

A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, there are dense green evergreen trees. In the middle ground, a calm blue lake is nestled in a valley, surrounded by green slopes and patches of snow. In the background, rugged mountains with snow-capped peaks rise against a sky filled with soft, white clouds. The overall tone is peaceful and natural.

Voicing the Earth Body

*EDEN Engagement: Montreal
Seed City Curriculum
Moe Clark & Marino Vazquez*

MAY 2023



International Teaching Artists Collaborative (ITAC)
and
Joyce DiDonato's

EDEN ENGAGEMENT

ABOUT

Three-time Grammy Award winning opera superstar Joyce DiDonato has created the global tour of EDEN, her major concert hall performance about environmentalism. Her personal commitment and partnership with ITAC has launched a re-imagining of the impact of a concert experience through teaching artist-led workshops in every city. The International Teaching Artists Collaborative (ITAC) is the world-wide network of artists who work in community and educational settings, who have the skills to bring change to communities. Together ITAC and EDEN Engagement will pilot a new approach to prove that touring can be a legitimate and powerful tool for change in communities.

Cities on the tour are designated either "Root Cities" or "Seed Cities". Seed Cities are a 1-4 day(s) event that engages the youth with one of three specific environmental issues; Urban Gardens, Urban Trees, Food Choices:

- Urban Gardens: They are youth-friendly. Among many social benefits, they bring these environmental benefits: reduce carbon use (reduced food transport); reduce water runoff; help pollinators; plants absorb CO2 and pollutants and produce oxygen; health benefits in the food and the community building (reduced stress and blood pressure).
- Urban Trees: Trees are omnipresent and overlooked in cities—kid friendly. They can plant them, and the EDEN performance encourages that. Trees are powerful answers to heat mitigation (reduce temperatures by 8 to 10 degrees and need for air conditioning), carbon and pollution sequestration and oxygen production, water flow pollution reduction, biodiversity, and food insecurity. Health benefits include healthier air, psychological benefits, lowering blood pressure and stress.
- Food Choices: Scientists have proven that small choices make a big difference. Because many foods with a high health burden, including processed meats or red meats, also have high environmental costs, switching out 10 percent of a person's daily caloric intake can cut a person's food-based environmental footprint by over 30 percent. Between growing it, packaging it, moving it around, cooking it, and often wasting it, food production makes up about one-fifth to one-third of all annual greenhouse gas emissions globally. Eat less red and processed meats, eat more veggies and fruits, reduce food waste, and if you have a way...compost.

Teaching Artists: Moe Clark & Marino Vazquez

Participants: Choeur des enfants de Montréal, 40 students, ages 12-19

WORKSHOP

OPENING Song (as prayer – calling in the spirit, honouring the elements, all our relations, giving thanks for being loaned this day of life)

kisē manitou

kihci okawimaw

nēwo atoskēyakanak

kinanâskomitināwow

pēyak kisikaw

kā-wapatamak

ē-awihiyat

PART I:

WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY OF SONG?

- Everyone is invited to consider, and share with a partner their first memory of song;
- Moe demonstrates a memory: gathered around a fire with family, singing simple tunes while the sunsets, starry sky, felt a sense of home, wholeness, quiet love;
- Feeling connected to the land, stars, sky, lake, etc. nothing could disturb this moment

BREATH WORK

- We begin with an image of the medicine wheel, where we speak about the holistic nature of sound, breath, life cycles, seasons, times of day, etc.
- Building up from this relationship, we also speak about the four elements and the necessity of finding and maintaining balance, and one way to do that is through song/ sound in circle:
- Drawing from the medicine wheel, we move into breathing exercises as a way to understand breath as a complete circular cycle.
 - inhale: dropping breath stone into belly, feeling it ripple in lake, sending breath throughout, feeling invisible strings pulling out ribs/belly/back, take root in earth
 - Sustain: feel the lake settle, dropping shoulders, relaxing jaw + knees, feeling the lake lapping against insides, keep widening ribs/belly/back
 - Exhale: slowly rising balloon inside you, feel the belly moving inwards, chest relaxing, shoulders dropping, balloon floats out and up
 - Sustain: connect to skyward, balloon floating above you, long spine, subtle tether to clouds/stars/sun

SOUNDING AROUND

- Moving through the space, we begin with challenging our assumptions about good/bad sound. Referencing that which exists in the natural world, from the sound of frogs croaking to a branch snapping, to leaves crackling under foot, we bring these qualities of sound into our body and breath, voicing them as we move through space.
- Poetic and image-based prompts are offered as stimulus for sonic discovery, active listening to what exists between breaths, what others are sounding, how to mimic, transform the sound, and reply;
- Examples: bumble out breath while you walk, rising and falling of sound like a bumble bee, dropping shoulders, feeling feet connected to earth; sounding out an important message as an old growth tree left standing alone in a burnt forest; geyser exploding, spewing the sound all around you; steady clear fresh water stream descending from a glacier.
- Throughout, we invite taking breaks to notice what's changing in the body: do you feel more space between the shoulders, what do you hear that you couldn't when we first started, what feels different inside/ outside? Is there a physical shift you feel in your hands/ face/ knees/ under your armpits?

MARINO - BODY PERCUSSION/ SOUND MAKING

- Exploring fire, wind, earth, water as sound-making against the body: - askiy - iskotêw - nipi - yôtin / earth - fire - water - wind
- What relationship do students have with qualities of rhythm that are naturally produced by the body? When we walk? Skip? Jump?

CALL + RESPONSE

- Drumming, moving through forest, origin story of song, song-catching in nature, responding + listening to the landscape + surrounding environment as a point of departure for receiving or "song-catching";
- Speak about the creation of song: "askiywipimacihowascikêwina" in intergenerational collaboration with Elder + active listening with land; exploring concepts of how sound and song can build memory within the body: when we sing something, we learn, we embody, we remember;
- We use this song as a call + response, to bring these teachings together and learn a song in nêhiyawêwin (Moe's ancestral tongue) to demonstrate that learning new languages aren't so difficult, and that within sounds of nature, there exists a myriad of languages.



PART II:

MIRROR: In partners

- Body as mirror, exploring height, speed, proximity, distance, facial expressions, subtlety, move simultaneous so it become difficult to know who leads/ follows;
- Voice as mirror: exploring volume, rate, speed, pitch, texture, frequency, stutter;
- Body + Voice as mirror: follow the leader, who leads/follows, how do two voices/ bodies become one?

CIRCLE PULSE : HOME TONE NAME : CALL + RESPONSE

- Sending a pulse through: mycelia networks, trees in states of emergency, animals, winds, etc. how does earth communicate? How can we mirror this?
- Pulse through hands;
- Broken telephone/mic;
- Home tone: circle repeats a specific short melody through singing + we move around the circle, giving each person the opportunity to create their own 'solo' lyrical part using their name, we sing back the same lyrical solo responding their name

CIRCLE SINGING :

- Dividing into more specific coral groupings around the circle;
- Moe/ Marino jump in the middle of the circle, and improvising one line at a time, they give a vocal part to one section, moving and sounding around the circle, the song slowly builds part by part as the "giver" of the sound/song improvises to "catch the song" and the circle "receives" the song and repeats it to create an orchestra of song;
- Speaking about oral traditions, the lineage of learning in communal spaces as a way to transmit important messages from one generation to the next, to build harmonic relationships between kin (human + beyond human kinships), to activate qualities of: listening, blending, giving and receiving, continuum sound, embodied listening.

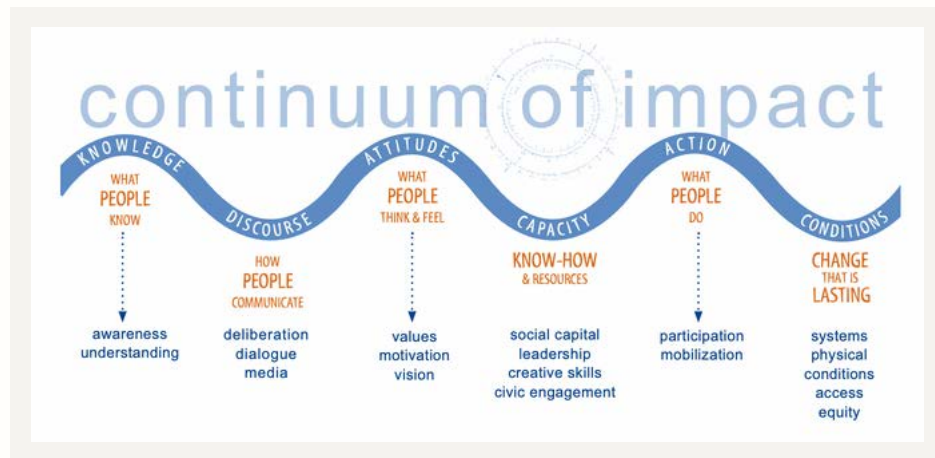




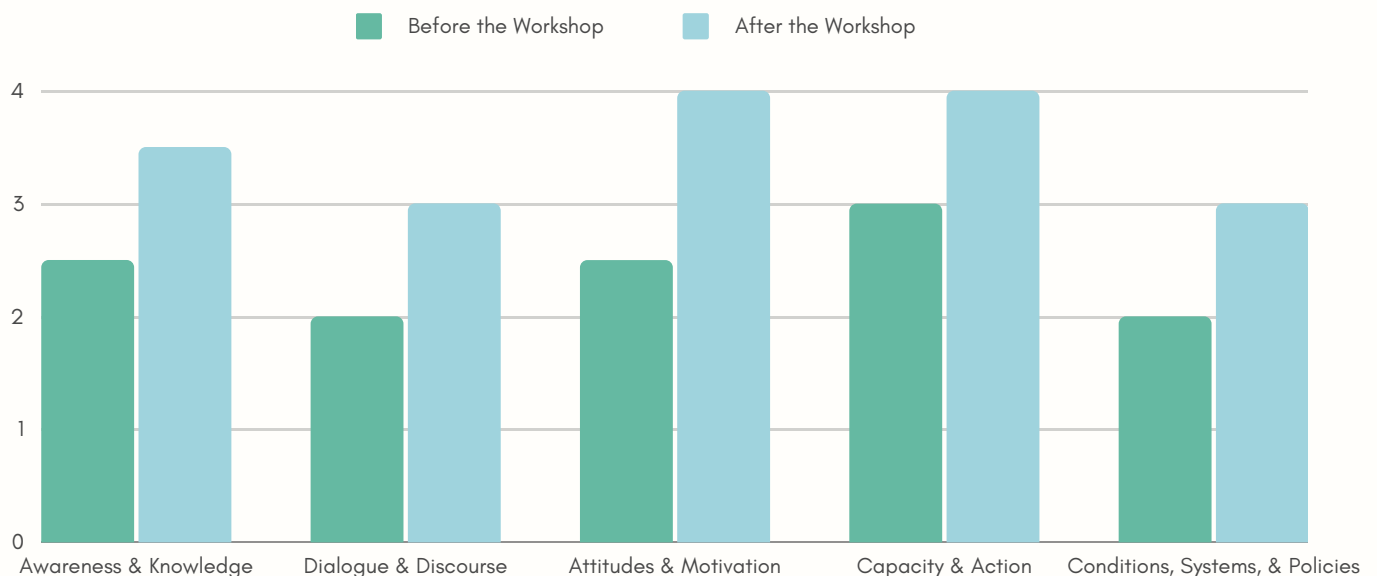
IMPACT & EVALUATION

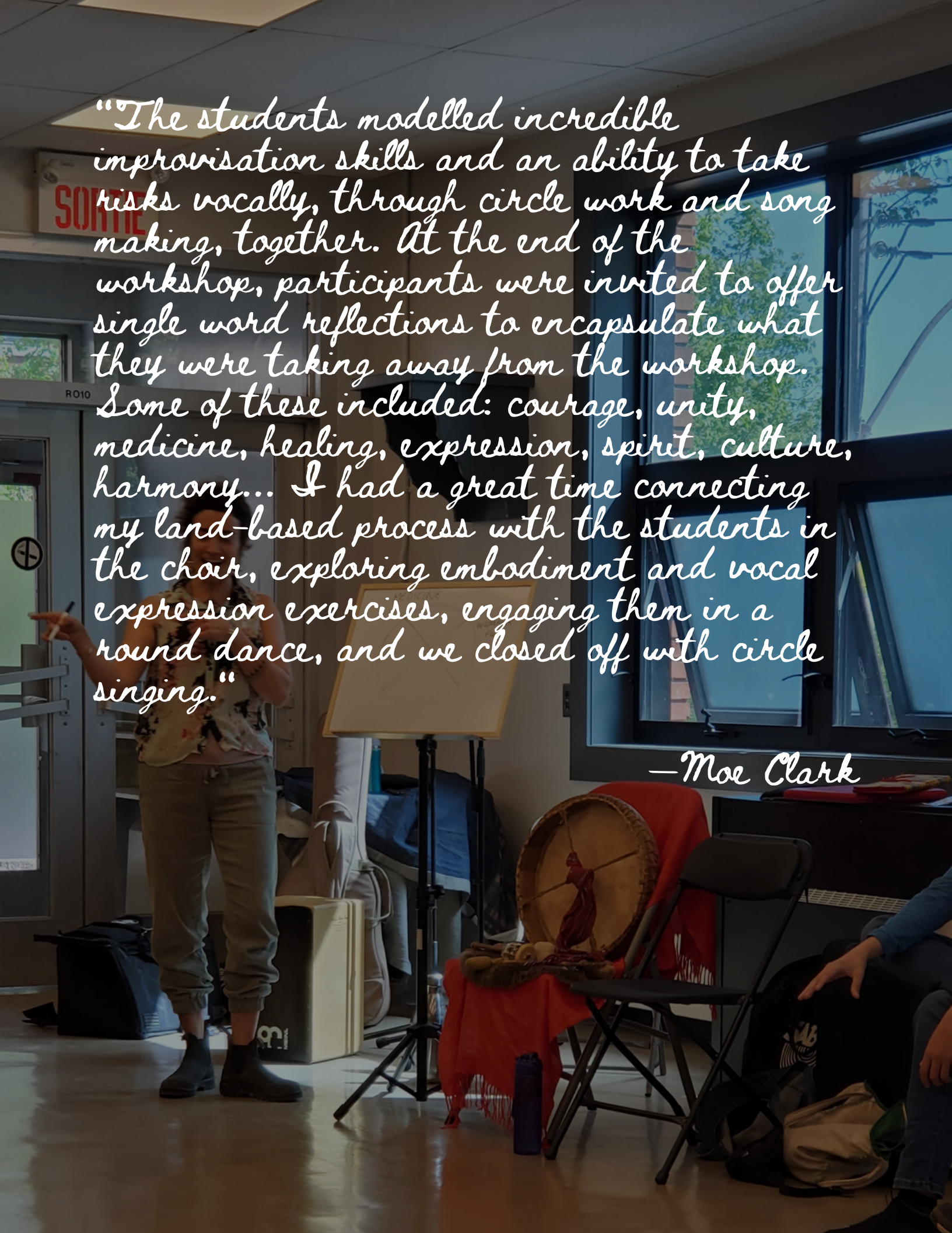
The goal of this effort is to learn about the impact that the activities have on participants. We are especially curious to learn if there is any evidence that they have the impulse to take action and/or feel they can make a difference—this is the high goal of the arts-for-climate field, and we believe teaching artists have a particularly strong contribution to the field.

During the EDEN project, teaching artists were encouraged to use the Continuum of Impact Guide as a model when thinking about impact and assessment in their workshops.



We tasked each teaching artist with evaluating their students based on the Continuum of Impact Guide. They rated their students on a scale from 1 (no knowledge of the subject) to 4 (extremely knowledgeable about the subject). The following graph reflects Dee & Joanna's observations of their students.





"The students modelled incredible improvisation skills and an ability to take risks vocally, through circle work and song making, together. At the end of the workshop, participants were invited to offer single word reflections to encapsulate what they were taking away from the workshop. Some of these included: courage, unity, medicine, healing, expression, spirit, culture, harmony... I had a great time connecting my land-based process with the students in the choir, exploring embodiment and vocal expression exercises, engaging them in a round dance, and we closed off with circle singing."

—Moe Clark

REFLECTIONS FROM THE TEACHING ARTIST

In what ways did you observe change in your participants understanding and engagement of the environmental issue you chose?

"We shared practices centred around building better relationships with our surrounding environments and ecosystems through "song-catching", "deep listening" and vocal improvisation practices. Participants were able to imagine their own vocal relationships with prompts given surrounding different beings and aspects of the natural world, while improvising movements as well. They were also enthusiastic and eager to participate in call and response practices and circle singing, which were all invitations to consider the natural world around and within us as catalysts for musical discoveries. We also explored breathwork as related to the medicine wheel, and the four directions, linking our bodies, minds, spirits, and emotional bodies together in a holistic practice of unifying breath."— Moe Clark

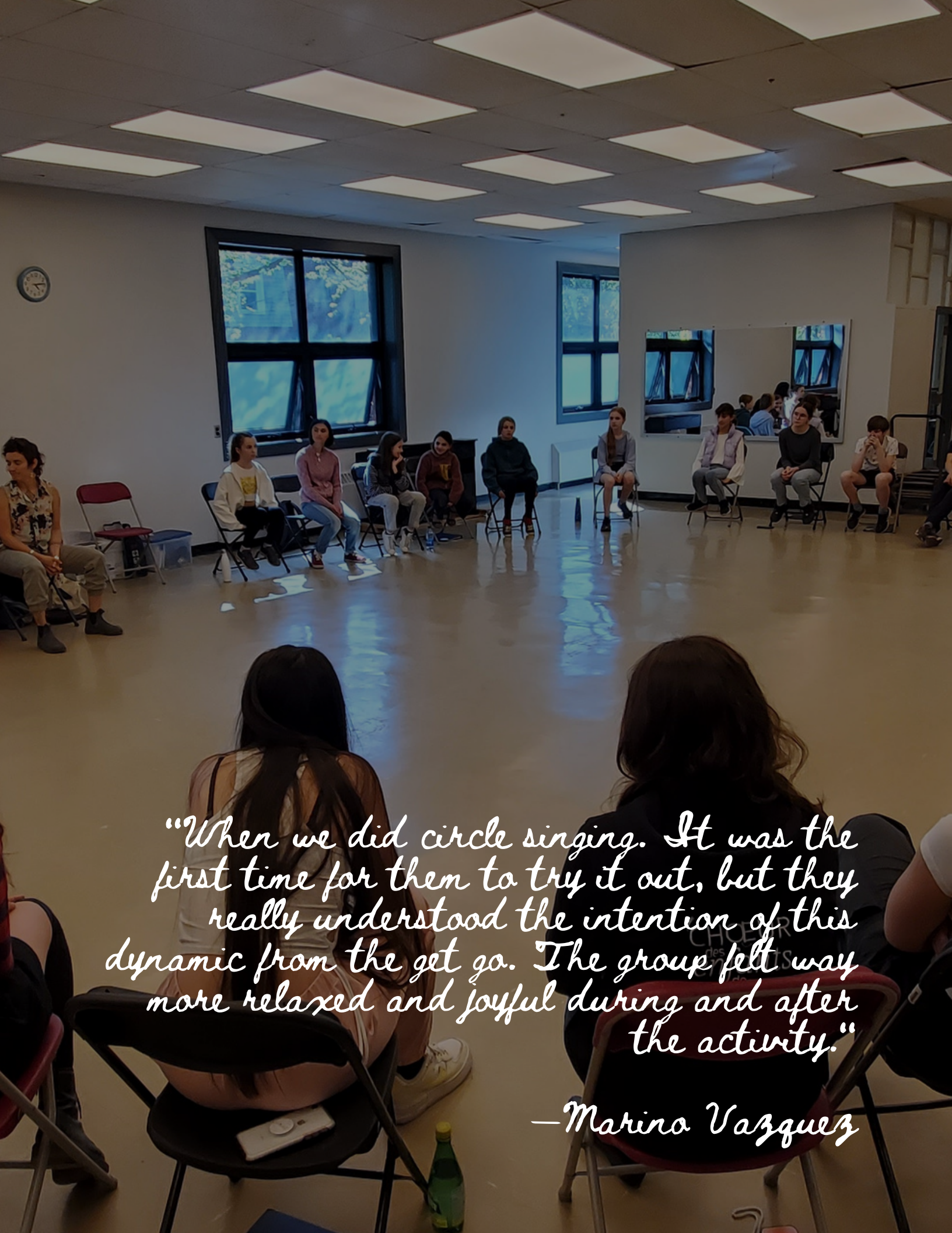
"In the awareness of how we communicate with nature beyond our comprehension. That we can become her translators if we pay enough attention to move forward with nature's words, bringing the message to those who cannot yet hear her speak."—Marino Vazquez

Did your EDEN experience expand your work or skills as a teaching artist in any specific ways?

"Most of these practices have been in my toolkit for quite some time, but working with a group of young vocalists who are well-trained and eager to try new things offered a dynamic space to go deeper in the vocal explorations and to push their skill level and aptitudes. I am always learning new things from the participants I work with and the communities which invite me to facilitate."—Moe Clark

"Absolutely. Teaching and sharing about the environment throughout music in this case, was kind of rare for me, compared to the academical approach I'm used to. It relates you more as person rather than just a lesson provider."—Marino Vazquez



A group of people, mostly young adults, are sitting in a circle on folding chairs in a large room. The room has a high ceiling with square light fixtures and large windows that look out onto a green landscape. A clock is visible on the wall to the left. The people are engaged in an activity, possibly a discussion or a performance. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

"When we did circle singing. It was the first time for them to try it out, but they really understood the intention of this dynamic from the get go. The group felt way more relaxed and joyful during and after the activity."

—Marina Vazquez

ABOUT THE TEACHING ARTISTS



MOE CLARK

âpihtawikosisâniskwêw (Métis / Norwegian / French / British) multidisciplinary artist Moe Clark is a 2Spirit singing thunderbird. She works across diverse disciplines of vocal improvisation, spoken word poetry, sound design, and performance creation to create meaning that is rooted in personal legacy, ancestral memory and embodied knowledge. Originally from the prairies in Treaty 7, Moe resides in Tio'tiá:ke/ Mooniyang/ Montréal, on the unceded territory of the Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk people).

Her last solo album "Within" toured across North America and her collaborative video poem "nitahkôtân" won best Indigenous language music video at the ImagiNative film festival. In 2013 she directed the 10th Annual Canadian Festival of Spoken Word, highlighting Indigenous Languages, and she was named Poet of Honour at the same festival in 2014. "Fire & Sage/ Du sauge et du feu", her bilingual book of poetry was released through Maelström Editions in Belgium and has been showcased at international literature festivals. Moe has seven albums of music, both solo and collaborative and multiple performance videos. Co-founder of Weather Beings with Māori Takatāpui dancer/choreographer Victoria Hunt, their collaboration examines intersections of Métis & Māori cosmology and Indigenous futurism through performance experimentation.

Apart from performance, Moe's work as a creative facilitator aims to remember and reconnect personal and collective belonging to territories of land, body and voice. Through creative continuums of Indigenous language immersion, song creation and ceremonial practice, her work in community reinforces the roles of 2S people and intergenerational transmission. Moe's work has appeared the world over, including the Lincoln Centre (US), UBUD Writers & Readers Festival (ID) and Origins Festival in London (UK).

www.moeclark.ca



MARINO VAZQUEZ

Is a multi - instrumentalist musician, arranger, composer and producer based in Montreal. He was introduced to the local music scene through performing in different festivals (Jazz Fest, Francopholies, Nuit d'Afrique, etc.).

Invited to collaborate with a variety of projects, artists and genres such as: Indigenous Music, Folk, Reggae, Jazz, Son Jarocho and Flamenco among others. Integrating his different music backgrounds such as Classical Music to the Elementary and High School classrooms.



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