



Red Sky Dance and Theatre Company's

# Raven Stole the Sun

March 27 @ 9:45a & 1:00p  
March 28 @ 9:45a & 12 noon

## Teacher Guide

LIED CENTER OF KANSAS

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### About Red Sky

<http://www.redskyperformance.com/home>

#### The Cast

Raven	Michael Dufays
Seik	Sandra Larone
Eesh	Carlos Rivera

#### The Creative Team

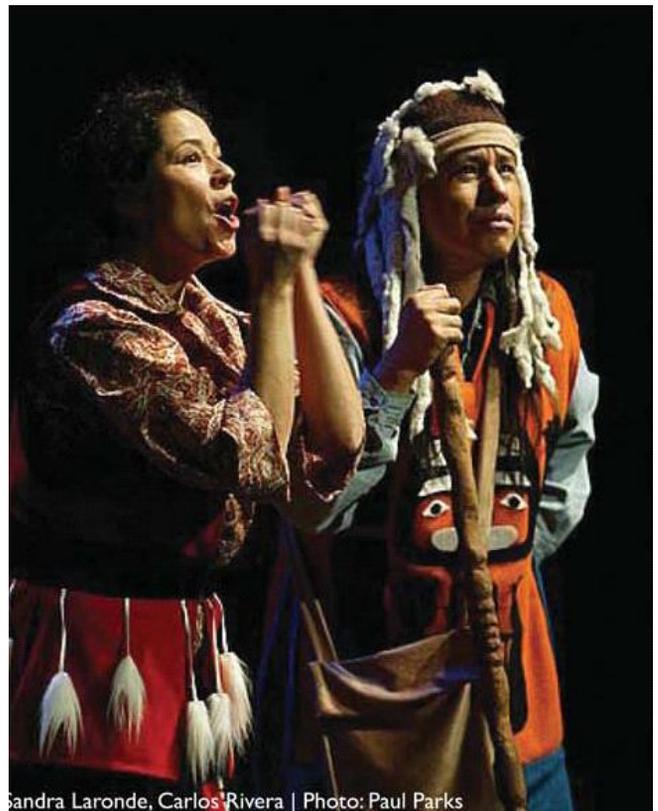
Play by	Drew Hayden Taylor
Based on a traditional Story of the Tlingit Nation as recounted by	Shaa Tlaa Maria Williams

Director	Sandra Laronde
Composer	Donald Quan
Lighting Designer	Steve Lucas
Set & Costume Design	Cheryl Lalone

## About Red Sky Performance

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

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



Sandra Laronde, Carlos Rivera | Photo: Paul Parks

## Background Information

The People and the Story: Raven Stole the Sun

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

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

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

Raven Stole the Sun takes a traditional story to new heights. Raven is a fabulous and magical creature of impulse and curiosity. In order to satisfy his overwhelming sense of curiosity, Raven hatches a brilliant scheme

for stealing the stars, the moon, and the sun and ends up bringing light to the people of the world.

By Shaa Tlaa Maria Williams



## About First Nations

The term First Nation came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian,” which many people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists, unlike “Indian.” The word “Indian” is still used to describe one of three groups of people recognized as Aboriginal in the Constitution Act, 1982. The other two groups are the Métis and Inuit. There are six major cultural regions of First Nations in Canada. From east to west, these are the Woodland First Nations, the Iroquois First Nations of southeastern Ontario, the Plains First Nations, the Plateau First Nations, the First Nations of the Pacific Coast and the First Nations of the Mackenzie and Yukon River basins. There are many unique cultures, languages and histories among first Nations. Their collective presence in North America does not diminish their distinctiveness any more than the collective presence of nations in Europe lessens the distinctions between the cultures of Poland and Italy, for example. The practice of identifying all First Nations as a homogeneous group obscures the unique and rich traditions that each First Nation has developed and nurtured.

First Nations today retain their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. As with other cultures throughout the world, the cultural identity of many contemporary First Nations results from a long history of influences, some peaceful and some arising out of conflict. Some First Nations merged with others.

Some were simply absorbed over time by larger Nations, and some disappeared altogether. The cultures and languages evident today are the products of complicated, centuries-old processes that shaped the evolution of most, if not all, cultures everywhere. Although there are many differences between First Nations, there are commonalities as well. For example, all First Nations were dependent on the land for survival and prosperity. All First Nations were hunters and gatherers. Some were also farmers. Without the skills and knowledge to hunt and fish and to gather food and medicines, First Nations would not exist today. Another commonality is that all First Nations lived in organized societies. Individuals, families and larger groups of people, such as clans, tribes and Nations, behaved according to a broad range of agreed upon social, political and economic values. A third commonality was trade. Expansive trading practices contributed to the growth and development of First Nations cultures. These practices also enabled many First Nations to respond to the fur trade as competitive, efficient trading partners with Europeans.

# Classroom Connections

## Exploring Movement

### Warm up Activity 1: 'Flocking'

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

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

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

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

#### Literal Movement:

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

#### Abstract Movement

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

### Story Mime

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

### Raven Dance

- As a class or in groups, discuss the Raven character and develop movements, gestures, and expressions that reflect his personality. Also, create bird-like dance movements.
- Have students create their own version of the Raven's song/dance. Students can learn the lyrics provided below, using them to provide the rhythm. The final dance can be performed with lyrics as a song or a spoken word piece.



## **Raven Hop**

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

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

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

## **Soundscapes and Landscapes**

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

Begin by having students:

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

## **Trickster Trouble**

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

## Ask Mother Nature

- Find and read stories from both Native and other cultures which explain natural phenomenon or involve "how \_\_\_\_ came to be" themes.
- Make a chart with the common elements between various tales.
- Brainstorm natural phenomena relevant to the students' local environment.

## Tlingit Plants and Animals

- Research what animals, birds, and plant life would live in the region of the Tlingit Nation. Write the names or draw pictures on a map.
- Discuss why animals play such an important part in the lives of these people.
- Explain how the story is used to explain elements of nature (Raven puts the sun and moon in the sky).

## Kansas State Standards

### History

The student uses a working knowledge and understanding of significant individuals, groups, ideas, events, eras, and developments in the history of Kansas, the United States, and the world, utilizing essential analytical and history.

- B1: The student understands the significance of important individuals and major developments in
- B2: The student understands the importance of experiences of groups of people who have contributed to the richness of heritage.
- B4: The student engages in historical thinking skills.

### Reading Standards for Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
  - Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
  - Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
  - Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
- Craft and Structure
  - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).
  - Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
  - Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.
  - Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

### Science

- The student will experience science as full inquiry. In the elementary grades, students begin to develop the physical and intellectual abilities of scientific inquiry.
  - Benchmark 1: The student will develop the skills necessary to do full inquiry. Full inquiry involves asking a simple question, completing an investigation, answering the question, and sharing the results with others.
- The student will develop an understanding of biological concepts through direct experience with living things, their life cycles, and their habitats.
  - B1: The student will develop knowledge of organisms in their environment.
  - B2: The student will observe and illustrate the life cycles of various organisms.

### Dance

- Identifying and Demonstrating Movement Elements and Skills in Performing Dance
- Understanding Choreographic Principles, Processes, and Structures expressive dynamics of movement.
- Understanding Dance as a Way to Create and Communicate Meaning
- Applying and Demonstrating Critical and Creative Thinking Skills in Dance

### Music

- Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
- Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
- Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

## Additional Resources

Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative

[http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/youth/campaigns/local\\_spotlight\\_aboriginal\\_education/docs/LocalSpotlight\\_Elementary.pdf](http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/youth/campaigns/local_spotlight_aboriginal_education/docs/LocalSpotlight_Elementary.pdf)

Excellent complete unit resource for your classroom. Cohesive lessons, standards, rubrics, reproducible, and outside links

<http://ainc-inac.gc.ca/eng/1315444613519>

Kids Activities about first nations in Canada

Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

<http://www.aboriginalaffairs.gov.on.ca/english/kids/kids.asp>

Kids Zone Activities

Claire and Here Grandfather

[http://www.beatstudios.ca/inac/eng/2000\\_e.html](http://www.beatstudios.ca/inac/eng/2000_e.html)

Read about aboriginal history, kids activities, coloring, etc.

Bulkley Valley - School District #54

<http://bctf.ca/bctla/pub/documents/libraryprogram/SD54FirstNationsStudy.pdf>

Lesson Plans for First Nations Children's Literature

Sealaska

[http://www.sealaskaheritage.org/programs/language\\_and\\_culture\\_curriculum\\_tlingit.htm](http://www.sealaskaheritage.org/programs/language_and_culture_curriculum_tlingit.htm)

Comprehensive Units based on the Tlingit People



Carlos Rivera | Photo: Cylla von Tiedemann

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