Yearbook for Traditional Music (2020), **52,** 23–40
doi:10.1017/ytm.2020.7

Fostering Reconciliation through Collaborative Research in Unama'ki: Engaging Communities through Indigenous Methodologies and Research-Creation

MARCIA OSTASHEWSKI, SHAYLENE JOHNSON, GRAHAM MARSHALL, and CLIFFORD PAUL

Abstract

This article documents relationships, strategies, and activities involved in developing and carrying out collaborative community-engaged research for reconciliation, based on Indigenous methodologies and research-creation. It documents an example of Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaboration in Unama'ki (also known as Cape Breton, Canada), providing data towards the refinement of models of research designed to foster reconciliation, and contributing to a literature on Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaborations in ethnomusicology and related fields. While revealing some challenges in the process with respect to addressing local needs, it also describes transformations that can be achieved through effective collaboration, including ways in which universities can be involved.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
–Principle #1, Principles for Reconciliation (TRAC 2015b:3)

After centuries of repression, issues relating to Indigenous peoples are belatedly being acknowledged as priorities of governing bodies, institutions, and communities around the world. In Canadian universities, these issues arise at many levels: for example, how to indigenise programmes and courses; the relationship between a given university and local Indigenous groups; and the overall role of universities in a society in which decolonisation is a general concern. As university-affiliated researchers, we ask how and to what ends we can best study Indigenous histories, communities, and experiences. In this article, a

© International Council for Traditional Music 2020

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

non-Indigenous settler researcher and three Indigenous community-based co-researchers document and reflect on an ongoing project that engages this issue: collaborative research that integrates, through an emergent process, local Indigenous methodologies and research-creation. Clifford Paul lives in Membertou and is a Traditional Knowledge Holder; as a grandfather, Clifford is "a bridge to Elders, [as] our Elders are a bridge to our past" (Ostashewski et al. 2019). Shaylene Johnson is a Traditional Singer; she has worked as a youth programme officer in Membertou, and has been involved in coordinating youth and Elders for our larger working group. Graham Marshall is also a Traditional Knowledge Holder and Drummer; he is an elected Member of Council in Membertou and serves as a liaison between our working group and Chief and Council. All three Mi'kmaw co-authors are Mi'kmaw language speakers and active members of Membertou First Nation. Marcia Ostashewski grew up on a farm in northeastern Alberta; her grandparents and great-grandparents immigrated just before WWII and in the late 1800s, respectively, from what is today Ukraine, and settled and farmed on Treaty Six territory in the Canadian prairies. She is an ethnomusicologist and dance ethnographer by training, and established the Centre for Sound Communities at Cape Breton University, which serves as the university base for this research.

Since 2017, our collaborative team's efforts have often been directed towards Indigenous communities in Unama'ki (also known as Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada), especially Membertou First Nation, in a project titled *Songs and Stories of Migration and Encounter* (hereafter *Songs and Stories*). Through this publicly-funded collaboration between the university and the public, we have come to understand that our learning may be useful to others across Canada working within the context of the formal recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). We focus here on our group's research methodologies and strategies, as well as ways of relating and relationships that Elders and Traditional Knowledge Holders have recognised as major outcomes of this project. Throughout this article, we make reference to principles of reconciliation articulated by the TRC, with which our collaborative activities and outcomes align. Beyond this national context, we aim to contribute to a body of ethnomusicological research for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples around the world, suggesting ways to work within institutional constraints and limits while attending meaningfully and respectfully to the needs and interests of the varied community groups among and with whom we live and work.

Songs and Stories involves an ongoing process of recovering and honouring local Indigenous histories; it is not complete, and the data and prerogatives on how, when, and with whom to share the information belong to Membertou. Previous publications (Ostashewski et al. 2018; Ostashewski and Johnson 2020) have documented basic elements and outcomes of earlier phases; here we attend to the most recent ones. Throughout, we are developing ways to share a history beyond the local community that are appropriate and sensitive to individual needs and to the community's way of life, particularly given that some aspects of the history are contested (Smith 1999:33–34).

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Rather than data collection and argument, our research proceeds through storytelling and reflection. We describe the Indigenous foundations of our research, which are well served by the unique affordances of research-creation.[1] We highlight the leading roles of community-based co-researchers; the value of community partners and of allowing the process to emerge openly and responsively; and the overarching values of collaboration, mutual support, and care. We acknowledge the models of applied ethnomusicology and community music (Higgins 2012:124–125), with their goals of active music-making directed towards social change and in support of community wellbeing and development. We are also acutely aware of the rich and growing literature on Indigenous methodologies, some of which we draw on here. To introduce our work with an overview of that literature, however, would be fair neither to it nor to our project, for as will become evident, that project arose not from a desire to exemplify a methodology or theory, but rather from the concerns of a particular community reflecting on its history at a unique moment for Indigenous peoples in Canada. We have sought, in short, primarily to document the work of our group, founded on the relationships of the people involved, guided by local Elders and Traditional Knowledge Holders, and emerging from our collective values and experiences. Ostashewski, as a university-based researcher, describes how her professional studies led her to work with this group and disseminate the academic findings. Then we describe our collective actions, what we learned, and accomplished. It is important that this story be told by those whose story it is, that their efforts and knowledge be recognised and valued as their own. As research collaborators from diverse backgrounds, we are accountable to our communities and institutions, and to the standards and needs of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers; these are familiar challenges to others who do similar work (Barney 2014:7).

Respectful Relationships: Investing Ourselves in the Foundations of Research

All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
–Principle #6, Principles of Reconciliation (TRC 2015b:4)

Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as substantial investment of resources.
–Principle #9, Principles of Reconciliation (TRC 2015b:4)

The Membertou community—small working groups as well as the community at large—has been involved since 2014 in collaborative research with faculty and students based at

1. "Research-creation: An approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation." (SSHRC 2016). This methodology is known as artistic research in Europe.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Centre for Sound Communities (CSC) at Cape Breton University, with the support of federal (Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Canada 150 Fund), provincial (Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust), and university investment. Founded and directed by Ostashewski, the CSC is an arts-led social innovation lab that works to effect positive social and cultural change in the communities it serves. Its work involves research-creation through artistic practice (primarily dance, music, theatre, and digital media), training for students, faculty, and community partners, and helping to develop community capacities, connections, and access to resources. Since 2017, Membertou-based researchers and CSC-based faculty have been working together on a project to recover local Mi'kmaw histories, honour Mi'kmaw traditions and practices, and move towards meaningful reconciliation, a process that has received further impetus from the work of the TRC. Initiated in response to a class action lawsuit by survivors of Indian Residential Schools against the Canadian Government and the churches that had run the schools, the Commission travelled throughout Canada over six years to hear from survivors of the schools. Its Principles (2015c:V–VI) and its ninety-four Calls to Action (2015a) are intended to lay a foundation for reconciliation. Reconciliation, according to the Commission, "is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in [Canada]. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm, that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour" (2015b:113).

As our research group reflected on these points, the idea arose for a project to address local histories and experiences, shaped by encounter, settler colonialism, and migration, building on the CSC's model of critical, creative research that integrates intergenerational and intercultural exchange; that project would become *Songs and Stories*. Our research group is investigating the experiences and impacts of the forced relocation of the *Kun'tewiktuk* ("Kings Road") Reserve community to the present-day Membertou First Nation location. In *Songs and Stories*, we share what we learn with the wider community in different ways and times, to raise awareness of what we are learning and to obtain feedback for next steps. Our arts-based research processes are designed to facilitate and support Indigenous leadership as one way of redressing historical inequities in research and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and to help establish a practice of the study of Indigenous histories, experience, and knowledge with and by Indigenous people (possibilities that have been noted more generally by Ninomiya and Pollock 2017 and Whitlow et al. 2019).

If violence is inherent in structures of power, which constrain rather than empower people, particularly the underrepresented, underserved, and colonised, as Araujo (2008) and others suggest, then research-creation can disrupt historically inequitable research relationships. Collaborative research, in which non-Indigenous university-based researchers understand themselves as working in service to and support of the Indigenous communities, is particularly useful, as the research process can make amends, weakening power structures and suggesting new possibilities for relationship (see also Somerville 2014:3 and Lassiter 2019). Such practices can, however, lead to puzzlement. For instance,

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ostashewski delivered a twenty-minute presentation about *Songs and Stories* research at ICTM Bangkok 2019, highlighting activities that were led by the group's Indigenous researchers. The presentation included a fourteen-minute film of Membertou-based collaborators speaking about activities and outcomes of the project. In the question period, Ostashewski was asked: "Then what did *you* do?" The following section responds to that question, and to the many times before and since that non-Indigenous researchers have asked her how they might contribute to such collaborative projects.

> *First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.*
>
> *–Principle #2, Principles of Reconciliation (TRC 2015b:3)*

One of Ostashewski's roles in this research is to facilitate recording and reporting on our research processes and outcomes. That research itself, however, is largely led by Indigenous community-based researchers, supported by university-based researchers. Thus, while Ostashewski has taken a lead in authoring this article, the co-authors have been consulted repeatedly in the process and have been involved in the writing. Contributors' own words are used, and are acknowledged throughout. Collectively, we are continually exploring means of acknowledging the contributions of co-researchers—contributions to the varied elements of research practice, data collection, and knowledge creation, and to mechanisms of sharing the research in ways that are culturally appropriate and culturally relevant (Younging 2018). The concept of "ally" (Davis 2010) serves well to describe the nature of the relationships that are core to the methodology, particularly aspects of authentic relationships and friendship (Christian and Freeman 2010; Snow 2018; Diamond 2008). Having collaborated with Snow and other non-Indigenous as well as Mi'kmaw co-researchers in Unama'ki, Ostashewski recommends Snow's recent publication, which extends Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) Four Rs for researchers (to be respectful, relevant, reciprocal, and responsible) to include also Indigenous *rights*; authentic *relationships*; *returning* to research participants for continual feedback, clarification, and dialogue; and engaging in constant *reflection* on one's place and contributions with respect to Indigenous communities, lives, and issues (Snow 2018). These practices align more generally with "Indigenist" (Wilson 2007) and Indigenous paradigms (Chilisa 2012:19; Kovach 2009:95–96; Wilson 2003:176, 2007:194, 2008:39) that support relationships and contextualised knowledge for culturally specific and culturally relevant discourses and activities, for a research practice that is emergent, and for researchers to attend to *how* work is conducted at least as much as to what is being investigated.

The recognition that Indigenous people deal with individual and intergenerational impacts of traumatic experience due to colonialism, including residential schools, and that reconciliation is a process of "healing" relationships (TRC 2015b:3, 111), has led Ostashewski to a trauma-informed approach as the basis of work and training, supported by the CSC and affirmed by Mi'kmaw collaborators. According to Hopper, Bassuk, and

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Olivet, "Trauma-Informed Care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment" (2009:133). Although our research teams are not therapists or caregivers, we are mindful that underrepresented and underserved groups often have histories of hardships and face challenging circumstances. Given these concerns, our trauma-informed approach to research prioritises honesty, transparency, integrity, and accountability, as well as genuine care and kindness. Researchers' actions and behaviours seek to inspire and maintain trust and avoid triggering trauma responses in others. For instance, many of our sessions open with an Elder's or Traditional Knowledge Holder's prayer to the Creator, asking that our actions and collective efforts reflect Indigenous values and care for one another. This respect-based interaction resonates with ideas such as "living from a place of love," a frequent topic of discussion in our collaborative working group and a goal for our interactions with one another. As Henderson makes clear, that goal aligns closely with Mi'kmaw values—"the concept of empathic love is the foundation of the L'nu understandings of nature, humanities and law" (2016:48)[2]—and with what Darnell has observed in Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaborations related to reconciliation and "the entailed commitments of our ongoing relationships": "Words like *beautiful* and *love* and *sincere* are rarely found in academic discourse or in the mainstream political and legal rhetoric, but they recur matter-of-factly here and convey a content and commitment that I am unwilling to dismiss as wanton romanticism incompatible with 'science'" (2018:230).

Constructive, Creative, Collaborative Action to Address the Ongoing Legacies of Colonialism

> *Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that required public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.*
> *–Principle #3, Principles for Reconciliation (TRAC 2015b:3)*

> *Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.*
> *–Principle #4, Principles for Reconciliation (TRC 2015b:3)*

2. L'nu is the word that Mi'kmaq use, in their own language, to refer to themselves. See Henderson (2016:29–30), with reference to discussions with Elders. Mi'kmaw is based on a more recent term first used by Europeans to refer to people of this nation. Recent public discourse includes a call to use L'nu rather than Mi'kmaq, but the overwhelming consensus in discussions with our research participants, including community Elders, is that since L'nu is not yet a widely familiar term they prefer that this article use Mi'kmaq/Mi'kmaw.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> *Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.*
>
> *–Principle #10, Principles of Reconciliation (TRC 2015b:4)*

Songs and Stories is of course situated within a local historical and research context. The Mi'kmaq in Cape Breton have historically been underrepresented, and their communities underserved. As a number of Mi'kmaw collaborators mentioned in conversations that led to the establishment of *Songs and Stories*, too little appears to be known, understood, or represented in public discourse regarding even the history of the Mi'kmaq who live closest to Sydney, where the university is located. This is true even among Mi'kmaq themselves; as youth co-researcher Noah Cremo remarks in the documentary film, very few people in the group had much prior knowledge regarding histories of the community and its families (Ostashewski et al. 2019). To give only the barest outline of that history, Unama'ki is part of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw people. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" (INAC 2015) that Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people signed with the British Crown in 1725. These treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources; rather, they recognised Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik title and established rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. Yet, in the first decades of the 1900s, after having already been restricted to reserve lands, the members of the *Kun'tewiktuk* (or Kings Road Reserve) Mi'kmaw community near the small city of Sydney, Nova Scotia, were forced by the Dominion of Canada to relocate to the current Membertou First Nation site, an event whose history and impact on the displaced Mi'kmaw residents historical publications are finally beginning to address (Membertou 2016; Walls 2016).[3] Mi'kmaw educator Marie Battiste also makes mention of related oral history in her introduction to a recent edited collection outlining a Mi'kmaq humanities. She describes stories her parents told her about special places in their homeland and one "place in the history of the Mi'kmaq that should remain be [sic] in our

3. Sydney waterfront resident J. A. Gillies made an application the Exchequer Court of Canada to have his neighbours, the Mi'kmaw residents of Kings Road Reserve, removed from their property. Court Proceedings provide an overview of the very complex history and arguments regarding the matter (Library and Archives Canada 1916, henceforth LAC 1916). The waterfront property afforded the Reserve community was small for the growing number of residents. Still, it was well positioned on the bay with direct access to water for drinking and washing and traditional foods to forage (e.g., mussels, fish), as well as a means of transportation. Technically an "adjunct of the Eskasoni Reserve" (LAC 1916:4) situated twenty-four to twenty-five miles away, it was a location to which Mi'kmaq came to sell wares such as handmade baskets, or to live while in the employ of Sydney businesses such as the steel plant or city works. The Proceedings suggest that racism and monetary interest on the part of settlers were at play in the matter, indicating, for instance, that "No one cares to live in the immediate vicinity of the Indians [sic]" (ibid.) due to disturbances and unsanitary conditions; and that the removal of the Mi'kmaw residents "would make the property in the neighbourhood more valuable for assessment purposes" (LAC 1916:5) and allow for municipal development. The Proceedings note that evidence supporting complaints regarding the Mi'kmaw residents was "meagre and not very reliable" (LAC 1916:6). Nonetheless, the court ordered the community's removal. The court case was settled in 1915, but not until 1926 were all residents finally removed and the community relocated to the present-day Membertou First Nation site, a larger property up the hill and away from the waterfront.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

memory" (2016:vi). "One of those places is King's Road where Mikmaq lived but were removed. The people of Sydney wanted the Mi'kmaw land on the shores of the harbour and created a backlash against them to get them removed" (2016:vi). Despite these and other extraordinary challenges, Membertou is a community characterised by resilience and prosperity.

Songs and Stories aims to foster awareness of this history, and supports efforts to make amends, for instance by making deliberate choices about how and with whom research is conducted, as well as through the impacts of that research. At the time of this writing, four phases of *Songs and Stories* have been carried out. The first three have been addressed in other publications, especially concerning youth expressions of transnationalism and identity, and the vital role of intergenerational relationships in community (Ostashewski et al. 2018); and the resilience of Mi'kmaw people amidst histories of displacement and work carried out by a Membertou-based group of researchers to reclaim and honour the legacy of Mi'kmaw ancestors (e.g., Ostashewski and Johnson 2020). The fourth phase, involving an ICTM Colloquium on the theme of *Songs and Stories of Migration and Encounter* (please refer to www.ictmusic.org/songs-and-stories-migration-and-encounter-26th-ictm-colloquium), was hosted by the CSC in October 2019 and facilitated through partnerships with several communities in different locations around Cape Breton Island.

Although we focus here on the final phase and on the dynamics of collaboration, we offer a brief overview of earlier phases. *Songs and Stories* began with a one-day pilot project facilitated by the CSC for Multicultural Day in Canada, on 27 June 2017. Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members wrote and performed songs and produced short video documentaries (Episode One, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3cGFe7-Ieg; Episode Two, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fbo6tdzoVQ). The song lyrics, based on participants' experiences living in Cape Breton, acknowledged a long history of the presence of Mi'kmaq on the land as well as intercultural encounter and relationship. The second phase involved a six-week in-community workshop process at four locations around Cape Breton Island, beginning in September 2017. Our CSC-based team members visited each location weekly, meeting with the local research team members and participants. In addition to the university-based artist-researchers, these teams comprised community Elders and culture-bearers and youth local to each of the sites. The workshop process culminated in a shared performance of song and dance, in some cases building on findings from the pilot and extending them in new directions (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNXI-YTZr8Y).

The processes developed in these phases have continued throughout the project. Our research-creation process employed stories and music as means of praxis, and used an emergent strategy of inquiry. The basic model, established through earlier CSC projects, involves an initial period during which the Elders and other culture-bearers are asked to share with the youth their knowledge and experiences related to a given topic. Though not exclusively an Indigenous practice, storytelling and sharing of oral histories in our work are directly informed by Indigenous traditions and research methods: "engaging with elders has been recognized as an essential means of accessing Indigenous knowledge and histories

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

as oral histories" (with reference to Miller 2011, in Ostashewski et al. 2018:10). Knowledge-sharing gives rise to dialogue and discussion, led by the youth, involving Elders and other Knowledge Holders as well as faculty and research assistants. Following the discussion, the group engages in a process of collaborative creation of a work relevant to the young participants' own lives. These central processes are supported as appropriate with technology-enhanced interactions and activities such as archival research, ethnographic interviews, digitisation of documents, and so forth. Processes vary as needs and interests emerge, with as much leadership as possible remaining with the youth, advised by the Elders and supported by university-based researchers.

The third and largest phase of the project, lasting six months (January to June 2018), emerged through a request from Membertou First Nation, the most active participants in the second phase. Responding to interest from community members, Shaylene Johnson proposed a new workshop, possibly creating a song about the forced relocation of the *Kun'tewiktuk* community from their Kings Road Reserve to the current Membertou site. We have described the creative work of this phase elsewhere (Ostashewski and Johnson 2020); here we focus on the essential and inevitably personal process of building a mutually respectful and collaborative team.

Johnson's involvement was invaluable, given her unique combination of experience as a Traditional Singer, university researcher, and community organiser. Her efforts helped engage about a dozen Membertou youth aged seven to sixteen, primarily teenagers, who participated at different stages of this phase. Johnson also facilitated the participation of Elders, including Shirley Christmas and Clifford Paul, as well as those known as community historians, including Nelson Paul, Peter J. Paul, and Dr. Peter Christmas. Additional participants included Graham Marshall, a Traditional Drummer, a student in a course on Indigenous musics that Ostashewski was facilitating, and a member of Membertou's Council who had also worked with Mi'kmaw youth; Marshall shared news of our activities with many different people in the community. Towards the end of our workshop process, other culture-bearers, including some from other Mi'kmaw communities, joined the group, among them Jeff Ward, Karina Matthews, Shawnee Paul, and Kalo Nicholas. As a consensus developed to create a theatrical production rather than a single song, we drew on the skills of Shirley Christmas, a published poet, CBU's theatre director and devised theatre expert Todd Hiscock, who also had strong family connections to the Membertou reserve, and Sheila Christie, also of CBU's drama programme. In short, our team developed through an ongoing process dependent on engaged commitment, personal and community relationships, and trust. Aside from CBU faculty members and a graduate student research assistant, all workshop participants identified as Mi'kmaq or L'nu.

The emergent and relational basis of our work is perhaps clearest in the process by which the Membertou Elders Advisory Council granted us permission to access local Indigenous archives. In response to a request crafted with advice from Elders and Knowledge Holders, the Council invited a small group (Shaylene Johnson, Clifford Paul, and Ostashewski) to meet with them. Our introductions included our roles in the project, but also our places in our communities, and our families and origins. After an extended and

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

positive discussion, some Elders noted their concern for the safety of the archives as a resource for continuing the Mi'kmaw language and protecting the community and its cultural practices. Ostashewski's response noted not only their awareness of the vital importance of language, but also her personal connection to the issue; despite her very different background, her experience as a member of a Ukrainian family whose mother had fought for bilingual education, and her role as a cantor in the local Ukrainian church, allowed her to appreciate the significance of being able to use one's own threatened language in culture and worship, just as is the case with Mi'kmaw. She recalls feeling that the Elders appreciated this parallel, and shortly after the meeting, the Elders granted access, or, as Johnson phrased it, "the blessing from Elders for permission" (Ostashewski et al. 2019). This story of productive interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous interlocutors demonstrates the trust and empathy that can develop through mutual respect and shared personal experience.

The musical elements of the play were also shaped by our collaborative, collective process. As the arc of the narrative began to take shape, Nelson Paul indicated when it was a good time to bring in the songs and music; by consensus, the group asked for musicians who could sing traditional songs with a hand drum, as well as play fiddle tunes that were both enjoyed by Mi'kmaw communities and represented the Europeans coming to Unama'ki. Nelson Paul describes his thinking as he guided our musical choices:

> The songs [we chose] were like the real old Indian drum songs: the "Welcoming Song" because John Isaac welcomed us all [to the original *Kun'tewiktuk* property]. And then slowly going to fiddle music, because they played a lot of fiddle music in those days, and also with the Scot people around here. So I wanted to see that graduation, like I say, slowly start off with old Indian music and then to modern music—we say modern, in those days, you know. (Ostashewski et al. 2019)

As Jeff Ward observed, "Each song told a story…and perfectly connected with a time but also with a message, what we are passing on to one another" (Ostashewski et al. 2019).

The intensive learning and creative activity that developed from our team's strong relationships begin to suggest the unique potential of arts-based research methods, which, as Patricia Leavy has noted, require "openness to the spontaneous and the unknown" (2015:20), as well as the collaborative and caring approach discussed above. We continued to draw on both Indigenous and settler ways of knowing, skills, capacities, and other resources, and participants contributed according to their abilities, resources, and interests. Elders and other Knowledge Holders, for example, shared oral histories and allowed our team to make video and audio recordings. The discussions that arose from this sharing led us to further questions and stories, to exploration of related traditional teachings, and to searching both local and national archives. We amassed a body of data that included oral histories, trial and interview transcripts, community history magazines, materials from personal archives, recordings and transcriptions of our workshops and meetings, and a bibliography of further resources. This rich and varied corpus provides a concrete example of how collective artistic inquiry and more familiar research methods can service and enrich one another (Leavy 2015:20).

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The final words that Shirley wrote for the play, as it was performed on 21 June 2018, were a resounding call to action:

> Now as we reflect, we look back to the beginning that started with a prayer, then [we] shared knowledge. We made a commitment, and created. Now that we have gifted you with this basket and knowledge, we must remember to continue this process and pass on the knowledge to future generations.

Shirley's words reflected our collaborative research process; they also reflected the process of traditional Mi'kmaw basket-making preparations and weaving that were woven through the play, metaphorically in its structure as well as embodied in performance, interspersed with storytelling of *Kun'tewiktuk* families' experiences, and dialogue from the court process. Through the performance, the knowledge we had shared and developed was further shared with the wider community (more than 400 people attended that day)—and the working group asked that the community take up the process of sharing the knowledge with future generations. We had begun our research with prayer and song; onstage, the play began with a prayer, an offering to Mother Earth. In our research process, the Elders shared their knowledge; onstage, the actors shared stories and knowledge that had been brought to light through our research. Our research was characterised by a commitment to complete work together, and to work in a good way. Likewise, the actors committed themselves to the performance. Our carefully crafted play, a vessel made of strands woven together, was gifted to the audience, to the broader community. It was also a request to the community to help to carry this heavy knowledge, so that it would no longer be only the young people of the working group but the wider community continuing to do the work of remembering and creating together, for the benefit of future generations (see Cape Breton Post 2018).

The most recent phase of *Songs and Stories* involved an ICTM Colloquium, also entitled *Songs and Stories of Migration and Encounter*, hosted by the CSC and several communities around Cape Breton Island. This four-day event began in Membertou on October 9, 2019, with traditional songs and drumming by Graham Marshall and close friends; Marshall also welcomed those present and introduced the project, setting the context for a short documentary film about our process. This film, too, is an example of the responsive practise of the group. Initially, our working group submitted a proposal to the ICTM World Conference in Bangkok (July 2019) for Ostashewski and at least one Membertou-based co-researcher to present the work. When it appeared that funding limitations would make this proposal impossible, the working group decided to create a film in which Membertou-based participants speak about their experience and its significance from their perspectives (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhqrUb3h_Qo).[4]

4. An early version was presented in June 2019 at an Edmonton event celebrating the legacy of the community-engaged ethnomusicology of Dr. Regula Qureshi. Because the Membertou-based researchers were neither faculty nor university students, they did not qualify for university-based funding to present this work. We learned too late that the ICTM might have contributed funds to bring our Indigenous researchers to the conference.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The film's production provides another example of intensive commitment and collaboration, as well as a demonstration of the ways in which different organisations, from the most localised to the broadest international group of researchers, work together to support, share, and learn together. The film is also the result of the organisation of Membertou lending their support to this research. Ostashewski normally has access to film production staff through the CSC, but in that particular window staff time had been oversubscribed. Thankfully, the corporate bodies within Membertou First Nation were able to lend the time of a film production staff member, Kim Cheetham, who worked with our research team. Cheetham generously donated some of her own time to ensure that the film was prepared in time for preview in Edmonton, and then revised before the Bangkok presentation. Marshall's presentation at the local ICTM Colloquium afterwards meant that finally a community member was able to present from his own perspective, on his own—and the research was shared with a new group of scholars, in the context in which it was carried out. These were all means used to share our research with ever-widening circles of people in dialogue with other research on the theme, through the support of an international scholarly society.

Indigenous Methodologies and Research-Creation: Weaving Methods, Relationships, Baskets

> *The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.*
>
> *–Principle #7, Principles of Reconciliation (TRC 2015b:4)*

> *Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.*
>
> *–Principle #8, Principles of Reconciliation (TRC 2015b:4)*

In *Arts of Engagement* (Robinson and Martin 2016), Byron Dueck and several other scholars observe and analyse Canada's TRC process, noting the essential public role of ceremony and song. Our work, like theirs, inhabits aesthetic and artistic realms, with the goal of reconciliation, but rather than observing an intervention, the current work was conceived *as* an intervention fostering reconciliation. In this final section we focus on our actions, the process of weaving together the methodologies of the co-researchers, especially Indigenous methodologies and research-creation, to facilitate learning and foster reconciliation.

Mi'kmaw methodologies and traditional ways of teaching and learning "in a circle" were central to our processes, as Clifford Paul's description of our process of teaching and learning together, featured in our short film, makes evident:

> Teaching and stories, they are sacred. In a sense of our own education [his generation which learned from non-Indigenous teachers], we have kind of learned from our

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> instructor, and information flowed this way [making motions in which he draws his arms sharply toward himself from a slightly raised and distant position]. But in these [*Kun'tewiktuk*] sessions, we had Elders who were our instructors, and we had children who were our instructors, and we had each other, who instructed each other, so the information flowed [making motions with his arms between three different lateral points in front of himself], three different directions. And to me, that is very sacred because that is [pause] the teaching circles of life, the teaching circles of learning environments before the arrival of the Europeans. We had very sacred teachings and a lot of them were done in a circle [at which point the film includes a photo of a circle dance from one of the sessions]. (Ostashewski et al. 2019)

In the film, Graham Marshall also notes the sacred nature of the focus of our research, the relationships of the people involved with their community as well as with their ancestors, the transmission of the knowledge intergenerationally, and the performance of knowledge in the form of a theatrical production:

> The people that participated in the play, they were descendants of the individuals that they were portraying.… When we have that, when we show the great-great-grandsons and the great-great-granddaughters telling the stories of their ancestors, it's a very sacred thing, what we do. The Mi'kmaw way, Mi'kmaw philosophy, is always *ta'n wetapeksin*: "What is your roots? Where do you come from?" It's always sacred to know who you are and where you come from. The Mi'kmaw way, your shadow plays an important part of you because your shadow is your ancestors. So when you say you feel alone, you're never alone because wherever your shadow is, those are your ancestors. So when you have your ancestors always with you, it always shows that you're never alone. So when you tell that story onto a stage, you're being proud and you're honouring your ancestors, and that's what was so sacred about that. (Ostashewski et al. 2019)

Several of the co-researchers of all generations, including two youth, Noah Cremo and Graham Curtis Marshall, observe in the film that our research process has provided those in the working group and the community with opportunities to learn about the history and experiences of the families of *Kun'tewiktuk*, what they experienced in the move—and, as Shaylene Johnson points out, the racism and prejudices they dealt with (Ostashewski et al. 2018, 2019).

The centrality of relationships evident in our process—allowing the development of what Morin (2016:71) has called "this space where Indigenous knowledge meets settler ways of being"—has also been widely acknowledged by other scholars of Indigenous research. For example, Wilson (2008) writes about Indigenous research as a ceremony of achieving enlightenment and of maintaining accountability to the relationships that are inherent even in how we select topics, methods of data collection and analysis, and forms of presentation. For instance, when Johnson and Ostashewski participated in a CSC workshop on digital humanities and data management, Johnson remarked that "data management happens at the sacred fire" (16 March 2018, pers. comm.). Johnson went on

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to say that "the sacred fire plays a part in safeguarding traditional knowledge, for example, how it is shared and with whom, in what circumstances, for what purpose. The sacred fire plays a part in how that knowledge is received as well." She explains how she understands the two concepts come together:

> Traditional Knowledge Holders [including Elders and other designated culture-bearers] have a duty to protect sacred and traditional information. This is necessary to protect the resources of our Mother Earth but also to protect the people from self-harm through misuse of traditional ceremony and traditional medicine. (pers. comm., 16 July 2018)

Addressing the potential impacts of knowledge, Diamond has also observed that "Elders emphasize that some things which are good in one situation can become bad in others" (Diamond and Witmer 1994:18). The notion of the integrity of knowledge also resonates with the experience Johnson, Paul, and Ostashewski had when requesting the Elders Advisory Council, charged with protecting the community's knowledge, for permission to access the Membertou archives.

The importance of our focus on the critical, creative, and collaborative work that is respectful of the ceremonial and the sacred becomes all the more clear when we recognise song, ceremony, visual arts, action, and performance as core aspects of Mi'kmaw knowledge and experience:

> The L'nu humanities among the Mi'kmaq is a performance-based worldview. It is based on actions not theories of behaviour. The interweaved processes of performing a worldview are embodied in relationships, songs, ceremonies and conduct are integrated with visual arts to revitalize the ecological covenants and their teaching about being human in various situations. They are about the process of finding one's gifts and establishing good and interconnected relationships and feelings with all life forms. The learning spirit animates the transmission of knowledge in stories, ceremonies and visual arts. (Henderson 2016:48–49)

As linguist Stephanie Inglis writes, Mi'kmaw language is based on action, and on the relationality of knowledge; it "indicate[s] how speakers and listeners during a speech act, i.e. conversations *are connected to each other in terms of shared knowledge and experience* [emphasis in the original]" (Inglis 2004:397). A practice-based ethnomusicology of "aesthetic action" (Robinson and Martin 2016:2) may thus be uniquely relevant and expedient in such contexts as the Mi'kmaw community of Membertou, in which doing, experience, and relationships between knowers and doers and knowledge are fundamental.

Our work in *Songs and Stories* emerged from the context of Indigenous community needs, histories, and experiences, guided largely by local Indigenous paradigms, with related strategies that align with well-documented frameworks of Indigenous research (Wilson 2003:175, 2008:39). Our activities and time together involved traditional song and prayer and aspects of Mi'kmaw ceremony led by Elders and Tradition Bearers (Battiste

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2016); our methods involved stories and oral histories of relations, all founded on respectful, caring, authentic relationships (Bull 2011). The sharing of/access to knowledge was governed and managed by Elders, in the traditional manner, seeking to convey that knowledge to future generations. Wilson has written more broadly of the significance of this continued learning as part of Indigenous paradigms:

> Indigenous people need to do Indigenous research because we have a lifelong learning and relationship that goes into it. You are not just gaining information from people; you are sharing your information. You are analyzing and you are building ideas and relationships as well. Research is not just something that's out there: it's something that you're building for yourself and for your community. (Wilson 2003:179)

Nelson Paul also noted in our film that the involvement of the youth in our process of discovery has encouraged their continued investigations into community and family histories, thus supporting a continued process of learning for the community (Ostashewski et al. 2019).

Graham Marshall describes in our film "what was so significant about this play, *Kun'tewiktuk*, and what it meant to the community as a whole—…it was a place that we were able to open a door into history and show the people how it was back in the early 1900s" (ibid.), and the experience of being forcibly removed. Here we share the observations of Clifford Paul, whose wise words are presented to conclude this article, just as they were chosen to conclude our film. Paul describes what he feels are the most crucial outcomes of our work together in creating *Kun'tewiktuk*:

> *Kun'tewiktuk* strengthened our community. When you create a link for people my age with our Elders, people my age with our youth and our children, the learning, the learning that's involved allows you to say, hmm, that's me! This is how I am made. Like, my grandchildren, their strength and resilience comes from the strength and resilience of those who came here before them and those who live productive lives in Membertou. So that tradition is passed down. So you see me learning from my Elders. You'll also see my daughter learning, and my granddaughter learning. We're carrying this pride in ourselves that we in turn learnt this together, and that we worked on this project together, and that we successfully brought it to fruition and had [pause] a very emotional, and a very powerful [pause] story to tell. And when that story was told, the Elders embraced the youth, and they said that was incredible, that was very good, and that was very strong. That's the spirit of our people, that's the spirit of Membertou, that's the spirit of *Kun'tewiktuk*. (Ostashewski et al. 2019)

Acknowledgements The *Songs and Stories* team acknowledges with gratitude the strength and courage of the Elders, Traditional Knowledge Holders, Culture Bearers, and other community members who have supported us, guiding us and inspiring a reconfiguration of relationships in our communities and in our scholarship. Wela'lioq.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

References

Araujo, Samuel. 2008. "From Neutrality to Praxis: The Shifting Politics of Ethnomusicology in the Contemporary World." *Musicological Annual* 44(1):13–30.

Barney, Katelyn. 2014. *Collaborative Ethnomusicology: New Approaches to Music Research between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians*. Melbourne: Lyrebird Press.

Battiste, Marie Ann. 2016. *Visioning a Mi'kmaw Humanities: Indigenizing the Academy*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.

Bull, Julie R. 2011. "Research with Aboriginal Peoples: Authentic Relationships as a Precursor to Ethical Research." *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics* 5:13–22.

Cape Breton Post. 2018. "Feasting and Friendship in Membertou on National Indigenous Peoples Day." *Cape Breton Post*. http://www.capebretonpost.com/news/local/feasting-and-friendship-in-membertou-on-national-indigenous-peoples-day-220606/ (accessed 20 July 2018).

Chilisa, Bagele. 2012. *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, California, London: SAGE Publications.

Christian, Dorothy and Victoria Freeman. 2010. "The History of a Friendship, or Some Thoughts on Becoming Allies." In *Alliances: Re/envisioning Indigenous-non-Indigenous Relationships*, ed. Lynne Davis, 376–390. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Darnel, Regna. 2018. "Reconciliation, Refurgence and Revitalization: Collaborative Research Protocols with Contemporary First Nations Communities." In R*esurgence and Reconciliation: Indigenous Settler Relations and Earth Teachings*, ed. Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully, 229–244. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Davis, Lynne. 2010. *Alliances: Re/envisioning Indigenous-non-Indigenous Relationships*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Diamond, Beverley. 2008. *Native American Music in Eastern North America. Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Diamond, Beverley and Robert Witmer, eds. 1994. *Canadian Music: Issues of Hegemony and Identity*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Henderson, James [S'ake'j] Youngblood. 2016. "L'nu Humanities." In *Visioning a Mikmaw Humanities: Indigenizing the Academy*, ed. Marie Battiste, 29–54. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.

Higgins, Lee. 2012. *Community Music: In Theory and In Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hopper, Elizabeth K., Ellen L. Bassuk, and Jeffrey Olivet. 2009. "Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services Settings." *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal* (2):131–151.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). 2015. "Peace and Friendship Treaties." http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028589/1100100028591 (accessed 20 July 2018).

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Inglis, S. 2004. "400 Years of Linguistic Contact Between the Mi'kmaw and the English and the Interchange of Two World Views." *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXXIV(2):389–402.

Kirkness, V. J. and R. Barnhardt. 1991. "First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's—Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility." In *Knowledge Across Cultures: A Contribution to Dialogue Among Civilizations*, ed. R. Hayoe and J. Pan. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong.

Kovach, Margaret. 2009. *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.

Lassiter, Luke Eric. 2019. "Collaborative Ethnography." In *SAGE Research Methods Foundations*, ed. Paul Atkinson, Sara Delamont, Alexandru Cernat, Joseph W. Sakshaug, and Richard A. Williams. https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036766518.

Leavy, Patricia. 2015. *Method Meets Art: Arts-based Research Practice*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Library and Archives Canada [LAC]. 1916. RG-10, Vol. 7762, File 27061-2, part 2. Cape Breton Agency, Exchequer Court Proceedings #390845 under Section 49A Indian Act for the Sydney Reserve (plans). 1915–1916.

Membertou Communications. 2016. "Kings Road Reserve 100 Years Later, The Journey On…: The Story of Membertou's Reconciliation." http://www.membertou.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/kings-road-reserve.pdf.

Miller, Bruce Granville. 2011. *Oral History on Trial: Recognizing Aboriginal Narratives in the Courts*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Morin, Peter. 2016. "This is What happens when we Perform the Memory of the Land." In *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action In and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,* ed. Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin, 67–92. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Ninomiya, Melody E. and Nathaniel J. Pollock. 2017. "Reconciling Community-based Indigenous Research and Academic Practices: Knowing Principles Is Not Always Enough." *Social Science & Medicine* 172:28–36.

Ostashewski, Marcia. 2020. "Sound Communities." Special issue: Keywords in Music and Peacebuilding. *Music and Arts in Action* 7(3):63–84.

Ostashewski, Marcia (Producer), Graham Marshall (Associate Producer), Kim Cheetham (Director and Editor), Norm MacDonald (Director of Photography), in addition to several Membertou-based co-researchers. 2019. *The Kun'tewiktuk Project* (documentary film, 15:07 min.). Sydney, NS: The Centre for Sound Communities, Cape Breton University. http://soundcommunities.org/the-kuntewiktuk-project/.

Ostashewski, Marcia, Heather Fitzsimmons Frey, and Shaylene Johnson. 2018. "Youth-Engaged Art-based Research in Cape Breton: Transcending Nations, Boundaries, and Identities." *Jeunesse* 10(2):100–125.

Ostashewski, Marcia and Shaylene Johnson. 2020. "Relocation, Research and Reconciliation in Unama'ki." In *My Body Was Left on the Street: Music Education and*

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Displacement, ed. A. De Quadros and K. Vu, 267–280. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Robinson, Dylan and Keavy Martin, eds. 2016. *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action In and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London & New York: Zed Books.

Snow, Kathy. 2018. "What Does Being a Settler Ally in Research Mean? A Graduate Student's Experience Learning from and Working Within Indigenous Research Paradigms." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 17(1):1–11.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). 2016. "Definitions of Terms." http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22 (accessed 11 February 2018).

Somerville, Margaret. 2014. "Creative Collaborations in the Contact Zone." In *Collaborative Ethnomusicology: New Approaches to Music Research between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians*, ed. Katelyn Barney, 9–24. Melbourne: Lyrebird Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015a. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

———. 2015b. *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

———. 2015c. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Walls, Martha. 2016. "The Disposition of the Ladies: Mi'kmaw Women and the Removal of the King's Road Reserve, Sydney, Nova Scotia." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 50(3):538–565.

Whitlow, Kawennakon Bonnie, Vanessa Oliver, Kim Anderson, Kari Brozowski, Stephanie Tschirhart, Danielle Charles, and Kaienkwinehtha Ransom. 2019. "Taonsayontenhroseri:ye'ne: The Power of Art in Indigenous Research with Youth." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 15(2): 180–189.

Wilson, Shawn. 2003. "Progressing Toward an Indigenous Research Paradigm in Canada and Australia." *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 27(2):161–178.

———. 2007. Guest Editorial: "What is an Indigenist Research Paradigm?" *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 30(2):193–195, 322.

———. 2008. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Younging, Gregory. 2018. *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples*. Edmonton, Alberta: Brush Education.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2020.7 Published online by Cambridge University Press