

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the beginning, when we discovered the Pointing exercise together, this work was a joyous collaborative effort between the author and Darrell Larson (Coyote), and Norbert Weisser (Trickster). Rarely does a theatre artist have the opportunity for such a sustained and fulfilling partnership as the three of us had. During those first exploratory years, we were joined at different times by Lorinne Vozoff and Ellen Blake, as Spider Woman, and I must thank them for their invaluable contributions here. In '81, Christine Avila began her ongoing mastery of Spider Woman with *Other Side Camp*, and in that year Priscilla Cohen helped to begin the evolution of Clown.

Matthew Goulish was our longtime stage manager, designer, electrician, traveling companion—and, when exigency demanded it, a superb Coyote; Peggy Dobreer coordinated with devotion for many years; James Parks created the set for *Listening to Old Nana*; Bob Behling became our master set-builder, doll-maker, archivist—and a wonderfully salty Trickster; Don Preston designed lots of our music and sound effects; Karen Musser did all of our first lighting designs; Kim Simons created the original "Spider People;" Kathleen Cramer and Stephanie Curley collaborated on the costumes; Rick Foster of *West Coast Plays* published the plays as they came along and encouraged interviews and articles; Jesse Shepard and Morgan Weisser created, respectively, the original Boy Coyote and Boy Trickster; Sarah Lovett and Alice Sealey facilitated our several expeditions to Santa Fe, culminating in the first complete all-night performance; Dan Stolpe created the seven fabulous wood-cuts, one of which became our poster; Susanna Styron shot a priceless video and photographic record of the all-night production in Santa Fe; Chas Rundberg was instrumental in the engineering and construction of three waterfalls; Susan Loewenberg and Sara Maulsby were responsible for both the L.A. production and the tour to Yugoslavia (Richard Bloom expertly and stalwartly stage managed these); a grateful bow to Cheryl Slean, Padua Hills' publisher, who made this book possible; a special thanks to Richard Williams, our spiritual mentor, guide, and sweat leader; special thanks also to Penny Williams, Selo Black Crow, Leonard Crow Dog and all the men and women of the Red Road, without whose encouragement and support this project would no doubt have gone unfinished or awry.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

The Coyote Cycle was developed serially at the Padua Hills Playwrights' Festival starting with *Pointing* in 1978. All of the first six plays of the series were performed originally at the Padua Hills site in Claremont, California; the seventh, *He Brings the Waterfall*, was premiered at the '84 Festival's venue at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California. Subsequent productions of two or more of the plays were given at the Intersection Theatre of San Francisco; at the Bay Area Playwrights' Festival in Mill Valley; and at the Armory for the Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The *Cycle* was first presented in its entirety, twilight to dawn, by Theatre-in-the-Red at the Randall Davey Audobon Estate in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on September 30, 1984, with the following cast:

<i>Coyote</i>	Darrell Larson
<i>Trickster</i>	Norbert Weisser
<i>Spider Woman</i>	Christine Avila
<i>Clown</i>	Priscilla Cohen
	and
<i>Boy Coyote</i>	Dakota Fitzner
<i>Boy Trickster</i>	Morgan Weisser

Directed by Murray Mednick

PRODUCTION

<i>Producers</i>	Sarah Lovett & Alice Sealey
<i>Associate Producer</i>	Peggy Dobreer
<i>Set Design and Construction</i>	Robert Behling
<i>Production Stage Manager</i>	Matthew Goulish
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	Kelly Stuart
<i>Chief Scout</i>	Frederick Lopez
<i>Technical Assistant</i>	Chas Rundberg
<i>Lighting Operator</i>	Deborah Scharaga
<i>Assistant Producer</i>	Zoe Viles
<i>House Manager</i>	Rhona Gold
<i>Publicity and Tech.</i>	John Oldach
<i>Lighting Consultant</i>	Dick Hogle

DESIGN

<i>Poster & Coyote Logos</i>	Daniel O. Stolpe
<i>Sound</i>	Don Preston
<i>Costume, Spider Woman II</i>	Dona Granata
<i>Costume, Spider Woman VI</i>	Michele Jo Blanche
<i>Costume, Spider Woman VII</i>	Louise Hayter
<i>Weaving</i>	Nargis
<i>Program Design</i>	Michael Motley
<i>Typography</i>	Casa Sin Nombre, Ltd.
<i>Rocks and Trickster Headdress</i>	Anthony Showe

In the summer of 1985 (July 19 - August 3), *The Coyote Cycle* was presented by L.A. Theatre Works for a one-month run, including two all-night performances (July 27 and August 3), at the Paramount Ranch in Agoura, California, with the following cast:

<i>Coyote</i>	Darrell Larson
<i>Trickster</i>	Norbert Weisser
<i>Spider Woman</i>	Christine Avila
<i>Clown</i>	Priscilla Cohen
	and
<i>Boy Coyote</i>	Tavish Graham
<i>Boy Trickster</i>	Morgan Weisser

Directed by Murray Mednick

On July 27, Darrell Larson broke his heel at his entrance but courageously finished the all-night performance. Matthew Goulish took over the role of Coyote for the remainder of the run.

PRODUCTION

<i>Producers</i>	Susan Albert Loewenberg & Sara Maultsby
<i>Set Design & Constructions</i>	Robert Behling
<i>Production Stage Manager</i>	Matthew Goulish
<i>Structural Engineer</i>	Steve Bauer
<i>Electrician</i>	John Oldach

PRODUCTION (con't)

<i>Hydro-Electric</i>	Chas Rundberg
<i>Production Coordinator</i>	Richard Bloom
<i>Costume Coordinator</i>	Louise Hayter
<i>Photography</i>	Margaret von Biesen
<i>Publicist</i>	Julio Martinez
<i>Box Office Manager</i>	Greg Moreno
<i>House Manager</i>	Eric Schusterman

DESIGN

<i>Sound Design</i>	Gregory Hormel
<i>Costume Spider Woman VII</i>	Louise Hayter
<i>Costume Spider Woman VI</i>	Michele Jo Blanche
<i>Weaving</i>	Margaret Clarke; Nargis
<i>Posters & Coyote Logos</i>	Daniel O. Stolpe
<i>Program</i>	Randi Ganulin
<i>Music</i>	Don Preston

In 1987, *The Coyote Cycle* was presented by American Inroads and The Magic Theater of San Francisco as part of The San Francisco New Performance Festival, in association with L.A. Theatre Works. The play was performed July 9 - August 1, including four all-night performances, at East Fort Baker, Sausalito, in the Golden Gate National Park, with the following cast:

<i>Coyote</i>	Norm Skaggs
<i>Trickster</i>	Robert Behling
<i>Spider Woman</i>	h. Teirrah McNair
<i>Clown</i>	Robin Karfo
	and
<i>Boy Coyote</i>	Andrew Ohren
<i>Boy Trickster</i>	Michael Moir

Directed by Norbert Weisser & Murray Mednick

PRODUCTION

<i>Producer</i>	John Lion, Magic Theater
<i>Scenic Designer</i>	Chas Rundberg
<i>Lighting Design</i>	David Welle
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Gael Russell
<i>Associate Costume Designer</i>	Esther Fishman
<i>Music Design</i>	Don Preston
<i>Sound Consultant</i>	Scott Koue
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Carolyn Campbell
<i>Production Manager</i>	Ann Fujilan
<i>Technical Director</i>	T. Bird
<i>Native American Liason</i>	Richard Williams
<i>Site Manager</i>	Ellen Osborne
<i>Light Board</i>	Eric Graves
<i>Sound Board</i>	John Barnes

In 1988 the *Coyote Company* was invited (through L.A. Theatre Works) to participate in the YUFEST tour of Yugoslavia, along with groups from Mexico, Germany, and Russia. We were able to bring only one of the plays, *The Sacred Dump*, with the addition of a segment from *Listening to Old Nana*. We toured nine cities of what was the then unified nation of Yugoslavia: Belgrade, Skopje, Mostar, Sarajevo, Kotor, Subotica, Novi Sad, Lubijana and Zagreb, performing outdoors in the most astonishing sites — atop ancient city walls, in parks, courtyards, on rooftops, movie studio lots, alleys, along the Danube, on athletic fields — with the following undaunted cast:

<i>Coyote</i>	Jason Smith
<i>Trickster</i>	Roger G. Smith
<i>Spider Woman</i>	Christine Avila
<i>Clown</i>	Page Leong

Produced by L.A. Theatre Works
 Directed by Norbert Weisser & Murray Mednick
 Stage Managed by Richard Bloom

Pointing, The Sacred Dump, and Other Side Camp were performed, respectively, as part of the '89, '90 and '91 Padua Hills' Retrospective Benefits, with the following cast:

<i>Coyote</i>	Darrell Larson
<i>Trickster</i>	Norbert Weisser
<i>Spider Woman</i>	Christine Avila
<i>Clown</i>	Page Leong

Directed by Murray Mednick
Assisted by Cedering Fox

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BIOGRAPHIES

MURRAY MEDNICK was born in Brooklyn, New York. He was for many years a playwright-in-residence at New York's Theatre Genesis, which presented all of his early work (*The Hawk, The Deer Kill, The Hunter, Sand, Are You Lookin'?*, and others). He was Artistic Co-director from '70 to '74, when he emigrated to California. He founded the Padua Hills Playwrights' Workshop/Festival in 1978 and remains its Artistic Director. Plays since then include *The Coyote Cycle, Taxes, Scar, Heads, Shatter 'n Wade, See You in Nairobi* and *Fedunn*. He has been the recipient of two Rockefeller Foundation grants, a Guggenheim Fellowship, an OBIE, and several *Drama-logue* and Bay Area Critics Circle Awards. He edited *Plays from Padua Hills* (1982), and *Best of the West* (1991). His play *Scar*, starring Ed Harris, recently received a critically acclaimed and sold-out run at the MET Theatre in Los Angeles. Other recent productions include a revival of *Heads* at the Omaha Magic Theatre, *Taxes* at L.A.'s New One-Act Theatre Ensemble, and *Shatter 'n Wade* at the Matrix Theatre in L.A. His play *Fedunn* has been given staged readings at the MET Theatre (produced by Ed Harris) and the Odyssey Theatre (produced by Audrey Skirball-Kenis Theatre), L.A. Mr. Mednick was honored with a 1992 Ovation award from the Theatre League Alliance of Los Angeles for his outstanding contribution to Los Angeles Theatre.

DANIEL O. STOLPE (Master Printmaker) works in a tradition of European figurative style, heavily influenced by German Expressionism, to create contemporary interpretations of ancient beliefs. He is represented in over 25 major collections, including Fogg Art Museum, Grunwald Collection (UCLA), the Smithsonian Institution, and the Portland Art Museum. He has received over 50 solo exhibitions nationally and has been the subject of two television documentaries. The genesis of the seven woodcuts in *The Coyote Cycle* evolved out of playwright Mednick's recognition of Stolpe's artistic dedication to the Coyote images in his earlier work, titled "Coyote Suites I & II." After he created "Coyote Pointing," corresponding to the first of the seven plays within the *Cycle*, Stolpe became inspired to create a distinct visual image for each of the seven plays. The seven woodcuts have been published as a limited edition oversized folio with excerpts from each of the plays from the *Cycle*. This monumental work of art has been included in numerous collections nationally, and is also a part of the permanent collection of the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

CHERYL SLEAN (Publisher) has previously published and co-edited *Best of the West, An Anthology of Plays from the 1990 and 1991 Padua Hills Playwrights Festivals* for Padua Hills Press, and co-edited and designed *Artlines*, for the National Network for Artist Placement. She has been Managing Director of the Padua Hills Playwrights' Workshop/Festival since 1991, when she produced the last Festival of New Plays. A playwright and Padua Hills Workshop alumnus, Slean is a long-time member of the New One-Act Theatre Ensemble (NOTE) in Hollywood, which has produced several of her plays, including *Palmdale, ...And the Leaves of the Trees*, and *Swap Nite*, which received a 1992 L.A. Weekly award for Best One-Act Playwriting.

"Mednick's *Coyote Cycle* is a major work of American theatre, born of the land and its people - a warning and a prayer for salvation.

...The natural environment was essential to the work. The settings, derived from Indian designs and religious artifacts, blended with the rigged landscape...

Mednick's theme was continually reiterated – 'The harsh punishment is coming,' warned the gods, and it is up to mankind to carry out Earth Mother's plans. There were frequent allusions to nuclear holocaust. But the *Cycle* ended on a note of hope, as Coyote's mission was fulfilled. This fusion of art and nature was magical. The audience was clearly uplifted. A sense of renewal prevailed."

A. Richard Sogliuzzo
National Public Radio

"...Beginning at twilight, the audience has been guided from set to set through an atavistic series of worlds where nothing is quite what it appears to be. In *Planet of the Spider People*, rocks speak and spider babies fly out to greet us; in *Listening to Old Nana*, we enter a lean-to kiva with a primitive radar station where bleached bones and adobe bricks make connections with the spirit world. Inside such mysterious environs, the actors make frequently startling appearances. Coyote leaps from trees like a comet hurtling from the heavens, while his cohort Trickster literally digs his way up from the bowels of the earth.

Mixing metaphors like a mad metaphysician, Mednick throws everything into the pot: legends and Lucky Strikes, Milky Ways and mudheads, bag ladies, buffalos, subways and shamans. Out of this potent brew, which uses the Coyote/Trickster traditions and Hopi creation myths as a soup stock, there emerges an intergalactic vaudeville in which the predicaments of the modern age are given new meaning through the mirror of a culture much older and wiser than ours..."

Cree McCree
American Theatre

"What Mednick is after is nothing less than an ecological view of existence. It infuses everything, from the constant web-image to the physical process of actor and audience involvement... links are made between the Gaelic *Mabinogion*, the Native American myths and the Icelandic sagas. The work is rife with Westernisms as well. But Mednick takes us so far West that we're in the East, carried across a conceptual Bering Strait into the land of Zen where 'arrows go clear through you.' All this exemplifies *Coyote's* great contribution to the contemporary theater: Mednick has created a new kind of anthropologic time capsule."

Robert Koehler
Los Angeles Times

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Also available from Padua Hills Press:

*Best of the West,
An Anthology of Plays from the 1990 and 1991
Padua Hills Playwrights' Festivals.*