

SPIDERWOMAN  
THEATRE

# NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN DRAMA, SECOND EDITION



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# North American Indian Drama, Second Edition

*North American Indian Drama, Second Edition* brings together the full text of more than 200 plays representing the stories and creative energies of American Indian and First Nation playwrights of the twentieth century. Many of the plays are previously unpublished or hard to find, and they represent a wealth of dramatic material that is often overlooked or inaccessible.

Together, the plays demonstrate Native theatre's diversity of tribal traditions and approaches to drama—melding conventional dramatic form with ancient storytelling and ritual performance elements, experimenting with traditional ideas of time and narrative, or challenging Western dramatic structure.

## Content

The collection begins in the early 1930s with *The Cherokee Night* and other works by R. Lynn Riggs, the first American Indian playwright to have his works produced. It progresses through the 20th century with plays produced by the Native American Theatre Ensemble (NATE) and other companies of the 1970s and 1980s, including Spiderwoman Theater, the longest continually running Native American or women's theatre group in North America. The collection will include many contemporary plays produced by Toronto's Native Earth Performing Arts, Seattle's Red Eagle Soaring, New York's Coatlicue Theater Company, and other groups.

Among the playwrights included are Hanay Geiogamah, Diane Glancy, Bruce King, William S. Yellow Robe, Yvette Nolan, Monique Mojica, Terry Gomez, Daniel David Moses, Laura Shamas, E. Donald Two-Rivers, Elvira and Hortensia Colorado, Jason Begay, Joseph A. Dandurand, LeAnne Howe, and Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl.

The collection represents groups across the United States and Canada, including Cherokee, Métis, Creek, Choctaw, Pembina Chippewa, Ojibway, Hawaiian/Samoan, Comanche, Cree, Navajo, Rappahannock, and others. A significant number of the plays have never been published before.

## How Will You Use It?

Until the 20th century, the presence of Indians on stage was limited to depictions by non-Indian writers, typically flat and negative stereotypes. *North American Indian Drama, Second Edition* dismisses those stereotypes, either satirizing them or altogether replacing them with nuanced stories of the Indian experience that are virtually absent from other plays.

The writing depicts traditional creation stories, oral histories, and rituals alongside modern issues such as tribal and individual searches for identity, life on and off the reservation, poverty and its accompanying struggles, political sovereignty and claims for self-determination, spirituality and connections to nature, and intercultural encounters and collisions. Many of the works serve as protest literature against deep suffering and dislocation, or they transcend protest to become universal testaments of survival, humor, and hope.

Users can browse the collection by title, playwright, tribe, production, production company, character, year, and date. Full-text searching is refined by the author's tribe, birth and death dates, gender, age when writing; the play's number of characters, setting, number of acts, year written or produced; and many other fields.

Alexander Street's *Semantic Indexing*<sup>™</sup> makes it easy to answer questions such as these:

- Show me all plays written by Cherokee authors set in Oklahoma during the 19th century.
- Give me all scenes set on a reservation showing female characters discussing alcoholism.
- What plays were produced by the Red Earth Performing Arts Company between 1974 and 1980?
- Show me all plays in urban settings with both Native and white characters.
- Show me all plays in contemporary settings and with Coyote as a character.



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