



Canadian Studies Centre

University of Silesia, Katowice

Institute of English Cultures and Literatures

Faculty of Philology



University of Silesia

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Days of Canadian Culture at the University of Silesia May 13-15, 2013

Organizer: Canadian Studies Centre, Canadian Studies Student Circle,
Institute of English Cultures and Literatures

Venue: Sosnowiec, ul. Gen. Stefana Grot-Roweckiego 5

PROGRAM for May 15, 2013 (Wednesday)

DRAMA AND PERFORMANCE WORKSHOPS

9:45-13:00

MICHELLE LAFLAMME (University of Fraser Valley)

- **Land, Love and Ceremony: A look at Canadian Indigenous Plays** (*Rez Sisters* (T. Highway), *Ernestine Shushwap gets her Trout* (T. Highway), *Baby Blues* (Drew Hayden Taylor).

Workshop description

- Land, Love and Ceremony: A look at Canadian Indigenous Plays (*Rez Sisters* (T. Highway), *Ernestine Shushwap gets her Trout* (T. Highway), *Baby Blues* (Drew Hayden Taylor).

In this workshop we will discuss three central thematic issues that resonate in three contemporary Canadian Aboriginal plays. We will consider the plays in the context of the Indian Act and note how ceremony, love and the land are connected with survival of culture in these works. The role of the trickster figure in *The Rez Sisters*, as well as questions of leadership, community and sisterhood will be examined. The importance of land and the impact of colonization will be

discussed in relation to Ernestine as a sample case that uses comedy to address the encroachment of settlers in BC. *The Baby Blues* will highlight some of the issues surrounding interracial relations and the role of hybridity in contemporary Aboriginal plays. Some scenes will be read closely and students will need to be familiar with these plays and bring them to the workshop. Finally we will think critically about the role of Aboriginal theatre praxis in the context of social justice and national literature.

13:15-16:45 **MONIQUE MOJICA (Toronto, playwright, artistic director, stage and film actress)**

- **Stories From the Body/Stories from the Land.**

Workshop description

- **Stories From the Body/Stories from the Land.**

A brief overview of embodied research and creation process of the work-in-progress, *Side Show freaks and Circus Injuns* followed by an introductory workshop in Indigenous performance through generating organic texts from the body’s memory. Participants will explore impulse, gesture, sound, movement, as an embodied approach to storytelling. The workshop will include participatory “on your feet” group exercises in ensemble theatre techniques and collective creation as well as a physical warm up and a vocal warm up. Comfortable attire required. All present are asked to participate — no observers.

BIOS OF WORKSHOP LEADERS



Monique Mojica (Guna and Rappahannock), playwright, artistic director of Chocolate Woman Collective, stage and film actress and social activist, committed to strengthening the continental links among the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. She is passionately dedicated to a theatrical practice as acts of healing and reclaiming historical/cultural memory. Her acting 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 and *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God* by Djanet Sears; Her film and television credits are: *Smoke Signals*, *Traders*, *Earth: Final Conflict*, *La Femme Nikita*, and *Conspiracy of Silence*. She is the author of *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots* and co-editor with Ric Knowles, of *Staging Coyote’s Dream An Anthology of First Nations Drama in*

English, vols. I & II. As a co-founder of Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble, Mojica taught Indigenous Theatre in theory, process and practice at the University of Illinois, the Institute of American Indian Arts and at McMaster University. She founded Chocolate Woman Collective in 2007 to develop the play *Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky Way* (2011) which was created by devising a dramaturgy specific to Guna cultural aesthetics, story narrative and literary structure. She was most recently seen on stage in the role of Goneril in the NAC's production of *King Lear*. Her upcoming projects include *Side Show Freaks and Circus Injuns* co-written with LeAnne Howe and directed by Michael Greyeyes.



Michelle LaFlamme (Métis, Creek and African-Canadian), Professor at the University of Fraser Valley, performer, playwright, activist and educator with a Ph.D. degree in English literature from the University of British Columbia. Her doctoral thesis, “Living, Writing and Staging Racial Hybridity” was awarded the Paul Stanwood Prize for the best doctoral thesis in the Department of English. As a performer she has been involved with the Aboriginal arts community and has worked with Margo Kane at Full Circle First Nations Performance and (IMAG) Indigenous Media Arts Group for a number of years. Social justice work is an essential element of her background and her passion lies in developing curriculum that reflects the worldviews of Aboriginal people. She is the Program Director in the Centre for Aboriginal Programs and Services at the Justice Institute of British Columbia. She taught in Germany, the Netherlands and Spain in the areas of race theory, film and literature. Her publications focus on mixed-blood identity as represented in novels, autobiographies and contemporary plays; the most recent ones include “Theatrical Medicine: Aboriginal Performance, Ritual and Commemoration” and “Speaking up, Speaking out, or Speaking back. The Signposts are in the Right Direction” published in *Theatre Research in Canada*.