents mistook the dance for a war dance becoming alarmed at the great numbers of people who started to gather to dance day and night. They feared a full revolt and issued a ban on the dance. In November 1890, the Lakota of the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations defied their inexperienced agent, continuing to hold the dance ritual. The commissioner of Indian Affairs was called and within five days, hundreds of heavily armed United States troops arrived. The Lakota retreated back to Pine Ridge, but continued to dance at an even more fevered pitch. In December 1890, a warrant for Sitting Bull was issued after he threatened to join the Ghost Dance movement out of protest against reservation life. In the panic of the attempted arrest, shooting broke out killing seven Sitting Bull supporters and six policemen. With troops even more on edge, Sitting Bull’s followers fled to the Bad Lands trying to reach Pine Ridge, but eventually surrendered. While disarming the Native Americans at Wounded Knee, one man, Black Coyote, refused to give up his gun shouting in protest that he has paid money for the weapon. In the struggle, a shot rang out and troops opened fire. They continued shooting, even at women and children, the unarmed, and those trying to flee. At the end of the ‘fighting,’ one estimate placed the number of Native Americans dead at nearly 300 of the original 350 in the group. Of the 470 soldiers, 25 died and 39 were injured. Following the massacre, the soldiers left the bodies in a three-day long blizzard. They later hired civilians to collect the frozen bodies and bury them in a mass grave. For a contemporaneous account of events, see Mooney, 1973 (reprint from 1896). For a later re-visitation of the history, see Dee Brown, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 1970). For a more recent anthropological perspective of how the movement relates to revitalization, see Alice Beck Kehoe, The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory and Revitalization (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1989).

⁵⁰ Robert Choquette, Canada’s Religions: An Historical Introduction, (Ottawa, Ontario: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 306.

dance festivals were held around Christian or political holidays like Christmas and Fourth of July to avoid raising suspicion with government Indian Agents.

At the same time that dance was outlawed in this official context, Aboriginal peoples were pressed constantly to perform spectacles of 'Otherness' for Western audiences. Indigenous dance became a fetish object of the Western gaze. Only five weeks after the United States Indian Commissioner outlawed Native American "war" dances in 1883, William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) began touring "Indian war dances" in his widely successful *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* stage show.⁵¹ Local craft fairs, agricultural festivals, and stampedes in White communities, looking to attract more tourists, further supported and promoted the dances of nearby Aboriginal nations, often inviting them to participate in parades wearing traditional clothing, set up 'tipi villages,' perform dances, and sell traditional-style crafts.⁵²

Such Wild West Shows, World Fairs, staged documentaries, and staged demonstrations for tourist and anthropologist cameras are exploitative arenas that contain and control cultural expressions, often perpetuating distorted views of dances. But, to study these performances and displays simply as exploitation removes agency from the individuals who negotiated this terrain of prohibition and control to their best possible advantage. Portraying Indigenous performers from the nineteenth and twentieth century as only victims in academic writing subtly dis-empowers them. Recent re-visitation to

⁵¹ Jacqueline Shea Murphy, "Policing Authenticity: Native American Dance and the 'Western' Stage," *Discourses in Dance* 1.2 (2002): 7.

⁵²For an exploration of the prohibitions and use of Indigenous ceremonies as a form of control in Canada, as well as extensive research on the laws and practices of the government in the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century, see Katherine Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Manitoba Studies in Native History VII. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994), 134–152. For an interesting exploration of the interconnected relationship of provincial arts and crafts movements in Canada to First Nations cultural tourism, see Gerald McMaster, "Tenuous Lines of Descent: Indian Arts and Crafts of the Reservation Period," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 4.2 (1989): 205–236.

this history by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars has shown that in spite of the manipulative and inaccurate nature of these displays and spectacles, some Native performers were able to subvert the system by using stage dance as a small vehicle in which to continue practicing embodied knowledge and to peruse arts that had been banned.⁵³ While enduring stereotypical reenactments, inaccurate costumes, and distorted portrayals of ceremonies and historical events, performers practiced and passed on traditional dances while on the road, began a dialogue with other nations about their dances, traveled and went site-seeing, got paid livable wages to support their families back home, and represented themselves to foreign dignitaries.⁵⁴ In recent history, some see the contemporary dance form of the Powwow as a place for cultural tourism and exploitation. For example, some dance historians have suggested Powwow evolved from the late-nineteenth-century practice of show promoters conspiring with Indian agents to have Indian encampments near annual fairs or sports days as side attractions.⁵⁵ For White promoters, with their Western world views, staging Native dance made it less real and

⁵³ See Jacqueline Shea Murphy, "Policing Authenticity: Native American Dance and the 'Western' Stage," where Shea Murphy questions why Wild West shows would co-opt Native American Dance. She also explores the agency Native American dancers found in their performances. Also see Ruth B. Phillips' essay "Performing the Native Woman: Primitivism and Mimicry in Early Twentieth-Century Visual Culture" in Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity, ed. Lynda Jessup (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 26–49, in which Phillips explores the life of vaudeville performer Molly Spotted Elk to posit that during the early twentieth century, performance and not the plastic arts was the best site for artistic production and the best cultural site for Native negotiations of the dominant culture's expectations of Native Americans as vanishing, degenerate or pre-modern.

⁵⁴ See images 5 and 6. For a particularly interesting first-hand account of the Native American experience dancing in the Wild West shows, see Black Elk's commentary in the chapter "Seeing the World of the Wasichus" in The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt, ed. Raymond DeMallie (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

⁵⁵ See Pettipas' discussion of agricultural exhibitions and stampedes in Canada (Katherine Pettipas. Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies, 134–151), McMaster's discussion of Banff Indian Days (Gerald McMaster, "Tenuous Lines of Descent: Indian Arts and Crafts of the Reservation Period," 216–219), and Doolittle and Elton's discussion of fragments of dances being performed at rodeos, fairs, and "Indian Days" celebrations as the forerunners to modern Powwow (Lisa Doolittle and Heather Elton, "Medicine of the Brave: A Look at the Changing Role of Dance Culture from the Buffalo Days to the Modern Powwow," in Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader, ed. Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 115).

less powerful. For them, staging was a form of containment. But Aboriginal dancers were not always of this same mind set. They could navigate the terrain of staged performances to their best advantage. Despite awareness of being exploited, some Indigenous nations embraced these encampments because the usual laws forbidding dance, celebration, and public gatherings did not apply in such cases of “spectacle.”⁵⁶ Also, contemporary events such as Powwows and fairs allow communities to feel cultural pride and have fun in a self-determined context whether or not non-Aboriginal audiences are watching.

A re-visitation of late-nineteenth through early-twentieth-century Native American and First Nations dance suppression and appropriation and an examination of the Western audience/Indigenous performer relationship sets the context for the Contemporary Aboriginal dance movement that started much later in the twentieth century. A more contextualized history can demonstrate the power of Aboriginal dance in the face of great adversity and how important a sense of agency was to Aboriginal performers even as they were performing for exploitative Western eyes. The contemporary performance movement addresses these same issues of ‘the Gaze’ and power through performance but on a stage in which performers have greater control over self-representation.

Modern Appropriations and Negotiations

The dance movement I examine emerged in the 1970s–1980s when professional dancers of Aboriginal descent who were trained in the Western forms of Modern dance and ballet began to question the art forms’ possibilities of reflecting their real, lived

⁵⁶ See succinct description on University of Saskatchewan’s website: <http://www.students.usask.ca/aboriginal/powwow/> (accessed April 6, 2009).

experiences. Up until this point, Modern dance choreographers had been appropriating aspects of African and Native American dance (just as many Modern artists such as Picasso and Braque appropriated the imagery of non-Western cultures for their “avant-garde” theoretical art movement) while ignoring the governmental oppression and true social situation of the artists by whom they were influenced. For example, the ground-based work and rhythmic emphasis of non-Western dance deeply impacted the “Mother” of Modern American Dance, Martha Graham.⁵⁷ She took inspiration from Native American religious rituals and ceremonies, especially those of Pueblo cultures of the Southwestern United States where she often visited on tour.⁵⁸ She praised dances by Indigenous cultures because she saw them as something to be celebrated as uniquely American:

America’s great gift to the arts is rhythm: rich, full, unabashed, virile. Our two forms of indigenous dance, the Negro and the Indian, are as dramatically contrasted rhythmically as the land in which they root. The Negro dance is a dance toward freedom, a dance of forgetfulness... The Indian dance, however, is not for freedom, or forgetfulness, or escape, but for awareness of life, complete relationship with that world in which he finds himself: it is a dance for power, a rhythm of integration.⁵⁹

Upon first read, this statement seems to be a positive affirmation of the power of traditional Aboriginal dance, and it is; but with closer examination, problems emerge. Graham appropriated elements of non-Western dance into her pieces and profited from the way her work was seen as “avant-garde” and original without sharing any benefits

⁵⁷ See figure 7.

⁵⁸ Pieces that include references to Native American spirituality or ritual include *Primitive Mysteries* (1931) which explores the relationship between Christianity and Native religions in the Southwest (Graham casts herself in the role of the Virgin of the Adobe churches), *American Document* (1938) which includes a reading of a letter from Red Jacket of the Seneca tribe and an act entitled “Indian Episode,” and *El Pieniente* (1941), which explores the ritual of self-flagellation and endurance and is structured as a traveling road show.

⁵⁹ Martha Graham in 1932. Quoted in Merle Armitage, *Martha Graham* (Brooklyn, New York: Dance Horizons, 1966), 99. She is obviously overlooking the fact that African-Americans were transplanted unwillingly to the Americas rather than being “indigenous.”

with the Aboriginal community she used. She never created a piece for Native dancers, and when her company emerged shortly after her death, it included no Native dancers. By incorporating Aboriginal and African movements and ritual elements into her pieces, Graham claimed authority and ownership over forms and styles that were not her own. Many movements had specific, contextual ceremonial meanings she could not fully understand with her Western world view.⁶⁰ She glorified some aspects of Aboriginal dance within her own context (frequently misunderstanding them) while excluding the people who created the art form.

Sadly, this appropriation without recognition and this power of the Western gaze to distort are as commonplace in dance history as in art history. For example, another pivotal Modern choreographer, Lester Horton, was known early in his career for “Indian Pageant Productions,” such as *Song of Hiawatha* (1928) and *Totem Incantation* (1948) in which he staged himself and other White dancers as “Indians” and tried to recreate traditional dance forms in order to reconnect to “natural” male masculinity. Modern choreographers like Horton often understood Native American dances as movements only and disregarded their sacred connections to ceremony, history, and the practice of embodied knowledge. They also exploited the pageantry of the dances by exaggerating stereotypical elements and marketing them as exotic.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Starting the 1930s, Graham traveled through the Southwestern United States many times attending Pueblo dances and became fascinated by both dance as rite and the Catholic religious practices of Native Americans as they intersected with Indigenous religions and dance. See Graham’s biography (Martha Graham, *Martha Graham: Blood Memory* (New York: Doubleday, 1991)). For a more in-depth discussion of Graham’s relationship with Native American dance, see Jacqueline Shea Murphy’s chapter: “Her Point of View: Martha Graham and Absent Indians” in *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories*, 148–168.

⁶¹ An exception to this can be found in the work of José Limón. This Mexican born Modernist choreographer/dancer created many pieces based on his Mexican heritage and the conflicts between “El Indio” and “El Conquistador.” Instead of romanticism, many of his pieces relating to Indigenous peoples

While this cultural appropriation was occurring within the Modernist scene, Native performers continued their own artistic production, as they always had, in both traditional and Modern styles. Dancers continued to negotiate the appropriation and consumption of their bodies and culture while finding new ways to perform. In the 1920s—1940s, although ethnographic and stereotypical displays were still commonplace, some Native American dancers started to receive international acclaim through Western style stage dance. Princess White Deer (Mohawk, born Esther Deer), became known as a Broadway star and a Ziegfeld Follies dancer throughout the 1920s.⁶² Molly Spotted Elk (Penobscot, born Molly Nelson Dellis) achieved fame in both the United States and Europe as a nightclub and Vaudeville star during the 1920s and 1930s. Like Princess White Deer, she was often forced to wear skimpy and inaccurate costumes that exploited both her body and her Native heritage.⁶³ During her career, Spotted Elk produced volumes of personal history which demonstrate her acute awareness of, and sensitivity to, the negotiations of identity she was performing on stage. Her diaries reveal a performer constantly torn between wanting to create self-determined artistic expression and a mother paying the bills by enacting the stereotypes that American audiences craved: “My costume made me embarrassed...Not natural for my Indian dance...I am an injun in the flesh parade. Feel terrible about being bare and walking around, but I must work...”⁶⁴ The fact that Molly continued to dance despite the shame she felt and the other job skills she had demonstrates her need to continue performing and dancing. Her writing also

address the real effects of colonization on the body and the complex political identities that Indigenous Mexicans needed to negotiate during Limón’s lifetime. See figure 16.

⁶² See figure 8.

⁶³ See figures 9–11. Figure 9 and figure 11 show the Plains culture costumes she created and wore, although Molly was Penobscot from Maine.

⁶⁴ Molly Spotted Elk. Quoted in Bunny McBride, *Molly Spotted Elk: A Penobscot in Paris* (Norman Oklahoma and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 136.

expresses the joy and happiness she felt when she had the occasional opportunity to share (more) accurate dances with audiences. While in college, she wrote about how pleased she was to perform at museums and share the oral histories and dances of her Penobscot community on stage. One wonders what volumes of personal history and commentary would have resulted if the Native American dancers of Buffalo Bill's shows had had access to pen and paper, a translator, and the time to write. Later, Molly's embarrassment at her exploitation prompted her to move to Paris where she felt audiences were more appreciative of "authentic" Native dance; but she still wrote in her journals: "the more I dance, the more I want to interpret my emotions without limitation, to create a freedom of primitiveness and abandon. If only one could dance solely for art! Maybe someday I will have the chance..."⁶⁵ More than forty years later, other dancers would finally get the opportunity that Molly craved.

A New Era

In his essay "On National Culture," Frantz Fanon outlines three phases a colonized artist goes through during the process of decolonization: Assimilation, Remembrance, and Fighting.⁶⁶ Examination of the history of Contemporary Aboriginal dance reflects these "phases" well. Although Fanon's use of the term "phase" implies an evolution or linear progression that I do not intend to perpetuate here because in Aboriginal dance these phases can be present at multiple times, in any order, or even at

⁶⁵ Molly Spotted Elk in 1929. Bunny McBride, Molly Spotted Elk: A Penobscot in Paris, 128.

⁶⁶ Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) was a psychiatrist and philosopher from Martinique who was also a revolutionary with the National Liberation Front known for his writings on decolonization. Although he is non-Aboriginal, he has the first-hand experience of being a colonized person. Fanon uses the term 'Postcolonial' in his writing, but following my methodology, I will continue to use the term 'decolonizing.'

the same time.⁶⁷ For example, in Fanon's first "Assimilation" phase, "the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying culture."⁶⁸ In the 1950s and 1960s, the numerous Native American prima ballerinas touring the world demonstrated this 'Assimilation.' Among the ballerinas was a pair of sisters who achieved international acclaim—Maria and Marjorie Tallchief (Osage)—whose father was a chief of their Osage community in Fairfax, Oklahoma.⁶⁹ Maria, who started at the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, became George Balanchine's wife and muse. She eventually went on to become a principal dancer for the New York City Ballet. Marjorie married the famous choreographer George Skibine and danced with the American Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas. At the Paris Ballet, Marjorie became the first American to achieve 'Premiere Danseuse Etoile' status. Both Maria and Marjorie engaged their Native American identities rarely in their careers. However, in her autobiography, Maria frequently references the influence of her Native culture on her life as a performer:

By 1925, even though the Osage had become rich, they, like all Indian tribes, were subject to government edicts, which were designed to destroy tribal customs. Indian ceremonies were banned and tribal languages forbidden. The Osage and many other Indian nations kept their culture alive by holding ceremonies in remote corners of the reservation. Marjorie and I were thrilled when, together with Grandma Tall Chief, Daddy drove us to the location... The rhythm of those songs has stayed with me.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ I believe the phases can progress in other ways than the progression Fanon outlines. The phases can cycle, can be present all at once, or can happen in any order within an artists' production. Another appropriate model for de-colonization phases is laid out by Poka Laenui (Hayden F. Burgess, Native Hawaiian) in his similar "Process of Decolonization": 1) Rediscovery and Recovery; 2) Mourning; 3) Dreaming; 4) Commitment; and 5) Action. See his essay "Processes of Decolonization" in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, ed. Marie Battiste, 150–160.

⁶⁸ Frantz Fanon, "On National Culture," *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 40.

⁶⁹ See figures 12–14. Professional ballerinas most written about: Rosella Hightower (Choctaw/Irish), Maria and Marjorie Tallchief (Osage), Yvonne Chouteau (Cherokee/Shawnee), and Moscelyne Larkin (Peoria/Shawnee/Russian).

⁷⁰ Maria Tallchief and Larry Kaplan, *Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1997), 7–8.

Another prima ballerina from the 1950s who expresses the importance of her Native heritage is Yvonne Chouteau (Cherokee/Shawnee), a woman who won a full scholarship to the School of American Ballet and became the youngest dancer ever accepted into the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.⁷¹ Chouteau grew up as a competitive Powwow dancer. She spent most of her childhood traveling to Powwows and fairs and taking part in community celebrations while studying ballet. Her family was more supportive of her Native dance performances than ballet despite the fact that she showed promise as a professional ballet dancer:

Of course, my parents were not about to let ballet take me away from my Indian dancing, but they made it possible for me to do both. Looking back, it was very wise, because the recognition I had gained as an Indian dancer offered me tremendous opportunities to perform. ...I rarely did my exhibition Indian dances without at least one ballet piece. As far as I was concerned, the two were very similar...I had been taught the sanctity of dance as it is seen in the eyes of the Indian and approached ballet the same way. So later I didn't have to learn that classical ballet, in its purest form, demands spiritual focus as well as technical ability. There is much more to ballet than steps, and what makes it art comes from deep inside.⁷²

Although Fanon would propose these dancers were demonstrating assimilation of the colonizer's ideas through mastery of what Euro-North-American society deemed 'High culture;' I propose these dancers were also demonstrating an awareness of the possibilities that Indigenous epistemologies held for Western dance. By finding connections between the spiritual focus of ballet and traditional Aboriginal dance, these ballerinas negotiated their situation in a colonial society while maintaining their ties to Indigenous knowledge.

⁷¹ See figure 15.

⁷² Yvonne Chouteau in Lili Cockerille Livingston, American Indian Ballerinas (Norman, OK and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 65.

In Fanon's second "Remembrance" phase, "we find the native is disturbed; he decides to remember what he is... Past happenings of the bygone days of his childhood will be brought up out of the depths of his memory; old legends will be reinterpreted..."⁷³

In 1978, the United States government passed the American Indian Religious Freedom act, stating the government would now attempt to protect and to preserve Native Americans' rights to freedom of worship through ceremonies and traditional rights. This long-overdue recognition spurred playwright Hanay Geiogamah (Kiowa) to help create the Native American Theatre Ensemble in the 1970s, the first internationally touring theatre company consisting completely of Native actors and dancers. In the 1987, the organization evolved and Hanay co-founded the American Indian Dance Theatre (AIDT) with Barbara Schwei. AIDT aims at modifying traditional-style dances for the Western stage.⁷⁴ The company produces abridged versions of Powwow dances alongside a rotating selection of tribally specific dances not regularly seen on stage, such as the Zuñi Buffalo Dance, the Eagle Dance, and the Apache Crown Dance.⁷⁵ Through these works, AIDT aims to reflect "the vibrancy and excitement of an ancient culture that continues to thrive and flourish in the new millennium... [with productions that] reflect this living history and vital present."⁷⁶ AIDT reinterprets historical stories oral histories, legends, and traditional-style dance on stage in an "authentic" manner.⁷⁷ Sometimes criticized by Indigenous community members for presenting "glorified Powwow," stereotypical spectacle, or sections of ceremonial dance that should be kept sacred and hidden from the

⁷³ Frantz Fanon, "On National Culture," 40–41.

⁷⁴ See figure 17.

⁷⁵ Rosalie Daystar Jones, "Modern Native Dance: Beyond Tribe and Tradition," 172–174.

⁷⁶ The New LATC Theatre Press Release. October 17, 2007. Collection of author.

⁷⁷ Although I find the term "authentic" troublesome, I use it here in reference to the writing and criticism surrounding AIDT. See Anna Kisselgoff, "The Dance: Premiere of 'Shaman's Journey'," The New York Times, Monday, February 8, 1988; and Rosalie Daystar Jones, "Modern Native Dance: Beyond Tribe and Tradition," 174.

non-initiated, AIDT maintains their presentations are mainly social-based dance and that elders from the communities represented have been consulted extensively on non-social dances. Furthermore, Hanay Geiogamah considers the notion of “secret ceremonies” to actually serve the non-Native’s desire to be in control of what is considered “authentic.” The notion of authenticity only being reflected by sacred, ceremonial dance or thinking that all “Indian things should be kept hidden or secret” perpetuates a cultural romanticism of Native culture as “exotic.”⁷⁸

Another dance company associated with Fanon’s Remembrance phase is Daystar: Contemporary Dance Drama of Indian America (once Daystar: Classical Dance-Drama of Indian America) founded in 1980 by Modern dancer Rosalie Jones (Pembina Chippewa/Blackfeet, known professionally as Daystar).⁷⁹ The company is now known for bringing traditional Native American stories and oral histories to the stage through Modern dance. Rosalie Jones grew up sixty miles from her Blackfeet reservation in Montana and was studying ballet and piano when she discovered Modern dance. For her, the Modern Western stage was a way to explore an identity that had been suppressed by her Native American mother when she moved the family far away from the reserve and talked rarely about her Pembina Chippewa culture. Rosalie says her mother “very much wanted to be just a middle-class person...the whole Indian thing was under wraps.”⁸⁰ By using Modern dance to explore her Native identity and expression of oral histories and traditional movements, Daystar was able to subvert her family’s avoidance and express her culture openly. As Daystar says of studying Modern dance in her youth: “there was

⁷⁸ See Geiogamah’s commentary in Jacqueline Shea Murphy, The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories, 200–206.

⁷⁹ See figures 18–20.

⁸⁰ Jacqueline Shea Murphy, The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories, 206–207.

some sort of stamp of approval on it, because it was an art form, and it was on stage...In a sense, the modern dance gave validity to what I was doing...It was a great adventure to say, okay, I really can express Indianess, and being Indian.”⁸¹ While working on a master’s degree in dance at the University of Utah in 1966, Daystar was hired to produce a dramatic spectacle featuring students from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. The resulting production, *Sipapu: A Drama of Authentic Dance and Chants of Indian America*, based on the coyote trickster stories of the Southwest, featured thirty Modern dancers and two hundred traditional dancers. The performance debuted in Washington DC to packed audiences.⁸² Later, in 1969, Daystar received a scholarship for young Native Artists to Julliard, where she studied under José Limón.⁸³ As part of their studies, she and fellow student Cordell Morsette (Sioux) were sent to Flandreau Indian High School in South Dakota to teach Modern dance and create a performance. Their work, *The Gift of the Pipe*, told the story of White Buffalo Calf Woman.⁸⁴ With this production, Daystar began developing her signature narrative choreographic style, using storyteller characters, traditional art-inspired costumes, story-cycles, and masks within Modern stage dance to re-tell Native American legends. After touring a one-woman production called *Daystar: An American Indian Woman Dances* in which she became Napi, the Blackfeet trickster, she created her own company Daystar: Contemporary Dance Drama of Indian America—founding what would become the oldest Native

⁸¹ Ibid, 207.

⁸² Hollis Walker, “Contemporary Dance,” *Native Peoples: Arts and Lifeways*, September/October (2005): 32.

⁸³ See footnote 61 and Figure 16.

⁸⁴ Jacqueline Shea Murphy, *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories*, 176. White Buffalo Calf Woman is a sacred figure in the Lakota religion. She taught the Lakota many sacred rituals and gave the tribe the sacred pipe. Before leaving the group, she promised to return.

Modern dance company still producing today.⁸⁵ Now, more than twenty years later, Jones is still dedicated to recreating Native American legends and stories on stage while incorporating narrative structure and Aboriginal oral traditions into Contemporary dance. Jones has created numerous productions based on specific tribal/band stories rather than on spectacle designed for crowd appeal. *Wolf: A Transformation* enacts the Anishinabe story of how the Creator gave Wolf to First Man as a companion. *Sacred Woman, Sacred Earth* is a full evening dance-drama incorporating multiple stories: the Iroquois creation story of Sky Woman who created the earth when she fell from the Sky World, the Cherokee story of the origin of corn, a coyote trickster story, and the Lakota story of White Buffalo Calf Woman who brought the first pipe to her people. The Lakota segment of *Sacred Woman, Sacred Earth* is especially innovative because it occurs in multiple realms: the flashback/suspended time of the original story, the spiritual time of Buffalo Woman herself, and the present time in which Buffalo Woman intervenes in the lives of contemporary Native women.

In Canada, the catalyst for “Remembrance” was René Highway (Cree, 1954-1990), a choreographer and dancer with the Toronto Dance Theatre who studied ballet and Modern dance at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in Manitoba, The Martha Graham School in New York City, and The Alvin Ailey School in New York City.⁸⁶ In 1980, mid-career, Highway worked with Tukak Theatre in Denmark, a company made up mainly of Inuit and other Indigenous performers from Greenland and Lapland. The experience reawakened Highway’s interest and pride in his own cultural heritage.⁸⁷ He

⁸⁵ Hollis Walker, “Contemporary Dance,” 32.

⁸⁶ See figures 21–22.

⁸⁷ Paula Citron, “Rene Highway, 36, ‘Charismatic’ Performer,” *Toronto Star*, Saturday, October 20, 1990, A14.

began traveling throughout Canada and the United States to perform Indigenous-related themes and stories through dances, pageants, and plays at Native cultural festivals. In Toronto, he worked with the Native Canadian Centre and collaborated with other Indigenous Contemporary dancers Alejandro Ronceria (Suesca/Sogamoso/Columbian) and Raoul Trujillo (Apache/Ute/French-Canadian/Latino). While working with young Native American performers on a Navajo Reservation in 1982, he helped choreograph the “Night of the First Americans” performance at the Kennedy Center.⁸⁸ Later, René began working with his playwright brother Tomson Highway to produce *The Rez Sisters* (1986) and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* (1989), plays that incorporated the stories of First Nations oral histories and world views into narratives about the daily lives of Canadian First Nations people. While working with Tomson, René created the role of Nanabush for *The Rez Sisters* (now a Canadian and First Nations theatre classic) and incorporated dance into the play. He also danced in many of the productions he helped create and/or choreograph with his brother, including the 1989 dance-drama *The Sage, the Dancer, and the Fool*. In return, Tomson wrote the musical score for René’s dance work *New Song, New Dance* (1987) in which René danced alongside Alejandro Ronceria and Raoul Trujillo. The theme of the abstract, Modern-style work was:

...exploring Indian experience...and how growing up in a foreign environment [Residential School, Western cities, etc] affected all our lives...It shows that we are able to survive and we have survived...Natives have already learned to express themselves in visual arts, through painting and sculpture. Now they’re starting to express themselves through the performing arts...The message is to use what we’ve learned and experienced and to come up with a way of expressing ourselves.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Rosalie Daystar Jones, “Modern Native Dance: Beyond Tribe and Tradition,” 180.

⁸⁹ René Highway quoted in *Ibid*, 180.

Many of Highway's most ambitious works, however, were solo pieces. His first, *There Is My People Sleeping* (1985), is a full length, multi-media quasi-autobiographical work based on a monolithic poem by Sarain Stump.⁹⁰ It received excellent reviews from critics. *Prism, Mirror, Lens* (1989), the last piece René choreographed before his death at the age of 36, is another multi-media solo work inspired by a Samuel Delaney science fiction novel. The piece follows a young hero as he undertakes a vision quest in the "mechanized desolation of a modern city."⁹¹ In his 1990 obituary, Highway was quoted as saying, "[t]here's a wonderful Native Indian imagination that has been crippled along the way, so the message is to let yourself loose. Express yourself!"⁹²

Although I have introduced Rosalie Daystar Jones and René Highway's work as reflecting Fanon's "Remembrance" phase, their work cannot be so easily categorized. Their careers reflect a development into work that encompasses multiple styles and genres: work that restages Native American legends, work that reclaims Native identity, and work that demonstrates both a firm base in traditional culture as well as a mastery of Western stage dance styles. While it remembers, Daystar and Highway's work interrogates the stage: What are the possibilities for critique and agency when we turn the tables and appropriate Western dance to express our own stories and movements? How can we portray our culture truthfully and retain ceremonial references within dance while avoiding spectacles of Otherness? How do we get various types of audiences to listen to our ideas? Although René Highway died before he could develop his vision for

⁹⁰ See Sarain Stump, *There is My People Sleeping: The Ethnic Poem Drawings of Sarain Stump* (Sidney: Gray's Publishing, May 1970). Stump was a Cree-Shoshone artist from Wyoming who was also a writer. The book's minimal text, mainly captions for drawings, form a type of poetry: "It's with terror, sometimes / that I hear them calling me / but it's the light skip of a cougar / detaching me from the ground / to leave me alone / with my crazy power / till I reach the sun makers / and find myself again / in a new place."

⁹¹ Rosalie Daystar Jones, "Modern Native Dance: Beyond Tribe and Tradition," 180.

⁹² Paula Citron, "Rene Highway, 36, 'Charismatic' Performer," A14.

Contemporary Aboriginal dance production, Rosalie Daystar Jones' work has continued to expand and ask tough questions while inspiring new generations of dancers to take her traditional innovation and contemporary remembrance to Fanon's next phase: "Fighting."

Fanon says the Native artist in this phase, "having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will on the contrary shake the people."⁹³ For Fanon, the artist in the Fighting phase goes to the "zone of occult instability" where the people dwell and works with and for them. Fanon says, "it is there that our souls are crystallized and that our perceptions and our lives are transfused with light."⁹⁴ Contemporary Aboriginal dance is now entering this "zone of occult instability" by creating pieces designed to awaken people politically or culturally through the destabilization of stereotypes (well demonstrated by the discussion of Michael Greyeyes work and his avant-garde collaborations with Kent Monkman in chapter five), to heal the soul so it can be 'crystallized' (demonstrated by Gaétan Gingras' negotiations of identity and Jerry Longboat's ritual explorations in chapter four), and to be revolutionary by celebrating Aboriginal culture as a contemporary expression of traditional ideas that has survived despite active suppression (demonstrated by Red Sky and Sandra Laronde's celebratory pieces for children discussed in chapter three). Artists have begun to question their craft and how their own cultures can be illuminated while on a Western stage. Alejandro Ronceria, who danced with René Highway and co-led the Banff Aboriginal dance program from 1996–2001, explains of his need to create Contemporary Aboriginal dance:

[I] wanted to include all that I didn't have in my dance training in Columbia, the Soviet Union, the United States and Canada. All about who I am. My culture. Although I appreciate classical music, I always wondered, When can I hear my

⁹³ Frantz Fanon, "On National Culture," 41.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 43.

own music? When can I wear my own outfits with our own aesthetic and designers? Perform our own dance steps?⁹⁵

This phase of instability or fighting is where my discourse with the dancers begins. Through dialogues with artists and choreographers, I realized Contemporary Aboriginal dance has only begun to answer the questions first posed by dancers like Rosalie Daystar Jones and René Highway. The process of addressing these questions through art has inspired an opportunity to ask even more questions and opened the door for younger artists to go beyond Assimilation, Remembrance, and Fighting. Contemporary companies and artists such as Santee Smith (Mohawk) at the Six Nations Reservation in Ontario and her company Kaha:wi, Sandra Laronde (Teme Augama Anishinabe) and Red Sky in Toronto, Penny Couchie (Ojibway/Mohawk) and Alejandro Ronceria (Suesca/Sogamoso/Columbian) and the Earth in Motion company based in North Bay Ontario, Gaétan Gingras (Mohawk/French-Canadian) and the Manitowapan company in Montréal, Jerry Longboat (Mohawk) at the Canada Council, and many others are adding to the movement and slowly gaining support and recognition for their work.⁹⁶ Instructors like Rosalie Daystar Jones have begun to implement Aboriginal dance programs within universities.⁹⁷ Even Contemporary performance artists such as James Luna (Lusieno, La Jolla Reservation) and Contemporary theatre performers like Margo Kane (Cree/Saulteaux) have begun to incorporate Indigenous dance into their pieces.⁹⁸

These dancers have all been trained in stage dance traditions at prestigious schools and treasure this training, but they also choose to honor their Indigenous heritage

⁹⁵ Alejandro Ronceria quoted in Heather Elton and others, eds., *Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project*, 35.

⁹⁶ For more companies and more information, see appendix I.

⁹⁷ See Trent University program for a precedent-setting program.

⁹⁸ Luna's performance piece *Emendatio* for the Venice Biennale included a marathon dance performance over several days.

and recognize the multi-layered arena of artistic discourse that opens up when they acknowledge Aboriginal world views on the Western stage.⁹⁹ They have chosen to continue working within the idioms of Modern and Classic Euro-American dance technique or Contemporary theatre and Performance Art; but instead of being guided by the principles of Western training, they re-appropriate and re-envision the Euro-North American styles and conventions in order to share their connections to tribal/band histories and political/personal issues with multiple audiences through self-representation. In their pieces, they use references to traditional Aboriginal dances, rhythms or music, narrative/storytelling, spirituality/ceremony/ritual, figures from oral histories, movement basics from Contemporary dance, electronic music, lighting design, political commentary, multimedia elements, and autobiographical explorations to create current expressions of Indigenous cultures.

In re-creating the Western stage as an Aboriginal space, these dancers develop a sovereign arena within the hegemony of the performance world.¹⁰⁰ In correlation with Indigenous world views, Fanon's "Fighting" phase is also cyclical; it contains elements of the other phases such as dancers demonstrating mastery of Western techniques (Assimilation) and retelling and rediscovering oral histories (Remembrance). But, the Fighting phase differs from Remembrance because artists are no longer trying to "salvage" oral histories and traditional style dances and illustrate them didactically on stage; they are fighting to change Contemporary dance by modifying and re-infusing it with the world views and epistemologies recovered in the Remembrance

⁹⁹ For example, the dancers have been trained at schools such as: The National Ballet of Canada, Toronto Dance Theatre, The Martha Graham School, The Alvin Ailey School, The Santa Fe Opera, and the Julliard School of Dance (just to name a few). See websites in Bibliography or appendix I for information on specific artists.

¹⁰⁰ See figure 23.

phase—demanding that discourse and audiences grow and change. Embodying research, the dancers mine the archive of historic performance to restage hidden histories and expose colonization.¹⁰¹ They create both abstract and narrative Contemporary dance pieces with subtle references to Aboriginality giving Native audience members an advantage into the discourse surrounding the pieces and challenging privileged Euro-North American audiences expecting easy consumption.

By re-envisioning stage forms such as Ballet and Modern dance in order to bring Indigenous knowledge to future generations while celebrating a cultural legacy that has been suppressed for so long, these Contemporary Aboriginal dancers are able to produce works that Fanon would say “fight.” They speak back to dominant cultural forms and claim agency through the presence of the non-passive, physical bodies of the colonized. By going to the “zone of instability where people dwell” through their practice, these dancers are able to transform lives—reaching out to communities with their practice and programs. They alter (mis)perceptions of Indigenous art by producing art that is true both to tradition and their current lived experiences while being understood on multiple levels by diverse types of audiences. These dancers recreate the Western stage as an Aboriginal space and fight to have their created sovereign spaces recognized and legitimized by the Western canon.

¹⁰¹ For example, the Contemporary dance piece *Evening in Paris* (created by Michelle Olson and Muriel Miguel and performed by Michelle Olson of Raven Spirit Dance) honors the complexity of Aboriginal women’s experiences through the life stories of Molly Spotted Elk and Michelle’s mother and grandmother.

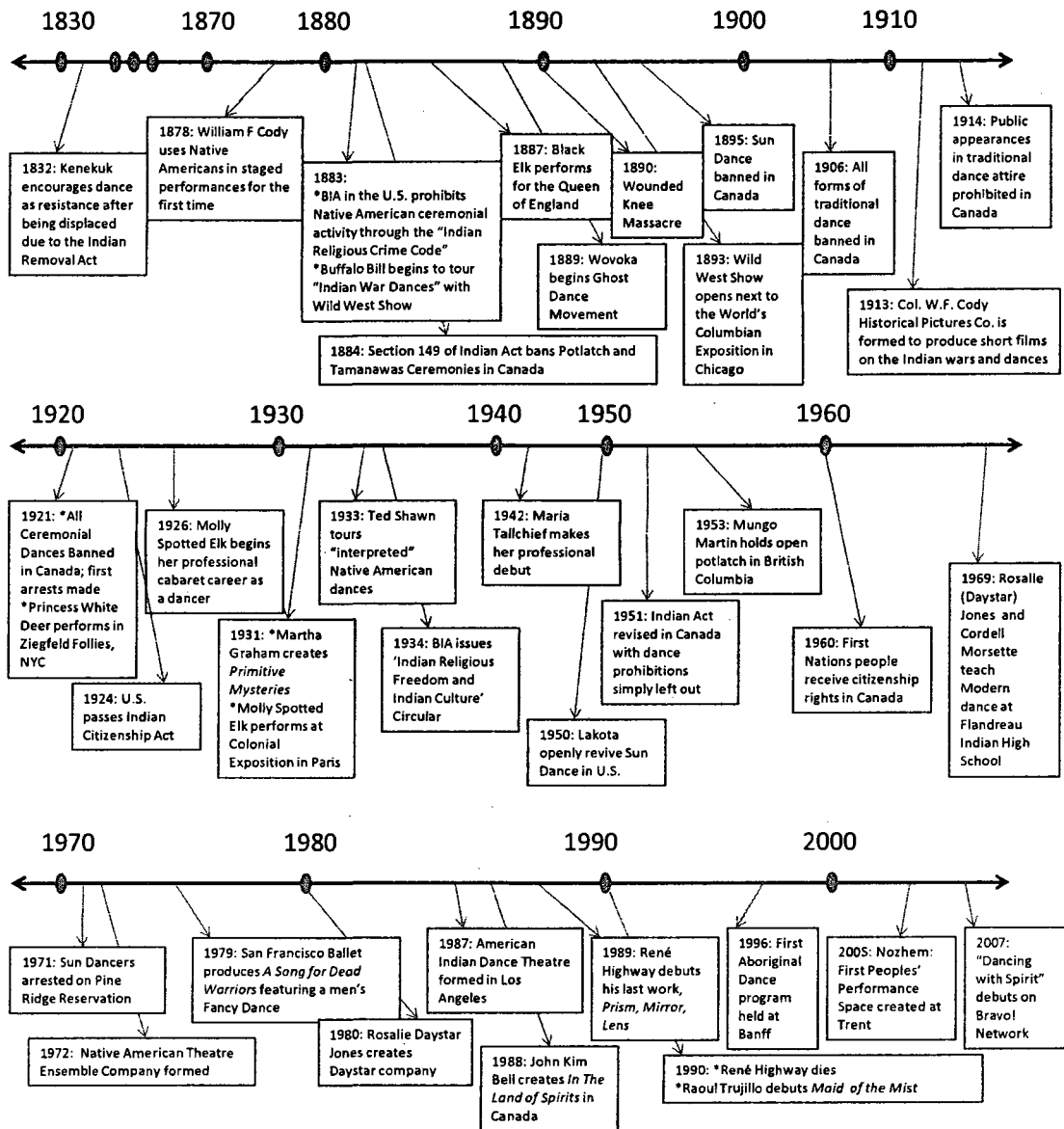


Diagram 2. Timeline of selected dates relevant to Indigenous dance

2.

Performance is about presence, not representation; it is not (as classical theories of theater would suggest) a mirror, but the actual moment in which the mirror is shattered...we perform as we live, love, travel, and suffer, everything woven together into a complex, multi-hued tapestry."¹⁰²

—Guillermo Gómez-Peña, multi-disciplinary performance artist, writer, activist, educator

Throw Away Kids tells the story of two women: Cosmos (Penny Couchie) and her daughter Star Girl (Sandra Laronde). The piece weaves together various narratives: the life struggles of a mother and daughter, the Iroquoian creation story of Skywoman, the legacy of generations of children stolen by residential schools, the theme of youth striving for cultural renewal in Canada where half of all Aboriginal people are under twenty five, and the cycles of abuse and abandonment that many Aboriginal children and women have suffered.

The piece opens to a heart beat, then the moaning wail of a woman. "It was a long long long long long long time ago," Muriel Miguel says in a voice over. Cosmos enters dancing like Janet Jackson, elbows out to the beat of the heart. Threads begin to emerge—a birth, a past that is also present, a dance that is and isn't—that run throughout the piece. A line from the Beatle's song, "She's Leaving Home," bursts out and Cosmos pleads, "Don't go!" rubbing her belly while rocking back and forth and contracting as if giving birth to Star Girl all over again. The Supremes song, "Baby Love, My Baby Love," blares while she bops and twirls, her arm bent at the elbow and flicking out from the waist, a sort of traditional-dance-inflected hip hop move. But the

¹⁰² Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Dangerous Border Crossers: The Artist Talks Back (New York: Routledge, 2001), 9.

story turns deadly serious. The heart beat starts again and Star Girl comes forward: "I had a three week old baby girl. I want her to be okay. But I do not want her."

At one point in the piece, a male character romances Star Girl; he entices her into a nightclub partner dance. This dance slowly turns into a struggle during which the male character hits Star Girl. With this image of violence lingering, Cosmos enters the stage and tells a story about a Miss South Dakota beauty pageant contestant who performed a Native American burial dance ritual for the "talent" part of her competition. "The lights shimmered off her short buckskin dress," Cosmos snarls, spitting each syllable with disgust. Star Girl steps up to join Cosmos. "A three-week old Native baby dies in her sleep," she says. "These events collide in my mind," Cosmos says. "Enough" she screams. "Enough!" both women scream together. "Enough!" In a small voice, Star Girl says, "I feel a cold in the lining of my heart."

Here, the narrative starts turning slowly toward renewal. Another man enters the stage and dances by himself, moving slowly to his own rhythm, lost in thought. "Trying to weave the past with the future," he says, "trying to connect." The music picks up and his moves become more intense. Cosmos and Star Girl start to dance, each to their own rhythm within their own area of the stage. The music stops and the three characters stand together at center stage. Together they face the audience, staring them down, and say: "We are the people who genocide has been performed upon." As the stage darkens, projected images of giant hands and dozens of smiling Native faces, young and old, flash by one after another. As the image fades and the audience is left in darkness, a voice over reads a section from the printed program: "Sovereignty is that wafting thread securing

the component of a society. Sovereignty runs through the vertical strands and secures the entire pattern. That is the fabric of Native society."¹⁰³

Theoretical Approaches to Contemporary Aboriginal Dance

...[Through choreography], representation and reference are made, as are signifying narrative and non narrative motional expression. Stories can be told about dances just as much dance tells stories. In either case, the agency of telling, what moves the tale itself, is palpably on display in dance performance.¹⁰⁴

—Randy Martin, performance theorist

Since so little is written about the Contemporary Aboriginal dance movement, it was necessary for me to build a personal theoretical framework out of my own, Western epistemology in order to provide a meaningful critique and discussion of the artworks—despite the fact that it seems to go against my goal of using Aboriginal methodologies. It is extremely difficult to conduct critical analysis of Indigenous dance pieces from within the academy—with its modes of knowledge production based on Western ways of knowing—while continuing to acknowledge the sovereignty of Indigenous epistemologies within the discussion. Academic theories that relate to space creation and the politicization of the body are useful to my personal understanding of Contemporary dance and for examining stage works created by Indigenous choreographers in Western styles. However, they can also be inappropriate for addressing work created by an artist with Indigenous world views or an artist whose background does not force him/her to

¹⁰³ See figure 24. Entire italics section paraphrased from descriptions in Jacqueline Shea Murphy, *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories*, 229–232. Although a video of this performance is available for viewing at the NMAI Resource Center, I provide Shea Murphy's written description above because it captures the experience of someone witnessing the piece live and represents more first-hand knowledge of the piece than I am able to have through video recordings of live pieces.

¹⁰⁴ Randy Martin, "Dance and its Others: Theory, State, Nation, and Socialism," in *Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory*, ed. André Lepecki (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 48.

make dichotomous distinctions (performing arts and visual arts, Fine Art and popular art, product and process, us and them, margin and center) as Western epistemologies based on dualities do. The realm of academic theory is often considered part of the colonizing agenda, but it can also be an important site of engagement and reconstruction for a decolonizing agenda.¹⁰⁵ As Linda Tuhiwai Smith states, “theory enables us to deal with contradictions and uncertainties. Perhaps more significantly, it gives us space to plan, to strategize, to take greater control over our resistances.”¹⁰⁶ The decolonization of academia does not require a total rejection of Western theory but rather an understanding and knowing of theory *after* centering world views and epistemological concerns so that theory can serve a purpose. Here, I aim to center academic theories around Aboriginal epistemologies—making connections to show how these theories abstract Indigenous practice rather than merely framing a discussion about Aboriginal dancers with Western world views.

Because the dance movement I discuss navigates multiple epistemologies, temporal modes, and understandings of what constitutes “Art” (both Western and non-Western), the following theoretical sections offer various platforms from which to start dialogues between Contemporary Indigenous dancers and Western critics. These sample frameworks are not conclusive or the only platforms available—they offer only a sample of Western theories of performance centered around Aboriginal ways of knowing. From my location in Willie Ermine’s ethical space between world views, I want to illuminate strands within the movement that dancers have been practicing and discussing for years and show how recent Western performance and art theory echo some of these Aboriginal

¹⁰⁵ Graham Hingangaroa Smith, “Protecting and Respecting Indigenous Knowledge,” 214.

¹⁰⁶ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, 38.

epistemologies.¹⁰⁷ Since my main premise is that dance artworks provide a space for agency and sovereignty, I treat the dance movement as a type of decolonizing performance art with strong connections to history and tradition. In this chapter, I consult academic theorists who traverse dance, performance, and the body in a similar way. Although nearly all of the theorists presented in chapter two are non-Aboriginal and consider mainly Contemporary Western art works in their writing, the way in which they talk about performance space and the body has illuminated my viewing of how Aboriginal epistemologies function within Contemporary Aboriginal dance. Since the dancers are producing multi-layered work for the stage, influenced by their Western stylistic training and informed by Contemporary art theory and aesthetic discourse, they need their work to be seriously critiqued as both Aboriginal Art *and* Contemporary Art by writers and academics who can recognize the existence of both world views in their writing. The dancers have developed their careers in the multiple art worlds with an awareness and understanding of multiple critical theories, including those I present here.

Reverse Appropriation and Re-infusion

In his essay “Nationalism, Modernity, Modernism,” Olu Oguibe examines a few of the common misconceptions about colonized artists who use the imagery or stylistic modes of their colonizers.¹⁰⁸ He says this use is often framed as acquiescence, mimicry, and fracture, and that “native acquisition of supposedly exclusive European skills and

¹⁰⁷ For more information on Willie Ermine’s ethical space, see Methodology section of Introduction (pages 11–12).

¹⁰⁸ Born in Nigeria and raised in Britain, Olu Oguibe is an artist, writer, and professor currently teaching art and art history and serving as Director of the Institute for African American Studies at the University of Connecticut. He is a leading postcolonial and Contemporary art theorist. His website: <http://www.camwood.org/>

manners is seldom discussed as *appropriation*, which is an active, positive gesture...”¹⁰⁹ Critics frequently overlook the work of Aboriginal and non-Western artists when it does not display a “cultural identity card” of Otherness. By appropriating Western forms, however, Oguibe implies that artists have the ability to find agency by confronting Europe on its “own terms” and challenging the West with the fallacies inherent in its constructed image of the ‘Other.’¹¹⁰ As Oguibe says, “...the mastery of Europe speaks to a tactic of overdub... [it is] a significant part of a process of crossing out Europe’s texts of exclusivity rather than merely imbibing forms and surfaces.”¹¹¹ For artists who have long had their traditional art forms and cultural expressions appropriated by White artists, this reverse appropriation is a legitimate form of political and/or cultural resistance against constructions of the “authentic native.” Further, Black Canadian artist, poet, and theorist Dionne Brand writes in her chapter “Whose Gaze and Who Speaks for Whom,” that cultural appropriation is a critical category which should be manipulated to the point that European cultural forms such as the ballet and Classical music no longer signify whiteness as a form of cultural superiority.¹¹²

At first, the concept of reverse appropriation and manipulation of the category of ‘High Art’ brings to mind the Native American prima ballerinas mentioned in chapter one. By mastering European art forms, performers like Maria Tallchief and Yvonne Choteau illustrate the fallacy of colonial constructions of the non-white ‘Other’ as

¹⁰⁹ Emphasis is my own. Olu Oguibe, “Nationalism, Modernity, Modernism,” in The Culture Game (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 50.

¹¹⁰ What is deemed “High Art” by Western tradition(s). Here notably, ballet and Modern dance within the European training and performance system. See discussion of Frantz Fanon’s “Assimilation phase” in Chapter 1.

¹¹¹ Olu Oguibe, “Nationalism, Modernity, Modernism,” 53.

¹¹² Dionne Brand, “Whose Gaze and Who Speaks for Whom,” in Bread Out of Stone: Recollections, Sex, Recognition, Race, Dreaming, Politics (Toronto: Couch House Press, 1994), 160–161.

'primitive' or 'under-developed' and incapable of the mastery of European culture. But, reverse appropriation is a critical category that does much more than just challenging racist stereotypes by presenting non-white bodies executing Western skills. Today, by combining Contemporary and Modern dance techniques with traditional Aboriginal dance forms and ideas in a masterful manner, Indigenous dancers on the Western stage are purposefully overdubbing the Western canon with Indigenous knowledge systems. These composite stage dances cannot be easily displaced from the 'High Art canon' because they are inclusive of the signifiers of High Art at the same time that they hold signifiers of Aboriginality. Being both Western and Aboriginal at once, the dance works are impossible to label as Other. The resulting art form actively crosses out Euro-North-American texts of exclusivity and Whiteness for stage dance and claims space in the contemporary art world for the recognition of Native forms and techniques. The inside/outside or margin/center dichotomies of colonial performance loses its power.

In Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance, Philip Auslander examines Postmodern performance theory and how it relates to the cultural politics of appropriation.¹¹³ His overview, although not relating to Aboriginal dance or Indigenous culture, resonates with Olu Oguibe's work. Auslander refers to appropriation as a "miming" or a representation that imitates the structure of hegemony from within it while seeking simultaneously to open a space for criticism of it."¹¹⁴ Contemporary Aboriginal dancers are able to use the

¹¹³ Philip Auslander is a professor in the School of Literature, Communication, and Culture at Georgia Institute of Technology, Philip Auslander's primary discourse is with performance; but he has written on aesthetic and cultural performances as diverse as theatre, performance art, music, stand-up comedy, robotic performance, and courtroom procedures.

¹¹⁴ Philip Auslander, Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 24–25.

Western idea of representation against itself by miming the structure and style of ballet, Modern dance, and Western theatre while criticizing the colonial power structure of the stage from within.

Through mimicry or reverse appropriation, artists reveal the cracks within hegemony's foundation by dispelling stereotypical expectations of what Native art should look like. Mimicry deconstructs the power structures inherent in representation and presentation without fully changing the terrain of the stage's audience/performer/critic relationship.¹¹⁵ This allows slow, continuous revision and change that can go unnoticed by the Western art/dance world until it is 'too late' to regain the previous power relationships. Mimetic performance reveals the fallacy of the absolute status representation has on the Western stage by using representation against itself.¹¹⁶ When stage performance (supposedly High Art and the epitome of performative representation for Western cultures) also includes Aboriginal bodies and world views intertwined with the Western styles, it can no longer be the quintessence of White culture alone. High Art is no longer synonymous with whiteness. When Indigenous bodies represent themselves on stage as part of the Western art world, it dismantles the stage's historic use as a site of colonial perpetuation for stereotypes and imperial agendas.

In English is Broken here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas, performance artist Coco Fusco also addresses appropriation by discussing the history of symbolic violence and colonial power relations inherent in cultural appropriation by the West:

[Appropriation's] historical and political implications in relation to European colonialism and American expansionism cannot be ignored, because the erasure of authorship and the exchange of symbols and artifacts across cultural

¹¹⁵ Philip Auslander, Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance, 25.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 24.

boundaries have never been apolitical or purely formalist gestures. That mainstream culture has periodically expressed desire for subaltern art has never obligated anyone to deal with subaltern peoples as human beings, compatriots, or artists. That is, perhaps, until now.¹¹⁷

Considering Euro-North-American culture has inaccurately appropriated countless cultural symbols and artifacts from Indigenous cultures for everything from Western films and sports team mascots to Modern dance technique and New Age religions, Fusco's comment is especially poignant. Fusco goes on to explain how contemporary artists of color like herself can combat this appropriation. Because she participates in multiple communities of identity (Spanish-speaking, New Yorker, first generation American, artist of color, feminist, mother, academic), Fusco's art is able to reflect multiple lived realities—moving back and forth between past and present, history and fiction, art and ritual, High Art and popular culture, Western and non-Western influence. By operating within numerous communities, artists like Fusco and Native dancers are able to create a counter history, bouncing off negative stereotypes and inaccurate appropriations while teasing out stories that hegemonic discourse often hides.¹¹⁸ Fusco quotes Palestinian filmmaker Elia Suleiman's analogy in relation to colonized artists who reverse appropriate the art of the colonizer to express personal world views: "in a war in which you have no weapons, you must take those of your enemy and use them for something better—like throwing them back at him."¹¹⁹ Tactics such as reversal, recycling, and subversive montage are common aesthetics for many twentieth to twenty-first-century artists, but that when artists of color use them, they engage the semiotics of the colonial condition to serve their own needs. "Resistance within a colonial context is

¹¹⁷ Coco Fusco, *English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 29.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 33. Also see introduction quote to chapter 3, page 82.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

rarely direct, overt, or literal; rather, it articulates itself through semantic reversals, and through the process of infusing icons, objects and symbols with different meanings.”¹²⁰

By appropriating Western artistic forms such as Modern dance technique and re-infusing them with Indigenous world views and new symbolic meanings, Contemporary Aboriginal dancers are creating an important site of cultural resistance for reclaiming artistic expression. The concept of re-infusion set forth by Fusco and Suleiman is also a much more active and agency-filled concept than that of reverse appropriation. Re-infusion does not have the semantic connotations of immaturity of Auslander’s miming or the negative colonial history that connects the term appropriation to the idea of stealing. Rather than simply imitating the West through miming and reverse appropriation, through re-infusion, Native dancers reclaim space in the cultural mainstream for their own views to be recognized and validated. Icons are remade while hurtful and painful stereotypes are dismantled and rebuilt to tell different stories. Traditionally repressed dance forms are mixed with the forms of the oppressor converting them into something fresh and sovereign.

Creation of Space

In Performance as Political Act: The Embodied Self, theorist Randy Martin explores how the dancer’s body is harder to reduce to the simple “body-subject” mode seen in biological, anthropological, or psychological discourse and recordings.¹²¹ These

¹²⁰ Coco Fusco, English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas, 35.

¹²¹ Randy Martin is professor of art and public policy and director of the graduate program in arts politics at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. He has authored books such as: *Performance as Political Act: The Embodied Self*; *Critical Moves: Dance Studies in Theory and Politics*, and edited collections on United States Communism, sport and academic labor, dance, and artistic citizenship. Dr. Martin holds degrees in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Wisconsin, Madison; and the City

body-as-subject modes of perceiving a performer are familiar to artists of color who perform for Western audiences. Colonial and imperialist history has seen the practice of exhibiting Indigenous people from Africa, Asia, and the Americas in world fairs, zoos, parks, taverns, museums, town craft fairs, 'freak shows,' parades, and circuses—all in the name of science, entertainment, and supposed advancement. These displays of the bodies constructed as Other for consumption by white audiences created and perpetuated popular racist stereotypes while building support for domestic and foreign policies of cultural eradication and assimilation.¹²² Martin does not address this specific history, but he does describe how performance offers a way to resist seeing the body as a passive, consumable subject. Through the act of contemporary performance, "...a body can never be reduced to these [anthropological/biological modes] and is always constructing a world by the space it inhabits. The body is not a passive abode but an expressive space, a space projected toward others."¹²³ Unlike many nineteenth and early-twentieth-century performers who were exploited by Western impresarios or manipulated by anthropologists, Contemporary stage dancers create works of their own construction and combat the reduction of their art into a consumable display. They are involved in projecting actively to the space (and lives) of the audience members, effectively returning 'the Gaze' through their self-directed performances.¹²⁴ Although even nineteenth-century

University of New York. He has studied, taught, and performed in dance, theater, and clowning in the United States and abroad. Previously, he served as professor and chair of social science at Pratt Institute, associate dean of faculty at Tisch School of the Arts, and editor of the journal *Social Text*.

¹²² For more specific examples of these displays, see Coco Fusco, "The Other History of Intercultural Performance," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 205–217.

¹²³ Randy Martin, *Performance as Political Act: The Embodied Self* (New York: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1990), 36.

¹²⁴ The moment in *Throw Away Kids* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter when the three dancers face the audience head on is a good example of a moment in which the Gaze is returned actively during a performance.

performers had the ability to project themselves into the experience of the viewer, current performers have more access to agency and power over their own representation and are therefore able to present their own stories and combat the simple consumption of what they share.

Martin quotes extensively from the book The Structure of Behavior in which philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty discusses how the body itself is able to create expressive spaces because it is the origin of all experience.¹²⁵ Since objects, experiences, and emotions come into existence through bodily senses using physical features such as the body's eyes, nerves, ears, hands, and mouth, "the body is our general medium for having a world."¹²⁶ As we experience things, we create our own version of the world and through art, performance, and writing, this world can be shared with others. During performance, the body translates a specific version of the world (found only inside the mind/body of the performer or choreographer until the moment of enunciation) for the audience members. This projection of ideas is accomplished by moving through space in specific ways or imitating movements that other bodies recognize as symbols. The body becomes a liminal space of both being and becoming—a site where the performer is able to manipulate created worlds or spaces and pass them on to the audience. In the context of Western dance and theatre, the proscenium space dictates that the viewer passively receive the worlds and stories projected by performers, while the performer operates in an elevated, set-apart arena—actively creating spaces and sharing them with the viewer. For example, the world contained within a novel or film is a creation of an author/producer;

¹²⁵ Merleau-Ponty was a French phenomenological philosopher who wrote profusely in the 1940s and 1950s. He was strongly influenced by Husserl and Heidegger and is closely associated with Sartre and de Beauvoir. The core of his philosophy deals with the foundational role that perception plays in understanding and engaging with the world.

¹²⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty quoted in Randy Martin, Performance as Political Act: The Embodied Self, 37.

as it is projected into the created world of the reader/viewer, it modifies that reader/viewer's experience and has an effect on their own personally-created world. In a stage performance situation, the dancer/creator has control in the power dynamic. They can draw the audience members into or exclude them from the worlds they create on stage. Through their physical presence in a self-created territory, dancers produce agency and enact effects in the epistemologies, spaces, and realities of the audience members.

This power through space and world production is especially meaningful in the case of Aboriginal dance because of its history of colonization, consumption and Western analysis. Self-representation in Western venues to Western audiences has been hard won for Indigenous performers. These stage spaces have been contested spaces for Aboriginal performers while Western dancers and dance forms (ballet, Modern) have been able to slip into such spaces without question. When the choreographer and creative team negotiating these privileged spaces are Aboriginal, they can re-claim the stage as a sovereign space—an advantaged territory where Aboriginal performers have the authority to tell their own histories and stories, work through the bodily effects of colonization while confronting colonial audiences and the colonial stage, and/or express the joy of cultural and artistic survival in a physical manner with the body that has been transgressed upon. By creating these sovereign spaces with re-infused Western styles on stage on re-claimed territory, Native dancers refuse to have their expressive worlds consumed simply as something Other.

Performance as Mirror

In a later essay, “Dance and Its Others: Theory, State, Nation, and Socialism,” Martin expands on this theory of expressive world creation through the body and discusses how performance—like theory and philosophy—operates to produce self-understanding and to help form concepts of identity for both the artist and the audience. Contemporary Aboriginal dance offers the performers and choreographers a way to physically work through and internally explore issues of identification and self-representation. Because the Western stage is a codified space which dictates audience members sit (usually in the dark and not visible to each other) quietly and listen to/watch what is occurring on the stage, it gives dancers an arena in which they are able to insist upon or present this self-inscribed identity to audience members from both Western and Non-Western cultures and tell their personal stories/histories from an accurate perspective for a captive audience.

For Martin, such performances act like a mirror, presenting a way for the audience to look at itself.¹²⁷ During a performance by a Contemporary Aboriginal dancer, Indigenous audience members can be presented with a mirror that reflects pride, survival, and renewal. Many times, after watching dance performances, I have heard community members talk about finally seeing themselves and their experiences represented in typically Western cultural spaces (such as orchestra halls and city theatres) where they have so long been ignored and purposely excluded.¹²⁸ To non-Indigenous

¹²⁷ Randy Martin, “Dance and Its Others: Theory, State, Nation, Socialism,” 47.

¹²⁸ Many Aboriginal artists and performers can give examples of community members being questioned by security guards or event organizers when entering art galleries, performance halls and Western performance spaces. Also, some audience members, accustomed to being excluded, are still uncomfortable coming to a space where they have previously been harassed or looked down upon. It is a triumph to enter these privileged spaces. In this context, other non-Aboriginal audience members act as witness to this well-fought inclusion and challenge to colonial history.

audience members with stereotypical expectations, the performances reveal that traditional cultural identity and Aboriginal knowledge systems are part of the contemporary world and that current Indigenous cultural expression has no need for stereotypes.

Interestingly, when performance functions as a mirror, the colonial power dynamic shifts and non-Indigenous audience members can be presented with an image of themselves as Other. As Martin states, “one looks in the mediated mirror [performance] to see oneself, but the image is constantly changing and the self is reflected back as other, less a determinant content than an approach to life where the gaze is turned back on the self.”¹²⁹ When non-Aboriginal audience members watch Indigenous performances expecting an easy display of Otherness to consume for entertainment or education, their assumptions (stereotypes of Powwow dance costumes, drumming and chanting, masking, etc.) are reflected in the mirror as inaccuracies and they are confronted by their misjudgments through the multi-layered nature of the piece and through the re-infused Western symbols. When the artist/dancer includes ‘insider’ references for Indigenous audience members (traditional dance steps, subtle ritual and ceremonial allusions, community insights or jokes, Indigenous languages, etc.), non-Aboriginal audience members are unable to participate fully in the piece or have absolute access to the performance; they can no longer assume that they are the target audience and they are forced to position themselves as an outsider. Such audience members may miss references to Aboriginal epistemologies within the piece (or not be able to conceptually grasp them because their epistemological references differ from that of the artist). They may not be able to comprehend what is occurring or being referenced at all times.

¹²⁹ Randy Martin, “Dance and Its Others: Theory, State, Nation, Socialism,” 53.

Additionally, they may be directly confronted—exposed as the oppressor or colonizer—within a narrative storyline. Or, non-Aboriginal audience members could realize a section of a work was created for a specific Aboriginal audience, not them, and that their presence is inconsequential.¹³⁰ The uneasiness this realization creates is often new for audience members who are accustomed to having a privileged position within the hegemony of stage performance. The exclusion and uncomfortable position does not make for easy consumption or revelry in spectacle; instead, it gives indigestion.¹³¹

Embodiment of Knowledge

Randy Martin names dance/performance as a “world making activity” in multiple ways.¹³² In addition to projecting the created worlds of the performer into the personal worlds of the audience and acting as a mirror for the audience, he says: “dance performance models a situation where theory and practice are mutually insinuated in time and space. Dance is an artistic practice where time and space are generated expressly in the course of performance and not simply an activity that passes through an already given spatiotemporal medium.”¹³³

Because the art is created and ends (in effect, is destroyed) at the moment of performance/utterance, dance creates an artwork in which “representation and reference are made one.”¹³⁴ This combination of signifier and signified through action creates a literal opportunity for transformation because the signified (the story, emotion, narrative

¹³⁰ For example, see discussion of *Night Traveller* [sic] by Michael Greyeyes in chapter 5.

¹³¹ For more a more detailed analysis of how intercultural performance operates on multiple levels and has the possibility to create encounters with the unexpected in which colonial defense mechanisms are more likely to be caught off guard, see Coco Fusco, “The Other History of Intercultural Performance.”

¹³² Randy Martin, “Dance and Its Others: Theory, State, Nation, Socialism,” 48.

¹³³ Sic. Ibid, 48.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 48.

of history, idea) is embodied in the signifier (the body). In the context of Aboriginal dance, this is especially important because dance is traditionally practiced as embodiment rather than as performing a role or pretending in the Western sense. In traditional dances related to ceremony or ritual, dancers are not *acting*, pretending to be ancestors or spirits or animals; through dance they *become* what they dance—embodying what they perform in a spiritual space rather than enacting a role. With this type of epistemological base, although Contemporary dancers are not performing rituals or ceremony on stage, they are able to literally transform themselves and the stage space to carry Aboriginal world views, knowledge and histories to future generations.

Philip Auslander also mentions this combination of sign and signifier but describes it as a “flow of signifiers liberated from the need to signify.”¹³⁵ During the moment of performance, dancers and performance artists are projecting a stream of signifiers toward the audience: body and facial gestures the audience recognizes with personal referents (a smile meaning happiness or a punch meaning violence), familiar dance steps recognized with cultural connotations (Tango choreography symbolizing Argentinean culture or ballet steps symbolizing Russian culture), costumes invoking shared cultural characters or stereotypes (wrinkles and knitted clothing to depict an old woman, traditional dress to depict Native peoples). But, through the performative, these signifiers are liberated from the sign-signifier relationship because they occur within an ending temporal moment. They cannot be repeated or revisited the same way again. They become a stream of ideas being shared between the performer and audience—pure meaning. As Gloria Young describes it in her essay “Dance as Communication:”

¹³⁵ Philip Auslander, Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance, 46.

Dance is a visual medium of communication. Native American dancers “mediate” meaning, usually symbolically, through the mode of rhythmic body movement. The dancing body appeals to many senses; along with the visual symbolism, dancing sends subliminal signals through sound, smell, and texture, enveloping the dancers and audience in an empathetic experience. In addition to the human body, dance includes other elements that carry meaning. Dance takes place in space...A dance is a temporal sequence...¹³⁶

This empathetic experience is contained to the performative instant and to the relationship between performer and audience making what is performed a literal exchange—a combination of thinking and doing. When the lines are blurred between real and representational (the signifier and sign) in a temporally urgent experience, dancers operate in a way that recognizes and privileges Aboriginal epistemologies. Dance is both theory and practice—embodied and enacted knowledge. Through embodiment on stage, Contemporary dance recognizes Aboriginal knowledge systems that emphasize process over an end result or definitive conclusion and Indigenous languages that stress active verbs and living nouns.¹³⁷

Because live performance is beginning and ending simultaneously, it demands that the audience follow what is happening on stage and keep their attention sustained. Embodiment and literal transformation on stage create a sense of temporal urgency for audience members to listen to the dancer(s) while the embodiment is occurring. The performance is more precious and the performer’s voice more compelling because it can never be repeated the same way again.¹³⁸ This newly-made and constantly ending world unlocks an arena in which teaching, political or social commentary, remembering, and

¹³⁶ Gloria Young, “Dance as Communication,” *Native American Expressive Culture*, special edition of *Akwe:kon Journal*, 11.3–4 (Fall/Winter 1994): 9.

¹³⁷ See discussion of Indigenous languages in Methodology section of Introduction, pages 12–13.

¹³⁸ This is if the performance is not recorded; some would argue that a spark of the performance is lost in seeing dance on video. This may be true, but dance performance pieces created for video also open up new possibilities for situations and edits that stage performance can not provide. It can also bring dance to communities unable to travel to see dance performances on the Western stage. For an in-depth exploration of a video piece, see chapter 5.

cultural renewal can take place without interruption. The performer has the focused attention of each audience member and a specialized relationship based on the interaction between their created worlds and the dancer's level of commitment (embodiment). For the duration of the performance, the Contemporary dancer's voice has precedence and power despite a history of oppression and denial. The creations of Indigenous dancers insist on "dance that has a voice"¹³⁹ and reflect the capacity Contemporary dance has (like traditional dance has always had) to embody the lived experiences and histories of Indigenous peoples.

Exposing the Hollowness of Stereotypes

When Philip Auslander mentions the sign and signifier relationship in relation to the destruction or reversal of power relationships within the moment of performance, he quotes philosopher Jean-François Lyotard: "by eliminating the sign relation and its hollowness, one makes the power relation (hierarchy) impossible."¹⁴⁰ Through the incapturability of the performance medium, physical bodily presence, and embodiment of signs, dancers have the unique ability to disrupt the perpetuation of colonial hegemony found in the sign/signifier relationship. Contemporary Aboriginal dancers are especially apt at exposing the hollowness of stereotypical signs of "Indianess" (inaccurate traditional dress, music, romanticism, or cultural icons). By occasionally performing such signs through self-determined means such as exaggeration, irony, humor, and anger while also presenting factual or re-infused symbols (such as accurate traditional dress,

¹³⁹ Sandra Laronde, Red Sky website, <http://www.redskyperformance.com/>, (accessed October 25, 2006).

¹⁴⁰ Philip Auslander, *Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance*, 48. Jean-François Lyotard (1924–1998) was a French philosopher and literary theorist. He is well-known for his discourse in the 1970s regarding the impact of Postmodernity on the human condition.

contemporary clothing, ceremonial references in the correct context with sensitive and private details not presented, and personal stories/narratives/experiences of Aboriginal life), Indigenous performers expose the un-embodied nature of stereotypes. They show that such signs hold no basis in lived reality while showing the health and power of non-stereotypical, embodied signs. For example, in Native Earth Performing Arts' one-man, semi-autobiographical performance piece *Tales of an Urban Indian*, performer Darrell Dennis (Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nation) begins the performance by projecting stereotypical imagery (Florida State University's Chief Osceola, the Land O'Lakes' "Indian Maiden," the Cleveland Indians' logo, Tonto, Pocahontas) onto a large screen in rapid succession while drums, wolf howls, chants, and ocarinas play in the background.¹⁴¹ When the images stop, Dennis walks on to stage and says with a smirk: "well, now that I got that out of the way, I can begin." He jokes about how he has never shed a tear when he sees someone litter on the street but that the performance will tell his own story—"a story I need to tell, not because it's extraordinary, but because its common, too common, and it's not told enough."¹⁴² The exaggeration and humor used to deal with the hurtful and often absurd stereotypical signifiers functions to make the true stories/signs he performs in the play more penetrating.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ See Figure 27.

¹⁴² Author's notes from viewing the play at the Public Theater in New York City on March 15, 2009.

¹⁴³ See the work of performance artist James Luna to see how an artist can perform stereotypical signs with their body to the level of absurdity in order to reveal the hollowness of such signs while dealing with painful issues such as alcohol abuse and diabetes in bitingly humorous ways (Figure 28). Also see the performance piece *Undiscovered Amerindians* by Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco.

Reclaiming the Physical Body

In “Dance and Difference: Performing/Representing/Rewriting the Body,” dance historian Helen Thomas writes about the power of bodily presence in resisting oppression and power relationships inherent in the Gaze. In her work, Thomas focuses on how female presence within Modern dance has been a way of contesting the patriarchal gaze; but this theoretical framework transfers readily to issues of the Western Gaze upon Aboriginal cultural expression. Drawing extensively from the work of French feminist philosopher and literary critic Hélène Cixous, Thomas explores the way language and sexuality are ordered around fixed male/female binaries (non-masculine logic and sexuality are repressed within a patriarchal hegemony). She explains how the female dancer, by being physically present and creating work by “writing” (working) with a corporeal body, reasserts herself within the patriarchy. “Writing on the body” through performance creates greater possibilities for ownership of the self and less repression:¹⁴⁴

By writing herself, the woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into an uncanny stranger on display... Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time... Write yourself. Your body must be heard.¹⁴⁵

This exploration parallels issues in the colonial hegemony in which language and culture have been ordered around Western inside/outside binaries and where signs of non-Western logic and non-Western world views have been repressed. By transferring Cixous’ quote to the censorship, display, and suppression of Aboriginal bodies by non-Aboriginal power structures, we see a situation parallel to that of sexism and the

¹⁴⁴ Helen Thomas, *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 175. In this discussion, I am not asserting that Feminism as a theoretical mode can be applied to Aboriginal discourse on the whole. Feminism is often criticized for being a discourse made up largely of White middle-to-upper-class, highly educated women and does not necessarily represent the experience of women of color, women of lower economic means, and women of the LGBT communities.

¹⁴⁵ Cixous in Helen Thomas, *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*, 175.

objectification of women: anthropologists, scientists, and academics analyze, record, and catalogue the bodies of Aboriginal peoples while popular culture audiences manipulate and create displays of the “exotic” for their own consumption and use.

Reclamation of the physical body has been made difficult for colonized peoples on the Western stage because of this consumption, suppression, control, and display. One’s own body is made a stranger through this consumption; and feeling comfortable “in your own skin” becomes a constant battle. By creating work with their fully embodied, living selves on the Western stage, Contemporary dancers make a statement about how their bodies must be heard—they “write themselves” into spaces and discourses previously made inaccessible. Through the re-possession of their physicality on a stage made sovereign, display and Western or imperial manipulation is complicated. The dancers breathe the air of their self-created space while rewriting themselves into the dance cannon and validating their lived experience for multiple types of audiences. Real, living bodies (humans with voices that defy objectification) have been long missing from discourse about Aboriginal issues and art (physically present Indigenous people choosing what to share instead of being discussed and written about by non-Native academics in their absence). “Unlike traditional scholarship where the body seems to slip away, performers generate and present their insights through the body, a knowing body, dependent upon its participatory and empathetic capacities and located in contested yet potentially liberating space.”¹⁴⁶ Presence on stage makes the body both visible and powerfully undeniable.

¹⁴⁶ Roland J. Pelias, “Performative Inquiry: Embodiment and Its Challenges” in Gary J. Knowles and Adra L. Cole, Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2008), 188.

Indigenous Performance Theory

The most useful theoretical model I have found for analyzing Contemporary performance by Indigenous peoples was developed by art historian Lara Evans (Cherokee) who, sick of a lack of theoretical models that took Indigenous world views into account, aimed at framing Contemporary Aboriginal Performance Art without the distortions caused when Western theory alone is used to discuss Indigenous knowledge and practices.¹⁴⁷ Her model is based on performance theorist Richard Schechner's seven spheres of performance which he lists as: To Entertain; To Deal with the Divine and the Demonic; To Teach or Persuade; To Create Beauty; To Foster Community; To Make or Change Identity; and To Heal.¹⁴⁸ In her thesis, "One of These Things is Not Like the 'Other': Works by Native Performance Artists James Luna, Rebecca Belmore, and Greg Hill, Evans explains how these spheres are organized around Western world views, dichotomies and assumptions that are not always appropriate for Native Art.¹⁴⁹ To rectify the situation, she creates her own "spheres of performance" to provide a more appropriate theoretical model for discussing Native performance. She lists nine spheres (see diagram three for one possible constellation of the spheres):

¹⁴⁷ This theoretical model was developed Evans as part of her 2005 PhD dissertation for the University of New Mexico.

¹⁴⁸ Extracted from diagram in Richard Schechner, Performance Studies: An Introduction (New York: Routledge, 2003), 39. Richard Schechner is professor of performance studies at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, editor of *TDR: The Drama Review*, and artistic director of East Coast Artists. Schechner is one of the founders of the performance studies department at Tisch. He also founded The Performance Group, an experimental theater troupe. He has published over twelve books on performance and performance theory.

¹⁴⁹ Schechner's "To Deal with the Divine and Demonic," for example, assumes Judeo-Christian ways of knowing that emphasize good versus evil. "To Create Beauty" assumes all artists and audiences agree on one aesthetic system and implies the preferred aesthetic system would see beauty as the main goal of art (rather than other goals such as to examine realities or to simply create an experience). "To Foster Community" gives a slightly paternalistic overtone—implying community is something static that needs to be watched over and guided rather than a naturally forming, continually evolving organism.

- *To Exchange or To Gift
- *To Deal with Natural or Spiritual Forces
- *To Teach or Persuade
- *To Stimulate the Senses
- *To Exercise Culture/To Create Culture
- *To Make or Change Identity
- *To Deal with Racism/Romanticism
- *To Engage in Inter-and/or Intra-Cultural Critique
- *To Deal with Trauma and Healing

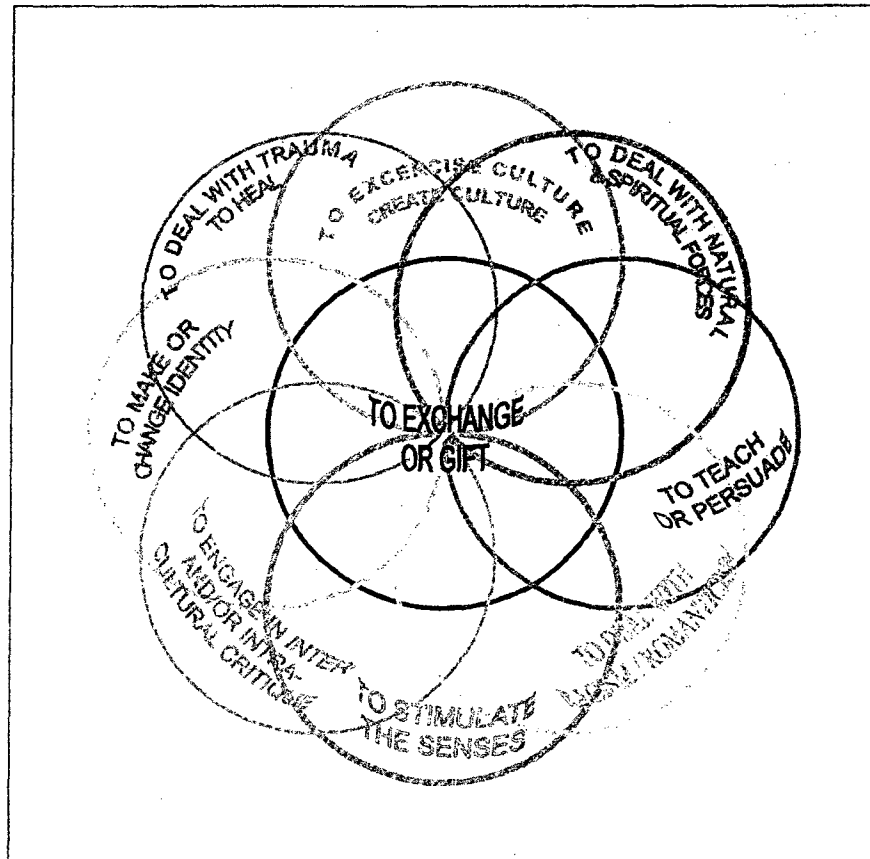


Diagram 3. Lara Evans' diagram "Spheres of Performance specifically applicable to Native Performance Art."¹⁵⁰

Although Evans designed this theoretical model to examine Performance Art by Native artists, I propose that due to the Indigenous knowledge systems it recognizes and the multi-valenced creativity that it supports, Evans' theoretical spheres are an ideal model

¹⁵⁰ Lara M. Evans, "“One of These Things is Not Like the ‘Other’.” Works by Native Performance Artists James Luna, Rebecca Belmore, and Greg Hill,” 41.

with which to appreciate and explore Contemporary Aboriginal dance. Since Evans stipulates all of the spheres need not be present in every artwork analyzed and that the spheres can be combined and configured differently for each artwork (diagram three demonstrates one possible configuration of many), it is also a versatile model to use for critical writing in the space of this thesis.

I find Evans' theoretical model particularly fascinating and applicable because of the way in which her spheres parallel the themes that surfaced in the words of the dancers and choreographers I spoke with. After reviewing all of the notes, e-mails, and conversation transcripts gathered from Contemporary dancers, I noticed certain phrases, ideas and themes repeated again and again. Organizing these recurring theories of the dance artists into categories revealed eleven themes that relate with uncanny effect to Evans' spheres:

- *Embodiment rather than performance
- *The Inseparability/Interconnectedness of art forms (dance, music, visual, oral)
 - *The creation of sovereign space/Sacred space/Alternative space
 - *Literal healing/Working with trauma with the body/Dealing with effects of colonization
- *Combating stereotypes and expectations
- *Fusion, inseparability, and interdependence of "contemporary" and "traditional"
 - *Self-Representation and authority over cultural representations
 - *Access to Blood Memory and essential imagery through bodily experience¹⁵¹
 - *Dance as embodiment of history (oral, physical)/Embodiment of knowledge
 - *Aboriginal methodologies/Experiential learning/Community involvement
 - * Reciprocal relationship between the performer and audience

Although these themes are more specific to dance and more numerous than Evans' themes, they can be cross-referenced with her theoretical model. For example, on a basic

¹⁵¹Throughout this thesis, I examine the concept of "Blood Memory" in a very specific context. For further definition and explanation of the concept, including interviews with Aboriginal women, see Nahanni Fontaine, "Neither Here nor There: A Reflection on Aboriginal Women and Identity" (Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2001), 46-49. I refer to Blood Memory as something carried within the body that triggers one to recognize and/or remember where one originated from. Nahanni Fontaine defines it as: "a recognition of Aboriginal culture and beliefs before ever having any teachings and/or assurances that what they were thinking was indeed right," (page 48 of her thesis).

level, Evan's "To Deal with Racism/Romanticism" is nearly identical to the way in which most of the dancers said they use dance in "combating stereotypes and expectations." "To Deal with Trauma and Healing" is very similar to dancers who experience "literal healing/working through trauma with the body/dealing with the effects of colonization" through dance. Evans' "To Engage in Inter-and/or Intra-Cultural Critique" reflects the "reciprocal relationship between the performer and audience member" that many dancers mentioned. On a more conceptual level, there is a connection between Evans' "To Teach or Persuade" and the dancers' discussion of "dance as embodiment of history (oral, physical)/embodiment of knowledge" because in bringing embodied knowledge to future generations, the performer is participating in a didactic relationship. I also propose that there is a connection between Evans' "To Exercise Culture/To Create Culture" and the artists' discussion of "the creation of sovereign space/sacred space/alternative space" because the dancers are using the Western stage to make self-created spaces in order to exercise culture in a physical way that is suppressed through colonial performance models.

To follow Evan's example, I created a diagram to visually demonstrate these correlations (see diagram four on page 81). Like Evans' model, it represents one configuration of many—including only a few of the combinations of themes and spheres. By incorporating Evan's spheres of Native performance with themes culled from dialogues with multiple Contemporary Indigenous dancers, I hope to frame the dancers' words and choreography within the following chapters in a more accurate way than many academic writers of the past. As I introduce a Contemporary Aboriginal performance group in chapter three, two Contemporary Aboriginal choreographers in chapter four, and

a recent dance piece in chapter five, I aim to examine the movement from an ethical space between both my Western understandings of reverse appropriation, re-infusion, creation of space, embodiment, semiotics, and an Indigenous performance theory model based on Aboriginal world views and the words of the dancers themselves. By doing so, I aim to illuminate the multiple epistemologies, theoretical modes, and forms of cultural expression the dance movement traverses.

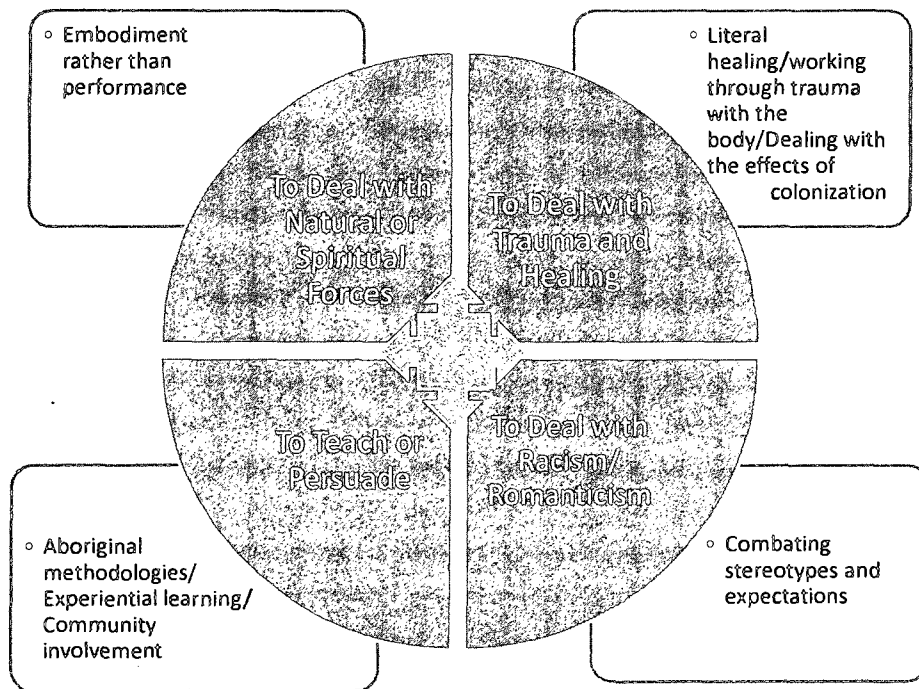
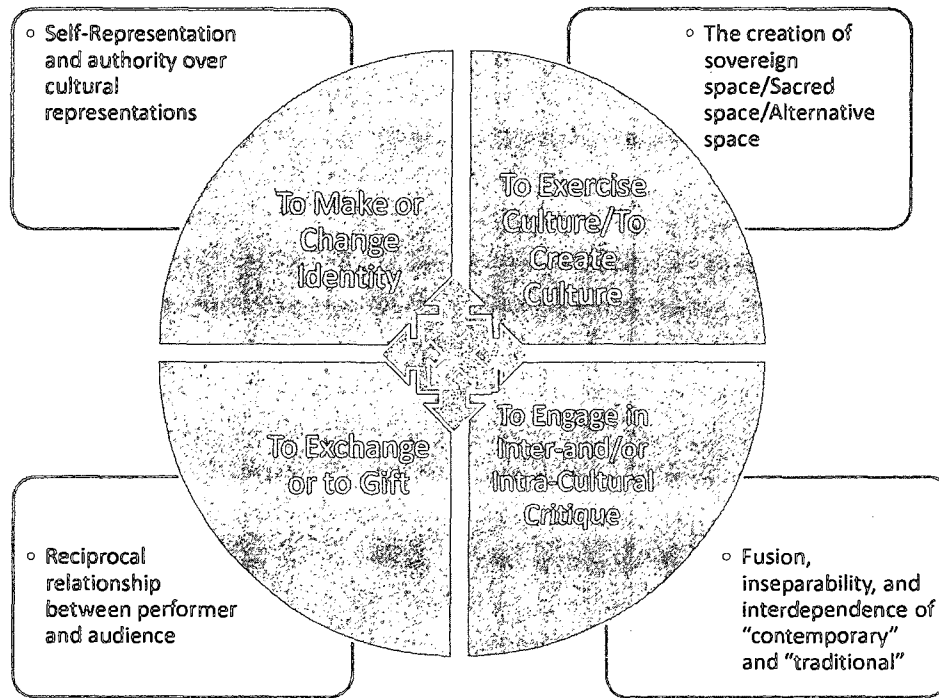


Diagram 4. Visual model of Evans' spheres alongside themes of Contemporary Aboriginal dancers.

3.

No longer bound to a sense of having to restrict one's focus, materials, or genre, many contemporary artists of color move back and forth between past and present, between history and fiction, between art and ritual, between high art and popular culture, and between Western and non-Western influence. In doing so, they participate in multiple communities.¹⁵²

—Coco Fusco, Contemporary Performance Artist, Writer,
Theorist

Walking into the auditorium before the start of Red Sky's Raven Stole the Sun performance at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York (NMAI), I immediately realize the piece will be very different from others I have seen lately. Unlike the first time I viewed Manitowapan, this time I arrive early, with plenty of time to kill before the start of the program. Rather than the "typical" museum auditorium or performance space filled mainly with White, thirty-something dance aficionados, cultural hipsters, and older museum members or donors, the auditorium brims with laughing children and families. Instead of the usual pre-performance dimmed auditorium, the house lights are all the way up leaving the stage exposed for exploration of the performance props and instruments. I recognize a few adults from the NMAI's bi-yearly community social dances as they take their children up to the stage and point out the bentwood boxes and traditional rattles set up next to a drum kit and marimba. The din in the auditorium is surprisingly loud compared to Contemporary dance performances. Rather than being distracted, I find myself caught up in the energy and anticipation radiating from the children. As I take my seat squarely between a Cub Scout troupe from New Jersey and a Girl Scout Brownie troupe from Bedford-Stuyvesant Brooklyn, my

¹⁵² Coco Fusco, English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas, 33.

seven year old neighbor immediately begins asking questions: "Why do you have a notebook? What are you writing? Look at those boxes up there with the funny faces! I can draw them, wanna see? Why are you here alone? Where are your kids?..." I laugh and tell him I am a dancer who wants to write about the dancers on stage and hand over my notebook so he can show me his drawing skills while I look over Red Sky's NMAI promotional materials.¹⁵³

According to the program, Raven Stole the Sun "takes a traditional Tlingit story to exciting new heights through a compelling theatre dance piece for family audiences."¹⁵⁴ Another sheet states: "In this contemporary take of a traditional story, the curious Raven schemes to steal the sun, the moon, and the stars but ends up bringing light to the people of the world."¹⁵⁵

As I sit in the audience chatting with my eagerly-friendly neighbors, the house lights dim and a single light illuminates the stage quieting the young audience. Musicians silently take their places at their instruments while Sandra Laronde reads a brief prologue that clues the audience into the main characters' backgrounds and what the bentwood boxes hold. We see Eesh (Carlos Riveras), dressed in a Tlingit headdress, a

¹⁵³ See figure 25.

¹⁵⁴ Based on an oral history recounted by Aa Tlein Kwaan Tlingit Story Keeper Sháa Tláa Maria Williams and rewritten for the stage by Ojibway playwright Drew Hayden Taylor, Raven Stole the Sun tells the story of the elderly chief Eesh who lives with his beloved daughter Seik. Eesh is deeply troubled and sad because he has lost his beloved wife. In his sadness, he keeps all the lights of the world (sun, moon, stars) in bentwood boxes inside his home and keeps the world in darkness to reflect his depressed state. The Trickster figure Raven knows Eesh is keeping something precious in his boxes. Out of uncontrollable curiosity, he schemes to gain access to Eesh's house by transforming himself into a pine needle in a pool of cool water which Seik drinks from one day while out in the woods collecting food. Seik becomes pregnant with the Raven after ingesting the pine needle and soon gives birth to an oddly curious and troublesome baby. Eesh immediately falls in love with the boy despite the child's mischievous ways, not suspecting the boy is really the Raven. Once inside the house as a cherished grandson, Raven is able to find out what is inside the boxes, and he later steals back the lights returning them to the world and turning himself from white to black in the process.

¹⁵⁵ Sic. Promotional materials gathered at performance November 17, 2007. Collection of the author. Materials created by the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and Red Sky.

denim shirt, and leather vest as he enters the stage leaning heavily on a cane and checking the contents of the boxes. Seik (Sandra Laronde) enters bouncing and bubbly with her red button-blanket vest sparkling and her long red skirt billowing as she moves and sways around her father. Raven (Michael Dufays), dressed head to toe in gauzy, silky material and white feathers, enters the stage with stiff, quick, bird-like movements of his head and legs (highlighted by marimba notes and staccato drum beats). He sneaks up to the imaginary windows of the house and spies on the family as he addresses the audience in a conspirative tone about how his curiosity wants him to take “whatever is in those boxes!”

The children love the entire performance. From the moment the house lights go down, they are transfixed and sit on the edges of their seats. I find myself as much in awe of their reactions as in what is happening on stage. As the characters interact, dance, and sing, I realize why Sandra Laronde has repeatedly insisted to writers and critics that Red Sky is not simply a dance company or a theatre troupe. The work cannot be classified or defined by either of these categories. The closest I can come in my mind to defining it while watching is “musically-inclined physical theatre.” The performance is part history and culture lesson, part musical, part dance performance, and part comedy show. One moment the performers are actors imparting oral history through their conversations, then suddenly, the actors jump up and break into song while dancing à la Broadway. At times, the actor-dancers break away from their interactions with each other to address the audience with jokes. They treat the audience members as confidantes much like comedy television shows such as The Office or Scrubs, thereby breaking down “The

Fourth Wall."¹⁵⁶ *The performers sometimes even wait for a response from the audience before resuming their interactions on stage, thereby involving the children in a tangible, interactive way. As audience members, we are not allowed to remain passive and silent. Our feedback is needed for the performance to continue. At one point in the story, Raven is lost and cannot be found. The house lights suddenly go up and the actor-dancers enter the auditorium seating area to ask children if they have seen the Raven. In the meantime, the Raven runs around and behind auditorium seats, and hides under jackets or behind parents that he forces to stand. The children in the audience scream and point to Seik and Eesh as they spot the Raven around the room. While I watch—more passively than the children—Red Sky succeeds in breaking down the dichotomy between audience and performer while keeping the children involved and invested in the story's outcome.*

At the end of the performance, rather than doing multiple curtain calls, Sandra, the musicians, and the other dancer-actors re-enter the stage for a question and answer period. Laronde explains their clothing and where the Tlingit people are from, asks the musicians to demonstrate instruments, and invites questions from children and parents. The questions range from the flippant ("May I touch the feathers on the Raven's costume?") to the serious ("How does it feel to be Native American?") to the offensive and intrusive ("What percentage of Indian are you? Your skin looks very light."). Laronde handles them all with the grace and agility of a juggler. She brings the first child and his friends up to feel the feathers of raven's costume while explaining that unlike the Raven's costume, her outfit is actually one that people still wear today at

¹⁵⁶ "The Fourth Wall" refers to the imaginary "wall" at the front of the stage in a proscenium theatre, through which the audience sees the action in the world of the play. Denis Diderot coined the term in the nineteenth century. See John Stevenson. "The Fourth Wall And The Third Space" (Centre for Playback Theatre, Spring 1995), http://www.playbackschool.org/articles/Stevenson_TH%E2%80%A6.pdf (accessed May 20, 2009).

dances and fancy dinners. She then tells the second child how it is wonderful to be Native American, how she is proud of her heritage the same way he is probably proud to be an American and proud of where his older family members come from, although she mentions that she lives in Canada where Indigenous peoples are called First Nations. She then deftly turns the table on the rude older man by telling him that Native Peoples are as varied in their looks as in their languages and cultural expressions. “Would you happen to know the specific blood quantum of European blood you have that gave you your blonde hair?” She asks with deadpan delivery. As the NMAI volunteer swiftly takes the microphone from the man’s hands and gives it to a child, I laugh and take notes below my new bentwood box artwork.¹⁵⁷

In 2007, I interviewed Sandra Laronde, artistic director of Red Sky in Toronto, while she was performing in New York City. Sandra has the type of focused energy which radiates from performers who inherently feel comfortable within their bodies and who use their bodies as their artistic medium—an energy felt physically as well as seen. She is articulate from years of having to express what she feels within her body in written form. In addition to her performances, she writes and directs a performance group that has reached international acclaim. As the founder of Native Women in the Arts, a television actor, CBC radio personality, published author, professional dancer, and Canadian spokesperson for Toronto’s Olympic bid, Laronde is comfortable with interviews. I, however, was nervous and jittery, having read so much about her. Amazed she had agreed to meet me, being on an international tour and having been announced as the new director for the Banff Aboriginal dance program only three days before, I

¹⁵⁷ See figures 29 and 30

struggled to find questions because there was so much to discuss. She soon had me at ease, however, and the ideas poured from her mouth.

I contacted Sandra for an interview/conversation after seeing a few of Red Sky's dance works such as *Shimmer*, a collaborative dance project between Aboriginal dancers of Australia and Indigenous dancers of North America, and *Dancing Americas*, a piece discussing the First Peoples of North, South, and Central America through the metaphor of the migratory Monarch butterfly that travels between Canada and Mexico each year.¹⁵⁸ Both of these pieces are fairly abstract in their choreography, narrative, and visual form. They contain multiple layers of dance references—Contemporary, Modern, and traditional Aboriginal dance forms interact to form something wholly different than what is usually expected from any one of these styles. From these viewing experiences, I had assumed Red Sky was a dance company and had expected *Raven Stole the Sun* to be a similar Contemporary dance work. I did not realize the depth of programming Sandra was striving for through her company.

The first thing Sandra says before I ask questions about her work and practice is that she must start with a correction to our e-mail exchange in which I had been calling Red Sky a dance ensemble: “First off, we don’t call ourselves an ensemble. It’s Red Sky Performance. We don’t say ‘troupe’ or ‘company’.”¹⁵⁹ Red Sky is expanding the concept of Contemporary performance experience in Canada to include many facets of artistic production and the old terms are inaccurate when discussing their work. The pieces within Red Sky’s body of productions range from straight-on Contemporary dance shows like *Shimmer* in which a group of unspeaking dancers create abstract pictures and stories

¹⁵⁸ See figure 31, 33 and 34.

¹⁵⁹ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

with their bodies on stage to productions geared towards children like *Raven Stole the Sun* and *Caribou Song*.¹⁶⁰ These children's works involve spoken theatre with oral histories, dance sequences based on both traditional steps and musical theatre, and live musicians who share the stage space with the actors and dancers. Red Sky also puts on productions like *Red Sky at Night*, an evening-long event full of short dance pieces, live music, storytelling, poetry readings, contortionist performances, and theatre pieces by leading Indigenous artists. As Laronde says, "Red Sky is a creature of flight. It has wings—it can cross all kinds of boundaries."¹⁶¹

Laronde identifies a need to stretch the boundaries of how Contemporary Aboriginal performance is perceived by creating quality works based on Aboriginal world views that are then presented on the Western stage. By combining these two modes of production (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), both modes are affected in a reciprocal relationship: Aboriginal epistemologies relating to performance gain space within the discourse and critical writing surrounding Contemporary performance while Indigenous communities uncover the possibilities for cultural expression when it is placed in Western arenas and interacts with different world views and epistemologies.

¹⁶⁰ See figure 32. *Caribou Song* is an "adventure dance story" based on a story by playwright Tomson Highway about two Cree children who follow the Caribou by dogsled with their family in northern Canada. It was developed with two adult dancers (Sandra Laronde and Carlos Rivera) as the siblings and a live symphony orchestra providing the sounds of 10,000 Caribou.

¹⁶¹ Andrea Raymond, "Red Sky Enlivens Through Dance Theatre," *Surface and Symbol*. September 2004, <http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/redsky.surface.html> (accessed March 11, 2009).

To Exercise Culture: Fusion, inseparability, and interdependence of “contemporary” and “traditional”

Formed in 2000, Red Sky is one of the fastest growing and well-toured Contemporary Aboriginal performance groups in the world. Named for Laronde’s Indigenous name, Misko Gee Shee Gut Migizwe Kwe, which translates to Red Sky Eagle Woman, Red Sky is hailed as “cutting edge” by critics for its diverse repertoire and for combining multiple performance and art disciplines.¹⁶² But, Red Sky should not necessarily be discussed as radically avant-garde. They actually carry forth a traditional cultural and artistic heritage in which the performing and visual arts are an interconnected/inseparable form of expression which enacts change, embodies history/memory/knowledge, and celebrates culture simultaneously. Laronde says, “we’ve always had a real legacy in our traditional culture, of music with unique instrumentation, orators speaking in heightened poetic language, dance and drama combined with spirituality, and even politics.”¹⁶³ Although Western discourse on culture has segregated arts into the dichotomy of “visual” and “performing” and then further into mediums such as dance, theatre, and music, for many Indigenous cultures, all of these arts stem from the same root and should not be discussed in separate spheres the way Western artistic discourse dictates.¹⁶⁴

For Sandra Laronde, all artistic “mediums” connect to a root idea—and for her, even in a “performing medium,” this root is a referenced visual form:

¹⁶² Laura Stevens, “Laronde’s Career a Celebration of Aboriginal Culture,” *Windspeaker*, September 2005, <http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/press.windspeaker.html> (accessed March 11, 2009).

¹⁶³ Dave Morris, “Red Sky Goes Underground,” *Eye Weekly*, May 26, 2005, <http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/redsky.eye.html> (accessed March 1, 2009).

¹⁶⁴ See Maria Campbell quote from *Achimoona* introduction in “Positioning” section of Introduction for an example of the root of art-related words in an Indigenous language.

I think the most powerful form of arts is the visual. It always has been that way for Indigenous peoples. Even when you think about the different forms of art—whether it is dance, drumming, a really good speaker or orator, etc., everything goes back to the image. What a really good storyteller or dancer is working with is images. They are creating images that touch the soul or touch some memory inside us. A picture speaks a thousand words and brings us into very old parts of ourselves—to an image or some memory. We all carry deep memories inside us that we are able to connect with. And I’m speaking of all of us now—not just Indigenous peoples. For example, take petroglyphs. When you look at them, you’re looking at an essential line—an essential form of something that is then taken to create stories. When you go back that far, and get down to the essential, simple line, you capture the essence of something and we already know what the image is. We fill it in automatically with our shared imagination. When we access these images through a painting or through our body, or a story, or music, we are looking for those essential images that move people no matter what the medium may be.¹⁶⁵

Laronde sees dance as inseparable from other forms of art such as storytelling, music, and the visual arts, because all forms of artistic expression can be distilled down to an essential image—an idea held by a group through a collective consciousness.¹⁶⁶

Laronde’s career and repertoire reflect this use of many facets of artistic production in order to express essential image-ideas. In Red Sky’s two performance pieces created for children, *Raven Stole the Sun* and *Caribou Song*, multiple art forms and mediums interact to create a cohesive production that accesses essential images of childhood wonder for audiences of all ages. *Raven Stole the Sun* and *Caribou Song* address complex Aboriginal epistemological ideas such as transformation, survival, and creation, while celebrating Aboriginal culture as something contemporary—alive and well—not something found only in the past. For example, In *Caribou Song*, we see and hear the story of a brother and sister, dressed in contemporary Canadian clothing, as they travel with their family

¹⁶⁵ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

¹⁶⁶ This concept (sans specifically visual reference) is also best understood through Indigenous languages. See Maria Campbell, *Achimoona*; or Willie Ermine’s explanation of *Mamatowisowin* in his essay “Aboriginal Epistemology” in *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds*, ed. Marie Battiste and Jean Barman (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995).

following the Caribou through northern Canada—a traditional way of life still practiced today by many families. At one point in the story, when the brother and sister are almost trampled by the herd and their family fears them dead, the audience discovers that the children were actually able to embrace the spirit of the Caribou and change themselves into part of the herd to stay safe. The Aboriginal epistemological concept of transformation is therefore demonstrated in a contemporary context without being treated as stereotypically “magical” or “shamanistic.” In *Raven Stole the Sun*, we watch an age-old story of how the Raven got his black feathers unfold through Contemporary theatre with actor-dancers wearing contemporary Tlingit clothing. We also hear ancient instruments being mixed with electronic techno beats and see traditional dance steps that are still performed at Potlatches being mixed with Contemporary dance and theatre techniques. Together, these elements produce rousing, joyful musical numbers.

Western discourse tends to treat what it deems “true” or “authentic” Aboriginal culture as something of the past and to discuss the history of Aboriginal artistic expression as following an evolving, linear trajectory from past to present. Thus, Indigenous artists are often forced to choose to focus their careers on the creation and presentation of work that follows *either* traditional tenets *or* contemporary stylistic choices. But this separation does not reflect lived experience. While being rooted in an Aboriginal epistemological base, the artworks are situated in the Contemporary performance art scene as well, causing the “two world” dichotomy that is so often forced upon the representations of Aboriginal peoples to lose its’ power.¹⁶⁷ Contemporary Indigenous art is a continuation and new form of traditional art. Both intertwine and

¹⁶⁷ i.e. the view that one must choose between being “Traditional” or “Urban” or that traditional Aboriginal culture in the past is more “authentic.”

inform each other. The traditional/contemporary art dichotomy is a creation of Western discourse. Red Sky's dance pieces demonstrate a tenant that many other Contemporary Aboriginal performers express as a theme in their work: the fusion and inseparability of the "traditional" and the "contemporary."¹⁶⁸ As Sandra says:

Presenters can control the programs, the advertising, etc., but they cannot control what will happen on stage... It is a place where you can not only just make your own images, but also share them. You can touch people and you can grab people's attention and get them to see Aboriginal culture in a different way. You get to celebrate Aboriginal culture—Contemporary and Traditional. Oh! And you also get to make that statement of what is Contemporary. There is this perception that Aboriginal dance is static—that it doesn't change and that traditional dance always stays the same. There are a lot of things to convey on stage that need to be said. That forced Traditional/Contemporary dichotomy gets very tricky. For example, if you look at Grass Dance, which is the oldest dance form on this continent, you have old-style traditional steps in it, but added contemporary ones also, so you have contemporary right inside the traditional—in the same dance form.¹⁶⁹

Laronde demonstrates the fusion of traditional and contemporary dance beautifully in Red Sky's production of *Dancing Americas*, which begins with a fifteen-minute Grass Dance solo by a men's champion Powwow dancer. The solo functions to set up the audience for the presentation of the contemporary dance that follows, using a traditional way of preparing space in order to recreate the stage as a sovereign space. With a large competitive contingent across the Powwow circuit, the Grass Dance actually originated as a ceremonial dance. The origins of the dance vary from region to region and from nation to nation, but many First Nations in Canada agree that pre-Powwow Grass Dancers would come to the site where feasts and special events were to take place and consecrate the ground while they danced in time with the beat of the drum in order to prepare the space both environmentally and spiritually. Through their specific way of

¹⁶⁸ Fusion here is a Western term based on my art historical background—but I do not intend to imply that the various types of art were once separate. Indigenous epistemologies reflect a different experience.

¹⁶⁹ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

dancing, they flatten the grass with their feet to prepare the area for the ceremony or festival, but also ready the space emotionally and spiritually by infusing the ground with energy and setting it apart from other spaces conceptually. This process makes the space special and prepares it for what is about to happen. By bringing a traditional Grass Dancer on stage to begin a Contemporary dance performance, Red Sky makes a specific comment about how audiences should approach the stage space and the following dance. The group shows that Contemporary dance can still be connected to and contextualized by traditional dance, that stage dance can also be approached in a spiritual way, and that the act of viewing *Dancing Americas* should be set apart from the everyday with special energies. Red Sky informs the audience that the production that follows should be approached with respect as a continuation and new form of traditional world views even if it is performed on stage in Western styles.

The insertion of Grass Dance to prepare the stage also creates a sovereign space for Aboriginal performance; establishing immediately that Aboriginal world views will be privileged in the performance without catering to stereotypical expectations. At the onset of the encounter between audience and performer(s), the traditional form is utilized to reclaim the space of the stage and challenge the assumptions of audience members expecting either a stereotypical display of pageantry or a cliché Contemporary dance piece.

I think that there are expectations and pre-conceived notions of what Aboriginal artwork looks like. After they actually see the work, people realize that it isn't at all what they expected. And they say it with a big smile because what they're really saying is "I really enjoyed it." It isn't what they expected and they like being surprised and shown things that challenge their pre-conceived notions and stereotypes. They often come expecting our work to be more traditional—more beads and feathers... Sometimes people say: "Oh, Red Sky doesn't do beads and feathers; they're trying to step away from that." And that is wrong too... We're

not trying to “get away” from anything traditional. I love seeing the traditional in artwork... The difference is we find a reason *why*. We don’t just stick things in to do so or for crowd appeal. That’s a very important thing. And then with Contemporary work, I would say it comes from our own people too.¹⁷⁰

The Grass Dance in *Dancing Americas* is included not for a display of “beads and feathers” or to give the audience something flashy and exotic; it is has a very specific purpose—rooted in the history of employing dance to embody action and change. What follows the fifteen-minute Grass Dance defies the presumptions of those audience members who come expecting to easily consume First Nations or Native American culture. At the end of her statement, Laronde implies that the Contemporary dance section of the work is not simply being copied or “mimed” from Western art forms. Instead, it comes from both Aboriginal and Western communities because much of Modern technique was appropriated from Indigenous dance forms and because Contemporary dance forms such as ballet and Modern are taught in Aboriginal communities as much as other Euro-North American communities. Indigenous artists and performers have succeed in taking back these forms, re-infusing these Western styles in the same way they have re-infused traditional forms. To reference Lara Evan’s theoretical model for Aboriginal performance art, Red Sky is *exercising* traditional culture (a process-oriented verb that resonates with Aboriginal world views) as part of contemporary culture. Red Sky shows the fact that within Indigenous cultures, the concepts of “traditional” and “contemporary” are different facets of the same performative practice. As Alejandro Ronceria (Suesca/Sogamoso/Columbian) explains: “there is this idea of remembering the past in order to know who you are today... It’s about telling the story from different points of view without losing track of your history.

¹⁷⁰ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

We are making Contemporary art. We are transforming the form to create a new dance style.”¹⁷¹

To Teach or Persuade: Dance as embodiment of knowledge, Aboriginal epistemologies, and community involvement

Because Red Sky is able to diminish the borders constructed by Western discourse between mediums of performance and art, they are able to heavily incorporate theatrical modes and physical actors who speak into dance. Their oeuvre lends itself especially well to oral histories. Pieces such as *Raven Stole the Sun* and *Caribou Song* are especially important for Laronde and have been the most widely toured of all of Red Sky’s productions because, she says, “there are not enough of our stories out there. We don’t see ourselves reflected back to us, especially our experiences as children.”¹⁷² *Raven Stole the Sun* brings a traditional oral history to new generations and Western audiences while *Caribou Song* records a contemporary story for future generations. Both traditional and contemporary histories are actualized on stage.

The embodiment of histories on stage incorporates Indigenous methodologies such as storytelling and community involvement and the mentorship of elders. In *Underworlds*, a Red Sky production for older audiences, Red Sky tells the Ojibway oral history of Cheeby-Aub-Oozoo—brother of Nanabush the trickster—as he undertakes an epic journey into the underworld to bring back music, drums, and dream quests for the living. Focusing less on dance, this performance is an evening of dramatic storytelling.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Ronceria quoted in Heather Elton and others, eds., *Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project*, 34.

¹⁷² Millie Knapp, “Laronde’s Red Sky Stretches Boundaries with *Caribou Song*,” *Sage*, Summer, 2002, <http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/redsky.sage.html> (accessed March 11, 2009).

¹⁷³ See figure 35. This oral history varies widely. Nanabush is not always a trickster as in Laronde’s version. Cheeby-Aub-Oozoo’s name has been spelled in many ways—from endings with a ‘g’ to the most common: Chibiabos. I use Laronde’s spelling from the Red Sky website.

Each performance of the piece is accompanied by live music, consisting completely of pre-European, Indigenous instrumentation. For example, one of the drum types used in the piece is over one thousand years old.¹⁷⁴ The production involves people from many worlds: international master composer Antonio Zepeda, Native Canadian mezzo soprano Marion Newman, and traditional Ojibway singers Eddy Robinson and Derrick Bressette. Since Cheeby-Aub-Oozoo is a lesser-known hero within Ojibway oral histories, Laronde spoke to many elders within Anishinabe communities to create her script:

[N]ot a lot is written about Cheeby-Aub-Oozoo, it's all about Nanabush in the books. So I had to go talk to people who know that history—who have that oral history...the music had to be informed by [the history], so the words of the elders made it into the piece in many ways. And of course, various elders had different versions and perceptions on the same thing and those dynamics made it into the piece—all the different elements came through. Those histories played a huge role for the Ojibwa elders... Basically the whole piece was written from their living knowledge. So [*Underworlds*] is very, very, very directly tied to the importance of storytelling.¹⁷⁵

By bringing lesser-known oral histories to the stage and directly involving elders in creation, Laronde is composing innovative Contemporary performance that transfers Indigenous knowledge in both a traditional (through the mentorship of elders) and a contemporary (through a proscenium space) way. According to Laronde, presenting traditional ideas or world views in the form of stories can help people remember and understand more clearly. “You take what you need from that story. I find it so much more interesting because, [with story], you need to paint pictures for people and it's the images you remember and walk away with.”¹⁷⁶ Although Red Sky's Contemporary adult dance pieces like *Shimmer* and *Dancing Americas* contain less text, Laronde would be quick to point out that storytelling can happen through the body and through the essential visual

¹⁷⁴ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Laronde in Laura Stevens, “Laronde's Career a Celebration of Aboriginal Culture.”

image presented through dance that still “speaks a thousand words.” These more conceptual pieces are still imparting and privileging Indigenous knowledge and histories, just without the specifically “oral” designation; they are abstractly embodying histories.

In addition to imparting oral histories and involving elders, Red Sky also embodies Aboriginal methodologies through their community-driven practice that involves experiential learning, community involvement and consultation, storytelling, and process-oriented creation. Most performance companies tour, but Red Sky does so with purpose. Red Sky makes it a priority to present in many diverse areas and venues, appearing everywhere from the large halls of the National Arts Centre Theatre in Ottawa or Roy Thompson Hall in Toronto to the cultural theatres of the National Museum of the American Indian in DC/New York and the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta to the community centers, school auditoriums, and local gymnasiums of Penticton, Temagami and Thunder Bay Ontario. As Laronde says, “[n]ot all of our community lives in urban centres. Why limit yourself? I believe we belong in every single venue—from the National Arts Centre to the Carlu to the Native Canadian Centre.” She notes that, often, Red Sky is the first Aboriginal group to be performing in the large stage venues in Canada.¹⁷⁷ As mentioned in chapter two, these cultural sites are those which have previously excluded Aboriginal people and Indigenous artistic expression. Performing at these venues makes an important statement about sovereignty.

Red Sky strives to make itself available to these varied audiences in order to engage different populaces. A large portion of their work performed in urban communities for mainly non-Aboriginal audiences inherently has the effect of breaking down stereotypes and reaffirming the presence of contemporary Indigenous cultural

¹⁷⁷ Both quote and footnoted sentence: Andrea Raymond, “Red Sky Enlivens through Dance Theatre.”

expression for unacquainted audiences. With diverse communities, Red Sky makes efforts to create a dialogue through question-and-answer sessions involving audience members both before and after performances. The group has expanded its outreach and pedagogical activities for non-Aboriginal audiences through study guides, family programming, guest lectures, and dance workshops. This dialogue is important for dispelling assumptions about Native art and broadening cross-cultural performance understanding. While working with non-Aboriginal audiences, Laronde also sees Aboriginal communities as the root of her practice and strives to engage them on a regular basis. Red Sky does not act as a large, professional performing group going into small reserve communities and demonstrating how things “should” be done; instead, it positions itself as a visiting group of learners. Red Sky attempts to create a reciprocal learning environment and takes the stance of a group willing to learn from each community it visits:

One of the things I would like to create with Red Sky is a better type of touring culture. So that it’s not just another tour, not just another gig, not a standard performance where you go in, do your thing, and get out. It goes back to engaging the community, but how do you do that? How do you make an impact on the community and how do they impact you? We’re always talking about how we impact them, and funding language is always geared this way, but it should be equal. How do they impact us? It is an experience of reciprocity. It’s a reciprocal exchange that many people don’t recognize. If you go in with the attitude that “we’re going to show you,” that’s the totally wrong attitude, especially in an Aboriginal community.¹⁷⁸

Laronde and members of Red Sky often hold post-performance “community talk backs” and “community cafes” in smaller towns/communities/reservations in order to provide a forum when community members can talk with the dancers about issues or questions their performance and presence inspires. This forum emphasizes the reciprocal

¹⁷⁸ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

relationship between performer and audience and the “performance as mirror” theoretical discussion in chapter two. It also reflects Aboriginal epistemologies emphasizing processes and relationships. Although the created worlds performed on stage affect audience members, the specific audiences that performance groups come in contact with also change the dancers. This interdependent contact and exchange affects future work and the creation of new types of worlds on stage.

Laronde further hopes to achieve a reciprocal “touring culture” by assisting isolated Northern communities in producing events and performances of their own.

In northern Ontario, for example, there is no kind of network to connect the smaller communities, and some of them are...communities that have not had exposure to quality Aboriginal productions... They have quality local arts and expressions, but they often have little coming from the outside. So, what we’re hoping to do is actually go in and develop some of those communities based on their needs so that they can put on events and performances of their own. Say they had their own arts festival; we would send someone in to assist them in doing so. Then they are in a position to present themselves to other people. The step after that is for them to host Red Sky. We could go in to develop our own system of presenters in northern Ontario while helping local communities. We haven’t tried that yet, but it is something new we are hoping to work on.¹⁷⁹

The ingenuity of this future plan/goal is that while Red Sky engages with each community and builds a potential future performance site, they help a local community share its particular contemporary cultural expression through previously established channels. The performance group, the established channels (the performance network and resources available to known groups like Red Sky), the audience, the hosting communities, and the cultural expression (dance) are all changed and share a piece of themselves in an interdependent, gifting relationship. This practice reflects the “4 R’s” of Kirkness and Barnhardt (respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility). Red Sky has

¹⁷⁹ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

respect for local communities, a responsibility to them, a relevant message, and a reciprocal relationship with them.

Another way in which Red Sky participates in new communities is by engaging other Indigenous cultures from around the world in their productions—for example, Tlingit communities for *Raven Stole the Sun* and Cree communities for *Caribou Song* for example—even if these cultures are not represented by members of the group.¹⁸⁰ *Dancing Americas* is a collaboration between the Indigenous expressions of Canada and Mexico. For the piece, Laronde worked with choreographer Peter Chin (Jamaican of Chinese/Irish/African decent) and Mexican composer Antonio Zapeda to create a work with five dancers (two from Canada and three from Mexico). The resulting production incorporates elements from all of their backgrounds. Another piece that involves extensive collaboration with Indigenous communities outside Canada is Red Sky's work *Shimmer*. This Contemporary dance piece is a collaboration between the Indigenous peoples of Australia and Canada inspired by Red Sky's visit to Australia and participation in "The Dreaming, Australia's International Indigenous Festival." While there, Laronde saw Albert David and Earl Rosas, two Torres Strait Islander dancers, perform. She was so inspired, she approached them about a partnership. To create the piece, elders from diverse communities in both countries were consulted about their ideas or translations of the word "shimmer." Their thoughts were incorporated into acts within the work ranging from Powwow Fancy Dances, didgeridoo and drum performances to a contemporary section co-choreographed by Albert David (Torres Strait Islander) and

¹⁸⁰ Aside from Sandra Laronde and Carlos Rivera, nothing is posted or published on the band affiliations of Red Sky members. Band affiliations are sometimes posted in performance programs as dictated by the presenter (for example, the NMAI tries to print band/tribe affiliations whenever possible in event programs).

Michael Greyeyes (Plains Cree). By involving elders from communities in both countries to explore a single concept from their different perspectives, Red Sky presents both the diversity and similarities of Aboriginal world views around the globe.

One of Red Sky's most recent productions, *Tono*, brings together the Indigenous peoples of Canada and inner and outer Mongolia (China and Mongolia proper).¹⁸¹

Exploring the "great horse cultures of the world," the project involves eleven dancers and musicians. Co-choreographed by Laronde and Montreal-based choreographer Roger Sinha (Armenian/Indian), it includes indigenous dancers Carlos Rivera, Eldon Weasel Child, Wei Jei, Cai Hong, Eri Deng Tu, Jinny Jacinto, Raul Talamantes, and a musical collaboration between Rick Sacks and Mongolian throat singer/morin khurr (horse head fiddle) player Bat-Orshikh Bazarvaani. It also includes Mongolian long song singers.¹⁸² In the piece, the dancers invoke the auditory experience of herds of horses through their footwork and hand claps as well as the gracefulness of horses and horse riders through their choreography. *Tono* has gained immense popularity. Parts were featured in the closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and it will also be featured in the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. It is also the subject of a forthcoming documentary film.

Community collaborations such as *Tono* put Aboriginal methodologies of processual learning and collaboration/partnership on the international stage to show how powerful and universal the fruits of such methodologies can be for both the communities involved in the exchange and the diverse audiences witnessing the results.

¹⁸¹ See figures 36 and 37.

¹⁸² The "long song" tradition in Mongolia, called such because each syllable of text is extended for a long duration (a four-minute song may consist only of ten words), meant to depict the spacious mountain valleys of the Mongolian countryside, is also said to have once been a form of communication for nomadic tribes over the country's vast terrain. The horsehead fiddle celebrates the society's mainstay, the horse—an animal that means transportation, comradeship, and pre-eminence in battle. Another Mongolian cultural expression, throat singing, has similar relatives in Canadian Indigenous cultures.

To Deal with Trauma and Healing: Working with the effects of colonization through the body

While speaking with Sandra Laronde, I could not help but notice how passionate and excited she became every time she touched upon the theme of celebrating culture through her performance art. She expressed in many ways how revolutionary it is for an Aboriginal performance artist to express joy, beauty, resilience, strength, and power in Euro-North-American arenas that so often overlook positive representations of Indigenous peoples. The night before our meeting, we both attended an Amnesty International presentation on sexual violence against Indigenous women on United States reservations that had been both moving and angering. Women stood up to tell their personal stories, many of which led to the people in the room shedding tears of anger and empathy. The morning after, while discussing dance, our thoughts kept returning to the emotionally draining night. In the middle of a comment about Red Sky's touring plans, Laronde stopped suddenly:

You know... I have something else to say. I've been thinking about it since that presentation at the NMAI last night. The stories of being wounded are so pervasive. When you look at theatre and dance in Aboriginal cultures, of course a lot of it revolves around what we've faced as a people. But I want to see and I want to hear how they've overcome—where are they now. I don't want to hear the woundedness in the voice anymore. I can actually hear the wound or see the wound when some people discuss their work. There's something *very* powerful when you hear a strong voice, even when you can tell that the person has been through a lot. So many people still have such obvious woundedness. And then people [the audiences/presenters] start to want the woundedness.¹⁸³

In this statement, Laronde does not discredit the bravery shown by the women who told their stories of sexual assault; in fact, she is very adamant about their strength. Instead, she references the way artists naturally use their artistic expression and practice/process

¹⁸³ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

to work through personal pain and issues, and that this sometimes leads to the pain itself becoming the only focus of the work—to the point of being expected and even encouraged by presenters, collectors, and galleries. An extreme focus on pain and the “romanticism of victimhood” creates a sameness of work that trivializes suffering. It serves the colonial audience’s impulse to feed on the pain of the colonized—in an almost sexual titillation—to try to address or assuage guilt. In continuing to give audiences this type of work, “the victim” becomes the only identity shown in the artwork and it becomes difficult for the artwork/artist to express the more multi-faceted nature of lived experience. Laronde, instead, would like to move beyond simple disclosure to portray resiliency—the ability to survive, use painful experiences to grow, and to portray joy and health despite a colonial past.

The way dance uses the physical body as a medium makes it an especially liberating practice for the performer. Through dance, joy, resiliency, pain, and health are expressed in a tangible way. Performance provides a way for dancers to “work through” issues of racism, colonization, and repression with the very physical body that has been discriminated and transgressed against. As theorist Philip Auslander states: “performance can be a therapeutic response to social and cultural repression...”¹⁸⁴ When Contemporary Aboriginal dance engages the stage as a space in which to address the history of psychologically harmful and physically violent colonization, there is a notion of Aboriginal dancers’ “bodies as sites of investigation and connection to Native history, politics and world views...”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Philip Auslander, Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance, 46.

¹⁸⁵ Jacqueline Shea Murphy, The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories, 241.

Within Indigenous communities, in specific contexts, dance is also intertwined with ceremony and ritual which can enact literal healing.¹⁸⁶ This epistemology informs a contemporary stage practice that, although not religious in nature, still enacts change in both the performer and the audience. For example, in 1999, participants in the Banff Aboriginal dance program mentioned in interviews that they were using dance to work with negative effects found in the physical body.¹⁸⁷ Marrie Mumford, director of the program at that time, states:

[P]art of the process [at Banff] is to identify the effect of colonization on people who come through the program. Colonization shifts you into a way of thinking, which then lives in your body. So part of what we are doing is deconstructing that way of thinking and reclaiming Indigenous knowledge.¹⁸⁸

Santee Smith, a Contemporary Aboriginal dancer from Ontario, who also participated in the Chinook Winds program, expressed a similar goal for dance:

[A] lot of the work that we do is with taking ownership of our own bodies. There's a lot of things that, through colonization, we don't even realize [affects] the way that we think or the way we view our own body and humanness. A lot of the work that [we] did was very much of reclaiming our own bodies, feeling comfortable in who we are.¹⁸⁹

When Laronde says she no longer wants to hear the woundedness in the voice anymore, she is not saying artists should no longer use their practice to address the wounds caused by colonization and racism, but that this should not become the sole focus of their artistic production. She would like artist to avoid allowing their work to slip into the cult of victimhood that enables colonial audiences to romanticize pain. What she would like to see displayed on the Western stage is the joy and celebration resulting after the above

¹⁸⁶ Powwow forms such as the Jingle Dress dance and the Grass Dance have origins stories relating to literally healing the sick. Many nations use dance within religious ceremonies (Longhouse practices or Kiva practices for example) that work at balancing energies through dance and initiating healing.

¹⁸⁷ Sandra Laronde was part of the program in 1999.

¹⁸⁸ Marrie Mumford quoted in Jacqueline Shea Murphy, *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories*, 222.

¹⁸⁹ Sic. Santee Smith quoted in *Ibid*, 224.

mentioned processes—the strength of survival. Because so much Contemporary art work has directly addressed wounds, (Western) presenters have started to expect woundedness as a signifier of Aboriginality—almost craving that the painful and anger-filled pieces be shown at their venues to prove themselves not racist.¹⁹⁰ For Laronde, it is much more radical and powerful to show joy and health while addressing past wrongs.

Although negative experiences and past pain should not be dismissed or repressed as they inform contemporary work and are intertwined with life experience, they should not become the sole focus of academic and critical discourse surrounding the art. Art historians, cultural critics, and theorists writing about artists of color tend to foreground the issues and injustices addressed within an artwork instead of the artwork itself or the creative process. James Luna (Lusieno, La Jolla reservation), a performance artist who partially represented the United States at the 2005 Venice Biennale with his dance-marathon performance piece *Emendatio*, comments on the way critics overlook the aesthetics of his pieces to talk about politics.¹⁹¹

[W]hen writing about my work, people are uncertain about what they should be critical about. The critical reviews I have received focus on the politics of the work without emphasizing the work itself. A non-Aboriginal artist, like a painter, will be critiqued on brush strokes and dynamics of colour, whereas an article on an Aboriginal painter will largely be about the history of Aboriginal art and design. A review I crave, and one that would be most satisfying, would be about the context as opposed to the subject matter, like the pace of the performance, use of music, and so on.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Franz Fanon addresses this idea on page 47 of “On National Culture” when he discusses how the colonizer encourages “bitter hopeless recriminations” in art by the colonized and assimilates this bitterness in a cathartic process to “avoid their dramatization and to clear the atmosphere.” By *allowing* and *encouraging* these releases of anger toward the colonizer through art, colonial society gets a release of guilt, but *nothing changes* in the power relationship.

¹⁹¹ His work was relegated to a separate pavilion sponsored by the National Museum of the American Indian, not the “official” United States government pavilion. The United States government later claimed his involvement after the press acknowledged Luna’s inclusion as “progressive.”

¹⁹² James Luna quoted in Amber-Dawn Bear Robe, “I’m Only Doing it for the Money, Girls, and Fancy cars: An Interview with James Luna,” in Anthony Kiendl, ed., *Obsession, Compulsion, Collection: On Objects, Display Culture, and Interpretation* (Banff, Alberta: Banff Centre Press, 2004), 158.

When reviewing or critiquing Contemporary Aboriginal dance, writers should focus on the aesthetics of each art work and the experience of the dance piece itself before addressing politics or the painful experience of colonization that informed the creation of the work.

Sandra Laronde, like many Aboriginal performance artists and painters, would like the aesthetics of her work to be foregrounded; reflecting resiliency and beautiful strength first rather than scars and wounds—even while issues of colonization are still addressed. Political and emotional issues are important to understand in order to access various facets of an artwork, but art is about much more than issues.

I think it is far more revolutionary to show beauty. I mean, what is beauty? You know what I think beauty is? I think beauty is health made visible. So many people create work around their pain and their issues. I am not discrediting their expression, but we are so much more than our issues! People need to see that! If you let those issues come in through the back door of your work, not through the front, they will pack more of a wallop and stick with people longer. We don't need to go directly into the quagmire. That can shut down audience members down. You can't compromise beauty. We've been showing a lack of it for so long. It is time to start showing our health—the vitality of our communities, arts, cultures. Let's make those things visible. That's something that is so important to me and...one of the reasons why I created Red Sky... To create art that comes from that place of beauty rather than a wounded place or a place full of angry issues.¹⁹³

Work originating from a place of beauty within the body and mind rather than a place of pain can create more of an impact on the audience members because of its proactive nature. This place of beauty can effect more change in both the audience and the performer because it does not “shut the audience members down” by replaying the expected clichés of victimhood and allowing both the performer and audience to slip into colonial or comfortable roles. The unexpected grabs the audience's attention. Later in the

¹⁹³ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

work, when issues of racism, colonization or repression are referenced, they pack more emotional and political power because they do not have the explosive and unstable base of anger and pain. When the “issues” are broached from a place of calmness and health, they ring with more clarity and demand real action or changes in perception from the audience rather than passive feelings of discomfort, guilt, or sadness for the duration of the performance.

When I read Laronde the Santee Smith and Marrie Mumford quotes regarding colonialism’s effects on the body and asked if her physical theatre/dance practice have allowed her to “work through” the effects of colonization and remove the negative effects of racism from her body through a cathartic process, she replied:

Oh, I think you never get rid of it! You can move it to a different place. You just don’t let it control you. I think that you shouldn’t always ‘get rid’ of all things that are negative in your life. There is a certain amount of wisdom that is acquired through those negative experiences that has been earned. Why would you want to completely let that go? You just don’t let those experiences have the loudest voice. Or you keep it tucked away somewhere where it doesn’t have power; and if you need it, you can call it up. As an actor or performer, I can... remember the feeling and actually bring that forward since [my body] can remember the experience. I don’t think that the catharsis in dance is about expelling things and getting rid of things, it’s about making them smaller and giving them less of a voice in your life. It’s about not letting them have the driver’s seat, but still letting them stay as a passenger.¹⁹⁴

In this statement, Laronde expresses something I had known as a dancer but could never articulate so eloquently. Dancers have the ability to use and shift the memory of pain or discomfort that we carry within the body through physical action and use it to make performances stronger instead of giving the pain control or allowing audience members’ free access to our emotional past.

¹⁹⁴ Sandra Laronde (dancer, actor, writer), in discussion with the author, November 17, 2007.

The analogy of being in the driver's seat reflects quite accurately what makes the movement of Contemporary Aboriginal dance so important. Through both performance and practice, dancers are able to reclaim and remodel negative life experiences to create aesthetically moving pieces without giving those negative experiences power or the largest voice within the work. By doing so, the dancers celebrate the vitality of Indigenous communities, arts, and cultures while bringing to light a political history that requires re-visitation without allowing the residues of colonialism to have power.

4.

Dance is a doorway to powerful wisdom. Its motions express the ancestral memory in our bodies; it is the voice of all our relations.¹⁹⁵

We have physical, emotional and spiritual bodies. Dance accesses them all.¹⁹⁶
—Jerry Longboat (Mohawk), dancer, choreographer, writer,
dance section officer for the Canada Council for the Arts

The stage lights come up to reveal a giant swath of white textured fabric resembling fake fur that stretches from floor to ceiling. With the dim blue lights, it appears cold yet soft. A young boy dressed in a baseball shirt, jeans, and sneakers walks out onto stage with his attention solely focused on a small electronic device he holds in his hand that could be a cell phone or Gameboy. A gun shot goes off and the startled boy looks up to see black and white historical images start to flash against the white fur: nineteenth-century family portraits, women in voluminous black cotton dresses, groups of school children in identical outfits that look like residential or boarding school uniforms, children smiling as they hang off the white-washed porch of a big farm house, children frowning in uncomfortable-looking starched clothes as they pose for school photographs, hunting scenes, family portraits, and more. The images begin to cycle faster and faster and become more ominous. Disturbing images start to flash up occasionally in the loop—gaunt and starved-looking people wrapped in blankets, people frozen to death in the snow, men on horses with guns, and masked people with guns behind a barricade made of overturned cars. They go by so quickly, I wonder if they were really there or if my mind inserted them. The boy turns and runs off stage away from the images. The

¹⁹⁵ Jerry Longboat quoted in Heather Elton and others, eds., Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project, 8.

¹⁹⁶ Jerry Longboat quoted in Zainab Amadahy, "Dance Medicine," In the Spirit of Healing and Wellness 4.3 (Fall/Winter 2002–2003): 8.

images stop changing; a single picture of a birch forest floats on the fabric. All is still while a dancer enters the space and begins a solo to the sweet country twang of an acoustic guitar.

Her solo is both soft and dynamic; she easily switches from ground-based rolls to high, soft leaps. The woman continually seems to reach and yearn for something just out of her grasp, stretching up towards the heavens and out toward the audience with her whole body—fingers splayed, tendons in her arms and neck stretched, feet in relevé.¹⁹⁷ But, each time she seems about to touch the object of her desire, she harshly grabs the outstretched arm with her other hand and brings it back in to her side or chest, holding herself back. As the music slowly dies away and the lights dim, she dances off stage past an elderly man who walks to a now-visible table near the back of the space. He begins to light sage and sweet grass, smudging himself and the stage. After preparing the area, he begins to talk to the boy who is slightly off-stage as if the young man is his son or grandson. He tells him stories about the beauty of the boy's mother/grandmother while the boy seems to ignore him and play card games on a hand-drum.

The female dancer re-enters the stage space in front of the man's table with two other women and they dance with the quick, light movements of joyful enamored young people as the man continues to talk story—weaving the words in and out of the music. Some of the graceful movements of the dancers, however, are tempered with violence. Mid-leap, one of the girls suddenly grabs her throat as if being choked. After languidly stretching, the dancers suddenly contract as if being hit in the stomach. Mid balletic port-de-bras, the women hunch over as if retching and splay their fingers in grotesque, painful

¹⁹⁷ Tip-toe.

configurations.¹⁹⁸ *The invocations of feminine beauty and strength intermixed with brutality make me wonder what painful thing has happened to the young boy's mother/grandmother or the storyteller.*

Later in the work, as the storyteller begins another narrative about the personal demons he faces in old age, the soft acoustic musical score and light movements of the dancers are replaced by loud techno music interspersed with urban noises such as traffic, crowds, phones, and alarms. The storytelling stops and the dance movements become harder and faster—more ground based with many quick rolls, speed changes, and full-body contractions. As the choreography becomes more intense, the boy can be seen skateboarding across the stage, back and forth, chased by the storyteller who is in turn chased by dancers/actors costumed as ominous spirits. The spirits terrify the older man yet seem invisible to the young boy. During one pass across the stage, a giant video projection screen leaps to life high up in the air and the boy freezes beneath it, transfixed as videogame images pass onscreen in fast-forward. Loud static replaces the techno music and the dancers stop in darkness. When the storyteller/father figure returns to the stage, he finds the boy spellbound, sitting on the ground beneath the video. He touches the boy's shoulder, and silence replaces the static. He talks softly to the boy again; and although the boy still seems under the control of the video stream, he begins to get visibly sleepy, nodding off and placing his head on the skateboard. His father/grandfather softly guides the boy's head off the skateboard and onto his arm while putting the boy's electronic device and playing cards aside. The projection stops its hyper-speed cycle on a

¹⁹⁸ Port-de-bras are graceful movements of the arms in ballet.

*blue screen and the storyteller walks slowly off stage humming and speaking softly to himself.*¹⁹⁹

For an Aboriginal choreographer fighting to keep his dance company alive and well within both the Quebecoise and Canadian dance scenes of Montreal, Gaétan Gingras is disarmingly amiable and good-humored. As we ate lunch in a crowded downtown café during the early summer of 2007, his serious commentary on the state of Contemporary Aboriginal dance in Montreal was interspersed with jokes and witty observations about the language barrier between us. We talked about everything from how much fun it was to work with his son in *Ma Père m'a Raconté* to his new experiences choreographing for the Ondinnok theatre group in Montreal.²⁰⁰

Gingras began his dance training in his late teens in Drummondville, Quebec where he grew up in a French-Canadian community and where his family felt compelled to hide their Native heritage (Mohawk) to avoid racism. It wasn't until he was fourteen years old that he learned of his Native ancestry. But, Gingras says, "at that age, I didn't take care of it [that knowledge]."²⁰¹ He went on to university level dance training at a number of schools in Montreal such as Concordia University and Eddy Toussaint's Ballet School, followed by professional training in Toronto at the Toronto Dance Theatre. After returning to Quebec, Gingras danced with multiple world-renowned Contemporary dance

¹⁹⁹ See figures 38–40. This narrative describes *Ma Père m'a Raconté/My Father Told Me* by choreographer Gaétan Gingras as viewed on March 10, 2007. At the beginning of the program, the piece is described with questions inserted by Gingras: "What happens when we discover a forbidden truth, which has been hidden from us, and this truth challenges our identity? Conversely, what happens when we know our ancestry, but have been cut off from our heritage? *Ma Père m'a Raconté* is a journey to our ancestors in the world of the unsaid. In this world, there are stories of our traditions." As a youth, Gingras was not told that he was Mohawk. The young boy acting in the piece is actually Gaétan Gingras' son, adding more dimensions to the concepts of embodied knowledge and family histories. Performance program collection of the author.

²⁰⁰ See appendix I for more information on Ondinnok.

²⁰¹ Gaétan Gingras (dancer), in discussion with the author, May 2007.

choreographers (Robert Desrosiers, Ginette Laurin, and Gilles Maheu for example). In 1993, Gingras danced a solo role in the Aboriginal dance piece called *In the Land of Spirits* a production by composer/theatre producer John Kim Bell (Kanawake Mohawk). The piece would change the trajectory of Gaétan's career.

I was 30 years old and living in Toronto and doing a project with the Aboriginal Foundation. We were doing a ballet about spirits and the Underworld. I was surrounded by a team of Native people—dancers, actors—it was a huge production with about 25 people... And it's there that it started. I had been hired to do the performance because I was Native and I didn't know anything about it. Yes, I had Native roots but I never knew them. My search started at that point. I searched through my art. It was like for so many years, talking about being Native was bad. My grandfather even changed his name to hide that he had Indian blood...²⁰²

The experience sparked Gaétan's drive to re-discover his roots and the culture that had been hidden from him as a child. His choreographic creations started to shift—first with the piece *Isolé* (1993), which was a solo retracing the exile of a Native American. Dina Davida, artistic director of the Montreal dance performance space L'Espace Tangente, saw *Isolé* and invited Gingras to create a work for Tangente's intercultural series "Ascendance." For the series, Gingras conceived *Sentier Inconnu* (1994) which examined the experience and meaning of Contemporary rituals. Gingras followed with two more pieces for Tangente: *Dancing with my Ancestors* (1995) and *Osheron* (1996–1997). Both works use the symbolic imagery of rituals combined with Contemporary movement to convey various emotions or moods. Along with *Sentier Inconnu*, many consider the four works to fit together to form a "cycle." Gingras' creative search led him to the Aboriginal dance program at Banff where he was awarded the Clifford E. Lee Foundation Choreography Award in 1998 for his piece *Shaping Worlds as Fire Burns* in which Contemporary Aboriginal dancers Sid Bobb, Sylvia Cloutier, Penny Couchie, Jerry

²⁰² Gaétan Gingras (dancer), in discussion with the author, May 2007.

Longboat, Andromeda Lutchman, and Michelle Olson danced.²⁰³ Gingras also began learning about traditional-style Aboriginal dance, but was quoted in newspaper reviews at the time as saying: “you know, I’ve tried the [traditional] steps but it didn’t feel like me. [Most of] the people who do those have grown up on a reserve and it’s taken them years to learn.”²⁰⁴ Instead, he employed his Contemporary Quebecoise/Canadian dance training to explore his personal issues with identity as a Contemporary dancer, a French-Canadian, and a Native man. After all, he says, “that’s what dance is all about: *identity*.”²⁰⁵

After taking time off to dedicate to his growing family, Gingras burst back into the Canadian dance scene in 2005 and creating his own company, Manitowapan. With his company, he began an oeuvre of Contemporary work that explores issues ranging from Blood Memory and the ability of dance to elicit healing to the importance of storytelling and history. This oeuvre highlights the way that dance is able to make the relationship between the spiritual world and matter visible.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ For more information on the Banff Program, see appendix I.

²⁰⁴ Gingras quoted in Janet Smith, “Dancers Reclaim their Cultural Identities,” The Georgia Straight, 39.1959 (July 7–14, 2005). Accessed from page 12 of Manitowapan press kit. http://www.manitowapan.org/e-fichiers/PKit_eng.pdf (accessed on December 30, 2008).

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ See chapter 2 for fuller explanation of Blood Memory in footnote 151, page 78. Blood Memory is also beautifully explained in the essay “Marrow Memory” by Clifford E. Trafzer (Wyandot/German): “Since the time of creation, American Indian people have known that memory is stored in the blood and bone of the people. For thousands of years before the arrival of non-Natives, elders passed on traditions in the language of the people, recording bone memories through oral traditions and on material objects made of wood, skins, rocks, textiles, basketry, and ivory. These items reminded the people of their memories, brought them to light again. The source of this knowledge is found in the bones of the people, living remains that speak in many ways to inform and continue the circle, tying the past to the present... The body stores tradition in its bones, where genetic information lives beyond the life of the person and is transferred into the structural material of his or her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Deposits of knowledge, understanding, and being live in the bones of Indian people...” See Eric Gansworth, ed., Sovereign Bones: New Native American Writing, volume II (New York: Nation Books, 2007), 149.

Only weeks later, I met choreographer, dancer, and Canada Council Officer Jerry Longboat while he was in Montreal for the Festival Transamériques, a week-long event that included Indigenous dance performances and talks. Between a speaking engagement on a panel and catching performances by an Inuit dancer, Jerry was able to sit down with me and discuss questions I had e-mailed him about Contemporary Aboriginal dance. Throughout the discussion, he stressed the seriousness of Aboriginal dance and cautioned me against focusing on vague terms like “spirituality” and “authenticity” that many non-Aboriginal people tend to misinterpret through different ideological frameworks. He warned me to contextualize my references to “healing” and be very careful while discussing this concept in relation to Aboriginal dance because of the term’s history of being misappropriated or exploited. I was extremely nervous to interview Jerry because he was the only dancer I approached for a dialogue whom I had never seen dance in person. But, I felt a dialogue with him would be extremely enlightening due to his prolific and articulate writings about both the movement and his own practice and due to the fact that he is actively working within the Canada Council to encourage and fund Contemporary Aboriginal dance. Even though he was no longer dancing professionally, if anything new was happening in Canada with Aboriginal Dance, he would know about it.

Jerry Longboat is from the Mohawk/Cayuga Nations of the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario and was raised both on and off the reserve. Traveling and competing as a traditional singer and dancer from a very early age, Jerry was also a talented visual artist and studied at the University of Michigan, where he earned a BFA. While studying art, Jerry grounded his work in oral traditions through theatre and storytelling, using his talent

with the visual arts to create sets and designs for the stage while exploring performance itself. Jerry's first experience with Contemporary Aboriginal Dance occurred in the 1980s when the University of Michigan invited René Highway to create a dance work:²⁰⁷

Somehow we got connected and I got to do some visuals for his performance. He was so creative. To sing and dance and work with him had a strong effect on me, but without really knowing it at the time—I came back to dance later on... And from knowing him, I got involved with Alejandro [Ronceria] and Raoul [Trujillo]. Those three were doing Contemporary Aboriginal dance in Toronto... I think [what inspired me the most] was his commitment to the art form—his commitment to that type of performance. He wasn't trying to do theatre; he was a dancer—a Contemporary dancer—and it was the first time I really saw that.²⁰⁸

Soon after graduation, Longboat moved to Toronto and started a career in theatre. He trained and performed for many years as a stage actor while becoming more and more interested in the movement language of the theatre world. In 1995, he had the opportunity to work on an Aboriginal theatre piece at the Banff Centre with playwright/director Yves Sioui Durand (Huron-Wendat Nation) and was given a dance role within the work. A year later, the Chinook Winds Aboriginal dance program began at Banff and Longboat immediately signed up for training with both the Contemporary dancers he had met through René Highway nearly ten years before and Aboriginal performance director Marrie Mumford, well-known for her role in the Canadian and Aboriginal theatre worlds.²⁰⁹ After finishing the program, Longboat accepted a position on the Northwest Coast of Canada with the Karen Jamieson Company.

Through her company, Karen Jamieson works at bringing together the experiences of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples of Canada through dance. According to the company's website, its goals are to:

²⁰⁷ For more information on Highway, see pages 46–48 of the “Revisiting History” section in chapter 1 and René's entry in appendix I.

²⁰⁸ Jerry Longboat. (dancer, writer), in discussion with the author, May 29, 2007.

²⁰⁹ See figure 41.

develop a post-colonial dance, dance as a significant force in building contemporary culture, dance to engage cultures and communities through a medium of “physical poetry” that connects us all. The dance practice of KJD includes staged choreography, community engaged dance, site-specific dance, and cultural dialogue through dance with First Nations artists and thinkers.”²¹⁰

Instead of appropriating First Nations dance like Modern choreographers historically have, Karen Jamieson has created partnership pieces and collaborative works with Indigenous dancers as well as works incorporating the land. For example, in 2005, she collaborated with Byron Chief-Moon (Kainai Nation, Niitsítapi) to create the piece *Elmer and Coyote*, combining the oral history of the Blackfoot creation story with Modern dance and music to address the “loss of ritual, sleeping people, and spirit guides in this present time.”²¹¹ Longboat lists Karen as a large influence on his career and as one of his mentors. When asked about how Jamieson attempts to incorporate both Western and Indigenous styles and world views into her work, Longboat says: “It creates an interesting dialogue, or counter-balance (often contrast), although I think it’s still elusive...that was the experience that I came into with dance. Just being part of that relationship and dialogue.”²¹² This dialogue with the Karen Jamieson Company eventually led to Longboat’s study of Butoh, which he describes as:²¹³

a way of really exploring the inner landscape as fuel and content—to truly “become” what you are dancing—to completely embody what you are dancing. And for me, it helped me to source the primal; it pared things down to their essence

²¹⁰ KJD website, <http://www.kjdance.ca/> (accessed May 15, 2009).

²¹¹ Ibid. Also see Chief-Moon’s entry in the appendix I for more details.

²¹² Jerry Longboat. (dancer, writer), in discussion with the author, May 29, 2007.

²¹³ Butoh dance is difficult to define. Emerging in Japan in the late 1950s, Butoh is a collective name for a wide range of activities. It is a form of movement-based expression with no set style (it may be purely conceptual or contain no movement at all) typically involving playful and grotesque imagery, taboo topics, and extreme or absurd environments. It is traditionally “performed” in white-body makeup with slow hyper-controlled motion, with or without an audience. Its origins have been attributed to Japanese dance legends Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno. For information on embodiment in Butoh, see E. Laage, “Embodying the Spirit: The Significance of the Body in the Contemporary Japanese Dance Movement of Butoh” (PhD dissertation, Texas Woman’s University, 1993). For more recent and more general information on Butoh, see S. Fraleigh, *Dancing into Darkness: Butoh, Zen and Japan* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh University Press, 1999).

and base elements... It has a sense of changing time and the ability to do so—of altering perceptions of time and space—which fit in very well with my interest in ritual and ceremony.²¹⁴

His interest in ritual and ceremony, as well as his interest in embodiment are reflected abundantly in the major Contemporary dance works he created as a choreographer while he danced as a member of the Vancouver-based Butoh company Kokoro Dance Theatre in the late 1990s. These included *Shaman's Circle* (1999), which investigated “traditional teachings...to know and access the body as memory...[and as] a vessel that resonates with the ancient knowledge and languages...,”²¹⁵ and *Chrysalis* (2001) which was a “contemporary and personal investigation into the body, spirit, soul, and the ritual process of experiencing the threshold between the living and the ancestral.”²¹⁶

After participating in the film *The Girl Who Married a Ghost* (2003), in which he acted and performed traditional dances of Northwest Coast cultures, Longboat detoured from dance performance to work as a Dance Officer in the Canada Council. Specializing in Aboriginal dance and encouraging the fiscal support of new companies and emerging artists/choreographers, Longboat continues his dedication to the Contemporary Aboriginal dance movement in a new way. Longboat is not currently producing solo stage works for himself, but he continues to teach and write about Indigenous dance.

Although both Gingras and Longboat approached Contemporary dance as a career in substantially different ways and from very different perspectives and backgrounds,

²¹⁴ Jerry Longboat. (dancer, writer), in discussion with the author, May 29, 2007.

²¹⁵ Jerry Longboat quoted in program descriptions for the ASA/CAAS Program Committee presentation of: “Crossing Borders/Crossing Centuries.” October 28–31, 1999. Montreal, Quebec. <http://www.theasa.net/program99/invitations.html> (accessed May 24, 2007). Modified by Jerry Longboat per phone conversation with the author on August 27, 2009.

²¹⁶ Jerry Longboat quoted in Jacqueline Shea Murphy, “Policing Authenticity: Native American Dance and the ‘Western’ Stage,” 20. Modified by Jerry Longboat per phone conversation with the author on August 27, 2009.

both choreographers explore similar issues through their dance practice and production.²¹⁷ Both men create pieces speaking to the concepts of embodiment and transformation, contemporary expressions of ritual and ceremony, spirituality, ancestral knowledge, the Indigenous experience, Blood Memory, and identity.

To Exercise Culture/To Create Culture: Embodiment rather than performance

In dialogues with both dancers, the concept of embodiment came up repeatedly as a unique aspect of Contemporary Aboriginal dance and as something that sets an Indigenous dancer's practice apart from other Western-style dance and dancers. However, each man expressed this sense of embodiment differently. Gaétan brought up the subject first when I asked him about how he chooses dancers for his company and once again when I asked him what his favorite part about being a performer is:

When I go to see Contemporary dance pieces, I often feel detached—Like I'm in a different world...an unspiritual world—a world different from the one of Native Contemporary dance... As a performer, what I think is the greatest thing is when you're on stage and there are so many things happening (in the sense that you have to know what you are doing, what is happening with other dancers, who you are following, what the music is doing, and you have to be so alert to your surroundings); but then during all that you are also able to *live* something. That is the greatest thing. And I don't see it often in dancers. I see performers executing things; but to really live a movement is something totally different.²¹⁸

This comment mirrors the harsher critique of dancer Raoul Trujillo when he talks about Western ballet dancers: “[t]hey’re just like little robots that don’t even know what they’re

²¹⁷ Gingras grew up academically with Contemporary Dance and came to an interest and exploration in his Indigenous identity later in his dance career; he has also just recently started to explore theatre. Jerry began as a Powwow dancer knowing traditional and ceremonial Indigenous dance since childhood through his belief systems; he came to Contemporary stage dance through theatre later in his art career.

²¹⁸ Gaétan Gingras (dancer), in discussion with the author, May 2007.

doing. They're just doing it."²¹⁹ Both men are making a distinction between *performing* movement and *enacting* movement. With his choreographic practice, it is hard for Gaétan to ensure embodiment through the pieces of his company, Manitowapan, since many of his company dancers are young and non-Aboriginal. Some may see this as limiting his work with Aboriginal identity, but Gaétan openly recognizes this contradiction and strives to include himself or Aboriginal friends and relatives in pieces to ensure a connection to himself within the works. The ethnic make-up of his company does not make the personal explorations of identity in the pieces any less real or less valid. Also, in his newest work, *Blood Memory (Mémoire de Sang)*, Gaétan cast himself as the lead/solo performer to explore the title concept.²²⁰ Alone on stage, with dramatic lighting and a darkened set, he goes through movements that seem to take his whole being to execute, stretching or contracting his muscles until he seems to embody abstract ideas and emotions most dancers would simply portray. The audience is immediately drawn into Gaétan's embodiment; and through his temporally broken-down movements, time becomes warped—a separation between dichotomous worlds (audience/performer, body/mind, spirit/physical self) is breached and the audience connects to Gaétan's movements empathetically. The borders between his created world and the created worlds of the audience members begin to merge. At times, there is a sense that Gaétan is no longer on stage and that he has been replaced by something else, something more than human. He is more than the movement, body, or emotion; he is a connection to ancestral knowledge through movement and the audience stands in as witness of his transformative exploration.

²¹⁹ Raoul Trujillo quoted in Heather Elton and others, eds., *Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project*, 27. He also makes a similar quote in the documentary film by the same name.

²²⁰ See figures 42–43.

Although many contemporary performers and dancers consider one of the goals of their practice to be “completely in the moment,” Longboat suggests embodiment has a very specific cultural history within Aboriginal dance that goes beyond just having a perfect “on” performance or connecting deeply with the audience. This difference must be recognized:

...When you experience, as a performer, having that type of commitment to something, then you discover this whole world that you can...make an effort to deepen, expand, and broaden. And you can really bring that fully into your performance, into the space, and share it with an audience...part of our traditions as Aboriginal people is the ability to do what would be referred to in English as ‘shape-shifting.’ So that in dance performance, you actually stop being human and come into the consciousness of being something else. That for me has always been something very exciting as a dancer and performer. It is a major tradition that I try to explore and enhance in my work. There is information, knowledge, and wisdom in other states of consciousness.²²¹

For Longboat, embodiment has to do with being so “in the moment” while dancing that transformation occurs. In *Chrysalis*, he experiments with staging this transformation by personifying the metamorphosis occurring inside a butterfly chrysalis in fast-forward speed. He describes himself being wrapped in sheer cloth and illuminated by a single spotlight; he turns and writhes, expanding and contracting his body as he (the butterfly) struggles to emerge. The simple yet dramatic result is an example of how both natural transformation and references to the essence of ritual dance practices can be portrayed on the Western stage without irreverently showing specific spiritual or cultural ceremonies to uninitiated audiences.

By literally becoming what they are performing, dancers are able to discover and explore the interior world of what they have become on stage—they become a butterfly, relative/ancestor, a history, or an emotion through their physical body. When

²²¹ Jerry Longboat. (dancer, writer), in discussion with the author, May 29, 2007.

performance is embodied, it becomes more than just practice. It becomes “a way of knowing. This claim, axiomatic for performers, rests upon a faith in embodiment, in the power of giving voice and physicality to words, in the body as a site of knowledge.”²²² Perceiving dance as a site of knowledge and as a way of accessing an ancestral connection through genuine transformation has long been recognized by Aboriginal communities. Dance is not always entertainment or diversion; it is also history, experience, family, friends, and survival. By bringing this type of perception to the stage and combining it with Western styles and references in performance, Contemporary Aboriginal dancers are living (embodying) tradition in a new way and sharing cultural practice without overstepping cultural boundaries or granting audience members access to protected ceremonies and rituals.

To Make or Change Identity: Access to Blood Memory through bodily experience

The passage to interior/other worlds through embodiment in dance relates to the concept of accessing Blood Memory and essential imagery. Sandra Laronde discusses the way she perceives the body to hold knowledge (as quoted in chapter three), Gingras makes Blood Memory the focus of one of his newest pieces, and Longboat writes extensively about the concept and how it relates to his practice. Longboat offers this explanation of Blood Memory:²²³

²²² Ronald J. Pelias, “Performative Inquiry: Embodiment and Its Challenges,” 186. The body as a site of knowledge also relates to the following section of this chapter.

²²³ In addition to chapter 2 (page 78, footnote 151) and introduction to the concept of Blood Memory in chapter 3 (page 114, footnote 206), see discussion of Sandra Laronde in Hollis Walker, “Contemporary Dance,” 35: “Like many Native dancers, Laronde subscribes to the belief in “body memory” or “bone memory,” meaning that, perhaps in DNA, people carry abstract memories of events and concepts from times prior to their lives. A dancer can tap into “body memory” in a non-intellectual way that an actor or

A base teaching or base philosophy [of Indigenous knowledge systems] is that all of our ancestral memory is carried with us. That is quite clear and universal across Indian country...the body holds the memory... For me, dance is cathartic and dynamic and I think it gives a person the ability to access ancestral memory in this dynamic way, but the person dancing has to know and understand that intention. They have to have a focus and keep culture grounded as we move forward in order to rediscover what it is they are looking for in their bodily memory and transmit it to future generations.²²⁴

Gingras also mentions similar experiences with the body and memory in relation to how he grew up knowing he was “different”—more interested in exploring divergent aspects of choreographic practice than his Western instructors. Because he did not have the mentorship of elders and a community of Indigenous dancers to support these understandings in his youth, he does not use the same terminology as Longboat. Instead, he describes a process of self-discovery and connection to the past through the body when discussing how he used dance to reclaim and rediscover the Mohawk identity suppressed by his family.

In most interviews, I say I feel the most Indian when I dance—even though it is Contemporary dance that I am doing. In some of my earlier work...there was an aspect of being connected with my ancestors and feeling more Native at that time than on a regular basis. In my day-to-day life I wasn't really connecting to my cultures [Mohawk and Quebécoise]... I tried to reclaim my culture. Through my body, I try to connect to my culture.²²⁵

In other words, despite the fact that Gingras is dancing on a Western stage with the Contemporary and Modern styles of his formal training in an unreligious and unceremonial context, he still feels most connected to his ancestry (the wisdom, joy, pain, and memory) when he dances. Dance holds the possibility for remembrance and

writer can't, Laronde says.” See also Sandra Laronde's quotes in Heather Elton and others, eds., Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project, 19: “What interests me about “physical text” is the rich image life and memory that the body possesses. Though many of us have suffered great losses, our bodies continue to carry cultural memory, imagery, knowledge, and emotion. If trusted and approached with respect, the body has an infallible memory.”

²²⁴ Jerry Longboat. (dancer, writer), in discussion with the author, May 29, 2007.

²²⁵ Gaétan Gingras (dancer), in discussion with the author, May 2007.

connection within the act itself. In his day-to-day life in French-speaking Montreal, he cannot access this feeling of cultural connection as easily. Dance provides him the possibility and the proper context through which he can remember and connect both physically and spiritually to access other worlds.

Dance historian Jacqueline Shea Murphy expounds on this concept of bodily memory through dance when discussing Leslie Marmon Silko's references to dance in Almanac of the Dead ("we dance to remember all our beloved ones...").²²⁶

This relationship of dance and memory carries not only the physical sense of dance as something that is learned from others and held and remembered in one's body. It also carries a spiritual sense in which learning to dance, and the act of dancing, enacts a spiritual and physical connection to other beings, including those who have passed on, as well as to those who will come later.²²⁷

Dance in the Aboriginal context holds many levels of memory. On a basic level, it holds physical memory of the connections made with friends, family, and mentors while learning steps or choreography. Mirroring someone's movements while learning allows you to connect with them on a very deep level; you are essentially trying to become that person and analyze how they get their brain and nerves to make certain motions with their bones and muscles—it is a deeply empathetic act that also holds the experience of the place where it was created or shared. Each time the dancer performs, he or she invokes and embodies this link and this sense of place. This connection makes dance an ideal carrier for spiritual and cultural memory—dancers are able to connect to ancestors by embodying dance moves that have been practiced and passed down for millennia and preparing space and energy in the same way as "those who have passed on, as well as those who will come later."

²²⁶ Leslie Marmon Silko, Almanac of the Dead, 722. Full quote reads as poem. See end of chapter 6.

²²⁷ Sic. Jacqueline Shea Murphy, The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories, 220–221.

To Deal with Natural and Spiritual Forces

This theoretical sphere of Evans' relates to the spiritual nature of both the embodiment/enactment and the bodily memory/Blood Memory/transformation practiced by Longboat and Gingras. In many of Gingras works, he literally references the metaphysical, as in *Ma Père m'a Raconté*, where the storyteller addresses and shows respect to spiritual forces at the beginning of the piece by smudging the space and himself. Later in the piece, tangible spirits (costumed dancers) pester him. In *Manitowapan*, Gingras recognizes the spiritual world in a different way than Longboat or traditional ceremonial dance by creating a "contemporary ritual" that reveals the interactions and overlaps between the seen and unseen worlds. Throughout the piece, the female dancer (representing the unseen spiritual world) follows the storyteller (representing the seen world) and moves around him, but never touches him.²²⁸ At the end of the work, as the man recognizes the spiritual presence so close to him, a bridge is made, balance and unity are restored, and the storyteller becomes visibly calm. Gingras hints at transformative embodiment through masks and choreographic choices, but he does not display real ceremonies or rituals for audiences who would not understand. For example, the mask used by the storyteller in *Manitowapan* is carved with shapes and textures similar to a False Face mask and the mask is addressed and talked to by the storyteller the same way a sacred mask would be addressed as a living entity. But the mask used was not created with sacred intent and addressing the mask during the Contemporary dance performance serves only to literally address the invisible threshold between seen and unseen worlds made visible through dance, not to make the mask

²²⁸ See description in the opening narrative section of chapter 1.

sacred. Gingras also hints at embodiment in the way that he choreographs allusions to transformation for his company dancers (the fish and bird movements of the lead dancer in *Manitowapan*).

In Longboat's practice, however, the choreography makes more concrete references to ceremony. Repetitive movements, extreme exertion, synching movement exactly with a drum beat, and manipulations of speed are choreographic choices used to separate and make special the type of dance occurring on stage. After the space and mind are prepared, through the body, the dancer is more able to access the spiritual world and in turn to discover him or herself and his or her humanness and his or her relationship to animal, plant and spirit worlds.

I use those aspects to get away from the "rational" mind—ritual and ceremony are not of the rational mind. They are ways we exercise to firmly ground us in the other parts of our humanness—our connections to the animal and plant and spirit worlds. I'm not claiming that you have to shut the mind down or become unaware, it's actually quite the opposite—you equally engage all of your senses and cognitive power within an experience. It is about finding the full reflection, understanding, and knowledge of being human—being a human being in that moment at that particular time... Ritual for me is an essential ingredient in discovery and it is becoming more and more difficult and more challenging as the world changes and becomes more mind centered, technologically based, and faster. There is a whole aspect of dance...much more associated with ritual and ceremony, where through dance you can access the spiritual world and connect to yourself more truthfully. Traditionally, when people had to grow their own food and hunt for their meat, it was essential to have a relationship and dialogue with the plant and animal worlds—Is it the right time to pick? Is it the right time to shoot?—Dance allowed humans to have a metaphysical connection that opened up communication and energy exchange with other aspects of the earth. Dancing with that intention insured survival.²²⁹

Even on the Western stage, these choreographic choices can bring a dancer into a different psychological mind set or space. In Longboat's *Chrysalis*, he uses Contemporary dance conventions (gauzy material, Modern dance leotard costuming,

²²⁹ Jerry Longboat. (dancer, writer), in discussion with the author, May 29, 2007.

dissected movement) to investigate unseen worlds and present a personal ritual process that accesses the threshold between the living and the ancestral.²³⁰ This exploration of the space between the seen and unseen worlds through dance is very similar to the way in which Gingras says he uses dance to reveal the “spirit-impregnated world” and to repair “broken bridges between the visible and invisible.”²³¹

In her essay “Ridge Notes, Summer 2006,” Allison Adelle Hedge Coke (Huron/Cherokee) phrases this ritual connection differently, saying, “in the motion of ceremonial dance, one moves into clearer thinking. The veil of supposed reality lifts, allowing accessibility to greater scope.”²³² Accessibility to clearer thinking and insight into the personal body are wonderful results of dance, but how can these states be reached on the Western stage out of their correct ritual and ceremonial contexts? Are references to ritual and the spiritual realm on the Western stage just a new way to create displays of Otherness for consumption by non-Aboriginal audiences?

I believe both Longboat and Gingras would say “no” if the references are used in the proper non-exploitative context. Gaétan invokes the spiritual realm through references such as masking, smudging, and abstract movement with allusions to animals, but he does not use sacred masks or purport the dancers actually become animal spirits while they dance. Also, the dancers Gaétan uses are often non-Aboriginal. They are not equipped with the bodily memory and world view of an Aboriginal person who would be able to dance with the intention and focus of transforming or embodying ancestral

²³⁰ Jerry Longboat quoted in Jacqueline Shea Murphy, “Policing Authenticity: Native American Dance and the ‘Western’ Stage,” 20.

²³¹ Gingras in the performance programs for *Blood Memory* and *Manitowapan* respectively. Collection of the author.

²³² Adelle Hedge Coke, “Ridge Notes, Summer 2006,” in Eric Gansworth, ed., Sovereign Bones: New Native American Writing, 33.

knowledge. Gaétan says that the masks and objects are not sacred because he is not using them in a sacred context: “You see, an object becomes sacred when you make it so, when you place it into a context,” and the stage has not been made a religiously sacred space even if it has been smudged and the energy prepared in an Indigenous context.²³³ For example, in *Manitowapan*, the female dancer performs a section wearing a mask that looks like a cross between a fish and a bird. While making the pecking motions of a bird with her hands, she executes the stiff leaps of a fish out of water with full-body tension. The dancer is referencing the transformation possible through masking and choreography, but because she is a Quebecoise dancer and on stage in a completely different context, she is just *dealing* with the spiritual world rather than *entering* it the way an initiated dancer like Longboat would be able to.

Because Longboat has delved into ceremony and has participated in rituals within an Indigenous sacred context since childhood, he is able to reference the purpose and experience of these rituals on stage without crossing any protocol-monitored boundaries. In works such as *Shaman's Circle*, Longboat creates ritual space and action, but abstracts and modifies the actual ceremonies for the Western stage. In the performance programs, he does not didactically explain each ceremonial reference he makes; instead he allows audiences to witness his personal experience and garner their own thoughts about the encounter. Because of his extensive experience with real ritual practices and his respect for the literal power of dance, Longboat is able to innovate with on-stage references to ceremony and combine them with Contemporary dance practice without creating something harmful or distorted. As he says:

I think when you do that kind of serious work and research and commit to

²³³ Gaétan Gingras (dancer), in discussion with the author, May 2007.

experiencing those ceremonies, you are more able to find new pathways to evoke ritual context that will enhance the artistic expression of dance. For example, when I worked with a Kwakwaka'wakw master on learning and performing his family's Raven dance with his family clan mask, he took me into his family's tradition...He coached as I followed the process of embodying these movements and gestures. Once I had reached a level of proficiency with the movement and the drum song, he said 'Now, you must make it your own. You have to infuse your character into the Raven. Then you will add to the legacy of the Raven.' When I committed to performing that dance—to honestly infusing my character with the context of dancing that mask and honoring it—I had to become the Raven. And I did...I experienced dancing in the big house, the soft dirt under my feet, smoke in my lungs, and all my relatives around me (both human and animal). I definitely had a sacred experience—even though I was dancing on camera. When you are able to completely understand something and respect it, you are able to then innovate with it. Because, ritual space is a universal space. It does not belong to anyone...²³⁴

Both Longboat and Gingras broach spiritual forces and ceremonial/ritual space through their dance works but the audience does not enter the spiritual space with Longboat and Gingras because many would not fully comprehend the space and do not have the epistemological skill set to do so. Instead the audience acts as witnesses to this embodiment of other worlds on stage and their recognition of the sovereignty of Indigenous ways of knowing.

²³⁴ Jerry Longboat. (dancer, writer), in discussion with the author, May 29, 2007.

5.

This beautiful art is like a language to me... When I speak with my body it is deeper than words at times.²³⁵

—Sylvia Ipirautaq Cloutier (Inuk), traditional and contemporary Inuit singer, dancer, and performer

The first act fades in on urban Toronto. Images of landmarks, skyscrapers, intersections, walkways full of tourists and businesspeople, and bustling malls flash before our eyes while street noises, traffic, and the clicking of heels provide the soundtrack. The words “Revive Thy Work, O Lord” on a black background flash on screen before the camera pans across a graffiti-filled overpass under which multiple homeless people sleep in broad daylight. The twitching of their nightmares becomes choreography as they simultaneously lift their legs, contract into the fetal position, or roll over on plastic tarps and cardboard blankets. Panning closer, the camera shows us the plastic sheets and graffiti-filled walls are covered with what appear to be Cree or Inuktitut syllabics. While a sound track of mechanical beats and electronically modified hymn-like tones softly begins to play, the camera pans in on one figure, a man in his thirties, trying to sleep on a makeshift bed covered with the highest concentration of writing. He twitches and squirms, finally opening his eyes and frantically digging beneath his cardboard pillow to find a notebook which he clutches closely while he runs away from the group, looking over his shoulder with paranoid glances as if someone may steal his treasure.

²³⁵ Sylvia Ipirautaq Cloutier quoted in Heather Elton and others, eds., Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project, 90.

Loud static interrupts the music while images of Toronto alternate quickly with color images of the man running away and black and white images of people beneath the overpass sitting with their backs to us. In this black and white segment, the darkly dressed figures slowly turn toward us and put their fingers to their pursed lips as if to make a “shhhhh” noise—a wordless gesture for “don’t tell.” Repeating the gesture as they lay down cradling their heads, the static and images of Toronto come faster, stopping abruptly on a color image of our antagonist, standing confused and dazed in the middle of a street with his notebook now missing. As the man begins to wander through back alleys, he is engaged by urban people who sometimes dance with him and sometimes push him and taunt him. In opposition to the other dancers’ graceful moves, his choreography seems somehow stifled, as if he has moments of mental disorientation mid-move or as if something is hurting him internally. His quick, bird-like jerks and sudden turns invoke someone being attacked or pestered by invisible entities. He tries to interact with the other people, imitating their choreographic movements, but is either hit and pushed by them or becomes schizophrenically lost in his own mind.

The electro-hymn choir music returns and we see the man behind a fence (now portrayed in black and white film) as he watches two nuns and a priest (portrayed in color film) dance together in a field. The movements of the religious figures start out slow and smooth, but end with the man and women standing up and frantically “crossing” themselves repeatedly in a frenzied manner—making the sign of the cross in a loop: hand going head-chest-left shoulder-right shoulder over and over again at warp speed. Through its intense repetition, the symbolic motion becomes purposeless and looks more like a nervous twitch than a meaningful gesture.

We return to the original overpass. This time, we see two men (one of whom is our original antagonist), dressed in black school or work uniforms standing near two nuns. "I heard a joyful sound, Jesus saves, Jesus saves" a choir sings clearly over the soundtrack as the two men drop to their knees and the nuns begin to dance above and on them, kneeling on their backs, sitting on them while pressing the men's faces into the dirt, forcibly moving the men's hands, and making reprimanding gestures with their fingers and fists near the men's eyes when the men try to reach out from under the women. Pushing them onto their sides, the nuns kneel on the men's hips and arch their backs and faces up to the heavens, using the men as a human foundation for their prayerful stance. When the women finally stand up, the men jump up and run away.

After a spurt of static noise, we again see the antagonist, this time in a back alley, as he dances between giant dumpsters while being watched contemptuously from afar by street people standing at a nearby bus stop. As the man dances, he tries to reach up, attempting transformation or growth, but unseen forces stunt his gestures. The awkward movements of his joints and muscles imply that the internal pain and confusion expressed earlier continue. The camera flashes to glimpses of another adult man, also Native, as he walks towards us in the shadows of the alleyway, then flashes back to the antagonist as he drops to his knees on the concrete between the trash cans. Contracting and writhing, the antagonist finally manages to stand and spin gracefully with his arms held straight out and his palms splayed towards the sun before falling prone onto the cement once more. As his chest heaves under the glaring sun, the second man steps out of the shadows, takes a drag upon his cigarette, and looks down at the man on the ground with

a smirk. With his face revealed by the sunlight, we see he is the second man from the earlier abuse sequence with the nuns.

We return to the rest of the group of street people as they circle each other and bow mockingly to one another while the camera cuts frequently to our antagonist (once again beneath the overpass) huddled over his notebook, flipping through pages black with syllabic characters, frantically making notations. The dance work transitions to the second act, and the screen goes black as the next title: "Alas and Did My Savior Bleed" flashes on the screen...²³⁶

The previous dance work narrative does not actually describe stage dance; it describes the first act of Michael Greyeyes' piece *Triptych*, which was created specifically for video. It is a reflection of the current shift of Contemporary choreographers to produce pieces specifically for film and video as art productions.²³⁷ This work is also a natural extension of Greyeyes' diverse experience as both a dancer and actor.

Greyeyes began his ballet training at the age of six. Bored, having to wait in the car with his mother while his sister finished her dance lessons, Greyeyes began to go into the studio and watch the class rehearsals. He enjoyed it so much he began to study ballet, auditioning at the age of ten for the National Ballet School of Canada, one of the ten best professional ballet schools in the world. He became a full member of the National Ballet

²³⁶ See figure 44.

²³⁷ The movement to create film and video dance works is currently an avant-garde trend within Contemporary dance. It is especially popular in Europe (e.g. Netherlands, Hungary, Holland, and France) and Latin America (e.g. Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay). For a wide selection of short films as an introduction to this movement within Contemporary dance, see the annual "Dance Camera West Festival" in Los Angeles. In 2009, This festival included the short film *Grey Horse Rider* featuring Aboriginal Contemporary dancer and actor Byron Chief-Moon (Kainai Nation, Niitsitapi).

after graduating from the school in 1984. Moving to New York City in 1990, he joined the Ballet Tech Company of Eliot Feld, known for innovative Contemporary ballet.

While there, he performed feature parts and roles created specifically for him.²³⁸

Early on, Greyeyes used his classical dance training with Aboriginal productions to choreograph an Aboriginal-related play, *Glory of the Morning*, and two productions of Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters*.²³⁹ During an interview from this period, he was quoted as saying "I love theatre work because, like dance, it's not just about performing, it's about transforming."²⁴⁰

To Exercise Culture/To Create Culture: Combating stereotypes and expectations

Early in his career, Greyeyes' interests and talents in Contemporary dance, ballet, and theatre became re-infused with his Aboriginal identity. He formed the dance theatre company Tipiskakí Goroh ("Night Thunder" in Cree and Japanese) in 1994 along with Contemporary artist Kent Monkman (Cree) and actor/dancer/playwright Floyd Favel (Cree).²⁴¹ The group created and performed works like *Child of 10,000 Years*—a two dancer piece that included traditional Native and Inuit choreography, a song in Inuktitut, and naturalistic stage set design elements such as rocks, trees, and water, and *Night Traveller* [sic]—a four dancer piece with complexly woven ballet and contemporary

²³⁸ Formerly Feld Ballet/NY

²³⁹ See "Michael Greyeyes," *Say Magazine* 5.7 (Special Performing Arts Edition 2006): 26. During this time, he also changed career paths, devoting himself almost exclusively to film and television. As an actor, he appeared in everything from prime-time dramas like *Law and Order*, *Dr. Quinn*, *Medicine Woman*, and *Numb3rs* to feature films like *Dance Me Outside* and *The New World*. While building an extensive acting career, Greyeyes went back to school, receiving his MFA in acting from Kent State University and exploring ongoing research in post-colonialism and the staging of ethnicity in film and dance.

²⁴⁰ "Dance Me Outside," *Dance Connection*, 13.2 (June/July/August 1995): 11.

²⁴¹ For more information on Floyd Favel's writing about Contemporary Aboriginal Dance, See Floyd Favel, "Waskawewin," *Topoi* 24.1 (January 2005): 113–115.

choreography, a classical music soundtrack, and abstract art sets by Kent Monkman.²⁴²

Night Traveller dealt with the themes of Native spirituality and visions. Based on Greyeyes' memories of his mother's stories about the dead visiting the living through dreams, the narrative follows a lead dancer who experiences dream visitations from deceased family members. For Michael, this piece was the best work he had created to date, but he was surprised by the audiences' ambivalent reactions toward the performances.²⁴³

Unfortunately, the audience didn't seem to understand it or like it as much as *Child of 10,000 Years*... In retrospect, I realize that Tipiskaki Goroh was billed as a "Native" dance company and the audience came expecting something more typically Native...*Night Traveller* was 'Native' in more subtle ways...[for example,] the music was by Bartok and Janacek. Bartok, especially, was known for researching and documenting the traditional Hungarian folk songs and melodies he had grown up listening to and then using them as the basis for his classical music compositions. My choice of music then mirrored what I was doing with the choreography, where I used "classical," western dance to express native themes and images. Even the title came from my roots, since "Night Traveller" is a traditional Cree family name back in Saskatchewan. To outsiders it may sound poetic, but to my ears I know that it is also a surname, like Smith or Jones. I suppose that all this went right over the heads of our audience... as they missed entirely seeing the piece's native roots. This idea of subverting an audience's perceptions of Indianness has always played an important part in how I approach creating...²⁴⁴

Greyeyes describes this work as representing a pattern within his creative mode; what he calls "an attempt to subvert the expectations audiences have of Native art."²⁴⁵ Through performances such as *Night Traveller* that defy stereotypical expectations of audiences while making subtle, accurate, or "insider" references to Native identity (such as "Night Traveller" being a Cree family name), artists like Greyeyes present sovereign

²⁴² See figures 45 and 46.

²⁴³ Dance section of "Michael Greyeyes Official Website" (supervised by Michael himself), <http://www.michael-greyeyes.com/html/biography.htm> (accessed 5/10/09).

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

representations of themselves and reflect The Gaze back at audience members who expect to consume something “Other,” “Exotic,” or overly didactic.²⁴⁶

In 1996, Michael collaborated with Kent Monkman to create the short film *A Nation is Coming*.²⁴⁷ The film explores three moments from Native American history through the lenses of prophecy and performance: the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890, the Ghost Dance movement that preceded it, and the genocidal use of small pox infected blankets by British and United States military officials.²⁴⁸ Michael is the only person shown in the experimental film, appearing as various characters in four dance sequences. The technology of the piece was cutting edge when it was produced, but it has since become dated. The dance choreography however, even confined to video, has withstood the test of time and still has emotional impact today. Each sequence begins with a line of prophecy or a lyric from a Ghost Dance song.²⁴⁹ In the first segment, Lakota holy man Drinks Water’s prophecy of “you shall live in square grey houses in barren land and beside those houses you shall starve” flashes on screen before we are shown black and white images of acres of suburban landscape—each house identical to the next—alongside images of city pollution—with smoke spewing from factory smoke stacks and smog settling over a city. Within these images, we see a shot of Greyeyes dancing on a simple black stage. As he dances, photographs of microscopic organisms, possibly germs

²⁴⁶ For more discussion on this, see exploration of Randy Martin’s theory of performance as a mirror on pages 67–69 of chapter 2.

²⁴⁷ See figure 47.

²⁴⁸ See footnote 49 on page 33 for more information on the Ghost Dance movement. In relation to smallpox blankets, many historians have explored and debated multiple incidents of purposely spreading disease to eradicate Native populations; but the most well-documented case (with military letters to prove this early form of bio-warfare) occurred during the French-Indian wars (1754–1763) and was carried out by Lord Jeffery Amherst. See reference in Carl Waldman, *Atlas of the North American Indian* (New York: Facts on File, 1985), 108.

²⁴⁹ Prophecy and the spiritual leaders who dictated prophecies were of utmost importance to the hope that inspired the Ghost Dance movement.

and viruses, are projected onto his body. In the second segment, Wovoka's prophecy of "you will at last be reunited with your friends in a renewed world where there would be no more death or sickness or old age" flashes onto the screen, we see a black and white photograph of Greyeyes dressed and staged as the infamous unarmed frozen corpse of Chief Big Foot shortly after the Wounded Knee massacre. In Monkman and Greyeyes' version of events, however, the dead Ghost Dancer is resurrected. The frozen in time nineteenth-century image comes to life and Big Foot picks himself up from the icy earth. He trudges through knee-high snow, eventually finding a blanket at an abandoned campsite. As he wraps it around himself, images of microbes are quickly projected onto it, another reference to the smallpox blanket atrocity. In the third segment, Lakota Ghost Dance song lyrics flash on the screen and we again see the solo dancer appear on stage. But this time, he is depicted as the living dead, wearing Halloween-like makeup reminiscent of Jason Lee in *The Crow*. He performs adagio ballet choreography combined with Powwow-like steps broken down and performed in astonishingly slow motion.²⁵⁰ Combined in this way and at this speed, it is difficult to discern which parts of the choreography are ballet-influenced and which are inspired by Powwow moves. The camera returns to the black and white Ghost Dancer, in the woods, wrapped in a blanket as he wakes to find the fire he built to warm himself has gone out. In the fourth section, more Ghost Dance song lyrics appear: "The whole world is coming. A nation is coming..." On screen we see the stage dancer; no longer wearing the dead-looking Halloween makeup, he is dancing within a circle illuminated by pillar candles. He moves quickly and energetically, almost facetiously, as he seems to reference the choreography of *Flashdance* and *Riverdance*. When the film returns to the Ghost Dancer in the woods,

²⁵⁰ Adagio literally means: in slow time.

we see that he has rebuilt the fire. As he looks into the fire, he sees the stage dancer among the flames. Before his eyes, the stage dancer transforms from a man in black dance pants into a Powwow dancer. When the camera view jumps back to the Ghost Dancer's face, we no longer see him depicted in fuzzy, antique-like, black and white film, but in crisp color. The ending images in the fire subtly reference the "Eighth Fire" of the Ojibway Seven Fires Prophecy. This prophecy suggests if enough people of all colors and faiths turn from materialism and choose a path of respect after the prophecy of seventh fire comes about (giving society a choice between two paths: materialism and selfishness or respect and caring for the earth) that the eighth fire will be lit and a new era of peace will unfold.²⁵¹ Although the prophecy of Drinks Water revealed in the first segment has come true for us already, we are also able to bring about Wovoka's prophecy or the Eighth Fire prophecy by respecting cultural expression. The dance and video work ends on a hopeful and humorous note with "outtakes" as the credits roll.²⁵² The message is obvious. For Monkman and Greyeyes, the key to health and resiliency is cultural expression. Dance and art are so powerful that they can resurrect the dead and redirect prophecy.

After working with this type of personal choreography for about a year, using Western-style movements to express Native themes, stories, and culture, Greyeyes decided he needed to learn more traditional movement in order to have a firmer foundation for his stage choreography:

²⁵¹For more information, see Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Red House Indian Country Communications, 1988).

²⁵²As the credits roll, we see the stage dancer, now clothed in a T-Shirt and jeans, but still in full Halloween "Crow" makeup, sitting in a Lazy-Boy laughing and choking on his cigarette smoke as he watches a documentary on the buffalo. This darkly humorous moment could be post-script warning that apathy is death.

I realized that I didn't have enough background in the specifics—the details of traditional dancing in order to use them to express the cultural themes more clearly. It's difficult trying to say something about another culture with another kind of language. So I started studying. I embarked on a journey.²⁵³

He applied for and received a research grant from the Canada Council to study and learn Native dance traditions.²⁵⁴ This participatory research culminated in the performance entitled *Songs*, a stage work performed as part of the Centre for Indigenous Theatre program in Toronto. In this work, Greyeyes brought the traditional and Powwow movement forms of Grass Dancers to the Western stage to express the Contemporary Aboriginal experience of having to return to reservation communities to rediscover certain aspects of cultural heritage.

Greyeyes' more recent dance works have used few, if any, overt references to traditional and Powwow dance styles, but they still reflect Indigenous world views, practices, and epistemologies in ways that subvert Western stereotypes. In 2006, Greyeyes collaborated with Santee Smith (Mohawk, Six Nations Reserve), to create a dance work for Nozhem: First Peoples' Performance Space at Trent University. The duet, *The Threshing Floor*, toured across Canada throughout 2008.²⁵⁵ The piece has a score composed by Donald Wallace (Stl'atl'imx) and art and set design by photographer and installation artist Shelley Niro (Mohawk).²⁵⁶ With the stage set up as an empty house, two

²⁵³ Michael Greyeyes speaking in documentary *He Who Dreams: Michael Greyeyes on the Powwow Trail*. 1997. See bibliography for more details.

²⁵⁴ The 1997 CBC documentary *He Who Dreams...* follows Michael on his journey across North America and documents his experiences learning traditional and powwow style dances from champion dancer Boye Ladd.

²⁵⁵ See figure 48. Santee Smith was raised on a reserve and exposed to traditional dance from a young age and like Michael Greyeyes she began her dance training at the National Ballet of Canada. She later left ballet because she found it unfulfilling. For more information on her career, see appendix I. At the time of the writing of this thesis, there was also a clip of *The Threshing Floor* available for public viewing on Youtube.com.

²⁵⁶ Wallace was also a part of Chinook Winds Program at Banff at the same time as Santee Smith and Jerry Longboat; as a musician, he composed the music for the Aboriginal Dance Program production. See Heather Elton and others, eds., *Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project* for an interview with Wallace.

archetypal characters, man/lover/husband/father (Greyeyes) and woman/lover/wife/mother (Smith), relive their life together through choreography. They explore the landscape of memories and emotions held between life partners while an intriguing black and white film by Shelley Niro plays on a giant backdrop, standing in for the unseen memories cycling through the characters' heads. Described by one reviewer as "storytelling with movement instead of text," the piece follows the couple from their first meeting and courtship to pregnancy, infidelity, the birth and death of a child, estrangement, and forgiveness.²⁵⁷ The chemistry on stage between Greyeyes and Smith is powerful. With well-matched technical dance skills (both trained at the National Ballet of Canada and both have been choreographing and performing professionally for many years), the couple executes all the choreography with refreshing clarity: stunning leaps during joyful moments, interesting partner work that includes weight-sharing sequences during close moments, and body contractions that produce emotionally palpable pain during a moment in the piece when the couple seems to lose their child. Shifting constantly between the past, present, and future, the work addresses concepts of cyclical time and life trajectories.

In *The Threshing Floor*, Greyeyes and Smith refuse to carry their "cultural identity cards" in order for their work to be shown and taken seriously. The dance work is

Niro also collaborated with Santee Smith in 2007 to create the video performance work *Recharging*, which shows Smith dancing alone in a rehearsal studio before mirrored walls and a ballet bar. The frenetic dance before a mirror, with the look and feel of a hip hop music video, makes a subtle reference to the push and pull of identity as she practices moves over and over again in the mirror trying to get them "just right" while occasionally breaking away from the bar and "jamming" in the center of the room.

²⁵⁷ Melanie Florence, "Reviews and Responses: Indigenous Dancelands. *The Threshing Floor* by Kaha:wī Dance Theatre. March 8, 2008," *The Dance Current*, May 26, 2008, http://www.thedancecurrent.com/reviews.cfm?review_id=217 (accessed May 29, 2009). I would caution, however, against using this review for serious critical analysis. It includes many troublesome statements like: "It is relatively rare to see a piece by Native artists that isn't tied explicitly to traditional culture;" "Without the trappings of Native-ness, the audience sees these incredibly strong characters as people, and not specifically as Native people;" and "...it is simply casting that makes *The Threshing Floor* a distinctly native dance work [sic]."

a step towards creating space in the Contemporary dance world for Native choreographers to produce work that speaks to personal experiences that move them, whether or not those experiences are conspicuously specific to their Aboriginal cultural identities. *Threshing Floor* also speaks to the universal human experiences of love, life, pain, and loss which are often overlooked by many critics/academics/theorists when writing about artists of color. The work affirms the common humanity of Aboriginal peoples often denied or not considered—that we all have the same human feelings, needs, and desires, that we all love and grieve. By working entirely with Contemporary dance styles without blatantly obvious references to Aboriginal visual and expressive culture, Smith and Greyeyes are able to subvert audience expectations for Native art while showing that Indigenous artists are “no longer tied to having to restrict their focus, materials or genre.”²⁵⁸

Shooting Geronimo, another video installation collaboration between Greyeyes and Kent Monkman created in 2007, even more overtly addresses audience consumption of and craving for stereotypical indicators of “Indianess.”²⁵⁹ The short film pokes fun at the inaccuracy, racism, and machismo of Western films. Appearing alongside works by Kent Monkman’s drag alter ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle and projected from chandeliers inside teepee-like structures onto artificial buffalo hides, the silent motion picture shows young, shirtless, muscled Native men as they are filmed by a White nineteenth-century director making a “documentary” in a southwestern ghost town about “The New Frontier.” As the director manipulates the young man into caricatured roles for

²⁵⁸ See Coco Fusco quote at opening of chapter 3 on page 82 and discussion of Fusco’s theories in chapter 2 (pages 61-63).

²⁵⁹ Directed by Kent Monkman with choreography by Michael Greyeyes. 2007. 11 minutes. Beta SP. Distributed by V Tape (<http://www.vtape.org>).

his camera, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle makes humorous appearances (in fully sequined glory with her Louis Vuitton quiver) to thwart the Edward Curtis-like figure (aptly named “Frederick Curtis” in the credits). The piece ends with Curtis losing control and the Native actors taking over the film. Although Greyeyes’ choreography within the work is minimal, the physical theatre and movement energy he creates for the actors is a mix of The Three Stooges, action films, and romantic comedies. Greyeyes, who has played many cliché roles on screen and been caricatured by television directors, probably found his involvement in this satire slightly vindicating.²⁶⁰ Through facetious humor, Monkman and Greyeyes succeed in scrutinizing Hollywood’s visual reinforcement and perpetuation of the “hero”/cowboy versus the “blood-thirsty Indian”/“Noble Savage” narrative.²⁶¹

Collaborating again with Miss Chief Eagle Testickle in 2008, Michael Greyeyes choreographed and danced in Monkman’s installation video work *Dance to the Berdashe* based on a George Catlin oil painting by the same name.²⁶² Catlin wrote in the nineteenth century that the Native American Berdashe dance tradition was “one of the most

²⁶⁰ For example, just a few of the stereotypical roles listed for Greyeyes on the IMDB are: “The Brave” in *Harsh Realm*, “Shaman” in *Are You Afraid of the Dark*, “Spirit Dancer” in *Rude*, “Walks in the Night” in *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, “Chief” in *Sam’s Circus*, “Bo Lightfeather” in *Charmed*, “Crazy Horse” in *Crazy Horse*, “Juh” in *Gerónimo*, and “Johnny Black Eagle” in *Race Against Time*.

²⁶¹ The thwarting of Frederick Curtis also raises questions about the creation of ‘historic documents’ within a hegemonic society.

²⁶² See figures 49–51. *Dance to the Berdash*. 1835–1837. George Catlin (B: Wilkes-Barre, PA, USA 1796, D: Jersey City, NJ 1872). Oil on canvas. 19 1/2 x 27 1/2 in. (49.6 x 70.0 cm). Smithsonian American Art Museum. Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr. 1985.66.442 [Note spelling difference]. Catlin’s painting depicts an annual dance among the Sauk and Fox tribes in honor of the “Berdashe” (a gender-role-bending man who dresses as a woman) circa 1836. Writing in his letters and notes, Catlin describes the honor dance as: “a very funny and amusing scene, which happens once a year or oftener, as they choose, when a feast is given to the ‘Berdashe,’ as he is called in French . . . who is a man dressed in woman’s clothes, as he is known to be all his life, and for extraordinary privileges which he is known to possess, he is driven to the most servile and degrading duties, which he is not allowed to escape; and he being the only one of the tribe submitting to this disgraceful degradation, is looked upon as medicine and sacred, and a feast is given to him annually.” (Caitlin, *Letters and Notes*, Vol. 2. No. 56 (1841). Reprint 1973.). The term “Berdashe” is an antiquated anthropological term with roots in French (*bardache*) via Spanish (*bardaxa* or *bardajel/bardaja*) via Italian (*bardasso* or *berdasia*) via Arabic (*bardaj*) meaning “kept boy; male prostitute.” A more widely-accepted term today is “Two-Spirited” or “Two Spirit” which was put forward at the 1990 third annual intertribal Native American/First Nations gay and lesbian conference in Winnipeg.

unaccountable and disgusting customs that I have ever met with in the Indian Country...I should wish that it might be extinguished before it be more fully recorded.”²⁶³

Unfortunately, the strongly negative adjectives and skewed views displayed in this statement are characteristic of nineteenth-century ethnographers, anthropologists, missionaries, and colonialists who suppressed dances like that of the Berdashe (for its acknowledgement of different gender roles), the Sun Dance (for its supposed brutality and paganism) and the Potlatch (for its supposed wastefulness). In Monkman’s piece, the dance is resurrected via multi-channel video projected onto five translucent membranes resembling stretched hides. Miss Chief Eagle Testickle is “triumphantly and sensually interpreted” on the center hide with video projections of male dancers (one of whom is Greyeyes himself) performing choreography to a remixed version of Stravinsky’s ballet score, *The Rite of Spring* on the remaining hides.²⁶⁴ Each of the four male dancer projections is placed in a cardinal direction and the bodies of the male dancers are inscribed with the Cree syllabics for the four directions and elements (air, water, earth, fire). Although it is an installation and not performance work, Greyeyes’ dance choreography is integral, with individualized expressions created for each dancer and himself. Together, the movements of the men capture a sense of energy being created and projected toward the Berdashe (Miss Testickle) while the Berdashe appears to be renewed and enlivened by their adulation. The contemporary dancers, like the dancers in the original ceremony, are literally creating a space of honor while generating and

²⁶³ Catlin’s letter No. 56. Rock Island, Upper Mississippi, as quoted in Peter Matthiessen, ed., *North American Indians* (Penguin Books: London, 2004), 445. Catlin’s comment about not recording the dance in order to make it disappear reveals how the histories taught and perpetuated today through “historic record” were (and are) formed through a hegemonic lens by individuals with specific agendas.

²⁶⁴ Quote taken from the imagineNATIVE Film Festival program booklet write up [modified from the Urban Shaman Gallery press release] 2008, 35. Collection of the author.

regenerating energy with their undulating and repetitive motions. According to an Urban Shaman Gallery press release, “through this reciprocal and performative rite, the Dandies [the four male dancers] and Berdashe renew each other’s spirits as they refute their obfuscation and Primitivism’s reductive pillaging of Indigenous cultures.”²⁶⁵

Using the humor of Miss Testickle’s flamboyant theatrics and the seriousness of her presence (the fact that a transgender individual can once again be honored), Monkman and Greyeyes reclaim a dance suppressed by missionaries and explorers. They also question the authority of documents and paintings created by colonial artists like George Catlin, which are too often held as historically factual and objective. Together, Monkman and Greyeyes defy audience expectations of Native work and reinterpret a traditional dance in a contemporary way. By depicting the traditional two-spirited individual as a sexy, empowered, and healthy drag queen challenges the colonial legacy with defiance, as well as a touch of humor.

Triptych

Greyeyes’ video work, *Triptych*, explored in this chapter, was conceived, written, choreographed, and performed by Michael Greyeyes and four dancer/actors in 2007. The work grows out of his career pattern of presenting Native themes and concepts with Western performance conventions in order to defy audience expectations. Like *A Nation is Coming*, the piece is a dance work created specifically for film, but *Triptych* was

²⁶⁵Urban Shaman Gallery Press Release. August 2008. Urban Shaman Gallery commissioned the piece from Monkman. <http://www.urbanshaman.org/Archive/kentmonkman.html> (accessed May 10, 2009). Primitivism here is a reference not only to the way in which Stravinsky and Nijinsky’s ballet (the *Rite of Spring*, which presented an imaginary “Pagan/Primitive” ritual in which a woman dances herself to death in sacrifice to the god of spring) is often discussed, but also to nineteenth and twentieth-century colonialist attitudes that normalized the practice of Western artists appropriating cultural objects and *people* from “Other” cultures as subject matter.

directed by mainstream filmmaker Byron McKim who included it in his “Dancing with Spirit” series presented on the BRAVO! Television network.²⁶⁶

Triptych is successful on many levels. As an avant-garde dance film, it is an outstanding example of the genre. Varied camera angles and approaches, diverse speeds, an intriguing and complexly created music score, a labyrinthine narrative, social commentary, and unconventional choreography give the piece depth and complexity. The piece artfully probes the legacies that can result when a colonial system suppresses Aboriginal belief systems, world views, languages, and cultures and replaces them with a discordant system—in this case, urban homelessness resulting from psychological issues caused by a bad residential school experience. This was a personal exploration for Greyeyes, whose parents were forced to go to residential school. He says:

In fact, my parent’s experiences weren’t terrible—certainly not in terms of abuse; but the crushing loneliness that they experienced is something that is truly unforgivable. I think it’s important to articulate that there is a wide range of...our communities’ experiences in the residential school experience—the good, the bad, and the ugly... The negative effects of this form of education are well known, but what is relatively unexamined is why or how these teachings took such a tenacious hold within the minds and souls of members of many otherwise healthy communities.²⁶⁷

The title, “Triptych,” refers to the three sections of an altar piece. The titles of chapters come from titles of hymns translated into Cree by missionaries as found in a Cree/English hymnal lent to Greyeyes by Kent Monkman. The hymnal was used by Monkman’s parents’ in missionary schools in Manitoba in the 1950s–1960s.²⁶⁸ Each of the three sections or chapters of the dance work begin with a title of hymn that relates to

²⁶⁶ The series includes Contemporary Aboriginal dance works by Gaétan Gingras, Sylvia Cloutier, Christine Friday O’Leary, and Santee Smith as well as a Powwow piece to demonstrate for TV viewers how Powwow is also a Contemporary dance form with a more traditional style.

²⁶⁷ As stated by Michael Greyeyes at the 7th Annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts at Carleton University, Ottawa, March 1, 2008 and by Michael Greyeyes (dancer, actor, professor), e-mail message to author, June 30, 2009.

²⁶⁸ Michael Greyeyes (dancer, actor, professor), e-mail message to author, June 30, 2009.

the narrative's action: 1) "Revive thy Work, O Lord;" 2) "Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed;" and 3) "Man of Sorrows." The musical score, commissioned from Filipino-Canadian composer, musician, and DJ Miquelon Rodriguez, is made up of 400–500 year old hymns Rodriguez remixed with techno beats, street noise from Toronto, and some of the original lyrics of the hymns (both Latin and English) sung by dancer Katelyn Vanier.²⁶⁹ Greyeyes aimed to create innovative choreography by casting a combination of professional dancers and non-dancers and by experimenting with mixing site-specific improvisation and pre-determined choreography to create an awkwardly graceful chemistry. He also used both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal dancers to convey the storyline believably (white dancers for the priest and nuns, Aboriginal men for the two residential school boys). The piece was filmed in multiple sites around Toronto, but most of the action occurs beneath the Gardiner expressway, where an actual homeless camp is located. The real living space worked well for the site-specific art work. "Often, the inhabitants would wander by wondering what the hell we were doing there. [But,] the space lent itself beautifully to the idea that the structural support columns resonated as a monolithic cathedral space," Greyeyes says.²⁷⁰

The story of *Triptych* revolves around the main antagonist, John Prophet (Michael Greyeyes), who is an ill homeless man tormented by a past that haunts both his memories and his waking moments. The entire work is conceived from John's point of view. Because he is schizophrenic/disassociated, the film sequences, choreography, and narrative are also distorted and fractured.²⁷¹ John experiences confusion, time loss, and fear—represented in the video by static, rapid scene changes between color film (the

²⁶⁹ Rodriguez was able to track down the original sheet music for the hymns from the Cree/English hymnal.

²⁷⁰ Michael Greyeyes (dancer, actor, professor), e-mail message to author, June 30, 2009.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

present and waking dreams) and black and white film (memories and hallucinations of the past happening in present settings), as well as disjointed and halting choreography to express John's painful interior world.

Each of the three sections of *Triptych* serves a different thread in the storyline. In "Revive Thy Work, O Lord," John is introduced. We see that he lives among a group of street people (the other dancers), but is so trapped within his mind he cannot truly connect with them. Some of his memories come as distorted flashbacks in which other present-day street people stand in for the priests, nuns, and other residential school classmates of his past. In the "Alas, And Did My Savior Bleed" section, we meet John's 'foil,' King (Meegwun Fairbrother). King is an aggressive figure, his solo dance movements are often harsh and forceful. In one scene, King beats John after John tries to dance in the sun, leaving John broken on the ground and stealing his precious notebook full of Cree words. Greyeyes says King represents another negative result of childhood residential school abuse:

While John internalized the abuse by disassociating from his past and retreating from life and those around him, King instead internalized the violence of that abuse and in turn repeated it upon others around him, thereby insulating himself from his own past...He is disgusted by John and what he sees as John's ridiculous clinging to culture (as represented by the syllabic writing).²⁷²

In the "Alas..." section, we also meet the nuns in their dual roles of punisher/enforcer and comforter/stand-in mother through alternating scenes in which the nuns degrade the men or dance sensitively with each other. During the "Man of Sorrows" section, we meet Father Rupert (Glen Gaston) and witness his sexual crimes against the residential school students when John is finally able to confront his past. Once John deals with the disturbing memories and realizes what he has been suppressing mentally, he

²⁷² Michael Greyeyes (dancer, actor, professor), e-mail message to author, June 30, 2009.

moves into full knowledge and can begin to work towards wholeness and healing through balance. There is no “happy ending” or resolution to the piece—we never witness John reach this wholeness—but we are left with a sense of hope.

In alternating scenes of *Triptych*, John Prophet (in his adult state) is degraded by nuns, raped by a priest, told to keep silent by other classmates, beaten, and made to roam aimlessly on Toronto streets, but he can not separate what is real and currently happening from what is memory or pure fantasy. The fact that these memories are shown to us pared down and abstracted into Contemporary dance makes them even more disturbing and disorienting. Some memories come as floods of Cree syllabics, which are unintelligible to John, because his memory has been so suppressed. He knows these syllabics are important and precious and frantically scrawls them in his notebook and on his belongings (the plastic of the underpass where he sleeps, his cardboard bed, his skin), but he cannot decipher them and calm his mind. At certain points in the choreography, the nuns and priest even appear to “write” on John and King’s skin with their fingers. Greyeyes says this writing is symbolic of “the deep writing with which history has covered and buried him...a clear allusion to the fact that the evangelical movement was writing over our own histories, cultures and lives.”²⁷³

At the same time that his confused brain is flooded with these painful images and cryptic symbols, he also has flashes of memories that give the nuns, priests, and classmates three-dimensionality. At one point, John Prophet sees (or remembers seeing) two nuns dance together, not knowing that he is watching them, and he witnesses the way

²⁷³ Michael Greyeyes (dancer, actor, professor), e-mail message to author, June 30, 2009.

they love each other and long to connect with one another, but are trapped by a system of silence in an isolated setting just like the Native children.²⁷⁴ Greyeyes says:

My narrative idea was intended to examine how the nuns in the residential school system in Canada had numerous roles and realities. In some cases, they were the enablers to the abuse, abusers themselves, or in some instances, healers and positive teachers to my parents' generation. [This] was my way of showing that the residential school experience wasn't entirely negative...[the nuns] were isolated by a place that was alien to them, isolated by a code of ethics that did not allow them to experience love, certainly not sexual longing or release...[John] realizes their humanity and kinship...this is a turning point for him...²⁷⁵

After this turning point in the work, John Prophet realizes that in order to be released from his mental pain and confusion and connect with the community around him, he must recognize and deal with the prior abuse and make a claim to his own memories. In a disturbing, visceral rape flash-back scene, Father Rupert silently recites prayers as he attacks John. Even though Greyeyes intended the piece to articulate the wide range of residential school experiences as demonstrated by the tender scene of the nuns dancing together, he also says:

I really wanted to address the roles of the churches in the sexual abuse, so I had to be explicit in what was shown...For me, the larger issue is that the destruction of language, of familial ties, or cultural knowledge is in fact a colossal rape, that is more hideous and long-lasting than any sexual abuse can be.²⁷⁶

In the last section of the work, after recognizing the three-dimensionality of the nuns and understanding the graphic nature of the memories he has suppressed, John finally faces his past and is able to make a connection with other people in his community on the margins of the city. Within the video, time starts to move in a more coherent manner and the static soundtrack/black and white flashbacks within the film are reduced. In the last

²⁷⁴ Paraphrased from Michael Greyeyes' presentation and screening at the 7th Annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts at Carleton University, Ottawa. March 1, 2008.

²⁷⁵ Michael Greyeyes (dancer, actor, professor), e-mail message to author, June 30, 2009.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

scene, John completes a soft duet with one of the female dancers in which they finally look directly into each others' eyes and in which John is at long last able to match the smooth, graceful movements of another dancer perfectly. His choreography contains less jerky, bird-like motions and more effortless arm circles and slow, purposeful steps. As the duo circles each other in the sunny patches beneath the overpass, almost touching hands, John turns and stares directly at the audience. The camera zooms in on John's face and we see a slight smile on his lips, clarity in his eyes, and a coherent resolve in his features. The camera stays with him a long moment before fading to black. Rather than another hymn title flashing on screen, the piece ends with a simple yet powerful statement in white writing on a black background: "Dedicated to those with the courage to look back."

To Deal with Trauma and Healing: Working with the effects of colonization through the body

As Philip Auslander is quoted in chapter three, "performance can be a therapeutic response to social and cultural repression..."²⁷⁷ The residential school system in Canada which forcibly removed children from their families, physically punished Aboriginal cultural expressions (including mother tongue languages), and forced conversion to Christianity in order to "kill the Indian in the child," was one of the darkest and most blasphemous chapters in nineteenth to early-twentieth-century North-American history.²⁷⁸ The fact that Michael Greyeyes is addressing this cultural repression in 2008 is

²⁷⁷ Philip Auslander, *Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance*, 46.

²⁷⁸ Although this was official figural language of government policy, many of the students were literally killed. In addition to mental, physical, and sexual abuse at the hands of their guardians, it is estimated that almost half of the children in the residential system died of disease and malnutrition. The Canadian

very telling of the effect the system had on younger generations and the need artists feel to respond to this history through creation. According to Lara Evans, in her experience, “it is customary to evoke, remember, or somehow make reference to the trauma before any “healing” efforts are made.”²⁷⁹ *Triptych* does just that: visually and viscerally invoking the pain, fragmentation, and disillusionment from which people forced to go to residential school suffer(ed). Having “the courage to look back” and invoke the past (through *Triptych*’s third act rape scene), gives John Prophet the ability to recognize why he has repressed his memories and why he cannot understand the syllabics written all over himself and his spaces; only after recognition can Prophet start to deal with the trauma. Rather than stay with the pain and anger after realizing what has happened to him, Greyeyes’ character looks the audience directly in the eyes, showing he now has the ability to work with and make sense of his memories. Although the ending of the dance work could be considered a “happy” one, there is no concrete resolution; as far as we know, Prophet is still homeless and in need of psychological counseling. But, mirroring Sandra Laronde’s comments in chapter three about the effects of colonization never really leaving the body but being able to be manipulated through dance, John Prophet seems to shift the pain to a place where it has less voice and power.²⁸⁰

Through *Triptych*, Greyeyes also addresses the resilience discussed in relation to Sandra Laronde in chapter three. Although *Triptych* confronts a very painful experience, the piece does not romanticize victimhood or organize the character of John Prophet

government did not officially recognize and make amends for the injustices until June 2008, when Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a formal public apology to the nearly 80,000 living survivors of the school system.

²⁷⁹ Lara M. Evans, ““One of These Things is Not Like the ‘Other’.” Works by Native Performance Artists James Luna, Rebecca Belmore, and Greg Hill,” 48.

²⁸⁰ See page 107 of chapter 3.

solely around a victimized identity. John's character, as well as the characters of the nuns and priest, has many motivations and facets to his story. The theme of *Triptych* is not anger or pain; it is survival and the ability to recognize and remember past wrongs while moving on.

To Make or Change Identity: Self-Representation and authority over cultural representations

Many dancers speak about how working with their own physical bodies and making the choices of what cultural knowledge to present and what to keep hidden from public audiences is a way for them to have control and agency over their own performances. Through self-representation in art, Indigenous dancers are able to address a history of misappropriation and inaccurate representations. In Indigenous Aesthetics: Native Art, Media and Identity, Steven Leuthold reiterates this idea: "The concept of self that emerges in self-representation is one of agency, in which native artists play active roles, a concept that strongly contrasts with traditional non-native views of indigenous peoples..."²⁸¹ Connecting this active role to Helen Thomas' concept of the power of bodily presence in resisting oppression demonstrates that dancers are in a privileged position to create sovereign space on stage (or on video in *Triptych*'s case) from which to tell their own stories with accurate living narratives.²⁸²

Greyeyes succeeds in self-representation by telling the story of earlier generations of his community (his parents, Kent Monkman's parents) from his contemporary

²⁸¹ Steven Leuthold, Indigenous Aesthetics: Native Art, Media and Identity (Austin, TX: University of Austin Press, 1998), 42. Leuthold is Assistant Professor at Syracuse University in the School of Art and Design.

²⁸² See pages 74-75 of chapter 2 for discussion of Helen Thomas.

perspective as a professional dancer and film actor. Greyeyes' bodily presence as John Prophet in the piece along with the portrayal of a homeless man in 2007, gives the piece a sense of immediacy and authority regarding the residential school experience. His bodily presence is of utmost importance—even though the medium used for *Triptych* is film/video and not the stage. Although live performance is especially powerful for creating sovereign space because of the way it draws in audience members with its immediacy, Greyeyes finds film important in the expression of self-representations.²⁸³

I work in numerous mediums. As an Indigenous artist, I have no option—we, as an under-represented community, must use any and all means necessary to put our work out there. I work in theatre because of its power and immediacy and in film because of its potential for reach and flexibility.²⁸⁴

To Deal with Racism/Romanticism: Combating stereotypes and expectations

Triptych brings out this theoretical sphere and theme in the same way that Greyeyes' previously mentioned oeuvre does. Although Greyeyes has the ability to perform traditional-style Contemporary dances such as the Grass Dance, he chooses to keep these traditional references for specific contexts. As Laronde uses a Grass Dancer in *Dancing Americas* to prepare the stage space, in *A Nation is Coming*, Greyeyes shows the traditionally dressed Powwow dancer to represent cultural survival and resurrection, not as a display. In the film *He Who Dreams...*, Greyeyes is shown at Powwows and in experiential learning situations with a Grass Dancer to show the respectful relationship needed to learn traditional dance. In *Dance to the Berdashe*, Monkman and Greyeyes re-envision a traditional dance into an avant-garde drag show. *Triptych* makes subtle

²⁸³ See "Embodiment of Knowledge" section of chapter 2.

²⁸⁴ Michael Greyeyes (dancer, actor, professor), e-mail message to author, June 30, 2009.

references to traditional dance concepts even while it does not include a specifically traditional dance. The choreography includes ground-based footwork and a connection to the earth as the dancers repeatedly place their feet on the ground and rub them back and forth. The dance work also emphasizes the importance of the circle in the constant round forms the dancers make, the way they encircle each other, entwine arms, and execute multiple spinning motions. In one of the ending dance sequences involving the entire ensemble, most of these traditionally conceptual references are found: the group forms a circle and performs movements in sync that involve rolling onto the ground, touching the ground with flat palms and then bringing their palms to their hearts. As the choreographic progression changes, the group continually returns to the ground as if to gather strength before standing to spin together in celebration. Other movements in the piece reflect the epistemology of transformation discussed in chapter four relating to *Gingras* and *Longboat*. John Prophet continually tries to reach out of his body through his dancing and move into a different psychological space but appears damaged or stunted in this transformation. All of these subtleties in Greyeyes' choreography make it "informed by tradition" while being able to subvert the audience's tendency to romanticize.²⁸⁵ These references are included not to display a "cultural identity card" or to placate audience members who expect to see Native referents from a Native artist; they are contextual, contemporary expressions of age-old ideas.

Greyeyes further combats romanticism by portraying John Prophet as an urban man in contemporary society. He is shown dancing in public parks, in alleyways behind businesses near dumpsters, at bus stops, on sidewalks near passing traffic—the same urban spaces art viewers will inhabit after watching the video at a gallery or performance

²⁸⁵ Floyd Favel, "Waskawewin," 113.

venue. John Prophet is a homeless Indigenous man with mental illness resulting from cultural and social suppression. Mental illness and homelessness are compelling current issues, in both First Nations and non-Aboriginal communities in most urban centers. The street people in *Triptych* are not romanticized or created to inspire pity. Michael's goal for audience members is not for us to leave the viewing full of guilt, but for us to regard one man's story aesthetically and ponder how our North-American historic condition could simultaneously create a broken man, fragmented memories, and the destruction of language and cultural expression—all while leaving room for hope and survival.

My hope for this project is that audiences, especially in the heart of our country and abroad, will glimpse the complex realities of many Aboriginal people, who seek to negate much of their collective past in hopes of remaining unscarred by it, or imagine—conveniently—that to ignore the large elephant looming in the room is the safer path toward (at least) forgetfulness, if not resolution and forgiveness. Parallel to this is that I would like audiences to again be challenged or awakened by the nature of our current dance expression, allowing them to see in choreographic terms that Aboriginal culture is not folkloric in its direction, but expanding, reinvigorating, and ultimately redefining.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶ Michael Greyeyes (dancer, actor, professor), e-mail message to author, June 30, 2009.

6.

When we use our bodies and voices to the best of our abilities, we are sovereign. No one can take this from us just as no one can give it to us. Sovereignty is in our minds. When we understand and have freedom of expression, we are sovereign. When we are sovereign we are well.²⁸⁷

—Sadie Buck (Tonawanda Seneca), singer, composer, winner of 2007 Community Spirit Award.

Before an eerily lit blue wall, in a lonely spotlight, a drum and drumstick sit on a high stool. They remain alone for several moments as the blue background gradually fades to black. A woman dressed in plain brown pants, a white tank top, and a beautifully woven belt enters followed by a golden spotlight. She begins to dance with simple linear movements—slicing one perfectly straight arm diagonally across her body, contracting to a ninety degree angle, and then sharply bending her elbows. Like she is dissecting a math problem with her body, she creates angular movements that invoke images of machines. The spotlight switches from the drum and centers itself on her. She stays in place while her movements quicken. The audience is so silent we can hear her sharp exhales each time she contracts. All at once, her angular movements stop, she raises her body upright with hands down to her sides and begins a steady, heartbeat rhythm with her feet. As she beats the floor harder and harder, an identically dressed man enters the stage and joins her in the choreography. He moves around her in a circle while keeping the beat steady with his feet. I hear a young boy in a NYC site-seeing group in the audience start to ask his parents: Why aren't they drumming? Where are the costumes? This is boring!" But he is interrupted when someone offstage begins to play a bluesy,

²⁸⁷ Sic. Quoted on Community Spirit Website.

<http://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/Grant%20Programs/CommSpirit/2007Spirit/2007Spirit.htm> (accessed May 1, 2009).

country-western tune on an acoustic guitar. The woman dancer breaks from the beating rhythm and begins making softer, circular movements as she dances. She creates a large circle on the floor with a pointed foot, spiraling inward slowly with her toes until she reaches the center. Once there, she lifts her foot and quickly brings it back down to the center point again and again, her whole body a mix of tension and balance. Suddenly, she drops low to the ground, rolling and contracting into the floor while her partner continues his feat of endurance towards the rear of the space, stomping out the athletic rhythm.

The country guitar fades away. An older man—dressed in jeans, a bolo tie, a colorful vest, and a baseball cap—steps onto the stage and picks up the drum. As he starts to play and sing a song in an Indigenous language, the couple's choreography melds together. Both intermittently perform circular movements that encompasses large areas through the sweeping motions of their feet and arms, and then return to the straight backed stance and rhythmic pounding of their feet. As the elder's singing becomes more energized, he joins into the heartbeat rhythm with his feet, moving slowly toward the audience as the couple introduces leaps into their choreographic arrangements. Sometimes they leap in the style of contemporary ballet with pointed feet and weightless covering of distances; at times they jump with the quick and gracefully agile hops and foot switches of Jingle Dress Powwow dancers. Periodically, the dancers stop and appear to center themselves internally by planting their feet together and swaying in circular motions with their arms out like flying birds. Drummers offstage join the elderly man's beat and song becomes powerfully loud. All at once, the whole group on stage breaks into a hip hop inflected rhythm. The three performers begin to "trade off,"

*improvising solos like jazz musicians; each comes to the center of the space and performs a mix of traditional style dancing, Modern choreography, and hip hop dance. Even the older man takes his turn, “breaking it down,” and executing a cross between “The Running Man” hip hop move and the hyper-fast, low ending spins of a men’s Fancy Dance while he swings his hips and the drum from side to side. At this, the crowd goes wild, applauding, cheering, and whistling. The artists smile and the energy level of the room rises palpably. The three dancers come together on stage and return to the constant, steady beat of feet on the floor. As their feet sync up, I feel the energy level in the room rise again. The beat becomes louder and louder, even as the musicians cease playing. The three performers form a line and look as if they are about to join hands when the stage lights fade to black. We are left in the dark with the unflagging pulse of feet on a wooden floor that fades away slowly only after many moments.*²⁸⁸

Prior to seeing this *Mesa 2.0* performance during the summer of 2009, I had been very frustrated with my research. I often sat in the National Museum of the American Indian resource center, alone, in front of their big screen television, embarrassed by the way I was spending days inside a library watching dance on video rather than in real life—exactly what I set out *not* to do with my thesis experience. It had been nearly a year since I sat down with Jerry Longboat and Gaétan Gingras in Montreal and many months since I spoke with Sandra Laronde in New York City. All of my recent interactions with

²⁸⁸ See figures 52 and 53. This description refers to the piece *Mesa 2.0*, created and performed by Tom Pearson (Cherokee/Creek), Louis Mofsie (Hopi/Winnebago), and Donna Ahmadi (Cherokee) accompanied by live music. According to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian performance pamphlet given out at the performance, this 18 minute work “is the first iteration of a response to shared travels in the Southwest and the passing of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. It engages pueblo culture from the point of view of Native New Yorkers—three American Indian, contemporary artists, walking together in two worlds.” Pamphlet collection of the author.

dancers such as Rosalie Daystar Jones and Michael Greyeyes had been only through e-mail. I had not seen a live dance show in ages. I had set out to do something different with my research: to make myself transparent and my research narrative one of personal experience while allowing the dancers' voices to come through; but it was hard to break away from old academic habits and create connections with dancers hundreds of miles away. I kept questioning why so few Contemporary Aboriginal dancers came through the United States on tour. Most of the performances deserving critical attention had been taking place in Canada, and I had many questions. How could an avant-garde movement with such a firm base in tradition and interesting possibilities for performance discourse not garner more writing and touring production? If, as Jerry Longboat says, Contemporary Aboriginal dance is "about enlivening the voice or about bringing and representing the uniqueness of Aboriginal people—to share our art forms and the beauty of artistic expression...making space in the dance world for our own voices," then why had more presenters not been willing to share this uniqueness?²⁸⁹

Then, one Saturday, after spending hours watching and reading at the library, I found a brochure advertising *Mesa 2.0*. Watching the piece a week later reaffirmed for me the power Contemporary Aboriginal dance holds across borders and cultures despite the fact that dancers may not be able to share the same discursive space. The performers involved with *Mesa 2.0* are not involved in the discourse surrounding Contemporary Aboriginal dance in Canada, but throughout the performance, I saw many of the same issues and styles that dancers like Sandra Laronde, Gaétan Gingras, Jerry Longboat, and Michael Greyeyes invoke in their work. It was eye opening to see three Indigenous New Yorkers explore their experience of visiting more rural Native territories in the Southwest

²⁸⁹ Jerry Longboat (dancer, writer), in discussion with the author, May 29, 2007.

(experiences specific to the United States) through their bodies, music, and humor very similarly to Canadian First Nations artists with different life experiences.

Even though the two young dancer/choreographers in the piece (Tom Pearson and Donna Ahmadi) were not familiar with programs like Chinook Winds at Banff, pivotal choreographers like René Highway, and current touring groups like Red Sky, the *Mesa 2.0* piece expressed many of the same themes and theoretical spheres discussed in this thesis. The dance work uses music, dance, song, craft, and costume as inseparable art forms (by using feet to drum and the drum as a dance partner). It shows how the traditional arts are used for contemporary expressions (by including woven belts, traditional drums, and stylistic references to traditional dances), connects generations and passes on embodied knowledge (by involving an elder and Native American languages in the piece), combats stereotypes and expectations of Native American culture (by using pared down costumes, hip hop choreography and simple lighting), explores identity (by searching for connections between urban Northeastern and rural Southwestern Native American experiences through dance), and incorporates Indigenous epistemologies through choreography (by emphasizing cyclical movement, centered energies, relationships between the dancers, and alluding to holes in the floor like those found in the kivas of the Southwest). The way in which *Mesa 2.0* reflects the same theoretical practices as much of the Aboriginal dance being produced in Canada demonstrates how Indigenous dance operates as a potent carrier of cultural knowledge, communication, and Blood Memory. It illustrates the Western stage can be transformed into a sovereign Indigenous space no matter what side of the border the dancers are performing on.

My hope for this thesis is that the dialogues and revisited history I present provide an addition to serious critical writing on Contemporary Aboriginal dance that has been largely missing from visual culture studies, dance history, and decolonizing discourse. By addressing colonial history while discussing current work, I want to contextualize the agency negotiated by Aboriginal dancers even while they have to navigate legislative prohibitions, popular culture consumption, anthropological dissection, and “High Art” appropriation in order to maintain embodied traditions.

From this ethical space, I aim at opening a dialogue with dancers about their methods while centering academic theories around lived practice in Fanon’s zone of instability where the people dwell (and dance). Like Lara Evans, I hope to avoid the distortions created by framing Indigenous artworks with Western theory alone. By starting to expand Contemporary dance discourse to include more world views, epistemologies, and different versions of Modern dance history, not only will critical discourse grow and become stronger, but dancers in both the United States and Canada can become more aware of each others’ work and actualize more in-depth conversations within the Contemporary Aboriginal dance movement.

Contemporary Aboriginal dancers today are taking action against a legacy of being framed as consumable subjects who perform to entertain Western audience members. These dancers do not allow themselves to become Other, putting on a show for monetary gain from cultural tourists, posing for anthropologists under the pretense of recording “vanishing culture,” or performing only didactically to educate non-Aboriginal people about Indigenous lives. While Aboriginal dance imagery, costumes, and music are

still collected, exploited, and appropriated by the West today, the Indigenous knowledge systems embodied by the dances are often overlooked or pushed aside. As Australian Aboriginal writer Tyson Yunkaporta (Garrindjeri/Kaurna) says of his work with having Indigenous knowledge recognized:

Aboriginal knowledge is not cultural artifacts and exotic imagery. Our ways of knowing, thinking and being are our culture, but they don't make good photographs and can't be owned by colonists, so they are generally ignored. I work to bring this deep knowledge into the designing of systems, rather than just leaving it in the margins where it is reduced to a cultural lap dance for the entertainment of the dominant culture.²⁹⁰

Contemporary Aboriginal dancers actively combat being reduced to a “cultural lap dance” in the margins. They are artists/dancers operating on stage to re-infuse supposed High Art signifiers and styles with Indigenous world views. The work of these dancers shows that multi-medium cultural expression created in various epistemological planes, can operate successfully in diverse cultural contexts while dismantling the long held power structures of the stage and privileging Aboriginal methodologies and embodied knowledge systems. Operating as an embodied methodology much like Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s Indigenous research agenda, dance is able to move groups, communities and individuals in the directions of healing, decolonization, transformation and mobilization.²⁹¹ By doing so on the Western stage, fighting for their self-representation and centering Western practices around Indigenous world views in Fanon’s zone of instability, Contemporary Aboriginal dancers create art that lives a verb-rich life: it connects, embodies, creates, exchanges, teaches, engages, works, fuses, and most of all, remembers.

²⁹⁰Tyson Yunkaporta in a personal statement relating to his 2007 book Decolonizing Education: an Indigenous Learning Journey, www.suite101.com/profile.cfm/woorama (accessed July 30, 2009).

²⁹¹ See Smith’s diagram, Methodology section of Introduction, page 19.

We dance to remember,
we dance to remember all our beloved ones,
to remember how each passed
to the spirit world.
We dance because the dead love us,
they continue to speak to us,
they tell our hearts what must be done to survive.
We dance and we do not forget all the others
before us,
the little children and the old women who fought
and who died
Resisting the invaders and destroyers of Mother
Earth!
Spirits! Ancestors!
we have been counting the days, watching the
Signs.
You are with us every minute,
you whisper to us in our dreams,
you whisper in our waking moments.
You are more powerful than memory!²⁹²

²⁹² Leslie Marmon Silko. Leslie Marmon Silko, Almanac of the Dead, 722.

Bibliography

- Amadahy, Zainab. "Dance Medicine." In the Spirit of Healing and Wellness. 4.3 (Fall/Winter 2002-2003): 8.
- Armitage, Merle. Martha Graham. Brooklyn, New York: Dance Horizons, 1966.
- Auslander, Philip. Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992.
- Bataille, Gretchen M. and Laurie Lisa, eds. Native American Women: A Biographical Dictionary. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Battiste, Marie, ed. Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision. Vancouver/Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2000.
- Beck Kehoe, Alice. The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory and Revitalization. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1989.
- Bobkoff, Ned, and Daystar/Rosalie Jones. "Living Ritual/World Dance Alliance Global Assembly: Connecting the Sacred and the Secular." Scene 4 Magazine. August 2006. http://www.archives.scene4.com/aug2006/html/bobkoff-rev_aug06.html (accessed May 5, 2008).
- Brand, Dionne. Bread Out of Stone: Recollections, Sex, Recognition, Race, Dreaming, Politics. Toronto: Couch House Press, 1994.
- Brown, Alison K. Material Histories: Proceedings of a Workshop Held at Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen. 26-27 April 2007. Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, United Kingdom: Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen, 2008.
- Brown, Dee. Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 1970.
- Brown, Leslie and Susan Strega, eds. Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti Oppressive Approaches. Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2005.
- Campbell, Maria, Jordan Wheeler, Bernalda Wheeler, et al. Achimoona. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Fifth House, 1985.
- Choquette, Robert. Canada's Religions: An Historical Introduction. Ottawa, Ontario: University of Ottawa Press, 2004.

- Citron, Paula. "Force of Nature." Dance International. 32.2 (Fall 2004), <http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/article.danceintl.html> (accessed March 11, 2009).
- . "Rene Highway, 36, 'Charismatic' Performer." Toronto Star. Saturday, October 20, 1990, A14.
- . "Reviews: Toronto." Dance International. 24.4 (Winter 1996/1997): 44.
- Cockerille Livingston, Lili. American Indian Ballerinas. Norman, Oklahoma and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.
- "Dance Me Outside." Dance Connection. 13.2 (June/July/August 1995): 11.
- Desmond, Jane C., ed. Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Dils, Ann, and Ann Cooper Albright, eds. Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001.
- Dirlik, Arif. "Place-Based Imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place." In Place and Politics in an Age of Globalization, edited by Roxann Prazniak and Arif Dirlik, 15–51. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001.
- Dissanayake, Ellen. Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes from and Why. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995.
- Doolittle, Lisa and Anne Flynn, eds. Dancing Bodies, Living Histories: New Writings about Dance and Culture. Banff, Alberta: Banff Centre Press, 2000.
- Duffek, Karen and Charlotte Townsend-Gault. Bill Reid and Beyond: Expanding on Modern Native Art. Vancouver, British Columbia: Douglas and McIntyre, 2004.
- Elton, Heather. "Warm-ups: Politics, Again." Dance Connection. 9.5 (February/March 1992): 12–18.
- Elton, Heather, Paul Seesequasis and Florence Belmore, eds. Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project. Banff, Alberta: The Banff Centre Press, 1997.
- Ermine, Willie. "Aboriginal Epistemology." In First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds, edited by Marie Battiste and Jean Barman, 101–112. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995.
- . "Ethical Space: Transforming Relations." (paper, presented at the National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge, Wanuskewin Saskatchewan, June 7–9,

- 2005). http://www.traditions.qc.ca/docs_disc_ermine_e.cfm (accessed May 30, 2007).
- Evans, Lara M. ““One of These Things is Not Like the ‘Other’.” Works by Native Performance Artists James Luna, Rebecca Belmore, and Greg Hill.” PhD dissertation, University of Albuquerque New Mexico (Art History), August 2005.
- Fanon, Frantz. “On National Culture.” In Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 47–59. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Favel, Floyd. “Waskawewin.” Topoi. 24.1 (January 2005): 113–115.
- “Festival Offers Dances by Indians.” New York Times, June 2, 1966.
- First Nations Centre. OCAP: Ownership, Control, Access and Possession. Sanctioned by the First Nations Information Governance Committee, Assembly of First Nations. Ottawa, Ontario: National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2007.
http://www.naho.ca/firstnations/english/documents/FNC-OCAP_001.pdf (accessed May 5, 2008).
- Florence, Melanie. “Reviews and Responses: Indigenous Dancelands. *The Threshing Floor* by Kaha:wi Dance Theatre. March 8, 2008.” The Dance Current, May 26, 2008, http://www.thedancecurrent.com/reviews.cfm?review_id=217 (accessed May 29, 2009).
- Fontaine, Nahanni. “Neither Here nor There: A Reflection on Aboriginal Women and Identity.” Master’s thesis, University of Manitoba (Women’s Studies), 2001.
- Fusco, Coco. English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas. New York: The New Press, 1995.
- . “The Other History of Intercultural Performance.” In The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader, edited by Amelia Jones, 205–217. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Gansworth, Eric, ed. Sovereign Bones: New Native American Writing, volume II. New York: Nation Books, 2007.
- Goldberg, Rosalee. Performance: Live Art since 1960. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998.
- Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. Dangerous Border Crossers: The Artist Talks Back. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Graham, Martha. Martha Graham: Blood Memory. New York: Doubleday, 1991.

- Hill, Rick. Creativity is Our Tradition: Three Decades of Contemporary Indian Art at the Institute of American Indian Arts. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Department, 1992.
- Hill, Tom. "Forward." In People of the Dancing Sky: The Iroquois Way. Toronto, Ontario: Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd., 2000.
- Huxley, Michael and Nicole Witts, eds. The 20th Century Performance Reader. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Irwin, Lee, ed. Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.
- Jones, Rosalie M [Daystar]. "Modern Native Dance: Beyond Tribe and Tradition." In Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions, edited by Charlotte Heth, 169–183. Washington DC: National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Institution with Fulcrum Publishing, 1993.
- Kealiinohomoku, Joann. "Dance as a Microcosm of Holistic Culture." In Conference on Research: New Dimensions in Dance Research: Anthropology and Dance: The American Indian, edited by Tamara Comstock, 99–106. New York: CORD Research Annual VI, 1974.
- Kiendl, Anthony, ed. Obsession, Compulsion, Collection: On Objects, Display Culture, and Interpretation. Banff, Alberta: Banff Centre Press, 2004.
- Kirkness, Verna J. and Ray Barnhardt. "First Nations and Higher Education: The Four Rs: Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility." Journal of American Indian Education. 30.3 (May 1991): 1–15, <http://jaie.asu.edu/v30/V30S3fir.htm> (accessed on January 28, 2009).
- Kisselgoff, Anna. "The Dance: Premiere of 'Shaman's Journey'." The New York Times. Monday, February 8, 1988.
- Knapp, Millie. "Laronde's Red Sky Stretches Boundaries with Caribou Song." Sage. Summer, 2002.
<http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/redsky.sage.html> (accessed on March 11, 2009).
- Knowles, J. Gary and Adra L. Cole. Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2008.

- Koritz, Amy. "Re/Moving Boundaries: From Dance History to Cultural Studies." In Moving Words: Re-writing Dance, edited by Gay Morris, 88–103. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Laronde, Sandra, ed. Skywoman: Indigenous Women Who Have Shaped, Moved, or Inspired Us. Toronto/Penticton British Columbia: Theytus Books, 2005.
- Leuthold, Steven. Indigenous Aesthetics: Native Art, Media and Identity. Austin, TX: University of Austin Press, 1998.
- Magill, Gordon L. "Rosalie Jones: Guiding Light of Daystar." Dance Magazine, August (1998): 64–68.
- Mankiller, Wilma. Every Day Is a Good Day: Contemporary Indigenous Women. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2004.
- "Margo Kane: "I Have A Voice that Wants to Say Something"." First Nations Drum, Fall 2000, http://www.firstnationsdrum.com/fall2000/bio_Kane.htm (accessed February 4, 2009).
- Martin, Randy. "Agency and History: The Demands of Dance Ethnography." In Choreographing History, edited by Susan Leigh Foster, 105–115. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- . "Dance and Its Others: Theory, State, Nation, Socialism." In Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory, edited by André Lepecki, 47–63. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004.
- . Performance as Political Act: The Embodied Self. New York: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1990.
- Matthiessen, Peter, ed. North American Indians. Penguin Books: London, 2004.
- McBride, Bunny. Molly Spotted Elk: A Penobscot in Paris. Norman Oklahoma and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.
- McMaster, Gerald. "Tenuous Lines of Descent: Indian Arts and Crafts of the Reservation Period." The Canadian Journal of Native Studies 4.2 (1989): 205–236.
- Merriam, Alan P. "Anthropology and the Dance." In Conference on Research: New Dimensions in Dance Research: Anthropology and Dance: The American Indian, edited by Tamara Comstock, 9–27. New York: CORD Research Annual VI, 1974.
- Mooney, James. The Ghost Dance Religion and Wounded Knee. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973.

- Moore, Marijo, ed. Genocide of the Mind: New Native American Writing. New York: Nation Books, 2003.
- Morris, Dave. "Red Sky Goes Underground." Eye Weekly. May 26, 2005, <http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/redsky.eye.html> (accessed March 1, 2009).
- Mutua, Kagendo and Beth Blue Swadener, eds. Decolonizing Research in Cross-Cultural Contexts: Critical Personal Narratives. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2004.
- National Museum of the American Indian. This Path We Travel: Celebrations of Contemporary Native American Creativity. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing and National Museum of the American Indian, 1994.
- Native American Expressive Culture. Special edition of Akwe:kon Journal. 11.3–4 (Fall/Winter 1994). Ithaca, New York: Akwe:kon Press and National Museum of the American Indian, 1994.
- Needham, Maureen, ed. I See America Dancing: Selected Readings, 1685–2000. Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2002.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature. London: James Currey, Ltd., 1986.
- Oguibe, Olu. "Nationalism, Modernity, Modernism." In The Culture Game. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2004. 47–59.
- "Ontario to Welcome Dancers." Windspeaker. June (2006): 10–11.
- Pepper, Kaija. "Reviews: Banff." Dance International. 26.3 (Fall 1998): 47–48.
- . "Spirit of Dance." Dance International. 26.3 (Fall 1998): 16–19.
- Petten, Cheryl. "Aboriginal Dance Comes to Contemporary World." Windspeaker. 18.2 (June 2000): 20.
- Pettipas, Katherine. Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies. Part of Manitoba Studies in Native History VII. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994.
- Pollock, Della, ed. Exceptional Spaces: Essays in Performance and History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1998.

- Prucha, Francis Paul, ed. Documents of the United States Indian Policy. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975 and 2000.
- Raymond, Andrea. "Red Sky Enlivens Through Dance Theatre." Surface and Symbol. September 2004, <http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/redsky.surface.html> (accessed March 11, 2009).
- Rowe, Patricia A. and Ernestine Stodelle, eds. Dance Research Collage: A Variety of Subjects Embracing the Abstract and the Practical. New York: CORD Dance Research Annual X, 1979.
- Royce, Anya Peterson. The Anthropology of Dance. Hampshire: Dance Books, 2002.
- Rushing III, W. Jackson. Native American Art in the Twentieth Century: Makers, Meanings, Histories. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Sacha. "Finding New Ways: 'The Canadian Dance Scene'." Dance Connection 9.3 (September/October 1991): 16.
- Said, Edward. Orientalism. New York/Toronto: Random House and Vintage Books Edition, 1979.
- "Santee Smith." And "Michael Greyeyes." Say Magazine 5.7 (Special Performing Arts Edition 2006): 19 and 26.
- Schechner, Richard. Performance Studies: An Introduction. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Shea Murphy, Jacqueline. The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- . "Policing Authenticity: Native American Dance and the 'Western' Stage." Discourses in Dance 1.2 (2002): 5–28.
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. Almanac of the Dead. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991.
- Simpson, Herbert M. "Reviews: Utah Repertory Dance Theatre in Maid of the Mist and the Thunderbeings. Premiere Dance Theatre. November 5–9, 1991." Dance Connection 9.5 (February/March 1992): 38–40.
- Smith, Janet. "Dancers Reclaim Their Cultural Identities." The Georgia Straight 39.1959 (July 7–14 2005), page 12 of Manitowapan press kit, http://www.manitowapan.org/e-fichiers/PKit_eng.pdf (accessed on December 30, 2008).

- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can The Subaltern Speak?" In Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 66–111. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Steel, Debora. "Banff Sparkles with Creativity, Quality Instruction." Windspeaker. 20.5 (September 2002): 32.
- Stevens, Laura. "Laronde's Career a Celebration of Aboriginal Culture." Windspeaker. September 2005,
<http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/press.windspeaker.html>
 (accessed March 11, 2009).
- Stock, Cheryl. "Myth of a Universal Dance Language: Tensions between Globalization and Cultural Difference." In Asia Pacific Dance Bridge: Academic Conference, Papers and Abstracts, edited by Stephanie Burridge, 246–262. Singapore: World Dance Alliance, 2001.
- Striff, Erin, ed. Performance Studies. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Tallchief, Maria and Larry Kaplan. Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1997.
- Theobald, Elizabeth. "Beyond the Images: Native Voices and Visions in New York Theater." Akwe:kon Journal 11.3–4 (Fall/Winter 1994): 160–163.
- Thomas, Helen. The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Townsend-Gault, Charlotte. "Ritualizing Ritual's Rituals." Art Journal 51.3 (autumn 1992): 109–125
- Trépanier, France. Aboriginal Arts Research Initiative Report on Consultations. Ottawa, Ontario: Canada Council for the Arts, June 2008,
http://www.canadacouncil.ca/publications_e (accessed December 12, 2008).
- Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. London and New York: Zed Books, Ltd., 1999.
- Walker, Hollis. "Contemporary Dance." Native Peoples: Arts and Lifeways. September/October (2005): 30–37.
- Williams, Kenneth. "Arts Centre in Banff Outlines Aboriginal Summer Programs." Windspeaker 15.2 (June 1997): Special Insert.
- Young, Gloria. "Dance as Communication." Native American Expressive Culture. Special edition of Akwe:kon Journal 11.3–4 (Fall/Winter 1994). Ithaca, New

York: Akwe:kon Press and National Museum of the American Indian, 1994: 8–15.

Videos and DVDS:

Adrienne Clarkson Presents: He Who Dreams: Michael Greyeyes on the Powwow Trail.

Produced and directed by Allan Burke. Produced and aired by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Not currently in distribution. Season 1, Episode 134 (March 2007). 60 minutes. Documentary.

“American Indian Dance Theatre: Dances for the New Generations.” Originally produced in 1993 as a segment of the PBS television series *Great Performances/Dance in America*. Produced by Barbara Schwei and Hanay Geiogamah, in association with Phil Lucas Productions. Directed by Phil Lucas and Hanay Geiogamah. A production of WNET for the Great Performances Alliance. Phoenix, Arizona: Canyon Records and Indian Arts, 1996. Television Series

“American Indian Dance Theatre Volume 1: Finding the Circle.” Originally produced in 1989 as a segment of the PBS television series *Great Performances/Dance in America*. A production of WNET/Thirteen in association with Tatge/Lasseur Productions, Inc. Directed by Merrill Brockway. Phoenix, Arizona: Canyon Records and Indian Arts, 1996. Television Series.

The Business of Fancydancing. Directed by Sherman Alexie. New York: Rezroad, Outrider, Wellspring Media, 2002. 103 minutes. Feature film.

Byron Chief Moon: Grey Horse Rider. Directed by Marlene Millar and Phillip Szporer. Montreal, Quebec: Mouvement Perpetuel, 2007, 48 minutes. Documentary.

Chinook Winds: The First Aboriginal Dance Program. Produced by Marrie Mumford and directed by Alejandro Ronceria. Produced by Aboriginal Arts Program at the Banff Centre for the Arts. U.S. Premiere at 2000 Native American Film and Video Festival. Distributed by V Tape. 1998. 27 minutes. Documentary.

Dancing with Spirit: An Aboriginal Dance Series. Directed by Byron McKim. Peterborough, Ontario: Soaring Heart Pictures, 2007 [Entire series available for purchase at: <http://www.soaringheartpictures.com/aboutquest.htm>]. Television Series and Performance video.

The Girl Who Married a Ghost. Directed by Sandra Sawatzky. Calgary, Alberta: Blue Moon Productions, Inc., 2003. 83 minutes. Feature film.

Kaho 'olawe. Produced and directed by David H. Kalama, Jr. (Native Hawaiian). Premiered at 2000 Native American Film and Video Festival. Distributed by Kalama Productions. 1997. 57 minutes. Documentary.

A Nation Is Coming. Directed and produced by Kent Monkman. Banff, Alberta: Banff Centre. Not currently in distribution. 1996. 24 minutes. Art film.

“Santee Smith and Stefany Mathias” (Episode 4), “Lisa Odjig and Vanessa Bellegarde” (Episode 7), “Sylvia Cloutier and Jason Yuzicapi” (Episode 8), “Alex Welles and Christina Hanuse” (Episode 10). All from *The Seventh Generation II Series*. Toronto: Big Soul Productions; distributed by Media Group, Saskatoon Saskatchewan, 2002. Television Series.

Throw Away Kids. Produced and directed by Muriel Miguel. Directed by Wilhelm Schmidt. Produced by Aboriginal Arts Program. Banff, Alberta: Banff Centre. World premiere at the 2000 Native American Film and Video Festival. Distributed by V Tape. 2000. 46 minutes. Performance video.

The World of American Indian Dancing. Directed by Dan Jones and Randy Martin. Oneida NY: Four Directions Entertainment, Inc., 2003. 60 minutes. Documentary.

Women and Men are Good Dancers. Produced by Arlene Bowman (Navajo). Distributed by Third World Newsreel, 1994. 6 minutes. Performance video.

Websites:

Chapter 3: Sandra Laronde/Red Sky: www.redskyperformance.com

Chapter 4: Gaétan Gingras/Manitowapan: www.manitowapan.org

Chapter 5: Michael Greyeyes: www.michael-greyeyes.com

Images

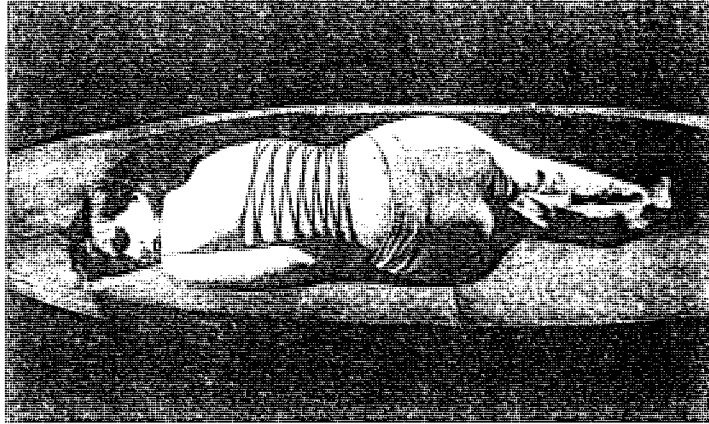


Figure 1: *Manitowapan*. Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Rolline Laporte. Date not given.

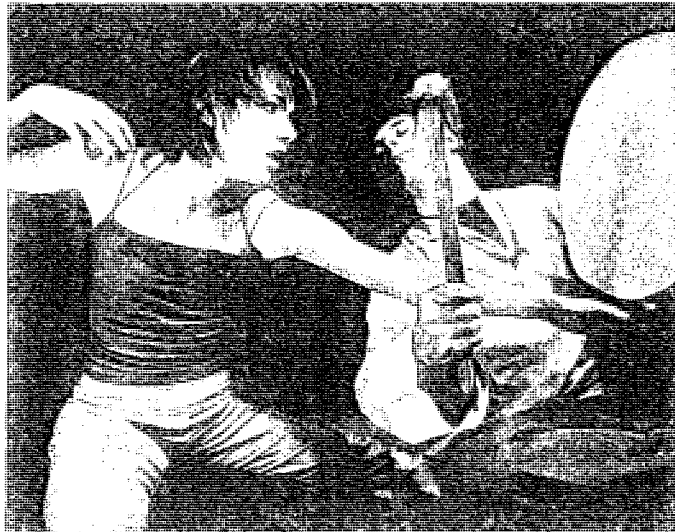


Figure 2: *Manitowapan*. Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Rolline Laporte. Date not given.

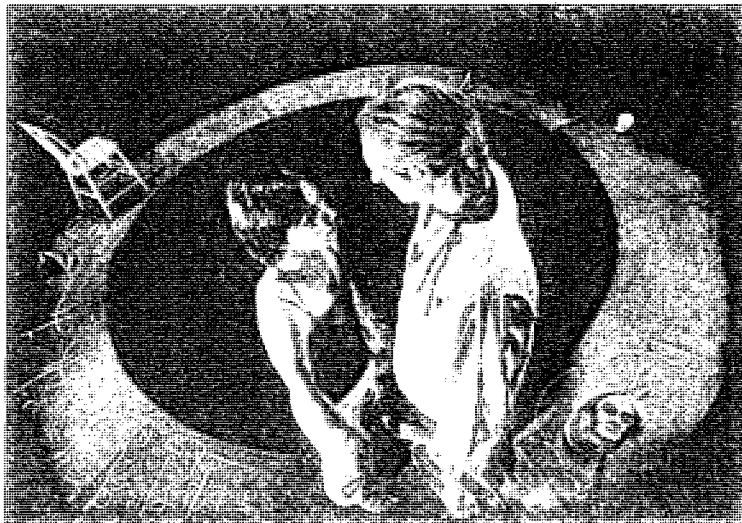


Figure 3: *Manitowapan*. Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Rolline Laporte. Date not given.



Figure 4: Red Rhythms Conference promotional poster. Image courtesy of University of California Irvine. 2004.

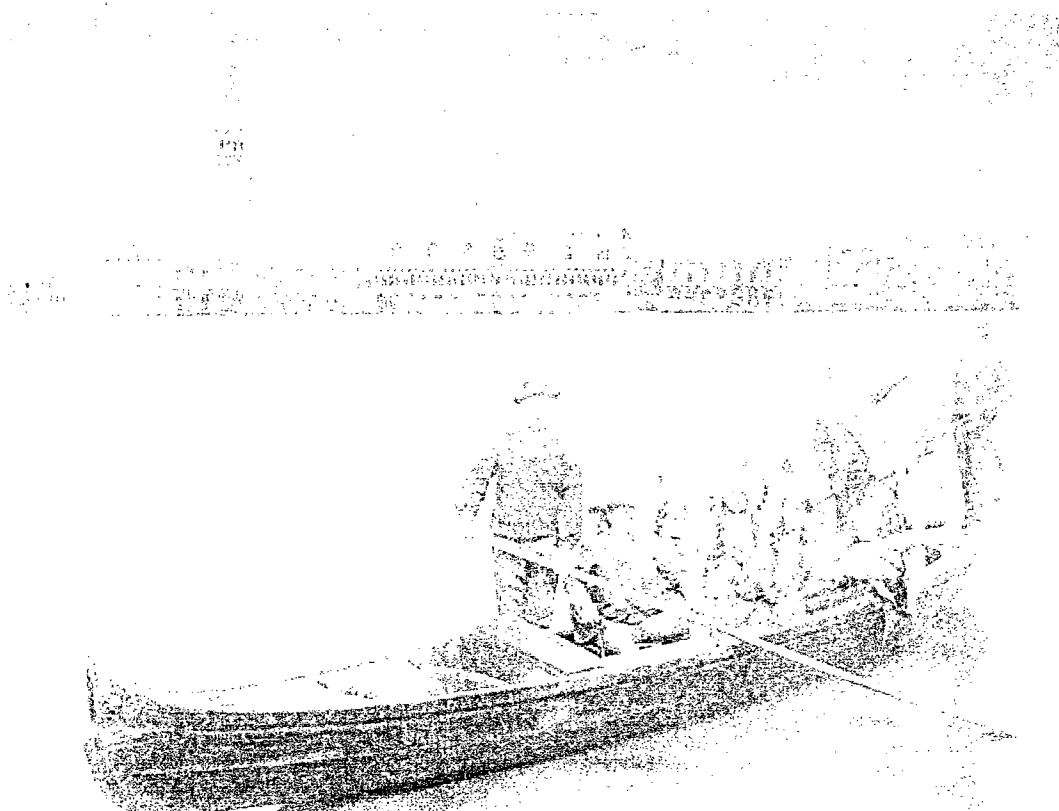


Figure 5: Buffalo Bill and Performers in Venice, Italy (Buffalo Bill, Black Heart, Rocky Bear, two unidentified men). 1890.

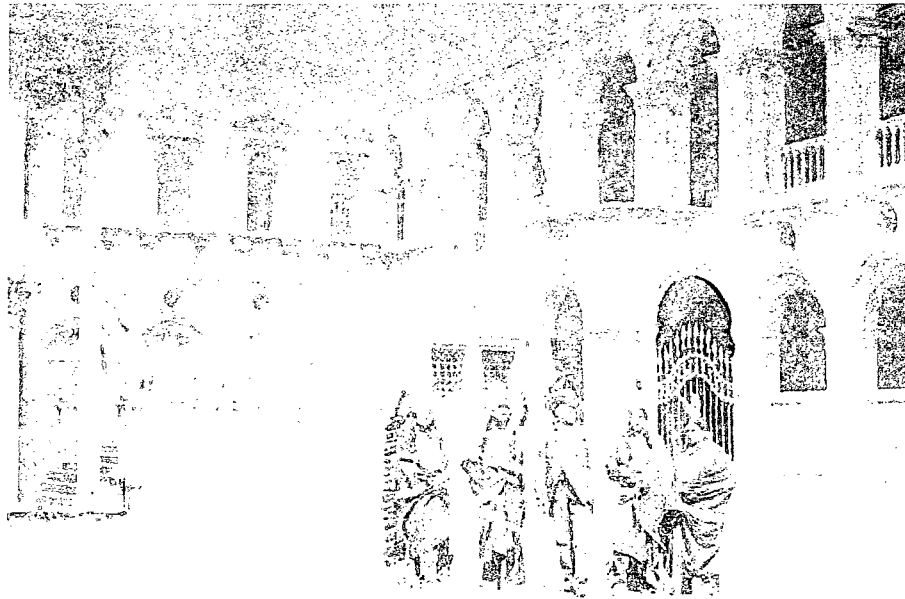


Figure 6: Buffalo Bill and Performers in Venice, Italy (Black Heart, Rocky Bear, Buffalo Bill, two unidentified men). 1890.



Figure 7: Martha Graham and Robert Gorham in *Xochitl*. Image courtesy of the New York Public Library Digital Image Collection. Photograph by Hartsook. 1920.



Figure 8: Princess White Deer in Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic of April 1921. Image courtesy of Historical Ziegfeld website. Photograph by E.O. Hoppe. 1921.



Figure 9: Molly Spotted Elk as she appeared in nightclubs in 1928. Image courtesy of Molly's daughter, Jean Archambaud Moore. Date unknown.



Figure 10: Molly Spotted Elk. Promotional portrait. Image courtesy of Molly's daughter, Jean Archambaud Moore. 1930.

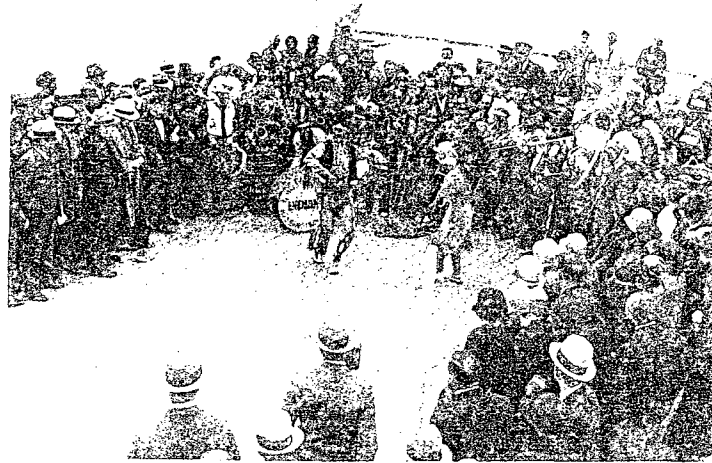


Figure 11: Molly Spotted Elk and band leader Chief Shunatona dancing aboard the Ile de France en route to the Colonial Exposition in Paris. Image courtesy of United States National Archives (RG43). 1931.



Figures 12 and 13: Left: Maria Tallchief performing as Eurydice in *Orpheus*. Right: Maria Tallchief performing her famous role in *The Firebird*. Both images courtesy of the collection of Maria Tallchief; Firebird photograph by George Platt Lynes. Dates unknown.



Figure 14: Marjorie Tallchief and husband George Skibine perform in *Idylle*. Photograph by Serge Lido. 1954.

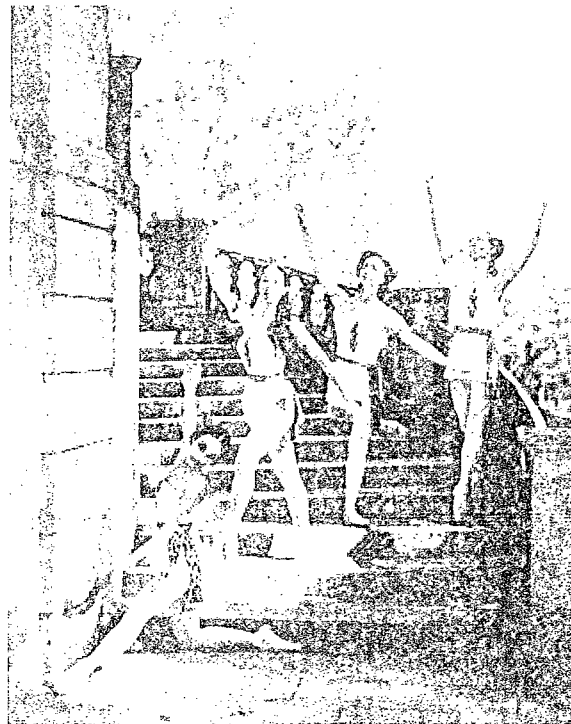


Figure 15: Left to Right: Native American Prima Ballerinas Moscelyne Larkin, Marjorie Tallchief, Rosella Hightower and Yvonne Chouteau pose outside the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma for the promotion of *The Four Moons* a ballet which featured music by Native American composer Lewis Ballard. 1967.



Figure 16: José Limón performing *Revolucionario* from *Danzas Mexicanas*. Image courtesy of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Photograph by John Lindquist. 1939.



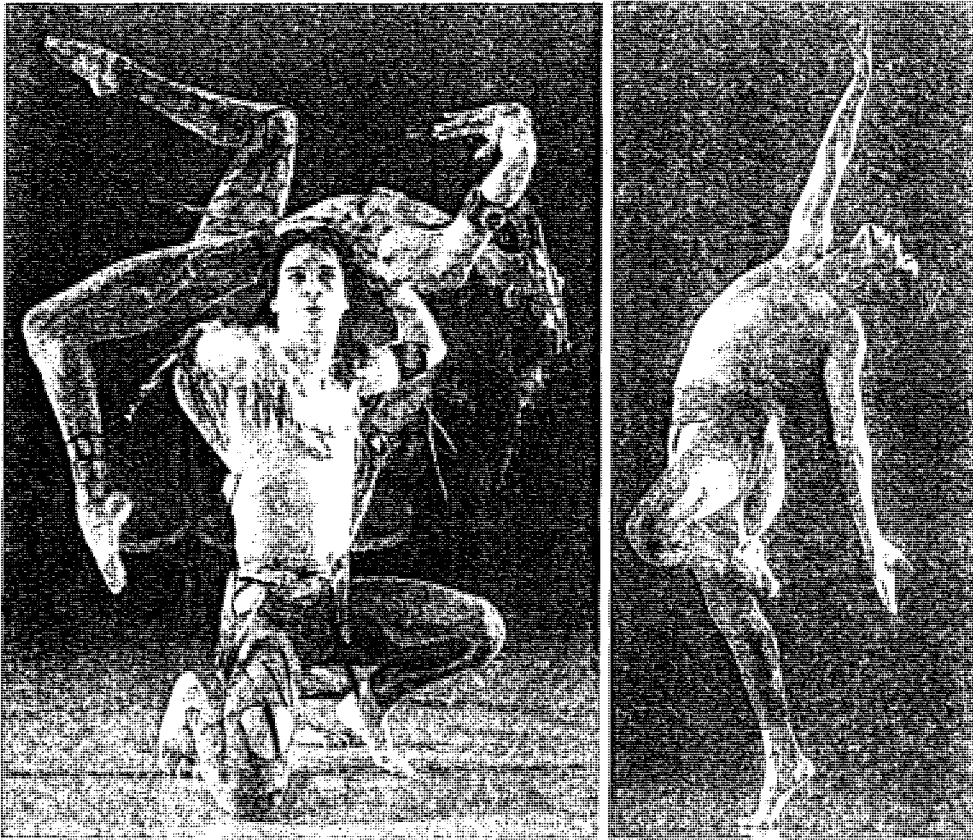
Figure 17: American Indian Dance Theatre promotional image of "Indian Women's Fancy Shawl Dancers." Image courtesy of AIDT. Photograph by Don Pudue. Date unknown.



Figures 18 and 19: Left: Rosalie Daystar Jones in *Prayer of the First Dancer*. University of California Irvine. Photograph by Philip Channing. Right: Rosalie Daystar Jones as Sky Woman in *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky*. Photograph by Norm Regnier. Images courtesy of Daystar. Dates unknown.



Figure 20: Rosalie Daystar Jones in *No Home but the Heart*. Image courtesy of Daystar. Photograph by Jim Dusen. Date unknown.



Figures 21 and 22: René Highway performing *New Song New Dance* in Toronto. Images courtesy of Highway family. Photographs by Cylla Von Tiedemann. 1987.

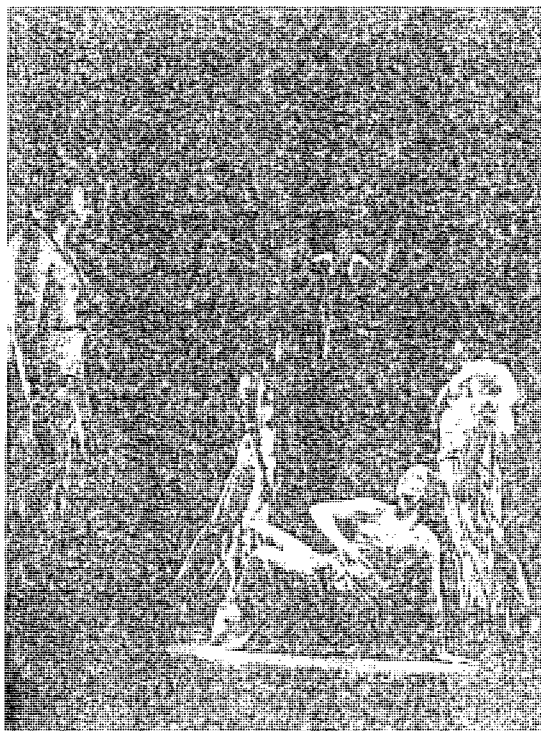


Figure 23: Soni Moreno, Carlos Rivera, Kalani Queypo, Santee Smith, and Jody Gaskin perform in *Bones: An Aboriginal Dance Opera*. Image Courtesy of Banff Centre Aboriginal Arts Program. Photograph by Donald Lee. 2001.

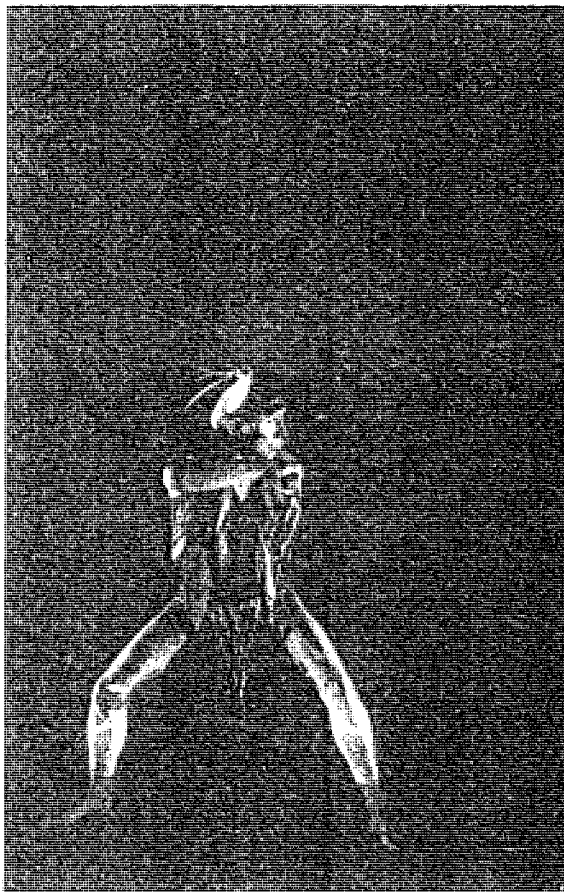


Figure 24: Carlos Rivera performing as Mean Thing in *Throw Away Kids*. Image courtesy of Banff Centre Aboriginal Arts Program. Photograph by Donald Lee. 1999.

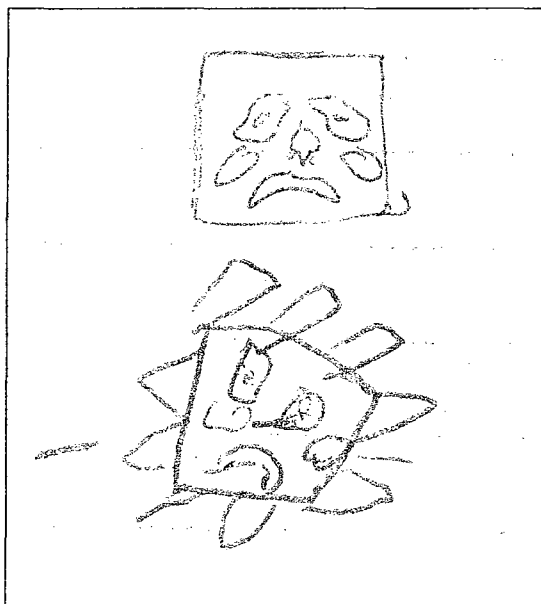


Figure 25: Picture of Bentwood boxes drawn by child at the performance of *Raven Stole the Sun* at the National Museum of the American Indian. 2008.



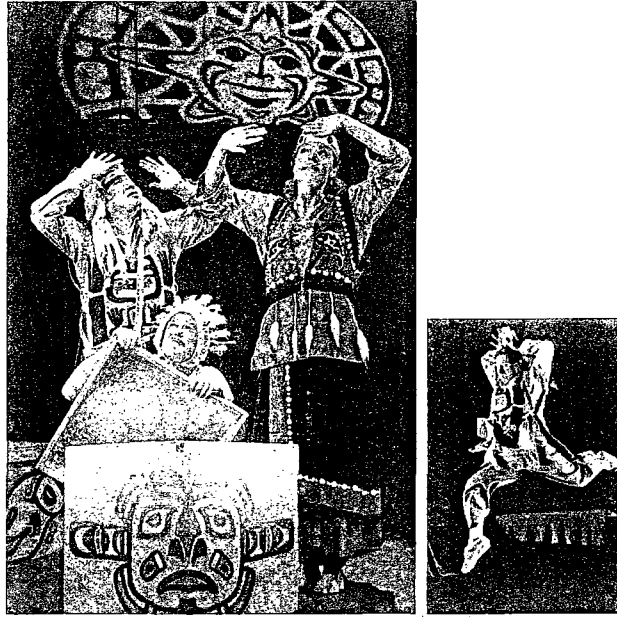
Figure 26: Promotional poster for *The Girl Who Married a Ghost* starring Jerry Longboat and Janna Jo Scheunhage. Image courtesy of Cinéma Libre 2003.



Figure 27: Darrell Dennis in *Tales of an Urban Indian*. Image courtesy of Native Earth Performing Arts. 2008.



Figure 28: James Luna performing *Emendatio* (placing insulin needles and Spam around his performance space) during the Venice biennale. Italy. Image courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian. Photograph by Katherine Fogden. 2005.



Figures 29 and 30: *Raven Stole the Sun*. Images Courtesy of Red Sky. Photographs by Cylla von Tiedemann. Dates unknown.



Figure 31: Michael Greyeyes and Carlos Rivera in *Shimmer*. Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph by David Hou. Date unknown.



Figure 32: *Caribou Song*. Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph possibly by David Hou. Date unknown.



Figure 33: Sandra Laronde in *Dancing Americas*. Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph by David Hou. Date unknown.



Figure 34: Matthew Pheasant performs in *Dancing Americas*. Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph by David Hou. Date unknown.



Figure 35: *Underworlds*. Image courtesy of Red Sky. Date unknown.



Figure 36: *Tono* Image courtesy of Banff Centre and Red Sky. Photograph by Laura Vanags. 2009.

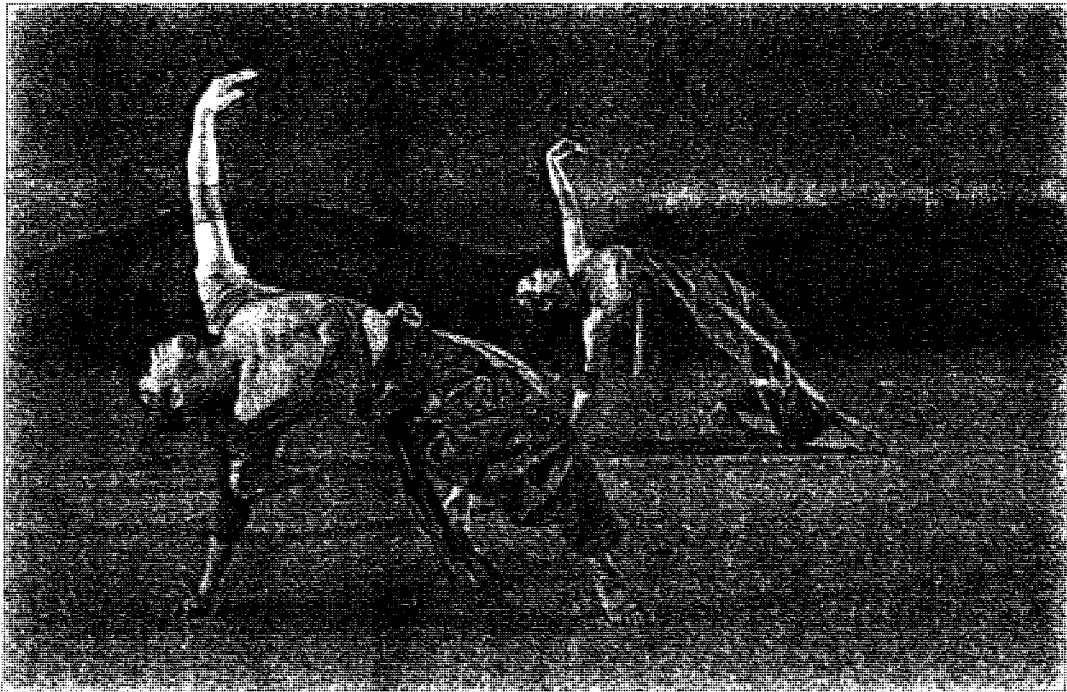


Figure 37: *Tono*. Image courtesy of Red Sky. Photograph by Don Lee. 2008.



Figure 38: *Ma Père m'a Raconté / My Father Told Me*. Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Mathieu Chartrand. 2007.



Figure 39: *Ma Père m'a Raconté / My Father Told Me*. Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Mathieu Chartrand. 2007.

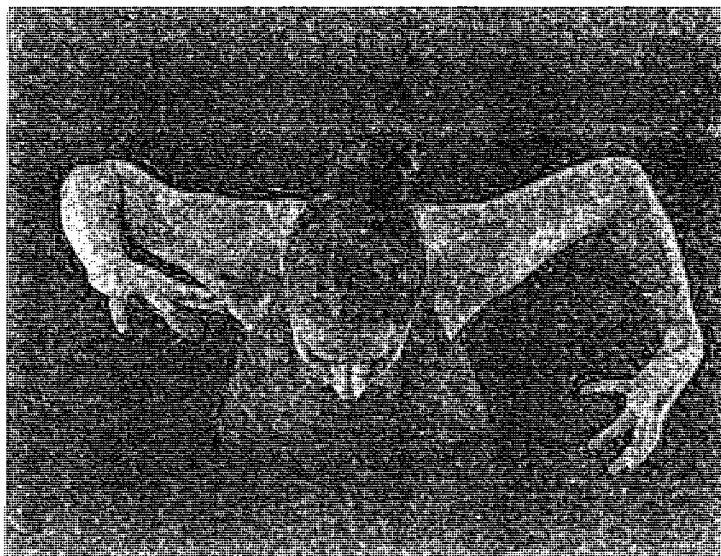


Figure 40: *Ma Père m'a Raconté / My Father Told Me*. Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Mathieu Chartrand. 2007.



Figure 41: Jerry Longboat performing in the Banff *Chinoook Winds* Program. Image courtesy of Banff Centre. Photograph by Don Lee. 1996.

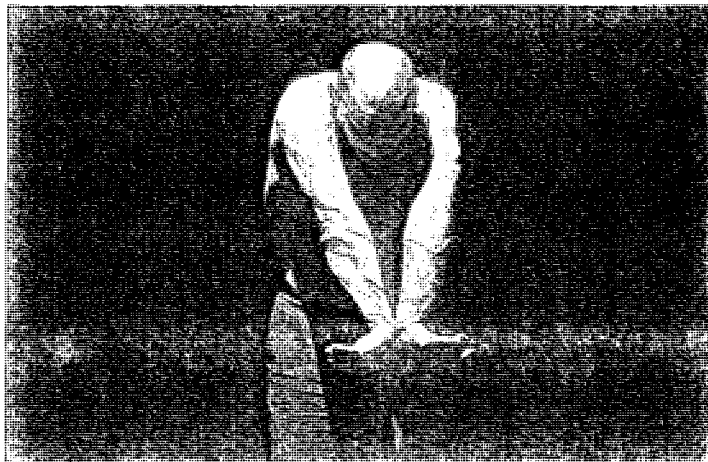


Figure 42: *Blood Memory*. Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Nicholas Minns. 2008.

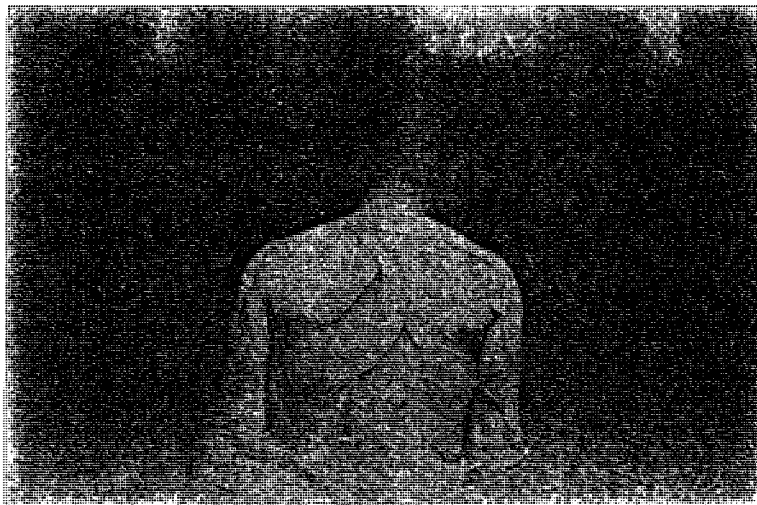


Figure 43: *Blood Memory*. Image courtesy of Manitowapan. Photograph by Nicholas Minns. 2008.

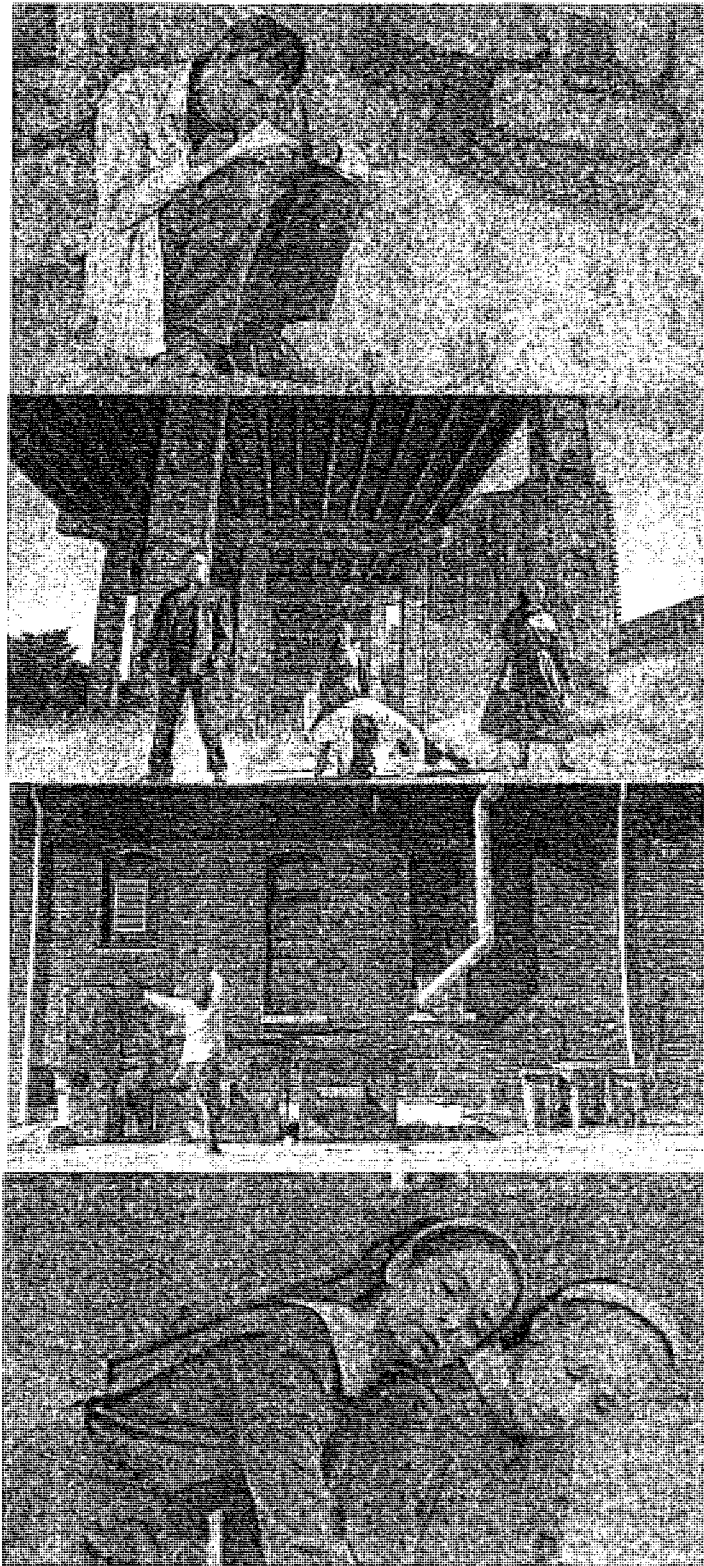


Figure 44: Production stills of *Triptych* from "Dancing with Spirit" Series. Images courtesy of Soaring Heart Pictures. 2007.



Figure 45: *Child of 10,000 Years*. Image courtesy of the artists. Photograph by Vincent Mancuso. 1994.

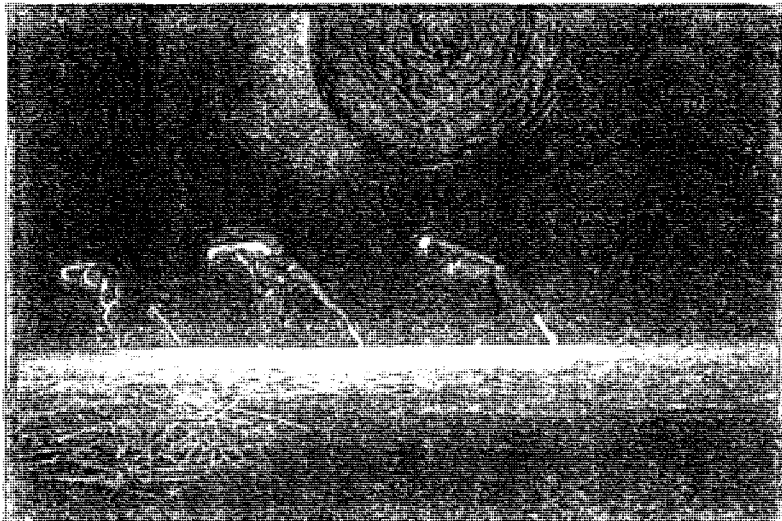


Figure 46: *Night Traveller*. Image courtesy of the artists. Photograph by Kent Monkman. 1994.

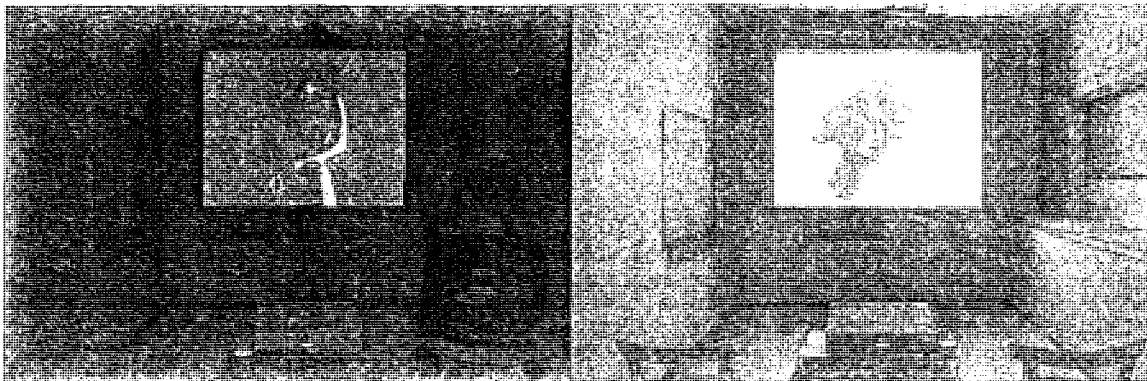


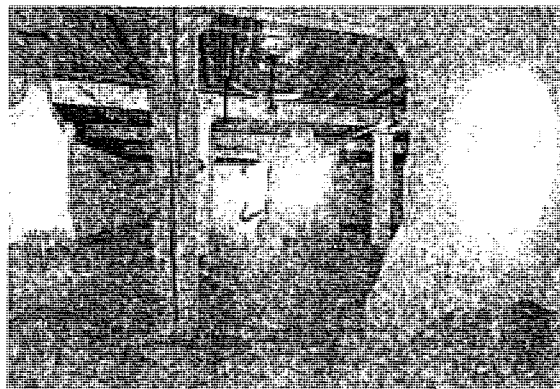
Figure 47: Installation views of *A Nation is Coming* by Kent Monkman featuring Michael Greyeyes performance. Images courtesy of Kent Monkman. 1996.



Figure 48: Promotional card for *The Threshing Floor*. 2006.



Figure 49: Still from *Dance to the Berdashe* Installation video. Kent Monkman. 5-Channel video installation. 12 minutes. Edition of 3 plus 2 A.P. Image courtesy of the artist. 2008.



Figures 50 and 51: Installation of *Dance to the Berdashe* by Kent Monkman. Left image courtesy of Urban Shaman Gallery, Winnipeg Manitoba. Right image courtesy of Bailey Fine Arts. Photograph by Christopher Chapman. 2008.



Figure 52: *Mesa 2.0* promotional photograph. Image courtesy of the artists and Third Rail Projects. 2009.



Figure 53: *Mesa 2.0* performance at the National Museum of the American Indian. Image courtesy of the artists. 2009.

Appendix I: Naming

List of Contemporary Aboriginal Dancers, Dance or Movement Based Performance Artists, Performance Groups, Dance Companies, and Dance Programs

This list is for further reference only and is by no means exhaustive. Excerpts are taken from company websites, Wikipedia biographies, and/or program liner notes. They are therefore constantly evolving and may be dated by the time of this thesis publication. Companies, choreographers and performers are included from multiple worlds—Contemporary Dance, Theatre, Traditional Dance, and Performance Art. Artists and companies are listed alphabetically. No distinction has been made between types of performers.

Companies:

***American Indian Dance Theatre (Los Angeles, California for 2008):** Focusing on traditional dances restaged for public spaces or on stage, AIDT was originally formed in May 1987, when more than 26 Native American dancers, singers and drummers, representing a variety of North American tribes, gathered in Colorado Springs to begin rehearsals with a revolutionary theatrical dance company. Brought together by New York-based concert and theatrical producer Barbara Schwei and renowned Native American playwright/director Hanay Geigomah (Kiowa and Delaware Tribes of Oklahoma), these dancers and musicians formed the nucleus of the American Indian Dance Theatre. AIDT successfully introduced Native American traditional dance and music to a wide range of audiences across North American, Europe, Asia and the Middle East; AIDT reflects the vibrancy and excitement of ancient cultures that continue to thrive and flourish in the new millennium. (<http://www.americanindiandancetheatre.com/> (site is often temporarily down)).

***Aqsarniit (Kuuujuaq and Montreal, Quebec):** Aqsarniit is an Inuit performing group whose members first came together several years ago to explore their own history and culture, as well as to create new music and dances inspired by the northern aboriginal traditions of throat singing and drum dancing. The performers are from across Canada's Arctic: Nunavut and Nunavik. Many grew up learning the basics of traditional Inuit music, song, and dance. Trained artistically in southern Canada, members of Aqsarniit have continued the Inuit traditions of their heritage while incorporating new elements into their art. These aspects have developed through Modern dance and performance training. They have also instructed Inuit youth from all over the north in drum dancing, throat singing, and ajaaja songs. Aqsarniit often recruits from their trainees to present larger ensemble performances. Aqsarniit's performances, while imbued with the richness of a professional stage performance, are not unlike the traditional Inuit performing arts that spawned them. Their songs are still expressions of individual personal experiences, their dances are still shared in celebration, and throat singing still imitates the same sounds of nature that previous generations heard growing up. What makes Aqsarniit different than traditional performance is more polished presentation, and the fact that they perform not only in their own communities, but also in the south and abroad, using the opportunity to bring the world awareness of their Inuit culture and history through music and dance. Sylvia Cloutier is the artistic director of the group. (<http://aqsarniit.com/>).

*** Compaigni V’ni Dansi (Vancouver, British Columbia):** Translated “Come and Dance” in Mitchif, Compaigni V’ni Dansi combines traditional Métis and contemporary dance. Created by Yvonne Chartrand in 2000, Compaigni V’ni Dansi received their first production grant from the Canada Council for the Arts in 2003 for a collaborative piece with Butoh master Yukio Waguri. The resulting dance production, called *A Poet and Prophet*, honored Louis David Riel and was inspired by his poetry and visions. In 2004, the company collaborated with Maria Campbell to create its second production called *Gabriel’s Crossing*, which was remounted as an ‘Artist and Community Collaboration’ working with six youth and touring throughout BC for ArtStarts in Schools. Chartrand also created a solo called *Marguerite* to honor the Métis Women and the life of Marguerite Monet dit Bellemeur, wife of the great Métis leader Louis Riel. The company produced a dance trilogy, *The Crossing*, inspired from past works which toured in Saskatoon and Vancouver to celebrate Louis Riel Day. An ‘Artist and Community Collaboration’ in Saskatoon was inspired from this work and included in July 2007 performances at the Batoche National Historical Site of Canada. The Company’s traditional Métis dance group is called the Louis Riel Métis Dancers. This group performs at many cultural gatherings and festivals including such events as The Vancouver International Children’s Festival, Festival du Bois with John and Vicky Arcand, The Heart of The City Festival, at all of Compaigni V’ni Dansi’s productions, and at many Aboriginal Day Festivals.
(<http://oshawametiscouncil.piczo.com/omcdancegroup?cr=4&linkvar=000044>).

***Coyote Arts Percussive Performance Association/CAPPA (Vancouver, British Columbia):** Founded by Byron Chief-Moon in 1999, CAPPA explores and creates distinctive dance, incorporates traditional storytelling, infuses traditional Plains Indian style music with contemporary music techniques, and initiates new media into the performances [It is unknown if CAPPA is still operating; they applied for a 2010 Legacies Now grant, but little information is available online aside from Byron Chief-Moon’s biography].

***Dance Theatre Collective Tipiskakí Goroh (Ontario):** Formed in 1994, Tipiskaki Goroh (meaning "Night Thunder" in Cree and Japanese) is a dance company formed by choreographer Michael Greyeyes, visual artist Kent Monkman, and theatre director Floyd Favel. They debuted at The Canada Dance Festival in Ottawa, Canada. The company performed two works *Child of 10,000 Years* and *Night Traveller* [It is unknown if the company is still active].

***Daystar Contemporary Dance-Drama of Indian America (Rochester, New York):** With a mission “to encourage and train Native American talent in the performing arts, and to teach others to approach respectfully, the dance, music, and art of Native Americans,” Daystar was the first United States Modern dance company created with all-native performers who specialize in the portrayal of the personal and tribal stories of Indian America. Founded in 1980 by Rosalie Daystar Jones (Daystar professionally), the company tours throughout the United States, Canada, Ireland, Germany, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Rosalie Daystar Jones continues to lead the company as its artistic director today. In addition to touring pivotal works like *No Home but the Heart* and *Mythic Dance*

Cycles, Daystar Contemporary Dance also holds workshops, participates in residencies and consults for indigenous productions. (<http://www.daystardance.com/index.htm>).

***De-ba-jeh-mu-jig Theatre Group (Manitoulin Island, Ontario):** De-ba-jeh-mu-jig ("Storytellers" in Cree & Ojibway) Theatre Group is a professional community-based non-profit organization dedicated to the vitalization of the Anishnaabeg Culture, Language and Heritage, through education and the exchange of original creative expression with Native and Non-Native people. De-ba-jeh-mu-jig Theatre Group occupies a unique position within the art form because the company sees its role as providing an alternative pathway for full participation in the arts sector by Aboriginal people. Dedicated to native artists and expression, the company has nurtured an original creative process and methodology that reflects and honors an Anishnaabeg World View distinct from the mainstream world view and subsequent value system. Its geographic isolation on an island and location on a Reserve has encouraged home grown solutions to challenges of development. These challenges have resulted in original models for everything from artistic development to operational governance. Artistic Director Joe Osawabine began with the company under the direction of Larry E Lewis in 1991 before being appointed to his current position in April of 2004. Joe is now an accomplished actor, playwright, director and teacher. He is supported and nurtured by a remarkable team of 'Arts Animators' who have a collective history together at Debaj of over 80 years. (<http://www.debaj.ca/>).

***Divi Shadene (New York, New York):** Divi Shadene, which means "they are dancing" in the Tewa dialect, was founded by Belinda James in the 1980s. With dual interests in dance and art, James combines both art forms, to produce "dance art" and choreographic works related to her Native American heritage. (<http://divishadende.com/>).

***Earth in Motion World Indigenous Dance (North Bay, Ontario):** Formed in 2001 by dancers/choreographers Alejandro Ronceria and Penny Couchie, Earth in Motion seeks to develop a creative forum for innovative and compelling dance and "to integrate modern artistic expression with deep respect for native traditions...Aboriginal contemporary dance that challenges, raises awareness and inspires dialogue." The first annual Aboriginal Choreographer's Workshop, a partnership project with the Centre for Indigenous Theatre and a subsequent production in Ottawa, brought these goals into practice with great success. The workshop culminated in a ground-breaking presentation of three new works-in-progress at the Winchester Street Theatre in Toronto. In 2004, the company held its second annual Aboriginal Choreographer's Workshop, bringing together artists from Canada, the United States and Mexico for another exciting presentation of new works. In August of 2004, Earth in Motion premiered *Agua* as part of the Harbourfront Centre's Aboriginal performing arts festival Planet IndigenUs. The great success of the premier performance of *Agua* secured an invitation to perform at the Universidad Autonoma de Mexico in Mexico City, one of the most prestigious universities in Latin America in October 2005. (www.earthinmotion.com).

***First Nations Dance Group (Ft. Defiance, Arizona):** Since 1992 First Nations Dance Company has named itself one of the most successful all-Indian owned and operated

Native American dance companies in the world. FNDC has performed in major markets and their television performances are viewed worldwide. First Nations Dance Company has performed in Istanbul, Amsterdam, Brussels, Frankfurt, Rotterdam, and over 60 other cities in Europe. Video productions have been viewed in Germany, Belgium, Holland, Turkey, Greece, New Zealand, and the United States. FNDC has worked closely with Dutch and other European television affiliates for 13 years. Many tribes and nations are represented in the company, performers are members of the Navajo, Caddo, Delaware, Lakota, Kiowa, Sac-Fox, Zuni, Apache, Pawnee, Shoshone, are just some tribes represented. The dancers and singers come from Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Idaho, and Canada. First Nations Dance Company provides a myriad of services to the media. FNDC has proven experience with television, film, media events, theater, promotions, exhibitions, tourism, and product promotion. "We are more than just a dance company"! FNDC can provide consulting services to all areas of media promotion. (<http://www.firstnationsdance.com/>)

***Full Circle: First Nations Performance (Vancouver, British Columbia):** Founded by Margo Kane in 1992, Full Circle creates opportunities for Aboriginal artists, writers and performers to express the reality of First Nations experiences and to work in harmony with First Nations traditions while engaging contemporary, interdisciplinary theatrical techniques. Full Circle provides an environment that fosters the development of skills, ideas, exploration, and collaboration. The ensemble members are dancers, singers, actors, clowns, writers, and musicians. Kane employs a collaborative approach through workshops that become research and training projects for all participants. Full Circle's skilled and talented artists are excellent creative ambassadors for Aboriginal communities and valuable role models for emerging Native artists. A number of them have gone on to practice as actors, performing artists, musicians, visual artists, and writers in mainstream theatre in Canada. Integral to Full Circle's mandate is networking and collaborating with performing artists and arts organizations regionally, nationally, and internationally. Each year, Full Circle holds The Talking Stick, a festival first debuted in 2001 as a cabaret. Since then, it has expanded into an annual festival offering a roster of invited artists. Full Circle also offers a two year Aboriginal Ensemble Training Program and an 'Aboriginal Artist Series.' (<http://www.fullcircleperformance.ca>).

***The Gwa'wina Dancers (North Vancouver Island/Alert Bay, British Columbia):** Members of the Gwa'wina Dancers represent many of the sixteen *Kwakwaka'wakw* tribes. The group performs by invitation or by special arrangement for private events. Since its current inception in 1999, they have performed in Canada, the United States, Japan, Europe, and New Zealand. Gwa'wina Dancers (pronounced "Gwah-wee-nah) means "Raven Dancers". All dancers have permission from their Chiefs and extended families to perform the dances and songs they present. Each Gwa'wina dancer is initiated in Potlatch ceremonies thereby earning the right to perform the dances and songs. The dances are traditional ones, each telling a story or legend. They sing the songs as they were originally composed, in Kwak'wala. For each performance, the Gwa'wina Dancers prepare body and mind to enter the spiritual world of each dance and song. Originally formed in 1996 when the U'mista Cultural Centre asked William Wasden Jr. to form a small dance group to perform for the tourists that visited Alert Bay during the summers.

In the beginning, the group was very small consisting of ten dancers and singers. Because the group was mentored by Elders of that time, it was very important for the group to dance for them on exclusive occasions, to seek guidance and approval for the ceremonies being presented to the public. The original teachers of the group leaders were Chief Tom Willie and his wife Elsie who were from the isolated village of Hopetown. The Elders moved to Alert Bay due to their age and the desire to teach the “dying” tradition of singing. The Gwa'wina Dancers are a society in terms of culture. In ancient times, most aspects of 'Nāmgis culture were passed down through generations and mentorship was considered the best method of transferring knowledge. The group gathers and practices regularly to learn, revive, and practice old and new compositions for Kwakwaka'wakw ceremonies. The group is a pathway especially for the youth, leading them to participate in their sacred ceremonies. In the past, the Gwa'wina Dancers have grown to numbers reaching seventy or more participants during dance performances. The group participates in many functions and travels to various parts of Canada representing their 'Nāmgis Nation. In 2004, the Banff Fine Arts Centre hosted the group during Banff's summer performing arts program. In regards to singing, the group has recorded songs to assist in fundraising for their people. William Wasden Jr., Dorothy Alfred, and Caroline Rufus recorded “One Nation One Voice” to honor Kwak'waka' language preservation. All male members participated in “Itusto – Rising from the Ashes” to aid in funds to rebuild the 'Nāmgis Big House that suffered arson in 1999. The Gwa'wina Dancers also created the CD “Laxwe'gila – Gaining Strength” to raise funds for the 'Nāmgis Canoe Gathering in the summer of 2003. (<http://gwawinadancers.org/index.html>).

***Kaha:wi Dance Theatre (Six Nations Reserve, Brantford/Toronto, Ontario):**

Kaha:wi Dance Theatre (KDT) was formed around the talents and accomplishments of Artistic Director Santee Smith, who built her reputation as a performer, choreographer, and producer over twenty years. Smith bridges the gap between contemporary and traditional dance in Canada, creating an innovating trademark style for KDT which allowed the company to grow from its most formative stage. *Kaha:wi* translates to “she carries” and is a traditional Mohawk family name and the name of Santee Smith's grandmother, Rita Vyse. Kaha:wi's goal is to create and promote contemporary artistic expression reflective of the integrity of indigenous cultural aesthetics and world views. “To see [the company] reveals a fascinating study through gesture, athleticism and art of one culture's view of the mysteries of life.” (J. Wegg). Operating as an artist run sole proprietorship since 2001, KDT officially became a not-for-profit organization in June 2005. KDT's head office is located on Six Nations Reserve with a secondary office and studio space at the National Ballet School of Canada in Toronto. As a company, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre is poised to take its first major steps as an Aboriginal based dance company by creating and producing cutting edge, innovative, and meaningful aboriginal dance. Selected excerpts from Kaha:wi reflect traditional values, beliefs, and aesthetics on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level. Kaha:wi is powerful due to the cultural weight it demonstrates by being profoundly connected to the richness, integrity, and beauty of the Iroquoian people. Kaha:wi met with great critical acclaim and toured internationally. “Smith's evening-length celebration of Mother Earth, finds emotional resonance in its evocation of traditional Iroquois cultural symbols, including the archetypal ancestor spirit, acknowledgment of the powerful four directions, honoring of

elders and celebration of the continuity of life as a cycle from birth to death to afterlife and rebirth...Smith and her dancers carry their upper torsos responsive to breath and gravity, connecting them deeply, spiritually, to Mother Earth," [Washington Post, 2005]. In 2009, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre launched a performance of *A Story Before Time*, a children's piece, which weaves music, dance, and theatre to tell the Iroquois creation story at Market Hall (Peterborough, Ontario). (<http://www.kahawidance.org/index.php>).

***Kanata Native Dance Theatre (Six Nations Reserve, Brantford, Ontario):**

Performing over 250 shows a year, the Kanata Native Dance Theatre from the Six Nations Reserve in Brantford, Ontario is one of the most active aboriginal dance/theatre companies in the country. Founded ten years ago by the New Zealand Maori artist Te Rangi Huata, the company has six to eight young people as members who come from Iroquois, Ojibway, Blackfoot, Cree, and Lakota heritage. They have performed for audiences in Canada, the United States, Germany, Italy, Korea, and China. Even though Kanata Native Dance Theatre is based at the Six Nations Reserve many people from different reserves have come to join them over the years. The group focuses on the continual learning of different traditional dances and educates audiences through programs, talks, and study guides. "Most of what we do is traditional dance performance with a narrator, but we also have theatre pieces that we write and perform. We have one show that we only perform at the Woodlands Cultural Centre. When people come here they get to see something that can only be seen here. A big part of what we do is education. Too often people don't realize that we still dance our traditional dances. At one school in Scarborough a teacher thought aboriginal people were extinct. It's really surprising how many people have no knowledge of what happens outside of their towns. If they don't see it, then it doesn't exist. Part of what we do is travel around Canada giving people a chance to see it". The KNDT allows the members travel to different countries and represent their homes. The dancers come from communities with real problems. The dancers have the chance to tell their stories to people around the world. "We see a lot of different things too. When we were in Germany, the mayor of every city we performed in wanted to meet us. At first we expect the same questions we usually get, 'Do you make your own regalia?... Are the feathers real?' They didn't ask those questions though. These mayors were asking, 'What is the water system like on the reserves?' and 'How does the traditional system of government differ from the national system?' We were treated like diplomats and spokespeople. It was really an honor and it was very empowering. (quotes by Naomi Powless, a dancer and choreographer for the group). (http://nativedance.ca/index.php/Showcase/Kanata_Dancers).

***Kehewin Native Performance and Resource Network (Kehewin Cree Nation, Alberta):** This Alberta-based performance group was originally founded in Peterborough, Ontario where husband and wife team Melvin and Rosa John lived while Melvin attended Trent University. Initially touring local schools to give presentations on Aboriginal culture because of the teasing and harassment their children faced in the new town, the John family was soon in high demand. The stories the couple shared were compiled into a book entitled *Inside the Circle*; these stories turned into theatre. Both Melvin and Rosa Johns have backgrounds in theatre, so they started working with youth from the Curve Lake and Hiawatha First Nations to put together shows and dance pieces.

Moving back to Calgary to attend the University of Calgary, the couple built a community theatre group of nearly thirty people and secured grants for costumes, choreography, and travel. Later, they returned to the Kehewin Cree Nation in Alberta and created the current incarnation of the group. The group offers Aboriginal theatre, storytelling, Powwow and contemporary dance performances throughout Canada and the United States. Every year, Kehewin holds a youth conference festival Powwow with performers from multiple countries coming to share their gifts with the children. (<http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/R12-10-2002-1E.pdf>).

***Le-La-La Dancers (Vancouver Island, British Columbia):** The Le-La-La Dancers are a traditional First Nations dance troupe whose members are from the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation of northern Vancouver Island. Le-La-La means, "traveling from here to there." The troupe has been performing all over Canada and internationally since 1987 under the direction of George Taylor (Potlatch name Me'las). Their *Spirit of the Masks* dance presentation delivers strong messages of respect and honor for each other, as well as towards our environment and Mother Earth. Many former Le-La-La dancers have gone on to success in life strengthened by the mentoring of being a "Le-La-La Dancer". (<http://www.laladancers.com/>).

***Manitowapan (Montreal, Quebec):** "Gaétan [choreographer] strives to create modern expressions of his ancestors' culture. By focusing on building bridges between spiritual and physical Gaétan hopes to open healing processes for some or simply make magic of dance a true experience for others." [sic] Incorporated in October 2008 as a non-profit organisation, Manitowapan Productions aims to create, promote, and disseminate contemporary North American native dance performing forms throughout Quebec, Canada, and the world. The company also provides multiple resources to aspiring native dance artists and collectives and through various projects contributing in a visible and steady way to the development of contemporary native dance practice in Quebec. (www.manitowapan.org).

***Marla Bingham Contemporary Ballet (Southern California):** Created in 1996 by Marla Bingham (Artistic Director) and Bruno Artero (Director), the MBC Ballet has performed seasons at the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza and in regional festivals such as the Redlands Bowl Summer Music Festival and Dance Kaleidoscope in Los Angeles, alongside numerous educational presentations (lecture demonstrations, choreography workshops and master classes) in Southern California. In 2003, MBC Ballet was the invited company for the City of Las Vegas Annual Choreography Showcase. In 2002, it was the resident company for the California State Summer School for the Arts. In December 2000, it was featured on Public Television (KCET) at the Los Angeles Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and it has been featured in *Dance Spirit Magazine*, *Pointe Magazine* and *Native Peoples* for their world premiere of their production *Firebird, A Native American Vision*. MBC Ballet's repertory, mostly choreographed by Marla Bingham, is eclectic and aims at reaching a diverse audience beyond the traditional boundaries of ballet. It also includes the duet "Running out of time" by Larrio Ekson, a choreographer/dancer of Native American descent who has made his career in Europe. Bingham's repertory includes classical pieces on pointe, to composers such as Antonio

Vivaldi and Max Bruch, where the form is classical and incorporates modern technique. At the other end of her creative spectrum, in a more modern and intuitive approach, Bingham deliberately juxtaposes a wide range of dance vocabulary with musical sources and references borrowed from world cultures, including her own Native American heritage in pieces such as *Sanctuary*; *Vision*; and *And Now There's Five*.

***Native Earth Performing Arts (Toronto, Ontario):** Native Earth Performing Arts is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating, developing and producing professional artistic expression of the Aboriginal experience in Canada. Through stage productions (theatre, dance and multi-disciplinary), new script development, apprenticeships and internships, Native Earth seeks to fulfill a community of artistic visions. The artistic mandate of Native Earth Performing Arts Inc. (NEPA Inc.) is: 1) to provide a base for professional Native performers, writers, technicians and other artists; 2) to encourage the use of theatre as a form of communication within the Native community, including the use of Native languages; 3) to communicate to our audiences the experiences that are unique to Native people in contemporary society; and 4) to contribute to the further development of theatre in Canada. Native Earth is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages with the Canadian Actors Equity Association under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement. In service to their mandate and mission, the company operates according to seven traditional principles (Courage, Generosity, Tolerance, Strength of Character, Patience, Humility and Wisdom) which inform decisions in all undertakings. These tenets not only honor Aboriginal values, but are universal to all cultures in various manifestations. (<http://www.nativeearth.ca/en/>).

***Native Nations Dance Theater (Philadelphia PA):** NNDT is an educational program of Native Nations Productions, Inc. NNDT is recognized as the Nations resource for exceptional educational and outreach programs with offices in Philadelphia and South Dakota. NNDT was developed for the purpose of educating people about the presence of Native American artists and culture in their communities. Native Nations has presented to Millions of people Nation wide appearing on radio, television and films. They have performed at over 500 schools World-Wide including England where they also performed for members of the Royal Family and Canada. Some of our members are featured in the film "*Who We Are*" showing at Lelawi Theater in The National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. Members of NNDT were also selected to appear in the PBS television Special "*Tecumseh: We Shall Remain*" airing in 2009 directed by Chris Eyre (he also directed *Smoke Signals*). NNDT received the Spirit Community Award in 2005 from the Rudolph Steiner Foundation and Spirit the 7th Fire for their community efforts. NNDT is a professional touring dance company and the only one in Philadelphia that specializes in educational presentations for children & teachers, theatrical productions for the stage, conferences, ceremonial openings, museums, schools, colleges & various organizations. It is the mission of NNDT to present authentic American Indian themes to institutions of higher learning and audiences Worldwide. (<http://nativenationsdanceco.homestead.com/presentations1.html>)

***Ondinnok (Montreal, Quebec):** Ondinnok is the only Native theatre company in Quebec. Founded in 1985 by Yves Sioui Durand, Catherine Joncas and John Blondin, the company has won acclaim both in Quebec and abroad for the originality of its productions. Its mission is to create a Native mythological theatre that integrates initiatory traditions and contemporary theatre practice: a theatre that is innovative and responsive to the present, asserting the power of art over reality. Ondinnok's work is part of a vast pan-Canadian Native theatre movement sustained by artists such as Tomson Highway, Margo Kane, and Drew Hayden Taylor.
(<http://www.ondinnok.org/en/index.php>).

***Qaggiq Theatre Company (Iqaluit, Nunavut):** The Qaggiq (gathering place) Theatre Company was incorporated as the Qik (short for Qikiqtani) Theatre Company, a non-profit organization registered in Nunavut, on June 4, 2002. The Board of Directors changed the operating name to 'Qaggiq Theatre Company' on February 3, 2003 to incorporate a thematically appropriate Inuktitut name, in keeping with the cultural aspects of organization's mandate. Currently, there are no other initiatives in Nunavut seeking to promote Inuit culture, health and wellness, and social issues through training and experience for youth in all aspects of the performing arts. A key goal of the company is to provide professional and life skills development opportunities to increase both the employability and personal well-being of Nunavut youth. Qaggiq continues to be run by one of its founding members, Jonathan Dewar, a board member and volunteer executive director, and Sylvia Cloutier, its first artistic director. In 2007, Qaggiq Theatre Company of Iqaluit toured its production of *Nuliajuk* in remote communities of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories that rarely experience live theatre. *Nuliajuk* is based on the foundational myth told throughout the circumpolar world of the Inuit. It dramatizes the ancient story of Nuliajuk, a young woman who is eventually transformed into a half-woman, half-sea-creature mother of all sea beasts.
(<http://www.yorku.ca/gardens/html/qaggic.htm/>).

***Raven Spirit Dance Society (Vancouver, British Columbia/Dawson City, Yukon):** Raven Spirit "create[s] contemporary dance that is rooted in traditional and contemporary aboriginal world views...RSDS aims to explore how professional work is responsive and responsible to community." Established in 1999, its mandate is to create, develop and produce contemporary dance rooted in traditional and contemporary Aboriginal world views. By sharing this work on local, national, and international stages, Raven Spirit Dance aims to reaffirm the vital importance of dance to the expression of human experience and to cultural reclamation. Raven Spirit Dance currently has four active productions and a new site-specific project, *Tawan* (Squamish for 'illuminate'). The company works in two contrasting contexts, the northern community of Dawson City, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in territory and the urban community of Vancouver, BC. RSDS is active in both communities by teaching, facilitating workshops, mentoring, and residencies. In 2007, they performed over 40 shows (in BC, Ontario and the Yukon) and this past fall RSDS premiered *Evening in Paris* at the Firehall Arts Centre in Vancouver. Their production *Songs of Shär Cho* has been invited to tour nationally with the 2008 CanDance Indigenous Dancelands Tour with performances at Tagente (Montreal), New Dance Horizons (Regina), and the Vancouver International Dance Festival (Vancouver).

Songs of Shār Cho will be presented as part of the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre 2008 six week summer program. Michelle Olson, the artistic director, has also been invited to participate in a year long residency at the Scotiabank Dance Centre in Vancouver beginning in September 2008. (www.ravenspiritdance.com).

***Red Crooked Sky (Southeastern Virginia):** The Red Crooked Sky dance troupe is a collaborative mix of American Indians, each dedicated to educating and promoting positive cultural awareness through traditional and contemporary dance. The troupe is based in Southeastern Virginia and represents an array of tribes – Cherokee, Sioux, Meherrin, Osage, Pamunkey, Seneca, Monacan and others. Red Crooked Sky is also multi-generational, including mothers, fathers, and children as members – all who believe and support family cultural development and spiritual awareness. To name a few, Red Crooked Sky has performed at: The John F. Kennedy Center, Washington, DC; The Virginia Highland Festival, Abingdon, VA; The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, IN; Salisbury University, Salisbury; and Jamestown Festival Park, Williamsburg, VA. Some of our members have been cast as actors and extras in various American Indian movies and documentaries. All of the dancers participate in a variety of powwows throughout the United States and are in great demand as head staff for these venues. (<http://www.redcrookedsky.com/home/home.html>)

***Red Sky (Toronto, Ontario):** “Renowned for its artistry and innovation, Red Sky is a leading company that shapes contemporary Aboriginal performance in dance, theatre, and music; it explores the artistic landscape where world Indigenous cultures merge. Red Sky seeks to nourish and strengthen the health creativity and innovation of First Nations...” Red Sky occupies a particular place in the Canadian performance landscape, charting unexplored cultural links with peoples around the world. Established in 2000 by Sandra Laronde, Red Sky is a dynamic young company playing a pivotal role in shaping Aboriginal contemporary performance forms. Red Sky produces original works that explore new areas of dance, theatre, and music performance. For example, *Caribou Song* (2000), based on a story by Tomson Highway, employs dance, theatre, storytelling, and live music to tell the story of one northern Cree family’s relationship to the caribou. *Raven Stole the Sun* (2003) is a family-oriented dance/music/theatre/storytelling/mask piece based on a traditional story from the West Coast. *Dancing Americas* (2003) is a Canadian/Mexican dance production that investigates the relationship of the First Peoples of the Americas through the metaphor of the migratory Monarch butterfly. This program employs traditional dance to set the stage, or “prepare the grounds,” for the presentation of the contemporary stage and incorporates traditional indigenous Mexican instrumentation for the music. One of their newest productions, *Tono* (2008), is a cross-cultural collaboration with the Indigenous peoples of inner and outer Mongolia and explores ‘the great horse cultures of the world.’ *Tono* was chosen to be part of the opening ceremonies for the Beijing Olympics and is the subject of an upcoming documentary *From See to Stage*. (www.redskyperformance.com).

*** Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan):** Incorporated in 1999, SNTC is an award winning cultural performing arts organization and professional training centre. Since its inception, SNTC has become a recognized leader in

the performing arts sector, committed to providing quality, accessible programming, and services for youth, Elders, the community at large and particularly those who otherwise would not have an opportunity to participate in arts performances and activities. With respect for cultures and the need of communities, the company has provided quality and innovative cultural and artistic programs and services enabling youth, artists, and communities to enhance their quality of life. SNTC produces, on average, twenty-five projects each year. Additional outreach, professional development, and special events are also prevalent. The main components of SNTC's programs and services are: 1) Circle of Voices Program (COV): a full-time eight month accredited cultural and artistic skill development training program for Aboriginal youth. Participants gain cultural understanding, pre-study and pre-employment skills, and work experiences in the arts. New plays are created through the process of mentorship with professional artists, cultural/arts leaders, and Elders; and 2) Ensemble Theatre Arts Program (ETAP): a two year training program with an opportunity to participate in a third year of advanced skill development that prepares emerging artists for a career in the performing arts industry. ETAP links participants with professional theatre arts practitioners, cultural leaders, and career management experts. Along with theatre arts skills training, which includes both performance and technical components, participants are also trained in area such as career development, skill application, and cultural learning. SNTC is a cultural/arts organization founded with the understanding that arts and culture are intertwined and are an integral part of the human make-up. SNTC creates, develops, and produces artistic presentations by Canadian Aboriginal artists who promote positive images of Aboriginal people and contribute positively to the local and national performing arts scene. SNTC utilizes innovative partnerships, mentorships, and collaborations with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals, organizations, and agencies to present a unique blend of theatre and staged presentations. SNTC's community and professional programming is delivered in an environment where Aboriginal talent and genius are recognized, validated, and encouraged to thrive. (<http://www.sntc.ca/net/desktopdefault.aspx>).

*** Spakwus Slolem/Eagle Song Dancers (Vancouver, British Columbia):** Spakwus Slolem, (translated "Eagle Song Dancers"), are members of the Squamish Nation. "Spakwus Slolem presentations bring out 'ChiAx,' the protocol and laws of canoe culture, for our Longhouses. Some of our Elders today still have memories of early years, traveling across the waters in great canoes to visit family in distant land and exercising our ChiAx. Spakwus Slolem presents a glimpse into this culture through singing/drumming, dance, and audience participation. A great canoe gathering took place in 1993, called "The Gaatuwas," in Bella Bella, B.C. Paddlers from the Squamish sea-going canoe enjoyed the culture so much they decided to continue, and eventually became known as Spakwus Slolem (Eagle Song), traveling and presenting at venues in Switzerland, Taiwan, Japan, across Canada, and locally, as well as Washington State." "Spakwus Slolem is pleased and honored to present songs and dances of yesterday, as well as today, and feel very honored to represent our People in a good way, as our Ancestors had intended. Huy chewx aa, Wey chewx yuu." (<http://www.eaglesongdancers.org/>).

***Spiderwoman Theatre (New York, New York):** Formed in 1975 when Muriel Miguel organized a workshop of Native and non-Native American women at the Washington Square Methodist Church in New York City, Spiderwoman Theater is the longest-running women's theater company in North America. Featuring three sisters: Lisa Mayo, Gloria Miguel, and Muriel Miguel, Spiderwoman Theater takes its name from the Hopi goddess, Spider Woman, who created men and women and then taught them to weave. They call their work "story weaving," a process of merging stories with words and movement to create an overlay of interlocking stories in motion. The sisters' story begins in Brooklyn during a time when there were very few "urban Indians." They grew up hearing stories from their Panamanian born Kuna father and their Virginia-born Rappahannock mother, as well as from other Native people in the neighborhood. So strong an influence was their father, as a "show Indian" performing on the streets of New York during and after World War II, that each of his three daughters went on to establish an acting career. Coming together as a radical feminist group, drawing on contemporary collective feminist voice and Native American storytelling, they developed a collaborative art that has become their hallmark. Spiderwoman Theater portrays the female experience by questioning gender roles, cultural stereotypes, and sexual and economic oppression, tempering their performances with humor. Although *Women in Violence* (1975) was their first play, Spiderwoman Theater's distinctive style emerged in the semi-autobiographical play *Sun, Moon, and Feather* (1979) and in *Winnetou's Snake Oil Show* (1980), part critique, part comic story. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Spiderwoman Theater began touring Indian Country in both Canada and the United States, creating new works and conducting workshops while influencing an entire generation of young artists, both Native and non-Native. Lisa, Gloria, and Muriel, still very active, are much loved by Native People. "We were all born in Brooklyn, where hundreds of Native families lived in the 1930s and 1940s. Our Uncle George from Baltimore and Uncle Charlie from Kuna Yala in Panama had been among the first to cross the Brooklyn Bridge. As a family, we were as involved in performing at our Methodist church and in local parades and civic events as we were with Powwow dancing and snake oil shows. All three of us were drawn to the professional theater through our family involvement in these performances. Even though we perform internationally, we have always made New York City our home. We consider ourselves New Yorkers." [NMAI brochure 2005]. (<http://staff.lib.muohio.edu/nawpa/spdrwmnarchv.html>).

***Wichozani Dance Theatre (Southern California):** WDT is a Native American theatre company concerned with the accurate portrayal and representation of American Indian culture through music, dance, and drama. 'Wicozani' is a Lakota word meaning health or healing and personifies the company's belief that songs, dances, and stories are healing for the performers, audience, and all people. The company is composed of family, friends, and other performers, presenting Native American music, dance, and theatrical stagings such as the Hoop, Fancy Feather, Eagle, Horsetail, Grass, Spear & Shield, Traditional (Men's and Women's), Fancy Shawl, and Jingle Dress dances. As well as Flute, and Plains-style Singing and Drumming music and a theatrical production titled *Toka'hey*, consisting of dramatized stories from Native American oral traditions. In addition to performances, the Wichozani Dance Theatre also travels for educational

presentations, cultural demonstrations, guest lectures, consulting, and for the promotion of American Indian awareness to the general public. "We are in full support of all events, groups, and activities that preserve ethnic and cultural traditions, promote cultural education, advance diversity, and foster cross-cultural awareness and understanding." (<http://vwichozani.tripod.com/index.html>).

Artists:

***Donna Ahmadi (Cherokee/Chickasaw):** Donna received her BFA in dance from SUNY Purchase and has performed in recent years for Stephan Koplowitz, Alison Chase (Pilobolus), Andrew Marcus Performance, Brett Howard Company, and Tarin Chalin. She currently dances with Tom Pearson and Zach Morris of Third Rail Production, Red Hawk Indian Arts Council, and The Thunderbird American Indian Dancers. Ahmadi has taught for the Northern Rivers Conservatory of the Arts in Australia, where she founded Mantis Dance Theater, performing her site-specific and environmental choreography in northern New South Wales. Mantis Dance Theater is currently based in NYC where Donna is working on projects addressing Indigenous adoption, cultural hybridization, and the politics of place. Donna teaches for New York City Ballet Educational Department as a teaching assistant in Brooklyn and Queens public schools. She has been an active Native American fancy shawl dancer for over 10 years and currently teaches shawl dancing at Lotus Music and Dance. In 2009, Ahmadi performed alongside Tom Pearson and Louis Mofsie in *Mesa 2.0*, a dance and music piece responding to their shared travels in the southwest and the passing of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next [prepared by NMAI for performance of *Mesa 2.0*].

***Norma Araiza (Yaqui/Mexican):** Norma Araiza is a choreographer, performer, and instructor originally from Mexico. She has studied different disciplines within the arts in order to find her own unique style that blends dance, theatre, vocals, percussion, and Tai Chi Chuan with cultural and traditional themes especially from her Mexican Indigenous background. Norma studied with international theatre directors Jerzy Grotowski and Eugenio Barba, Butoh Master Natsu Nakajima, theatre group Tascabile di Bergamo from Italy, Kei Takei from New York, and Pol Pelletier from Montreal. She has performed extensively as a professional actor and dancer throughout Mexico, California, Toronto, Montreal, and Hungary. She founded Creando Huecos Company in 1986 and co-founded Tolmec Dance Theatre in 1988 in Mexico City. While in Mexico, she was an assistant director, choreographer, dance theatre performer, and researcher at the National University of Mexico in the Laboratory of Performing Arts. At present, Araiza is Artistic Director of Tolmec Dance Theatre, an independent Toronto-based group working with culturally specific themes through the medium of dance theatre. She has completed a Master's Degree in dance ethnology and currently teaches at York University. She is a member of CADA, Dance Ontario, Dancer Transition Resource Centre and she is also a member of the Advisory Committee of Ritmo y Color at Harbourfront. Araiza has presented her work at Dance Talks, Studio Series (DUO), fFIDA (fringe Festival of Independent Dance Artists), the Fringe of Toronto, The Fringe of Montreal, the

McMichael Gallery, Mixed Arte Mezclado, Harbourfront, The Hart House (U of T), The Theatre Centre, The Music Gallery, and The AGO. She has collaborated in theatre projects with the Canadian Stage/Hour Company, L & L Productions, Inner Stage Theatre, and DECC Productions, and also in documentaries with CineFocus Canada as a choreographer, performer, and consultant. (<http://tolmeccandancetheatre.tripod.com/>).

***Marla Bingham (Mashpee Wampanoag):** Marla Bingham, a choreographer, dancer, and artistic director, was born in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. She discovered her potential as a dancer at age 12 when she auditioned for George Balanchine's School of American Ballet and obtained a full scholarship to SAB's Summer Program. She later obtained a two-year full scholarship at the Joffrey Ballet School in New York. Bingham has performed with Pennsylvania Ballet, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, and Jennifer Muller & The Works, touring the United States and the world, performing in 14 different countries. She performed works by choreographers such as Alvin Ailey, Jerome Robbins, George Faison, Donald McKayle, Jennifer Muller, and Louis Falco. Bingham later performed in *The King and I* with Yul Brynner on National Tour and on Broadway. In the late eighties, in Vienna-Austria, Bingham became the Artistic Director of the Vereinigte Bühnen Wien's Musical Theater School (Tanz Gesang Studio). This prestigious school was part of a state-supported European theatre company which was a successful producer of *Cats*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Miserables* and *A Chorus Line*. A few years later, in New York City, she became Director of Artist Development for Dick Scott Entertainment staging live performances and music videos for recording artists. Marla has choreographed for the American Indian Dance Theatre, the Joffrey Concert Group, Kazuko Hirabayashi Dance Theatre, The Mississippi Ballet, as well as Disneyland's *The Spirit of Pocahontas* and numerous music videos and TV commercials. She created her own troupe in 1996, the Marla Bingham Contemporary Ballet, based in Southern California. Recently, she was featured in *Dance Spirit Magazine* and *Native People Magazine* for the world premiere of *Firebird, A Native American Vision*, and an original ballet she choreographed and performed with her company. Marla also performed on Public Television (KCET - Christmas Celebration) at the Los Angeles Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion where she led her company in an excerpt of one of her signature pieces, *Sanctuary*. Bingham's artistic vision uses a wide range of cultural references in her ballet repertoire. Her repertoire is eclectic and it aims at reaching a large and diverse audience beyond the traditional boundaries of ballet. She received the *2002 First American in the Arts* award for outstanding achievement in dance. The Tri-County (Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and Ventura) Native American UMC Circle of Life named her *Native American Youth Educator of the Year 2000*. Bingham is a master teacher in ballet, Modern and Jazz as well as a certified GYROTONIC® and Pilates instructor.

***Allan Blake Tailfeathers (Kainai First Nation, Blackfoot Confederacy):**

Participating in traditional dance via Powwow from a young age, Allan toured with the Kainai Grassland Singers and the Kehewin Native Performance & Resource Network in Alberta. Allan's major professional performing experiences, however, have been with Contemporary dance, performing with Studio One in Lethbridge, AB. Becoming fascinated with the potential of combining contemporary technique with traditional Grass

Dance forms in the late 90s, Allan participated in the Chinook Winds dance program at Banff in 1997 and performed in *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera* at Banff (Elton et al. 1997, 95).

***Sadie Buck (Tonawanda Seneca):** Based in Six Nations, Ohsweken, Ontario, Sadie Buck is also a member of the Tonawanda Territory in New York. From a noted family of singers, instrument makers, dancers, and longhouse members, Buck is the lead singer and artistic director of the Six Nations Women Singers, a unique singing group that has been increasingly in demand throughout North America – the first Aboriginal group invited to perform at the New Orleans Jazz Festival. Winner of a 2007 Community Spirit Award, she was also part of the creative team for *Bones: An Aboriginal Dance Opera*. Sadie was born into a long line of traditional singers and dancers. Her life as a traditional singer has honed her training and performance skill to a master level. She has taken her traditional training ideology and transposed it to her contemporary life as an artist, performer, facilitator, director, author, trainer, researcher, and consultant. Meisha Kreisberg, one of the people who nominated Buck for the Community Spirit Award, says: “It is impossible to discern the line between Sadie’s art as an occupation and her art practiced as service to her community. Her art has translated into a traditional way of life from which she draws her boundless inspiration. Through her singing and dancing, Sadie constantly breathes life into traditional song and dance.” Buck is the program director for the Aboriginal Women’s Voices program at The Banff Centre, recording the *Hearts of the Nations* CD, distributed by Sweetgrass Records and EMI. The CD was nominated for a Juno Award, a Canadian Aboriginal Music Award and for the Native American Music Awards in 1999. Additionally, Buck recently performed with Robbie Robertson on his CD, *The Underworld of Red Boy* and with his documentary film, *Making a Noise* [from Banff *Bones: An Aboriginal Dance Opera* Program of 2001] and (<http://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/Grant%20Programs/CommSpirit/2007Spirit/2007Spirit.htm>).

***Tamara Ceshia Podemski (Saulteaux/Israeli):** Tamara graduated from the Claude Watson Performing Arts School in Toronto where she studied theatre, opera, ballet, modern, jazz, tap, folk, Latin, and ballroom dance during the 10-year program. Tamara has performed both nationally and internationally. She danced for the opening of the Aboriginal Achievement awards in 1994 and participated in the Banff Chinook Winds program in 1997. She also has a vibrant acting career. Accompanying her dance is a vibrant acting career, which includes film credits such as: *Dance Me Outside* (CBC), *The Rez*, *Blue Hawk*, *Ready or Not*, and a lead role in *Chalk*. Tamara is also a traditional dancer and has been Fancy Dancing since she was seven years old (Elton et al. 1997, 93).

***Yvonne Chartrand (Métis):** With ancestors from St. Laurent, Manitoba, Chartrand began her dance career in Winnipeg performing with a traditional Métis dance group called The Gabriel Dumont Dancers in 1986. At the same time while majoring in painting with the fine arts program at the University of Manitoba, Yvonne also began her career in contemporary dance. Chartrand trained with contemporary dance in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, New York and The Banff Centre for The Arts. She graduated from Main Dance Place in Vancouver, with the Apprenticeship Program in

1998, working with The Karen Jamieson Dance Company. Since then, she has worked with choreographers: Lee-Ann Smith, Paula Ross, Katherine Labelle, Anna Storoszczuk M.F.A., Yukio Waguri, Helen Walkley, Georgina Martinez, Michelle Olson, Denise Lonewalker, and Robin Poitras. She was helped found Raven Spirit Dance Company and has been the Artistic Director of Compaigni V'ni Dansi since 2000. She worked with Margo Kane's production *Confessions of an Indian Cowboy* teaching Métis dance during intermission. She trained for three years with the Full Circle Ensemble, as part of Margo Kane's Company, Full Circle: First Nations Performance, which included a production of *The River Home* for The Talking Stick Festival, 2005. Yvonne facilitates many Métis dance workshops locally, provincially, and nationally focusing on youth and community. Yvonne began teaching Métis traditional dance for the community with Winston Wuttonee's Band Shagonapi, beginning at The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre in 2001. Yvonne was the teacher for a children and youth Métis dance group called "Mooshum's Little Métis Jiggers," created in collaboration with Métis Family Services, and Métis Elder Bob Kelly for 2004–2005. Yvonne taught a new group formed for Métis Family Services called the "West Coast Métis Jiggers" in 2005–2006. The children and youth are performing locally and provincially. Yvonne has created ten new Métis dance groups in BC thanks to First Peoples Heritage Language and Culture Council. She is on the organizing committee for an international festival called the Pacific West Performing Arts Festival of Burnaby where they are the first to create an Aboriginal category including Métis dance and is a board member for the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance. Yvonne was awarded Women's First Place for "The Canadian Traditional Red River Jigging Championship," at The John Arcand Fiddle Fest 2005–2007 and Overall Grand Champion for 2007 at Windy Acres Ranch outside of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. In 2005, she received Women's First in the "Western Canadian Métis Red River Jig Championship" for Métis Fest by The Edmonton Métis Cultural Dance Society. She also received first place for Most Traditional Dancer at Back To Batoche Days in 2007. Yvonne is working on a new creation and is planning another BC Métis dance tour soon. (<http://oshawametiscouncil.piczo.com/omcdancegroup?cr=4&linkvar=000044>).

***Byron Chief Moon (Kainai Nation, Niitsítapi):** is a member of the Kainai First Nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy in southern Alberta. He is an actor, choreographer, dancer, playwright, and founder of the Coyote Arts Percussive Performance Association, a dance theatre company. Chief-Moon has made appearances in several well-known American and Canadian TV shows such as *MacGyver*, *North of 60*, *Stargate SG-1*, *Da Vinci's Inquest*, *Highlander: The Series*, and appeared on *Walker, Texas Ranger*, as well as several feature films. Some of his dance theatre pieces have included *Possessed*, *Dancing Voices* and *Voices*, as well as *Jonesing*, an experimental video dance piece. He is also known for his choreography work on the documentary *Echoes of the Sisters* and the dance film *Quest*. In 2007, he created a documentary/performance film entitled *Byron Chief Moon: Grey Horse Rider* which melds the history and art of his Canadian Blackfoot Confederacy tribe with issues of contemporary life as a gay man while being the father of three children. (http://en.allexperts.com/e/b/by/byron_chief-moon.htm).

***Yvonne Chouteau (Cherokee/Shawnee):** Born March 7, 1929 in Fort Worth, Texas, Yvonne is one of the "Five Moons" or Native prima ballerinas of Oklahoma. A member

of the Shawnee Tribe, she is the great-great-great-granddaughter of Maj. Jean Pierre Chouteau, who established Oklahoma's oldest white settlement, at the present site of Salina, in 1796. She grew up in Vinita, Oklahoma. Inspired to dance at age four after seeing the famous Alexandra Danilova dance in Oklahoma City, Chouteau studied at the School of American Ballet before Danilova recommended her in 1943 to Serge Denham for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. At fourteen, Chouteau was the youngest dancer ever accepted. Her first solo role was in "Prayer in Coppelia" (1945). At eighteen, she was the youngest member inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. In 1956, she married dancer Miguel Terekhov. Together, they organized the Oklahoma City Civic Ballet (now Ballet Oklahoma) and established the first fully-accredited dance department in the United States at the University of Oklahoma at Norman, Oklahoma in 1962. Chouteau was featured in *Ballets Russes*, a documentary film by Dayna Goldfine and Dan Geller that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2005. Governor Frank Keating designated her an Oklahoma Treasure on October 8, 1997, and she appears in the mural "Flight of Spirit," by Chickasaw artist Mike Larsen in the Oklahoma Capitol Rotunda, and in *The Five Moons*, a set of bronze sculptures by artist Gary Henson on the west lawn of the Tulsa Historical Society. When the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian opened in Washington D.C. in 2004, Chouteau was honored with the inaugural National Cultural Treasures Award, celebrating her contribution to the cultural heritage of the United States. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yvonne_Chouteau).

***Marie Clements (Métis):** Marie Clements is an award-winning performer, playwright, screenwriter, director, producer, and founding artistic director of Urban Ink Productions and Fathom Labs Highway. Her ten plays including *Copper Thunderbird*, *Burning Vision*, *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*, and *Urban Tattoo* have been presented on some of the most prestigious stages for Canadian and international work including the *Festival de Theatre des Ameriques* in Montreal, and *The Magnetic North Festival* in Ottawa, garnering awards including the 2004 Canada-Japan Award, short listed for the 2004 Governor General's Literary Award, Jessie Richardson Awards and a Jack Webster Journalism nomination. As writer and producer her full-length play *Copper Thunderbird* premiered as a co-production with The National Arts Centre in Ottawa in May 2007, and at The Magnetic North Festival in 2007. As a writer, Marie has worked in a variety of mediums including theatre, performance, film, multi-media, radio, and television. Her film *Unnatural and Accidental* was invited to premiere at over fifteen film festivals including the MOMA Festival in New York, the Toronto Film Festival, the Vancouver Film Festival, and the American Indian Film Festival of 2006. Currently *Unnatural and Accidental* has received ten nominations for the prestigious Leo Awards including Best Screenplay. Clements is currently working on a commission from The North Vancouver Presentation House titled The Edward Curtis Project (awarded the prestigious Cultural Olympiad Award) in collaboration with Brenda Leadlay and Rita Leister, as well as, her multi-platform project titled *The Red Diva Project*, her play *Tombs of the Vanishing Indian* and its film version. This winter, Marie was selected to be a part of the 2008 – 2009 Women in the Director's Chair. As a producer and director Marie has been involved in the development of over seventy productions of new work across forms and disciplines. *Copper Thunderbird* was published by Talon Books in 2007 and her initiative *fathomlabshighway.ca* is in its second year. She is a freelance contributor to CBC Radio,

and has worked in the writing department of the TV series *Davinci's Inquest*. As an actor, Marie has performed in over fifty productions on stages across Canada and the United States including; The Arts Club Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Rumble Theatre, Factory Theatre, Cahoots Theatre, Belfry Theatre, and The Fire Hall Arts Centre. (<http://www.marieclements.ca/>).

***Penny Couchie (Ojibway/Mohawk):** Penny Couchie, from the Nipissing First Nation, is a dancer, actor, teacher, and choreographer. She holds an Honors B. A. in Aboriginal studies and drama from the University of Toronto and is a graduate of the School of the Toronto Dance Theatre. From 1998 to 2003, Penny participated in the development of the Aboriginal Dance Project at the Banff Centre for the Arts as a student, choreographer, and teacher. In 2003, the Banff Aboriginal Dance Project invited her to return as a guest artist, where she choreographed a production of *Creation, My Mother's Story* by Columpa C. Bobb. Other recent performances include: dancer in *Agua* at Harbourfront Centre for Planet IndigenUs; dancer/actor in *The Place Between*; choreographer/dancer in *When Will You Rage?* at the National Aboriginal Dance Symposium; co-choreographer/dancer in *Earth's Flesh* for Shared Habitat 2; dancer in *No Home But the Heart* at the Woodland Cultural Centre; and dancer/singer in *Bones: A Dance Opera*. Penny has been a faculty member at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre since 1998. She is a founding board member of the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance and a regional representative of the National Aboriginal Dance Collective. (<http://www.earthinmotion.com/aboutus.html>).

***Sylvia Ipirautaq Cloutier (Inuk):** Originally from Nunavik, Northern Quebec, Sylvia Cloutier is an accomplished traditional and contemporary singer/dancer/performer who specializes in Inuit throat singing. After a tragic car accident that took her away from dance for a year, she returned to the practice at the Banff Centre for the Arts Aboriginal Dance Program in 1997. Her goal while participating in the Chinook Winds Aboriginal Dance Project was to bring Aboriginal dance back to her community as a "creative alternative to combat the social and cultural challenges they presently face." She helped start the Aqsarniit performing group and is currently its artistic director. In addition to performing, Ipirautaq Cloutier is also a freelance television producer (Siqiniq Productions) who trains youth in television, video, and web production. (http://www.aqsarniit.com/news_releases.html).

***Dawn Ireland-Noganosh (Oneida/Chippewas of Rama First Nation):** From Barrie, Ontario, Dawn has worked as the publishing coordinator for *Aboriginal Voices*, a Native American arts magazine and coordinated an anthology of Aboriginal women's writings entitled *Into the Moon* published by the Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts. In the 1990s, Dawn also completed contracts as the program coordinator for the Aboriginal Music Project. She was the coordinator of the Couchiching Drum and Dance Troup in Rama and has danced traditionally since the early 1990s. While participating the Chinook Winds Aboriginal Dance Program at Banff in 1997, she wrote: "Dancing has been a form of healing for me. When I'm dancing I internalize the rhythm and it becomes a part of me. My mind, body, and spirit are all in sync and it's just me and the drum." (Elton et al. 1997, 92)

***Larrío Ekson (Mexican/Indonesian/Apache/Dutch/Seminole):** Born in New York, Larrío Ekson began his career as an actor, aged 16, at the Living Theater with Ellen Stewart's company, La MaMa. He was spotted by Lucille Beards, a sponsor who gave him a grant to continue his training at Carnegie Hall's School of Fine Arts School of Harkness Ballet. In 1971, he joined the Lyon Opera Ballet, where he became a dancer with the Anne Beranger/Joseph Russillo company. When Beranger and Russillo separated, the company joined Carolyn Carlson and the legendary Carlson/Ekson duo was born, well before they worked together at the Paris Opera. Their meeting was decisive for Ekson's career: they devised their first choreography together and Larrío Ekson went on to be in nearly all the pieces Carolyn Carlson created at the GRTOP (Paris Opera Theatre Research Group), both as principal partner and assistant choreographer. Ekson continued in his choreographer role in the early 1980s with Carolyn Carlson's Teatro La Fenice company in Venice, then at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris. He also worked as a soloist at the London Contemporary Dance Theatre. In 1988, he returned to New York for an original work by Martha Clarke, *Miracolo d'amore*. In 1992, he formed the group *Il Momento* at the Teatro Verdi in Genoa and choreographed *What's Happening in the World Today*. He has danced at the Nederland Dans Theater on the invitation of Jiri Kylián, as the principal soloist in Maurice Béjart's *King Lear-Prospero*, and as Marie-Claude Pietragalla's partner in *Sakountala*. He has choreographed many original works, including *La Strada* at the Théâtre de Caen, *Jealousy* with Paris Opera étoile Agnès Letestu, for the Kobe Ballet, the Los Angeles Ballet with Marla Bingham, and many others in between. In addition to being a choreographer and dancer, Larrío Ekson has worked as a film and theatre actor, for example in the leading role of Anne Delbee's *Othello*. Additionally, he established an international reputation as a teacher: in 1993, Ekson became director of the dance department at the Marseille Ballet School at the request of Roland Petit; he was a guest teacher at Lausanne Ballet's Mudra-Bruxelles then Rudra-Béjart schools; in 1998, he taught at the Ballet du Nord; in 2005, he was a guest teacher at the Paris Opera Ballet; and since 2006, he has taught dance at Bartabas's Academy of Equestrian Arts in Versailles. Larrío Ekson's recent work includes a film by Nils Tavernier and the FR3 television drama *Le Réveillon des bonnes* by Michel Hassan, dancing a solo by Susan Buirge, *Le chasseur du lac*, choreographing the original works *Frida, une vie d'ombre et de lumière* as well as *Summer Breeze* for the National Choreographic Centre Roubaix, and performing in *Didi à Gogo* by Olivier Chanut in Lausanne. He has also trained the étoiles at the Paris Opera and students at the Ecole de Danse in Nanterre. He has recently choreographed and performed in the original work by Bartabas, *Les Juments de la nuit*, which premiered in Versailles in August 2008, and the solo *Les Princesses*, which premiered at the Nouveau Théâtre in Poitiers in October 2008. In 1995, Larrío Ekson was made a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres and, in 2005, after a special screening of *Flight of Eagle Spirit*, a documentary about his life directed by Marlène Ionesco, he was awarded the medal of Officier des Arts et des Lettres by Hugues Gall, former director of the Paris Opera. (www.larrío-ekson.com and http://www.ccn-roubaix.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147&Itemid=857&lang=en).

***Hanay Geiogamah (Kiowa):** Hanay Geiogamah is mainly recognized as the most important Native American playwright of the late twentieth century. In his plays

Geiogamah strives to portray contemporary American Indian life for both Indians and non-Indians. He is currently a professor at UCLA in the Indian studies program, but he is also a playwright, director and historian, and Artistic Director for both the American Indian Dance Theatre and the Native American Theatre Ensemble while serving as the managing editor for the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. His plays *Body Indian*, *Foghorn*, *49*, *Coon Cons Coyote*, and *Land Sale* have been performed throughout the US and Europe.

(http://www.americanindianstudies.ucla.edu/idp_profiles/people_hgeiogamah.htm).

***Gaétan Gingras (Iroquois-Mohawk/French-Canadian):** Gaétan Gingras began his training in various dance techniques during his college years in Drummondville, Québec (his birthplace). He continued his studies at Concordia University in Montreal and at the Toronto Dance Theatre. Gaétan quickly became known for his strong interpretation skills and athletic presence and has been recognized and appreciated by choreographers such as Robert Desrosiers (Desrosiers Dance Theatre), Ginette Laurin (O Vertigo Danse), and Gilles Maheu (Carbone 14) with whom Gaétan has worked on numerous internationally acclaimed productions. In 1993, Gaétan was a soloist in the native dance production, *In the Land of Spirits*, produced by John Kim Bell, which toured across Canada. This important project initiated Gaétan's search for his Native roots, which subsequently influenced his future artistic choices as a creator. As a parallel to his career as an interpreter and dance teacher, Gaétan has always nurtured his passion for creating dance. After choreographing numerous works for students' performances back in his native College of Drummondville, in 1993, he presented his work as an independent choreographer for the first time at the Toronto Fringe Dance Festival with three short works. Invited by Dena Davida of Tangente the following year, he choreographed *Sentier Inconnu* for the Ascendance series in Montreal. Since then, invited regularly by Tangente and participating at various festivals and venues, Gaétan has created a dozen choreographic works. In 1998, the Clifford E. Lee Foundation recognized Gaetan's outstanding creations and contributions to the culture of native people by naming him the choreographer in residency at The Banff Centre for the Arts. After a few years of absence from the dance scene in order to devote his time to the development of new skills, Gaétan returned to the Montreal dance scene and founded his company Manitowapan. (<http://www.manitowapan.org/Artists.html>).

***Carol Greyeyes (Muskeg Lake Cree Nation):** Originally from Saskatoon, Carol Greyeyes recently returned from Toronto, Ontario where she has spent the last eleven years working as an actor, writer, director, teacher, and arts administrator. Before leaving the province, Carol studied at the University of Saskatchewan, where she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Bachelor of Education from the I.T.E.P. program. Carol acted and taught in both Saskatchewan and Alberta before heading east to pursue a MFA at York University. After graduation, Carol worked in theatre and in film and television as an actor and screenwriter. She was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best Actress for her work in theatre. She was the series lead in a German-Canadian television series called *Blue Hawk* and worked as a story editor on the TV series *North of Sixty*. Carol is also the founder of the full-time post secondary training program, the Indigenous Theatre School based in Toronto. Carol was the principal and the Artistic

Director at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre for the past five years. In addition to working at Arts Board as the Artist in Residence consultant and the Indigenous Arts Advisor, Carol maintains ties with the cultural community by teaching theatre and writing for series television. She wrote and co-produced a documentary film, *For Love of the Land* for SCN and CBC. Currently, she is working on the film adaptation of her dance work *Indian Blue*. Originally produced for the Fringe Festival in Saskatoon, *Indian Blue* played to critical acclaim and won the hearts of the audience. *Indian Blue* was conceived and is performed by Carol Greyeyes and directed and choreographed by Nicole Mion. Inspired by the speech spoken by Cree/Assinaboine Chief Poundmaker, Shakespeare's sonnet No. 29 and the guidance of grandmothers, this piece explores a solo journey that retraces the steps of ancestors; a man who shaped history, women who made choices and the ties that bind all of them. In this new work, history (both public and personal), the land of the northern Plains Cree, and a rich cultural and spiritual inheritance figure prominently.

(http://www.artsboard.sk.ca/News/Archives/Headline%20News/news_HL_200110_carol.shtml)

***Michael Greyeyes (Muskeg Lake Cree Nation):** Originally from Saskatchewan, Michael Greyeyes is an actor, educator, choreographer, and director. Michael graduated from The National Ballet School in 1984 before joining The National Ballet of Canada in 1987. He moved to New York City in 1990 following an invitation to join the company of renowned choreographer Eliot Feld as a soloist. Soon after, Greyeyes began developing his own dance creations. In addition to concert dance, Michael's choreography has been seen on film and television and in traditional text-based theatre. In 1996, Michael was the subject of a CBC documentary entitled, *He Who Dreams: Michael Greyeyes on the Pow Wow Trail*, which documented his journey home, as he learned how he might use traditional Native dance as a basis for a more personal form of choreography. As an actor, Michael has been featured in films such as *Crazy Horse*, *Dance Me Outside*, *Dreamkeeper*, *Skinwalkers* and most recently, *Passchendaele*. In 2007, Michael created a duet for two Grass Dancers, "Untitled # 1535" for the Dusk Dances Festival in Toronto and, in November of that same year, Michael wrote, choreographed and performed in a Contemporary dance/Performance Art piece called *Triptych*, which is also the sixth episode in "Dancing With Spirit," a dance series created by director, Byron McKim for Bravo! Television. Greyeyes often collaborates with the Cree artist Kent Monkman on works such as the short film *A Nation is Coming* (1996), *Shooting Geronimo* (2007), and the film installation *Dance to the Berdashe* (2008). In 2009, Michael is working on the choreography for the first Cree opera *Pimooteewin: The Journey*, featuring a libretto by Tomson Highway and directing the Daniel David Moses' classic First Nations play *Almighty Voice and his Wife* being toured throughout North America and Europe by Native Earth Performing Arts. (<http://www.michael-greyeyes.com/>).

***Nadine Jackson (Bigstone Cree):** Nadine is an actor, dancer, and choreographer who currently lives in Toronto. She has had the pleasure of working with great companies like Roseneath Theatre, Red Sky Performance, Native Earth, The Blyth Festival, Magnus Theatre and Persephone Theatre. Nadine studied acting at Dalhousie University and

technical theatre at Ryerson University. She grew up as a competitive gymnast in the cold north of Yellowknife, NWT and continued her love for movement by studying jazz, modern, tap, ballet, butoh, and traditional dance. Recently, she was in New York City doing a mentorship with Muriel Miguel developing a one-woman performance piece with the support of a grant received from the Ontario Arts Council. She has performed in Dawn Dumount's play *Nicimis* (little brother) at the Toronto Fringe Festival and the Toronto New Ideas Festival in 2005 [from *Spirit Horse* playbill, Capitol Theater, 2009].

***Julia Jameison (Mohawk/Irish):** Julia is from the Six Nations reserve in Ontario and is the Artistic Director and Owner of the Julia Jamieson School for Performing Arts. As a graduate of the Banff Centre Aboriginal Dance Program; Centre for Indigenous Theatre, Toronto and York University, she is also a professional actor/dancer committed to the creation of socially conscious arts projects. She has traveled throughout North America performing in such pieces as *Tribe*, Indigenous Musical, Minnesota; *Bones: An Aboriginal Opera*, Banff, Alberta; *Spirits in The Sun* Festival, Phoenix, Arizona; *Ode Shkodeing*, Copenhagen, Denmark. As a renowned choreographer, she has most recently workshopped and showcased *Wavemaker* with Earth in Motion-World Indigenous Dance and *Tobacco Ties* with Native Earth Performing Arts. *Tobacco Ties* is inspired by the words of her late father and author, political activist, Gawithra of the Haudenosaunee Bear Clan. Julia's background in sociology allows her to brilliantly juxtapose early western male-philosophical thinkers with the journey to acceptance of the life/death cycle as she explores feminism, prostitution, and birth. Current work explores the writing of Six Nations Native Poetess E. Pauline Johnson from an introspective perspective. After completing a Master of Music in Voice at the University of Regina, Julia continued her training at The Banff Centre and apprenticed as a lyric mezzo-soprano with the Montreal Opera. She continued to study and perform in London, New York, and San Diego, before returning to Canada to perform in the long running Pantages Theatre production of *Phantom of the Opera*. While in Toronto, Julia completed the MFA Acting program at York University, moving on from there to do a couple of seasons with the Stratford Festival. Upon returning to Saskatchewan, Julia performed and music directed at the Globe Theatre and Dancing Sky; she has taught and directed in the drama department at the University of Saskatchewan and is currently teaching and contributing to curriculum development for a new Ensemble Theatre Arts Program at the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company. (<http://www.myspace.com/jjperformingarts>).

***Belinda James (San Juan Pueblo):** Classically trained in Ballet and Horton technique, Belinda danced for the Santa Fe Opera before joining the New Jersey Ballet Company in 1984. Her choreography is influenced by the mythology and history of the Native Americans. She has studied ballet in New York City since 1979 and has performed throughout the United States. With dual interests in dance and art, Belinda James of Ohkay Owingeh, New Mexico, relocated to New York City in 1980 to pursue her goals. She has danced throughout the United States for ballet and opera companies and has been choreographing since 1985. Combining both art forms, Ms. James produces "dance art" and choreographs works related to her Native American heritage. As a fine artist, her work has been exhibited in such venues as the Gallery at Lincoln Center, the Americana West Gallery, the Limelight, the 82nd St. Barnes & Noble Bookstore as well as the

original Ballet Shop (all in Manhattan), and at the 21st Century Fox Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In addition to being granted the Art Directors' Club "Award for Graphic Excellence," she designs posters, playbills, and greeting cards and also works as an illustrator and photographer for magazines and other printed works. Belinda creates, writes, and dances in New York City and is currently working on a book about her life and her experiences being forced to attend an 'all-Indian' Catholic high school. (<http://www.ideasandsociety.ucr.edu/redrhythms/performers.htm#james>).

***Rosalie Daystar Jones: (Blackfeet/Pembina Chippewa):** Currently active as artist director of her company (Daystar Contemporary Dance-Drama of Indian America), a full-time instructor within the Indigenous Studies Program at Trent University in Peterborough Ontario, Daystar also continues to write, choreograph, and dance. Daystar was born on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana and her Native American ancestry is Pembina Chippewa, as passed through her mother's side. Daystar says: "Native American people have volumes to speak, not only to non-Indian society, but to each other as well. I personally feel that all of us, Indian and non-Indian alike, could benefit, especially now, from Native American philosophy and life experience. I intend to continue not only as a performer, teacher, and choreographer, but also as a catalyst for inter-cultural understanding." She holds a master's degree in dance from the University of Utah and studied at the Juilliard School in NYC as a scholarship student of José Limón. She was responsible for the revitalization of the performing arts department at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, during the early 1990's, when she was chair of the department. Jones has pioneered the concept of "native modern dance" throughout the United States over the past 30 years. She is the author of the "Native Modern Dance: Beyond Tribe and Tradition," a chapter she wrote for the publication *Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions* (1993). Her script *No Home But The Heart* was published this spring by UCLA in *Keepers of the Morning Star: An Anthology of Native Women's Theater* (2003). In 1995, she received a two-year NEA Choreographer's Fellowship. In 2001 and 2003, Daystar/Rosalie Jones was also a guest instructor and artist in residence for the Aboriginal Arts Program at the Banff Centre for the Arts (Alberta, Canada). (<http://www.daystardance.com/east2.html> and <http://www.trentu.ca/academic/nativestudies/faculty.html>).

***Margo Kane (Cree/Saulteaux):** Margo Kane is an interdisciplinary artist and a leading figure in the Aboriginal performing arts. Over the past forty years, she has been recognized as a storyteller, dancer, singer, animator, video and installation artist, director, producer, writer, and teacher. Her desire to create work that has meaning for her people is the catalyst for her extensive travels into both rural and urban Aboriginal communities across Canada; it fuels her commitment to a performance that is not only socially relevant but empowering, as well. Her work is nationally and internationally acclaimed, especially her piece *Moonlodge* that is recognized as a Canadian Aboriginal classic in theatre. This one-woman performance was originally presented in the oral tradition to Aboriginal audiences and performed to high acclaim in Canada, the United States, Europe, and Australia. It was adapted for CBC Radio and published in 1994. Much of her work grows out of physically-based exploration of story, using techniques that include "vocal and voice, authentic movement, sourcing, rivers work and improvisation." Her solo

performance pieces include: *Reflections in the Medicine Wheel*, *O Elijah, We've Always Been Here*, *Childhood Burial*, *Memories Springing/Waters Singing*, *I Walk I Remember*, and *Confessions of an Indian Cowboy*. As Aboriginal Artistic Director of Spirit Song Native Theatre School in Vancouver in the 1980s, Kane began to develop curricula based on stories and legends of Aboriginal communities in the region. She worked with Aboriginals as a facilitator with the National Native Role Model Program, using theatre as a community development tool. She supported other trained facilitators in their work with communities in health and wellness programs, using her dramatic training along with activities, games, and laughter. Concerned with issues of cultural access, she initiated the Vancouver forum *Telling Our Own Story: Appropriation and Indigenous Writers/Artists* in 1989–90. In 1990, Kane was invited to join two committees of the Canada Council: *Racial Equality* and *First Peoples' Advisory*. In 1991, she developed the First Nations' Access Program with the Satellite Video Exchange in Vancouver. She envisioned a new performance using a video installation that enabled experimentation with form and an interdisciplinary approach, extending from Aboriginal performance culture and the integration of image and performer. It was with her thesis work *The River - Home* that Margo formed Full Circle: First Nations Performance in 1992 to create and enable opportunities for Aboriginal artists, writers and performers. (<http://www.fullcircleperformance.ca/content.asp?chapterID=5&subchapterID=47&pageID=136>).

***Don Kavanaugh (Anishinabe):** Kavanaugh is a traditional dancer and theatre artist and the former Executive Director of the Lake of the Woods Ojibway Cultural Centre. He participated in the Theatre Arts Program in 1999 and in the summer of 2000 was production coordinator for Aboriginal Dance Training and assistant stage manager for *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera's* workshop production. He went on to perform in a 2001 workshop production of *Miinigoowezwin...The Gift*. He has been instrumental in the acting, play development, and stage management training of high school students in the community of Grassy Narrows. More recently, Don performed in the Christine Friday O'Leary piece *Passage* at NOZHEM: First Peoples Performance Space at Trent University in 2007 [from Banff *Miinigoowezwin...The Gift* from 2002].

***Moscelyne Larkin-Jasinski (Peoria/Shawnee/Russian):** Ballerina and instructor Moscelyne Larkin was born January 14, 1925, in Miami, Oklahoma. Her mother trained her in ballet until her mid-teens; then she traveled to New York to study under Mikhail Mordkin, Anatole Vilzak-Shollar, and Vincenzo Celli. At fifteen she joined the Original Ballet Russe, first as a soloist and then as a ballerina touring throughout Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Larkin met her future husband, Roman Jasinski, *premier danseur*, while she was dancing for the Ballet Russe. The couple continued to tour during World War II. After returning to the United States, Larkin-Jasinski joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1948 and danced many leading roles. She was featured often as the prima ballerina at Radio City Music Hall in New York. In 1954, she toured Asia, performing in Alexandra Danilova's "Great Movements in Dance." After the birth of their son, the family moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma to operate a ballet school. There they formed the Tulsa Civic Ballet and School, now called the Tulsa Ballet Theatre. She was honored at the Oklahoma Indian Ballerina Festivals in 1957 and 1967, performing with three of the

state's other American Indian ballerinas. Larkin was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1978, received the *Dance Magazine* Award in 1988, and was named Outstanding Indian by the Council of American Indians. She also served on the dance advisory panel of the State Arts Council, introduced dance into the Tulsa Public Schools, taught ballet at the University of Tulsa, and instructed American Indian children in dance, through the Tulsa Indian Council. Quapaw-Cherokee composer Louis Ballard composed a ballet, entitled *The Four Moons* for the Oklahoma Indian Ballerina Festival of 1967. The ballet honors the so-called Five Moons: Larkin, Yvonne Chouteau, Rosella Hightower, and sisters Maria Tallchief and Marjorie Tallchief. It consists of four solos that evoke each dancer's tribal heritage. Chickasaw artist, Mike Larsen, included Larkin in his monumental mural, *Flight of Spirit*, on display in the Great Rotunda of the Oklahoma State Capitol Rotunda in Oklahoma City.
(<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/L/LA023.html>).

***Sandra Laronde (Teme Augama Anishinabe):** an award-winning writer, performer, and artistic producer, who draws on her identity as a member of the Teme-Augama-Anishinabe (People of the Deep Water) of Temagami, in northern Ontario, to inspire her work. Founder and artistic director of Red Sky Performance, founder and Artistic Producer for Native Women in the Arts (1993–2007), founder and former co-artistic director of Native Earth Performing Arts. Laronde has won numerous awards: the Ontario Good Citizenship Medal (2006), the Paul D. Fleck Fellowship in the Arts from The Banff Centre (2006), the Governor-General's Canadian Leadership program (2004), the Toronto City Council's Aboriginal Affairs Award (2004), and she is listed in Canada's Who's Who. She has also worked with, and has been influenced by, choreographers Peter Chin (*Dancing Americas*), Michael Greyeyes (*Buffalo Jump*), Georgina Martínez, and Denise Fujiwara (*Murmuring Blood*). Currently, she is the director of Aboriginal Arts Dance Program at The Banff Centre, but divides her time between Banff, Alberta and her duties with Red Sky in Toronto, Ontario.
(<http://www.redskyperformance.com/red.sky.html/opening.frameset.new.html>).

***Jani Lauzon (Métis-Cree/Ojibway/French):** Jani Lauzon is a multi-disciplinary performing artist who believes that creative expression is as much a spiritual journey as it is a musical or theatrical one. She grew up in British Columbia's East Kootenays where she inherited the cultural wealth of her parents' Métis and Scandinavian ancestries. Her father was a pianist and painter, while her mother was a doll maker and mathematician. Her foster parents, both teachers and artistically inclined, nourished Jani's propensity for drama and music. She became a skilled performer on the Western flute. Beginning her career in the late 1980s, she gave virtuosic, energetic performances performing on the Western flute, a variety of Native flutes and singing her own Blues-infused songs. More recently she has developed the acting and writing side of her career while continuing to compose and perform music. Jani Lauzon is a Dora nominated actress, a three time Juno nominated singer/songwriter and the creator of several children's television puppet characters. Known as Grannie on the *Mr. Dress-up Show*, she played Lili/Little Star on *Little Star*, Pa Foley on *Big Comfy Couch*, and Sasha on *Prairie Berry Pie*. In 2004, she won a Gemini for her role as Seeka in the series *Wumpa's World*, the first Métis puppeteer to garner the award. She is a co-founder of Turtle Gals Performance ensemble.

Her play *On the Toad to Freedom* was a hit at Weesagechak Begins to Dance XVI. Through The Barker Fairley Distinguished Writer-in-Residence Fellowship at the University of Toronto, Lauzon is further developing this play. Recent theatre performances include *Diva Ojibway* and *Son of Avash* at Native Earth, plus *Almighty Voice and his Wife* at the Great Canadian Theatre Company. Television credits include *Destiny Ridge* and *Conspiracy of Silence*. As a director she produced *The Vagina Monologues* for Native Earth and *Waiora* at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre. Jani Lauzon lives in Toronto with her partner, artist, and songwriter Arthur Renwick and their daughter, Tara. (<http://www.janilauzon.com/>).

***Tanya Lukin Linklater (Alutiiq Nation of Kodiak Island, Alaska):** Tanya Lukin Linklater (M. Ed.) comes from the Native Villages of Port Lions and Afognak in the Kodiak archipelago of southwestern Alaska. Tanya, originally an actor, began dancing in Toronto in 1998. She has attended Stanford University (B.A. Honors), the Centre for Indigenous Theatre, and University of Alberta (M.Ed.) where her Master's paper focused on traditional Alutiiq and Yup'ik performance art. Her choreographic work (*Qalnga'aq cali kumagyak* and *Kumagyak I*) draws upon modern dance, yoga, Alaska Native stories and songs, and Powwow dance. Based in Edmonton, she is a practicing performance artist, choreographer, and writer. Tanya trained in theatre and Native American Literature as a Mellon Fellow at Stanford, where she received the Louis Sudler Prize in the Creative and Performing Arts. She has trained in contemporary aboriginal dance at The Banff Centre for the Arts (2001–2003), at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto (1998–1999), and in modern dance and Noguchi Taiso at Mile Zero Dance (2003, 2005). Her performance highlights include *Imam Sua* (a dance in four parts telling an Alutiiq origin story) at Indigenous Dance Quest; at Syncrude Next Generation Arts Festival's dancefest, and at Agnguartukut: We are Dancing, a festival of Alutiiq performance in Kodiak, Alaska; *Woman and Water* as a resident artist at Visualeyeyz: Latitude 53's festival of performance art; *Nunarpet Una* at the opening event for Visualeyeyz: The City; *Ika lluk* at Syncrude Next Generation Arts Festival's dancefest, and *Honour Songs* at the 2007 Edmonton Poetry Festival and Word! Symposium. Tanya has worked as an artistic intern in the Aboriginal Dance Program at The Banff Centre for the Arts, directed and acted in Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* for the Edmonton Fringe Festival, and was a guest performing arts mentor at the Enow'kin Centre in Penticton, British Columbia. In 2008, she premiered *Murmur* at Expanse Movement Arts Festival, presented a revised version of *Woman and Water* in Edmonton, and sang at the 35th Annual Skookum Jim Folklore Show at the Yukon Arts Centre. Also in 2008, she was an artist in residence at Trent University, and performed at Nozhem: First Peoples Performance Space. She also performed at "Actions of Transfer: Women's Performance in the Americas" at UCLA, and presented on a panel titled "Performing Practice" at the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective's symposium in Vancouver. Tanya returns home often to work with Alutiiq youth and elders in song, dance, and storytelling as a culturally re-constructive and creative process. Tanya publishes and presents at international conferences on Alutiiq dance's underlying cosmology and contemporary forms and is a dedicated educator, having instructed at University of Alberta in Aboriginal Literature and Aboriginal Dance. Her forthcoming publications include "Re-membling, re-imagining, re-telling Alutiiq Dance" in an anthology on contemporary American Indian dance methodologies.

“Avva’s Telling,” a critical essay was published by Isuma (Independent Inuit Film) in The Journals of Knud Rasmussen: A Sense of Memory and High-definition Inuit Storytelling in 2008. Tanya’s artistic practice is informed by her understanding of traditional Alutiiq performance art, contemporary aboriginal art history and literary criticism, and framing of her domesticity. She is a former board member of Latitude 53: Visual Culture. (<http://www.terminus1525.ca/studio/about/5533>).

***Jerry Longboat (Turtle Clan, Mohawk/Cayuga Nations):** Jerry is from the Six Nations of the Grand River in Southern Ontario. He holds a BFA from the University of Michigan with a focus in the visual arts. He has enjoyed a professional career as an artist, actor, dancer, storyteller, and choreographer. His work developed through an interdisciplinary approach focused on layering and weaving elements of Aboriginal performance culture. He is a graduate of the 1996–2000, Chinook Winds Aboriginal Dance Project programs at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta as both a dancer and choreographer. His first choreography, *Seeing Voices*, premiered in July 1997. Later, he lived in Vancouver where he trained and danced with Kokoro Dance Theatre and developed Contemporary First Peoples dance. Longboat writes, "My cultural traditions teach an understanding of the body as Ancestral wisdom and memory. Indigenously rooted within are centuries of ancestral memory and understanding of the Peacemakers message of the Good Mind and the Great Peace. With this, I cultivate and nurture my body as a tool and vessel to resonate with the ancient languages passed from generation to generation through heritage and birthright: the blood, bones, hair and tissue. When I dance from my center, I enter the eternal unfolding of cultural expression and my body is the orator of languages beyond words. The languages of earth and spirit, revealed in the breadth of Haudenosaunee song, dance and narrative traditions." [from *Raven’s Shadow* program at the Studio Theatre Toronto Harbourfront Centre in 2001]. Jerry currently works as a Dance Section officer at the Canada Council helping Aboriginal dance professionals gain access to funding.

***Geraldine Manossa (Bigstone Cree):** Geraldine Manossa is a member of the Bigstone Cree Nation in Northern Alberta. She completed a Master of Arts degree from the University of Lethbridge, specializing in the evolution of Cree Indigenous knowledge and performance and since has written about Indigenous performance methodologies and showcased her work at various venues and festivals across Canada. Presently, she is an instructor at the *En'owkin Centre*, an educational institute dedicated to cultural arts and ecological initiatives and training. She is a recent member of the National Dance Advisory Council for Canada Council for the Arts. A recent work, *Iskwew* ("woman" in the Plains Cree language), created and performed by Geraldine Manossa, was inspired by the work of Anishinaabekwe (Ojibway) multi-media artist, Rebecca Bellmore. *Iskwew* explores the delicate, unspoken rhythms of womanhood. Manossa uses movement and stark metal sculptural elements to gently suggest the passages of womanhood but the central premise of the dance is much more sinister. Manossa explores her responses to the Pickton farm West Coast murders of predominantly First Nations women missing from the streets of Vancouver. The case relies heavily on DNA analysis of the remains. *Iskwew* examines some of the themes around this particular archaeological dig and DNA in

respect to the found objects and stories embedded in the landscape.
(<http://www.trentu.ca/news/daily/archive/060220paris.htm>).

***Georgina Martinez (Zapotec/Mexican):** Georgina Martinez has been a driving force for the creation of a unique dance form, an integration of a strongly, poetic and feminine style with ancestral knowledge. From 1981 - 1986, she studied dance and choreography in the United States, most notably in Chicago. Returning to México, her training and artistic vision focused on the exploration of her personal world view with the history, rituals, and iconography of her indigenous heritage. Her work has been presented since 1989 in dance venues and festivals in Mexico, the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Philippines. She was a program director and choreographer for the Banff Aboriginal Dance Program in 1998 and 2002 [from Banff *Miinigoowezwin...The Gift* from 2002].

***Muriel Miguel (Kuna/Rappahannock):** Miguel was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. Muriel was an original member of Joseph Chaikan's Open Theatre, one of the leading alternative theatre groups in New York in the 1960's. She studied modern dance with Alwin Nickolai at the Henry Street Playhouse. She, along with her sisters Gloria Miguel and Lisa Mayo, helped found the Spiderwoman Theater group in 1975. In 2003, Muriel was the program director for The Aboriginal Dance Program at The Banff Centre where she had taught for seven years, choreographing *Throw Away Kids* in 1999 and *She Knew She Was She* in recent years. She has directed for Nightwood Theatre in Toronto. In the fall of 2002, she directed *The Scrubbing Project* at Factory Theatre with Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble. Muriel is the co-founder of the Thunderbird American Indian Dancers in New York City. She originated the role of Philomena Moosetail in the *Rez Sisters* and has performed the roles of Aunt Shadie in *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* for The Firehall Arts Centre in Vancouver and Spirit Woman in *Bones: An Aboriginal Dance Opera* at the Banff Centre 2001 Summer Festival. Muriel has created two one woman shows: *Hot' N' Soft* and *Trail of the Otter*. In March 2003, she was the first Lipinsky resident at San Diego State University Women's' Studies Department where she wrote and presented the first draft of her new one woman show, *Red Mother*. Muriel was an assistant professor of drama at Bard College for four years. She teaches on an ongoing basis at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto. She has developed four shows for The Minnesota Native American AIDS Task Force working with inner city native youth. In 1998, Muriel was selected for the Bread and Roses International Native Women of Hope poster. She has also been awarded an honorary doctorate in fine arts from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio – the site of the Native Women's Playwrights' Archives. In 2002, she received a Fleck Fellowship in the Arts from the Banff Centre to complete work on *Persistence of Memory*, a Spiderwoman Theater work. In 2007, she presented a new theatre work, *Red Mother*, as part of a two-week residency at NOZHEM: First Peoples Performance Space at Trent University.
(<http://www.ideasandsociety.ucr.edu/redrhythms/miguel.htm>).

***Louise Mofsie (Hopi/Winnebago):** Louis is the leader of The Heyna Second Sons singers, the Artistic Director of the Thunderbird American Indian Dancers in New York, and a member of the Hopi and Winnebago tribes. He received his master's degree from Hofstra University and taught art for 35 years at the Meadowbrook School in East

Meadow, New York. Mofsie has curated exhibits at the Whitney Museum of American Art and other venues. He has been a guest artist at the Walker Art Center and has shown his work at the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma at the Woodards Museum and the Gallup Ceremonials, both in Gallup, New Mexico. Mofsie has illustrated the books *The Hopi Way*, *Coyote Tales*, and *Teepee Tales*; he has choreographed productions for the Lincoln Center Repertory Company, The Mercer Arts Center, and the Theater for the New City. He has made several recordings, including *Songs and Dances of the American Indian* and *Authentic USA 1* and has lectured at the American Museum of Natural History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Columbia University, Wesleyan University, and New York University, among others. He has composed three original scores and developed work in collaboration with Tom Pearson/Third Rail Projects at the Theater for the New City, The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, La MaMa E.T.C., and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. In 2009, Mofsie performed alongside Tom Pearson and Donna Ahmadi in *Mesa 2.0*, a dance and music piece responding to their shared travels in the southwest and the passing of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. [prepared by NMAI for performance of *Mesa 2.0*].

*** Monique Mojica (Kuna/Rappahannock/French):** Currently based in Toronto, Monique Mojica is an actor and playwright whose life and work reflect a commitment to strengthening the continental links among the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Daughter of Gloria Miguel, another educator, singer, actor, and co-founder of Spiderwoman Theatre. Mojica was raised among her extended Indigenous family. She identifies as both North American (Rappahannock) and Central American Aboriginal (Kuna) and believes that across the continent there are shared political struggles and strong cultural commonalities. Her earliest years were spent in Manhattan among the Bohemian artists, painters, dancers, and musicians of the 1950s, and among the “show Indians” who visited her family when passing through New York. From the time she was three years old, her mother enrolled her in dance, drama, and music theory classes at the Henry Street Settlement House and in visual arts programs at the Museum of Modern Art. One of her earliest dance teachers was Murray Louis of the Alwin Nikolai Company. At eight, Mojica moved with her family to Stanford, California, where her father completed his doctorate, and where she continued to study dance and music and participated in a children’s theatre guild. At seventeen, she left home and went to Iroquois country (the Onondaga reservation in New York), before joining the American Indian Movement. After the siege at Wounded Knee in 1973, she worked as part of the Wounded Knee Legal Defense Offence Committee and moved to Oklahoma to live with a Wounded Knee activist. Eventually, she became disillusioned with the gap between the stated ideals of AIM and the membership’s actual treatment of one another, particularly with instances she witnessed and experienced of violence against Native women within the movement. In the mid-1970s, Mojica returned to school to study dance and theatre at the State University of New York in Buffalo, where she met and married the Onondaga photographer Jeffery Thomas. In 1977, she gave birth to their son Ehren Ramon. Monique Mojica is a Kuna and Rappahannock actor and playwright based in Toronto. Her theatre credits include: *Red River* by Daniel David Moses and Jim Millan, *Mango Chutney*, *The Rez Sisters* by Tomson Highway, *Jessica* by Maria Campbell and Linda Griffiths, *Sucker Falls* by Drew Hayden Taylor, *Governor of the Dew* by Floyd Favel,

The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God by Djanet Sears, and *Home is My Road* by Florence Gibson. She also played Ariel in Skylight Theatre's *The Tempest*. Her film and television credits include: *Smoke Signals*, *Traders*, *Earth: Final Conflict*, *La Femme Nikita*, and *Conspiracy of Silence*. She was also seen for three seasons as the host/storyteller on Vision TV's *Creation*, and for three seasons as the regular Wednesday night host on Vision TV's *Vision Voices*. Nightwood Theatre and Theatre Passe Muraille produced Monique's *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots* in 1990, directed by Muriel Miguel, with dramaturgy by Djanet Sears and Kate Lushington, and featuring Monique Mojica with Alejandra Nunez as musician /composer. The play weaves together past and present, North and South America, history, documentary and myth, satirizes colonization and celebrates Native women as creators and healers. It was published by Women's Press in 1991 and included in the anthology of First Nations drama in English, *Staging Coyote's Dream* (2003). It has also been produced on CBC Radio. Her radio play, *Birdwoman and The Suffragettes: a story of Sacajawea* has also been produced by the CBC. Monique co-founded the Food for Chiapas Campaign in 1994 and remains an active supporter of the Zapatista struggle through a guerilla theatre troupe, Zapateatro! Along with colleagues, Jani Lauzon and Michelle St. John, she was part of Turtle Gals, a Native women's performance ensemble.
(<http://www.canadiantheatre.com/dict.pl?term=Mojica%2C%20Monique>).

***Marrie Mumford (Chippewa/Cree):** Marrie Mumford, appointed the Canada Research Chair in Aboriginal Arts and Literature at Trent, is the first artistic director of Trent's First Peoples Performance Space. She has spent over 25 years in professional theatre in Canada and the United States as an actor, director, producer, and instructor. She taught at acting studios and at the University of Toronto after earning a master's degree from Brandeis and a bachelor's degree from the University of Alberta. She has worked in Toronto with the Native Earth Performing Arts Inc., Tarragon Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Factory Theatre and Toronto Free Theatre, and nationally, with De-Ba-Jeh-Mu-Jig Theatre Group, Theatre Calgary, Citadel Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. From 1992–1995, Marrie worked with the Ontario Ministry of Culture to implement a cultural industries strategy for Aboriginal Arts organizations. From 1995–2003, as Artistic Director of the Aboriginal Arts Program at the Banff Centre, she founded and established innovative programs such as the Aboriginal Dance program, the Creation of New Works program, the Aboriginal Women's Voices music project, the Aboriginal New Media program, the Aboriginal Screenwriters' Program and the Aboriginal Curators series at the Walter Phillips Gallery. Marrie also participated on the First Peoples Advisory Committee for the Canada Council, juried the Dreamspeaker Festival in Edmonton and the Sundance Festival in Utah and been a member of the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards Committee. In 1996, Marrie was honored with the first James Buller Award for the Advancement of Aboriginal Theatre by the Centre for Indigenous Theatre. She has also been a contributor to many publications including *Chinook Winds*; *Dancing Bodies*, *Living Histories*; *Staking LAND Claims*. (<http://www.trentu.ca/academic/nativestudies/nozhem.htm>).

***Christine Friday O'Leary (Teme-Augami Anishinabe):** Christine Friday - O'Leary began her professional career in 1992 with John Kim Bell's production of *In the Land of*

Spirits. This led to a three year contract with Desrosiers Dance Theatre, touring across Canada, Aruba, and the United States. She is currently a dancer, teacher, and choreographer from Northern Ontario. She has toured with several dance companies across North America and is a recipient of numerous dance awards. Her solo dance piece entitled *Spirits, Beings and Life Forces* combines First Nation traditional and contemporary dance forms to explore how Anishinabe (Ojibway) teachings and legends which shape and influence one's character. She is also the founder of Pu-Kawiss Productions. Her piece *Passage* was featured in the Bravo series *Dancing with Spirit*. The work explores how passion and forces of this world influences oneself. Traditional Native stories can parallel this inspiration and bring forth teachings and legends to the present time where ones own spiritual force and nature can be awakened. (<http://www.soaringheartpictures.com/aboutquest.htm>).

***Michelle Olson (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation):** Michelle Olson is the Artistic Director of Raven Spirit Dance. Her work as a performer and creator embrace both realms of theatre and dance. She received a bachelor of university studies at the University of New Mexico and continued her training at the Aboriginal Arts Program at the Banff Centre and with the Full Circle First Nations Performance Ensemble Training Program. Other choreographic credits include the dance piece for young audiences, *Raven Restores the Sun to the Sky*, the theatre/dance work *The Place Between* in collaboration with Lisa C. Ravensbergen and Yvette Nolan, the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards 2006, the dance/puppet piece *Luk T'äga Näche'*, and the Vancouver Opera's production of *Mozart's The Magic Flute*. She also choreographed for Native Earth Performing Art's production of *The Death of a Chief*, which premiered at the National Arts Centre in 2008. She is looking forward to her site-specific work, *Tawan (Illuminations)* in collaboration with dancers from the Eagle Song Dancers. She has performed across Canada and overseas with Orchesis Modern Dance, body voice dance collective, Chinook Winds Dance Company and UNM Dance Company. Along with Muriel Miguel, Michelle Olson also created *Evening in Paris*. Inspired by the remarkable life of Molly Spotted Elk and the lives of our grandmothers, this dance/theatre piece uncovers and honors the complexity of Aboriginal women's experience. (<http://www.autochtones.ca/documents/candanse2008-en.pdf>).

***Tom Pearson (Cohaire/Creek/Eastern Band Cherokee):** Tom is a BESSIE award-winning choreographer working in a variety of media that includes contemporary dance, site-specific performance, film, visual art, and large-scale installations. Along with Zach Morris and Jennine Willett, he is co-director of Third Rail projects, a collective of artists based in New York City. He has been commissioned to create original works for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; Danspace Project; the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council; and the Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation among others. Additionally, his work has been presented in New York by World Financial Center, Dance Theater Workshop, La MaMa E.T.C., the National Museum of the American Indian, Dixon Place, Thunderbird American Indian Dancers at the Theater for the New City, The New York International Fringe Festival, Dance New Amsterdam, and on tour. Pearson received his master's degree in performance studies from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and his BFA in dance from Florida State University. He has taught as an adjunct

professor of dance at the Florida School of the Arts; as a movement instructor for Opera Workshop at LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts (through New York City Opera's Arts-in-Education program); as the Dance Program Coordinator at the award-winning LEVELS teen center in Long Island; and through lectures and/or master classes at New York University; Fordham/Alvin Ailey; Swarthmore College; and Florida State University as well as a variety of other programs. Additionally, Pearson's writings on dance have been published in *Dance Magazine*, *Dance Spirit*, *Time Out New York Kids*, and several online publications. In addition to his work in the contemporary arts, Pearson, who is of Coharie and Muscogee heritage, also participates in traditional American Indian events as a dancer and singer. In 2009, Pearson performed alongside Louis Mofsie and Donna Ahmadi in *Mesa 2.0*, a dance and music piece responding to their shared travels in the southwest and the passing of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. (www.thirdrailprojects.com).

***Alejandro Ronceria (Suesca/Sogamoso/Columbian):** Alejandro Ronceria is a director/choreographer/producer with a growing national and international profile. In 2004, he was nominated for a Dora Award for The Artshow by Native Earth Performing Arts. In 2003, he produced, directed, and choreographed *A Jaguar's Tale*, a dance musical in Mexico. In 1996, Alejandro co-founded the first Aboriginal Dance Program in Canada at the Banff Centre for the Arts. This pioneering program brought together contemporary and traditional Aboriginal and Inuit dancers and teachers for the first time. From 1996 - 2001, as the co-Artistic Director/choreographer at Banff, he created these productions: *Bones a Dance Opera*, *Dance for a New Century*, *Dances Around the Fire*, *Light and Shadows*, and *Chinook Winds*. Alejandro has directed and choreographed numerous dance, music and theatre productions including *Nunavut*, a live event for broadcast and *Tribe*, an Aboriginal dance musical. He wrote and directed the acclaimed film, *A Hunter Called Memory*, which premiered at The Toronto International Film Festival in 2003 and was invited to prestigious festivals worldwide including The Sundance Film Festival and Clermont Ferrand in France. (<http://www.earthinmotion.com/aboutus.html>).

***Michelle St. John (Cree):** Michelle St. John is a two-time Gemini Award winning actor with more than 25 years of experience in film, television, theatre, voice, and music. Film credits include: CBC's *Where the Spirit Lives*, Miramax's *Smoke Signals*, CBS's *Northern Exposure* and Sherman Alexie's *The Business of Fancydancing*. Theatre credits include: Darrell Dennis' *Trickster of 3rd Avenue East*, Drew Hayden Taylor's *Sucker Falls* and Marie Clements' *Unnatural and Accidental Women* and *Copper Thunderbird*. In March 2008, Michelle portrayed Cassius in Native Earth Performing Arts' production of *Death of a Chief* at the NAC and at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in Toronto. Michelle is a Co-Founder of Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble and with the Gals, co-created *The Scrubbing Project*, *The Triple Truth* and *The Only Good Indian...* As a vocalist Michelle has recorded dozens of radio and television jingles, theme songs, and voice-overs, and is writing songs for her first solo album. For two years, Michelle served as producer and host for *Red Tales*, a weekly Native literary show on Aboriginal Voices Radio. In the summer of 2008 Michelle toured Yvette Nolan's play *Annie Mae's Movement*, to New Zealand and Australia as part of the Honoring Theatre-Tri-International Tour. Most

recently she worked with co-composer Jennifer Kreisberg to create a new vocal score for WCT and NAC's co-production of *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* in Kamloops and Ottawa. In 2009, Michelle will join Marie Clements and Evan Adams as an associate producer with Frog Girl Films. (<http://www.harbourfrontcentre.com/planetindigenus/advisory.cfm>).

***Daniel J. Secord (Ojibway/Mohawk/Scottish):** Daniel is a traditional dancer from the Mississaugas of the New Credit First nation in southern Ontario. He was a member of the Kanata Native Dance Theatre of Six Nations and did a three-month tour of Asia with them. Being part of the Chinook Winds Dance program at Banff in 1997 was Daniel's first experience with Contemporary dance. After the program, Daniel traveled to northern Ontario to research and learn social dances of the Ojibway nation as part of the training program for Kanata Native Dance Theatre. In 1998, Daniel returned to the Chinook Winds program where he danced in the Clifford E. Lee Choreography Award winning piece *Shaping Worlds as Fire Burns* by Gaétan Gingras (Elton et al. 1997, 94).

***Santee Smith (Turtle Clan, Mohawk Nation at Six Nations):** From the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario, Santee Smith works as a choreographer, dancer, and pottery designer. She is the Artistic Director and choreographer for Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, an innovative contemporary Aboriginal dance company. As an artist, she is committed to sharing traditional and contemporary stories of her indigenous culture. Santee holds a masters degree in dance from York University. She attended the National Ballet School from 1982–1988 and completed an honors degree in kinesiology at McMaster University. Santee was an integral part of the Aboriginal Dance Project at the Banff Centre for the Arts throughout 1997–2001 as a dancer, choreographer, assistant, and guest artist. In 1996, Smith began creating and performing her choreography including works *Kaha:wi, Here On Earth, A Story Before Time, A Constellation of Bones, and A Soldier's Tale, SkyWoman and Three Sisters*, for a National Film Board documentary called *The Gift*. Santee performed the leading role of First Woman in *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera*. Santee presents her work nationally and internationally and is the founder of the inaugural Living Ritual: World Indigenous Dance Festival. Her work was featured on *Freedom* series with host Robert Desrosier and *Dancing with Spirit* series by Soaring Heart Pictures both aired on Bravo! TV and *The Sharing Circle* aired on APTN. Santee's choreographic work has been highlighted on the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN), Seventh Generation and First Nations Arts and Music and Buffalo Tracks. Santee is the recipient of the K.M. Hunter Award for Dance and the Victor Martyn Lynch-Staunton Award for Dance 2006. Santee will be presenting KDT's evening of work, *Fragmented Heart* which includes, *Tripped Up Blues, The Threshing Floor* and *A Constellation of Bones* at the Canada Dance Festival 2008. Santee has been a guest teacher for Six Nations Community Youth Outreach Program, Canadian Children's Dance Theatre, The Iroquoian Indian Museum (New York), York University (dance department), and Red Roots Theatre. Santee's choreography has been showcased at numerous festivals: Toronto (ImagiNative Media Arts Festival), in the United States (Iroquois Festival, New York), and Indonesia (JakArt 2002, Canadian Embassy, Kalimantan). She was a featured artist at the Canadian Heritage National Gathering of Aboriginal Artistic Expression, Dream Weavers in Ottawa in 2002 and at the National Gathering of Aboriginal People and Tourism in Whistler BC in 2003. Santee was a

featured dancer and choreographer for the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, 10th Anniversary Special in 2003. Santee has created works for Dancers Dancing (Vancouver), Woodland Cultural Centre and Canadian Children's Dance Theatre. She is actively involved in aboriginal contemporary dance in Canada and the United States having performed and presented her work at the Aboriginal Dance Symposiums in Nova Scotia and Manitoba and at the Red Rhythms Conference at the University of California - Riverside. Santee successfully self-presented the world premiere production of *Kaha:wi* in 2004 at the Premiere Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto. Santee's *Kaha:wi* CD received two Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards nominations for Best Producer and Best Song and she was a featured performer. In 2005, Santee was a featured choreographer/dancer for the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards and for the CanDance Network's Aboriginal Choreographers Exchange, Montreal, Peterborough, Regina. (<http://www.kahawidance.org/santee.html>).

***Floyd Favel Starr (Cree):** Floyd works as a director, writer, and performer from the Poundmaker First Nation Reserve. After pursuing his studies at the Native Theatre School in Ontario, Favel Starr went overseas in 1984 to study at Tuak Teatret in Denmark, a theatrical school for the Aboriginal citizens of Greenland, Scandinavia, and North America. He also studied at Ricerca Theatre in Italy under the famed Polish Director Jerzy Grotowski. In Japan, he apprenticed in Butoh dance under Master Natsu Nakajima. He also spent time at the Native Theatre School in Toronto. He returned to Saskatchewan and founded the Red Tattoo Theatre, and, more recently, the Takwakin Performance Laboratory which "conducts scientific research into ritual, method, culture and cell structure" and is based in Regina. He is also one of the founders of the Centre for Indigenous Theatre. He recently spent time as the dance artist in residence with New Dance Horizons in Regina. Floyd has worked extensively across Canada at such venues as The Canada Dance Festival, the National Theatre School of Canada, The Citadel Theatre, New Dance Horizons, Globe Theatre, and Fujiwara Dance Inventions. Floyd has presented two shows at the Globe Theatre including *Governor of the Dew*, which he also directed. The play was performed at the National Arts Centre, where The Ottawa Citizen called it "moving and beautifully written." Starr's work in theatre is drawn from his culture, but seeks to transcend, as well as reflect it. "Art is universal," he says. "If we're all the time looking at ourselves, all we see is ourselves. We need to look elsewhere too." Starr's global vision took him to Siberia for one month to research a play based on the Tunguska meteorite explosion there in 1908. The resulting work was *The Sleeping Land*, an exploration of that event from a spiritual and cultural perspective of the Evenki, the indigenous people there. The play was presented as a workshop production in Montreal in May 2003, in partnership with the Montreal Playwrights Workshop, Ondinnok Theatre, and Starr's company, Takwakin. In the summer of 2003 he went back to Russia and Siberia to do final research. The show then premiered at the Globe Theatre in the 2003 - 04 season. Starr recently finished touring his dance show, *Nitaskenan*, which performed at Peterborough Dance, and L'Espace Tangente in Montreal. Despite many travels Favel Starr still sees Saskatchewan as his home working base [Steven Ross Smith article on website]. (<http://www.artsalliance.sk.ca/?p=advocacy&c=1&id=44>).

***Jeff Tabvahtah (Inuit):** Originally from Arviat, Nunavut, Jeff Tabvahtah has been performing for as long as he can remember. His first foray was in Trial at Fortitude Bay,

a CBC made for television movie, in the early 90s. Later, he appeared in *Qaggiq '95* and '96, an Inuit fashion show that took place at the Museum of Civilization in Hull. He took part in the 1997 Chinook Winds Program at Banff. From 1994 until 2007, he performed at many different venues doing traditional Inuit drum dancing. In addition to his traditional performances, Jeff has both acted in and written for Qaggiq Theatre's *Nuliayuk*, a traditional bilingual Inuktitut legend (2005), and a Beechwalker/CTV/APTN/NFB collaborative mockumentary, *Qallunaat: Why White People Are Funny*, which he also narrated. Along with his achievements in the performing arts, Jeff Tabvahtah has also co-authored two papers on aboriginal music: "Identity and Environment in Contemporary Inuit Music" and "Distant Beat of My Father's Drum: Contemporary Aboriginal Music and NCI-FM Broadcasting." (http://www.northernlightsottawa.com/bios/performers_nz.html).

***Maria Tallchief (Osage):** Born January 24, 1925 as Elizabeth Marie Tall Chief, Maria Tallchief was the first American Prima Ballerina. From 1942–1947, she danced with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, but she is best known for her time with the New York City Ballet from 1947–1965. She was born in Fairfax, Oklahoma to a father who was a chief of the Osage Nation and a Scottish-Irish mother. Her desire to pursue a career in the arts constituted a considerably challenging dream for a Native American child in those days. The family moved to Beverly Hills, California in 1933, where she studied ballet with Bronislava Nijinska for five years. Betty Marie continued to work hard and mastered technical skills well beyond her years. She premiered at the Hollywood Bowl. Tallchief left Los Angeles at the age of seventeen and auditioned in New York City. She joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and quickly rose to the status of featured soloist. At the suggestion of Agnes de Mille, she adopted the name Maria Tallchief. Georgian born Russian choreographer George Balanchine wrote several of his most famous works for her. The two were married on August 16, 1946; the marriage ended in 1952. She was the first *prima ballerina* of the New York City Ballet from 1947–1960, where Balanchine was the principal choreographer. Her performance of Balanchine's *The Firebird* in 1949 and their earlier collaboration at the Paris Opera elevated Maria Tallchief onto the world stage. She also originated the role of the *Sugarplum Fairy* in Balanchine's version of *The Nutcracker*. Tallchief continued to dance with the New York City Ballet and with other groups until her retirement in 1965. With her sister Marjorie, she founded the Chicago City Ballet in 1981 and served as its artistic director until 1987. Since 1990, she has been artistic advisor to Von Heidecke's Chicago Festival Ballet. When the governor of Oklahoma honored her that same year for her international achievements and her proud Native American identity, Maria Tallchief was named *Wa-Xthe-Thomba* ("Woman of Two Worlds"). She received the Kennedy Center Honors in 1996 along with Johnny Cash, Jack Lemmon, Edward Albee, and Benny Carter. In 1999, she was awarded the American National Medal of Arts by the National Endowment of the Arts in Washington D.C. On November 7, 2006, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York presented a special tribute to Maria Tallchief titled "A Tribute to Ballet Great Maria Tallchief." Maria Tallchief is honored in Tulsa, Oklahoma along with four other Native-American ballerinas (Yvonne Chouteau, Rosella Hightower, Moscelyne Larkin and Marjorie Tallchief) with a larger than life-size bronze statue entitled "The Five Moons" in the garden of the Tulsa Historical Society, Tulsa, Oklahoma. A one-hour documentary

entitled *Maria Tallchief* was completed in November 2007 by Sandy and Yasu Osawa of Upstream Productions in Seattle, Washington. The documentary will air on PBS stations at various times from 2007–2010. Tallchief made a cameo appearance as Pavlova in the film *Million Dollar Mermaid*, starring Esther Williams. She also appears in the feature documentary *Ballets Russes*.
(<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/T/TA006.html>).

***Marjorie Tallchief (Osage):** Born in 1927, Marjorie Tallchief is a Ballerina of Osage descent and the first American Indian to become premiere danseuse étoile in the Paris Opera. She was raised in Fairfax, Oklahoma, but as a young girl, she moved to Los Angeles, California, with her family to further her ballet training alongside her sister ballerina Maria Tallchief. After working under Ernest Belcher, Bronislava Nijinska, and David Linchine, Tallchief performed with various dance companies: the American Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo (1946–47), the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas (1948–55), Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet (guest artist, 1958–62), and the Harkness Ballet (prima ballerina, 1964–66). Her most acclaimed roles were performed in *Night Shadow* (1950), *Annabel Lee* (1951), *Idylle* (1954), *Romeo and Juliet* (1955), and *Giselle* (1957). Tallchief has served as director of dance for the Civic Ballet Academy in Dallas, Texas, and for the City Ballet in Chicago, Illinois. In 1989, she accepted the position of director of dance for the Harid Conservatory in Boca Raton, Florida, where she remained until her retirement in 1993. Her repertoire included classical and contemporary dance roles that exhibited her talents as one of the most versatile ballet dancers of the twentieth century. During her career, she performed throughout North America and Europe. She has danced for many heads of state, including John F. Kennedy, Charles de Gaulle, and Lyndon B. Johnson. In November of 1991, she was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. She is featured in a mural honoring the state's Indian ballerinas. The mural *Flight of Spirit*, by Chickasaw artist Mike Larson, is in the Great Rotunda of the Oklahoma Capitol. The University of Oklahoma in Norman also presented her with a distinguished service award in May 1992. Tallchief was married to artistic director, ballet master, and choreographer George Skibine on August 5, 1947 in Vichy, France. Their twin sons, Alexander and George, became attorneys working with Native American issues. Tallchief currently resides in Boca Raton, Florida.
(<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/T/TA007.html>).

***Alexandra Thompson (Métis):** Alexandra studied at Banff as part of the Aboriginal Theatre Ensemble in 1995 and as part of the Chinook Winds Aboriginal Dance Project in 1997. Her work includes *Percy's Edge* for the Festival of Native and Métis Plays at 25th St. Theatre, a Globe Theatre tour of *Sitting on Paradise*, and *The Dutchess* for Alberta Theatre Projects playRites Festival. She is a graduate of the Centre for Indigenous Theatre and George Brown Theatre School. She was co-founder of the Ahaso Med'sin So & Company, an Aboriginal Theatre company based in Saskatoon in the 90s. (Elton et al. 1997, 95).

***Raoul Trujillo (Apache/Ute/French Canadian/Latino):** An accomplished actor, dancer, choreographer, and director, Raoul Trujillo's career spans more than 25 years. Raoul's professional work as a choreographer and dancer has contributed to greater

appreciation of Native American dance worldwide. Between 1980 and 1986, he performed as principal dancer, soloist, and master teacher with the Nikolais Dance Theatre, touring five continents. He was the original choreographer and co-director of the American Indian Dance Theatre for its first two years. His work, *The Shaman's Journey*, was turned into a short dance film for PBS and Alive from Off Center. Trujillo received an Emmy Nomination for Best Performer as the host/narrator for the highly acclaimed New York Public Television series, *Dancing*. An actor for film and television for more than 16 years, he continues to dance and choreograph for dance artists and companies. He teaches the Nikolais technique all over the world, as well as technique based on Native dance vocabulary merging with Nikolais and yoga. He explores tribal, mythological and Tantric dance art forms in his work. Raoul's extensive acting career includes films such as *Apocalypto*, *Black Robe*, *Highlander III*, and *Shadow of the Wolf*. Other acting roles include the lead in TV series *Destiny Ridge*, ABC mini-series *Black Fox* (co-starring Christopher Reeve), and guest appearances on popular shows such as *La Femme Nikita*, *The Rez*, *JAG*, *Lonesome Dove*, and many more. In 2009, Raoul Trujillo can be seen in his role as Hernan Prado, in Taylor Hackford's *Love Ranch* alongside Helen Mirren and Joe Pesci. (www.raoultrujilloinfo.com).

***Troy Emery Twigg (Kainai Blackfoot):** Troy Emery Twigg is from the Kainai Tribe of the Blackfoot Confederacy in Southern Alberta, Canada. Troy graduated from the University of Lethbridge in 2003 with a BFA in theatre and dramatic arts. His research as a graduate student of dance at York University investigated the metamorphosis of traditional Blackfoot songs and dances and how that transcends into contemporary visual and performing arts. In 2004, he choreographed *Omao'pii: Shut-Up! Silence, Be Quiet!* This work explored the issues of assimilation tactics imposed upon the Blackfoot People by the Canadian government. In 2007, Troy worked with other Blackfoot artists such as Dr. Joane Cardinal-Schubert on an original choreographed dance work titled *Pulse* at the Banff Centre in Alberta. (<http://www.yorku.ca/wda/TO%20artists%20bios.htm>).

Schools and Organizations

***Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts (Toronto, Ontario):** ANDPVA's mandate is to provide access and to stimulate and promote creativity in the arts for artists/creators/producers of Native ancestry working in any discipline. They do so by facilitating workshop and training opportunities, programming events, information services and networking opportunities; by advocating for Native art and Native artists, creators and producers; by rendering experienced and informed counsel, and by providing professional opportunities – to ensure Native art and artists a place of integrity within the Native and non Native community. ANDPVA has a 35-year history of being the place where people go to meet Native artists and to further their careers. Cree Elder James Buller established the ANDPVA in 1972 along with a small group of First Nations artists during a time when presentation and employment opportunities for Native artists were limited. At one time ANDPVA housed a magazine company (Aboriginal Voices), The Aboriginal Film and Video Art Alliance of Ontario, and the Aboriginal Music Project, all of which assisted artists in some format in their isolated artistic mediums. They continue to mentor smaller organizations that need

assistance in organizational development. The association facilitates collaborative projects, acting as a conduit for artists and producers by producing and promoting their work. Founder James Buller believed giving Native artists the tools and resources for artistic production in a Native context would empower artists and non-artists – leading to a resurgence of Native culture and artistic endeavors across the country. (<http://www.andpva.com/>).

***Centre for Indigenous Theatre (Toronto, Ontario):** The Centre for Indigenous Theatre offers training in the performing arts to students of Indigenous ancestry. The Centre's goal is to develop and implement educational programs that promote and foster an understanding of Indigenous theatre while providing the highest caliber arts training to Indigenous students from across Canada. The Centre for Indigenous Theatre offers a three-year, post-secondary conservatory program as well as introductory summer intensive programs. Founded in 1974 by the late James Buller as the Native Theatre School, today the Centre has expanded greatly. The current principal and artist director is Rose Stella. (<http://www.indigenoustheatre.com/>).

***Indigenous Choreographers Summit/Dance Residency within the Banff Aboriginal Arts Program (Banff, Alberta):** In 2009, the inaugural international Indigenous Choreographers Summit will bring dancers together with invited choreographers in an unprecedented opportunity to share, stimulate, and strengthen existing choreographic knowledge and capacity. The focus will be on developing the choreographic voice of Aboriginal dance practitioners during a three-week residency. Dancers accepted to the program will be given the rare opportunity to participate in a high quality artistic process with exceptional Indigenous choreographers from various nations, backgrounds, and countries. Dancers will bring their own varied perspectives and dance forms, including their unique cultural perspectives to the creative process. It will develop Indigenous choreographers in contemporary dance while valuing their respective traditional knowledge base, dance vocabulary, and relationship to land. This summit/dance residency will investigate sources and context of traditional expression, as well as the relationship of innovation to tradition. This program has two key goals: to affect change through investigation, sharing and artistic discovery, and to make a significant contribution to the artistic ecology of contemporary dance in Canada. It will focus on probing, refining, and deepening the artistic process and strengthening the choreographic voice of our Indigenous practitioners. It will also provide a space for creators and collaborators to exchange artistic and cultural knowledge and practice. At the conclusion of the three-week residency, to highlight the exciting results of this project, The Banff Centre will present two shows of excerpted choreographic works. (<http://www.banffcentre.ca/programs/program.aspx?id=838>).

***Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance (Toronto, Ontario):** This recently incorporated group is the culmination of many meetings over the years that dealt with the need for a national arts service organization that would address the interests of Indigenous performers. An online community, the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance (IPAA) serves as a collective voice driven by its members who consist of professional Indigenous performing artists and organizations. IPAA aims to build strategic partnerships and

creative relationships within the Indigenous Arts community and with other organizations through the sharing of information and through professional development opportunities. (<http://www.indigenousperformingarts.org>).

***Julia Jamieson School for Performing Arts (Six Nations Reserve, Brantford, Ontario):** By choosing to base JJSPA in the Woodland Cultural Centre, Julia Jamieson chose “a path of healing for those students of the 'Mush Hole' Residential Institute. There is no other way to define cultural genocide or assimilation other than to speak its truth.” The Mohawk Institute, which was closed in 1970, has since become a learning resource centre in the Woodland Cultural Centre and home to JJSPA. The school is actively curious about many stories of cultural genocide within this space and seeks to bring these stories to the foreground through the implementation of artistic expression. They acknowledge these stories and intend to honor, respect, and create. The music implemented at Jamieson Performing Arts is culturally inclusive to Haudenosaunee peoples as well as other cultural groups from around the world. The school recently purchased equipment necessary to begin work on documentaries and short films. With the inclusion of a MAC Pro Laptop and the Final Cut Pro program, the faculty is now able to include students in all film making processes and JJSPA expects this program area to grow within 2009. (<http://www.myspace.com/jjperformingarts>).

***Native American Women Playwrights Archive (Miami University, Oxford, Ohio):** Association with a mandate to “identify playwrights, collect and preserve their work, try to make it widely known, and encourage performances and continued creativity.” The NAWPA is a collection of original materials by Native women playwrights of the Americas. NAWPA also aims to make the work of Native American women widely known, and encourage performances and continued creativity. Plays in manuscript, disk, videotape, or other format are cataloged, given appropriate preservation treatment, and made available to anyone who wishes to read them in the library at Miami University. NAWPA welcomes playwrights at any level of development. The online version of the archive includes bibliographies, links, programs, productions, a writer directory, a Spiderwoman Theater exhibition, and transcripts of authors' roundtable discussions. The site also features a new publication or work each month. (<http://staff.lib.muohio.edu/nawpa/>).

***Trent Indigenous Studies Program/Nozhem: First Peoples Performance Space/Indigenous Performance Initiatives (Peterborough, Ontario):** Trent University was the first university in North America to establish a department dedicated to the study of Aboriginal Peoples. The First Peoples House of Learning at Trent was officially opened in 2005. Located in the Enweying Building along with the new Peter Gzowski College, the FPHL consists of Nozhem: the First Peoples Performance Space, the First Peoples Lecture Hall, the First Peoples Gathering Space, two outdoor teaching and ceremonial areas and an indoor gallery for art exhibits. Nozhem: The First Peoples Performance Space (with seating for one hundred) is an exciting venue in which the audience can participate in an intimate relationship with the artists and performers. Unlike traditional Western theatre, the space is also used for ceremony, as a vessel to pour forth and nurture Aboriginal oral tradition, language, and knowledge. The space will

be the summer home of the Centre for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto. Indigenous Performance Initiatives was created to bring into being a gathering place where we can remember and create new images and restore old forms. Formally initiated in February 2004, IPI supports Indigenous artists to tell their own stories through dance, music, theatre, and video, They create stories of this generation, merging cultural history with current concerns, and presenting dreams and images for the future. The theme guiding Indigenous Performance Initiatives is the development of Indigenous performance practice that bridges traditional cultural practices and contemporary expression to encourage enhanced access, professional development, and performance opportunities for Indigenous artists. According to the IPI Vision Statement: "Storytellers – artists, singers, dancers – have the power to move the souls of the people towards remembrance and recognition of who they are as a people."
(<http://www.trentu.ca/academic/nativestudies/welcomeB.htm>).

Deceased Artists:

***Rosella Hightower (Choctaw/Irish):** On January 10, 1920, Rosella Hightower was born in Durwood, Oklahoma. She went on to become an American ballerina who achieved fame in both the United States and Europe. She moved with her family to Kansas City, Missouri, in her youth and began her dance training there under the instruction of Dorothy Perkins. After a 1937 appearance by Russian choreographer and ballet dancer Léonide Massine in Kansas City with Wassily de Basil's Ballets Russes, Massine invited Hightower to join a new ballet company he was forming in Monte Carlo. Hightower traveled to France at her own expense and discovered she had been invited for further auditions and had been given no commitment of employment by the group. Ultimately, she was accepted into the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo where she was guided by Massine who recognized her hard work and ability to learn quickly. After the outbreak of World War II, Hightower followed the Ballet Russe to New York City, where she joined the Ballet Theater in 1941. She joined the de Basil Ballet in 1946, which was performing under the name Original Ballet Russe. Hightower received acclaim from John Martin of *The New York Times* after a March 1947 performance of *Giselle* by the Original Ballet Russe at the Metropolitan Opera House. Martin's review called it "a thoroughly admirable achievement, which brought an ovation from the audience." Three days later, Martin's review of *Swan Lake* called Hightower "the newest star on the ballet horizon." In 1947, Rosella accepted an invitation from the Marquis George de Cuevas to join a new ballet company, which was variously called the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo or the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas. Here, Nijinska choreographed for Hightower the "glitteringly virtuosic" *Rondo Capriccioso*. The company disbanded after the 1961 death of de Cuevas and Hightower largely retired from the stage, though she gave a series of performances in 1962 when she opened the Centre de Danse Classique near her home in Cannes. The Centre later became one of Europe's leading ballet schools. Hightower later directed several major companies, including the Marseilles Ballet from 1969–72, the Ballet of the Grand Théâtre of Nancy in 1973 and 1974, the Paris Opéra Ballet from 1980–1983 and the La Scala Ballet of Milan in 1985 and 1986. She is honored in Tulsa, Oklahoma, along with four other Native American ballerinas (Yvonne Chouteau, Moscelyne Larkin, Maria Tallchief and Marjorie Tallchief), with a larger than life-size

bronze statue, *The Five Moons* in the garden of the Tulsa Historical Society. Rosella died on November 4, 2008 after suffering a series of strokes. Hightower was married to Jean Robier, a French artist and designer, in 1952; they had one daughter, Dominique (b. 1955). (<http://www.answers.com/topic/rosella-hightower>).

***René Highway (Canadian Cree):** Born in 1954 on the Brochet Reserve in northern Manitoba, René Highway studied at Toronto Dance Theatre where he was a company member from 1976–1979. He also studied at Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey schools in New York City and the Native Canadian Centre in Toronto. Brother of Tomson Highway, the two boys began their careers in the performing arts by making up fantasy plays and soothing songs as an escape from the strict regime and abuse at the Catholic boarding school they were forced to attend in their youth. While attending high school in Winnipeg, Tomson took René to see the Royal Winnipeg ballet and René was so impressed he began to take dance classes, something he hid from his teenage friends. He spent 1980 with Tukak Theatre in Denmark. Tukak is a company whose members are mainly the indigenous peoples of Greenland and Lapland. The Tukak experience re-awakened Mr. Highway's interest in his own cultural heritage leading to subsequent travels throughout the United States and Canada performing works such as *New Song, New Dance* (1987), *There is My People Sleeping* (1985), *Prism, Mirror, Lens* (1989), and Kennedy Center's "Night of the First Americans." He collaborated frequently with his brother during their time at Native Earth Performing Arts in Toronto, and with his partner actor and singer Micah Barnes. He helped to create the role of Nanabush in his brother's play *The Rez Sisters* (1986) and was the choreographer for *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* (1989). René died of AIDS-related meningitis in Toronto in 1990. In his honor, Native Earth Performing Arts started the René Highway Foundation and The René Highway Scholarship was established at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in his memory since he once took dance classes with the Recreational Division of the RWB School [Toronto Star obituary. October 20, 1990].

***Molly Spotted Elk (Penobscot):** Molly Spotted Elk was the stage name of Molly Nelson Dellis, a Native American dancer and actress born on November 17, 1903 in the Penobscot reservation in Maine. In the 1920s, Spotted Elk performed in New York nightclubs and starred in *The Silent Enemy*, a 1930 silent docu-drama of Native American life. In the 1930s, she moved to Paris where she found an audience for traditional Native American dance. While there, she met and married French journalist Jean Archambaud. At this time, she began the researching folktales and traditions of the Native American Northeast. At the break of World War II, Molly was forced to flee France with her young daughter never to see her husband again. Together mother and child crossed the Pyrenees Mountains on foot to Spain. She returned to the United States with her daughter, and spent the rest of her life on the Penobscot Reservation. Molly Spotted Elk's career is said to be marked by a tension between her desire for fame and success as an actress and performer and the racist expectations of White American and European society that forced her to don skimpy buckskin costumes and act out stereotypes in order to do so. Returning to rural Maine after living in New York and Paris "was like an old pair of moccasins that one dreamed of during years of high-heeled city life – only to find, upon

slipping into them, that they felt less comfortable than remembered because the shape of one's feet had changed." (McBride. 1997, 223).

***Princess White Deer (Mohawk):** Born Esther Louise Georgette Deer of Chief James Deer and Georgette Osborne Deer in 1891, "Princess White Deer" was a famous stage actress and dancer who came from the Mohawk community of Akwesasne in upstate New York. Princess White Deer is now said to be the first American Indian to gain fame as a dancer and stage vocalist. She traveled around the world in Texas Jack's Wild West Show and then broke away with her family, called the Deer Family Troupe, with their own western show usually billed as "The Famous Deer Brothers Champion Indian Trick Riders of the World," which performed across Europe and America in the early 1900s. Esther Deer eventually became a solo act and gained most of her fame from the Florenz Ziegfeld shows (Ziegfeld Follies), where she performed and danced crossing over from Wild West to vaudeville. Princess White Deer performed in the 1927 Ziegfeld 9 O'Clock Frolic. According to the theatre program, she also performed in the Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic of April 1921. She performed not only with Ziegfeld but with other Broadway productions including "Hitchy Koo" (1919); "Tip Top" (1920); "The Yankee Princess" and "Lucky" (1927). She also presided at the dedication of Lake Mohawk (Sparta, NJ) to the Mohawk people in 1927. (<http://ziegfelgrrl.multiply.com/photos/album/191#219>).

Now Defunct:

***American Indian Registry of the Performing Arts (Los Angeles, California):** The American Indian Registry for the Performing Arts (AIRPA) opened in 1983 with the help of actor Will Sampson (Creek) and other Native Americans established in the entertainment industry. As an organization for actors and performers, AIRPA provided Native people for Indian roles, worked with film and television studios to encourage historical and ethnographic accuracy, and served as a support group by disseminating information, offering casting assistance, and encouraging cultural accuracy. Its objectives were simple: to establish and develop a central registry of American Indian performers and technical personnel in the entertainment field. After financial difficulties forced the registry to close in 1992, the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) formed a Native American Sub-Committee through its affirmative action department, made up of Native SAG members. As of 2003, the sub-committee was working to address the under-representation of Native Americans in film and television and to "help reverse misinformed racial stereotypes of this group." Another non-profit advocacy group, American Indians in Film and Television, founded by Sonny Skyhawk (Sicangu Lakota), has operated out of Pasadena, California since 1985. (<http://www.aaanativearts.com/native-american-actors.htm>).

***Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble (Toronto, Ontario):** This group was founded in 1999 by Jani Lauzon, Monique Mojica, and Michelle St. John to produce a repertoire of original, collectively created ensemble performances that reclaim art, history and cultural identity while imaging a vital future of hope and possibility for Aboriginal Peoples. Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble grew exponentially, creating several award winning productions such as *The Scrubbing Project*, *The Triple Truth* and the acclaimed *The Only*

Good Indian.... Equally important was the group's presence at conferences, festivals and universities where they conducted workshops, participated in advisory councils and performed their repertoire of moving and satirical compositions. Over the years, Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble has had the pleasure of working with a plethora of extraordinary artists including Muriel Miguel, Michael Greyeyes, Yvette Nolan, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Erika Iserhoff, Kate Lushington, Jill Carter, Arturo Freslone, Tim Matheson and Sandra Laronde. According to the group: "As artists we envision a continuum of past, present and future expressed as stories using our bodies and voices. We draw on traditional forms of storytelling, oratory, song and dance, integrating them with current technology and popular culture to develop non-linear multi-disciplinary theatre forms." After nine years of working tirelessly to bring Aboriginal Women's voices to the stage, Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble wound down its operations in April 2008 in order to support the creative and personal endeavors of its individual members. This decision, approved by the board of directors, followed the resignation of co-managing Artistic Director/co-founder Michelle St. John and associate artist Falen Johnson, who along with remaining ensemble members Jani Lauzon and Cheri Maracle had increasing difficulty keeping up with the administration and artistic demands while also sustaining the solo careers that are necessary to support themselves financially. (<http://www.indigenousperformingarts.org/?q=node/26>).

For further research (mentioned in programs and bios, but little information available online or in archives/books):

- *Agnguartukut (We Are Dancing): (Kodiak, Alaska)
- *Brandon Alexander Oakes (Mohawk): visual artist, actor and traditional dancer, appearing in commercials, independent films, and dance productions including Red Thunder Native Dance Theatre and *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera* (2001).
- *Aurorah Allain (Choctaw)
- *California Bear Dancers
- *Coastanoan Humaya Dancers
- *Monique Diabo-John
- *Jonathan Fisher
- *Christine Friday O'Leary-Keeshig: (unknown if she is different or same as Christine Friday O'Leary? Performed pieces such as *Metamorphosis*, *Natchemowwaning*, and a collaboration with Ilderful)
- *Andrameda Lutchman (currently in the Yukon?): Performed in *Shaping Worlds as Fire Burns* at Banff in 1998).
- *Cherith Mark (Nakoda Stoney): dancer, actor and singer, trained at the Aboriginal Dance Program in Banff as well as The Centre for Indigenous Theatre. She has traveled nationally and internationally with Red Thunder Native Dance Theatre and *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera* production.
- *Michael Meyers (Blackfeet/Yokut)
- *Mi'kmaq Dancers (Eskasoni First Nation): led by Joel Denny. A lot of information on Joel Denny is available, including an extensive interview on Natedance.ca, but little else can be found on the group and they have no website.

- *Jeremy Proulx (Ojibway/Thunderbird Clan): actor, dancer, writer and visual artist and an inaugural graduate of the Indigenous Theatre School. He also performed in the 2001 world premiere of *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera*.
- *Kalani Queypo (Hawaiian/Blackfeet): dancer and stage, film and television actor based in New York City. He has traveled nationally with *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera*. Possibly part of Dancing Earth.
- *Red Roots Theatre (Winnipeg)
- *Ann Roberts Khalsa (Cherokee)
- *Sen'klip Native Theatre Company (Vernon, BC)
- *Sherman Apache Dancers
- *Siobhán Arnatsiaq-Murphy (Inuit/Irish)
- *Spirit Song Native Theatre School
- *Takwakin Performance Laboratory (Toronto, Ontario): founded by Floyd Favel. Received a grant to produce the show *The Sleeping Land* at Globe Theatre.
- *Leilani Taliaferro (Cherokee)
- *Juan Valenzuela (Yaqui): 1919–1986, studied with Martha Graham and Jose Limon, taught at Institute of American Indian Arts in the 1960s, and at Stanford University in later years.

Appendix II: Re-visiting

Selected Relevant Historical Dates

- *1832: Kenekuk, a Kickapoo spiritual leader, encourages dance and other religious ceremonies as resistance after being displaced following the Indian Removal Act in the United States.
- *1878: William F Cody (Buffalo Bill) uses reservation Native Americans as actors in staged performances for the first time.
- *1883: Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the United States implements the "Indian Religious Crimes Code," developed by secretary of the interior Henry Teller which prohibits Native American ceremonial activity (punishable by prison). Sun Dance banned in United States.
- *1883: Buffalo Bill begins to tour his "Wild West" show prototype which includes "Indian War Dances" in the billing.
- *1884: Section 149 of Indian Act bans Potlatch and Tamanawas Ceremonies in Canada.
- *1884: Compulsory school attendance for First Nations children legislated in Canada.
- *1885: Pass system enacted after Saskatchewan Métis resistances in Canada.
- *1887: Buffalo Bill's Wild West show is part of the American exhibition at Queen Victoria's Jubilee in London. Black Elk performs for the Queen of England.
- *1889: Prophet/visionary/Paiute leader Wovoka begins the Ghost Dance movement. The religion spreads across the great basin and great plains of the United States.
- *1890: The practicing of Ghost Dance rites result in the United States army's slaughter of men, women, and children at Wounded Knee, South Dakota in December.
- *1892: Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan codifies "Rules for Indian Courts" in the United States which dictate imprisonment or withholding of rations for engaging in the "sun dance, scalp dance, war dance, or any similar feast."
- *1893: Buffalo Bill's Wild West show opens next to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.
- *1895: Sun Dance banned in Canada.
- *1906: All forms of traditional dance for Indigenous peoples banned in Canada.
- *1913: The Col. W.F. Cody Historical Pictures Co. is formed to produce short films on the Indian Wars" that include depictions of dances.
- *1914: Public appearances in Indigenous traditional dance attire prohibited in Canada.
- *1920: Mandatory school attendance for First Nations children legislated in Canada.
- *1921: Dances associated with religious ceremonies also banned in Canada; first arrests made (forty-five Kwakwaka'wakw people arrested for attending David Cranmer's potlatch).
- *1921: Princess White Deer performs in Ziegfeld Follies in New York City.
- *1921: BIA in United States categorizes Sun Dance as an "Indian Offense."
- *1924: Native American participation in WWII leads to the Indian Citizenship Act in the United States. The act grants Native Americans citizenship, but most states refuse to allow Native Americans to vote.
- *1925: Molly Spotted Elk joins the Miller Brother's 101 Ranch Wild West Show and begins to travel across the United States.

- *1926: Molly Spotted Elk travels to New York City performing in cabarets as an “Aztec Dance Theatre” girl.
- *1930: Molly Spotted Elk stars in a lead role in the film *The Silent Enemy*, a fictitious story about Anishinabe peoples in Northern Canada that was billed as a documentary.
- *1931: Martha Graham creates *Primitive Mysteries*, a Modern piece incorporating Southwestern Native American religious references.
- *1931: Molly Spotted Elk travels to the International Colonial Exposition in France with the United States “Indian Band.”
- *1933: Ted Shawn begins to tour “interpreted” Native American Dances with his Modern “Men Dancers” company.
- *1934: Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes approves Bureau of Indian Affairs circular 2970 in the United States titled “Indian Religious Freedom and Indian Culture” which states: “no interference with indian religious life or ceremonial expression will hereafter be tolerated.”
- *1938: Rosella Hightower joins the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo
- *1938: Martha Graham creates *American Document*, a Modern piece with a section entitled “Indian Episode” and quotes by Red Jacket of the Seneca Tribe.
- *1942: Maria Tallchief makes her professional debut with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo
- *1943: Yvonne Chouteau joins the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo
- *1944: Marjorie Tallchief makes her professional debut as a soloist in Lucia Chase and Richard Pleasant’s Ballet Theatre
- *1950: Lakota peoples in the United States openly revive the Sun Dance.
- *1951: Indian Act revised with religious (dance) prohibitions simply removed instead of being formally repealed in Canada.
- *1953: Mungo Martin holds open potlatch at the British Columbia Provincial Museum.
- *1957: Utah is final state in the United States to grant voting rights to Native Americans. Country-wide suffrage is finally recognized
- *1960: First Nations people receive citizenship rights in Canada (first able to exercise this right by voting in 1962).
- *1969: Indigenous Julliard students Rosalie Daystar Jones and Cordell Morsette teach Modern dance at Flandreau Indian High School.
- *1971: Sun Dancers arrested on Pine Ridge Reservation by tribal police based on an injunction issued by a tribal judge against Sun Dancing.
- *1972: Native American Theatre Ensemble Company, the first theatre group with all Native performers, is formed.
- *1972: Possibilities for Modern dance by Native Americans are addressed by Juan Valenzuela (Spanish/Aztec-Yaqui) at the Arizona meeting of the National Conference of the Congress on Research in Dance.
- *1978: American Indian Religious Freedom Act is passed.
- *1979: *A Song for Dead Warriors*, a ballet produced by the all non-Native San Francisco Ballet is produced. It contains a Men’s Fancy Dance but no Indigenous dancers.
- *1980: Rosalie Daystar Jones founds the first all-Native Modern dance company: Daystar: Classical [later Contemporary] Dance-Drama of Indian America.

- *1980: René Highway works with Tukak Theatre in Denmark, begins to tour Native cultural festivals
- *1982: "Night of the First Americans" premieres at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. René Highway choreographs.
- *1985: Residential school system in Canada disbanded.
- *1987: American Indian Dance Theatre formed in Los Angeles, California.
- *1988: Composer John Kim Bell (Mohawk) produces, co-composes and directs the first ever full-scale Aboriginal dance production in Canada, *In The Land of Spirits* (premiers 1992, tours 1992-93).
- *1989: René Highway's last work, *Prism, Mirror, Lens* debuts in Canada.
- *1990: Native American Languages Act is passed in the United States.
- *1990: *Maid of the Mist*, a Ballet choreographed for the mainly non-Indigenous Repertory Dance Theatre of Utah by Raoul Trujillo with music by Dr. Louis Ballard (Cherokee/Quapaw) and story by Bruce King (Oneida) debuts in the United States.
- *1990: René Highway dies.
- *1996: First Aboriginal Dance Program held at Banff Centre as part of Aboriginal Arts program.
- *2005: Nozhem: First Peoples Performance Space created at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario
- *2007: "Dancing with Spirit" series on Contemporary Aboriginal Dance by director Byron McKim debuts on the Bravo! Television network.

Appendix III: Consent Form to Participate in Research

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Katie Apsey of the Art History department of Concordia University, (**address and email included for participants, withheld in this thesis**).

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

Interviews and statements will be used to inform and add a personal perspective to a master's degree thesis on Contemporary Aboriginal Dance as visual culture. The thesis will attempt to provide serious critical attention to the movement, provide a brief history of the movement, and explore pieces by current dance companies, performers and choreographers within the framework of Performance theory and art history methods.

B. PROCEDURES

This research will be conducted through interviews. The questions included in these interviews will be created with specific artists in mind. If the artist/dancer is more comfortable developing answers to questions over time, they may also request a copy of interview questions and can answer by writing their statements and sending them to Ms. Apsey via mail/e-mail. The answers will be used to inform essays on Contemporary Dance and Aboriginal Dance and the interviewee may be quoted as an artist/dancer/choreographer within Ms. Apsey's thesis.

C. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is non-confidential (i.e., my identity will be revealed in study results), but I may chose to keep my identity confidential by informing Ms. Apsey that I would like my identity to remain private and initialing here. _____
- I understand that the data from this study may be published. I may request copies of any writing being published that mentions my name and work before publishing, and I may request a copy of the thesis from Ms. Apsey at any time.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT.
I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION (E-MAIL AND/OR PHONE): _____

Appendix IV: Traditional and Historic Dance References for Further Reading

- Beck Kehoe, Alice. The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory and Revitalization. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1989.
- Berbaum, Sylvie. Ojibwa Powwow World. Thunderbay, Ontario: Centre for Northern Studies at Lakehead University, 2000.
- Browner, Tara. Heartbeat of the People: Music and Dance of the Northern Pow-wow. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002.
- Conklin, Abe. "Origin of the Powwow: The Ponca He-Thus-Ka Society Dance." Akwe:kon Journal 11.3-4 (Fall/Winter 1994): 17-21.
- Fenton, William N. The Iroquois Eagle Dance: An Offshoot of the Calumet Dance. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991.
- Fletcher, Alice C. Indian Games and Dances with Native Songs. New York: AMS Press, 1915.
- Heth, Charlotte, ed. Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions. Washington DC: National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Institution with Fulcrum Publishing, 1993.
- Highwater, Jamake. Ritual of the Wind: North American Indian Ceremonies, Music, and Dances. New York: The Viking Press, 1977.
- Kealiinohomoku, Joann W. "Dance." In Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia, edited by Mary B. Davis, 164-169. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Laubin, Reginald and Gladys. Indian Dances of North America: Their Importance to Indian Life. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976.
- McClintock, Walter. Dances of the Blackfoot Indians: Southwest Museum Leaflets #7. Los Angeles: Southwest Museum, n.d.
- Mooney, James. The Ghost Dance Religion and Wounded Knee. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973.
- Morton, Robert, ed. Powwow: Photography by Ben Marra. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996.
- Payton, Colleen M. "Traditional Native Dance: Past and Present." Native Peoples: Arts and Lifeways. September/October (2006):46-49.

Powers, William K. "Powwow." In Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia, edited by Mary B. Davis, 476–480. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.

Speck, Frank G., Leonard Broom, and Will West Long. Cherokee Dance and Drama. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1922.

Vecsey, Christopher. Imagine Ourselves Richly: Mythic Narratives of North American Indians. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1988.