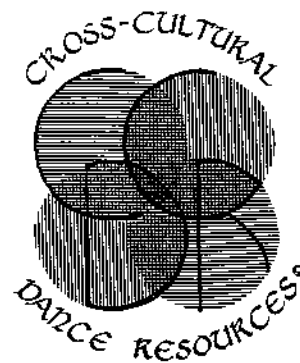


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## CCDR Newsletter

Number 18

Winter 2001

### Art Making and Cultural Regeneration

John Wilson

In our era, and particularly in the past two decades as globalization of commerce and technology has become the hallmark of "modernity," we have witnessed and lamented the degradation of the cultures of indigenous people. Although the curious name, *indigenous people*, is tricky to define and difficult to apply without having to note exceptions and special cases, we can use the name generally to refer to groups of people whose members are closely related, physically, historically, and culturally, whose homeland has remained pretty much the same for at least several generations (or, in the not uncommon case of displaced people, the idea of a homeland), and whose members constitute a more or less distinct minority in a larger society. Clearly, the many American Indian tribes exemplify indigenous people within the large, complexly layered, modern society of the Western hemisphere.

Professional organizations and individual scholars who have interest in the well being of indigenous people have decried the degradation of their cultures – the loss of native languages, customs, legends, botanical and medicinal knowledge, arts, rituals and so forth. And estimable popular journals like the *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, and *Civilization*, the magazine of the Library of Congress, have published articles in the past few years sounding alarms about the loss of ancient wisdom with the extinction of primary native cultures. The cultures of indigenous people can not survive in the rush and press of a modern, secular world dominated by the expediency of commerce, technology, and a few global languages – English perhaps predominating.

"What to do" about this apparently inevitable loss of native cultures is elusive. Ethical and philosophical issues associated with "preservation" of these cultures are as ramified as those associated with their extinction. We of the social majority can not and should not isolate indigenous people from modernity in order to preserve their culture any more than we should run heedlessly over their cultures (because their old ways are doomed anyway).

One of the answers to this dilemma has been to use modern technology and techniques to record at least elements of the disappearing, indigenous cultures. Linguists are developing written forms of the old languages that had no written forms; cultural anthropologists are recording oral histories; videographers are taping or filming dances, rituals, artisans at work, faces, traditional clothing; archivists are labeling collected tools and artifacts and gathering them in collections held by museums and universities. As liberally educated modernists we believe that this is all to the good. Preserved wisdom of the ages will enlighten all humankind regardless of our divergent histories. Whether or not these efforts are "good for" the indigenous people is moot because our efforts simply do not assure the continuance of their cultures. Only the indigenous people themselves can continue their cultures, can provide the vitality that maintains an integrity with their past. For all our efforts in the name of preservation, we who are not native to those cultures can not provide that vitality.

This vitality has been a focus of my anthropological observations for the past 25 years. Prompted by the late American anthropologists, Edward and Rosamond Spicer, themselves students of the Yaqui people of Arizona and Sonora, Mexico, I have attempted to describe a social phenomenon that I have identified as cultural regeneration. *Cultural regeneration* refers to a spontaneous behavior, arising from within the indigenous culture itself, dedicated not just to the survival of the culture, but to its continuing creation of itself; to its *vitality*. This is a phenomenon that operates apart from efforts – by natives or outsiders – to preserve the culture. The eminent Hopi scholar, Emory Sequaptewa, has labored for over two decades to produce a dictionary of the Hopi language. The result is an invaluable tool for preserving the old language; but it does not assure the creation of new Hopi poetry or songs or tales of life for the tribe to enjoy and learn from. The weaving of the distinctive coiled, multicolored baskets by Hopi women

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just in the last thirty years, however, does exemplify cultural regeneration. Yes, the efforts of the basket weavers did preserve, in the nick of time, the traditional craft; but beyond that, the innovations in coloring, proportions, and the shapes of the baskets exemplify a new vitality within the society to regenerate its culture.

It is notable that acts of cultural regeneration are always realized through art making and performance of traditional rituals. While civic, institutional and governmental reforms are essential to the survival of the society, the sure sign of the society's vitality is in its art and ritual making behavior. The examples of this phenomenon that I studied most closely are totem pole making by the Haida and Kwagiutl people of British Columbia and production of the Sunrise ceremony by the Apache people for their young daughters as they enter womanhood. In both these instances, much art making is involved and a ritual, which Joseph Campbell defined as the "enactment of a myth," is essential to the whole effort. Totem poles are not just carved and painted, but raised with much communal festivity, story telling, chanting, laughter, eating, and demonstration of camaraderie. The Sunrise ceremony is not just a dance (which is very elemental in its form though exhausting to perform in its three day enactment), but is a costumed event with chanting and drumming and the appearance of the mysterious Mountain Spirits (the *Gwan*) adorned in body paint, whirling their bull roarer, displaying their exquisite crowns made of painted lattice as they dance and spring around the midnight fire.

Both totem pole making and the Sunrise ceremony had almost died out in the course of the twentieth century as the tribes languished in poverty and uselessness. It is not the purpose in this article to retell the terrible story of the degradation of these tribes under the enormous pressures of the advancing majority society in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. But it is important for us to try to understand how cultures on the verge of extinction sometimes not only survive, but thrive. In this article I will focus on the cultural regeneration, as I see it, of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest.

The spark that reactivated the making of totem poles and other fine, wood sculptures was cross-cultural. It was a commission from the government of Canada to the Kwagiutl artist, Mungo Martin, in 1949 to repaint his own totem pole of 1902 for the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia that initiated a remarkable outburst of artistic activity by such native carvers as Robert Davidson, Bill Reid, and Douglas Cranmer among others. Young, strong, visionary, and proud of their tribal heritage and, no less, of their personal identities, these men quickly became

the master artists of the 1950's and 1960's whose work is now held as the standard of excellence for all visual art of the indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest.

The cross-cultural spark in this instance was provided by the government of the majority society in its attempt to preserve a particular artifact, Mungo's 1902 totem pole. But the result extended far beyond that objective. A phenomenal leap occurred and a new level of aesthetic consciousness, manifested in the work of a few individual artists but instantaneously recognized by the members of their society, ushered in a period of cultural regeneration. The potlatch ceremonies, outlawed by the Canadian government from the 1880's clear into the 1940's, have been reintroduced by the tribes, mask carving and painting have become fine arts admired the world over, button blankets, sometimes referred to as totem poles on cloth, have become collectors' items, and the wonderful creation tales of raven and killer whale and all the bestiary of the people's poetic vision have been told anew – printed in English, of course!

With a small grant from the University of Arizona in 1989 I made my first study trip to the Vancouver area to observe the effects of this regeneration and to assess the new aesthetic standard established by the first masters of the period. Although Mungo had passed away several years earlier, Davidson and Reid remained in the forefront of plastic art making and had expanded their work to include printmaking, illustrating, gold and silver smithing, and story telling. Bill Reid's monumental wood sculpture, "The Raven and the First Men," was unveiled by H.R.H. Prince Charles in 1980 at the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, and the full scale clay model of his magnificent commemorative sculpture, "The Spirit of the Haida Gwaii," was on view in his Vancouver studio. (The model is now in Ottawa and two bronze castings are in permanent location: a jade green casting at the Vancouver International Airport and a black casting at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C.)

As for the proliferation of art making, it was clear that many younger artists had taken up the tools for production of fine arts of all sorts, just as the first masters had done. Upscale art galleries throughout the region and extending into the Seattle area were well advertised and easily accessible to serious collectors and curious browsers alike. Clearly, the cross-cultural effect was in full swing. The artistic success of the regeneration had readily translated into commercial success for a generation of native artists. But of course the competition was gaining intensity and a number of galleries were on the edge of survival; so one had to wonder if the artists providing the fine works displayed

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in those galleries and available for sale were surviving solely on their art making. It is an old story, familiar to Navajo and Pueblo natives, too.

Another question had to be raised as well. Was the aesthetic standard set by the first masters being maintained? Put in larger anthropological terms, had the cultural regeneration had a lasting effect, shared by the indigenous people generally? It is probably not possible to answer that question without the perspective of several decades. But public schools were including substantial units of study of the history and arts of the indigenous people, and high school history and sociology courses were designed to promote in-depth study of the Amerindians of Canada. This was a major change from the old policies that specifically downplayed or even ignored the traditional lives of the Amerindians.

A few civic units, like the City of Duncan, 40 miles north of Victoria on Vancouver Island, had turned major efforts toward celebration of the native people and their traditions. The City of Duncan had adopted the title "City of Totems" and had established a school of native carvers who were producing full-scale poles to adorn the city and to ship off to museums and embassies around the world. The craftsmanship was very good, though not so fine as the work of the masters. The dedication of the young artisans was quite genuine and their pride in their tribal histories and their work was palpable. Perhaps most important, the young artisans identified with a meaningful purpose in their lives and with the venerable artisans who preceded them, the masters of the 1950's and the ancient masters. Certainly, these are signs of a true and lingering cultural regeneration.

Decline of artistic standards is inevitable in a materialistic society where ersatz collectibles are made available at every tourist crossroad. We should not waste our brains worrying about that. (I even saw, and was tempted to buy, an epoxy statuette of the Statue of Liberty as a Haida totem pole with Raven's wing holding a Roman torch aloft! I simply could not plunk down 20 Canadian dollars for this astonishing *objet d'art*.) Far and away the more important and interesting questions have to do with the society's identification with its traditions through a new and elevated aesthetic standard.

A return trip to the region in the year 2000, including a stay with the chief-apparent of the Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands (the ancestral home of the Haida Gwaii) in the old village of Masset, revealed mixed messages. The village remains very poor – and poorly kept – while the chief-apparent, an articulate woman in her late 60's whose grandfather was Norwegian, lives in gracious comfort. Her home is a B&B, in fact, and she and a son

welcome guests with a sumptuous salmon dinner and lively conversation about the politics of the Haida nation. The house, a top-of-the-line designer pre-fab, is chock full of worldly artifacts and *faux* cultural objects. A bust of Tutankhamen dominates the sitting room and a stuffed teddy bear rides a unicycle on a wire stretched overhead the length of the room. Genuine Haida and other Pacific Northwest Indian artifacts of good quality are scattered about, but spare in the room full of "the world." Interestingly, the only T-shirt with Indian symbols on it that I could find in the local craft shop was one with Aztec images! The very friendly, native shopkeepers thought that I could find a T-shirt with Haida images on it in Vancouver or Seattle or maybe Anchorage.

Meantime, the few remaining totem poles that were carved and erected on the islands between 1880 and 1906 are protected in their original locations by native park rangers. One can see the poles only from a boat in pre-scheduled groups of no more than 10 at a time. What is most striking, at least to me, is the integrity that the new poles of the period of cultural regeneration have with the original poles. The new masters of cultural regeneration produced art that is unmistakably derived from the old work. The forms and images of the new work are consistent with the design parameters of the original work so thoroughly recorded and analyzed by Franz Boas in the 1950's and later by Bill Holm. But the work of the new masters does not slavishly duplicate the images of the original poles. Rather, they manipulate the elements of the designs to awaken our aesthetic consciousness for our own time. This is achieved in many ways. Many images and forms are enlarged from, for example, the size of a domestic cedar box – box making being one of the artistic traditions of the natives – to architectural size supporting modern buildings and framing entrances and lobbies. In other examples, the geometric progression of images that originally conformed to the cylindrical volumes of poles has been translated to flat and even irregular surfaces. Robert Davidson is particularly gifted at this manipulation.

But the manipulation (if that mechanistic term is at all appropriate to use in this instance) that I find most powerfully indicative of true cultural regeneration is the use of myths, newly told and newly interpreted, in the clever, often witty, assemblage of images. Again, Bill Reid's "The Raven and the First Men" is illustrative. In this element of the works, the artists demonstrate not only expert craftsmanship and knowledge of the myths of their tradition, but their lively participation in those myths. The myths are not only enacted but are re-realized, recognized in their eternal revelation of human character and folly and hope and terror and, yes, sometimes joy. The artist does not superimpose his or her judgment about human

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character and behavior, but opens him or herself to understanding anew that which was understood by their forebears and celebrated communally. This is the vitality of cultural regeneration.

In his prefatory remarks to *The Raven Steals the Light*, authored by Bill Reid and Robert Bringhurst with drawings by Reid, Claude Levi-Strauss states, "Whether [the artists] be of Haida origin, like Bill Reid, or Tlingit, Tsimshian, Kwakiutl or Bella Coola, Northwest Coast artists must also be scholars. They must incorporate into their work the most subtle local nuances of a knowledge that, in many respects, constitutes the common heritage of all these peoples." Cultural regeneration cannot be achieved through production alone. It requires the personal investment of the artist in the myths of his or her people, and the response of the community in recognizing that who they are is who they have been through time.

**John M. Wilson**  
November 2001, Tucson

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**Thank you to all of our  
contributors for this  
Winter 2001 Newsletter**

Cross-Cultural Dance Resources, Inc. is partially funded  
by the Dance Heritage Coalition, the Arizona Commission  
on the Arts, and the Flagstaff Cultural Partners.

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## TAX LAW CHANGES BRING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DONORS TO NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

In May, 2001, Congress enacted legislation that will result in the most extensive federal tax reduction in a generation. Changes in income, gift, and estate taxes mean that the amount of taxes paid by most Americans will be significantly reduced now and in future years.

As a result, many will soon find they have increased freedom to spend, save, and give their assets to others in ways that are more in keeping with their personal priorities. . . . [here is an] overview of [a] provision of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (EGTRRA) . . .

### THE CHARITABLE DIMENSION

. . . the new tax bill offers special opportunities . . . charitable gifts continue to be fully deductible under the terms of the new tax bill. Gifts of cash may still be deducted from federal income tax in amounts up to 50% of your adjusted gross income (AGI). Gifts of stocks, mutual funds, and certain other assets that have increased in value since you have owned them are still deductible in amounts up to 30% of your AGI. As in the past, funds donated in excess of the maximum amounts may be used to reduce taxes in up to five future tax years.

The savings from your tax deductions are greatest when your tax bracket is higher. Effective income tax rates will be falling in 2002 and later years. For this reason, whether you give cash, securities, or other property, you may wish to make the maximum gifts possible *this year* and enjoy greater savings as you take deductions against existing higher income tax rates. In future years, reduced income taxes may result in greater disposable income from which to make gifts to your family and favorite charitable interests.

If you have investments that have declined in value, consider selling them, taking advantage of deductible losses where possible, and giving the cash proceeds in order to enjoy maximum tax savings from your charitable gifts this year. . . .

As you and your advisors explore the impact these changes bring to your personal plans, you may discover new and advantageous ways to balance your financial needs and those of your loved ones with your charitable interests. . . in light of the new law.

abstracted from information prepared by  
the East-West Center, Honolulu, 2001

## Local Dance Community News

### \* FEATURING \* Winter Solstice Circle Dance

On Friday, Dec 21st, 7-9 p.m., The Many Lands Dance Band welcome everyone to a Winter Solstice Circle Dance at the Canyon Dance Academy (formerly the Flagstaff School of Ballet), 2812 North Izabel, in Flagstaff.

Celebrating the Solstices and Equinoxes is something almost every culture has in common, because the longest and shortest days of the year are easily observable events all over the world. This Winter Solstice dance will include some traditional Solstice dances from Britain, using candles to light our way toward months of increasing daylight.

Circle Dance is a relatively new tradition which draws fun, and accessible dances from many cultures, including traditional folk dances from the Balkans, Greece, Hungary, Armenia, Turkey, the British Isles, Africa, South America, as well as several dances of modern choreography.

Bavarian ballet master Bernard Wosien collected many such traditional dances in the early 1970's and brought them to the Findhorn Community in Scotland, where modern Circle Dance began. From there, Circle Dance groups appeared all over Britain, then spread to the rest of Europe and eventually North America. In the U.S. and Canada there are over 50 regular Circles and many weeklong dance camps. See [www.sacredcircles.com](http://www.sacredcircles.com) for resources.

Bowen Swersey and Miriama Broady have been leading Circle Dance events for over 12 years, in such diverse places as South India, Finland, Britain, Germany, Spain, all over the U.S. and Canada and Mexico. This is their third time presenting Circle Dance in Flagstaff, having performed twice for the annual Cross-Cultural Dance Resources fundraiser, in 1993 and 1997.

Together, Bowen and Miriama form The Many Lands Dance Band, a folk, rock and world music duo which performs on an astounding number of unusual musical instruments. Besides guitar and violin, they play the 21 string kora, a traditional West African harp, the Tamboura, the four stringed drone instrument from India, numerous types of traditional bamboo flutes including Bansuri, Shakuhachi, and transverse Walkingstick Flutes, Tabor Pipes, a Renaissance double flute with roots in ancient Egypt, and many others. Some of Bowen's choreographed dances have become staples of the international Circle Dance repertoire.

While in town through Jan 11, Bowen and Miriama will seek bassists and percussionists to add to their duo's performances. Interested professionals can call (207) 229-1935 to contact them.

**This fall, Flagstaff's local arts & entertainment publication featured an article about the local dance community. Included was also the vision of CCDR as told by our Director.**

"...Joann Kealinohomoku has been an anthropologist and ethnochoreologist for 40 years and is co-founder of Cross-Cultural Dance Resources, Inc. She describes dance as "something universal to all cultures, but at the same time, culturally specific." The vision statement for CCDR is "to enhance global understanding of cultures through dance and about dance through cultures." They assert dance is critical to societal maintenance.

"Sometimes the reason we love to, need to, crave to dance is simply to move our bodies. We can express ourselves without the clumsiness of words. We can tap into an entire lineage. We can create our own. Maybe we can envision and create the dream of Kealinohomoku and CCDR, that "the understanding of people, as expressed through dance and all the performing arts, will contribute to personal well-being and global peace."

-Elizabeth Semmelman

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● Flagstaff School of Ballet, and long-time CCDR member Beverly Hugg recently relocated to California and sold her studio to Gina Darlington, Director of Canyon Movement Company (also CCDR members). They have expanded to form the Canyon Dance Academy and will be offering winter workshops. Congratulations to both for their success!

● Coming this Spring semester, Coconino Community College (CCC) will open a new dance studio! Located at 2700 Lone Tree, the new space will have modern, concert, improvisation, choreography, ballet, jazz, and flamenco classes for students enrolled in both CCC and NAU.

● CCDR has filled the Flagstaff Public Library display case with a plethora of books, instruments, and dolls for the December and January months. The case was put together for the Flagstaff International Sister Cities Association to educate the community about our sister cities: Barnaul, Russia; City of Blue Mountains, Australia; HsinTien City, Taiwan; Manizillo, Mexico.

### Dance Heritage Coalition and CCDR 2001 Update

Since former President Clinton's announcement of the "Save America's Treasures" awards in the Rose Garden in 2000, the Dance Heritage Coalition and CCDR have been working to fulfill the project's goals to "save our [national] treasures at risk." In January 2001, the Dance Heritage Coalition supported a conservator, Jo Anne Martinez of Carino Conservation, to make a conservation assessment of the archives that CCDR houses. This resulted in a thorough 50 page evaluation and appraisal of the work that needs to be done to the collections to ensure they will be preserved and usable for researchers for generations to come. In October, Martinez returned for the archival and preservation work portion of the project. The visit consisted of six days of intense training and work, allowing the Director of Collections, Joann Kealinohomoku, and Assistant Director, Amron Skowronski to be able to carry out the storing, describing and cataloging of the King and Kealinohomoku collections. The Dance Heritage Coalition has been a solid foundation for CCDR to stand upon throughout each phase of this project. CCDR wishes to thank Jo Anne Martinez, Elizabeth Aldrich of the Dance Heritage Coalition, and its increasing member support as we move into our third decade as a unique and valuable resource among the field of dance research.



Jo Anne Martinez of Carino Conservation working with a Japanese scroll from the Eleanor King Collection.

## **Cross-Cultural Dance Resources Looks Towards a Third Decade of Successful Dance Research**

**A Report about the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration  
September 16, 2001**

The event was a splendid success! Folks from the community positively showed their support of CCDR on September 16th. The five presentations allowed for a lot of crowd interaction. Starting the afternoon off with a wildly energetic display of West African inspired drumming and dancing, the local performance group Ashe helped us kick off the Celebration right. Charyse Harvick, a recent graduate of Northern Arizona University shared with us a bit of history and background on the folk dancing of France. With the help of Charyse's instruction members of the audience learned the danse folklorique from the Anncey region. A newcomer to Flagstaff, Andy Cooke, presented an array of musical instruments including some history, myth, and a wonderful demonstration of their uses. NAU professor and ethnomusicologist, Blase Scarnati discussed the legendary Willie Nelson and his album "Red Headed Stranger." Dr. Robert Schacht introduced films of the varieties of East Javanese dancing. This proved to be a first time introduction to Javanese dance for most of the members that were present. To end the events of the day, Karen Custer Thurston presented a wonderful interactive sharing on Middle Eastern dance. The presentations sparked a lot of successful dialogue amongst the professionals and the audience attending. During the five hours the festivities extended, the amount of positive and enthusiastic energy that filled the facilities here at CCDR, served as a brilliant reminder that our work is valuable and supported in the communities of Flagstaff, and in the dance community nationally and globally. As is part of our vision, "the world will experience a global understanding of dance in culture."



Charyse Harvick doing folk dances from France

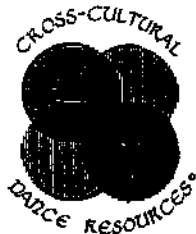


Two volunteers from Sri Lanka: Amali Withanage and Yoshani Thyuvilongam

CCDR Newsletter ● ISSN # 1069-7241  
The Publication for Members of  
Cross-Cultural Dance Resources, Inc.  
A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization  
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**“The Gertrude Kurath Legacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:  
Reawakening Sensitivity to the Dance-Music Interdependence”**



Gertrude Prokosch Kurath, 1972.  
(1903-1992)



Gertrude dancing with children, 1966.

*On October 25-28, 2001, the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) held its 46<sup>th</sup> annual Meeting at the University of Michigan. The Meeting was titled "Teaching and Learning in the Twenty-First Century." Dr. Joann W. Kealiinohomoku held a forum titled "The Gertrude Kurath Legacy For the 21st Century: Reawakening Sensitivity to the Dance-Music Interdependence." Following are the five panel members discussions about Gertrude Kurath's contributions and influence to the field.*

### **Introduction**

The objective of this forum was to encourage ethnomusicologists to be aware of the interface of dance-in-culture with music-in-culture as envisioned by an SEM charter member, Gertrude Prokosch Kurath.

Because of her training, experiences, and convictions, Kurath was ideally suited to research the interface of ethnomusicology with ethnochoreology (a term she coined as a co-equivalent label). She herself always combined the two studies in her many carefully crafted writings. Indeed in SEM Newsletter No. 10, 1957, she established a model for the related studies with her influential article "Dance-Music Interdependence" (pp.8-11). She was the editor for dance in ethnomusicology until 1972. During her watch dance was regularly included in the Journal.

These 2001 SEM meetings are noteworthy because they take place in Michigan where Gertrude Kurath developed dance-in-culture and its interrelationship with music as a field of study, from 1954 until her death in 1992. Five established ethnomusicologists – Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck, Joann Kealiinohomoku, William Malm, Bruno Nettl and Judith Vander - will discuss Gertrude Kurath and her vision for researching the interdependence of dance and music. In addition to personal recollections, examples from the scholars' researches will validate the Kurath premise, and demonstrate the dance-music interdependence.

In the more than four decades since the Society for Ethnomusicology was founded most new members have no personal memories of many who founded the Society and are unaware of the unique insights that motivated those founders. Although some contemporary ethnomusicologists include dance in their studies, the specific focus on dance seems to have drifted away from the discipline. Ethnomusicologists of the 21st century will be enriched to become familiar with the dynamic personalities and ideas that animated the beginnings and development of the Society. This process of discovery may inspire ethnomusicologists and influence their studies. The articulation of the Interdependence of dance and music may reawaken a renewed cognition and emphasis in both theoretical and practical approaches to ethnomusicology.

*-Joann W. Kealiinohomoku*



Joann Kealiinohomoku, Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck, William Malm, Bruno Nettl, and Judith Vander presenting "The Gertrude Kurath Legacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" at the 46<sup>th</sup> annual SEM meeting in October.

Dr. Nadia C. Nahumck spoke extemporaneously at the panel about her academic and artistic career with dance and movement studies. A widely published author, and founder of the Philadelphia Dance Academy, which became the Dance Department of the University of the Arts., Dr. Nahumck joined the Society for Ethnomusicology in 1955 when Gertrude P. Kurath, with whom she was a colleague and friend, suggested that she join. Throughout the years Dr. Nahumck and her husband saved the royalties she received for her many books on dance literacy. In the year 2000, with a donation of \$50,000 that had accrued from that savings, the Nadia and Nicholas Nahumck Fund was established as a fellowship to be awarded annually to a graduate student member of SEM in support of research on a dance-related subject. The fellowship was awarded for the first time at the annual SEM meeting this year, while Dr. Nahumck was in attendance. The awardee is Joanna Bosse, an ethnomusicology student at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. The provisional title of her dissertation is "Locating the Latin in 'Latin' Ballroom Dancing. Toward an Understanding of the Processes of Incorporation, Style, Transformation, and Standardization in Ballroom Music and Dance."

### **Some Roots of the Kurath Tradition**

William P. Malm

The contributions of Gertrude Kurath to the field of Native American studies and ethnochoreology are well-known and part of these materials are being discussed by others at this meeting. I have known Gertrude since 1960 as a local Ann Arbor resident as well as a colleague in many Society for Ethnomusicology meetings. I have chosen to look at some of the family background that contributed to her ability to do all she did. I wish to thank her daughter, Ellen Kurath for much of the information I am using.

Gertrude's father, Eduard Prokosch, came from Bohemia to America in 1896 to avoid further military service. He returned to Europe to complete a degree in philology at Leipzig. Afterward, he was a journalist in the United States, including Chicago, where Gertrude was born (1903). His first major academic job was at the University of Wisconsin. When he



moved to a new job in Texas, one of his students, Hans Kurath, followed him, living in the Prokosch home where the young Gertrude also resided. In the xenophobic mood of 1919, Texas ceased to pay German-born faculty. Apparently both he and Hans Kurath moved to Chicago. For awhile Prokosch was reduced to being a linotype operator.

Eventually, Kurath found a job at the University of Ohio in Columbus. Dr. Prokosch took a position at Bryn Mawr where Gertrude completed a degree in art history. Her father next took a position at Yale where Gertrude worked with the Yale School of Drama. His one-year appointment at Columbia in 1927 allowed Gertrude to participate in the modern dance world where she met young dancers like Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey. Earlier she had studied in Berlin with Wigman and others.

In 1930 she married Hans Kurath who then had a job at Brown University. In Providence, Rhode Island, she founded the Creative Dance Guild. She staged dances with live music, often by local composers. They were performed on the School of Design stage. She also searched for the remains of the Native American art traditions in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. The results were thin. Her father died in 1938.

In 1946 Hans took a job at the University of Michigan. Gertrude's adventuresome spirit is reflected in her circuitous trip from Rhode Island to Michigan. On the way she first spent several months in Mexico. There, she and her daughter, Ellen, observed indigenous music, dance, and festivals.

Nepotism rules kept Gertrude from an active role in the dance or the anthropological programs of Michigan, though I did have the pleasure of inviting her to participate in ethnomusicology seminars in the 1970s. Once more she became active in searching out the remnants of local Indian cultures. Most of the time, she did not have grants; she simply had a car and a determination to find informants.

The sunroom of the Kurath brick home on Summit Avenue became her research center and the nearby Huron River the location of her daily swims that she often shared with her family. Her determination was seen in 1973 when she had her leg in a cast. Gertrude's daughter Ellen brought her to a natural pond on my street (Cedar Bend). Here Gertrude guided her walker into the water and took off for another invigorating swim. It was that kind of drive that kept her on the search for new ideas throughout her career. I recall her drafting my daughters into a performance of her dance of the Lords Prayer. It used Indian-inspired gestures.

During the 1950s Gertrude worked with Fred and Jane Ettewageshik on the religious customs of the modern Algonquin Indians. She had known anthropologist Jane in the 1920s and now shared with her this final research project. The materials of this study remained among the many papers, tapes, and photos in Gertrude's sunroom research center. There are plans for this work to be added to her long list of wonders. What a woman, dancer and scholar!

## On Gertrude Kurath as Colleague, Artist, and Scholar

Bruno Nettl

This informal paper... is part personal reminiscence, part history of our disciplines, and part theory about the relationships of dance and music...

### *First Meetings*

I think everyone here knew Gertrude Kurath in her early or middle years. For myself, I met her first in 1948, when I was in high school, and she came to give a solo dance recital, Isadora Duncan style if you will, at Indiana University. My parents dragged me along. My mother was a pianist also named Gertrude, and she had also studied modern dance in her youth with Mary Wigman and, unlike a lot of people in Indiana, she knew that the term modern dance meant neither classical ballet nor the fox trot. She and Gertrude Kurath became quite friendly. At my next encounter, I was much more interested; it was the IFMC meeting in Bloomington in 1950, and Gertrude (a lot of people then called her Tula) read a paper on Iroquois music and dance, introducing it dramatically by dancing and singing her way from the back to the podium. Arguably the high point of the meeting. Three years later, having taken up residence in Detroit, I turned up in Ann Arbor, and for the next several years, Gertrude and Professor Hans Kurath welcomed me and my young family to their home for occasional Friday afternoon coffee and cookies.

Gertrude wanted to stimulate the development of ethnomusicology in Ann Arbor, and no doubt dance research as well; but clearly, if people didn't take research in Native American music seriously, the idea of research on dance was really beyond the pale to most academics. She did some lobbying in the School of Music, but her closest allies were Mischa Titiev in Anthropology and Ivan Walton, the folklorist. In the middle fifties, she established a small discussion group on ethnomusicological issues in which I participated, joined by people working on their graduate degrees Wiley Hitchcock, then much involved in jazz, and James Howard, later known for his work on the history of the pan-Indian movement.

In 1961, I think, the School of Music at Ann Arbor staked out a place for ethnomusicology appointing Bill Malm, which made Gertrude Kurath happy. One of my most cherished memories is a party at the Kuraths, about 1962, at which I saw Bill Malm for the first time perform his inimitable version of the Japanese Lion Dance.

### *Studying the Relationship of Music and Dance*

Between 1948, when she was giving dance recitals that didn't rely much on Native American inspiration, and 1955, when she began to publish important work of an anthropological sort, significant changes must have taken place in Gertrude Kurath's orientation. We never talked about this, but I suspect that she realized at some point that her career as a dancer would have to be gradually replaced by something, and she went increasingly into scholarship. As a scholar, she was on the one hand a pioneer, who put dance ethnology on the map, but she was also

a member of an older tradition of scholarship that took for granted the relationship of music and dance as the methodological underpinning for dance research. Her epochal article, "Panorama of Dance Ethnology," (Current Anthropology 1(3):233-254.1960) provides an impressive bibliography of dance research before 1960, and this could of course be augmented. It's interesting to see that in contrast to the field of musicology, which, broadly speaking, has always concentrated on the study of classical traditions and historical materials, the literature of dance research has always well, for much longer -- given a much greater proportion of its attention to traditions outside the Western canon and to recent events. The reasons may be obvious, and relate to the absence of a long history of generally accessible dance notation. It seems to me also associated with the fact that dance research has always taken more account of the relationship of dance to music, of the music/dance interface.

My knowledge of the older literature is sparse, but two illustrative classics, and two major predecessors, come to mind. One is Franz Magnus Boehme. Possibly the earliest attempt at a kind of comprehensive historical ethnography is a book of two fat volumes published in 1886, *Geschichte des Tanzes in Deutschland*, by this man Boehme, a German choral director, folk music collector, and arranger, who evidently felt that all the attention to music required some consideration of dance and his book is full of ties between music, dance, and daily life, including as it does a lot on social dances, children's dances and games, prejudices against dance, revivals of folk dances; and always there is discussion of the music. I see Boehme in this work a real predecessor of Kurath's.

The other one, naturally, is Curt Sachs, also principally a music person, but one with broad cultural interests who made a major excursion into the dance world. You know his book, *World History of the Dance*, from 1933. In the 1950s it was still reasonably recent, and Gertrude in conversations showed that she revered it but also thought that Sachs had much of it all wrong. Yet she rather liked the kinds of speculative historical reconstructions in which Sachs engaged, and she occasionally followed suit.

The problem for these biggies of the past, and for Gertrude Kurath, was always, I think, how to study and show the relationship of music and dance in an individual performance. She tried to do this with the use of ingenious graphs and parallel notations. This is probably still a problem for everyone, and maybe it will always be with us, like Merriam's music-and-culture relationship, and will never be totally solved. But Kurath was, it seems to me, the person who did more for it than anyone else.

#### *Dance Editor of ETHNOMUSICOLOGY*

But this central subject I must leave to others. There are two other areas in which about which I'd like to say a word. One is Kurath's long-term, intensive relationship to SEM. In its earliest

years, she was always there. We considered her, of course, as an ethnomusicologist, which she was that's the label for her in *The New Grove* but she also played a unique role in SEM. She was the most consistent in telling us -- there were others of course too like Nadia, but Gertrude played the role most aggressively -- that we had better pay attention to dance if we were going to understand the world's music properly. She did this in part from her spot as Dance Editor of *ETHNOMUSICOLOGY* for fifteen years, under five editors. Indeed, in the history of the journal she is the person with the longest formal association. In the Dance Editorship, her job was to be sure that every issue paid some attention to dance, something not always easily accomplished in the days when articles were hard to come by I can tell you from my experience as editor in the early sixties. During my term, though, I could always count on her to send me something; when she couldn't solicit an article, she would write one herself. The nine volumes, 2-10, contain 27 short or medium-length articles, an average of precisely one per issue. They include early appearances by some of you, Nadia and Joann, of Judith Hanna, Louise Scripps, Juana de Laban but also people one might be less expecting to find on those pages, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Richard Wolfram, and Kapila Vatsyayan. She had a bent for inclusiveness and loved to organize symposia in which different viewpoints were aired, and so we have in vol. 7 a symposium of excerpts from publications by several figures from the world of modern dance, including Ted Shawn; and in our Tenth Anniversary issue, there is a short symposium titled "Dance Ethnology, Dance Education, and the Public," with contributions by Chilkovsky, Rose Brandel, Donald Brown, Reginald and Gladys Laubin, Frances Wright, and George List, surely a heterogeneous group. In her days as dance editor, we weren't allowed to forget dance, and while our journal today hasn't given up on dance, there's no doubt that the role of dance in *ETHNOMUSICOLOGY* has changed from family member to being an occasional honored guest.

#### *The Kurath Style*

Gertrude Kurath's way of speaking in public was discursive, slow, contemplative, full of physical gestures. Her writing, on the other hand, was terse and to the point, her articles organized in short sections which sometimes came in almost breathless succession. I'm not sure how to interpret these characteristics of her style, but perhaps they had something to do with her feeling that there was just so much that had to be done, to be said, to be taught, about the world of dance in which she lived, and that there weren't enough people to do it. Brevity and terseness was her way of being sure that nothing escaped completely. The elaborate organization of "Panorama of Dance Ethnology," with its short divisions and subdivisions, provides a credible outline for the future of the field.

But her manner probably had another function too. There was very much a gathering-in or mothering aspect to Gertrude Kurath's work, and surely also her life. Just as she gathered us into her house on Spring Street on Friday afternoons 45 years ago so we would mix it up, she acted, in our journal, as a kind of mother whose children included all the faces of dance. The

dance content of the journal included scholars and artists from inside and outside SEM, a variety of genres of academic writing, a plethora of viewpoints, to show the rest of us just how rich this world could be. But the favored child, it seems to me, was the question of music/dance relationship. Dance research now, I think, does not depend so much on an understanding of music and its technicalities as it did in mid-century, and I think Kurath did what she could to fight off the increased incursions of specialization.

But in the end, I think her contributions to scholarship were always associated with her work as an artist, and with the idea that dancing was good for people. The first publication of hers I find is from 1938, titled "Rhythms of Work and Play," in the *Journal of Health and Physical Education*. The last, or one of the last, published in the Festschrift for Rose Brandel, is titled "Music and Dance Unite in Earthward Plunge and Skyward Flight." It was published posthumously, completed with lots of help from Charlotte Frisbie and Ellen Leichtman, and I'm not even sure that the title was by Gertrude, but I think it reflects her many-sided interests in dance. It's a kind of biography that discusses Gertrude's early influences and how she amalgamated them with each other and with what she learned as a scholar, showing again her desire to gather many diverse things under her wing. The article is a marvel of inclusiveness. But the most important thing about it is the desire to put music and dance together, in creative choreography and in analytical scholarship. The last sentence is typical Kurath, though I'm not actually sure she wrote it, practical, down to earth, unpretentious, and certainly in the spirit of inclusiveness: "Readers are free to match the elements and principles with examples. They can apply them to music-dance combinations within their experience, in various corners of the world."

### **Gertrude Kurath's Enduring Legacy to Ethnomusicology : A Personal Example**

Judith Vander

Although I, too, like Gertrude Kurath, have lived in Ann Arbor for many years, I only had the privilege of meeting her late in her life and at a distance when she was a guest lecturer for an Ethnomusicology seminar. While I have no personal reminiscences of her to share, I do have deep gratitude for her work. It helped shape the path of my own research and writing.

Let me begin with a reflection by Wallace Stegner: "For history is a pontoon bridge. Every man walks and works at its building end, and has come as far as he has over the pontoons laid by others... Events have a way of making other events inevitable; the actions of men are consecutive and indivisible." (Stegner 1998:10)

My last book presented a study of the *Shoshone Ghost Dance Religion*. What were the pontoons that Kurath built that I walked over? What were her cutting-edge thoughts that had become conventional wisdom by the time I was starting my research?

First, she championed the notion that dance in culture was important to the human condition, and also that one needed to know the cultural context of dance. (Kealiinohomoku 2001:3) She expressed her work as, "the study of dance and music in relation to a way of life." (Kealiinohomoku 1992:70)

The interdependence of dance and music was her given, and became mine. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Shoshone Ghost Dance. Performance of this religious event could not take place without the large circle of dancers; nor could the dancers dance without the accompanying songs. Indeed, the dancers were the singers. No instrument sounded beyond the dancer's voices.

Kurath related dance and music to a way of life. Thus, I, in my work, needed to know why Shoshones performed the Ghost Dance. Emily Hill, a Shoshone singer explained it to me. "When you sing that song, when you dance, Mother nature's going to give all the berries. They're going to grow good. And water too. ... It makes water, won't get dried up. Grass grow and berries grow, plenty of berries for in the fall. Everything: fish, anything. Sing for them. Let them, our elk and deer and all them. That's what it's for." (Vander 1997:18)

Human health was another motive for Ghost Dance performance. Emily: "You hear white people... got measles, they got flu, the got some kind of a disease. One of the old Indians, he sleep and then dream about it. That kind of flu or measles... It's coming, coming to us. Just like air, it's coming, coming this way. Let's dance! We just make it go back." (Vander 1994:19)

One hears echoes of Emily's comments in Kurath's discussion of Tewa music and dance, "... the revered dances are still the old, ecological ceremonies, which express the interplay of seasons and human adjustment to the natural environment." (Kurath 1970:27)

Even my ethnographic approach--letting Emily Hill speak in her own voice, quoting her directly and always first before I added any further comments--was influenced by Kurath's stress on the central role of the singers and dancers whom she interviewed and learned from. The importance of this point to Kurath is illustrated by her giving co-authorship of *Music and Dance of the Tewa Pueblos*, to Antonio Garcia, her principal native teacher.

This Tewa book was a particular important model for me. I want to mention just some of the many topics in this book, which have counterparts in mine.

#### *1. Transcription and translation of song texts*

Kurath put great stress on the importance of the texts and was meticulous about their presentation. She relied not only on Antonio Garcia for translation of the texts, but also on her husband, who was a linguist. He provided phonemic transcriptions and indicated the tones of the spoken language.

#### *2. Beliefs about the natural world*

Always, Kurath's notion of context is both broad and deep, richly detailing cosmic views. For example, a section called, "Creatures of the Landscape," begins, "The concept of space mingles with life. In symbolism the six directions are associated

with specific animals and birds... Some of the creatures appear in ritual and dance. *Pingxeng*, the mountain lion, represents the north." (Kurath 1970:19)

### 3. Aesthetics

Kurath's rule was to learn native aesthetics, and never impose her own. She writes that moderation was the ideal in Tewa singing and dancing. Issues of gender enter her discussions too, as she notes the slightly different standards for men and women: women should be "...one notch more subdued than the men." (Kurath 1970:35)

### 4. Rhythm

Kurath was a pioneer in recognizing the problem of using Western meters in the transcription of Tewa songs. The implications of primary and secondary stress, which are inherent in Western meters, did not apply to Tewa songs. Instead she used the term, "basic temporal unit" (Kurath 1970:88) and in her transcriptions she omitted meters and used bar lines to indicate musical sections.

### 5. Choreography

Kurath also provided detailed pictures and diagrams of dance movements and the overall choreography. (Kurath 1970:83, 213) Here I was at a disadvantage, as Shoshones no longer performed the Ghost Dance in 1977 when I first visited the reservation. I was given detailed descriptions of the dance: a large circle formation set in a field and performed at night. Shoshones showed me the single sideward shuffle, which was the one and only step used in the dance. Yet I knew from transcriptions of the songs that many had duple rhythmic organization and many had triple. I am sure that Gertrude would have asked me if there were any specific adjustment in the dance corresponding to the different rhythmic organization of the melodies. (She discussed this very issue in reference to Tewa song and dance.) (Kurath 1970:100) But, regretfully, I can't answer her question.

Gertrude Kurath was very self-conscious about the issue of objectivity and early on pioneered the importance of divesting oneself as much as possible of ethnocentric prejudices in fieldwork studies. As Joann Kealiinohomoku has written, "When Gertrude began her research and writing, most published works about dance were sentimental and ethnocentric. Gertrude's work was neither. Her work was rigorous and her writing was 'hard.' She collected her own data, and she did not let personal feelings intervene with her analyses or reportage. She published materials that challenged received ideas about dance." (Kealiinohomoku 1995:4) This became an important issue when I searched for roots of the Ghost Dance in earlier religious dances of the Great Basin.

It became clear to me that the Shoshone Ghost Dance, performed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, had its origins in the ancient Round Dance of the Great Basin. Wind River Shoshones who live today in Wyoming, originally came from the Great Basin. The form of the Great Basin Round Dance, the few published Round Dance song texts, and most especially, the many descriptions of the purpose of the Round Dance, (reported in precise detail by Julian Steward) all matched up perfectly with the Shoshone Ghost Dance. However, Steward, an

anthropologist and Great Basin specialist, had concluded from his data that the Great Basin Round Dance was virtually devoid of any religious meaning. (Steward 1938:45) Why? Because the Round Dance included a large amount of recreational and social activities; therefore, according to his own ethnocentric prejudice that sacred and secular elements do not mix, he disregarded his own data that pointed to clear religious expression and intent in the Great Basin Round Dance. Kurath was an exemplary model in helping later generations of ethnomusicologists, like myself, avoid this kind of misunderstanding.

In summary, I've tried to emphasize how Kurath's work, quite apart from the details of her specific research, has made essential contributions to the entire field of ethnomusicology, its premises and approaches. I, and so many others, are its inheritors and beneficiaries.

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Gertrude Kurath performs a Tehuantepec dance from the region of Oaxaca, Mexico. This picture was taken in Tema, Iowa in the late 1940's.