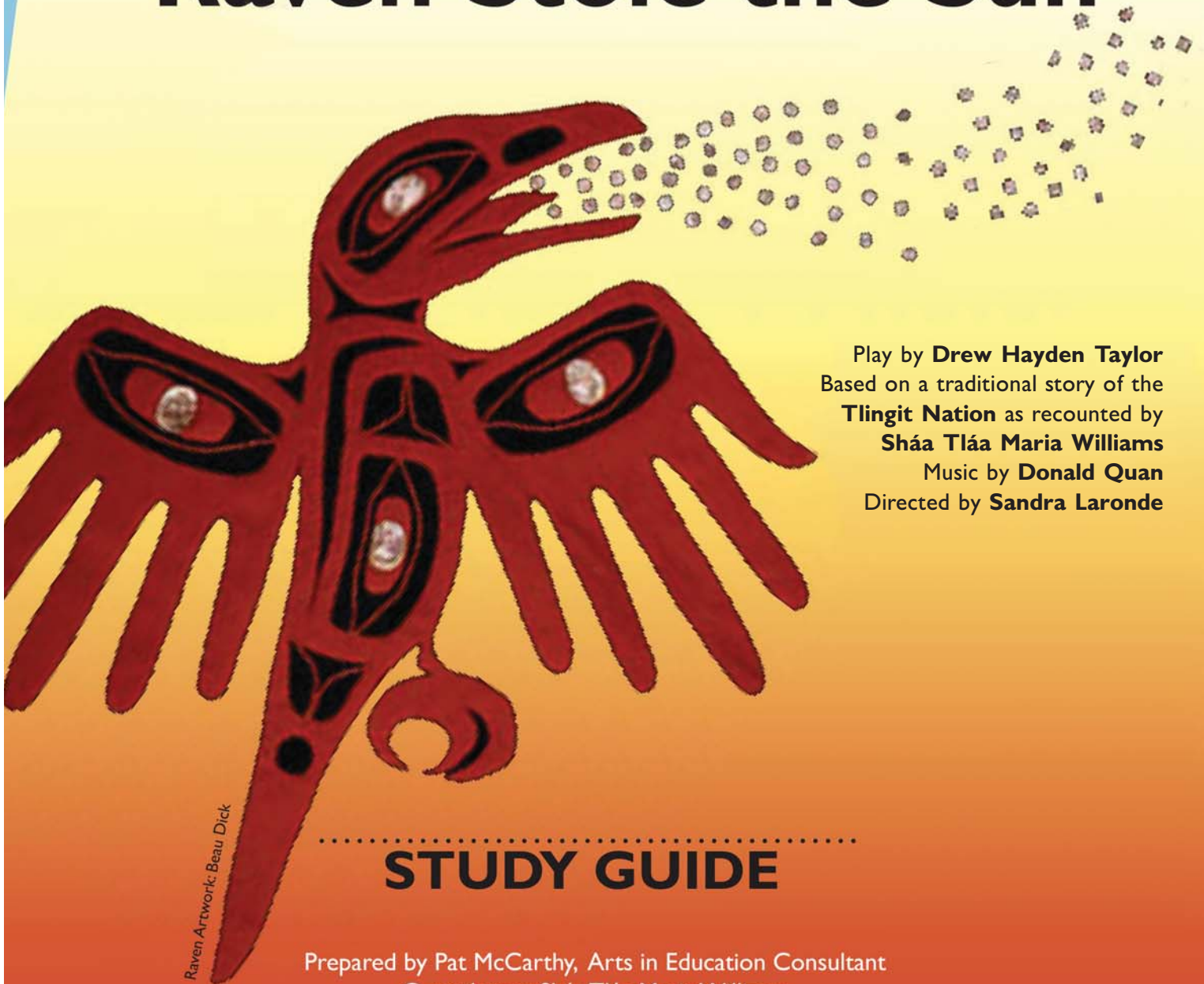


# red Sky

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Sandra Laronde

## Raven Stole the Sun



Raven Artwork: Beau Dick

Play by **Drew Hayden Taylor**  
Based on a traditional story of the  
**Tlingit Nation** as recounted by  
**Sháa Tláa Maria Williams**  
Music by **Donald Quan**  
Directed by **Sandra Laronde**

### STUDY GUIDE

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## THE STUDY GUIDE

*Raven Stole the Sun* and the Ontario Curriculum



THIS STUDY GUIDE will help you to prepare your students to see the play and integrate the performance into your curriculum. In addition to the general areas listed below we have identified curriculum expectations that relate directly to ***Raven Stole the Sun***. Often activities will satisfy two or more expectations. For example, a drama activity might cover both Knowledge of Elements and Creative Work expectations. It is our objective to suggest ideas for the creative, intellectual, social, physical, and emotional development of your students. We believe that drama, music, and dance activities are vital to a child's development. Keep an eye out in this season's study guides for more connections to the Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner, caregiver activities, and more!

In addition to DRAMA **A** and LANGUAGE ARTS **L**, ***Raven Stole the Sun*** directly relates to student development in the areas of:

### **SS** SOCIAL STUDIES

Native Studies  
Traditions and Celebrations

### **S** SCIENCE

Animals and Habitats

### **NL** NATIVE LANGUAGES

Reading

### **L** ORAL COMMUNICATION

Storytelling

### **A** DANCE

Drama and Dance  
Choreography and Movement

## LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

*Dance (see Pre-Show Discussion)*

Grades 1 - 3

By the end of grade 3 students will:

- describe their own and others' work in dance, using appropriate vocabulary (e.g., character, rhythm, dynamic, harmony).
- explain the importance of symbols used in specific dances.
- distinguish between a variety of dance forms, using specific criteria (e.g., steps, music, costumes).
- identify effective uses of drama and dance elements in performances (e.g., form, space, pattern, energy) and compare their own responses with those of their peers.
- identify the themes and subjects found in drama and dance works, and make links between these and their own experiences.

Grades 4 - 6

By the end of grade 6 students will:

- describe the meaning and evaluate the effect of the work of others, using drama and dance vocabulary correctly (e.g., focus, energy, style, balance).
- identify the significance of symbols in dance explorations.
- explain and demonstrate the use of different patterns in creating effects in drama and dance (e.g., patterns of pace and direction, symmetry, asymmetry).

## LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

### *Dance (see Post-Show Discussion)*

#### Grades K - 3

By the end of grade 3 students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of a character's point of view through using body movement in role.
- recognize and choose appropriate elements of movement for dramatizing their responses to different stimuli or ideas.
- communicate, through movement, their thoughts and feelings about topics studied in other subject areas. ( e.g. telling familiar stories through movement).
- solve artistic problems in dance in co-operative work groups. (e.g. discuss the effects of using one dancer or several to convey a message).

#### Grades 4 - 6

By the end of grade 6 students will:

- interpret and perform some types of dances.
- create drama and dance productions in which they make effective use of the principles of harmony, balance, and contrast.
- evaluate drama and dance performances, with reference to their own experiences in daily life.
- solve artistic problems in drama and dance, individually and in groups, and evaluate the solutions.

### *Social Studies (see Post-Show Discussion)*

#### Grades 1 – 3

By the end of grade 3 students will:

- identify the Native peoples located in Upper Canada at the time of first settlement.
- describe the influence of Native peoples and pioneers in the area of farming methods (e.g., the use of crop rotation).

#### Grades 4 – 6

By the end of grade 6 students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the theories related to the origin of the Native peoples (e.g., migration and settlement).
- describe the relationship between Native peoples and their environment (e.g., with respect to food, shelter, cultural practices).
- locate relevant information about the relationship between the environment and Native lifestyles using primary sources (e.g., interviews, field trips), and secondary sources (e.g., maps, illustrations, print materials, videos, CD-ROMs).

## THE COMPANY

### *The Cast*

Raven  
Seik  
Eesh

**Michael Dufays**  
**Sandra Laronde**  
**Carlos Rivera**

### *The Creative Team*

Play by  
Based on a traditional story  
of the Tlingit Nation as recounted by

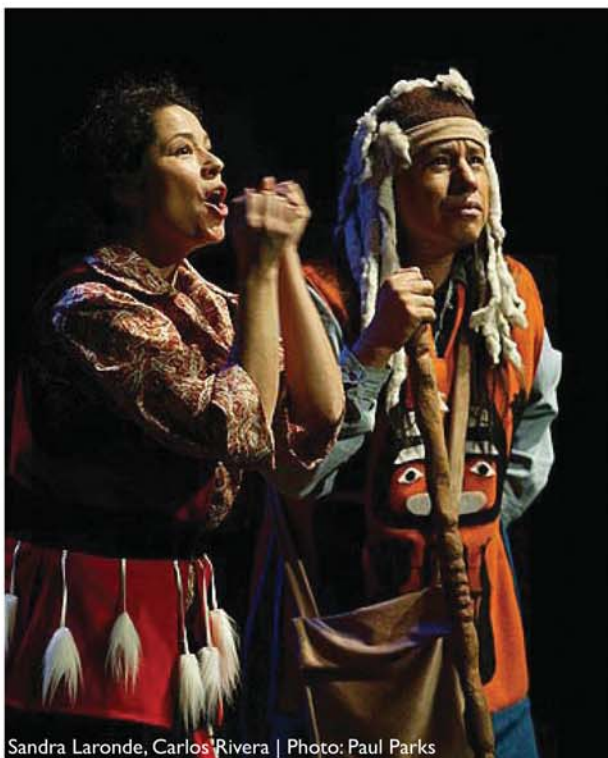
**Drew Hayden Taylor**  
**Sháa Tláa Maria Williams**

Director  
Composer  
Lighting Designer  
Set & Costume Designer

**Sandra Laronde**  
**Donald Quan**  
**Steve Lucas**  
**Cheryl Lalonde**



Michael Dufays | Photo: Cylla von Tiedemann



Sandra Laronde, Carlos Rivera | Photo: Paul Parks

### *About Red Sky Performance*

Red Sky has enjoyed a meteoric rise to international attention for its artistry, creative excellence and innovation. Founded in 2000 by Artistic Director Sandra Laronde, Red Sky is a dynamic company shaping contemporary Aboriginal performance in dance, theatre, music, and explores the artistic landscape where world Indigenous cultures merge.

Red Sky is committed to creating new works for both family and adult audiences on local, national and international stages. Red Sky provides a positive and deep experience of Aboriginal artistic and cultural expression in all communities.

Artistic Director, Sandra Laronde  
[www.redskyperformance.com](http://www.redskyperformance.com)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### *The People and the Story: Raven Stole the Sun*

Stories are an important aspect of cultural histories that link a people to their land and environment. The Tlingit (meaning 'people' in our language) live in present-day Canada (Yukon Territory and British Columbia) and the United States (Alaska).

There are many Raven stories because he is a highly intelligent, creative, and (often times) mischievous character. These stories highlight Raven's insatiable curiosity, his sense of humour, and also his ability to transform himself. The story, **Raven Stole the Sun**, includes all of these elements and is a well-known story among the Tlingit people. My father, Aweix Bill Williams, told me this story many times and has passed this story down to me. In most stories, Raven is somewhat of a troublemaker, but often the results are beneficial. For example, in **Raven Stole the Sun**, Raven releases the sun, moon, and stars into the sky, bringing light to the world. In other Tlingit stories, Raven creates the oceans.

All the First Nations along the west coast of Canada and Alaska have Raven stories as well. Similar to the Coyote, who is a common trickster figure in nations in the southwestern United States, Raven makes trouble, often for himself, but usually manages to get the best of everything in the end. Trickster figures are a common character found in Indigenous stories throughout the world. They are called tricksters because they often use trickery to get what they want.

**Raven Stole The Sun** takes a traditional story to new heights. Raven is a fabulous and magical creature of impulse and curiosity. In order to satisfy his overwhelming sense of curiosity, Raven hatches a brilliant scheme for stealing the stars, the moon, and the sun and ends up bringing light to the people of the world.

by Sháa Tláa Maria Williams



Sandra Laronde, Carlos Rivera | Photo: Cylla von Tiedemann

## PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION

### *About Dance and Body Language*

**Raven Stole the Sun** uses dance and body language in order to convey thoughts and feelings.

Ask students:

- why they think people dance.
- if they have seen a story told through dance before and to share their experiences.

Explore the concept of 'body language' with students. Ask them:

- how they think their movements or gestures might tell other people what they are feeling inside.
- to pay particular attention to the body language of the characters in the play and report back to the class on what kinds of specific body language is used in **Raven Stole the Sun**.
- to define "movement phrase."

## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

### *The Plot*

- Why was the world so dark at the beginning of the story?
- Why was the old man guarding the boxes?
- What colour were the Raven's feathers at the beginning of the story? At the end? How did this transformation occur?
- What kinds of food do the characters gather or mention in the story?
- What story is the old man illustrating when he dances as a young man?
- What will make the old man happy again?
- Why does the Raven make friends with the young girl?
- How does the Raven get the old man to open the boxes?
- How do the characters feel about light at the end of the story?
- Discuss how this Raven story has elements of other trickster stories. What other kinds of trickster stories does the class know?

## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION (cont'd)

*The Characters*

(Note: primary school children may enjoy demonstrating their answers.)

- Who are the main characters in the story?
- Who are the human and non-human characters in the story?
- **Raven Stole the Sun** has a 'moral.' What is the lesson that the audience learns through this Raven story?
- Define the difference between monologue and dialogue.
- How did the performers create the characters through movement (e.g., the light bird-like movements of the Raven versus the slow heavy steps of the old man)?
- Describe how the costumes helped to create the characters. What other elements of theatre helped to create characters?

*Native Oral Tradition*

- Discuss the tradition of oral storytelling in Native culture.
- Why is storytelling important? What and how can they teach us about different cultures? What would happen if we didn't pass on our stories?
- Explore popular themes in Native myths, fables and legends.
- Ask students to share myths or fables with similar themes that they know from their respective cultures.



Sandra Laronde, Jonathan Fisher | Photo: David Hou





CURRICULUM  
CONNECTIONS:



Native Studies,  
Animals and  
Habitat

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### *Tlingit People (Grades 1-4)*

Ask students to:

- conduct research in order to place the Tlingit Nation on a map of North America.
- describe different aspects of First Nation life in the geographic location of the Tlingit Nation.

### *Tlingit Plants and Animals (Grades 1-4)*

Research what animals, birds, and plant life would live in the region of the Tlingit Nation. Write the names or draw pictures on a map.

Discuss why animals play such an important part in the lives of these people. Explain how the story is used to explain elements of nature (Raven puts the sun and moon in the sky).



Artwork: Mary Intven Wallace



### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:



Dance and Drama,  
Choreography  
and Movement

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### EXPLORING MOVEMENT (GRADES SK–2)

#### Warm Ups

- Students move in a space by themselves and respond to verbal cues in order to perform a variety of action words i.e., clapping hands.
- Students repeat this exercise combining two or more actions together creating a movement phrase.
- Students pair up and combine movement phrases and work towards creating a short narrative.

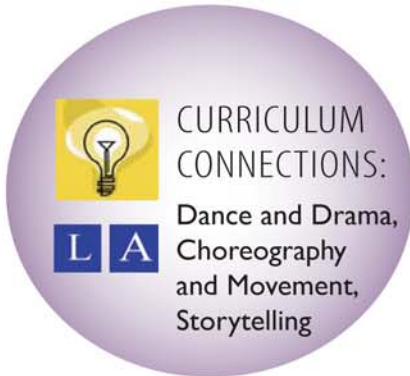
#### What if You Were...

- Brainstorm with students to come up with as many words as possible in the following three categories: adjective, action, animal. Write these on the board.
- Once this is completed, have students write out a word (or several depending on how many words) on a piece of paper and, keeping the categories intact, collect them.
- Ask for three volunteers to go to the front of the class and quietly give each one either an adjective, action word or animal. Students must then create a movement for each word. After each volunteer has a movement, combine them to create a movement phrase.
- The class must guess the movement phrase that is being acted out in front of them. Only when the class identifies the movement phrase in the correct order (adjective, action, animal) can the actors return to their seats. Three more volunteers take a turn and so on until everyone in the class has had a chance to participate.

Note: The above exercise is ideal for an ESL class.

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## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### EXPLORING MOVEMENT (GRADES 3-4)

#### Warm Ups

##### Warm up Activity 1: 'Flocking'

This activity works in the same way that birds flock together, disperse, and then re-group.

- Have students move around the room on their own. When you call out a number students must 'flock' into a group of that number.
- The groups disperse and the activity is repeated.
- Give students the opportunity to be the 'caller'.

##### Warm up Activity 2: Literal and Abstract Body Language

Introduce the concepts 'literal' and 'abstract'. Brainstorm examples of both.

##### Literal Movement:

- Have students move around the room in their own space and follow your direction to move as though happy, sad, afraid etc.

##### Abstract Movement

- Challenge students to move as though they are red, heavy, light etc.

### Story Mime

- Call out an action or a shape for the students to try and perform. Ask students to compare being abstract versus literal (e.g., red, heavy vs. bird, caribou).
- Students get in pairs and combine both abstract and literal movements to create movement phrases. Ask each pair to show the non-verbal movement phrase they have created (e.g., heavy bird, red caribou).
- After each presentation, have groups explain how they created their phrase. Discuss as a group what was effective and offer suggestions for further development.

### Soundscapes and Landscapes

Recall the different instruments and common objects used to create the different music and sound effects in **Raven Stole the Sun**.

Begin by having students:

- create a soundscape of different environments (e.g., a city, forest, river, storm).
- brainstorm the sounds of a select environment.
- experiment with different ways of creating those sounds (e.g., using their voice for human voices, or animal calls, soft pattering on their knees for rain).
- experiment with volume, speed, rhythm, and layering sound effects. Combine sound effects with the scenes they have created.


**CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:**


Dance and Drama,  
Choreography  
and Movement,  
Storytelling

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### EXPLORING MOVEMENT (GRADES 3-4)

#### *Raven Dance*

- As a class or in groups, discuss the Raven character and develop movements, gestures, and expressions that reflect his personality. Also, create bird-like dance movements.
- Have students create their own version of the Raven's song/dance. Students can learn the lyrics provided below, using them to provide the rhythm. The final dance can be performed with the lyrics as a song or a spoken word piece.
- If students have done the 'Soundscapes and Landscapes' activity (p.9), some of the students can take turns as the 'musicians' for the Raven dance.

#### **Raven Hop**

I wanna teach you something called the Raven Hop,  
It's like another thing we all call the Crow Hop,  
Just mix it up and in with some Hip Hop,  
And you've got the moves to make the dance called the Raven Hop Hop.  
Raven hip hop Raven hop.

Keep it flowing band better not stop,  
Break beat break down. Get down all around.  
Dance on the rocks. Dance till you drop,  
That's the only way to do the Raven Hop Hop Raven Hop Hop.  
Raven Hop.

Be bop. Hip hop. Crow hop. Raven hop.  
Raven hop hop Raven hip hop Raven hop.  
Be bop. Hip hop. Crow hop. Raven hop.  
Raven hop hop Raven hip hop. . . check it out! (x2)

Raven Hop taken from *Raven Stole the Sun*



## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### *Tell a Trickster Tale (Grades 1-3)*

- Find other stories about Raven or other Trickster characters.
- In small groups, decide on four or five scenes that would retell the story.
- Have students choose a part of the story and act it out using movement phrases.
- Students take turns narrating each sequence as other students act out their movement phrase.
- Have children each take one event in the story and draw a picture to combine into a picture book.

### *Trickster Trouble (Grades 3-4)*

- Read a number of trickster tales from different cultures and discuss the common elements (Raven, Anansi, Coyote).
- Make a chart with the characteristics of a trickster character (curious, mischievous, able to change shape, loves to play tricks, etc.).
- Make a second chart with the elements of a trickster tale (e.g. a trickster character, tricks played on other characters, unforeseen outcomes of the trick, an explanation of a natural phenomenon).
- In small groups, use the elements to create a new 'trickster tale'.
- Discuss elements of oral storytelling (e.g., the voice, the body, instruments).
- Use movement and narration to tell the story to the rest of the group.
- Make masks for the various characters in the story.



## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

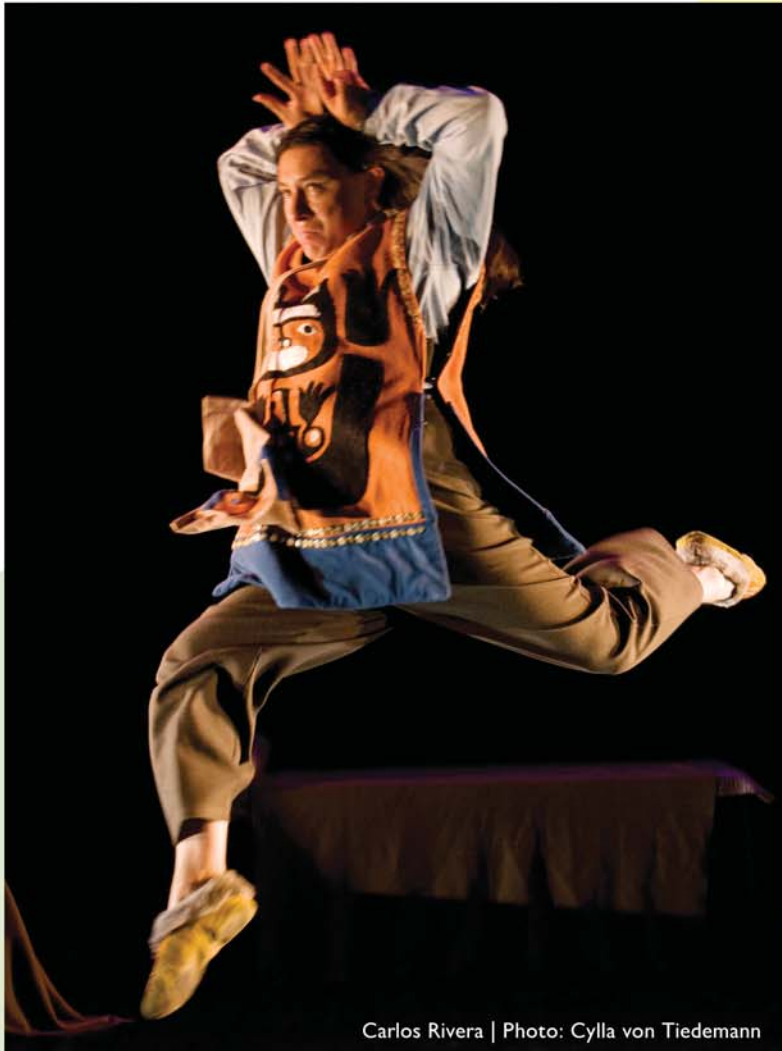
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Native Studies,  
Storytelling

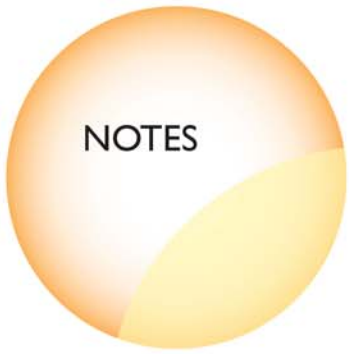
## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

*Ask Mother Nature (Grades 3-4)*

- Find and read stories from both Native and other cultures which explain natural phenomenon or involve “how \_\_\_\_ came to be” themes.
- Make a chart with the common elements between various tales.
- Brainstorm natural phenomena relevant to the students’ local environment.
- Ask each student to create their own story explaining a natural phenomenon. Students may want to choose something related to their favourite season or time of day (e.g., winter and snowfall, night and the creation of the stars).
- Have each student read their stories aloud to the class. Encourage students to use the techniques of storytelling as discussed (p.6).



Carlos Rivera | Photo: Cylla von Tiedemann



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# red Sky

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Sandra Laronde / Photo: Paula Wilson

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