

RED MOTHER

CONCEIVED, WRITTEN AND PERFORMED
BY MURIEL MIGUEL

DIRECTED BY MURIELLE BORST TARRANT

A SPIDERWOMAN THEATER PRODUCTION
DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH
LOOSE CHANGE PRODUCTIONS

www.spiderwomantheater.org

AVAILABLE
FOR TOURING
IN 2012 & 2013



RADIO FLYER

ABOUT

New York City's Spiderwoman Theater is the longest running Native American women's theater company on the continent. Founded in 1976, Spiderwoman Theater has had a long and successful history of bringing a unique brand of thought provoking theatre to the world. We have travelled to universities, Indigenous communities and theatres all over the United States and Canada, throughout Europe and to Australia, New Zealand and China, bringing entertaining and stimulating work to a multifaceted and appreciative audience.

Our newest show *Red Mother*, is the latest tour de force for writer and performer Muriel Miguel and has brought together an exciting company of creative Indigenous artists from the US and Canada. This is the compelling story of Belle, an old Native woman and mother, who travels with her red cart and her magical horse and companion Blue Fred through endless wars, witnessing the devastation of her people. Belle is a survivor; cunning and manipulative; raging and funny. The production explores the desires of the craven women who live in Native society, not the noble mothers but the failed ones. *Red Mother* is about the importance of the responsibility of motherhood and the consequences of failing. Through her struggle, Belle embraces her legacy and inspires a promise for the future.

Inspired by *Mother Courage*, *Red Mother* interweaves Brechtian themes with demon tales an integral part of the mythology of the Kuna people. Developed in collaboration with Loose Change Productions, the production is a tribute to those who have been lost and to their stories of survival.



Spiderwoman
theater



WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

...the power of Miguel's performance is not to be understated. When she goes from laughing jubilantly to crying out in pain so effortlessly, the audience can't help but connect to her stories. Her honesty and directness is so mesmerizing that we can follow Belle's flawed justifications for her actions as she wraps herself in the world of her mola calling for survival until the end...

- Marguerite Spellman, *theatreonline.com*

...Miguel's piece is an example of what theater should be: challenging artistic work that raises relevant questions without providing clear solutions. *Red Mother* will leave its viewer with lasting images and plenty of fodder for discussion. In its abstraction it is a concretely important work of theater...

- Kelly Aliano, *offoffonline.com*



HISTORY OF RED MOTHER

APRIL 2002

The Banff Centre, Aboriginal Arts Program
Seminal idea formulated.

JANUARY 2003

Playwrights Workshop Montreal
With dramaturges Paula Danckert and Peter Hinton begins writing *Red Mother*.

MARCH 2003

San Diego State University's Women's Studies Department
As first Lipinsky resident (feminist-in-residence), explores structure for *Red Mother* in the studio.

OCTOBER 2003

Native Earth Performing Arts - Weesageechak Begins to Dance Festival - Toronto
Continues work with dramaturge Paula Danckert.

APRIL 2004

American Indian Community House-Indian Summer Festival - New York City
Begins collaboration with daughter Murielle Borst-Tarrant.
Dance, movement and text begin to be more clearly integrated.

JUNE 2006

urban ink productions/fathom labs New Works Division-Galiano Island
Completion of a production draft with dramaturges Paula Danckert and Marie Clements.

OCTOBER 2006

urban ink productions - Heart of the City Festival - Vancouver
Laboratory workshop. Composer Russell Wallace begins work on the music composition and sound design.

JUNE 2007

Spiderwoman Theater and Two Spirit Productions - New York City Development workshop. Script revisited. Designer Christine Plunkett begins integration of visual design elements.

NOVEMBER 2007

Indigenous Performance Initiatives and Two Spirit Productions
Trent University - Peterborough, ON
Production workshop. Lighting Designer Don White, from Peterborough joins the creative team.

FEBRUARY 2008

Museum of the American Indian - Washington, DC
Presentation of *Red Mother*.

MAY 2010

Spiderwoman Theater and La MaMa E.T.C. in collaboration with Loose Change Productions
World Premiere

NOVEMBER 2011

Indigenous Performance Initiatives and Two Spirit Productions
Trent University-Peterborough, ON
Canadian Premiere



WHO WE ARE

WRITER AND PERFORMER

Muriel Miguel (Kuna/Rappahannock) is a founding member and Artistic Director of Spiderwoman Theater. She is a director, choreographer, playwright, actor and educator. She choreographed *Throw Away Kids* for the Banff Centre; directed *The Scrubbing Project* with Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble in Toronto and Evening in Paris with Raven Spirit Dance Company in Vancouver. She performed in the off-Broadway hit, Taylor Mac's *Lily's Revenge* and created the roles of Philomena Moosetail -*The Rez Sisters*, Aunt Shadie-*The Unnatural and Accidental Women*; Spirit Woman - *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera*. She has created one woman shows *Hot' N' Soft*, *Trail of the Otter* and most recently *Red Mother*. Muriel teaches Indigenous Performance at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre (CIT) in Toronto and is Program Director for their summer intensive at Trent University. She has been profiled in *American Women Stage Directors of the 20th Century*. Her play, *Trail of the Otter* has been published in *Staging Coyote's Dream: An Anthology of First Nations Drama in English Vol. 2*. She has been awarded an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Miami University in Oxford, OH.

DIRECTOR

Murielle Borst Tarrant (Kuna/ Rappahannock Nations) is an author, playwright, director, producer, cultural artist, educator, and human rights activist. She comes from a long line of cultural activism with her family's theater company, the world famous Spiderwoman Theater. Her non-fictional work is published by Miami University in Oxford, Ohio on the Spiderwoman Theater methodology. She works on the deconstruction of methods of teaching the arts in Native communities in urban areas across the United States, Canada, and in the New York City education system and consults urban and non-urban universities on the development of Native theater programming. She was the only Native American woman to have her work selected by the Olympic Games at the Sydney Opera House in Australia for her one woman show *More than Feathers and Beads*. For four years, she has served as the Special Assistant and liaison to the North American Regional representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She has recently published the first volume of her fantasy series, *The Star Medicine*.

SET, PROPS AND COSTUME DESIGN

Christine Plunkett has been designing for over twenty years in the theatre, television, film, and special event industries. She was the CAD manager for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar in 2006. Selected design credits include audience environment realization for *The Lord of the Rings* (Mirvish Productions), *Agua* for Earth in Motion in Mexico City, *The Scrubbing Project* national tour (Turtle Gals), *Dead White Writer on the Floor* for the Centre for Indigenous Theatre, *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*, *Tales of an Urban Indian* and *Annie Mae's Movement* among others for Native Earth Performing Arts, *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera* at the Banff Centre for the Arts (as both Designer and Faculty). She worked in Macau China, as consulting Theatre Project Director for a new purpose built theatre for Dragone Entertainment Group and was the Assistant Lighting Designer to Luc Lafortune on the production *House of Dancing Water*.

WHO WE ARE

ASSISTANT SET, PROPS AND COSTUME DESIGN

Karmenlara Ely is the Artistic Director for Acting at the Norwegian Theatre Academy. She is a multi-disciplinary performer of dance theater and carnival arts in the Americas. Her work explores the relation between costume, contested public space and the ecstatic body. An instrument builder, milliner and masquerade designer, she has been making materials for commercial fashion and professional performance for over 15 years. Karmenlara has taught performance studies in drama at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. This was her second collaboration with Muriel Miguel and she is an active part of Spiderwoman Theater.

PROJECTION DESIGN

Bear Witness (Cayuga) is an Ottawa-based media artist who has been producing short experimental videos for over seven years. In Australia, he had a solo-exhibition as part of the 2010 Sydney Festival, titled, "The Only Good NDN". Bear's video *The Story of Apinachie and her Redheaded Warrior* was selected for the 2009 Berlin International Film Festival, as part of the Culture Shock program. His video "BrokeDickDog" was included in the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography exhibition *Steeling the Gaze: Portraits of Aboriginal Artists*, hosted by the National Gallery of Canada. Working with his father, visual artist and curator Jeff Thomas, Bear produced a new video, "STRANGE.HOME.LAND" exhibited as part of Home Land and Security at Render Gallery in Waterloo, ON. Thomas has collaborated with the NFB on a project to remix films from the National Film Board archive. Bear is the cofounder of A TRIBE CALLED RED, a Native DJ collective that hosts the Electric Pow Wow, which has toured throughout Canada.

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Don White has been involved in the Arts for most of his life. He is an award winning Actor and Producer as well as having many years of production experience. He has been a technical director in Dance, Musical Theatre, Rock and many other Artistic disciplines as well as working on unique productions where he can also be an artist. Don has been at NOZHEM: First Peoples Performance Space at Trent University since its conception and has designed lighting for most of Indigenous Performance Initiatives' productions. He has worked with Spiderwomen Theater off and on since 2004.

COMPOSER

Russell Wallace (Stla'limx) is a composer, producer and is a traditional singer. Wallace's music has been part of a number of soundtracks (film, video, television) and theatre/ dance productions. He was the composer in residence for the Chinook Winds Aboriginal Dance program from 1996-2003 at the Banff Centre for the Arts. He has produced CD's that have been nominated for awards at the Junos, Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, and at the Native American Music Awards in the USA. Wallace was commissioned by the Nunavut Government to compose music for the Formation of the Nunavut Territories inaugural Gala in April 1999 and by the Westcoast Sacred Arts Society in Vancouver to compose a new choral work with Hussein Janmohamed for the Dalai Lama's visit in Vancouver in 2004.



RED MOTHER IS AVAILABLE TO BOOK

PERFORMANCE ONLY *as part of a subscription season or festival*

LECTURE DEMONSTRATION *presents scenes from Red Mother with a discussion about the show's development followed by a talkback with the audience.*

ONE WEEK RESIDENCY *one performance presented along with additional activities: lecture(s), a workshop, talks to groups etc, just let us know what you are thinking about.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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