

WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS—IMMERSIVE ENGAGEMENTS

A SOLO EXHIBITION BY CHERYL L'HIRONDELLE







Common Weal Community Arts bridges artists and communities in the territories on which Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 were signed. We recognize the diverse Indigenous people past, present, and future whose footsteps mark these territories, including the Cree, Dakota, Dene, Lakota, Nakota, Saulteaux, and the Métis people.



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Common Weal Community Arts Presents

Why This Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements

A solo exhibition by Cheryl L'Hirondelle



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small, round, woven basket. Inside the basket, a small, colorful bird is visible, perched on a piece of white fabric. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

Dedicated with love and respect to the memory of my co-writers: Margaret Sewap, "The Beauty Within" and "The Journey Home," Bernice Bighead (Sanderson), "Come My Sisters, Come" and "Lightning Scarred Heart," Deanna Renee Desjarlais, "Come My Sisters, Come," and Isaiah Terell Akachuk (aka: AWCP), "Can't Break Us." Your spirits will live on through the powerful words you contributed in the writing and singing of these songs.

— Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Curatorial Statement

Walking into the *Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements* exhibition, your eye is immediately drawn to a line of white chairs running closely along the wall. Above them is a corresponding row of black phone receivers which are attached to tablets playing videos of women holding similar receivers. The women are poised in postures of intense communication. It's a visually beautiful sightline, with satisfying symmetry and repetition of chairs and tablets, bearing the structural lines and edges of a modernist institutional dream. Your eye is soon pulled up above the vector of chairs to a long panel of expansive green landscape, as the subtle scent of tanned hide and rhythms of drums from other areas of the exhibition begin to work on the senses. This push and pull between structural, institutional elements and the expansive, organic, sensory qualities is a critical experience of the exhibition and important to understanding the deep interpersonal practice that has given rise to it.

Cheryl L'Hirondelle has been engaging incarcerated populations for many years and began working with Common Weal Community Arts inside Saskatchewan correctional facilities in 2008. At this time Common Weal invited Cheryl to initiate an intensive songwriting experience at the Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert where approximately 95% of incarcerated women are Indigenous, a statistic common to Canadian correctional facilities where an ongoing colonial legacy of systemic inequity becomes visible in this disproportionate representation within the justice system. The inaugural alliance with Cheryl at the Pine Grove facility was the beginning of a long, productive partnership. Over the past 13 years, Cheryl's collective songwriting processes have become ever richer and more comprehensive. This has included the intense process of recording songs sung by the incarcerated co-writers themselves, with song royalties paid to participants through Cheryl's music publishing company Miyoh Music Inc. Cheryl's collaborative methods have a rigorous structure as well as a generous process of sharing, refining, and growing in understanding together as the song's form emerges. During the songwriting workshops, there is an expansive quality to the interactions of the small circle of women gathered, which defies the

institutional environment of white walls and squared edges. The drums, voices, lyrics, and rhythms invoke something beyond the walls that can not be contained.

Common Weal enables social practices that are deeply focused on the people we engage. By their nature, these activities happen unseen by the broader society, and the learning that occurs can be hard to share. It's challenging to translate the intense creative experiences of an artist and community group for a wider public. This was the incentive for Common Weal to partner with Cheryl in mounting a solo exhibition of artwork emerging from her experiences working with incarcerated populations. Through her masterful melding of the structural and organic within visual, auditory, and olfactory elements of this exhibition, Cheryl creates a sensorial experience for the public. Inside the gallery, we find ourselves immersed in the dynamic forces that take place in her creative sharing of songs, teachings, and worldviews within the walls of Saskatchewan's correctional facilities.

This publication is a significant offering, contextualizing the *Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements* exhibition and the practice in which it is embedded. Julie Nagam's astute critical essay describes Cheryl's influence, insight, and unique position in the cultural landscape, with a sometimes arcane accuracy that only Julie's poetic approach can intuit. Cheryl's first-person artist statements bring us a bird's eye view into the process, philosophy, and intent behind each of the artworks. The partner statements, artwork credits, and QR codes provide details, context, and directions to find more, and of course the lush images indulge our senses with a portal into the encounter. It's a pleasure and an honour to work with the group that brought this exhibition and publication to life, and I hope that it will bring pleasure to you as well.

— Judy McNaughton, Common Weal Community Arts Northern Artistic Director and Exhibition Curator

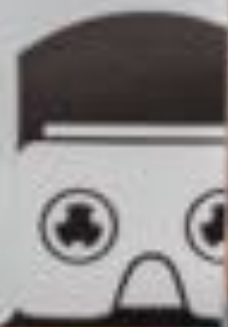
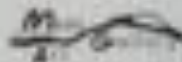




I AM
CARDBOARD




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The Power of the Land

In every Nation, in every Clan
The Elders to a person
Whether woman or man
Shared a common truth
One Truth to understand
That the spirit of the people
Is equal
To the spirit of the land

The mother of us all
The sacred Mother Earth
Is constant in her giving
And perpetual in her birth
In meadows and in fields
Where weeds and flowers grow
She conceives the summer showers
And spawns the winter snows

In forests and in mountains
She gives the birds that fly
Every type of wing
Then coaxes the wind to join in harmony
When they begin to sing

In brooks and streams and rivers as they flow
She generates the dreams
And makes the fires glow

And in every creature
Whether large or small
She buries gems of wisdom in them all

And in every grain of sand
She plants the knowledge
Of the Power of the Land

And those that honour her creations
And acknowledge her grand design
She gives the templates of the sacred
And the patterns of the divine
And then the certain knowledge
This to understand:

That the spirit of the people
Is equal
To the Power of the Land

— Dr. Duke Redbird (2020)



this swift songbird coaxes the wind to join in harmony with the power of the land

For the exhibition *Why The Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements*, I noted that artist and critical thinker Cheryl L'Hirondelle's career spans 40 years, yet she continues to work on the cutting edge of technology. Like most artists, she jokes that she will not be able to keep up with the rapid pace of change; however, she continues to expand each medium she tackles and, in the end, seems to adapt seamlessly, just like the small bird that surprises with the distance it can travel in harsh weather conditions. Her practice traverses a variety of media: virtual reality (VR), sound, web and net art, augmented reality (AR), song, sculpture, light, and much more. She emulates the white-throated sparrow that is swift and strong in all kinds of harsh conditions that never slow her down. Her voice hums a beautiful tune that people around her recognize immediately.

Retracing ancient paths through both landscapes and languages demonstrates the complexity of space, time, and place. For thousands of years, we have embodied, philosophized, and practiced different cultural relations to these terms. In my past scholarship, I have argued that spatial acts have serious material consequences for Indigenous people because confronting practices of subjugation to build place-based critiques of geography impacts our relationship to space and place. The ontology of language is embedded in the land. Languages are coded, they are embodied, and they are experienced through the spaces that create them—they have ancient conceptual connections to place. Our daily practices are embedded in our languages, how we communicate and move through our global world. Indigenous languages are learned on the land, or as my mum always says, "Watch and learn." When we rise in the morning and greet the sun, we are practicing a way of being in the world, since our expressions are bound to the ways we act and communicate with our families, friends, and communities.



In *nêhiyawêwin* (Cree language), *miyo-pimâtisiwin* is a path of the good life within the *nêhiyaw tâpisiwin* (Cree worldview)³, a philosophy and a way of being in the world that sees a connection between humans, nature, health, and happiness, implying that there should be balance between these relationships. Concepts are impossible to communicate in language without feeling a strong connection to place; language is learned out on the land because that is where the intricate relational layers that each word holds become clear. Cheryl explores these ideas through her multimedia practice, forging new paths by connecting visual and sound-based narratives to bring our Indigenous stories of place to the forefront. In her artwork, *Here I Am (Bless My Mouth)*, an intimate conversation reflects on solidarity and connection to people. The song this work is centered around is part of a larger community-engaged songwriting project entitled *Why the Caged Bird Sings*. It is a song written with a group of incarcerated women at Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge, a minimum-security federal prison located at Nekaneet First Nation in southwestern Saskatchewan. Cheryl explains that she wasn't able to record the women's voices, and so for the installation she invited 12 female artists and academic friends to sit-in as proxies for the incarcerated women—in solidarity with their voices and words. This work is viewable inside the gallery on 10 wall mounted tablets with phone receivers attached so that it creates both an overwhelming feeling and intimacy through each person and voice. Like songbirds soaring above the skyline, the voices echo throughout the bush to remind us of the incarcerated women, connecting worlds through dialogue and creating balance in those experiences and relationships. The exchange of words and song is imperative in Cheryl's practice and is witnessed in much of her artwork. Cheryl explains in her artist statement for the work *Here I Am (Bless My Mouth)* that “[t]his work considers the consequence of seemingly momentary encounters that create empathy and promote change—the empowerment we endorse when we stand in, sit in, sing with, and listen to one another.” Cheryl draws on *nêhiyawêwin* to bring forward radical inclusivity for all people, things, and the land—all are animate with no hierarchy of being.⁴





By inserting bodies, voices, and stories into the Canadian narrative and bringing to life Indigenous experiences and connections to knowledge, Cheryl inserts Indigenous people into the narrative instead of working from incorrect and archaic notions of vanishing races located only in the past and without a connection to the future. The importance of the orality and embodied knowledge that is a part of Indigenous praxis and creation is present in her VR work, *Medicine Kitchen Table: The Beauty Within*. Viewers of this work get to experience a round dance firsthand from within a circle of moccasins and long vibrant skirts shuffling to the beat of the drum. The circle that is created feels like home. Cheryl creates this VR experience using all the senses—the viewer hears the drum calling them to the land and feels the warmth of the women moving around like a star blanket embracing their body. She was in part inspired by the Métis matriarch Maria Campbell,

who offered her important teachings about the Métis Kitchen Table with its multipurpose functions and rich history. It is the place where all important decisions are made and where resistance planning takes place. *Medicine Kitchen Table: The Beauty Within* builds on the practice of Michif scholar and curator Cathy Mattes, who has “organized private and public kitchen table talk gatherings, collaborative and individual beading sessions, learn[ed] the Michif language, and work[ed] to strengthen and understand [...] kinship ties through self-reflection and the sharing of personal narratives with others.” These tables mark and map out actions within our families and communities to create change and spark difficult dialogue. Mattes explains that some of our favourite memories of intergenerational knowledge exchange are at the kitchen table. I imagine Cheryl sitting with Maria at her kitchen table in the landscape of Batoche, a key site of Métis history, drinking tea, and chatting about her work and the ideas informing it, sharing a lot of laughs, cackles, and table slaps. I dream I could be a fly on that wall.

The song in the VR work, "The Beauty Within," was written in 2008 during a workshop held at Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert. Cheryl explains that the incarcerated women were writing in their journals, filling the pages with their hopes for the future. The workshop, and later the lyrics, provided the women with uplifting encouragement and positive expression. To evoke these feelings of hope, Cheryl created brightly coloured tablecloths that act as patterned skirts that move with grace to the drum. The viewer looks down onto virtual flames that flicker and dance and catches glimpses of the material that makes up the tipi, reminding them of the power of people and their belief in themselves and the teachings that space holds. The knowledge of the kitchen table and the tipi is twofold, literally both a space of integrational learning and physical markers of Indigenous stories of place. The table and the tipi encompass Indigenous living histories linked to the land, water, and people, and Cheryl draws on their deep connections to place, history, and Indigenous epistemologies. Her sound and new media installations enable in-person and virtual gatherings, building on the strength of engaging through both our senses and imaginations.

Wintercount: Can't Break Us takes us through visual and sound-based narratives connecting past ways of knowing, of Plains pictorial accounts that document the stories and events of that specific nation or community. Winter counts are drawn calendars that recorded events and narratives on hides. These stunning circular images that chronicle histories is what Cheryl draws on for inspiration from this method of counting and holding memories. She places a large hide on a plinth where the viewer can write a message on paper notes and place it on the skin holding down the message with a rock. The song "Can't Break Us" was written in collaboration with 10 young men in detention at the Paul Dojack Youth Centre in Regina, Saskatchewan. Cheryl employs a collaborative process where she works with underrepresented voices in our society to help them find their pipes and sing their own tunes, to tell their own stories through the power of music. Each lyric tells a story about these incarcerated youth who are



trying to find hope for the future and live their lives in a good way. Viewers in the gallery can send back messages of their own, and like homing pigeons they will find their way to the incarcerated youth and hopefully inspire them to carry on, thus making the viewer a witness to their journey. It is exciting to witness the deep sense of poetics in Cheryl's practice as she expands on the importance of Cree language because it “uses metaphors and metonymy; it is always useful to agree collectively on this as an overarching poetic device—hence why this is a ‘winter count’.” Metaphors are prevalent in her practice, requiring viewers to read between the layers to find all the nuggets of knowledge that she imparts.

Drawing us back to the land is a deep connection to place and the embodied knowledge needed to read or see the terrain that holds our history. Imagining different historical narratives allows for a more nuanced view of and relationship to contested landscapes in the occupation of space. With an understanding of the history of conquest, colonialism, and capitalism, a person can open their mind to different possibilities of space and place. But, when histories of displacement are erased, the only memory left is the imperial view of discovery and ownership. *Mother Nature's Powers: To All Our Nations* immerses the viewer in the boreal forest landscape of Treaty 6 territory. If you stand barefoot on the large moss-patterned velvet cushion within the semi-enclosed space of the projection-mapped triptych, you are transported to that land and all the knowledge it holds. This memory and experience contradicts the current political climate of Canada and so is a marker of ongoing resistance to the dominant colonial narrative. Cheryl positions the viewer with wind-blown flora to convey the message of decolonization and self-determination, to understand the land as Native space. Our relationship to place is grounded in our ability to listen, to hear the song it's trying to sing to us over and over again. Cheryl translates these lyrics visually in order to rethink and re-imagine, to dream the potential of space beyond something solely patriarchal and colonial and conquered. This is when the magic happens, the moment a multitude of voices and visual images take over the subconscious, even if the viewer doesn't realize they are experiencing all this knowledge transfer. Each of Cheryl's works leaves me with a deeper sense of self and way of being in the world.



Cheryl's creative interventions draw on the land to tell ongoing Indigenous stories of place, imagining new ways of mapping the body, voice, and land. The ways history is constructed impacts Indigenous people, since in most cases we have been written out of the narrative in order to satisfy the logic behind the settler occupation of space in nations such as Canada. As Loretta Todd explains, "When native people say that the past is in the future, that the future is knowable, it is not some mystical rant but is rather the result of planning and consideration. As well, it draws on an understanding of the interconnected nature of all life. Prophetic belief and skill aside, there is a relationship to time and space that is not restricted to the moment at hand." There exists a lack in understanding of the connection through past, present, and future, though these are greatly interconnected. By bringing voices to the table that are generally disregarded in larger colonial narratives, Cheryl's work articulates that the circle isn't complete without these voices present and heard. Thus, her installations become part of a larger collective memory of Canada that challenges the stereotypical politics that have followed Indigenous people for centuries. Working with under-represented voices, whether those of people from detention centres or of the land itself, and placing them at the forefront, she is rewriting and re-imagining narratives through visual, aural, sculptural, and digital media.

Histories of displacement, genocide, and attempts to systematically destroy our languages and cultural knowledge are ongoing, and, lucky for us, Cheryl is a transmitter of our knowledge. Her ability to read the land and lead workshops to inspire others to sing their song is a gift that provides an opportunity to reflect on and understand the exchange that is happening. Cheryl explains: “Now, information is propelled through time and space as packets, bits and bytes via wireless and satellite signals. We now readily use this technology as the imperative of our continued survival. However, as we are bombarded with popular dominant culture, new trends, and the glut of global information, it is important to return home to our source, reflect on our history, and pay homage to the agency and ingenuity of our pathfinders.” Cheryl is this pathfinder; she is a beacon in a dark night searching for the bright stars who continue to shine, but never too brightly to overpower, imparting her knowledge to the people who resonate with her constellation.



Cheryl is a trailblazer in the field of digital media and continues to push its boundaries. She innovates in whatever medium of creative practice she determines to explore. This kind of fearlessness and inventiveness is demonstrated by her prolific career as both an artist and a critical thinker. Her practice is in a constant state of transformation; she is always translating her wealth of skills into new forms, leading the way for wonderstruck emerging and established artists. As her friend and collaborator, I am always amazed at each growth and transformation Cheryl takes in her projects from vision to realization. Each time I listen, witness, participate in, and experience her work, I understand the depth of knowledge that she possesses in her worldview, in her intellect, and in her practice. She is continuously gifting her incredible knowledge to whoever is fortunate enough to soar in the sky with this tiny but mighty songbird as she sways through the bush with just a transmitter on her back, bouncing the sound waves of her presence to the art world and community. So, listen carefully and absorb her knowledge in these immersive environments, and you will be forever grateful.⁹

— Dr. Julie Nagam

¹ Nagam, Julie. “This songbird soars swiftly through each branch with gifts of innovation and transformation.” *Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements* Exhibition Brochure. 2020. Common Weal Community Arts and Mann Art Gallery.

² McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds*. 2006. Minneapolis: University Minnesota Press.

³ Napoleon, Art. *Key Terms and Concepts for Exploring Nîhiyaw Tâpîsinowin the Cree Worldview*. 2014. University of Victoria, Master’s Thesis.

⁴ L’Hirondelle, Cheryl. *Here I Am (Bless My Mouth)* Artist Statement. 2020. Mann Art Gallery.

⁵ Mattes, Cathy. *Indigenous Littoral Practice: a Viable Framework for Collaborative and Dialogic Curatorial Practice*. 2021. University of Manitoba, PhD Dissertation. p. 38.

⁶ L’Hirondelle, Cheryl in discussion with the author. 2012.

⁷ Todd, Lorretta. “Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace.” *Immersed in Technology: Art and Virtual Environments*, edited by M. A. Moser and D MacLeod. 1996. MIT Press and Banff Centre, p. 179–94.

⁸ L’Hirondelle, Cheryl. “Codetalkers Recounting Signals of Survival.” *Coded Territories: Tracing Indigenous Pathways in New Media Art*, edited by Steven Loft and Kerry Swanson. 2014. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, p 150-151.

⁹ Nagam, Julie. “This songbird soars swiftly through each branch with gifts of innovation and transformation.” *Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements* Exhibition Brochure. 2020. Common Weal Community Arts and Mann Art Gallery.



The Beauty Within

Introduction: The Beauty Within
The Beauty Within: A Journey of Self-Discovery
The Beauty Within: A Journey of Self-Discovery

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Zip:

Phone:

E-mail:

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Date:

Teacher:

Subject:

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The Beauty Within (Hidden River Singer)
Why the Caged Bird Sings: The Beauty Within
Cheryl L'Hironsdale and Friends

4:40

Progress bar and play button

Full screen icon

Here I Am (Bless My Mouth)

In *nêhiyawêwin* (Cree language), there is the ability within the language structure to communicate with radical inclusivity so that everything animate is addressed, and this includes rocks, plants, animals and even one's socks. When writing in *nêhiyawêwin*, there is no such thing as a proper noun as no one being or thing is above or below any other in the perpetual inter-relatedness of *miyo-pimâtisiwin* (life force). These are concepts from *nêhiyawin* (Cree worldview) that continue to challenge and inspire me.

High above thick institutional walls, the gentle rolling hills of the great northern plains are visible—symbolizing that ultimately the only entity or being capable of keeping, confining, sustaining, and cradling us is our Mother Earth. Each of the tablets reveals a video of a woman, her face partially blurred to protect her identity, sitting at a payphone singing into the receiver.

This work considers the consequence of seemingly momentary encounters that create empathy and promote change—the empowerment we endorse when we stand in, sit in, sing with, and listen to one another, in solidarity. It asks the gallery viewer to crossover from their privilege of passive engagement and ask the questions:

Will you answer the phone and receive the transmission?

Will you sit in solidarity and listen?

"Here I Am (Bless My Mouth)" was co-written at Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge, a minimum-security federal prison located at Nekaneet First Nation in southwestern Saskatchewan. At the end of my week-long songwriting workshop, the warden did not allow me to record the women's voices as is the intended concluding activity. To create this installation, I instead invited twelve colleagues (female artists and academics) to sit-in as proxy for the women inside, in solidarity with their voices and story.



Mother Nature's Powers: To All Our Nations

Being on the land is paramount in so many Native peoples' lives, and it is from the natural world where we learn teachings of who we are as Indigenous people and how we are intrinsically connected with land and life. For many from the north or from rural and remote regions, there is a sense of self-worth and pride in being able to hunt, trap, gather, and sustain life, and I assert that self-determination originates from these teachings, acquired skills of survival and our relationship with *where we're from*.

A large moss-patterned velvet cushion is lit, inviting the viewer into a semi-enclosed space. Sensors trigger projection mapping of a peaceful rural vista on three of the adjacent walls, and directional audio is focused on the cushion, which can be sat or stood on, and this transports the viewer to experience the message in the lyrics to “go with the wind/and use mother nature's powers.”

"To All Our Nations" was created through a workshop at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre. At the beginning of the workshop I showed the participants some music videos for my own songs to spark their interest. One commented that if I ever made a music video for their song, they wanted it to be about being in the bush. I was planning to make a sensory VR video using the beautiful muskeg between Beauval and La Loche involving youth from a couple of the northern schools for the choruses of the song, but pandemic restrictions forced me to switch directions and create a different kind of immersive environment filmed at, and close to, Fort Carleton—the site of the Treaty 6 signings. As conditions allow, alternate versions of this installation will include the planned VR video using the similar moss patterned cushion, projection mapping, and enclosed space design.



Medicine Kitchen Table: The Beauty Within

A few years ago, I had an idea for how to use 360° VR (panoramic virtual reality) to make a music video for a round dance song. My intention was to disrupt the panoramic abilities of 360° VR, as it is used in everything from tourism to medical applications, by playing with the senses to create an imaginary, almost impossible place. I wondered what it would be like to be closely encircled by women, who were the singers of the song, round-dancing in long skirts around the viewer. Shortly before I began production, I had the serendipity of visiting with knowledge keeper Maria Campbell, who relayed an important teaching about the multipurpose uses Métis Kitchen Tables offer—above, around, and even below.

For this piece, viewers find themselves enclosed beneath what could be a table with rotating multi-coloured tablecloths. Looking up, they see a drum being rhythmically hit. Looking around in this environment, viewers see the tablecloth to be four brightly coloured fabric skirts. The feet of four women are also seen moving in a clockwise motion to the rhythm of the drum and a song being sung in unison. Looking down, an animated flame glows, and every now and then between the skirts, glimpses of the inside of a tipi are visible that further encapsulate the dancers, the drum, and the viewers alike. The refrain of the song is “The beauty within shall shine forever,” and it is hopeful that the observer comes to understand by participating, that they are also part of this panorama, casting their glow intermittently onto the fabric skirts. In doing so, the spectator becomes witness—in support of the positive affirmations of the women who composed the lyrics and who are heard singing their song.

"The Beauty Within" is the first song co-written in 2008 at Pine Grove Correctional Centre. The women involved were writing in their journals about all their hopes and dreams for when they would be released, and the songwriting workshop and resulting song lyrics became a natural extension of their self-expression.



Wintercount: Can't Break Us

Winter counts are customary Great Plains pictorial accounts, chronicling the history of a band (community). A solitary image or a small collection of symbols would be drawn in an outward spiraling pattern on an animal hide, to make note of a major occurrence for each of the years included. The keeper of the winter count used these glyphs as mnemonic cues to recount the narrative, year upon year. Witnessing was an integral part of how and why a winter count works—there is an imperative that the history is heard and remembered as all are part of the continuum of the story unfolding.

The smoky scent of a brain-tanned hide dominates the space around, and a song can be faintly heard only increasing in volume when one nears the hide that lays atop a large, flat plinth. Next to the hide are blank, caption-shaped paper notes, small sharpened pencils, and rocks, and it is evident that the hide is being populated with glyphs and messages.

"Can't Break Us" was written collaboratively with ten young men in detention at the Paul Dojack Youth Centre in Regina, Saskatchewan. Similar to the concept of a winter count, these lyrics were created as a narrative progression, to tell a story of how and who the young men are as they live through their detention. "Happiness" was unanimously chosen as the theme for their song. The significance is meaningful since this life-affirming value correlates to the fourth pole in the construction of *mîkiwahp* (tipi) and is one of the poles that makes a doorway.



Why The Caged Bird Sings

The series of songs featured together at the listening station in the exhibition are from *Why the Caged Bird Sings*, a five-day participatory and community-engaged singing, songwriting, and recording workshop series involving small groups of incarcerated women, men, or detained youth, along with their literacy educators and cultural programmers within federal prisons, provincial correctional centres, and youth detention facilities.

The song lyrics created by the participants are strung together to create a narrative, using consensus as a way to create equity so that everyone's voice is heard and validated. The resulting songs are uplifting and positive in theme and are meant to become a repeatable mantra that belongs to all the participants who co-wrote the songs—extending out to the greater community, so that everyone can join in.

At the root of every song lyric is the use of metaphor. This helps to both poetically focus the lyrics thematically and transform negative experiences into positive strengths. The resulting uplifting song doesn't ignore the struggles or hardships any of the participant/co-writers have endured, individually or collectively, but instead looks forward as a way of affirming one's future and potential. The songs therefore are considered "freedom songs"—though not to be confused with those from the civil rights movement. In Cree language, freedom is akin to having self-control and self-determination, so from a creative point-of-view it is self-expression that these songs lyrically and melodically declare.

To date (2008 to 2021) nine songs* have been co-written and recorded at the following municipal, provincial, and federal correctional facilities in Saskatchewan: Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert (women's provincial); Okimaw Ohci Healing Centre in Maple Creek (women's federal); Paul Dojack Youth Centre in Regina (youth municipal); and Prince Albert Correctional Centre in Prince Albert (men's provincial).

**These songs can be heard by scanning the QR codes on page 61 of this publication or to support and contribute to the songwriters, please visit: whythecagedbirdsings.bandcamp.com. Each purchase includes the B-side version of the song and the artwork as a downloadable PDF.*

All Our Nations (Mother Nature's Powers)

©2015 SOCAN/Myonidwean
Lyrics by: Trevor Alexander, Trevor S. Nelson,
John Craig, Jeyden Lapine, George Latta,
Dominick Mignone, Fabian Mathias,
Terrance Stonechild, Jake Tupper,
Robert Young and Alfred Sanyal
Music by: C. L'Abonde, J. Noyon, J.

Every moment
I'm trying to find my way
the sky is no limit
I'll go any way
The earth will be mine
The wind can be ours
With the wind
Use mother nature's powers
Go with the wind
Use mother nature's powers

nations

COVID-19 Adaptations: Parking Lot Karaoke

The songs written during *the Why the Caged Bird Sings* engagements each have a B-side featuring an instrumental version of the song suitable for karaoke. The intent was that, where possible, this extra sing-along rendition of the song would be added for the many song co-writers' benefit—namely, to enable them to perform their song at an open mic or for their families and friends.

Parking Lot Karaoke was created, in part, as a workaround to meet COVID-19 restrictions in the fall of 2020. Because a limited number of visitors were allowed in the gallery, *Parking Lot Karaoke* became an extension of the immersive work inside the Mann Art Gallery. In keeping with other projects of mine—most notably 2011 to 2014's *NDN Storytelling Bus Tour*, and 2014 to present's *yahkâskwan mîkiwahp*, or *Light Tipi* (with Joseph Naytowhow)—*Parking Lot Karaoke* is only manifested by direct community participation. In this way, the exhibition opening became an event. Performative in nature, *Parking Lot Karaoke* is an outdoor version of what I had originally envisioned happening weekly for the entire run of the exhibition, whereby sing-a-longs of this nature are intended to act as a further invitation to the local Indigenous community, family members of the songwriters, and corrections staff to feel more welcomed into the gallery space. Ironically, pandemic restrictions actually worked in a favourable way to attract the local Indigenous community to the gallery where the safety and comfort of one's vehicle was appreciated by folks who don't regularly spend time in art galleries.

An important aspect of *Parking Lot Karaoke* optimally involves partnering with local radio stations to dedicate an hour or more of their programming to play both versions of the song so all can initially listen to the songs on their car radios, first practicing with the lyrics, then singing along a second time with the karaoke version. Using radio in performative contexts is consistent with several previous performance art pieces (*cistêmaw iyiniw ohci*, 2001 and *awa ka âwaciwêt pîwâpisko waciya*, 2002 to 2008).

For the Mann Gallery iteration, special guests Joseph Naytowhow as MC and Harvey Knight as DJ engaged audiences via a PA system set up in the parking lot turning it into an open-air dance floor. Joseph and Harvey's involvement was what remained from the original pre-pandemic idea. Both are well-respected and much-loved senior Indigenous musicians in Saskatchewan. At the Mann Art Gallery exhibition opening, several helpers donned safety vests and aprons handing out lyrics and serving food and refreshments. As a performative aspect, their vests and aprons were a nod to treatycard.ca, Nuit Blanche edition (2012), and *Freedom Tours* with Camille Turner (2018). I also wandered throughout the parking lot handing out prizes including bars of soap, a limited-edition face mask made with the same moss print as the cushion in *Mother Nature's Powers: To All Our Nations*, and a CD of songs from the *Why the Caged Bird Sings* project.

— Cheryl L'Hirondelle



COVID-19 Adaptations: Exterior Projections

In order to increase accessibility in light of COVID-19 gathering restrictions, a series of videos associated with the *Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements* exhibition were adapted and projected at a large scale onto the windows of the Mann Art Gallery in the evenings for the entire exhibition run. These projections included the lush panoramic greenery of Treaty 6 territory in the music video for “Mother Nature’s Powers: To All Our Nations,” the mesmerizing machinima video for “Medicine Kitchen Table: The Beauty Within,” and the engaging faces of people listening to the co-writers at Paul Dojack Youth Centre singing “Wintercount: Can’t Break Us.” This allowed people walking or driving by the gallery to experience some of the content and imagery within.

What began as an adaptation came to take on new meaning. The E. A. Rawlinson Centre, which houses the Mann Art Gallery, is positioned next to a neighborhood consisting primarily of transitional housing. It is likely that some of the local residents are among those who cycle in and out of the correctional system, or have family who do. During the evenings installing the exhibition, and again at the *Parking Lot Karaoke* opening event, it was apparent that many local residents regularly walk past the gallery at night. The projections drew these people to the gallery, and they became interested in stopping to view the work, inquiring about the activities taking place inside the institution. This external view of the exhibition clearly resonated with local residents who were not regular gallery visitors and would likely not have experienced Cheryl’s work otherwise. We came to understand the importance of the external projections as part of the exhibition outreach, allowing us to entice new audiences beyond the walls of the gallery space.

— Judy McNaughton, Common Weal Community Arts Northern Artistic Director and Exhibition Curator









A Letter from Common Weal Community Arts

Common Weal Community Arts is the only professional arts organization in Saskatchewan committed solely to socially-engaged practice. The importance of this cannot be understated. We are dedicated to a high standard of artistic merit, in part, so that this practice may be promoted as a legitimate contemporary art form, judged by criteria that prioritizes a relational aesthetic. As socially-engaged practitioners, we value the process. The processes of socially-engaged collaboration, including exploration and expression of voice and identity, are as significant (or more significant) as a finished product or presentation. However, it is also of vital importance that Common Weal seek opportunities to “make the process visible,” highlighting the creativity and stories of project artists and participants alike through public presentation of their work.

The *Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements* exhibition is the culmination of a decades-long partnership with Cheryl L’Hirondelle, who has worked with incarcerated populations for over 20 years. Her work has influenced and been influenced by these participants and by their families and communities, many of whom are from remote northern and other isolated communities in Saskatchewan. This exhibition is an opportunity for the public to experience first-hand the powerful work that Cheryl, her co-producers, local musicians, and importantly the incarcerated co-writers have created inside Saskatchewan correctional facilities. Cheryl has created space for participants to develop skills in creative expression and cultural awareness, creating songs filled with hope. Although participants can’t bring anything in or take anything out of correctional facilities, the songs they co-create with Cheryl are theirs to have, something precious they can sing while inside, and bring home with them when they are released.

This type of public presentation is important, especially for groups whose perspectives have been underrepresented or misunderstood by the broader public. In sharing the stories of those in corrections, we are advocating for the communication of unique expressions of social values and attitudes to the broader public, creating forums for dialogue and understanding that have impacts in all sectors of society. We are grateful to partner with the Mann Art Gallery on the development of this exhibition as they are equally committed to expanding the boundaries of contemporary art institutions by making space for diverse community voices.

The work in corrections facilities across Saskatchewan is an important part of our past, present, and future, and we are pleased to share it with the public.

— Risa Payant, Common Weal Community Arts Executive Director



A Letter from the Mann Art Gallery

Since 2008, Cheryl L'Hirondelle has been co-writing songs with incarcerated adults and detained youth across Saskatchewan. These songs were exhibited with other works in an immersive installation at the Mann Art Gallery in the fall of 2020. Though they had been presented in public on numerous occasions, in a sense this exhibition brought these songs home—located, as we are, in Prince Albert: Saskatchewan's "jail town."

With COVID-19 protocols in place, the opening reception looked more like a drive-in movie than the usual pinkies-up affair we're used to. Over 50 cars packed the parking lot with bubbles of families and friends enjoying DJs, exterior video projections, and other performances. The great success of this event is a testament to Cheryl's resilience and generosity, not to mention all the staff and volunteers who made it possible.

As Saskatchewan's northernmost public art gallery with a well-established record of supporting contemporary art as well as traditional and revived forms, the Mann serves a very diverse range of artists and publics. With accessibility and inclusiveness embedded in our organizational vision, Cheryl's collaborative work with incarcerated people in our midst fulfilled our mandate in myriad ways.

While the rich and challenging work in *Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements*, attracted publics with diverse interests and experiences, on a more integral level—the artwork itself had a fundamentally relational character. Cheryl became a catalyst by initiating convivial situations between people who wouldn't otherwise have come together to express themselves. She tapped into her musical skills and passion to set up situations that enriched the participants and the publics they attracted.

Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements is the flower of a great partnership between Common Weal Community Arts and the Mann Art Gallery. I look forward to our renewed commitment for future exhibitions, and especially working with their Northern Artistic Director, Judy McNaughton.

I know all the staff at the Mann Art Gallery were invigorated by *Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements*, and as I started my directorship at the gallery half way through the show's run, I was personally grateful to join an organization that supported such complex, challenging, and generous work. I had the great fortune to meet Cheryl at the striking of the show, and we were all ecstatic to hear she was the recipient of the Governor General's Awards for the Visual and Media Arts in 2021 just months after the exhibition closed. Good work!

— Marcus Miller, Mann Art Gallery Director/Curator







Cheryl L'Hirondelle (Cree/Halfbreed and German/Polish) is an interdisciplinary, community-engaged artist, singer/songwriter, and a critical thinker whose family roots are from Papaschase First Nation, *amiskwaciy wâskahikan* (Edmonton, Alberta), and the Kikino Métis Settlement in Alberta. Her work critically investigates and articulates a dynamism of *nêhiyawin* (Cree worldview) in contemporary time-place with a practice that incorporates Indigenous languages, audio, video, virtual reality, the olfactory, sewn objects, music, and audience/user participation to create immersive environments towards radical inclusion. As a songwriter, Cheryl's focus is on sharing *nêhiyawêwin* (Cree language), Indigenous and contemporary song-forms, and personal narrative songwriting as methodologies toward *survivance*.

Cheryl has exhibited and performed nationally and internationally. She is the recent recipient of the 2021 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Art and was awarded the imagineNATIVE New Media Award (2005 and 2006) and Canadian Aboriginal Music Award (2006 and 2007) as well as various nominations and honorable mentions. Cheryl holds a Masters of Design from OCAD University's Inclusive Design program (2015) and is a member of the university's Indigenous Education Council. She is currently a PhD candidate with SMARTlab at University College Dublin, in Ireland.

Dr. Julie Nagam (Métis/German/Syrian) is a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Arts, Collaboration and Digital Media and an Associate Professor in the department of Art History at the University of Winnipeg. She is the inaugural Artistic Director for Nuit Blanche Toronto for 2020 and 2022, the largest public art exhibition in North America. Dr. Nagam's SSHRC research includes digital makerspaces and incubators, mentorship, digital media and design, international collaborations, and place-based knowledge. As a scholar and artist she is interested in revealing the ontology of land, which contains memory, knowledge, and living histories. Her artistic work has been exhibited internationally, including in Brazil, France, New Zealand, and England in both solo and group exhibitions. Nagam's scholarship, curatorial, and artistic practice has been featured nationally and internationally. Dr. Nagam is the Director of Aabijjiwan New Media Lab and Co-Director of Kishaadigeh Collaborative Research Centre in Winnipeg.



Judy McNaughton (Scottish/Irish/Norwegian) is a cultural animateur and visual artist living in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Throughout her career she has been socially motivated, which has manifested in cultural activism and socially-engaged projects. Her programs strive to enrich our cultural ecosystem while highlighting the strength and beauty that already exists. She serves on numerous panels, juries, boards, consultations, and engagements both provincially and nationally. Her studio practice, including public installations and gallery exhibits, reconsiders notions of discrete separation between the things and beings in the world and our corporeal connection to the things around us. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Regina and a Master of Fine Arts degree through Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Judy has been Northern Artistic Director with Common Weal since 2004.







Thank You

I'd like to express my deep gratitude to Judy McNaughton, Northern Artistic Director of Common Weal Community Arts and Curator of this exhibition, whose commitment and compassionate willingness to work with community while supporting artists is unparalleled in my experience—*hay hay, miywâsin nitôtêm!* A big thank you also to Common Weal Community Arts staff and board for your ongoing support of community-engaged practices such as mine and to the wonderful staff and volunteers at the Mann Art Gallery for welcoming and assisting in the installation and hosting of this exhibition—*mêtoni mâmaskâc!*

Also, I'd like to thank the amazing and dedicated program staff at the correctional facilities visited, including Carla Johnson, Teacher and Therapist at Pine Grove Correctional Centre; Alfred Sanderson, Community/Culture Coordinator and Cal Reid, Activities Coordinator at Prince Albert Correctional Centre; Elroy Carrier, Cultural Programming at Paul Dojack Youth Centre; and Sherry Wright, Literacy Teacher at Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge. This project would not have happened if not for your care, devotion, and vision, to provide excellent learning and cultural opportunities for your students. Thank you for trusting me and allowing me into your classrooms and cultural spaces—*hay hay wîcihtowin ohci.*

Huge gratitude as well to all my musical and technical colleagues—Gregory Hoskins, David Travers-Smith, Mark Schmidt, Glenn Ens, Joseph Naytowhow, Gabe Ritchie, Samay Arcentales, Rob Lowther, and Phil Schleihau—*mêtoni miywâsin kinakacihitiyik!*

To all the amazing co-writers of the songs in this project: I am grateful you opened up and trusted me. Know that I will continue to protect your intellectual property as reflected in these songs—*kwayask nitôtîn, kwayask nipimâtisin!*

êkwa tèniki nistêsêh Joseph Naytowhow nêhiyawêwin ohci – wahwâ, mêtoni!

And finally, I would like to thank my mama for teaching me how and why to care and share—*kisâkhitin nikâwiy!*

— Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Thank You

This exhibition came together thanks to the talent and ingenuity of many. First, my deepest gratitude to Cheryl L'Hirondelle for her insight and vision and the generosity to share it all with us. I've learned so much through working with you, and it has changed me. It took the concerted effort of many hearts and minds to create the songs that are the foundation for this exhibition. Thank you to the many co-writers who found a place inside themselves to share their struggles, dreams, and hopes, and to make songs that could also reach that place inside of each person who heard them. Thank you also to the musicians and technicians who helped actualize these songs.

Thank you to the correctional centre staff who trusted us to come into your buildings and make beautiful music together. In particular, we are grateful to Pine Grove Correctional Centre Teacher and Therapist, Carla Johnson, who's unflinching energy, humour, and persistence has created the ground for so much to flourish.

We are thankful that the exhibition took form at the Mann Art Gallery, in Prince Albert, the place where it all began. Thank you to the team there, including Marcus Miller, Lana Wilson, Tia Furstenberg, Danielle Castle, and Ethan Waldner. Thanks also to Dannyll Challis from the E.A. Rawlinson Centre for the Arts. This exhibition would not have been possible without the expertise of Technical Preparator Phil Schleihau.

Thank you to the team of folks who came together to make the *Parking Lot Karaoke* opening event a success. In particular, I am grateful to event MC and performer Joseph Naytowhow, Karaoke DJ Harvey Knight, VJ Carrie Gates, DJ Tim Janke A.K.A. Stimmy the Whale, videographers Samay Arcentales Cajas and Marcel Petit, and photographers All My Relations Photography and Barb Reimer. Thanks also to Michele Lesser at the Nestle Inn for hosting our team.

Finally, thank you to Risa Payant and Nena Hawkes, my colleagues at Common Weal Community Arts for your unflinching support and, especially, your oversight of this publication. Thanks also to copy editor Paula Bogdan.

— Judy McNaughton, Common Weal Community Arts Northern Artistic Director and Exhibition Curator





Common Weal Community Arts creates programming in collaboration with socially-engaged artists and Saskatchewan communities in pursuit of an equitable and just society. Over the course of nearly three decades we have grown from a grassroots collective to a professional non-profit arts organization. Our projects are diverse in artistic discipline and approach, including elements of traditional practice, site-specific work, residency and workshop activity, high-profile events, and critical discourse on socially-engaged and community-based arts.

You can find out more about us at www.commonweal.ca.

MannArtGallery

The Mann Art Gallery is committed to bridging culture and community through excellence, diversity, and engagement in visual art. We are Prince Albert's only professional public art gallery and the northernmost public art gallery in Saskatchewan. For over 40 years, we have played an important role in promoting local, regional, and nationally significant work through exhibitions, catalogues, education programs, and by showcasing our permanent collection.

You can find out more about us at www.mannartgallery.ca.



Song Credits

Gallery Work:

Mother Nature's Powers: To All Our Nations (2020)

Projection mapping, sensors, directional audio

Velvet cushion and triggered audio

"To All Our Nations (Mother Nature's Powers)" © 2016 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Production Credits

Artistic direction: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Videography, photo stitching and colour correction: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Cushion seamstress: Julie Spence, Prism Industries

Colour correction and video editing: Samay Arcentales

Projection mapping, sensors, extra video editing, audio mix and installation: Phil Schleihau

This piece was commissioned for this exhibition by Common Weal Community Arts with funding through Canada Council for the Arts Public Outreach. Special thanks to Paved Arts (Saskatoon) for production space and Ontario Arts Council – Media Art Project Grants for additional production funds.

Medicine Kitchen Table: The Beauty Within (2020)

VR music video with cardboard viewer and machinima projection

"The Beauty Within" © 2008 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Production Credits

Artistic direction: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

360° Videography, photography and 360° photography stitching: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Unity programming and 360° video editing: Rob Lawther

Extra editing, animation (VR video) and Machinima footage, editing, subtitling: Samay Arcentales

This piece was commissioned for this exhibition by Common Weal Community Arts with funding through Canada Council for the Arts Public Outreach. Part of the production took place during *Cultural Sensorium: an Ethnography of the Senses* (Jennifer Biddle, PI) - University of New South Wales, at EPICentre (Expanded Perception & Interaction Centre) Sydney, Australia.

Wintercount: Can't Break Us (2015)

Multimedia and olfactory installation

Brain-tanned hide, pencils, post-it notes, rocks

Headsets (4) or parabolic speaker and looped audio

"Can't Break Us" © 2015 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Production Credits

Artistic Direction: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Stitched hide: Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Leah Decter

This installation was originally commissioned by curators Jaime Isaac and Leah Decter for the exhibition *mamo'wiiang: to make change* at The Art Gallery of South Western Manitoba, Brandon MB. The additional iteration with a stitched hide was created during an artist residency at Isabel Bader Media Art Centre, Queen's University. Thanks to Ontario Arts Council Exhibition Assistance Program.

Here I Am (2013)

Multimedia installation

7.9m x 2.43m [26' X 8']

10 wall-mounted tablets with handheld telephone receivers, 10 unique video performances, one 34-foot X 4-foot full colour panorama, 10 chairs

Courtesy of the Indigenous Art Centre, Gatineau QC.

Production Credits

Artistic Direction: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Performances by Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Ayumi Goto, Leah Decter, Aruna Srivastava, Mimi Gellman, Tania Willard, Robinder Sehdev, Cecily Nicholson, Jaimie Isaac and Kym Gouchie, and Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill and Keavy Martin.

Videography and editing: Gabriel Archie

Additional editing: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Sound recording: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Sound mixing: Gregory Hoskins

Song Credits

"Here I Am (Bless My Mouth)" © 2013 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Collaboratively composed June 2013 at Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge.

Lyrics: Cathy McAlinden, Christine Griffiths, Heike Irmgard Hagen, Beverly Fullerton, RM Gorman, Lori Ann Maurice, Kristen Dillon, K. Brunet, Tiffany Peters, E. Jackman, Panda Bear Delorme, V. Martin, N. Chartrand, Cyndi Sinclair and Sherry Wright.

Music: Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Gregory Hoskins

This installation was originally commissioned by curator Steven Loft for *Ghost Dance: Activism. Resistance*. Art at Ryerson Image Centre, Toronto, ON. Videos and panorama were created during *Reconsidering Reconciliation* thematic art residency at Thomson Rivers University (Ashok Mathur, CRC) and sponsored by *The Shingwauk Archive*, Algoma University (Jonathan Dewar, director), and Dylan Robinson – Canada Research Chair, Queen's University. Thanks to Ontario Arts Council Exhibition Assistance Program.

The Listening Station:

The Beauty Within

© 2008 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Collaboratively composed and lyricists voices recorded live, June 2008 at Pine Grove Correctional Centre.

Lyrics: Tracey Gamble, Maggie Sewap, Shelene Holcomb, Michelle (Baldy) March, Karen Moocheweines, Angela Rabbitskin, Lisa Smith and Carla Johnson

Music: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Original Rendition:

Vocals: all lyricists

Handdrums and extra vocals: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Rattles: Angela Rabbitskin, Michelle March, Tracey Gamble

Produced by Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Recorded and mixed by Big Drum Media, Prince Albert

Mastered by David Travers-Smith

Hidden River Singers Rendition:

Recorded May 2019 at Found Sound

Vocals: Monique Mojica, Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Shandra Spears Bombay, Rose Stella, Michelle St. John

Rattles: Michelle St. John

Hand drums: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Recorded, mixed, and mastered by David Travers-Smith

Arranged by Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Co-produced by Cheryl L'Hirondelle and David Travers-Smith

Cover design: Shandra Spears Bombay

Cover art: Kaylynn Smoke

The Journey Home

© 2010 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Collaboratively composed with all women's voices recorded March 2010 at Pine Grove Correctional Centre

Lyrics: Charli Thingelstad, Danielle Ermine, Doris Banahene, Jane Paul, Janine George, Margaret Sewap, Stacey Gunnlaugson and Carla Johnson

Music: Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Gregory Hoskins

Lead vocals: Charli Thingelstad

Group vocals: all lyricists

Call-and-response chanting: Doris Banahene and Danielle Ermine

Hand drums and backing vocals: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

All guitars: Gregory Hoskins

Voices, drums, and guitars recorded by Gregory Hoskins

Co-produced and arranged by Cheryl L'Hirondelle, David Travers-Smith and Gregory Hoskins

Mixed and mastered by David Travers-Smith

NOTE: Due to how parts of this song were recorded, the 'B-side karaoke version' (as found in later songs) was not possible. Instead, both of my co-producers' created unique mixes, their sonic visions.

Cover design: Shandra Spears Bombay

Cover art: Andrea Bear

Come My Sisters Come

© 2010 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Collaboratively composed, and women's voices recorded live, October 2010 at Pine Grove Correctional Centre

Lyrics: Maureen Montgrand, Elizabeth Charles, Bernice Sanderson, Deanna Renee Desjarlais, Melody Bird, Angela Rabbitskin, M. Henderson and Carla Johnson

Music: Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Gregory Hoskins

Lead vocals, harmonies and vocables/chanting and ka cistâwêhtâkosihk (leles): all lyricists

Spoken word: Bernice Sanderson

Hand drums and extra vocals: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Guitars and extra percussion: Gregory Hoskins

Arranged by Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Gregory Hoskins

Co-produced by Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Gregory Hoskins and David Travers-Smith

Mixed and mastered by David Travers-Smith, Found Sound

Cover design: Shandra Spears Bombay

Cover art: Charnelle Swiftwolfe

Lightning Scarred Heart

© 2011 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Collaboratively composed, and women's voices recorded live, November 2011 and January 2012 at Pine Grove Correctional Centre, SK.

Lyrics: Jennifer Houle, Abby Nawakayas, Celeste Whitehawk, Bernice Bighead, Rosanna Napope, Cheyanne Fox, Jessica LaPlante Sandi and Carla Johnson (Teacher Therapist).

Music: Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Gregory Hoskins

Vocals and other rhythmic sounds: all lyricists

Percussion and backing vocals: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

All guitars: Gregory Hoskins

Arranged by Gregory Hoskins and Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Mixed by Gregory Hoskins and David Travers-Smith

Voices recorded live onsite by Gregory Hoskins, November 2011; and by Harvey Knight, January 2012.

Co-produced by David Travers-Smith, Gregory Hoskins, and Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Mastered by David Travers-Smith, Found Sound

Cover design: Shandra Spears Bombay

Cover art: Charnelle Swiftwolfe

Can't Break Us

© 2015 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Collaboratively composed with all youth's voices recorded live, March 2015 at Paul Dojack Youth Detention Centre

Lyrics: Bannock Kid, Cruz, AWCP, Redman, IWA, Ryder, Lil Durk, Key-Lo-G, Biter, Lil Bear and E. Carrier

Music: Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Mark Schmidt

Lead vocals: AWCP

Rap: Bannock Kid

Backing vocals: all lyricists

Hand drum: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

All other instruments and programming: Mark Schmidt

Co-produced by Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Mark Schmidt

Recorded and mixed by Mark Schmidt, Northern Town Music

Mastered by Ron Skinner, Heading North Mastering

Cover design: Shandra Spears Bombay

Cover art: Key Lo G

To All Our Nations (Mother Nature's Powers)

© 2016 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Collaboratively composed and men's voices recorded live, October 2015 at Prince Albert Correctional Centre

Lyrics: Trevor Alexander, Trevor S. Ballantyne, John Craig, Jayden Laprise, George Lathlin, Donovan Misponas, Fabian Stalthanee, Terrance Stonechild, Jake Toutsaint, Robert Young and Alfred Sanderson

Music: Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Joseph Naytowhow, Gregory Hoskins

Lead vocals: Jake Toutsaint

Group vocals: all lyricists

Chanting and drumming: Joseph Naytowhow

Backing vocals: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Acoustic and electric guitars: Gregory Hoskins

Bass, drums, and percussion: Mark Schmidt

Co-produced by Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Mark Schmidt

Men's voices recorded live onsite by Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Guitar tracks recorded by Gregory Hoskins - Midnight Works

Additional recording and all mixing and programming by Mark Schmidt, Northern Town Music

Mastered by Ron Skinner - Heading North Mastering Studio

Cover design: Shandra Spears Bombay

Cover art: Fabian Stalthanee

Live the Life That Is Meant for Me

© 2016 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Collaboratively composed, and men's voices recorded live, April 2016 at Prince Albert Correctional Centre

Lyrics by: Drew Ballantyne, Michelle Ballantyne, Larry Bird, Cory Halkett, Joshua Johnson, Randall Lemaigre, Keith William Martell, Robert pachapis Favel, Alfred Sanderson

Music by: Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Gregory Hoskins, Joseph Naytowhow, Mark Schmidt

Lead vocals: Keith William Martell

Group vocals: all lyricists

Chanting, flute, and spoken word: Joseph Naytowhow

Hand drums, backing vocals: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Acoustic and slide guitar: Gregory Hoskins

Bass, synth, keys, drums and percussion, and additional guitar: Mark Schmidt

Co-produced and arranged by Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Mark Schmidt

Live onsite voices recorded by Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Guitar tracks recorded by Gregory Hoskins, Midnight Works

Additional recording and all mixing and programming by Mark Schmidt, Northern Town Music

Mastered by Ron Skinner, Heading North Mastering Studio

Cover design: Shandra Spears Bombay

Cover art: Robert pachapis Favel

A Journey to Freedom

© 2019 SOCAN / Miyoh Music Inc.

Song collaboratively composed, and women's voices recorded live, June 2019 at Pine Grove Correctional Centre

Lyrics by: Kendall Whitstone, Jessica Smith, Faron Longman, Alexis Arcand, Janelle Umpherville, Janelle Montgrand and Carla Johnson

Music: Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Joseph Naytowhow and Glenn Ens

Vocals, *sâkawêw* (howls) *êkwa ka cistâwêhtâkosihk* (leles): all lyricists

Big powwow drum: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Instrument arrangements and programming: Glenn Ens

Song arranged by Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Glenn Ens

Co-produced by Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Glenn Ens

Mastered by Glenn Ens, Audio Art Recording, Saskatoon SK

Cover design: Shandra Spears Bombay

Cover art: Lil Bear

Exterior Projections:

Mother Nature's Powers: To All Our Nations (2020)

Subtitled music video

Length 3:28 (looped)

Directed by Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Panoramic videography: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

360° videography: Joseph Naytowhow

Colour correction, video editing, and subtitling: Samay Arcentales

Medicine Kitchen Table: The Beauty Within (2020)

Machinima music video

Length 2:43 (looped)

Directed by Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Machinima footage, editing, subtitling: Samay Arcentales

Wintercount: Can't Break Us (2015)

Subtitled music video

Length 4:23 (looped)

Directed by Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Videography, editing and subtitling: Samay Arcentales



MannArtGallery



Canada Council
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Conseil des arts
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I P A C

Indigenous Peoples Artist Collective



City of
Prince
Albert



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

PHOTO CREDITS

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The Journey Home



The Beauty Within



Come My Sisters,
Come



A Journey to
Freedom



Can't Break Us



To All Our Nations



Lightening Scarred
Heart



Live the Life that's
Meant for Me

