

Three Northwest First Nations Perspectives on the Practice of Drumming and Singing:
Expanding the Dialogue on Purpose and Function

by

Brooke Wilken
B.Mus., University of Saskatchewan, 2005

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

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in the School of Music

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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The primary objective of this study is to explore the social functions of drumming and singing based on the perspectives of three Northwest First Nations teachers named James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) [pronounced: OO-Kwa-Koom] Swan of the Ahousaht Nuuchahnulth Nation, Ax7wil [ACKh-wheel] of the Secwepemc [She-KWE-pem] and Stá'timc [Stat-lee-um-c] Nations, and Spuska7 [SPU-skah] of the Stá'timc Nations. It further aims to determine whether the author's etic, or outsider, perspective on function can contribute new and useful insights into how drumming and singing function in diverse First Nations cultural contexts.

Community involvement prior to the initiation of this study constituted a fundamental methodological step. Such involvement resulted in the acquaintances of James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, Ax7wil, and Spuska7, and facilitated participation in certain drumming and singing practices. Following processes of request for teachings and ethical and informed consent, interviews were conducted with James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7, which were transcribed and used as primary resources for this largely biographical study. The method of collaborative ethnography was applied, with each chapter being provided to the respective teacher for editing three weeks prior to a follow-up editing meeting.

The combination of interview data and participatory research through community involvement resulted in a unique merging of observation, experience, and interpretation from three distinct perspectives: an intercultural perspective, between Nuuchahnulth, Secwepemc, and Stá'timc First Nations; an interpersonal perspective, between James,

Ax7wil, and Spuska7; and an etic perspective, from the author's analysis of data observed, experienced, and collected.

Two main conclusions were drawn from this multivalent approach: firstly, while *purpose* and *function*, as defined from emic, or insider, perspectives were often analogous, the author's etic analysis frequently defined functions distinct from purposes emically described. This difference was tentatively attributed to the fact that function, that is, what drumming and singing effectively *do* for those involved, may not be fully experienced by those lacking cultural background and understanding, and thus analysed and defined according to broader criteria. Secondly, it was suggested that from the author's etic perspective, though the purpose of diverse drumming and singing practices according to the teachings of James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 were multifarious, a general overriding function was found to be the strengthening and affirmation of specific social relationships.

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Notes on Transliteration

Nuu-chah-nulth

The Nuu-chah-nulth language includes a number of orthographic units which do not occur in the English alphabet. A phonetic chart is included in Appendix C, however for ease of reading I have adopted a system based on the Ahousaht accent, as employed by Umeek E. Richard Atleo in his book *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. As Umeek writes, “Various phonetic systems, such as the international phonetic system and others, are not readable without training, and consequently I have avoided using them. The Nuu-chah-nulth words in this book should not be used for study of the language.”¹ This same caveat should be noted regarding the present study; however, following each Ahousaht accent-based phonetic spelling, the spelling using Nuu-chah-nulth orthographics will occur in brackets.

Secwepemctsin and Státimcets

The orthographic symbol ‘7’ indicates a voiceless glottal stop. Refer to Appendix C for a full orthography of Secwepemctsin (the Secwepemc language) and Státimcets (the Státimc language). Both Secwepemctsin and Státimcets are of the Salishan language group, and therefore share many linguistic features.

¹ Umeek E. Richard Atleo, *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), xx.

Notes on Song Transcription

All songs on the accompanying CD include transcriptions in the sections of text where they are described. These transcriptions do not use Western tonal notation, though certain features, such as shaded black circles representing pitches of varying relative heights, are based on the standard Western notational system. Each transcription is intended to serve as a practical visual aid in determining form, vocal range, and changes in instrumentation. They were originally intended for my use in analysis only, however I found them helpful for purposes of transmission. At times when I was unable to imagine the sound of a particular song or section which had been listened to previously, a glance at the written transcription facilitated quick recall.

Pitches are based on a graph system where each circular discrete pitch marker covers a four quadrant area. Quarter tones have been placed between two vertically adjacent quadrants of two chromatic pitches, respectively one upper pair and one lower pair. Horizontal lines indicate held pitches, while diagonal lines indicate falling or rising pitches. Where circular discrete pitch markers are replaced with an X, the indication is spoken, rather than sung, words or vocables. When the X is enclosed with a vertically-oriented rectangular box, the pitch is partially spoken and partially sung, comprising all possible pitches within the boxed area. In order to make the transcriptions palpable without prior training in this or other notation systems, all underlying graph markings and metric indications have been omitted. Thus, although the steps taken to produce transcriptions for each song on the accompanying CD involved careful measurement upon a graph-based template, the simplified versions herein included are formatted in a manner which best illustrates their role as supplementary (rather than as an alternate option) to the recorded material.

Acknowledgments

I would firstly like to thank my three teachers, James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, Ax7wil, and Spuska7, whose time, guidance, and contributions made this study possible. Not only have these three individuals vastly enriched my life through their friendship and sharing of cultural knowledge, but their perspectives have opened my eyes to new ways of thinking about music as practice; as a way of life. I also wish to thank my supervisor, Dr. Jonathan Goldman, whose tireless support, suggestions, and availability for meetings and feedback allowed me to confidently pursue research with direction and intent. My other committee members, Dr. Marcia Ostashewski and Dr. Patrick Boyle, also went far beyond expectation in their willingness to offer direction and edit even preliminary drafts of thesis chapters. I greatly appreciate their suggestions for additional sources, approaches to analysis, and experiential guidance. In this capacity I would also like to thank my friend Carla Mellott for sharing her experiences writing a thesis in ethnobotany, offering methodological suggestions and moral support.

Individuals who contributed to the logistical side of this research include Daniel Hogg and Cliff Haman of UVic Fine Arts Digital Media, for allowing me to rent recording equipment for extended periods in the field; the UVic Music and Media and special Archives staff for their interest and assistance in locating research materials; and to my friend and colleague Darren Miller, for his time and effort in audio mastering songs.

Many thanks to my family and friends for their love, encouragement, and confidence in my pursuit of an M.A.; my friend and mentor Celu Amberstone; and most of all, my best friend and husband Sam Albers, for cooking dozens of lunches and dinners during hectic times, driving hours to and from interview locations, providing pep-talks, advice, and support, teaching me how to set up templates for song transcriptions, helping burn CDs at the last minute– and continuing to love and support me after all of this.

I owe a great many thanks to the people of Canada for their investment in this research in the form of a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Dedication

With love and gratitude I dedicate this thesis to the St'át'imc Chiefs' Council and to my extended family at the International Indigenous Leadership Gatherings.

Preface

Participation in drumming and singing at diverse inter-tribal events has been at the heart of some of the most cherished experiences of my life. As a graduate student interested in music and social health, I have always marvelled at the special sense of inter-relatedness between drummers and singers that drum circles seemed to create. As a non-Aboriginal woman with limited lived experience with the traditional values, ceremonies, contemporary ideologies, and past and present adversities of First Nations communities in British Columbia, I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn more about this ‘special sense of inter-relatedness’—what I described as social bonding in earlier stages of this research—from three First Nations teachers¹ named James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) [pronounced: OO-Kwa-Koom] Swan of the Ahousaht Nuu-chah-nulth Nation, Ax7wil [ACKh-wheel] of the Secwepemc [She-KWE-pem] and Státimc [Stat-lee-um-c] Nations, and Spuska7 [SPU-skah] of the Státimc Nations.

At the onset of this research I hypothesized that drumming and singing were particularly conducive to establishing a sense of group cohesion due to surface features such as circular placement (to promote eye contact), entrained rhythm beating (to provide a sense of shared purpose) and use of vocables (to allow individuals unfamiliar with a given song to easily begin participating in-the-moment). During interviews with James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 I asked questions like: “How do you think drumming and singing bring people together?” Such leading questions were based on my presumption that James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 all saw drumming and singing as a process which did function to bring people together. However, throughout the interviews and subsequent consideration of their teachings I realized that this general notion of social bonding was not inherently part of their discourse.

When asked “how do you think drumming and singing bring people together?” James answered “the purpose”; Spuska7 described it as related to the sound; and Ax7wil

¹ I have chosen to use the term teacher rather than participant or interviewee to more accurately define the relationship between myself and the three individuals interviewed.

described drumming and singing as a shared journey of learning and healing. I had previously thought the purpose *was* to bring people together; that factors *beyond* the sound—such as eye contact or the relative lack of an audience-performer dichotomy—were what made drumming and singing so special; and that learning and healing were personal and internal, rather than factors contributing to a sense of group cohesion. After much deliberation, I realized that the hypothesis was not entirely wrong, though it needed refining. Firstly, I had to acknowledge that it was coming from an *etic*,² or outsider, perspective. Although *etic* perspectives cannot carry with them the history, diversity of experienced cultural acts, and familial relationships that largely constitute insider knowledge, the comparative lens through which an outsider observes unfamiliar musics may lead to insights which, from an *emic* standpoint are either self-explanatory or are not seen as relevant subjects at all. Secondly, I needed to listen carefully to the teachings of James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 and admit that my initial hypothesis was overly simplistic. Drumming and singing is not a means of creating general ‘good vibes’ among all those involved; the relationships being affirmed and strengthened are very specific and inextricably tied to cultural and personal meanings, values, and significances.

The Introduction, Methodology, and Conclusion have all been written in the first person singular in order to impress that the approach to research, hypotheses presented, and conclusions drawn are based on my experiences with and interpretations of the knowledge provided by James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7. Chapters two and three are based almost entirely on teachings from these three individuals and frequently use direct quotations. A third person narrative is thus adopted, as all *etic* analyses speak directly to the issues and hypotheses already presented in the introductory section.

² The word *etic* is derived from the linguistic term *phonetic*, relating to the classification and categorization of sound units perceived as different by a non-native speaker of a given culture’s language. The word *emic* is derived from the linguistic term *phonemic*, relating to a category of sounds which are perceived as the same by native speakers of a given culture’s language. These terms were first coined by linguistic anthropologist Kenneth Lee Pike, and will be further detailed in the Introduction.

Introduction

In his 1964 book *The Anthropology of Music* Alan P. Merriam defines musical function according to certain criteria proposed by anthropologist Siegfried Frederick Nadel. Nadel writes of function as: “the specific effectiveness of any element whereby it fulfills the requirement of the situation, that is, answers a purpose objectively defined; this is the equation of function with purpose.”¹ In Merriam’s work, the element in question is music, and the purpose and function of music are considered synonymous. Since the very word ‘purpose’ implies a goal or outcome, then the ‘function’—as a musical outcome—should be the same as the purpose. From an emic, or insider perspective, they usually are. But from an etic perspective, I noticed a function that had not ‘answered a purpose objectively defined:’ that is, the function of affirming and strengthening certain specific relationships. After interviewing James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 I realized that although purpose was often defined, meanings were provided through examples and stories, and significance was explained through cultural teachings, the function of drumming and singing—that is, what, based on sufficient evidence, it *does*—was not generally defined as distinct from purpose.

Linguistic anthropologist Kenneth Lee Pike, who coined the terms etic and emic, defines an emic unit as “a physical or mental item or system treated by insiders as relevant to their system of behaviour and as the same emic unit in spite of etic variability.”² In the case of drumming, singing, and dance practices as described by James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7, function and purpose were generally analogous; that is, they formed an emic unit. For example, if the purpose of a particular song is to cleanse the body and the mind, then the function is cleansing the body and the mind. As an outsider, I cannot verify this function because I cannot fully experience it. However, I have noticed a more general function involving the affirmation of specific relationships, which seems ubiquitous in the drumming and singing practices of James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7. The primary reason I have noticed this general function is that it contrasts

¹ S. F. Nadel, *The Foundations of Social Anthropology* (Glencoe: Free Press), 369.

² Karl J. Franklin, “K.L. Pike on Etic vs. Emic: A Review and Interview,” *Summer Institute of Linguistics* (November 1996) <http://www.sil.org/klp/karlintv.htm> (accessed July 13, 2012).

significantly with most of the Western classical music settings which constitute a large part of my musical cultural background. Herein lies the benefit of an etic perspective: *the functions of drumming and singing which differ from an objectively defined purpose (or purposes) may not be overtly articulated from an emic standpoint, as they are so much a part of daily practice.*

In addition to the problems associated with differentiating *function* and *purpose*, Merriam's 'purpose objectively defined' is often not manifest in a single verbalized statement, but rather, beneath layers of dialogue and stories. Throughout the interviews conducted for this thesis, functions involving the affirmation and strengthening of familial or cultural identity and social relationships were more abstractly presented through each teacher's descriptions and examples. The process of presenting these descriptions and examples with accompanying statements concerning the ways in which they actively articulate function—namely, growing certain relationships—is where my etic perspective has created a new dialogue on the subject.³ Given the many reports of group music-making improving physical and mental health,⁴ helping people with autism to connect with others,⁵ and increasing individuals' ability to recognize affective emotional cues,⁶ it is important to look to the teachings of individuals who participate in musics for which a primary function is the celebration of social relationships. Through such teachings the potential for music to act as a medium through which individuals can communicate, honour one another, and celebrate shared resources is brought to the surface for application in schools, care facilities, social health programming, and in everyday practice.

³ It is important to note that this study is collaborative and I was fortunate to have three teachers who were willing to edit the material as it came together. The risk associated with assuming that an etic perspective can verbalize aspects of cultural acts which may be assumed or seen as too obvious by individuals identifying with that culture, is that the outsider may, quite simply, be wrong in her assessment.

⁴ See Triona McCaffrey et al, "Is There a Role for Music Therapy in the Recovery Approach in Mental Health?," *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 38 (July 2011): 185-189.

⁵ See Emily Finnigan, and Elizabeth Starr, "Increasing Social Responsiveness in a Child with Autism: A Comparison of Music and Non-Music Interventions," *Autism* 14 (2010): 321-348.

⁶ See M Dyck et al, "The Neural Correlates of Emotion Experience – Mood Induction with Facial Expressions and Classical Music," *NeuroImage* 47 (July 2009): S191.

Chapter 1: Methodology

Prior to any formal interviews and specific requests for mentorship during this study, the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2) was consulted. Chapter 9 of the TCPS2, titled “Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada” was read and frequently reviewed during the process of applying for Ethics Approval for Human Participant Research from the University of Victoria’s Human Research Ethics Board. This chapter was indispensable in guiding methodological choices; particularly given its emphasis on community or participant engagement and collaboration throughout research processes. The detailed descriptions of various issues which have arisen during research involving First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, along with guidelines for mitigating such issues, turned my attention toward the ways in which this study could benefit the lives and local communities of the three teachers involved. In particular, the following statement concerning Justice guided decisions concerning how to approach the research in a manner which respected intangible heritage and spiritual knowledge:

Justice may be compromised when a serious imbalance of power prevails between the researcher and participants. Resulting harms are seldom intentional, but nonetheless real for the participants. In the case of Aboriginal peoples, abuses stemming from research have included: misappropriation of sacred songs, stories and artefacts; devaluing of Aboriginal peoples’ knowledge as primitive or superstitious; violation of community norms regarding the use of human tissue and remains; failure to share data and resulting benefits; and dissemination of information that has misrepresented or stigmatized entire communities.

Where the social, cultural or linguistic distance between the community and researchers from outside the community is significant, the potential for misunderstanding is likewise significant. Engagement between the community involved and researchers, initiated prior to recruiting participants and maintained over the course of the research, can enhance ethical practice and the quality of research. Taking time to establish a relationship can promote mutual trust and communication, identify mutually beneficial research goals, define appropriate research collaborations or partnerships, and ensure that the conduct of research adheres to the core principle of Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare—

which in this context includes welfare of the collective, as understood by all parties involved—and Justice.¹

This statement increased my awareness of the importance of thinking through issues of song ownership, and of deciding how best to approach such issues before they arose. I chose to include the following under the heading of “Guidelines Related to Risk and Harm which will be addressed as Necessary throughout the Interview” in the University of Victoria’s Application for Ethics Approval for Human Participant Research:

The entire interview will be recorded on an audio device, unless the participant is uncomfortable with this format and prefers written notes. In this case all questions/concerns the culture bearers² have, as well as their verbal consent and the date of verbal consent will be documented in writing.

Should the culture bearer wish to include a song as part of the interview I will ask whether they would like that song to be included with the thesis paper on a CD. If they would like it to be included I will ask: “to the best of your knowledge, is this song owned by any specific individual or community?” If they answer yes, I will state why I think we shouldn’t use it on the CD (risks associated with social harm). If they give further explanation regarding why it would be acceptable to use as part of the CD, we will use it with the understanding that they (the participant) are aware of any potential social harm³.

I understood that song ownership was something to be particularly sensitive to, however I may not have approached it in this manner had I not read the TCPS2. The importance of this document is not manifest a set of rules for approaching research involving First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, but in its emphasis on collaboration and flexibility. In other words, the maintenance of open communication with individuals, communities, and Tribal Councils; and the willingness to respect cultural values by creating individualized methodological and ethical approaches.

¹ Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (December 2010): 109-110.

² Once all interviews had been completed I changed the term ‘culture bearer’ to teacher, as per footnote 1 in the Preface.

³ Brooke Wilken, Excerpt from Section M – 12. “Verbal Consent Script”, *Application for Ethics Approval for Human Participation Research*, University of Victoria (February 2012).

1.1 Community Involvement

Although ethics approval for human participant research is required before any formal research (including recruitment) may be commenced, this study is the result of many years of interest and engagement in the act of drumming and singing with various First Nations and Indigenous communities in British Columbia. The inspiration for this study came from observing and sometimes participating in the drumming and singing practices of various Nations, communities, and individuals including James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations, Ax7wil of the Secwepemc and Sʔatʔimc Nations, and Spuska7 of the Sʔatʔimc First Nations—the three teachers consulted for this study.

Participation in public events such as the Unity Drummers and Singers' Friday night gatherings (Shoreline Middle School, Victoria BC), the Nuu-chah-nulth Monday night drumming and singing practices (Fernwood Community Center, Victoria BC), and the 2011 and 2012 International Indigenous Leadership Gatherings (Xaxli'p BC, Lillooet BC) comprised a fundamental methodological step only in hindsight. The reasons for attending these events were based on personal interest in learning more about the musical cultures of various First Nations in BC, rather than specific academic endeavours. Eventually, however, such participation yielded consistent observations and feelings, which led to questions that may not have been considered coming from a strictly observational or literature-based standpoint. I was then able to take such questions into an academic environment with the benefit of personal connection and fondness for both the act of drumming and singing and the teachers whom I approached to interview. Trusting and mutually respectful friendships had already been established, and thus the interviews with James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 included in Appendices A and B are conversations between friends. Each interview comprises a discussion about cultural context, personal values, and the perceived significance of purpose and function in various settings where drumming and singing take place. Due to previous involvement or presence during many events referenced in the interviews (particularly with Ax7wil and Spuska7), I felt *part of* certain stories, songs, and descriptions. The memories of particular events and the

emotions which these evoked enabled a deeper understanding of what was really being said. I felt better equipped to ask questions on the spot, which resulted—I believe—in a more fluid dialogue.

The conversations with James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 were initiated through trust and open communication about the nature of their use as teachings used to inform both myself as a researcher, and a greater community of musicologists and other individuals interested in learning from these perspectives. The interview process, as well as subsequent analysis and interpretation of statements and song examples, was straightforward and communicative due to previous non-scholarly-based acquaintance.

1.2 Meeting Teachers

I formally met James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan in an Indigenous Musics course at the University of Victoria. The class was comprised of students of varying ages and from many cultural backgrounds—including a number of Aboriginal students. As a Nuu-chah-nulth drummer and singer, as well as a mature student, James' role in addition to being a learner, was one of a teacher and mentor with life experience to draw on in sharing his perspectives. Prior to attending the Indigenous Musics course I had seen James drumming and singing at a Monday night Nuu-chah-nulth drum group which I had been attending as a listener. I already saw James as a skilled music maker, and was fortunate to have the opportunity to know him in the capacity of a teacher/learner through the course at the University of Victoria.

I asked James whether he would be willing to share some of his perspectives for my M.A. Thesis in Musicology, although at the time I did not yet know the specific topic. Similarly, during the 2011 International Indigenous Leadership Gathering in Xaxli'p BC I became acquainted with Ax7wil and Spuska7. I had spent several days hearing Ax7wil's stories and songs before mentioning that I was interested in learning more about drumming and singing in Indigenous communities as part of my Master's studies. I was quick to note that I already had a fellow UVic classmate who was a Nuu-chah-nulth hereditary chief willing to offer teachings (James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan), but I was not sure where to start. Ax7wil offered his guidance, and mentioned that he was willing to

share any of the songs we had sung together at the gathering. I already viewed Ax7wil as a teacher and mentor at this point, as he had taken me hunting, taught me several Secwepemc songs, and gifted me a drum. Spuska7 is Ax7wil's wife, and she has become someone I greatly admire as a mentor and teacher.

Following the gathering I sent a handwritten letter to Ax7wil and Spuska7, which included a sentence or two asking whether they would be interested participating in my thesis. At this point I had not submitted my completed ethics application to the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board, which should, in most circumstances, be submitted prior to recruitment. Due to the biographical nature of this study, it was important to know whether all three teachers were willing to consider participation prior to the project proposal and application for ethics approval for human participant research. Knowledge of which teachers were to be involved was necessary in this case, as the next step involved inquiring about Indigenous Community Research Protocols Designed for and by each teacher's Nation.

1.3 Locating Indigenous Community Research Protocols

A telephone call was made to the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council (Kamloops BC) in order to inquire about specific ethics protocol or resources in place within the Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nation. The administrator with whom I spoke did not know of any ethics protocols or resources in place specific to the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council. Her suggestion was to speak with Ax7wil's band, as the Secwepemc Nation constitutes such a large diversity of peoples and regions. This information was submitted to the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board, who concluded that given the "demonstrated sensitivity to the issue of song ownership and proposed Risk mitigation," individual consent from each culture bearer would be sufficient, unless determined otherwise throughout the interview process.

A booklet titled *Protocols and Principles for Conducting Research in a Nuu-chah-nulth Context* (PPCRNC) can be found on the *First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network* webpage: http://www.fnehin.ca/site.php/research_guidelines/.

Several articles within the *Protocols and Principles* booklet apply directly to this research project, and will be referenced herein using the lettergram PPCRNC.

1.4 Obtaining Ethics Approval

A Certificate of Approval was issued following minor amendments to the *Application for Ethics Approval for Human Participant Research* by the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board. Once ethics approval was obtained I was able to phone James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 to request formal interviews.

1.5 Requesting Perspectives and Cultural Teachings

1.5.1 Explaining the Research Position

In the University of Victoria's *Application for Research Involving Human Participants* this methodological step is called "recruitment." However, since this project was focused on the knowledge of three First Nations drummers and singers, the process could not be considered recruitment, but rather, *the process of requesting perspectives and cultural teachings*. The telephone conversations during which this request was issued detailed a number of key considerations. Firstly, I explained my position at UVic as a Master's Degree student in Musicology (with Performance), the requirements for the completion of which entailing a written Master's thesis. I then described why I wanted to learn about their specific perspectives—namely, the fact that I had noticed something special about the way drumming and singing gathers people together and forms a close community. There was something socially different about such a setting as compared to the classical and popular Western music practices I was accustomed to, and I wanted to better understand what that difference was.

Thirdly, I described an issue that had only become apparent once I began participating in drumming and singing gatherings with various Nations: there seems to be

a growing idea that only trained, expert musicians play music, and everyone else is meant to listen or be a member of an audience. Given the many reports of group music-making benefiting mental, physical, and social health of diverse demographics, it had occurred to me that the musician-audience member dichotomy should be challenged. To summarize, I described my etic position as a classical musician who felt, based on observation and some participation, that their experience with group music making could challenge the increasingly ubiquitous notion that audience members and musicians are necessarily distinct.⁴

1.5.2 Expressing Sensitivity toward Issues of Song Ownership

During the process of requesting perspectives and cultural teachings, I explained that since the thesis topic was mainly focused on the meaning of drumming and singing in a community where everyone participates whether through the creation of sounds, dance, or ceremonial acts, it would not be necessary to record songs. However, I also noted that if they were open to sharing songs as or in support of answers to my questions they would be welcomed.

James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan and Ax7wil each shared songs during the interview. Both were asked whether they would be willing to have their songs included with the thesis as a CD. James' songs were inherited from his Grandfather, and therefore the risks of social harm following his sharing of Nuu-chah-nulth intangible heritage was extremely low. Ax7wil shared Secwepemc songs, so I asked whether ownership might be an issue. He responded: "Who I am I going to ask? I've got to ask the Creator—and I've got to ask how many people in the Shuswap Nation? I've got to ask them all if I have the right to sing a song and sell it and, you know, its going to come back: "no, you have no right". But I do have the right to carry the songs and sing them. So, I would share all of my songs, but I can't give you the right to sell them... I can give you the right to record them and give

⁴ Following the interviews and the process of analysis and interpretation, it became clear that the musician-audience member dichotomy was not the most relevant issue to pursue based on the perspectives of James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7. Rather, the central issue became the question of musical *function*. According to these three different perspectives, a central function of drumming, singing, and dancing seems to be the building, affirmation, and celebration of specific relationships.

the music away, but I can't sell them."⁵ Thus, the songs Ax7wil sang during our interview are included as part of this thesis because they are not being sold, but rather shared as part of a study exploring the perspectives of those singing them.

1.5.3 Describing the Commitment

At this point I detailed some of the logistics, including a 2 hour interview, and a sample of questions that would be asked:

- 1) How long have you been drumming and singing?
- 2) When you first started, who did you learn most of the songs from?
- 3) How do you think music brings people together?

I then made arrangements to phone James, Ax7wil and Spuska7 again two to three days later so that they would have some time to consider participation, and left them with my telephone number in case of any additional questions. When I called back two days later all three individuals were willing to share their perspectives, and thus interview arrangements were made.

1.6 The Interview Process

1.6.1 Location

James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan was interviewed first at the University of Victoria's First People's House. The location for our interview was James' idea, since he had access to a quiet boardroom in the building. This was an ideal space for the interview, being a place James is familiar and comfortable with. The methodological philosophy which I have chosen to adopt is that holding interviews in such locations emphasizes a researcher's role in the process as a learner being invited *in* to a situation where cultural perspectives are shared; where identity-related surroundings may be

⁵ Ax7wil, interview by author, Kamloops, BC, home of Ax7wil and Spuska7, April 29, 2012.

observed in tandem with presented knowledge and insights.⁶ This same approach was taken for the interview with Ax7wil and Spuska7, which was conducted in their home in Kamloops, BC. This was an excellent location because it allowed Ax7wil and Spuska7 to physically reference personal examples of drums, art, and music as they came up during the interview. For example, Ax7wil was able to show me a drum he was gifted from his Mother while describing its significance in his life. It is important to note that without prior acquaintance with James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7, I may not have been invited to these special interview locations. Community engagement, as articulated in the aforementioned Tri-Council Policy Statement, cannot be overemphasized as a ubiquitous part of the overall methodological process in a study such as this.

1.6.2 Obtaining Verbal Consent

Two interviews were conducted: one with James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan and one with Ax7wil and Spuska7. Prior to both interviews some background on the thesis project was provided in a casual manner without the audio recorder. The main points included the fact that I would be the only person to hear the recording, and that it would be erased from the recording device once transferred to my password protected computer. I then asked for their permission to record the interview.

All three teachers agreed to have the interview recorded, so I began recording and read a verbal consent script, skipping any statement which had already been covered in our previous conversation.⁷ I chose not request signatures on a written form because I did not feel that a long and detailed outline of my responsibilities and their rights would be appropriate based on what I know of their personalities and values.

⁶ Sarah A. Elwood, and Deborah G. Martin, “‘Placing’ Interviews: Location and Scales of Power in Qualitative Research,” *The Professional Geographer* 52 (January 2000): 649-657.

⁷ See Appendix D: Verbal Consent Script.

1.6.3 Collaborative and Reciprocal Ethnography⁸

Article 2.2 in the PPCRNC reads as follows:

Article 2.2: Partnership: “Where Nuu-chah-nulth-aht are participants in research and have a major interest in the outcome of a research project, then a working relationship should be established between the researcher and the participants or representatives of the participating community”

Since this study is fundamentally based on the perspectives of James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, Ax7wil, and Spuska7, it was important to me that they be consulted throughout the writing and editing process. If I were to misinterpret or misrepresent their teachings not only would it negatively affect the integrity of this study, but it would damage the relationship of trust and open communication which I have sought to establish from the onset. The first draft of Chapter 2 was given to James and the first draft of Chapter 3 was given to Ax7wil and Spuska7. With those drafts I included a gift of pottery bowls that I made for each teacher, tobacco or sage, and a recording of me reading the statements for verbal consent and each teacher’s respective chapters in full. I also included the written transcriptions accompanied by a note that I wished to append them with the thesis.

Three weeks following submission of a first draft chapter to each of the teachers, I phoned to discuss any question and/or concerns and hear any suggestions for changes or revisions they wished to have made. No changes were requested.

⁸ Luke Lassiter. “From 'Reading Over the Shoulder of Natives' to 'Reading Alongside Natives', Literally: Toward a Collaborative and Reciprocal Ethnography,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 57 (2001):138, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3631564> (accessed July 6, 2012). Also see: Lassiter, Luke E. *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Chapter 2: A Nuu-chah-nulth Perspective

2.1 Historical and Contemporary Community Contexts

Fourteen linguistically and culturally associated First Nations from the West Coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia comprise the Nuu-chah-nulthiat-h¹ (formerly “Nootka”). The name Nootka was first used in the 18th Century by British explorer James Cook, who mistook the word nuutxaa (“circling about”) for the name of the people.² Nuu-chah-nulth, which means “all along the shining mountains,”³ is generally accepted, however some elders prefer the name TsishaʔatH,⁴ meaning “people of Tsisha” (Benton Island).⁵

¹ The suffix –ʔatH means “people of”. Nuu-chah-nulthiat-h uses an abbreviated form of this suffix in referring to the people themselves, as opposed to the culture, for example (Susan Golla, “Legendary History of the Tsishaʔath: A Working Translation,” in *Nuu-chah-nulth Voices, Histories, Objects & Journeys*, ed. Alan L. Hoover (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 2000), 133). The spelling *Nuu-chah-nulth* has been adopted by the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal council as an alternative to the original spelling *nuucaʔnuł* (Toshihide Nakayama, “Nuuchahnulth (Nootka) Morphosyntax,” *Linguistics* 134 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001): 2.)

² Nakayama, “Nuuchahnulth (Nootka) Morphosyntax,” 2.

³ Huu-ay-aht First Nations, “Kiixʔin Agenda Paper,” in *Nuu-chah-nulth Voices: Histories, Objects, & Journeys*, ed. Alan L. Hoover (Victoria, BC: Royal British Columbia Museum, 2000), 39.

⁴ See Appendix C for Nuu-chah-nulth language orthography.

⁵ Golla, “Legendary History of the Tsishaʔath,” 133.

James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum)⁶ Swan is a Nuu Chah-Nulth hereditary chief, or *hawilth* (haw'it) from Ahousaht,⁷ located along the West Coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia (see Fig 1).



Figure 1. Map of Ahousaht Territory

Nikater, Map of Ahousaht tribal territory. Public Domain Image.
<http://www.demis.nl/home/pages/Gallery/examples.htm>, 18 October 2007 (accessed April 29, 2012).

Ahousaht is a confederation of formerly separate Nuu-chah-nulth Nations including Ahousaht, Manhousaht and Keltsmaht.⁸ Prior to the union of these groups, each

⁶ ʔUu-Kwa-Qum [pronounced Oo-Kwa-Koom] is a Nuu-chah-nulth name meaning “sitting up straight in a canoe like royalty.” (James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, interview by author, Victoria BC, First People’s House, April 23, 2012).

⁷ The Nuu-chah-nulth name “Ahousaht” refers to people rather than a place; the suffix ‘aht’ (native spelling ʔath) meaning “the people of” and ‘Ahou’ being the name of a Nuu-chah-nulth village. (Golla, “Legendary History of the Tsishaʔath”, 133.) The name ‘Ahousaht’ is translated as “people living with their backs to the land and mountains on a beach along the open sea.” (Ahousaht First Nation, <http://www.ahousaht.ca/Home.html> (accessed May 3, 2012).

⁸ Ahousaht First Nation, “home”, (accessed May 31, 2012).

had its own hawilth, who was usually the eldest son of the chiefly family in charge of caring for several local groups living on one *hahuulthi* (*hahuuli*), or chiefly territory. Ahousaht is now comprised of several hereditary chiefs—including James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, who is the hawilth for Manhousaht—and beginning in 1958, an elected chief and council.⁹ The primary responsibility of the hawilth is to consult with his advisors in making decisions concerning hahuulthi, or land and resources.¹⁰ Ahousaht has a head hawilth – a *Tyee* (Tay’i’) – who is one of the three principal chiefs. In addition to these three, other hereditary chiefs from the amalgamated Manhousaht, Kelthmaht, Qwaacwi-aht, and O-inmitisaht, like James, continue to bear their titles as hawilth.

2.2 James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan

James is a well-known carver and painter based out of Victoria, British Columbia. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree with a focus on Art Education from the University of Victoria, and uses his creativity and aptitude for teaching to share Nuuchahnulth ways of life with students and members of his community. He is active in “Travel Journeys,” which are annual trips organized between multiple First Nations bands and organizations to guide at-risk youth through cultural teachings. James has sold his artwork to help fund Travel Journeys and has actively participated in these events by paddling his dugout canoe and sharing his cultural knowledge. He is an avid drummer and singer, participating in weekly Nuuchahnulth drumming, singing, and dance gatherings, and regularly hunts in order to provide traditional meal options for his family. In addition to these many Nuuchahnulth cultural activities, James is also active as a Corporal with the Canadian Scottish Regiment.

⁹ Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council, <http://www.nuuchahnulth.org/tribal-council/welcome.html> (accessed May 2, 2012).

¹⁰ Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (accessed May 2, 2012).

2.3 Tupati Songs and Dances: Defining and Strengthening Familial Relationships

2.3.1 Song Ownership

A central feature of Nuu-chah-nulth drumming, singing, and dance practices is the concept of song ownership. A complex tapestry of historical events, spirituality, and family lineage underlies one's right to perform a given song, as it often symbolizes ancestral connections to powerful spiritual beings. For example, an ancestor may have been gifted a song from Qua-ootz, the Creator, through a vision or dream during a fasting ceremony. This song would have been passed down through generations, symbolizing the three-fold connection between living kin, past and future generations, and the spirit world. To practice a song or dance with care and attention is to honour and know one's ancestors; to pray and give thanks for the spiritual guidance that led to its conception.

Family relationships are extremely important in Nuu-chah-nulth culture. Many songs and stories are related to the acquisition of family names, and through performance of such songs and stories a family reaffirms aspects of their shared identity. Susan Golla writes:

Within one's natal group, a name articulated one's status and rank—elder or younger brother, chief or commoner—and bound one indissolubly to the traditions on which the life of the group was sustained, a chain of tradition, which in the case of chiefs, reached back to the beginning of historical time. The rhetoric of the naming rituals and performance of songs and dances dramatizing the original supernatural encounters whence the names sprang, both suggest that the namesake in an important sense *becomes* his ancestor. A named chief is the living embodiment of the history and traditions of his people.”¹¹

Since James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan is a hawilth, he has always understood his role in ensuring his family's inherited songs are practiced and performed skilfully with honour and respect. “Because I'm the eldest son in my family,” he says, “it became my responsibility to become responsible for these songs and dances [after my Father passed away], because they became mine. And, of course because I became head of my family

¹¹ Golla, “Legendary History of the Tsishaʔath,” 166.

after my Dad passed...that responsibility got higher and I really had to learn.”¹² The concept of practice, here, is defined with a unique purpose: rather than practicing for entertainment alone, James practices in order to keep his family’s songs alive. In this sense, James and his family form part of the complex set of factors which *are* the songs, just as their ancestors did before them and so will their future generations.

Each family’s inherited ritual practices, which include oral traditions and other rights such as songs, dances, ceremonial privileges, names and sacred places, continue to be honoured through performance during important community and/or ceremonial events.¹³ James recounts one of his Father’s first teachings: “my Father always taught us that we were only allowed to do one thing at a time. So we’re either a dancer or we’re a singer. And in the beginning I was always a dancer.”¹⁴ Discipline, prayer, and careful practice for ceremonial acts are central themes in documented teachings by members of the Nuu-chah-nulthiat-h community. The importance of focus—of doing one thing at a time—is related to the meaning that songs and dances hold for each family, as skilled performance resulting from the disciplined practice of each part of the process is an important way to honour a song’s history.

2.3.2 Tupati

Collectively, the inherited physical and spiritual resources of a Nuu-chah-nulth family are known as their *tupati* (tuupaati). As noted, such resources, including objects, stories, songs and dances, belong to a lineage associated with a founding ancestor and the powers they received from a supernatural being. James explains: “Everything that we do in our culture is because we’re connecting with the Creator as well. And we’re connecting with spirits as well as visions.” He goes on to clarify: “I’m not saying that we see people or anything; it’s just a vision—that’s all we’re after. And my Grandfather, he had a vision when he was in a feverish state.” James’ Grandfather was a receiver of songs. In addition to those which are strictly ceremonial, James also owns his

¹² James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

¹³ Huu-ay-aht First Nations, “Kiixʔin Agenda Paper,” 44.

¹⁴ James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

Grandfather's three composed songs: "Song of the Waves", "The Cheyenne", and "The Warrior". All of these songs were passed down from James' Grandfather to his Father, and now to him.

2.3.3 A Non-linear approach to Meanings and Functions

James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan speaks frequently on themes of family lineage and practice, describing personal, cultural, emotional, and story-based meanings when he speaks of his family's tupati. But how can meanings, which are highly subjective, dynamic, and interpretable, support a definition of *function*? The short answer is that they cannot. However, they can contribute to a general sense of functional priority, which may be discussed and debated as part of a larger musicological dialogue on musical function. In James' case, a general function seems to be the strengthening of familial relationships.

The supportive evidence for this position is necessarily James' commentary on *meaning*. So in one sense observations concerning function follow from observations and discussions about meaning. In another sense, however, the opposite is true. This section concerning James' family tupati has touched upon the meaning of responsibility, careful and disciplined practice, and focus on one thing at a time in the context of owned songs or tupati, but none of these incontrovertibly supports the notion that the affirmation and strengthening of familial relationships is at the heart of certain acts of drumming, singing, and dancing. A responsibility must therefore be taken for this etic position and interpretation, with the intention being not to definitively prove a particular function (a very difficult task in any musical context), but to deliberate on the many stories, songs, and teachings which comprise a strong case, from James' perspective and teachings, for the strengthening of family identity and relationships.

2.3.4 The Story of "Song of the Waves"

Having grown up with his Grandfather as a "roommate" and an influential teacher, James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan is able to recount the stories associated with each

song. “Song of the Waves” was composed sometime before 1930, after his Grandfather’s fishing boat capsized miles from shore on the Pacific Ocean.¹⁵

James tells the story of “Song of the Waves”. When you receive a song, James explains:

...you are going into another state in your mind. And when my Grandfather got that he had a shipwreck...His boat sank—his trawler. And him and his wife had to get in a dugout canoe— their lifeboat...He was way off shore—like, miles off shore. And he had to paddle all the way in and it took him all day to paddle in. and he went to the first beach that he could, and his wife actually had to pack him up because he was paddling in the canoe with a little bit of water at the bottom, and he couldn’t even walk anymore because his knees were so sore from kneeling and paddling. And his wife packed him up, and just from him being exposed to the wind and the rain and that little bit of water around his knees he ended up getting a really bad fever that night. And his wife built a fire after dragging him up out of the canoe and on to the beach. And she built a fire and he saw this dance around the fire. He saw men dancing. And he brought it back to the community and he said ‘this is what I saw.’ And he showed them, and then the elders said ‘go away, take the men with you and teach them that dance and compose a song and come back to us.’ So he’d done that, and that is what “Song of the Waves” is, that we still do today.¹⁶

James sang his Grandfather’s song during a recorded interview, and has granted permission to share it on the accompanying CD of this thesis. This recording is included with the understanding that track 1: “Song of the Waves”, and track 2: “The Cheyenne”, are owned by James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan and not to be performed or sold without consultation with him and his family.

¹⁵ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

¹⁶ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

Transcription 1. "Song of the Waves"¹⁷

Section A
Repetitions: 1

Section B
Repetitions: 1

Detailed description of the transcription: The transcription is divided into Section A and Section B. Section A consists of three staves. The top staff is a pitch contour graph with 'Highest' and 'Lowest' labels and a vertical double-headed arrow. Below it are three voice parts: 'eyo eeee', 'wah ooo eee', and 'wa naa huh eeeee'. The middle staff is another pitch contour graph with three voice parts: 'wah ooooo eeeeeee' and 'wah nah ho eeeeeee'. The bottom staff is a pitch contour graph with two voice parts: 'wah ooooo eeeeeee' and 'wah naaaa ho eeeeeee'. All three staves in Section A have a drum staff at the bottom with a continuous, rhythmic, wavy line. Section B consists of three staves. The top staff is a pitch contour graph with three identical, bell-shaped curves. The middle staff is a voice staff with three identical 'brrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!' sounds. The bottom staff is a drum staff with three identical rhythmic patterns.

¹⁷ "Song of the Waves" is highly chromatic, with many nuanced fluctuations in pitch and occasional quarter tones. Its transcription is therefore based on a 24-pitch range from lowest to highest.

Section C

Repetitions: 2

Highest		
Pitch		
Lowest		
Voice	wa — na	he-a — eee
Drum		
Highest		
Pitch		
Lowest		
Voice	wa — na	he-ah-eee
Drum		
Highest		
Pitch		
Lowest		
Voice	hee — ee — ee	sim-chim-kwa see — ee chee — eee
Drum		
Highest		
Pitch		
Lowest		
Voice	wa — na	why — chik-why — com — a — ash-kwa
Drum		

Western tonal notation example of Section C, block 3:

Voice	
Drum	
	wa — na he-ah-eee wa-aa-na-aa he-i — ee wa — na why — chik-why-com-ash-kwa

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Voice</td> <td>wa na chi-tie ho-os-kwy ho na why nah chi-ty-ho no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drum</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Voice	wa na chi-tie ho-os-kwy ho na why nah chi-ty-ho no	Drum	
Voice	wa na chi-tie ho-os-kwy ho na why nah chi-ty-ho no				
Drum					

Section D

Repetitions: 9					
1- no drum 2- drum (as in Section C) 3- no drum 4- drum 5- no drum 6- drum 7- drum 8- drum 9- drum /ending at*	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Voice</td> <td>why eys kwa-a-na he eee eee why eee sha-po-tay nez tie na shipoos tay-eys-kwy-na</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drum</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Voice	why eys kwa-a-na he eee eee why eee sha-po-tay nez tie na shipoos tay-eys-kwy-na	Drum	
Voice	why eys kwa-a-na he eee eee why eee sha-po-tay nez tie na shipoos tay-eys-kwy-na				
Drum					

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Voice</td> <td>why eys kwa-a-na he eee eee</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drum</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Voice	why eys kwa-a-na he eee eee	Drum	
Voice	why eys kwa-a-na he eee eee				
Drum					

2.3.5 “Song of the Waves”: Description

On the CD James sings the song solo, accompanying himself with a handheld frame drum. I lent him my drum during the interview, which has a large polygonal (multi-sided) wooden frame with moose hide stretched across it. It is beat with a wooden stick, which has a soft bundle of leather tied to the end to form a mallet. Normally, James would play on a drum made from deer or elk hide. My drum, which was a gift from a Secwepemc teacher (Ax7wil), is large compared to many Nuu-chah-nulth drums, and thus creates a different sound. James notes that the size of a drum is representative of one’s singing style in Nuu-chah-nulth culture: “the bigger the drum means you’re really vocal and you’re a really big singer,”¹⁸ he says. Additionally, many drums are now made by steaming a single piece of wood and bending it to make a circle, rather than by gluing

¹⁸ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

many separate pieces together into a symmetrical polygon. The latter method was, James says, common long ago.

Several sonic features of “Song of the Waves” overtly depict the waves, icy waters, and daunting force of the Pacific Ocean. The first section, which I have marked *Section A*, consists of a rapid unmetred drum beat underlying a spectrum of chromatic and microtonal melodic pitches marked by long held vocal syllables. The rumbling sound of the drum creates a foreboding atmosphere, while the vocal techniques featuring glissandi to and from intervals of a semitone or less result in a sense of tension or anticipation.

On top of these surface descriptors, one vocal sound in particular may only be recognized by those familiar with Nuu-chah-nulth language. The sound “oooo”, used three times in Section A, depicts a set of emotions and meanings which are not easily defined in English.¹⁹ Nuu-chah-nulth is, Umeek Atleo notes, is a high-context language;²⁰ that is, few words may be used to describe a very complex situation, as a given word may have underlying meanings which supplement the primary definition depending on context. The same holds true for particular word-syllables such as “oo,” which may be essentially translated as “be careful.”²¹ This definition, however, does not explain its deeper cultural and ideological meanings. In ceremony and song, it pays homage to a general understanding that danger is a constant factor in daily life. In “Song of the Waves” James sings the first ‘oooo’ slightly higher than he does in its subsequent Section A appearances. The cultural knowledge underlying the sound itself, accompanied by a tense held tone which is only slightly higher than those preceding and following it, results in an extremely powerful message: James’ grandfather’s fishing voyage—a necessary activity for the sustenance of his family and greater community—was dangerous yet vital. “Song of the Waves” is both a warning and a celebration; reminding

¹⁹ The vocal sound “oo” is not a vocable, as it carries a particular verbal meaning. Elsewhere I have referred to “oo” as a word-syllable, however in the context of “The Song of the Waves” it functions both verbally and imitatively. In other words, when it is temporally prolonged, melodically rising and falling, it seems to imitate the sound of the wind and the waves. It is a vocal sound with verbal meaning.

²⁰ Umeek E. Richard Atleo, *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 3.

²¹ Umeek, *Tsawalk*, 74.

generations of kin and community that the ocean is to be concurrently celebrated and revered.

Section B may be interpreted in several ways. The three melodic pulses indicated are based on a set of three vocal glissandi, and visually resemble the rise and fall of waves. The sound ‘brrrrrr’, which James creates by rolling palatal r’s, seems to mimic the ripples of waves as well, or perhaps even a shiver. The same rapid drum beating as was used in Section A continues throughout each episode, ending abruptly following the descent of each vocal glissando. During this section the concept of “oo” resonates as the ocean—as James’ Grandfather’s experience with its powers—are recreated in this moment. When James and his family perform this song they bring the story to life and remember their Grandparents’ struggle. The lessons which this song carries are a gift to be passed down through generations of James’ family, to remind them of the strength of their ancestors and the strength their family still carries with this knowledge.

Arguably, Section C is where the chant ends and the song begins. At ceremonies, James explains, chants are often performed first.²² Section C, with its underlying duple-meter drum beat and rhythmically measurable melody, is in stark contrast to the long held, unmetered Sections A and B. Additionally, this section features repetition, whereas the others had none. Transcription 1 indicates that Section C is repeated twice, however upon listening and visual inspection of the transcription there are actually four repetitions, with some vocal variation occurring between the two which have been transcribed in full. The tempo of section C is relatively quick, and after a brief pause in the voice and drum, this quick pace continues into the next Section D.

Section D comprises eight repetitions and a partial ninth, each either accompanied by the same duple meter drumming as Section C or with no drum at all. The first occurrence is without drum accompaniment, followed by five repetitions which alternate between drum accompaniment and no accompaniment. The final two full repetitions are both sung with a drum beat; as is the partial ninth repetition, which ends abruptly with the vocals on the syllable ‘ho’.

Members of James’ community know the story of *Song of the Waves*, and when it is performed by James and his family the greater community recognizes James’

²² James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

Grandfather's achievement and celebrates the song he was gifted through his spiritual encounter. The dance, which was gifted to James' Grandfather first, is still performed today, each dancer wearing traditional regalia made from cedar bark.

2.3.6 Celebratory Gatherings

In practice, most of James' family's songs would be performed at celebratory community gatherings or, to use the general term, *potlatches*. Kinship and the honourable display of a family's tupati are central feature of such gatherings. James is careful to note that "potlatch" is actually a broad term used to describe many different ceremonies such as naming ceremonies, weddings, and coming of age ceremonies. "...[P]otlatch isn't really our name for the ceremonies that we have," he says, "We have our own names for them; for each individual party or feast that we have."²³ One such name, for example, is the Impty, or naming ceremony.²⁴

At such gatherings each family is able to perform songs that have been passed down for generations. "We get put in order on rank; on who we are in our community. On our status, if you will." James explains. "And we'll go up to the coordinator of the potlatch, or the floor manager, and we'll say 'yeah, I'd like to do a couple of songs for whoever is hosting the potlatch' and then he'll say: 'which songs are those?' and we'll say: 'we'll do "Song of the Waves" and "The Warrior"' and he'll put [us] in order. And that could be for a naming ceremony, it could be for a wedding, it could be for a coming of age, it could be for different forms of potlatches." James explains that the songs and dances "come out with [his] family doing them." A description which both impresses the importance of inherited ritual property in the performance of songs and dances, as well as the fact that a song only exists when it is played or performed. When songs come out with families, everyone is welcome to join.

In preparation for a potlatch gathering, James describes the process of asking a relative to invite other members of Ahousaht and surrounding communities such as Hesquiaht and Tlaquiaht First Nations to the potlatch on his behalf. "So he'll go knocking on a door *James knocks on the table* and he'll personally invite the household

²³ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

²⁴ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, first draft editing meeting, July 26, 2012.

to this potlatch I'm hosting. And he'll go next door and do the same thing until the whole community is invited...he'll go to other places that I send him to invite everybody to come to my party."²⁵ Even before the event begins, people are interacting and communicating; excitement and anticipation spreads within and between Nations.

At family potlatches, James explains that there is always a welcome song to open up the floor, which differs from one Nuu-chah-nulth Nation to the next. When the welcome song is over "everybody can come over and say 'I'd like to do a couple songs or have a couple dances'." This time, during which neighbour Nations are invited to share their songs and dances, is called an open floor. James further explains that the order of presentation is governed by seniority, or rank, progressing from the least to most senior family. Whoever is holding the potlatch in question is considered to have the highest rank, regardless of their ancestry. He provides an example:

If it was my potlatch, even though I'm not the Tyee of Ahousaht- I hold the seat of Manhousaht- and then the Tyee is [Maquinna] Lewis George ...So if he comes to the potlatch and he's there and he wants to do something...even though that goes by rank, and the higher the rank- you're the last. But if Lewis comes and I'm hosting, he does not go [after] me. But he is ranked before [or higher than] me. And I never go in front of him, because it's my party. Even if you're the lowest rank and then you're hosting, Lewis will never go behind you. He'll always be right in front of you. So there's an order you're supposed to do this, right? And you don't just go up and say 'I want to do this'. There's a list and people have a job and it's been part of their family for a long time—that job—and they know who is who, and which order they're supposed to be in.

This final statement is significant in the context of drumming and singing function because it impresses the extent to which a set of events beyond song and dance alone contribute to functionality. It acts as a commentary on the ways in which emic knowledge, such as knowledge of one's family jobs and order, exists prior to song performance; yet fundamentally contributes to functional outcome, such as a sense of shared family and/or community identity.

As the families each perform their songs, men from other Nations are welcome to join in drumming and singing. The Nuu-chah-nulthiat-h women in James' community do not generally drum or sing, but frequently dance. The women, James explains, "usually do not sing the traditional songs that are still being practiced because long ago most of

²⁵ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

the songs and dances were ceremonial...and reason why women weren't allowed to do [them] is because the men had to go to a different place in order to do some of the things they had to do." Such activities were largely centered around hunting, so "the women couldn't go there because they carry our babies" James says, "so we protect them. We protect our women because we treasure them."²⁶ However, women participate in contemporary practices through dance, which was not the norm in James' early experience. "Song of the Waves", for example, was only danced by men in James' Father's time; however once his Father moved to Ahousaht, his sister's were the only family members around to dance. Since that time, the women have participated in "Song of the Waves".

2.3.7 Gifting Songs and Dances

Familial relationships are not the only relationships strengthened through drumming, singing, and dancing. Part of the reason kinship is such a common theme in James' teachings about his culture is that Ahousaht is a very small community where many individuals are related either through blood or marriage. But the term 'family' can also be much broader, including individuals who have become close through friendship or service. James explains during an editing meeting that his dugout canoe was gifted to him by a Toquaht family with the surname Martin "to show how closely related [my family] are to the Martins."²⁷ To receive a song as a gift is, James explains, extremely rare. He has inherited his Grandfather's songs, but has not gifted any of these presently; nor has he received a song or dance. To receive a song, James says, one must show real commitment and effort over many years.

At a potlatch ceremony, a speech may be given to honour a member of the community who has been particularly kind or helpful to the hosting family by giving that community member permission to perform one of their songs or dances. Women or men may be the recipients of these gifts, including a recent gift to Ahousaht Chief Councillor Anne Atleo of a bow and arrow dance. "So you don't necessarily have to be a dancer or a

²⁶ James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

²⁷ James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, July 26, 2012.

singer to get permission to sing or dance a song” James adds. He provides a hypothetical scenario in order to describe the process of gifting a song or dance:

If somebody came and looked at me and said ‘I really like “Song of the Waves”,’ I’ll talk to my family first and say “so-and-so really likes this song—our song—and I want to give him permission because he’s done a lot...for our family and I want to give him permission because—say he’s not from Ahousaht; he’s from somewhere else—and I want to give him permission to sing this song and dance. And my family will say yes or no—or the elders in our family. And if they say yes and I’m having a party, I’ll stand up and I’ll have my speaker²⁸ announce to everybody and I’ll call his name and ask him to come up. And they’ll stand him up and my speaker will tell everybody in the whole hall—in the whole building—that this person is allowed to sing the song that we’ve just done, because we’ll do it first. We’ll do “Song of the Waves”, or “The Warrior”—whatever song. We’ll do it and say “that last song that we sang, we’re giving you permission to do that song and dance and we have witnesses here to prove that we gave you permission.”²⁹

In this case it is not the only the song itself but also the act of gifting the song, as a part of family heritage and identity, which may function to build relationships and, particularly given the public nature of this gifting ceremony, a sense of pride and community on the part of the recipient.

2.4 Affirming Identities in a Nuu-chah-nulth Community Context

2.4.1 “The Cheyenne”

Track 2 is “The Cheyenne”, which is another one of James’ Grandfather’s composed songs. James explains that “The Cheyenne” was composed as a fun song “for the ladies [to dance to]”,³⁰ and thus does not have the same type of narrative story as “Song of the Waves.” However, James does tell stories about his family as they performed “The Cheyenne” together. “I sang it one time and my uncle corrected me and

²⁸ The chief hosting a potlatch has a speaker, whose role is to “communicate the extent of his chief’s hahuulthi (ancestral territory) and the greatness of his lineage because it was taught that one did not engage in personal boasting about oneself” (Umeek, *Tsawalk*, 14).

²⁹ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

³⁰ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, first draft editing meeting, July 26, 2012

said ‘no, you have to repeat those over and over again. You can’t just say Hey ey. It’s Hey ey ey ey.’” James smiles as he recalls his uncle’s words: “I was just saying Hey ey... [and] he said, you’re doing it wrong. He corrected me even though that is my song.” The concept of *hahupa*, which James translates as “discipline in action,” is part of James’ story of “The Cheyenne”. Hahupa is a big word in Nuu-chah-nulth language, he explains. It is integral to the *process* of “The Cheyenne” as a song and as a personal story.

James sang “The Cheyenne” with the same frame drum previously described, beating in quadruple meter after an initial section without drum accompaniment.³¹ The form of the song, as marked, is A Ad³ B A Ad² B C Cd³ B. Each superscript number signifies a repetition and the lowercase letter ‘d’ signifies drum accompaniment. Some subtle variation in pitch and rhythm occurs during each repetition, however the general structure of each repeated section is the same and thus not transcribed in full each time.

³¹ This same unaccompanied verse occurs once more later in the song.

Transcription 2. "The Cheyenne"³²

Highest ↑ Pitch ↓ Lowest	
	Voice Hey eh yay yay yay yay Hey yay hey yay hey yay yo yo hey ee ya hey ya hey ya hey ey hey yay hey
	Drum

Section A

Reps: 0

Highest ↑ Pitch ↓ Lowest	
	Voice ey hey yay hey ey hey yay ya ya hey ey ya hey ya ey ya hey ey hey yay oay!
	Drum

Highest ↑ Pitch ↓ Lowest	
	Voice Hey eh yay yay yay yay Hey yay hey yay hey yay yo yo hey ee ya hey ya hey ya hey ey hey yay
	Drum

Section Ad

Reps: 3

Highest ↑ Pitch ↓ Lowest		Following Section Ad: 1st time: 2 drum beats 2nd time: 4 drum beats 3rd time: 2 drum beats 4th time: 0 drum beats
	Voice hey ey hey yay hey ey hey yay ya ya hey ey ya hey ya ey ya hey ey hey yay	
	Drum	

³² The Same transcription methods are used for “The Cheyenne ” as previously described for “Song of the Waves ”. Due to an even greater number of quarter tones and pitch fluctuations, this transcription is based on a 42 pitch range from lowest to highest.

Section B Reps: 0	Spoken	X X X X
	Voice	wah shi kwa hyu
	Drum	/ /

Highest
Pitch
Lowest

Voice Hey eh yay yay yay yay Hey yay hey yay hey yay yo yo hey ee ya hey ya hey ya hey ey hey yay hey

Drum

Section A

Reps: 0

Highest
Pitch
Lowest

Voice ey hey yay hey ey hey yay ya ya hey ey ya hey ya ey ya hey ey hey yay oay!

Drum

Highest
Pitch
Lowest

Voice Hey eh yay yay yay yay Hey yay hey yay hey yay yo yo hey ee ya hey ya hey ya hey ey hey yay

Drum

Section Ad

Reps: 2

Highest
Pitch
Lowest

Voice hey ey hey yay hey ey hey yay ya ya hey ey ya hey ya ey ya hey ey hey yay

Drum

Following Section Ad:
1st time: 3 drum beats
2nd time: 3 drum beats
3rd time: 0 drum beats

Section B	Spoken	X X X X
Reps: 0	Voice	wah shi kwa hyu
	Drum	/ /

Highest
Pitch
Lowest

Voice Hey eh yay yay yay yay Hey yay hey yay hey yay yo yo hey ee ya hey ya hey ya hey ey hey yay hey

Drum

Section A

Reps: 0

Highest
Pitch
Lowest

Voice ey hey yay hey ey hey yay ya ya hey ey ya hey ya ey ya hey ey hey yay oay!

Drum

Highest
Pitch
Lowest

Voice Hey eh yay yay yay yay Hey yay hey yay hey yay yo yo hey ee ya hey ya hey ya hey ey hey yay

Drum

Section Ad

Reps: 2

Highest
Pitch
Lowest

Voice hey ey hey yay hey ey hey yay ya ya hey ey ya hey ya ey ya hey ey hey yay

Drum

Following Section Ad:

1st time: 3 drum beats

2nd time: 3 drum beats

3rd time: 0 drum beats

2.4.2 “The Cheyenne”: Description

Microtonality is particularly evident in James’ performance of this song. The consistency with which he produces microtones during repeated sections suggests that this is not just a case of in-the-moment emotive singing. James is careful to note: “you don’t change songs. You don’t change the way you sing them....I could sing it over and over again to you and it will sound the same.”³³ It may thus be stated with confidence that “The Cheyenne” is comprised of many discrete chromatic and microtonal pitches. Not only is the range large by Western tonal vocal music standards, but the number of pitches employed within that range is also much higher.

Rhythmically, “The Cheyenne” departs from its underlying quadruple metre pulse between repeated sections (see: ‘Number of Drum Beats Following Sections Ad’ on the transcription); and during unaccompanied sections the pulse is often prolonged or sped up depending on James’ breath and phrase endings. In the second set of section Ad repetitions he frequently adds a single drum hit, or beat, between phrases. This metric offsetting occurs frequently in the second set of Ad repetitions, and thus seems to be a consistent feature. This subtle beat addition would make it difficult for an individual unaccustomed to “The Cheyenne” to sing along, which isn’t entirely surprising given James’ musical philosophies surrounding careful practice among families for performance: “we’re not supposed to make mistakes” he says. To know where these extra beats occur would require careful listening and practice.

2.4.3 “The Cheyenne”: Community Roles

During the interview James described certain aspects of “The Cheyenne’s” performance—particularly concerning community roles. For a song to be performed at a gathering both the song’s owner(s) and the communities elders must be consulted. He explains:

³³ James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

When my Dad passed away—this is back in 91—And you always have to wait for four years³⁴ for a memorial potlatch. Usually you have to wait four years, depending on the status of the person. But four years was going to be just right for me so I could get ready buying stuff and getting stuff for gifts: blankets and, you know, cutlery and all the other stuff that I needed to buy – or my family, not just me. I don't do anything without my family, and if I do something my family is there so, you know, I can't say myself as "I," I say "we". We got ready for this potlatch- we were going to get ready in four years but the elders came to us one day when we had a community meeting, said this is what we're going to do- when we had a meeting with the elders. They said: "no, we don't want you to do it in four years. We don't want your songs to be away that long." Because when my Grandfather passed away, my Dad became the owner of the songs and dances. And when my Dad passed away I became the owner. But my Dad was the owner of those songs and dances, so they had to get put away for the duration of the memorial four years. And the elders said "no, we don't want them put away because they're so popular and everybody likes them."

So we decided one year was good enough. That's what the elders decided so we went with them. And then they said we'll help you get ready, so they did help us get ready. And went fishing and going out and everybody did their part to get this party out so those songs could come back. And it wasn't just to show respect for my Dad, but to show respect for those songs and dances. So that's a reason why the whole community helped out a lot. And they do help out a lot. In Ahousaht if you say something and you want to do something they'll back you up 100% if they agree with what you're doing.

When asked whether one would go to the elders first to ask about performing songs in such a situation James replied: "*Always*. You always have to...If you do something without the elders it won't work out. It really won't. It's like bad luck if you don't see the elders. We have a name for that: its numak"³⁵ Although this song, like the others, belongs to James, he must perform them only and always when the elders agree that the time is appropriate. This is a means of showing respect to elders, as individuals who have acquired wisdom and knowledge through a long history of experience. Respect for elders

³⁴ Four is an important number in Nuuchah-nulth culture. James explains that the significance of this number varies between people, but for the Manhousaht Nuuchah-nulthiat-h it is related to the new moon. The Nuuchah-nulth also honour four universal realms, each protected by its own Great Spirit Chief. These are the sea world, protected by *Hilthsuu-is Ha'wilth*; the land and mountain world by *Ha'wii-im*; the sky world by *Yaalthapii Ha'wilth*; and the spirit world by *Ha'wilthsuu-is*. (Ki-ke-in, "Nuuchah-nulth: A Nation Always Praying," in *Listening to Our Ancestors: The Art of Native Life Along the North Pacific Coast*," ed. Robert Joseph (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2005), 45).

³⁵ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

is a central tenant in Nuu-chah-nulth daily life, both presently and historically; given the nature of oral tradition, the elders are keepers of knowledge concerning land, resources, and spiritual health.

The elders mentioned by James in his description of his Father's memorial potlatch preparations may not have been members of James' family, but the performance of his songs upon their request affirmed their powerful position and their role as teachers and mentors in their relationship with James, his family, and the greater community. Once again, the status, or rank, of a member of the community is identified and honoured through their role in *pre*-performance action and dialogue. The abstract concept of permission necessitates a set of understood relationships where one or more individuals are in a position of obeying one or more other individuals, for logistical reasons of keeping a healthy community through the allocation of decision-making and action-oriented roles. In the case of James' relationship to elders, this is built upon foundations of respect and discipline which honour the fact that the elders of his community have the spiritual, practical, and culture-based knowledge to decide when it is appropriate to perform a song which comprises all of these things.

2.4.4 Inter-Group Roles in Singing, Drumming, and Dancing

James sang both of his songs solo, however in practice his family and members of his community would participate. There are usually a few individuals who are considered song leaders. A song leader stands in the centre of a drum circle³⁶ along with a few other individuals comprising what James calls the 'main core,' and indicates both the pulse of a song and the times when certain drummers are to begin singing. The leader generally has a very powerful voice and sings just a bit louder than the other drummer/singers; he also directs both the pulse of the song and the times when individual drummers are to begin singing. This directing is done using a fan of eagle tail feathers called a *naatcha*. The *naatcha* would be most comparable, in Western orchestral terms, to a conductor's baton. The word, James explains, is also used to describe the rudder of a steering canoe. Thus, a *naatcha* directs a canoe, a group of singers, and, in James' words, it "directs the flow of

³⁶ In a Nuu-chah-nulth drum circle- or sitting- all individuals beat handheld deer or elk hide frame drums with mallets made of wood and leather.

the eagle.”³⁷ The lead singer directs the flow of the song and, as James reflects, the emotional charge of the group:

A long time ago the leader of the sitting— they used to stand on chairs to be higher than everybody else. And the reason why is to show the naatcha and to show the expression...it was *really* lively back then. The lead singer had moves that just picked up your spirit- that just made your chills come out on your cheeks and stuff- on your arms- just picked it right up. And the last time that happened to me was when Nelson Keitlah led our songs and dances- the last time that that ever happened to me. But there was also other people out there that used to do a lot of that too- Pompom, my grandfather, he led really well. He was lively with it, eh? He moved the naatcha around, turned it sideways, he had done a lot of action with it. He moved his body around. He bent down, got up, bent down—he’d done—he really showed a lot of movement in it. It’s not just standing there just waving the naatcha up and down showing the drumbeat, but there’s a lot of movement involved in your body.

From a description such as this, the potential for social bonding, or a feeling of closeness to other drummers and singers, seems high. From James’ account, the lead singer is someone who generates excitement and encourages the group of drummers and singers to bring songs to life. The role of the lead singer is thus to contribute to a functional outcome that may go even further beyond identifying and reinforcing relationships; the function may be more visceral, approaching a sense of oneness within the group.

2.5 Performance Practices in Supporting the Case for Socially-Oriented Function

2.5.1 The Lead Singer

The leader usually begins a song. James uses “The Cheyenne” as an example, explaining that if he began singing the first part of Section A (see Transcription 2), he might point to another individual to join in after he had finished the initial phrase (hey eh-yay-yay-yay / hey-yay hey-yay hey-yay) by repeating it. At this point, everyone would know to join in at the next phrase ‘yo-yo hey ee-ya hey-ya hey-ya...’. Section Ad, along with its repetitions, would follow this same order, except James would not sing the initial phrase. This would continue until the song was over; each section A or Ad beginning

³⁷ James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

with the leader pointing toward a singer with the naatcha to indicate it is their turn to sing. The presence of a naatcha increases the importance of focused attention on the leader and on fellow singers taking a solo phrase. Additional factors include circular placement, which allows for maximal inter-group eye contact; and attention to body language, which allows the leader to make spontaneous decisions effectively.

In addition to one's response to the leader's gestures and to the other solo singers (quieting one's drum for quieter voices, for example), James describes the process of adjusting one's voice to the sound of the group:

You can't sing above [the other singers]...And when we're leading, the leader has to know when to come down [in volume], and when to come back up, and come down, and come back in and out with everybody else. It's not something then where I can just go in and sing a song and be above everybody. I mean that's boring and it makes it flat... when everybody starts singing you have to find where everybody's at and be there. Because if you're higher than everybody else it's going to make it damp and you're going to spoil the song. And that's the only way I can actually think of how to describe it. And it makes it off. It doesn't sound right. So when I'm singing with somebody else when they're leading I try to use my voice to strengthen theirs.

Alternately, when one is chosen by the leader to sing alone they must be louder than usual. The key message in this description by James is that the sound of the *group* is of primary importance, even if it means bringing a powerful voice down to a level where it is not overly audible above the others. This precept, along with the aforementioned circular placement, presence of a lively lead singer, and tradition of taking turns singing solo are not defined as *meanings*, though they do contribute to such, but rather, as features of performance practice. Thus, in addition to the meanings that songs like "The Cheyenne" hold for James, there are also more observable features of drumming, singing, and dance performance practice that may be asserted as contributors to an extended community's experience of musical function. In other terms: by looking at one another, listening to each other's voices to match volume and tone, and giving directional authority to a lead singer who, in return, creates a lively performance capable of generating excitement within the drum group and potentially throughout the gathering space as well, James' drumming, singing, and dance community places a great deal of focus on the people who are part of the sound, rather than on the quality of sound alone.

When a group sings “Song of the Waves” a value is placed on James’ family. Identity, pride, and authority all support a function of strengthening and affirming familial relationships. This suggests, at least from an etic perspective, that the result—that is, the *functional* result—is an enhanced sense of social cohesion. Such a functional result, taken together with cultural and familial identity-related factors such as song ownership, traditional teachings, and community roles, gives this general function of social cohesion more definition: singing, drumming, and dancing, as well as the gatherings for which they are a part, affirm identity (which may take on many forms, such as cultural, familial, gender-based, etc.); celebrate the relationships which comprise that identity; and strengthen those relationships in so doing.

2.6 Toward Differentiating Between Function and Purpose

Nuu-chah-nulth sculptor, painter, singer and dancer Ki-ke-in writes:

To continue this good life, we as *kuu-as* (real living human beings) must follow a disciplined schedule and observe our sacred practices governed by lunar and seasonal cycles. We must bathe ritually, pray, and fast. We must handle physical and spiritual resources with respect. All our wealth for display—our status-validating songs, dances, and masks—is derived from individual contacts with our late ancestors or other *chi-ihaa* (spirit beings), messengers of the four Great Spirit Chiefs.³⁸

James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan does not speak openly about many of his personal, family, or Ahousht community spiritual practices, including ceremonial rituals, settings, and songs. These are, as Ki-ke-in writes, “sacred practices” which must be treated with the utmost respect. James does not detail these practices because to do so would be to deprive them of their meaning; much of which is manifest through in-the-moment connections with the spiritual world.

In addition to his Grandfather’s “Song of the Waves”, “The Cheyenne”, and “The Warrior”, James also names two ceremonial songs respectively called a *yutyahsa* (y’tya’ta) and a *hinikeets*. When asked about the remaining three ceremonial songs he explains that he is only able to name the two previously mentioned- that is, the *yutyahsa*

³⁸ Ki-ke-in, “Nuu-chah-nulth: A Nation Always Praying,” 46-47.

and the hinikeets. "...the other ones are ceremonial for the *tloo-qua-nah* (tlo:kwa:na)³⁹ and stuff, so I can't name those ones," he says. Such songs are inextricably connected to spirituality, prayer, and honour; they are songs of such purpose that without the ceremony to which they are a part, they cannot be named or described. In response to the question: "how do you think music brings people together?" James responds: "The circumstance; the situation; the purpose. The purpose is the big one."⁴⁰ The purpose, in James' ceremonial songs, involves spiritual connections with the Creator. But as noted in the Introduction to this study, purpose and function are not necessarily the same. The purpose of a particular ceremony, for example, may be to cleanse and heal the body through prayer. As a Nuu-chah-nulthiat-h, the function for James *is* the cleansing and healing of the body. He names these things as the purpose because they are part of his emic experience of the ceremony in question. But the etic perspective cannot speak to such functions; it can acknowledge them as emic truths, but it is limited in providing commentary, or compiling sets of 'evidence,' for emic functions.

The etic perspective must look for other possibilities and reference specific stories, declared or implied meanings, and significances in defending these possibilities. For example, the cleansing ceremony in question may be an affirmation of Nuu-chah-nulth identity or perhaps an act which ultimately strengthens one's sense of man or womanhood—or both. These are but two examples of many possibilities; the reason for describing these is to impress that although purpose can be defined from an emic perspective in a way which also defines a function, the etic perspective will often find these two terms to be distinct.

2.7 Ceremonial Song Types

As previously noted, many ceremonies begin with chants. "Each chief has their own chant" says James, so during a ceremonial event each family will "start off with a chant first, and sometimes they cleanse the floor. Depending on who you talk to and

³⁹ Tloo-qua-nah means 'we remember reality' (Umeek, *Tsawalk*, 80). Out of respect for James' wishes not to speak about the Tloo-qua-nah during the interview, this ceremony will not be elaborated further.

⁴⁰ James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

which Nation you're looking at they'll cleanse the floor first before they do anything else because other people have been on there, or there have been funerals in that same building so they want the floor to be clean."⁴¹ He notes that some nations use eagle down and dance around all corners of the room where the ceremony is being held. "They sing and they drop the down and they pray to the Creator that the floor is healthy. That the floor is free of bad vibes or bad spirits." Once one is made aware of the careful preparatory measures which are taken even *prior* to a ceremonial song and dance, the importance of setting becomes increasingly apparent. The mediation of a healthy performance space requires cultural knowledge and a history of learning from community and kin.

2.7.1 The yutyah'tsa (y'tya'ta)

The yutyah'tsa is "a powerful dance and song," says James, [it is] letting the spirit go...and it's only danced by ladies, and they wear white shawls and headbands with white feathers and [eagle] down on their heads. When my father passed away," he explains, "all of my sisters had done the yutyah'tsa. And so my Dad's closest relatives—my Mom was doing the yutyah'tsa and some of my nieces that were close to my Dad that were grieving really hard over my Dad's loss. And they were praying—and what the yutyah'tsa is, is to let all the grieving go and let the celebration begin."⁴² The purpose of the yutyah'tsa, as defined by James, is thus to let go of one's grief over death through song, dance, and prayer. The function, however, cannot be definitively defined as such. The implied meaning of the yutyah'tsa's purpose, as outlined by James, is that through this ceremony the sadness of loss is transformed through prayer into a celebration of the deceased's spirit entering a new phase. This meaning, together with the performance practice of entrained drumming, singing, and dance; James' cultural understanding of the yuthahtsa as a healing ceremony; and the fact that this ceremonial song and dance once belonged to James' father, all evidence a related, but different function: James' yutyah'tsa ceremony strengthens a sense of family and community support; a sense of 'being in it together.' This is not to imply that the yutyah'tsa ceremony does not also turn one's

⁴¹ James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

⁴² James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

sorrow into joy and celebration, but such an experience is highly personal and cannot be substantiated as a general function through deliberation on one teacher's examples and perspectives.

With a description of his family's tuupaati, James restates the importance of ancestry in the performance of songs: "Those are the main [ceremonial] songs that we have and that I own, that belong to Manhousat- Manhousat chiefs...[t]here was actually five of them that got given to my Great Grandfather when he was the head chief of Manhousaht. He gave five songs to my Grandfather and he gave five songs to my other Grandfather,⁴³ his older brother. And we still have our five songs, our original five songs, but the songs that went to the older son- they're gone now."⁴⁴ The disappearance of these songs demonstrates how important regular ceremonial practices and celebratory gatherings are to Nuu-chah-nulth intangible heritage. Songs lose their meaning and purpose without the mediations of ceremony and celebration, and ultimately cease to exist.

2.7.2 The hinikeets

James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan does not elaborate on the significance of the hinikeets, however he describes the beat pattern of his family's hinikeets song and dance during a more general discussion of drum rhythms:

Well there's different beats for different songs. Some of them are just straight beats like this *taps on table 1,2,3,4 – repeats* then *1,2,**3** (4)⁴⁵ – repeats* and some are fast and some are slow...so it depends on the song...[a]nd it depends on the composer of that song. Especially the older ones. The older ones have different beats...the older ones, you'd never really hear one song the same beat as the other...[a]nd with the hinikeets, you begin the first two parts of the hinikeets—that beat will be different than the last part.

⁴³ In my experience it is common in many British Columbia First Nations communities for elders, regardless of their familial relationship, to be called "Grandma" and "Grandpa."

⁴⁴ James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

⁴⁵ The bolded number **3** is to indicate a stress or accent, and the bracketed (4) indicates a pause or rest.

In the beginning, James explains, the dancers move quickly; however at a certain point “they start dancing slower...with a different foot beat.” This second part of the hinikeets uses the 123(4) drum rhythm, and the dancers pause on 3 with one foot in the air. “I never got the understanding on why [the beat changes],” James says, “that’s just the way it is. It’s always been that way.” This final statement speaks to the nature of oral tradition: the songs are passed down through generations, perhaps acquiring certain features in common as new songs for particular ceremonies are spiritually received or composed. Specific reasons or publicly defined meanings are not necessary to the purpose, personal meaning, or function of a ceremonial song. In this case, the understanding of when a drum rhythm will change, and what rhythm it will change to, is part of performance practice knowledge which, as previously discussed, contributes to function.

2.7.3 Ceremonial Setting

James explains that the yutyahsa is only to be done “at home”- that is, in Ahousaht. “Same with the hinikeets”, he says, “I can’t sing it; I can’t dance it here. The only time I can do it is at home.” This rule seems to be in accordance with many of James’ teachings elaborated on thus far: in addition to the aforementioned importance of a healthy and spiritually prepared setting, the following mediations apply: firstly, the elders of James’ community play an important role in deciding when ceremonial songs and dances are to be performed; secondly, these songs and dances are inextricably linked to the ceremonies during which they are sung, drummed, and danced. There are particular gestures, rituals, and territorial places which are as important to the songs as their sonic properties. Thirdly, songs are part of a family tupati, and normally performed with one’s kin. When James is at home he is in the presence of community elders, his family is near, and he on Nuu-chah-nulth hahuulthi (traditional territory).

2.7.4 The oosumich

One of the most protected and important rituals in Nuu-chah-nulth culture is called the *oosumich* (?uusimch); a ritual traditionally practiced by the Manhousaht on the

new moon when the night is darkest.⁴⁶ James describes the oosumich as a process of going up into the mountains and bathing naked in an icy pool for four to eight days. The place of ritual bathing, James explains, is extremely private. “we don’t let anybody see what we do” he says “and nobody knows where the bathing pools are...my brother does it and I don’t know where his is, and he doesn’t know where mine are.” The oosumich may be practiced either in freshwater mountain streams or the salt water of the ocean because, as James articulates: “we depend on the salt water for life and we depend on [the fresh water] for salmon and stuff; that’s where we catch our salmon. But we also look at the ocean too because we’re whalers. So we have to get used to that water.” In contemporary Manhousaht practice, the process of fasting, prayer, and ice water bathing is done in order to cleanse the soul and the body; to “cleanse everything that you have within your being in order to do the stuff that you need to. So it makes you stronger psychologically and mentally” James says. In times when the Nuu-chah-nulthiat-h relied on whaling as a means of sustenance, the oosumich was a period during which a whaler would travel to a private place in the mountains for bathing, prayer, and harpooning practice. Sometimes the whaler’s wife would accompany him⁴⁷ in order to hold a rope while he bathed in icy waters in case he were to lose consciousness, or to dive in with him, moving slowly through the water in imitation of a great whale while they prayed and sang.⁴⁸ In James’ experience, however, the oosumich is less about singing song and more about receiving them: “usually songs come to you” he says, “We usually hear the songs from spirits or...visions, if you will.”⁴⁹ Beyond the initial receiving of a song, each subsequent performance connects the receiver, as well as those kin and community members who understand its meaning and significance, back to the creator and the spiritual realm from which the song came.

2.8 “The Warrior”

⁴⁶ James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

⁴⁷ James practices the oosumich alone, as is the custom of Manhousaht Nuu-chah-nulthiat-h.

⁴⁸ Ki-ke-in, “Nuu-chah-nulth: A Nation Always Praying,” 54-55.

⁴⁹ James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, April 23, 2012.

The women in James' community frequently dance during their weekly drumming and singing gatherings. I asked James whether dancing was spontaneous or prompted by certain musical or gestural signals, and he responded by reminding me that the women during these weekly gatherings were practicing. Thus, the dancing in these cases may be more spontaneous and less influenced by ceremonial expectations. James further explained song and dance practices:

[A] lot of the time practices would- a long time ago, like when I explained to you that the first time we done it was upstairs in my Grandfather's room, right?... It was inside the personal home. And when we were getting ready for a potlatch and a memorial potlatch for my sister—my late sister—we practiced inside our house. So we done a lot of stuff in private, so we didn't show everybody else what we're going to do. So we kind of surprise everybody. Especially [in the case of] "The Warrior". When my sister passed away, we hadn't done "The Warrior" for twenty years. When she passed away we stopped doing it for some reason. And then twenty years went by -my sister passed away between there- about 4 years before that and then we had a memorial potlatch for her and "The Warrior" came back out. And we practiced that at the house so that nobody else would know we were bringing it out. And then when we got on the floor to perform everybody was excited- it was *really* lively,

The significance and meaning of "The Warrior" grew with this important event. James speaks of the song as a living force: "it came back" he says, "and we've been doing it ever since." This song, which was composed by James' Grandfather, carries with it the spirit of the family. As James describes the decision to surprise others in the community with a performance of "The Warrior", the connectedness between songs and family becomes increasingly clear. "The Warrior", like James' other inherited songs, serves the important purpose of articulating love, respect, and honour in a way that is more essential than words or actions.

Chapter 3: A Secwepemc and A St'át'imc Perspective

3.1 Ax7wil and Spuska7

Ax7wil and Spuska7¹ are a married couple living on Secwepemc (pronounced 'She-KWE-pem'², also called Shuswap) territory in T̓kemplups (Kamloops, BC). Spuska7 is St'át'imc (also spelled Stl'atl'imc or Stl'atl'imx, pronounced 'Stat-lee-um-c'³), and was raised in Lillooet, BC on St'át'imc Territory (see Figure 2):



Figure 2. Map of St'at'imc Territory

Randy James, St'át'imc Territory, <http://www.statimc.net/>, Feb. 4, 2008, ©Copyright 2008 (accessed April 29, 2012).

¹ See Appendix C for Secwepemcetsín and St'át'imcets orthography.

² Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, "Pronunciation Guide to First Nations in British Columbia," <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100022848> (accessed July 17, 2012).

³ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, "Pronunciation Guide," (accessed July 17, 2012).

Spuska7 grew up with drumming and singing, beginning as a teenager around 17 years old. She learned mainly from the St'át'imc people and other members of the Lillooet and surrounding communities.

Ax7wil's father was St'át'imc and his mother was Secwepemc. Although he identifies as St'át'imc (from his Father's side), he is at home on Secwepemc territory (Figure 3):

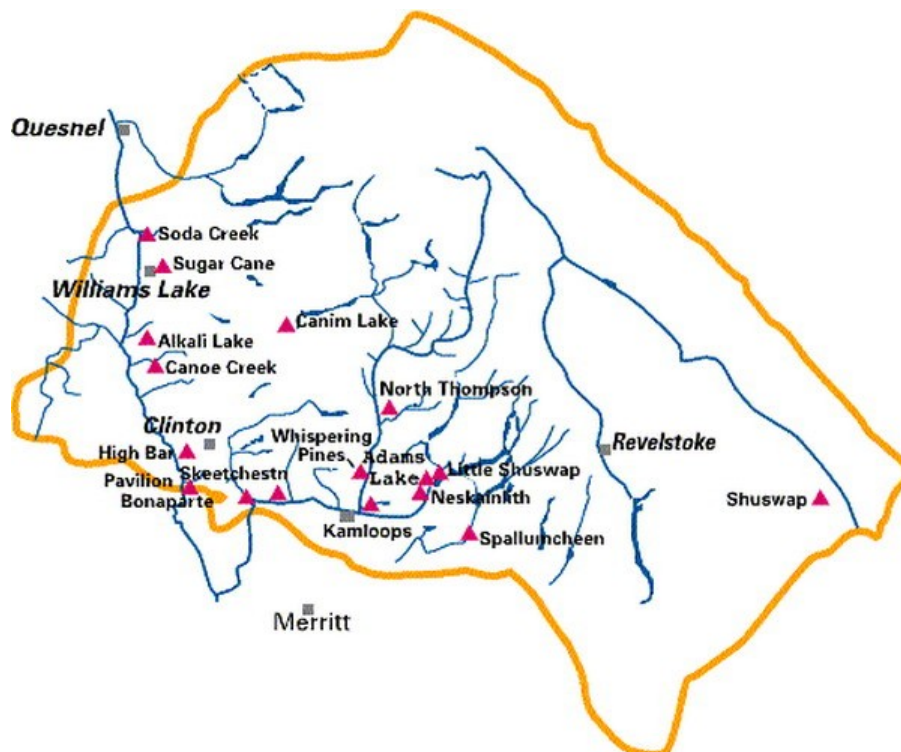


Figure 3. Map of Secwepemc Territory

Secwepemc Nation, <http://www.secwepemc.org/adc/map.html> (accessed April 29, 2012).

“Although I was St'át'imc,” he says, “[Secwepemc songs were] what I wanted to learn. And I told my elders this in the sweat lodge and so they honoured that. They started teaching me Secwepemc songs.” Ax7wil has been drumming and singing for over 10 years. Both Spuska7 and Ax7wil participate regularly in family and community events where individuals of all Nations and backgrounds are welcome to share songs and celebrate the ceremony of drumming and singing.

3.2 Historical and Contemporary Community Contexts

In 1774, Juan Perez, captain of the Spanish ship, the Santiago, made initial contact with the Nuu-chah-nulthiat-h of the west coast of Vancouver Island.⁴ His exploratory trip launched a full-scale maritime fur trade along the coast that lasted for several decades. The trade moved inland in 1783 when Alexander Mackenzie ascended the Peace River under the auspices of the North West Company and travelled by way of the Fraser and West Road Rivers to the coast at the mouth of the Bella Coola River. In 1808 Simon Fraser carried the inland trade further south when he explored the river that now bears his name to its mouth on the Pacific Ocean. Fraser was the first explorer to encounter the Secwepemc and St'át'imc during his journey downriver from Fort George. The Fraser River runs through Secwepemc, St'át'imc, and Nlaka'pamux (Thompson) territory. Through this endeavour he made the acquaintance of a number of Indigenous people, including Chief Xlo'sem of the Soda Creek band, who shared resources and assisted Fraser as a guide through Secwepemc territory.⁵ This initial peaceful interaction between explorers and Native communities was characteristic of the early fur trade years.⁶ In 1812 the North West Company established the first trade fort, Fort Kamloops, in the heart of Secwepemc territory.⁷ It was a small post that did not threaten the Secwepemc land-base. The exchange of pelts for items such as blankets and hunting weapons turned out to be mutually beneficial as the traders needed the subsistence and hunting skills of local people.

⁴ Robin Fisher, "Contact and Trade, 1774-1849," in *The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia*, ed. Hugh J.M. Johnston (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1996), 50.

⁵ J. Coffey, E. Goldstrom, G. Gottfriedson, R. Matthew, and P. Walton. *Shuswap History: The First 100 Years of Contact* (Kamloops, BC: Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, 1990),

⁶ The extent of this "peaceful interaction" is still under debate. Historians such as Cole Harris assert that the fur trade was built on forceful control and the fear of violent disciplinary action. See Cole Harris, "The Fraser Canyon Encountered," in *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997): 103-136.

⁷ Royal BC Museum, "BC Archives" (August 2012) <http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/exhibits/timemach/galler05/frames/furfortc.htm> (accessed September 21, 2012).

First Nations peoples of the Northwest had been trading food and materials for thousands of years prior to European contact and the fur trade that followed.⁸ Networks of ‘grease trails’⁹ ran between territories of diverse groups such as the Nuxalk, Haida, Nuuchahnulth, St’át’imc, Nlaka’pamux, Carrier, Tsilhqot’in (Chilcotin), Halq’emeylem, Sechelt, Tsimshian, and Secwepemc.¹⁰ The merging of cultural knowledge and resources had thus been a factor in Secwepemc life prior to the onset of the fur trade. However, with the fur trade this interaction between peoples was a new form of exchange, grounded in a capitalist, monopolistic enterprise based in London, England.¹¹ In addition to the European traders, trading brigades included people from other Nations; Chilcotin, Carrier, Cree, Stoney, and Iroquois peoples, for example, who interacted regularly with Secwepemc and St’át’imc peoples.¹² Competition for pelts increased as the beaver population declined in North America, and Aboriginal trappers were forced to spend less time on traditional activities including hunting for sustenance and more time travelling in search of pelts. Trade items such as cloth, guns, ammunition, and metal pots and pans had become important to the survival of First Nations families. Guns, for example, assisted in hunting big game, which had also declined significantly.¹³

A major gold rush hit the region in the summer of 1858 leading some 30,000 miners, many from California, to make their way to the Fraser River where many of the strikes were located. This was Nlaka’pamux territory. The rush soon moved upriver into

⁸ Nancy J. Turner, and Dawn C. Loewen, “The Original ‘Free Trade’: Exchange of Botanical Products and Associated Plant Knowledge in Northwestern North America,” *Anthropologica* 40 (1998).

⁹ This name comes from a fatty fish—called a Eulachon (or Oolichan)—which was transported from the Nuxalk of Bella Coola to the Carrier people of central interior British Columbia in exchange for goods such as moose hide and Saskatoon berries (Turner et al., “The Original ‘Free Trade’”).

¹⁰ Turner et al., “The Original ‘Free Trade’”.

¹¹ Cole Harris, “Strategies of Power in the Cordilleran Fur Trade,” in *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997):

¹² Annabel Cropped Eared Wolf, *Shuswap History: A Century of Change*, ed. Robert Matthew (Kamloops BC: Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, 1996), 7.

¹³ Coffey, et al, *Shuswap History*, 29

Secwepemc, and St'át'imc territories.¹⁴ Initially, First Nations vastly outnumbered miners, and remained more or less in control of their land and resources. Like the fur traders that came before them, the gold miners needed help traversing the rugged Fraser Canyon, and they required local foods for survival. There were major conflicts and significant deaths of both sides during the summer of 1858.¹⁵

In 1862, the region was subject to a major smallpox epidemic, which hit the Indigenous peoples hard. Historians estimate that by the time it subsided it had reduced the total population of the province by two thirds. Diseases such as smallpox, diphtheria, influenza, measles, tuberculosis, and whooping cough had already devastated local communities; between the years 1835 and 1885 the Aboriginal population in what is now British Columbia declined from 70,000 to 28,000.¹⁶

Early governors had “negotiated” a few treaties with Native peoples on Vancouver Island, but much of the rest of the province consisted of unceded land. And, the concept of land ownership, of course, was foreign to the Native people—many of whom travelled from place to place with the changing seasons and large game migratory patterns. After confederation in 1871 the federal government took over decisions related to “Indians and lands reserved for the Indians.”¹⁷ Aboriginal people were given plots of reserve land and expected to adapt their way of life to fall in line with the agricultural practices of the newcomers. Disputes arose between the provincial and federal governments over how much reserve land should be allotted; Native communities did not cultivate their land in the same manner as the European settlers, and it was therefore concluded that they were not “using” it. In 1876 a Joint Indian Reserve Commission (JCR) was formed in order to establish a set legislation on Native land allotments. In this same year the *Indian Act* was passed under Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie, defining Native peoples as wards of the federal government. The Indian Act granted the

¹⁴ Robert Muckle, *The First Nations of British Columbia: An Anthropological Survey*, 2nd ed (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2007), 67.

¹⁵ Coffey, et al, *Shuswap History*, 20-22.

¹⁶ Coffey, et al, *Shuswap History*, 29.

¹⁷ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, “Land Management” (May 2012) <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100034737/1100100034738> (accessed September 21, 2012).

federal government authority on matters band membership, lands and resources, taxation, money management, even the ‘status’ of aboriginal people.¹⁸ If a woman were to marry a non-Native man she lost her status, along with any rights, including reserve land, accompanying that title. With the loss of much of their land, hunting, fishing, and gathering was greatly restricted and the traditional means of survival became increasingly difficult for Aboriginal populations.

In addition to the loss of land and rights that came with the passing of the federal Indian Act, Native children were placed in residential schools under the direction of various churches. Children were removed from their homes and many were forbidden from participating in traditional ceremonies, games, and celebrations. The last residential school in Canada closed as late as 1996.¹⁹

During the time when I was preparing to write this section on Secwepemc and St’át’imc history I was invited to a salmon dinner on Secwepemc land. Myself, and several other non-Native attendees sat around an after-dinner fire listening to a Secwepemc man—a residential school survivor—share stories of his painful experiences. Physical, mental, and sexual abuse are common themes from coast to coast. I looked around the fire and saw the tears of twenty some people hearing first-hand how residential schooling had impacted one man’s life, and it became increasingly clear just how significant the theme of healing, as described by Ax7wil and Spuska7, remains.

Many of the themes expressed by Ax7wil and Spuska7 involve prayer, unity, and healing. Given the historical circumstances, such themes seem to be the outcome of the strength of their community; the ability to maintain connections through cultural action. The history of many of these songs may have been lost through the changes of the past 150 years, but their connection to special relationships and their healing properties have kept them alive in practice and meaning. Ax7wil describes songs as preceding the human act of performance:

¹⁸ Mary C Hurley, *The Indian Act*, Canada Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Volume 09-12E (Ottawa: Canada Parliamentary Information and Research Service, 2009), 4.

¹⁹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=4> (accessed September 20, 2012).

A lot of the songs that we sing today- these ones today that we sing, they come from times like that. That ‘homeland security’ picture there? *gestures to a poster hanging on the wall* (see Figure 5). A lot our songs come from that struggle in our culture and our ways of life that are very meaningful because [of] where we come from and our way of life; what the elders went through, what *their* elders went through, so, them are the songs that seem to evolve-that keep coming back-[they] are [part of] the struggle for the rights of our people, you know...somebody sat by the road with the guns like that and sang songs...[on] St’át’imc territory and Shuswap territory...they sat around days and nights and [said] ”let’s try this song, like the way we do here.

But we’re not out there. They made a song because it was very powerful at that time. Some of the songs that are old, old, old have been handed down from generation to generation. [T]he old chief song; kind of ironic that the DIA (Department of Indian Affairs) guys, [they] said they created that song at that time when they signed the 1910 declaration of the- of Indian tribes. But that song has been in our tribes for generations and generations, not just since 1910. It’s just—the white man recorded it. As far as I know, you know what my old friend says: when we started making drums, we knew the songs before that.



Figure 4. Poster: "Homeland Security: Fighting Terrorism since 1492"

California Indian Education, “Homeland Security: Fighting Terrorism since 1492,” <http://www.californiaindianeducation.org/store/> (accessed May 16, 2012)

The meanings of these songs may have changed over time, but a prevailing post-contact function has been one of solidarity.

3.3 On the Question of Purpose

When asked about their thoughts on the purpose of drumming and singing Ax7wil and Spuska7 both laugh, then Ax7wil starts to play track 3. This is a Secwepemc “Honour Song” which Ax7wil sings to pay tribute to his teacher and friend Ken Dennis, the Bear Dancer. “I wanted every word. Wherever he went I was there with him...and it was my journey” says Ax7wil. Prior to this point in the interview he had not used his teacher’s name because, as he explains, the honour song must be sung first. This is a gesture of respect and gratitude; a way of keeping the teacher present through the power and life of the drum. The purpose of this song may thus be to honour an individual, a group, the Creator, or the spirit of a loved one. By singing and drumming the honour song one makes an open statement about their respect and appreciation for another.

The demonstrative gesture of singing an honour song to answer the questions of purpose in drumming and singing prefaced a recurrent theme asserted by Ax7wil and Spuska7:

[The purpose of drumming and singing] is to heal; to bring our people together so we can pass on our knowledge of the songs in the way that we belong to the group. We belong to the Shuswap Nations²⁰ and...different cultures come together to learn our songs. You’re coming together to learn our songs, right? And drumming is very powerful. In our way of life- it is *very* powerful. When I’m sitting here and I’m feeling upset or depressed or whatever and I start singing and...then I start crying, my wife [Spuska7] will understand. She says: “oh, healing is taking place”. It’s a connection that we share.²¹

The purpose, as articulated by Ax7wil and Spuska7, is one of healing. From their emic perspectives, the function is thus the same. But an important additional function is included in Ax7wil’s description: that is, the sense of belonging to a group. The final statement about songs being “a connection that we share” defines not only drumming and singing, but musics of cultures all over the world. Cambridge University Professor and

²⁰ Ax7wil used the anglicized “Shuswap” after the author’s difficulty in pronouncing the name *Secwepemc*.

²¹ Ax7wil and Spuska7, interview by author, Kamloops, BC, home of Ax7wil and Spuska7, April 29, 2012.

Centre for Music and Science Director Ian Cross has developed a hypothesis related to the function of social connectedness:

It can be suggested that music's sense that a meaning is being presented, yet maintenance of indeterminacy in the meanings that can be derived from it – which elsewhere I have termed *floating intentionality* (Cross, 1999) – together with its capacity to induce a sense of connection between participants by establishing a commonly experienced temporal framework, makes music an excellent medium for non-conflictual interaction. Music's floating intentionality allows different participants to derive different significances from the ongoing musical event while each feeling that the meanings that they are experiencing are somehow intrinsic to the music; as these different significances are not made manifest between the participants, potentially divergent interpretations are never in conflict. Moreover, music's provision of a periodic temporal framework acts as a foundation for the co-ordination or entrainment of participant's actions and perceptions, leading to a sense of mutual affiliation.²²

Cross's hypothesis explains participatory music-making as a preventative strategy for group conflict management. But there are also known biophysical effects of synchronous activity which could explain the ubiquity of entrained music making among communities and cultures all over the world- both historically and presently. In particular, these effects include an increased ability to perform physical tasks (thus, increased energy) and enhanced positive mood; the former perhaps benefitting from the latter.²³ In this sense, the purpose of drumming and singing as defined by Ax7wil and Spuska7- that is, to heal- is perhaps directly related, either as the result of or precursor to positive feelings of connection with other drummers, singers, and dancers.

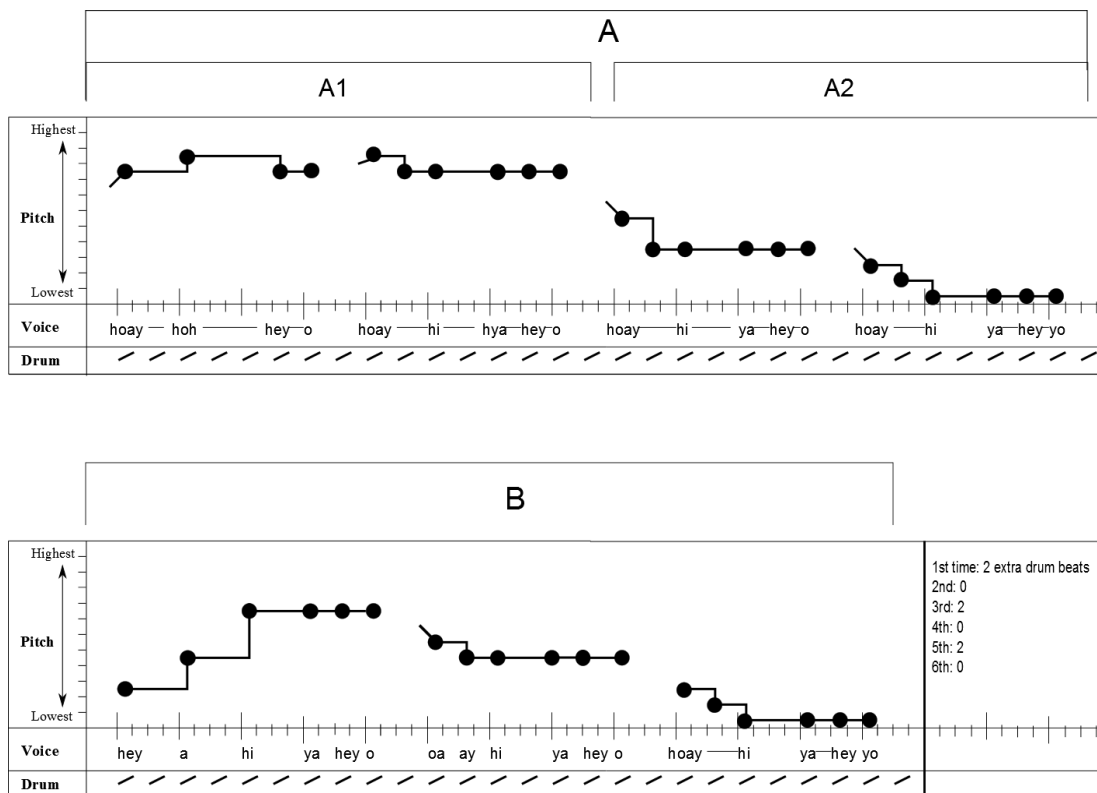
3.3.1 “Honour Song”: Transcription and Description

Track 3 on the accompanying CD is a Secwepemc “Honour Song”, drummed and sang by Ax7wil using a large polygonal wooden frame drum with moose hide stretched across it. The drum was beaten with a wooden stick with a soft bundle of leather tied to the end to form a mallet.

²² Ian Cross, “Music as a Social and Cognitive Process,” eds, P. Rebuschat, M. Rohrmeier, J. Hawkins, and I. Cross (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011): 321.

²³ Adrian C. North, and David J. Hargraves, *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2008), 294.

Transcription 3. "Honour Song"²⁴



Form: A B B A1 (Repeat 2 times)

A B B* A1

A B*

* indicates honour beats

The "Honour Song" consists of three main parts, which I have labelled A1, A2, and B. The form is essentially strophic, with sections in the order ABBA1 repeated as many times as the singer or singers wish to repeat it. In this version Ax7wil plays honour beats on his drum during the sixth and final occurrence of section B. Honour beats are special accented beats occurring every other time the drum is stuck. In some drumming and singing cultures, such as the Northern Plains, all dancers, singers and drummers will turn their bodies inward toward a central drum as honour beats are played. This is a way of paying respect to the creator and to each other.²⁵ Once sections ABBA1 have been

²⁴ This transcription is based on a diatonic 12-pitch scale from lowest to highest. The range of pitches used is 1-10.

repeated for the final time, Ax7wil sings sections A and B only, closing the song with a falling pitch “hey” and a rapid quiet drumbeat.

When Ax7wil thanks his teachers through song, he says, he is also “passing on the songs to keep [the] Nation strong, or [the] people strong.”²⁶ Although the historical significance, meaning, and intent of certain songs have been lost over time, the vibrant and welcoming community to which Ax7wil and Spuska7 belong uncover their meanings again in contemporary practice during gatherings and times of personal healing and prayer. Such are the contexts where the function of drumming and singing can best be described as building solidarity.

3.3.2 Renewal

The Secwepemc Cultural Education Society (SCES)²⁷ and The Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society (NSCS)²⁸ are responsible for the creation and public dissemination of materials describing or portraying aspects of traditional Secwepemc Culture. The SCES have published a number of books, including the Secwepemc Cultural Education Series. At the back of each book in the series, the Shuswap Declaration is printed, which includes the following statement:

Perseverance and hard work resulted in the signing of the Shuswap Declaration, August 20, 1982. The seventeen Shuswap bands had agreed to work together to preserve, record, perpetuate and enhance the Shuswap language, history and culture. The Shuswap Declaration marked the renewal of a strong and harmonious relationship that existed among the bands prior to European contact.²⁹

²⁵ Anna Hoefnagels, “Northern Style Powwow Music: Musical Features and Meanings,” *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* 31 (2004): 2.

²⁶ Ax7wil and Spuska7, interview by author, Kamloops, BC, home of Ax7wil and Spuska7, April 29, 2012.

²⁷ Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, <http://www.secwepemc.org/> (accessed May 2, 2012).

²⁸ Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society, <http://www.nsculturalsociety.ca/> (accessed May 2, 2012).

²⁹ Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, *Shuswap Cultural Series* (Kamloops, BC: Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, 1986).

This declaration is significant in the context of contemporary drumming and singing because it emphasizes the extent to which the 17 remaining bands (out of 30 distinct pre-contact Secwepemc bands)³⁰ have come together in efforts to revive intangible heritage—including songs. Such efforts are not only limited to the various Secwepemc Nations, but also surrounding First Nations groups, as exemplified by Ax7wil and Spuska7. Spuska7 sings the St'át'imc songs she grew up with, but she has also learned a number of Secwepemc songs since moving to Tkemlups (Kamloops). She provides an example of multi-Nation gatherings when responding to a question of participation versus listening:

[Ax7wil] *has* sat back and listened to other people singing, because at his Mom's gathering, his niece in law- she's from Saskatchewan and she sings way different songs than we do or we hear, and hers are really powerful. They're also like prayer songs...[and there are] other meanings. But she can go way down low and then go way up high, and she can do that throughout her whole song. And that is a time when he *has* sat back and listened to her...learning while he's doing that, you know, he's always challenging himself to learn a new song.

At the International Indigenous Leadership Gatherings previously noted under the heading 'Community Involvement' in the Methodologies section, this sense of solidarity through the performance of song and dance extended beyond First Nations, Inuit, and Métis; it included members of all Nations. Part of the process of cultural renewal is, for Ax7wil and Spuska7, to forgive, to share teachings, and to invite participation in singing, drumming and dancing. Through such participation, the purpose and function are the same: to heal. But in so doing, relationships built on mutual respect are also grown and strengthened.

3.3.3 Song Rights

Although the sharing of songs is an important part of Ax7wil and Spuska7's way of life, they honour the importance of asking permission before singing certain songs from other First Nations and other Secwepemc Nations. "We can't take ownership" says Ax7wil, "Who am I going to ask? I've got to ask the Creator, and I've got to ask how

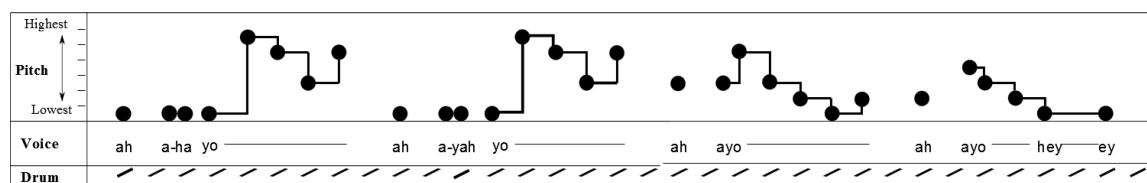
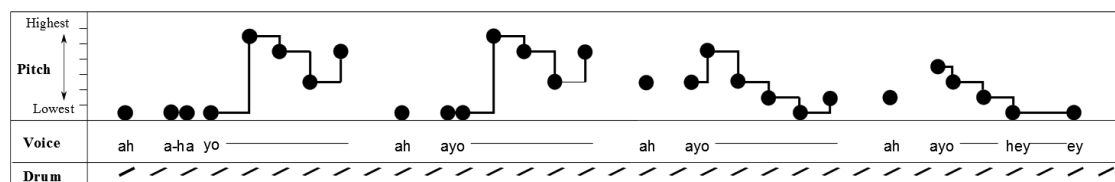
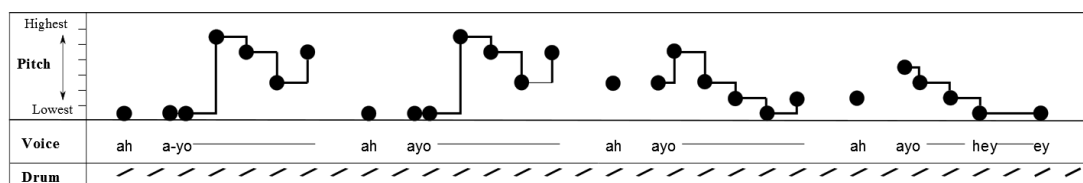
³⁰ Coffey, et al, *Shuswap History*, 37.

many people in the Shuswap Nation?”³¹ He goes on to explain that selling a song is beyond one’s right; however, to carry and sing them is—from his viewpoint—not only acceptable but encouraged. “I can give you the right to record them and give the music away, but I can’t give you the right to sell them” he says. Part of this philosophy is based on the understanding of songs existing prior to their first performance. “[T]here’s a lot of myths and a lot of stories behind it” says Ax7wil, “but that’s all I can share is that my old friend, he says: ‘yeah—when we made a kill, the songs were before we made the kill and they’re part of the drums.’ The songs are there and they were given to us by the Creator. Given to us as our healing and our right.” Such philosophy is based on similar circumstances in both James and Ax7wil and Spuska7’s accounts—namely, that songs are a gift from the Creator; however the uses, meanings, and functions which follow are very different. The gift of a song is, for James, a means of connecting to one’s ancestors and kin; while for Ax7wil and Spuska7 it is, in one sense, a means of connecting to all the world’s people as kin.

Spuska7’s favourite song, called “The Cane Tapper”, was one which she and Ax7wil were given the right to sing and share. Ax7wil explains: “It was passed down. We asked permission when we sang it. I told the guys, “I’m going to learn this song! I’m going to sing it!” And [they said] go right ahead!” Track 4 is “The Cane Tapper”.

³¹ Ax7wil, April 29, 2012.

Transcription 4. "The Cane Tapper"³²



“The Cane Tapper”, like most of the songs Ax7wil sang for the accompanying recording, consists of vocables rather than words. These are, he notes, “repeatable once you get the hang of it.”³³ The strophic form is likewise in accordance with the value placed on welcoming, prayer, and community strength— repeated strophes enable in-the-moment participation, and it is easier to remember the song for later reflection and prayer. “Some people say ‘chants’ and I just laugh” says Ax7wil, “because for us it’s not a chant it’s a prayer.” Where chants are often sombre and unpitched, this song is celebratory and melodically memorable. The distinction between a chant and a prayer may be very subtle in some cultures, however to Ax7wil and Spuska7 the joy of singing and hearing song is deeply imbedded in the prayerful experience.

3.4 Drumming and Singing as a Way of Life

³² This transcription is based on a diatonic 7-pitch scale from lowest to highest. The range of pitches used is 1-6.

³³ Ax7wil, April 29, 2012.

3.4.1 Sumac

Song performance among the Secwepemc is linked to the prevailing pre-contact understanding of *sumac*, or personal power. A young man or woman would embark on an *Etsxem* – a “guardian spirit quest” – in order to acquire their sumac.³⁴ The spirit quest, as recounted by Alkali Lake Band elder David Johnson in 1966, entails the young person fasting for 90 days; allowing themselves only suck the juices out of small pieces of dried salmon. At night, says Johnson, they would walk in a large circle through the hills around their village, stopping “at certain places....[to] sing and dance.”³⁵ The *Etsxem* was – and may, among certain people, families, and communities, continue to be – an important time of training where youth learned to be strong members of their village; capable of contributing to the group’s survival and, equally important, to find powerful spiritual guides able to offer direction through their personal journey.³⁶ Marianne Ignace, Ron Ignace and Gerald Etienne write that “In order to remain intact... these individual sources of power, a person’s *sumac*, had to remain private. Displaying them, flaunting, them, representing them in visual art that is connected to individuals, their faces and bodies, alienated and destroyed them.”³⁷ Thus, in contrast to the colourful paintings, carvings and clothing design of many coastal Indigenous groups, the Secwepemc were less inclined toward set visual representations of cultural values and more inclined toward action and performance representation of various *səməx*, (guardian spirits).³⁸ With this understanding, the invisible quality of the sound of voices and drums take on new significance. They are powerful because they appear only in moments which are spiritually and socially meaningful. Their purpose is to define such moments, establish meanings, and result in functions specific to the spiritual and social occasion.

³⁴ Marianne Ignace, Ron Ignace and Gerald Etienne, *Re tsuwet.s re Secwepemc: The Things We Do* (Kamloops, BC: Kamloops Art Gallery, 1999), 4.

³⁵ David Johnson quoted by James B. Brow, *Shuswap of Canada* (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, Inc., 1972), 150.

³⁶ Ignace, et al, *Re tsuwet.s re Secwepemc*, 4.

³⁷ Ignace, et al, *Re tsuwet.s re Secwepemc*, 4.

³⁸ Aert H. Kuipers. *The Shuswap Language* (The Hague; Paris: Mouton, 1974): 183.

3.4.2 Dance

Most historically-based traditional dances among the Secwepemc imitate certain animals, or guardian spirits. During the wintertime centuries ago, villages would hold s-TLAI, or “imitate” gathering. This gathering is described by Secwepemc elder Ike Willard in *Shuswap Stories: Collected 1971-1973*:

Before a person sang he announced his song. These were animals’ songs that represented the person’s power. After the song was sung once through slowly, the other people joined in. As soon as a person felt his song coming to him, he began to sing. It was not necessary to stand up before singing. Some of the songs were: the grizzly bear song; the badger song; the beaver song and the songs of various birds.”³⁹

Ax7wil’s community dances to a bear song- whether it is the same bear song referenced here by Ike Willard is unknown. Additionally, they dance “The Paddle Song”, “The Spear Song”, Berry Picking Songs, Lehal Songs,⁴⁰ Welcome Songs, Farewell songs, and many others...the number of songs is, to use Ax7wil’s term, “vast.”⁴¹

When asked whether there are “signs or signals that its time to dance,” Spuska7 replies that it is more of a feeling. “If you feel like dancing, she says, “you just get up and dance.” If this song really hits you and you think “oh, I feel like dancing” if the beat is right and everything then you just go with it. You go out there and you dance and you do your performance on the floor and...while you’re dancing too it’s another thing: you pray too. Maybe you pray for yourself, or for your family, or community, or somebody has asked you to pray for somebody else to make their life better or whatever. Whatever it may be.”⁴² Thus, the act of dancing entails much more than meets the eye. The purpose comes with the prayers each dancer brings with them when they begin to move. The function may not primarily involve affirmation and strengthening of relationships, but

³⁹ Ike Willard, “Shuswap Dances,” in *Shuswap Stories: Collected 1971-1973*, ed. Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy (Vancouver, BC: CommCept Publishing Ltd., 1979), 129-130.

⁴⁰ Lehal [pronounced lay-hALL] is a Secwepemc gambling game.

⁴¹ Ax7wil, April 29, 2012.

⁴² Spuska7, April 29, 2012.

rather, a sense of attending to observed, felt, or described needs in one's community and beyond.

When someone is dancing, Ax7wil explains, the singer is being honoured; so, he says with a smile: "I try not to stop singing until they're tired and they go sit down."⁴³ ... they're honouring something" he continues, "They're in prayer." Ax7wil goes on to describe some of the differences between dancing to *music*—that is, at a *swyep-max* (white people's)⁴⁴ dance—and dancing with drumming and singing. In the former case, he notes, the music often has a set number of verses and choruses. "you've got two minutes," for example, "and then [the musicians] quit. Ours is spiritual- it's all spiritual. It's not about time or anything- you know you can't quit singing if [Spuska7] is up there dancing." Songs are, in this sense, improvisatory. Ax7wil and Spuska7 view them as dynamic and responsive to each unique situation; they fulfill a need, whether it be dance and prayer, healing, or the need for solidarity. The song may be repeated as many or as few times as it takes for that prayer, healing, or sense of social cohesion to take place.

3.4.3 "Music" versus "Drumming and Singing"

One of the interview questions which Ax7wil and Spuska7 were asked included the word "music." The question was: "what is the role of music in ceremony for you?" After a long pause and some careful thought Ax7wil responded:

I'm not going to say music. I'm going to say drumming and singing *is* our ceremony. It's not the ceremony itself. Drumming and singing is a way of life in our culture and how we deal with things to carry on. The passage of somebody's life is a celebration, actually— it's what we want to do. It's a very important thing in our culture that we share that. So I don't like "music", eh?

The term "music," he explains, is not specific enough in describing the participatory, relationship and ceremony-oriented act of drumming and singing; it does not describe *process* and *becoming*. "Music, to me...you're talking about white people's music" he says "When you're talking about our culture and our way of life, you say *drumming and*

⁴³ Ax7wil, April 29, 2012.

⁴⁴ Aert H. Kuipers. *The Shuswap Language* (The Hague; Paris: Mouton, 1974),189.

singing, how does that affect you? How do you do that in ceremony and have a connection? I know what that's about."⁴⁵

Ax7wil's response to this question summarizes some very important, and frequently misunderstood, differences between drumming and singing as a cultural process, and *music*, as "That one of the fine arts which is concerned with the combination of sounds with a view to beauty of form and the experience of emotion; also, the science of the laws or principles (of melody, harmony, rhythm, etc.) by which this art is regulated."⁴⁶ Ax7wil listens to music frequently; the importance of separating the act of drumming and singing from the act of performing or listening to music does not suggest that music is not also an important part of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis life. Rather, it indicates the special function that drumming and singing continues to play in many Indigenous communities. It celebrates specific relationships, identities, emotions, and spiritual values. In the past, the songs of Indigenous communities have been collected and consulted as objects or 'pieces', such as an autograph score by Beethoven or Chopin may be consulted as the most authoritative version. But songs—more accurately the drumming, singing, and dancing of songs—is a living art.

3.4.4 Learning the Women's Warrior Song

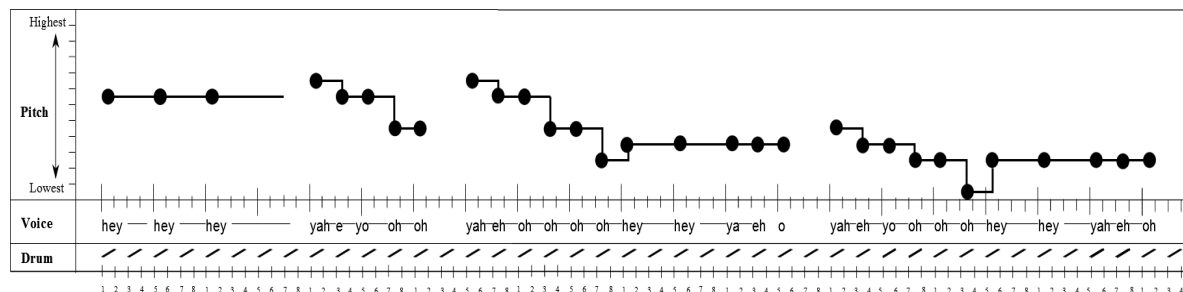
Track 5 is a Secwepemc *Women's Warrior Song* drummed and sang by Ax7wil and me. One part was added due to my imprecise recall of the song as learned, and there are places where all three of us stop to laugh or comment. This song, like the other Secwepemc songs on the CD, is one of infinite versions. As noted, the most valued function of these songs is not the sounds alone, but a combination of the sounds and the ways in which they bring those drumming, singing, dancing, and listening together through the ceremony of performance. Once the interview was over, Ax7wil asked "why

⁴⁵ Ax7wil, April 29, 2012.

⁴⁶ Oxford English Dictionary, quoted in Bruno Nettl, "Music: 1. The Word, Etymology and Formal Definitions" in Grove Music Online. www.oxfordmusiconline.com. (accessed May 7, 2012).

didn't I correct you when you sang that extra part?" The answer to this query was, simply, "because I probably would have stopped singing."⁴⁷

Transcription 5. "The Women's Warrior Song"⁴⁸



3.4.5 Personal Reflection on Learning "The Women's Warrior Song"

Due to my participation in this track, it is worth noting that I already knew this song from the International Indigenous Leadership Gathering previously mentioned. The initial participatory act of attending IILG was the single most important step in approaching this study. Ax7wil summarizes the importance of this event:

[A]t IILG, that's what it was all about, you know, joking around and trying to get somebody [to] 'come on, be part of us!' There's no difference, right? We're trying to help and we're trying to share something. And I'm sure a lot of people left there wanting to learn more...Because at the fire there was so much question, so much left and right, you know...and how many months did you finally make it back to ask these questions of us because of that spiritual connection? Because you want to learn more. You may call it your thesis, you may call it trying to do research, but your spirit wants to learn, right? To be part of something I'd say greater than all of us. I'm just sharing, that's all. We're just sharing.

In response, I made the following comment:

When I first got to hear some drumming and singing I wanted to learn more. So the first place, because I was a music student, the first place I went was to the library because I thought maybe somebody had written about their experiences drumming and singing, you know, a First Nations person had something...and I couldn't find anything and I didn't know- I couldn't find anything from a First

⁴⁷ Brooke Wilken, quoted in an interview with Ax7wil and Spuska7, Kamloops, BC, home of Ax7wil and Spuska7, April 29, 2012.

⁴⁸ This transcription is based on a diatonic 12 pitch scale from lowest to highest. The range of pitches used is 1-7.

Nations perspective- all I could find was early ethnographers writing down their observations, and, uh, I didn't know where to start looking for people that would teach me some of this information or, you know, so...its very generous and I hope people might be able to read this and then know that there are places they can go to hear music and be a part of-

Ax7wil's response was simply: "if you want to learn, if you want to know you've got to go to the sweat lodge."⁴⁹ Having taken part in a very powerful women's sweat lodge ceremony, I cannot overstate the importance of participation in such events. I had been told that ceremony and song often cannot be separated, but having experienced "The Women's Warrior Song" fully, as part of a women's sweat, this concept is much clearer. Meaning, identity, and sound are all transformed in a ceremonial setting. A fundamental piece of information to be derived from this thesis is that it is alright to ask questions, learn, and respectfully participate. Spuska7 describes the act of welcoming people into a drum gathering: "If [people are] standing outside during a gathering and somebody's inside a hall or whatever- and once they hear the sound of the drum beating it pulls them in. they all come in and go: 'hey, I like that song!' They all come in and sit around and they want to join."⁵⁰ "Especially if it's a song that somebody knows," Ax7wil adds, "they'll come in. Like what I was doing at the shed up there, at the gathering, I just sat there an sang. Next thing I have a shed full of people—because they're drawn in—they come in to see what's going on and I'm sitting there singing and I'm smiling at everybody and they come in—'you're welcome!'" Having been one of the people drawn to the shed in question, I can fully confirm that the songs, which we had all been learning together over the course of a week, did provide a welcoming atmosphere. I remember that smile and that song; and I remember joining in with people from many different Nations, all huddled together in a deer-smoking shed singing along to the beat of Ax7wil's drum.

⁴⁹ Ax7wil, April 29, 2012.

⁵⁰ Spuska7, April 29, 2012.

3.5 Celebrating Relationships through Singing and Drumming at Family Gatherings

3.5.1 Tsuwet

At a family gathering, Ax7wil recalls his cousin saying: “oh, we’ve got to teach our kids- they should sit here!” He responded by saying: “no no...if we’re sitting in here singing in the living room- they can hear us. I’m going to sing loud enough so they can hear us” and they’ll eventually come and see us laughing and see what’s going on and they’ll feel free. They’ll feel that connection and know [that] it’s okay to learn. And that’s all we want to do is teach and learn. It’s being drawn in; it’s a spiritual thing if you’re on the journey...to learn.” This is why Ax7wil and Spuska7 do not stop to correct someone who is learning a song. Rather, they continue to sing it together until everyone is able to participate by singing the same melody and drumming in a common rhythm.

Learning through practice is, Ax7wil and Spuska7 stress, the fundamental reason that reading about drumming and singing or listening to recorded sources does not offer the same fundamental principles and values that one might learn through interaction with the community. “My old friend” says Ax7wil, “he told me: “if you want to learn, you go to the sweat lodge.” There’s thousands, THOUSANDS all over Turtle Island.⁵¹ Pick and choose the ones you want to go to because you’re allowed to. Go to every one. Go to three or four night sweat lodges a week and watch who you want to learn from.”⁵² He continues, “If you want to learn, learn from the community that you’re in. Not from where you come from.” He explains that this lesson from his teacher ensures that when it is time to go home “you’ll have something to offer; you’ll have something to give.” “Besides,” Ax7wil paraphrases his teacher, “it will make our Nation stronger.” Again, this statement suggests a primary function of affirming solidarity between all who wish to learn the traditions, songs, stories, and teachings.

By learning the songs of the Nation where one lives, the values, traditions, and cultural landscape of the place—of the people—is also being learned. When songs are understood as prayerful ceremonial acts, they require thought about what or who is being

⁵¹ Turtle Island is a name for North America.

⁵² Ax7wil, April 29, 2012.

prayed for, honoured, or thanked. This, in turn, enhances one’s awareness of surrounding relationships and resources, and ultimately functions as a reminder of their meaning in life. In their book *Re tsuwet.s re Secwepemc: The Things we Do*, Marianne Ignace, Ron Ignace and Gerald Etienne use the Secwepemctsin word *tsuwet*, which essentially means “learning through doing.”⁵³ They remind the reader that *tsuwet* has been a central tenant of Native life for thousands of years. Social scientists, they write, call it “praxis as social reproduction of knowledge and activity;”⁵⁴ a jargon-filled description of the age-old concept of *tsuwet*. But to learn through doing is not always possible: one must be invited to ‘do.’ The function which has been asserted—building solidarity across Nations—is effective only because Ax7wil and Spuska7, among many other generous and patient teachers, have taken it upon themselves to share these songs and dances in the spirit of *tsuwet*; welcoming individuals from all Nations to learn through doing.

3.5.2 Teaching Children

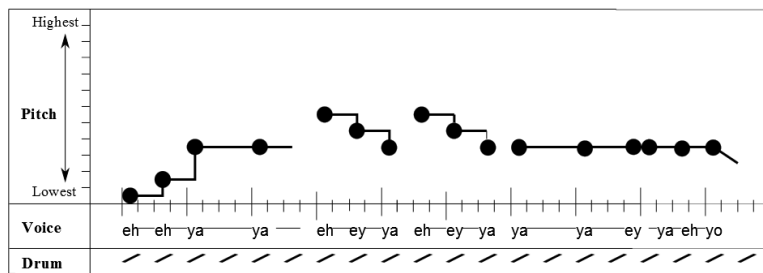
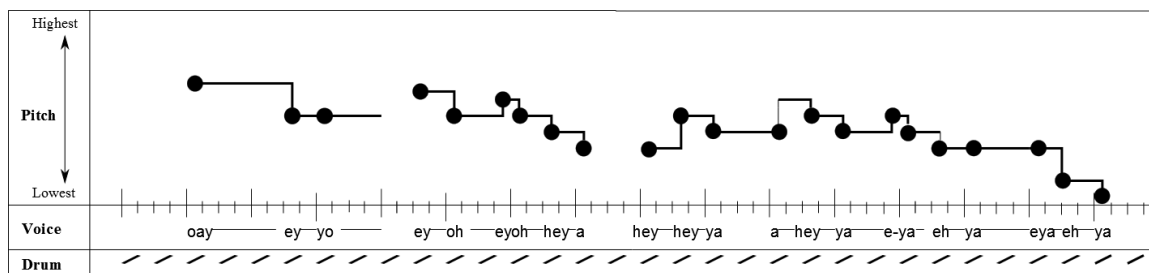
The concept of *tsuwet* is understood at an early age. Ax7wil describes singing to all the babies in his community: “You sing them a song. So they all know the song, they just don’t know how they got it,” he explains, “It’s part of culture; you grow up and... you’re just part of it.”⁵⁵ He goes on to describe the gift of hearing his young nephew say “uncle, sing a different song—I know all them!” when Ax7wil sang him the same songs he sang when his nephew was a baby. Track 6 is a Secwepemc Lullaby.

⁵³ Ignace, et al, *Re tsuwet.s re Secwepemc*, 2.

⁵⁴ Ignace, et al, *Re tsuwet.s re Secwepemc*, 2.

⁵⁵ Ax7wil, April 29, 2012.

Transcription 6. "Secwepemc Lullaby"⁵⁶



Ax7wil explains that some lullabies are meant to be fun and involve everyone- so they consist mainly of vocables rather than words. The vocal tone of this lullaby is certainly gentler in the first few verses. As the song progresses, the tone changes and becomes increasingly louder as it begins to function as a ‘fun’ lullaby for performance in a group. One can imagine the many possibilities in terms of drum and vocal tone depending on the performance situation.

The fourth, seventh, and eleventh verses of this Secwepemc Lullaby are sung in English. Ax7wil refers to a set of lines describing a specific moment: “I saw and eagle the other day,” Ax7wil explains, “is part of [an experience where] someone has been there; someone has seen that, and it touched them so they made this song and we sing it to heal.” In addition to the fun lullabies and those that are meant to be sung “when you’re sitting around, maybe at a campfire, maybe up at a home, around a tent...to put a child to sleep,” there are also healing properties. “Lullabies are beautiful,” he remarks. The words involved in this lullaby evoke a certain imagery which transport the listener/singer to another place. When Ax7wil goes to the mountains, he says, he has a ceremony which

⁵⁶ This transcription is based on a diatonic 12 pitch scale from lowest to highest. The range of pitches used is 1-8.

may touch him more because, as he explains with reference to the Secwepemc and St'át'imc, “we’re all mountain people.” He continues:

I really love the trees and love the mountains and being out there, you know, but then when I’m sitting here with my family and I hear my little nephew singing... the *tone* may change a little bit because I want to be softer, but over all the spiritual teachings—my little nephew sitting there singing touches my heart and my spirit and I want to sing more, and I want to sing more. And it has that same feeling and vibrancy [as] in the mountain—when you’re singing and all of a sudden you hear that gush of wind in the trees and you say “oh wow, the trees are talking now.”⁵⁷

When Ax7wil hears the trees talking, the vibrancy he feels describes an emotional or visceral outcome of his act of singing in the mountains. This sense of vibrancy, considered together with the sense of being in tune with the voices of nature, suggests the presence of a connection to nature which has been brought to consciousness through song.

3.6 Significance of the Drum

3.6.1 A Woman’s Moon Time

When a woman is on her moon time (menstrual period), Spuska7 explains, she does not drum or sing. This is the reason Spuska7 did not take part in the drumming and singing on the accompanying recording. “I know not to touch it when I’m on my time,” explains Spuska7, “and that’s once every month for seven days or whatever—however long it may be. And I try my best not to sing either, because I’ve heard that when a woman sings while she’s on her time it takes the power away from the men, especially your husband. It takes his voice away because we’re so powerful that we do that.”⁵⁸ Because the drum is part of one’s spiritual journey, a woman on her moon time—who has acquired special spiritual power—pays respect to others by refraining from drumming and singing. This is not always easy, as Spuska7 notes: “I try my best not to [drum and

⁵⁷ Ax7wil, April 29, 2012.

⁵⁸ Spuska7, April 29, 2012.

sing], but sometimes the song is – you like it so much you just end up singing it anyway, but then you kind of stop yourself and go “oh gosh, I can’t!” So *she chuckles* it’s hard, but it’s training yourself...because it’s a sacred time.”⁵⁹ During her moon time, a woman is participating in a very special and sacred ceremony. It is a time when she is emotionally open to give and receive powerful messages. She refrains from other ceremonies such as sweat lodges because she does not require the emotional bearing-open that is involved in such a healing ceremony. Similarly, the ceremony of drumming, which Spuska7 and Ax7wil describe as a healing ceremony, opens hearts, minds, and spirits to one another. A woman on her moon time experiences this ceremony even in silence.

3.6.2 Gifting Drums

The drum itself is extremely powerful. They are usually received as gifts, as I received mine from Ax7wil. “You know, when you’re in to singing and drumming it’s a prayer that we share and [a] journey. When I shared you that song,⁶⁰ right, that was my prayer to bring you back and that drum back in the circle. Because that drum meant a lot to me. Its back here; the journey its gone on and its come back to our circle,” says Ax7wil. The act of singing and drumming that first song, which was one I had learned the previous summer, not only brought back memories of the teachings I received at that time, but also acknowledged our continued friendship in the moment.

“There are a lot of people who are joining the drum community, singing,” says Spuska7, “people are given drums at gatherings or special events like birthdays. [Ax7wil has] made a lot of drums and he’s given away a lot of drums and there’s people learning.”⁶¹ A drum can be an exchange; a gift given for a gift received. Ax7wil describes the process:

⁵⁹ Spuska7, April 29, 2012.

⁶⁰ Referencing a song that was sung immediately after I arrived at the home of Axw7il and Spuska7.

⁶¹ Spuska7, April 29, 2012.

I see a gift in something...it might have been a challenge and it might have been something you accepted of my life that you wanted to see. And for me, when I gifted you that drum I see the challenge of you accepting our culture into your life, so I wanted to give you something to remind you of that time we shared, all the time. When you pick up that drum, you'll say "oh wow, I dragged that deer down the mountain! I stood over and I took a bite of the heart!"⁶² That will always be with you, even if that drum accidentally goes and disappears from your hand, you'll always remember that- because you'll think: 'Well, I wonder if I should ask for another one, or tell [Ax7wil] about it,' and I'll say 'well, lets talk about it and lets sing and we'll see what comes of it.' So the culture and the tradition- the song and the beat gets passed on and then later on the teaching will come with it.

He goes on to explain the significance of his drum:

That drum up there *he points to a drum hanging on the wall*; that's my life. That's where everything of me comes from, actually. From the gift of trust and love- that's where that comes from, my Mom. When she first passed that down to me that's what I got from it. She finally had learned to trust me. She'd finally given me something that was so powerful for me at that time. And the healing and the love and the caring that it is, eh? The drum—called the *pumín* [pronounced pu-MEEN] in our language—helps us connect to the Creator in our songs and in our spiritual way, right, that when we sing we pray. You and the Creator get to talk. That's why you see me close my eyes sometimes when I'm singing- it's because I'm in prayer. It may only take a second or two seconds- but that's when you're at one with the Creator. And that drum there, you know, that's a gift of my Mom. No matter what happens in my life I'll always honour that drum. But I'll also take my own and I'll honour my gift that I give to the culture and people, and that sobriety. And learning to walk carefully, learning to, you know, not be judgmental on others; not to go boasting. To be a drum carrier- singer of our people- is a very important job. My old friend says we've got to live the simple life. Sometimes I kind of hate that, but...but we do live the simple life here. We don't go drinking, we don't go do drugs, and we don't go bragging or boasting that 'I'm the lead singer' or- I don't go do that. I don't go to the community and boast about teachings. I let the community ask me what I want, you know, when I go to drum circles and they acknowledge me: 'we want to hear you sing'. I love to sing; I love to sing- you know, so I ask: 'what do you want to hear?' So, it's the meaning of life, eh? The drum—the *pumín*. It means life. It means the way I teach others about our culture, our traditions, our way; how we walk. If you're going to be on the journey, you'll learn that...it's all about the balance of everything that's in our life- not just a drum; not just a song."

⁶² Referencing a hunt Ax7wil took me on. Traditionally when one makes their first kill a bite is immediately taken out of the animal's heart as a way of thanking and honoring the animal for giving its life to feed the people. The piece of heart is taken inside the body as a means of keeping it always as a part of oneself.

The words “not just a drum; not just a song” take on profound meaning following the many teachings and insights which have been presented throughout this chapter. The drum is a symbol of life; it is a means through which to recreate songs which have strengthened and affirmed relationships for hundreds of years.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Although the teachings of James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 are distinct in their philosophical, cultural, and experience-based perspectives, by including them in a single thesis I was able to look at the many diverse uses of drumming and singing which can lead to the similar function of building and affirming specific relationships. As per my hypothesis at the onset of this research, performance practices including circular placement to promote eye contact, entrained rhythm beating, and attention to the facial cues of other drummers to indicate vocal turn-taking are all particularly conducive to establishing a sense of group cohesion and connectedness among participants. However the deeper cultural, personal, and community or family role-related factors expressed by James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 contribute to the specific relationships which are being affirmed and strengthened through such performance practices. I requested the teachings of James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 because all three of these individuals practice drumming and singing as a way of life; through action, expression, and being.

Through the stories, songs, and teachings of James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7, I have described a number of mediations which, in Merriam's words, "objectively define" the functional (relationship-oriented) outcome of participatory drumming and singing. The mediations in question include song ownership, tupati, and drumming and singing at family gatherings in the function of affirming and strengthening familial relationships; ceremony and ritual in identifying and building cultural relationships; personal experience, dreams, and visions in forming close connections with nature and the spiritual world; and the process of tsuwet: learning, knowing, and teaching songs and dances in the function of growing a healthy community.

4.1 Song Ownership, Tupati, and Drumming and Singing at Family Gatherings

4.1.1 Addressing Significance, Meaning, and Function

James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan sings, drums, and dances a number of songs which were passed down to him from his Grandfather. These songs, which are part of James' family's *tupati* (a set of family-owned objects and orally-transmitted knowledge including stories, teachings, and songs) are performed as a means of honouring one's ancestors and celebrating their connections to the spiritual realm. The significance of James' owned songs is that they are *part* of his family; in James' words: the songs 'come out' with his family during certain celebratory and ceremonial gatherings. The meanings of these songs, for James, run very deep, as he was born with the right to sing, drum, and dance them.

From my etic perspective, the function of James' family *tupati* is one of affirming and strengthening relationships between himself and members of his family. The meaning and significance of his songs—as family heritage—is shared among kin. This, in combination with performance practices such as song order based on family rank, disciplined practice within the family home, and the distribution of particular inherited roles in the preparation for and act of drumming and singing, strongly suggest that a functional role of drumming, singing, and dancing is, for James, one of defining and celebrating family identity. From an emic perspective, purpose and function are deductively the same. That is, purpose is oriented toward a specific positive goal. If this goal is obtained in practice, then the function will be defined in terms of the obtained goal, and the purpose will continue to be in line with said function.

Ax7wil explains the process of affirming and building family relationships in terms of exposure. He explains how the sound of drumming and singing within the family home or during family gatherings connects relatives together- often from a very early age. Ax7wil describes a Secwepemc Lullaby and its context-dependent purposes. When lulling a baby to sleep, both the purpose and the function is to create a gentle, safe, and comfortable environment. While the song itself maintains gentle and relaxing melodic and rhythmic qualities, the babies and children of Ax7wil's family also learn to associate the quiet and soothing tone of his voice while singing it with those positive feelings of security, comfort, and love. The significance and meaning of the songs themselves are not inextricably linked to family; however in certain contexts, such as the

story Ax7wil told of his nephew recognizing songs he sang to him as a baby, it seems that songs can be a powerful medium through which to form lifelong bonds. The function, thus, beyond the in-the-moment ability to lull a baby to sleep, is one of connecting family members through shared formative experience with particular songs.

4.2 Ceremony and Ritual

Songs and Dances, Ax7wil and Spuska7 explain, *are* ceremonies. The purpose is to create a ceremony through the acts of drumming, singing, and dancing, and the function of this ceremony is one of healing. But in addition to this overarching purpose and function of healing, a number of emotional, physical, and spiritual processes are functional in their own right and contribute to the sense of healing through song and dance. These emotional, physical and spiritual processes are, in the context of ceremony, largely based on cultural knowledge of ritual significance and meaning. For example, when Spuska7 describes the act of dancing, she is careful to note that during her physical movement she is also in a state of prayer. If Ax7wil happens to be drumming and singing he recognizes, based on his cultural experience, that she is in a state of prayer and he must honour her spiritual needs with continued singing and drumming. The process affirms a shared cultural relationship through its success in functioning as a spiritually healing ceremony.

James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan describes a number of traditional Nuu-chah-nulth ceremonies, all with multiple meanings, significances and purposes. But the one feature ceremonies such as the hinikeets, yutyahsa, and oosumich share is the requisite of cultural understanding. The shared cultural connection between all Nuu-chah-nulthiat-h involved facilitates a defined goal, or purpose. With all participating individuals working toward a particular functional outcome, the cultural connection which binds them in the first place is a defining factor in the fulfillment of ceremonial purpose. From the perspective of someone who does not have the shared cultural relationships necessary to fully—culturally—understand Nuu-chah-nulth ceremonies, it is apparent that cultural relationships are an important part of ceremonial song and dance, and, it seems, the strengthening of these relationships is a primary function in such contexts.

4.3 Dreams, Visions, and Encounters with Nature

Many of the specific song experiences described by James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 were highly personal and meaningful because of their connection to the Earth and to the Creator. Such spiritual experiences are singular and may only be described in specific terms of purpose or function on a case-by-case basis. In the most general sense, however, when a song is described as a gift received through a dream or vision, or when a song increases one's awareness of the natural world, connections are being made—at least felt—with the less tangible parts of one's surroundings. In this way a song may awaken spiritual connections previously unfelt or provide a stronger feeling of oneness with the natural world. Again, the function involves affirmation and strengthening of relationships.

4.4 Tsuwet: Learning, Knowing, and Teaching Songs and Dances

James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7 each provided unique answers to a set of questions related to the broad starting subject of 'music and social bonding.' By the time the interviews had been conducted and much thought given to the teachings of these three individuals, it was clear that the building of social relationships was not as much a part of their discourse on drumming and singing as it was of mine. But still, it was there. I had experienced it through a process of learning while doing; through tsuwet.

Tsuwet applied to the process of writing this thesis as well. A commentary on drumming, singing, and dancing as means of celebrating and strengthening certain relationships was there in James, Ax7wil, and Spuska7's teachings, stories, and songs all along. The benefit of my etic perspective involved a cognisance of features of musical function which contrasted significantly with those I was accustomed to in my own musical culture. The result of this etic commentary is a discourse on musical functions which differs from the emic purpose/function unit. The affirmation and strengthening of specific social relationships through participatory music making is not a subject which has been commonly pursued in traditional Western Musicological discourse because such

functions are less common in Western tonal music settings. Alternately, as this function seems to be intrinsic to the drumming, singing, and dance situations described by James, Ax7wil, and spuska7, an emic discussion of drumming and singing practices may not focus on social cohesion as a notable or salient characteristic. Through learning about drumming and singing from three BC First Nations teachers, I have delineated a function which, from an etic standpoint, offers a new way of thinking about musical function in general. The benefits of a highly participatory musical situation with underlying values related to family and community roles, spiritual connectedness, and cultural significance may be consequential not to musicological discourse on function, but also to studies in social health, music cognition and perception, and to the creation and application of new ways of making music in everyday practice.

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Appendix A

Interview with James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan

Notes on Interview Transcription Methodology

The recordings of all three interviews, along with any songs that were recorded, were transferred to my password protected computer and erased from the recording device. The interviews were copied into an Open Source audio editor program called Audacity® and slowed down for ease of transcription. The interviews are transcribed word-for-word, or “dialogically,” which allows the reader to reference statements which may have been paraphrased in the body of the thesis in their original context—including non-verbal reactions such as laughter, which are placed between asterisks. The concept of a ‘dialogic interview’ was first formally promoted by Judith Vander in her 1988 book *Songprints: the Musical Experience of Five Shoshone Women*.¹

Interview Part I, First People’s House, Victoria BC, April 23, 2012

Brooke: How long have you been drumming and singing?

James: Well when I first started off my father always taught us that we were only allowed to do one thing at a time. So we’re either a dancer or we’re a singer. And in the beginning I was always a dancer. I never got in to singing right away, but I knew all the songs that I was dancing and...you have to know the songs; you have to know when your next move is going to be; you have to know the rhythm of the beat because there’s different rhythms to different songs and different tones of voice; different tones of volume in the song. So you have to know every single—not word for word like a singer, but you have to know when it’s your turn to move and whether its going on to the dance floor or off the dance floor or whether its going to turn a left or a right and you have to know that side or that side. You’re not going to go out there and—there’s not going to be a choreographer or a dance instructor telling you its time to turn, its time to go this way or its time to go that way. You have to know everything yourself.

So understanding the song when you’re a dancer; that’s where I first started off. And I could never ever sing songs by myself when I was growing up, until in my late 20s, I would say, when I became a singer.

BW: And so when you learned to dance when you were younger did you have to then sit and listen to the songs for a long time before you even started dancing, just so you could know them?

¹ Judith Vander, *Songprints: the Musical Experience of Five Shoshone Women*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

JS: No, we started practicing and my Dad used to sing it a lot to us. So he was like our mentor, if you will, and he actually—we actually practiced in our house and he sang it to us and my Grandfather sang it to us a lot. And every time...my grandfather was my roommate when I was growing up, and he used to sing it to us all the time. And at times he used to have us dancing upstairs in his bedroom. And he used to tell us what to do; how to do it and all that stuff and we used to sit there and listen to his songs—the songs that he was singing. I have a lot of the songs on tape of my grandfather, that he sang, and with him singing it. But there's moments that we spent upstairs in the attic, or upstairs in his room—that I don't remember the songs that he sang. But I remember the dances that he was teaching us. All in all, though, I think that me being a singer was probably in my late...probably about your age, 29.

BW: Right. Does your voice have to be fairly strong to start being a singer?

JS: You have to learn how to use it.

BW: Right.

JS: It's not a matter of how strong. Like right now I kind of sound hoarse, but I can make my voice change pitch by using—by adjusting my vocal chords. I don't know if that makes sense at all, but I can make my voice sound really loud.

BW: And did anyone teach you how to do that or did you just learn by listening?

JS: No, I just learned by listening.

BW: Yeah.

JS: And when you're the leader of the song you have to be a little bit higher than the rest of the guys, so, when you're the leader you're the one that's holding the naatcha; you're the one instructing the drum beat.

BW: The naatcha?

JS: The naatcha is used for two things: It's a feather in the hand and it's like a big fan; it's a tail of an eagle.

BW: Uhuh- I've seen that.

JS: And that's a naatcha- but it's used in two different ways, a naatcha. The naatcha is also the rudder in your canoe—your steering canoe.

BW: Really?

JS: Or your sailboat or whatever- it's your rudder. We call that a naatcha. It directs the flow of the eagle, right?

BW: Yeah

JS: Or the bird. And the naatcha directs the flow of the canoe.

BW: Oh wow.

JS: So that's what the naatcha is.

BW: Would you use- so you actually use the feathers as the rudder of the canoe too?

JS: It's like the--yeah--not the feather though, but the naatcha is actually the big steering paddle.

BW: Oh, the shape...

JS: This one paddle has a different name than the other paddles--a naatcha.

BW: oh, I see. Wow--that's really beautiful.

BW: So, my other question was going to be: who did you learn the songs from...and you would say mostly from your Grandfather?

JS: Yeah, my Grandfather and my Father. But mostly my Dad. My Grandfather, I was listening. I was listening to the song and watching for my cue.

BW: Right.

JS: I wasn't necessarily learning the song, but I was, uh...and I knew my cues. And with my Dad it was different because--especially after he passed on--I knew that...because I'm the eldest son in my family, so it became my responsibility to become responsible for these songs and dances, because they became mine. And, of course because I became head of my family after my Dad passed, so that responsibility got higher so I really had to learn.

BW: Yeah. So when you become the--the sort of...what would the term be? The holder of the songs? Or when you own the songs? Is that...is that kind of...?

JS: yeah--I'm the owner of the songs.

BW: - The owner of the songs. Um, is that something that is shared with others outside of your family generally, or is it just--are there specific songs that are only heard by your own family?

JS: No, like all the songs that I have: like the y'tya'ta, I have hinikeets, and "Song of the Waves", and "Cheyenne", and "The Warrior". Those are the main songs that we have and that I own. That belongs to Manhousaht–Manhousaht chiefs. And two of them here... there was actually five of them that got given to my great grandfather when he was the head chief of Manhousaht; he gave five songs to my Grandfather and he gave five songs to my other Grandfather, his older brother. And we still have our five songs—our original five songs—but the songs that went to the older son, they're gone now.

BW: Oh, so you don't have any cousins that know them.

JS: No. And, I know the ones that my Grandfather had—that he got given—plus the ones that he composed, so there's eight songs altogether.

BW: Eight songs altogether. And what were the...do you mind? What were the names of the ones that you have? Does—

JS: the y'tya'ta—the ones that I can say—and then you have the hinikeets and then the other ones are ceremonial for the Tlo:kwa:na and stuff, so I can't name those ones.

BW: Okay.

JS: And then the ones that my Grandfather composed: "The Cheyenne", "Song of the Waves", and "The Warrior".

BW: And the "Where"?

JS: Warrior.

BW: Oh, warrior. And that's your Grandpa.

BW: Do the women ever compose songs or are they generally dancing?

JS: No. They're mainly dancing. They don't even come in the circle.

BW: Right, right. I've seen that.

BW: So when a girl is young she will learn to dance at that time but not to sing usually?

JS: Yeah.

BW: And is there—that's just tradition or is there...

JS: No, that's tradition because the women are really protected. And a long time ago there were some fun songs but there wasn't actually that many. So there was mostly ceremonial songs and dances and the reason why women weren't allowed to some of the

stuff is because the men had to go to a different place in order to do some of the things they had to do.

BW: Right.

JS: And the women couldn't go there because they carry our babies, so we protect them; we protect our women because we treasure them.

BW: Mhm. So this is things like hunting songs and this type of thing?

JS: Yeah. And mostly coming back to the Tlo:kwa:na and big ceremonial dances; everything that we do in our culture comes—is because we're connecting with the creator as well. And we're connecting with spirits as well as visions, so that's what I mean by "having to go to different places to get the stuff that they need."

BW: Are there sweat lodges in Nuu-chah-nulth-

JS: No. We do oosumich (*ʔuusimch*). We go up in the mountains and we find a pool and we bath in the pool for four days. Four to eight days. Everything is done in fours.

BW: Really?

JS: Yeah. We don't do things in two or three days. It's everything in fours.

BW: And does that have to do with seasons and things like that?

JS: It varies on different people, but Manhousaht's are—they do theirs on the new moon when it's really black. When it's dark out. They don't do it when it's light, you know, when the moon's out.

BW: That's when they go up to the mountains?

JS: Yeah. And we don't let anybody see what we do. And nobody knows where their bathing pools are. Like my brother does it and I don't know where his is, and he doesn't know where mine are. And we can do ours in the mountain, we can do ours in the ocean; we're fresh water and salt water because we depend on the salt water for life and we depend on [the fresh water] for salmon and stuff- that's where we catch our salmon. But we also look at the ocean too because we're whalers. So we have to get used to that water, and it happens—we do the cleansing for eight months out of the year and then for four months we're hunting.

BW: For eight months?!

JS: Eight months we do, yeah.

BW: And what is involved in a cleansing?

JS: A fast—you fast for the whole entire duration. My Grandfather explained it to me by saying that when you go up to the mountain...one man went up to the mountain and he came back down and the dogs were barking. They sensed him. And he turned around and he went back up for another four more days. It's because he wasn't cleansed enough that the dogs actually picked up his scent. So those are the kind of things that you—the reason for the cleansing is to cleans your soul, cleanse your body. And cleanse everything that you have within your being in order to do the stuff that you need to. So it makes you stronger psychologically and mentally, to do the stuff that you need to do. And you're praying to the creator the whole time, so this is actually a really religious ceremony, and I think that's one of the things that make First Nations different than most other Nations, and the reason that they do that is because it actually connects them to the creator and shows them respect, because you're up there praying. You know, praying for one or two things. And most of the time it's just that one thing—and it's the courage to capture that whale, or it's the courage to capture that seal. Whatever season it is, whether they go out for the first seal, whether they go out for big whales. You have to be strong enough to feed that fear and to feed the cold and everything else that comes with it. So that is what the cleansing is about. So you're acclimatizing yourself as well.

BW: Right, yeah.

JS: And you're doing this naked. All four days you're doing it naked. And a lot of people have different medicines that they use to rub their body. Some of them use a body...my Grandfather told me about this man—he was a very powerful whaler; he claimed to have eight whales a season, so that is a lot of whales.

BW: That is a lot of whales!

JS: And one of the things that he'd done was actually his stool—he rubbed it on his body, so that gave him the strength to do that.

Break

Interview Part II, First People's House, Victoria BC, April 23, 2012

BW: So, one question was where did you make music when you first started. You said in the attic, mostly, of your home?

JS: It was like an attic, but it was the second floor. Almost like an attic with a house like that.

BW: did you make music outside as well?

JS: No...

BW: Not when you were little.

JS: Not when I was small, no.

BW: So, um, one thing I remember I was going to ask you about the mountain: when you go up and do the cleansing of the soul do you sing usually too?

JS: Yeah. Usually songs come to you.

BW: Oh, okay.

JS: Usually it's the other way around. It's not that we sing songs, it's songs that come to us.

BW: So would a song come to somebody and then the others sing as well, or do you just sing alone?

JS: No because we're all by ourselves.

BW: You're all by yourself—oh, okay.

JS: We don't go up with anybody else. We usually hear the songs from spirits or people trying to—visions, if you will. I'm not saying that we see people or anything; it's just a vision, that's all we're after. And when you're really feverish—you know, our teachings tells us even when we're dying we see family members before we pass on. So my Dad's here, or my Mom's here. We feel better now that they're here. And it makes them feel comfort when they see their family that came on before them. And one of the things that we see is not necessarily family member, or we hear family members...it's just something that comes to us. And my grandfather, he had a vision when he was in a feverish state, and that is kind of where you want to bring yourself because you're constantly going in cold water, cold water, cold water.

BW: And you fast as well?

JS: And you fast as well. So you're going into another state in your mind. And when my grandfather got that he had a shipwreck. He was in a shipwreck. His boat sank- his trawler. And him and his wife had to get in a dugout canoe – their lifeboat; they had to get in the dugout canoe. He was way off shore- like, miles off shore. And he had to paddle all the way in and it took him all day to paddle in. and he went to the first beach that he could, and his wife actually had to pack him up because he was paddling in the canoe with a little bit of water at the bottom, and he couldn't even walk anymore because his knees were so sore from kneeling and paddling. And his wife packed him up, and just from him being exposed to the wind and the rain and that little bit of water around his knees he ended up getting a really bad fever that night. And his wife built a fire after dragging him up off out of the canoe and on to the beach. And she built a fire and he saw this dance around the fire. He saw men dancing. And he brought it back to the

community and he said this is what I saw. And he showed them, and then the elders said go away, take the men with you and teach them that dance and compose a song and come back to us. So he'd done that, and that is what "Song of the Waves" is, that we still do today.

BW: Wow. Yeah.

JS: So that was composed way back in the early...before the 1930s, that song.

BW: And you still do the dance as well?

JS: We still do the- and we still sing the song the same way that my Grandfather composed it.

BW: And so- you would normally just do that- uh- is there any specific ceremony that you would do that dance for now, or is it just a way of remembering to be strong and remembering your grandfather?

JS: No...like, there's a potlatch. We get put in order on rank, on who we are in our community. On our status, if you will. And we'll go up to the coordinator of the potlatch, or the floor manager, and we'll say "yeah, I'd like to do a couple of songs for whoever is hosting the potlatch" and then he'll say: "which songs are those?" and we'll say: "we'll do the "Song of the Waves" and "The Warrior"" and he'll put me in order. And that could be for a naming ceremony, it could be for a wedding, it could be for a coming of age, it could be for different forms of potlatches- because potlatch isn't really our name for the ceremonies that we have. We have our own names for them, for each individual party or feast that we have. And I can actually have those songs and dances come out with my family doing them, and we can actually perform them at those kinds of ceremonies.

BW: And do other Nuu-chah-nulth communities join in if you are there?

JS: Yeah. Even if I was having the Potlatch, I would actually get one of my relatives to go out and do an invite. So he'll go knocking on a door *knocks on table* and he'll personally invite the household to this potlatch I'm hosting. And he'll go next door and do the same thing until the whole community is invited, so he'll go to Tlaoquiaht, he'll go to Hesquiaht, and he'll go to other places that I send him to invite everybody to come to my party.

BW: And then do they- because you've had many other potlatches do people generally know the songs already when they get there, and then they can join in?

JS: Yeah- and in the beginning we have a welcome song, and that opens the floor. Right after that, we'll open the floor. And right after that everybody can come over and say "I'd like to do a couple songs" or have a couple dances. And they'll come out and do a couple dances. So those are our neighbor nations coming in to do the open floor.

BW: Right.

JS: Or they can come up and say a speech.

BW: Oh, okay.

JS: So that's when that happens, after the welcome. And then [we] usually break for dinner and continue after and when it stops, Ahousaht will go back on. And then it will go back into Ahousaht rank- on whose up next. So it will go from the least to the most senior- like seniority, I guess, if you will. But the higher the rank is the last. If it was my potlatch, even though I'm not the Tyee of Ahousaht- I hold the seat of Manhousaht, right- and then the Tyee is Lewis George.

BW: And what is a Tyee?

JS: The head.

BW: Oh, the head- okay.

JS: So if he comes to the potlatch and he's there and he wants to do something, he- even though that goes by rank, and the higher the rank- you're the last. But if Lewis comes and I'm hosting, he does not go before [with respect to the actual order, this would read 'after'] me. But he is ranked before me. And I never go in front of him, because it's my party. Even if you're the lowest rank and then you're hosting, Lewis will never go behind you. He'll always be right in front of you. So there's an order you're supposed to do this, right? And you don't just go up and say "I want to do this". There's a list and people have a job and it's been part of their family for a long time- that job- and they know who is who, and which order they're supposed to be in.

BW: And when you do the welcome song, is it always the same song?

JS: No.

BW: No- so every-

JS: No, Everybody has a different welcome song.

BW: Oh, okay- so if Manhousaht's doing theirs, then they've got their own. But your welcome song will always be the same?

JS: It will be the first one.

BW: The first one. But then if you go to a neighboring community, they have their own?

JS: Yeah. They'll do their own, yeah. And sometimes it will be a flag dance, and sometimes it will be a canoe dance- a paddle song. A paddle song and dance. And it depends on the Nation, on what they're song is going to be- their welcome song.

BW: Okay- so are there other dances? There's a canoe and a flag dance, and is that generally- its kind of one of those or are there lots of-

JS- Yeah.

BW: Right. And then there's different variations on those two?

James: yeah. And they have a lot of chants that they do, and each chief has their own chant. So each family has their own chant on what they- especially when it comes to ceremonies, they start off with a chant first, and sometimes they cleanse the floor. Depending on who you talk to and which nation you're looking at they'll cleanse the floor first before they do anything else because other people have been on there, or there have been funerals in that same building so they want the floor clean.

BW: so it's washing the floor?

JS: Yeah.

BW: So if, when they cleanse the floor is that a ceremonial situation too?

JS: Yeah- some use eagle down and they dance around all corners of the room

BW: And sing?

JS: And they sing and they drop the down and they pray to the creator that the floor is healthy- that the floor is free of bad vibes or bad spirits.

BW: And is that usually inside?

JS: Yeah- the only thing that ever happens outside is when the koyotsi come out- and I can't even talk about that to you.

BW: Okay- that's alright!

BW: So one thing I was wondering- do particular people usually dance, and if so do they dance at any time, or are there signals that its their turn to dance? Or, like, how does that work? Because when I've watched you do the drumming on Monday nights sometimes the women get up and dance- but is that just when they sort of decide to dance, or is there specific-

JS: yeah.

BW: yeah?

JS: When they practice for them- and what you saw was a practice. And a lot of the time practices would- a long time ago, like when I explained to you that the first time we done it was upstairs in my grandfather's room, right?

BW: Right

JS: It was inside the personal home. And when we were getting ready for a potlatch and a memorial potlatch for my sister- my late sister- we practiced inside our house. So we done a lot of stuff in private, so we didn't show everybody else what we're going to do. So we kind of surprise everybody. Especially "The Warrior". When my sister passed away, we hadn't done "The Warrior" for 20 years. When she passed away - we stopped doing it for some reason- and then 20 years went by -my sister passed away between there- about 4 years before that and then we had a memorial potlatch for her and "The Warrior" came back out. And we practiced that at the house so that nobody else would know we were bringing it out. And then when we got on the floor to perform everybody was excited- it was *really* lively,

BW: That's really special.

JS: And it came back and we've been doing it ever since.

BW: Wow- that's a really unique- you know, songs really mean something. It's so much more than just entertainment- music.

JS: And when my Dad passed away- this is back in 91. And you always have to wait for four years for a memorial potlatch. Usually you have to wait 4 years, depending on the status of the person. But 4 years was going to be just right for me so I could get ready buying stuff and getting stuff for gifts- blankets and, you know, cutlery and all the other stuff that I needed to buy – or my family, not just me. I don't do anything without my family, and if I do something my family is there so, you know, I can't say myself as "I" I say "we". We got ready for this potlatch- we were going to get ready in 4 years but the elders came to us one day when we had a community meeting, said this is what we're going to do- when we had a meeting with the elders. They said: "no, we don't want you to do it in 4 years. We don't want your songs to be away that long." Because when my grandfather passed away, my Dad became the owner of the songs and dances. And when my Dad passed away I became the owner. But my Dad was the owner of those songs and dances, so they had to get put away for the duration of the memorial 4 years. And the elders said no, we don't want them put away because they're so popular and everybody likes them. So we decided 1 year was good enough. That's what the elders decided so we went with them. And then they said we'll help you get ready, so they did help us get ready. And went fishing and going out and everybody did their part to get this party out so those songs could come back. And it wasn't just to show respect for my Dad, but to show respect for those songs and dances. So that's a reason why the whole community

helped out a lot. And they do help out a lot. In Ahousaht if you say something and you want to do something they'll back you up 100% if they agree with what you're doing.

BW: And do you usually go to the elders first to ask?

JS: *Always*. You always have to. And its not something that you- it's a must- you can't put it in a want and need list on that one, you have to do it. There's no buts ifs or whats about it. If you do something without the elders it won't work out. It really won't. It's like bad luck if you don't see the elders. We have a name for that- its *numak*. You don't do that- you don't do those things that you're not supposed to

BW: Numak.

JS: Yeah. So that's the kind of thing that we're taught, is always talk to the elders first.

BW: At that gathering that Celu and I were at – when we served food the elders always went first and we would go and get their plates and get the food for them and take it to them and everything and I thought that was really great. That's something people need to learn.

JS: Yeah we had a naming ceremony for my daughter four years ago- when she turned one. And we got gifts for the kids instead of the adults. And it changed everything after that. Everybody started doing it after.

BW: oh yeah?

JS: I'm not too sure if we're the first ones, but I don't remember seeing anybody else doing that. And we got coloring books and kids stuff like that for gifts. And it did turn out to be a really big hit.

BW: That's great. Did the elders bring some of those gifts, is that the thing?

JS: They helped in a lot of different ways and we did the gifts, but then they helped out with money too.

BW: That's so nice that your community is so close.

BW: Do you have a favourite song, and if so what is special about it?

JS: "Song of the Waves".

BW: "Song of the Waves". And it's because of-

JS: Because of that story.

BW: How do you think music brings people together? That's a big question.

JS: *Pauses* The circumstance- the situation- the purpose. The purpose is the big one.

BW: That's a really interesting answer because I don't think a lot of people would even consider purpose, you know?

JS: Yeah

BW: I think- yeah, that's really nice. I agree.

BW: So, when- Is there always the same leader? You mention that there is a person that leads with the eagle's wing

JS: *smiles* Say it.

BW: I've forgotten already!

JS: nutch(a)k)?

BW: The naatcha! With the naatcha.

BW: And is it always the same person?

JS: In our dance group, like, before- as far as I can remember back there was always Pierre or Robert- Robert Thomas were the leaders. And then Nelson started leading.

BW: oh yeah

JS: Nelson Keitlah Sr.- and he was always sitting with the main core, right? and there is always the main core inside the circle. But a long time ago the leader of the sitting- they used to stand on chairs to be higher than everybody else. And the reason why is to show the naatcha and to show the expression, and also to show- it was *really* lively back then. The lead singer had moves that just picked up your spirit- that just made your chills come out on your cheeks and stuff- on your arms- just picked it right up. And the last time that happened to me was when Nelson Keitlah led our songs and dances- the last time that that every happened to me. But there was also other people out there that used to do a lot of that too- Pompom, my grandfather, he led really well. He was lively with it, eh? He moved the naatcha around- turned it sideways, he had done a lot of action with it- he moved his body around. He bent down, got up, bent down- he'd done- he really showed a lot of movement in it. It's not just standing there just waving the naatcha up and down showing the drumbeat, but there's a lot of movement involved in your body.

BW: So when someone is moving the naatcha, are they ever gesturing for other people to move as well, like, do they ever-

JS: They're pointing at people if they're, like, at the beginning of a song, the first verse. There's a first verse and then everybody else starts singing with them.

BW: So the leader sings the first verse?

JS: Not necessarily the leader.

BW: Oh.

JS: He'll start the *whole* verse, but the *beginning* of the verse is the part that [in] some of the songs are sung by one person, and then they're carried on by the rest of the group after that.

So, if I sing a song like Heyey ey ey Heyey eyey eyey, that's the beginning of the first song, right? But if I wanted somebody else and I pointed at them they would start singing Heyey ey ey Heyey eyey eyey, and then everybody will join in: ya ya heyey ya heya heya and then that's when everybody joins in, right? And then I point to another person and they'll start singing Heyey ey ey heyey eyey eyey, then everybody will start singing ya ya heyey ya- that's the whole group singing. And they'll sing the whole song until they get to the end of the song, that verse, and then I'll point to somebody else and they'll sing that first little part, and everybody else will start singing again after.

BW: Okay- and so you always point with the naatcha and look somebody in the eye, kind of thing, and that's-

JS: Yeah, or I could just go like that to somebody behind me and kind of signal the next verse *gestures over his shoulder without looking, as if holding a naatcha in his hand*.

BW: Mmmhmmm, cool. Um, so, let's see: How would you describe the connection between music and dance?

JS: Well you have to get in to a- almost the same key as the other singer. You can't sing above them, you can't- there was one person that sang...that had a really really deep voice- a lot of people had a hard time singing with him because he just kind of took everybody out. And when we're leading, the leader has to know when to come down, and when to come back up, and come down, and come back in and out with everybody else. It's not something then where I can just go in and sing a song and be above everybody. I mean that's boring and it makes it flat- and you have to be able to come in and sing. But also if I'm high- if it is high I'll drop down a little bit but the rest of the group will have to come back to where I am in volume and in tone.

BW: So when someone points at you with the naatcha you would know, okay it's my turn, I need to be louder, kind of thing.

JS: Yeah. You have to be louder than everybody else. You have to be louder than your normal singing. But when everybody starts singing you have to find where everybody's at and be there. Because if you're higher than everybody else it's going to make it damp

and you're going to spoil the song. And that's the only way I can actually think of how to describe it. And it makes it off- it doesn't sound right. So when I'm singing with somebody else when they're leading I try to use my voice to strengthen theirs.

BW: That's great. And is it the same with dancing, that you need to pay attention to everyone's height and, you know, stuff like that, and try to keep it cohesive?

JS: Kind of, yeah, with ours I organize my dancers because I'm the dancer, right? I get everybody else to sing for me and then when I go out to do my dance I'll say you stand here and you stand here where its 2 girls in the front, 2 boys next, 2 girls, 2 boys, and then all the younger ones go to the back. The younger kids go in the back- they're just learning, right? So they need to follow somebody that's a little older. And they learn how to dance that way. And we never ever say no to little kids that want to dance. Doesn't matter how big or how small or if they've ever danced before- come on out and dance. That's the only way you're going to learn, by practicing. And then when you get older- you're not going to get a chance to dance at potlatches. Big potlatches [when you are young]. But, when you get older you'll be skilled enough to do it. When you get older. So those are the kind of things that we tell our kids. Don't be disappointed if you're not going to dance. But just to show that you've been practicing when you get older you will dance. So when you practice you can dance.

BW: Are there ever adults that come along and want to dance and then they have to learn as an adult?

JS: Yeah. There is now but there wasn't before. Yeah, a long time ago you had to be a dancer right away.

BW: And you always would, right?

JS: I mean that was our form of entertainment long ago. We had no TV, radios- that was our entertainment. And we did a lot of ceremonies- especially in the wintertime. When we were out hunting there was a lot of ceremonies- a lot of Tlo:kwa:na ceremonies and all that stuff that was out happening in our community. And that's when a lot of this stuff was done in the wintertime. And they're still done. A lot of potlatches are done in the wintertime. You never see potlatches done on the West Coast during the summer.

BW: That makes sense

JS: Yeah. Cause we're busy! We're out fishing or we're out hunting

BW: Yeah! Well, same thing I guess, right?

BW: Do you know, when the men were out hunting would the women do ceremonies- because the men were all gone and then the women would do some?

JS: No-

BW: Generally not.

JS- Like whalers for example, the women are at home praying to be the spirit of the whale, if her husband is a whaler.

Brooke: To *be* the spirit of the whale?

JS: The spirit of the whale. She is at home laying down in bed keeping her hands so she won't even wiggle her finger. That's how serious this is. Its teamwork- its- this is the only ceremony or the only thing that I know of in our culture that involves the women. Is when the hunters went out hunting she's praying to be the spirit of the animal that her husband is hunting so that it will keep that animal still while he is sneaking up on it to kill it. So- it's not saying that he is trying to kill *her*

BW: No.

JS: But she is trying to use her power through Nos, the creator, that she learned from her Mom and her family. To make sure that part is done.

BW: And so she stays quiet when she prays- there are no songs involved in that, right?

JS: No. She's praying really hard to be that person. And if the whale moves, the husband will come back and ask what happened. And he will get an answer- there's something that happened. Itched the nose or, something, something happened when she was actually trying to be still.

BW: Mhmm. Let's see, do you make your own drums?

JS: Yeah.

BW: Yeah, you do. And is it deer hide?

JS: Yeah- deer or elk.

BW: And what does the drum represent for you? Is there anything specific, or is it- I don't know...

JS: Different drums make different tones. You'd know that as a musician. And the bigger the drum means you're really vocal and you're a really big singer.

BW: Oh, okay!

JS: but a lot of people don't know that anymore, and a lot of times drums are basically the same size but they're a different shape. And some are octagon and some are round. The majority of them a long time ago where octagon. They were made of multiple pieces

that were glued together. And now a days it's just steamed- one piece steamed together and full circle. And for the significance of the drum; it's supposed to be like the rhythm of our heart. Of- its part of our soul, so that's the only understanding that I got from my Grandfather, where that came from.

BW: And when- so when – do you think that the drum sounds different depending on what song it is, kind of?

JS: Well there's different beats for different songs. Some of them are just straight beats like this (taps on table 1,2,3,4 – repeat- then 1,2,3 (4) – repeat-) and some are fast and some are slow (continues to wrap on table) so it depends on the song.

BW: Right.

JS: And it depends on the composer of that song. Especially the older ones. The older ones have different beats You'd never ever hear a song- the old songs- the older ones, you'd never really hear one song the same beat as the other. As another song, yeah. And with the hinikeetsah, you begin the first two parts of the hinikeets- that beat will be different than the last part.

BW: oh. And is that how people know that it's ending?

JS: no, no. The hinikeets- that's just the way it is. It's always been that way, I never got the understanding on why. But because the dancers are dancing a different way. They're a little bit faster in the beginning and then they start dancing slower at the end with a different foot beat too. So their feet are- it pauses, eh? So its going 123(4), 123(4) and then your foot stops in the air, and it goes back down on this beat. So it changes, the beat.

BW: And is it, uh- are the dances often written before- the dances come to someone before the song, or it just depends?

JS: It depends. Like I said, when you go and do the oosumich. When you go cleanse yourself and you hear a song or somebody comes to you and tells you what you're supposed to do next, then they'll go and do it and they'll find something. They'll find medicine and they'll use it. And it will start making them stronger in whatever they're going to be. But what they're going to be doesn't start from when they go out and look for it. It starts when the parents put what they want their child to become and wrap it in the afterbirth- it starts long before that. It starts when you're an infant- like, when you're just a young baby. Like my daughter- I'm taking her afterbirth and we're wrapping stuff around it and the stuff that we want her to become. So my daughter is not going to be just anybody. She's going to be something because we're preparing what we want her to become. And it's not just because- I mean you look at movies, you look at stories of parents wanting their children to be better than them. They want them to be doctors and lawyers and they want them to be independent and to possibly take care of them when they get older. With First Nations people it's similar to that, but they're using the power of the creator and the power of prayer and belief in our religion for that to happen. And it

works. And I'm not saying that it will work for everybody but its working for us, because we see the things that we've done for Jesse- we've done that ceremony for Jesse and we see it coming out. We've seen it come out even when she was two years old we saw those things coming. And it wasn't us pushing her to be what we wanted her to become- but sometimes it was done by the Grandfather or the Grandmother that took that afterbirth and they didn't tell us what it was. They didn't tell the parent what they had done with their grandchild's afterbirth. So a long time that they didn't know. My daughter is probably not going to find out what we put in there because it will take away that strength of our religion- of our belief from what we'd just done.

BW: Do you sing during that ceremony too?

JS: We pray. We pray a lot because we're sending it back. We're bringing it back. It's almost like we go out fishing and we dress the fish at home- we don't throw our remains in the garbage. We bring them back to the ocean and we thank the creator. And that's what we're doing with the afterbirth. But we're sending it away with gifts- with stuff that we want our child to become. If you ever hear a story of somebody writing a letter to their loved one and then burning it so that they will receive it. It's almost similar to that but we're sending a message to the creator that this is what we would like our daughter to become.

BW: yeah. So you bury it then?

JS: I can't say what we do with it.

BW: Hmmm.That's really nice.

BW: What types of songs do you sing? Do you have lullabies and you said warrior songs, and?

JS: Y'tya'ta. Y'tya'ta is letting the spirit go. It's a powerful dance and song. And it's only danced by ladies, and they wear white shawls and headbands with white feathers and down on their heads. Eagle down on their heads. And it's the ones that are- like, when my father passed away all of my sisters had done the y'tya'ta. And so my Dad's closest relatives- my mom was doing the y'tya'ta and some of my nieces that were close to my Dad that were grieving really hard over my Dad's loss. And they were praying- and what the y'tya'ta is, is to let all the grieving go and let the celebration begin. So that's what that's about. And some other cultures have a similar thing- like a wake, for example, and I'm not saying ours is like a wake, but it's to recognize it- or to look at it that way. That's the only way I can describe what the y'tya'ta does.

BW: and when the women dance the y'tya'ta are the men playing drums and singing?

JS: Yeah they're singing the song. But it's a powerful song. That's a song that I can't sing here- 'cause I can only do it at home. That's the only place I could do it. Same with

the hinikeets- I can't sing it, I can't dance it here. The only time I can do it is at home. So when I go back to Ahousaht.

BW: And then you said "The Cheyenne" is one your grandfather wrote. And "Song of the Waves" and "The Warrior".

JS: and that was the [The Cheyenne] that I was actually singing to you to explain. And there's different tones- there's different levels. You know, not just like normal talk. You can't sing that song like that. And it has- I try to sing it...I sang it one time and my uncle corrected me and said no, you have to repeat those over and over again. You can't just say Hey ey. Its Hey ey ey ey . And you have to say it over and over again, the Hey ey ey . And I was just saying Hey ey. And I was singing that verse or that part of the song that way and he said, you're doing it wrong- he corrected me. Even though that is my song

BW: *laughs*

JS: He came up to me and said: "no, you don't do it that way." And that was discipline, right, in action. He said it right away. And hahupa is a big word in our language.

BW: Hahupa.

JS: Hahupa, yeah. Its disciplining. Or correcting. And he'd done that to me. He'd *slaps own wrist* slapped my wrist. He said you don't sing it that way you sing it this way.

BW: And it's because he's an elder, and he hears the song-

JS: He was one of our leaders- lead singers- in Ahousaht

BW: yeah.

JS: And he's, well my father, before he passed away, he said if you ever need anything, he goes, see Nelson Keitlah, Harold Little, or Louie Frank Sr. Those are the people that are going to- and Louie Frank, he was there when my Dad died. And he instructed Louie Frank to take care of us. And my father- he never had any brothers, right? And so it's the next brother who takes care of us. We're never orphans. So...we're still not orphans because we have other people taking care of us.

BW: Your uncles, and

JS: Yeah.

BW: So one question I was going to ask is do you change the way you sing depending on the song. And the answer is- yes? It sounds like you change how loud you are singing... do you change the style of singing depending on what type of song it is too?

JS: No. That songs that I sang to you- I could sing it over and over again to you and it will sound the same. You don't change songs. You don't change the way you sing them.

BW: What about different songs- if you sang, lets say, "The Cheyenne", or something like- a different song- would you sing more from, you know, maybe a more chesty voice depending on what type of song it is, or depending on...*sees James smiling and starts to laugh* No???

JS: *laughs* well it really depends on where your at. Because I sing loud when I sing, and there are songs that you have to sing low and there are parts in the song that you have to break down. You don't change those things.

BW: Mhmm.

JS: But, lets say it is noisy now, I'd have to bring my voice up just a little bit higher. But I'm not going to be screaming because it won't have that tone.

BW: Yeah, its tone that I'm kind of wondering about.

JS: If I'm yelling the song then I'm not singing; I'm yelling. So we don't go to the level of yelling.

BW: yeah.

JS: So if I start losing my voice- if I start making mistakes- which we don't- we're not supposed to make mistakes- my backup will kick in. So somebody will take over for me. Yeah, so....

BW: Oh! That's neat.

BW: I should check- I don't want to keep you here too long. How are we doing? I'll maybe just ask you one more question, if I could.

JS: I'm good until 4:49

BW: 4:49- okay!

both laugh

BW: When you meet someone who knows a song that you also know, does it make you feel connected to them?

JS: It has to when you sing it together.

BW: Right, because I guess you always- you must have sang it with that person before- based on what you've been telling me.

JS: yeah, but sometimes- because today's different right, you can hear it on a recording, you can hear it on youtube-

BW, yeah, right.

JS: you can hear it anywhere and you can learn it. And there's a song that I like singing and, I think it belongs to the (Artinians itinians)??? I don't actually know who owns it, but I hear it in my head all the time and I sing it all the time. I sing it in my boat when I'm fishing- I hear the motor running and I sing it in my boat when I'm fishing. Especially when I hear motors, I can sing. When I'm by myself sitting in a room or when I'm sitting in a circle in a group I can't sing it. I have to hear a motor.

BW: Really?!

JS: I don't know what it is, but it makes me remember songs.

BW: Maybe its because you love being out fishing that so you associate [them with it]

JS: Maybe its because that's where I heard the songs- when I was fishing with my Dad

BW: Awe. Yeah.

BW: Are songs ever given as gifts?

JS: yeah.

BW: So before someone passes away you could give a gift of a song...

JS: If somebody *pauses* it's not usually done when they're ill, its usually done when they're well. So if somebody came and looked at me and said "I really like the Song of the Waves" I'll talk to my family first and say "so and so really likes this song -our song- and I want to give him permission because he's done a lot for us and he's, you know, he's been really like pinnacle for our family and I want to give him permission because – say he's not from Ahousaht- he's from somewhere else. And I want to give him permission to sing this song and dance. And my family will say yes or no- or the elders in our family. And if they say yes and I'm having a party, I'll stand up and I'll have my speaker announce to everybody and I'll call his name and ask him to come up. And they'll stand him up and my speaker will tell everybody in the whole hall- in the whole building- that this person is allowed to sing the song that we've just done. Because we'll do it first. We'll do the "Song of the Waves", or "The Warrior"- whatever song. We'll do it. And say, that last song that we sang, we're giving you permission to do that song and dance and we have witnesses here to prove that we gave you permission. But that doesn't mean that I give him all my gear- he has to make his own.

BW: All your gear?

JS: Yeah, all my regalia for the song. Because we don't just go out there naked, right?
laughs

BW: *laughs* Right- so you have different outfits for different songs.

JS: Yeah. Like, for song of the waves we use cedar bark and cedar bark skirts.

BW: oh, beautiful. And do the dancers wear the same thing as the singers?

JS: No, the *dancers* wear the cedar bark

BW: oh, okay.

JS: And shorts underneath the skirts so it looks like you just have cedar bark on. And back when my Dad actually danced this song it was just mainly guys that had done the dance but girls came into it when my Dad moved to town and my sisters were the only ones here, so that's why song of the waves introduced women.

BW: And do you need to also- when a woman wants to start dancing would you gift the dance to the woman too, or is it okay for-

JS- No, no- I'm not saying we don't gift it to women because Anne Atleo from Ahousaht got gifted to do the bow and arrow and I think she still does it once in a while.

BW: she sings it?

JS: No, she doesn't sing it. She has permission to do it, so she gets the singers to sing and she'll go do the dance with it. So you don't necessarily have to be a dancer or a singer to get permission to sing or dance a song.

BW: Oh, okay. So, do you ever sit and listen without drumming, singing, or dancing, as, like, an audience member?

JS: Do I ever what?

BW: do you ever sit and listen almost like an audience member when communities are drumming or are you pretty much always involved in dancing or drumming or singing?

JS: Once in a blue moon I'll sit down in the audience. Not very often

BW: And do you experience something different when you're an audience member as opposed to being part of –

JS: other than being out of place?

BW: You feel out of place?

JS: Yeah, that's the big thing when I sit in the audience. And sometimes my wife will look and me and say "what are you doing here?"

BW: *laughs*

JS: Yeah! That's what she says: "what are you doing here?" And she knows my role in my community and she knows what I'm supposed to be doing and where I'm supposed to be. She's not selfish with me. She doesn't hold me in place- she lets me go and do my thing.

BW: And is there generally people that just watch or is it kind of- like, does everybody participate usually?

JS: There's retirees, if you will

BW: Right

JS: I'm not saying that they're old, it's just that they don't do the song and dance anymore because they've reached your age, or seniority, if you will. They are spectators now. And at times, just for fun, they'll get up and the end of the song to dance with the dancers because that was the dance that they sang. Not necessarily what they own, but they were one of the original dancers or something, of that dance, and they'll get up and dance.

BW: Did you say that was the dance that they sang?

JS: uh, the dance that they danced.

BW: So the dancers wouldn't normally sing as well, right?

JS: No, like I said, if you're a dancer you aren't a singer. If you're a singer you aren't a dancer.

BW: OK, well that's pretty much it- I mean.

JS: I see you brought a drum.

BW: Well yeah, if you wanted to drum to show me anything I brought my drum just in case.

JS: I can show you something.

BW: Do you want to? So, I can pause this and not record it- do you mind?

JS: you can leave it on.

BW: And here's another thing: if you want to play a song for me I can include it with my paper as a CD.

JS: yeah.

BW: But if you'd rather not then I won't.

JS: no, you can.

BW: OK, just because when people are reading about these things it might be nice for them to hear what it sounds like.

JS: I'll sing you "The Cheyenne".

Appendix B

Interview with Ax7wil and Spuska7

Interview Part I, Home of Ax7wil and Spuska7, Kamloops BC, April 29/2012

Brooke: Okay, so the first question for both of you is how long have you been drumming and singing?

Spuska7: I've been doing it ever since I was a teenager, about 17.

BW: About 17? And who taught you?

S: Freddy John, Bucky John, those are the two main people

B: And are they family members, or?

S: No. They're people of the community, and the Státimc Nation

BW: Oh, okay. So your family is Státimc

S: Yeah.

BW: And [Ax7wil], your family is Shuswap and Státimc, right?

Ax7wil: Mhmm.

BW: Yeah, ok. Your Mom is Shuswap-

A: Yeah- my mom is Shuswap and my Dad's St'atliam.

BW: Right. And do you generally use Secwepemc...I can't pronounce it!

A: Secwepemc *speaking slowly, sounding out: SKWEPEM(K)*

BW: Secwepemc? *repeating slowly*

A: Yeah

BW: Yeah, yeah- ok. And is that generally what your family calls themselves, or do you use Shuswap?

A: No, I go with my Dad's side: Státimc Nation.

BW: You go with your Dad's side. Yeah.

A: And I've been drumming – how many years- 10 years, 12 years- something like that

BW: So did you start sort of just drumming with community events as well

A: When I sobered up I went with a group of the elders- I ended up going to a lot of sweat lodges to learn the songs and a lot of them were doing different types of singing that I wasn't ready to learn and, a lot of- I could say they were more ceremonial songs that I wasn't too willing to learn. I want to learn where I live- this culture, this territory- the Secwepemc nation, right? Although I was Státimc I was- that's what I wanted to learn. And I told my elders this in the sweat lodge and so they honored that. They started teaching me Secwepemc songs.

BW: Oh, wow.

A: And I thank them every day, I thank them all the time because two of the main ones that taught me are passed on to the other side. But their teachings are always with me and it's a gift that I tell them when I sing the songs I'm passing on the songs to keep our Nation strong, or our people strong.

BW: And, uh, so is there anyone that you learn songs from now, or are you more of a teacher now?

A: I learn songs all the time

BW: All the time

A: All the time. But a lot of it is I'm a teacher. I've taken the role of my teacher when I started, right, and a lot of people- my family, mostly- like to sit around like this and just sing.

BW: yeah.

A: Because [we're] passing on the songs. I got a good gift a few years ago when I took my little nephew- we went out to a funeral and we - we went there and he wanted to sing and he couldn't sing; didn't want to sing. And we were riding back home and I started singing and- for two hours- and he [said]: "uncle, sing a different song- I know all them!"

BW: *laughs*

A: And he was about 4 or 5 years old. And what it was is that when he was younger I used to go pick him up like this and sing to him. And so he knew the songs. So I try to do that with all the younger kids- the babies. You sing them a song. So they all know the song- they just don't know how they got it. Its part of culture, you grow up and you- you're just part of it.

BW: So do you create your own songs sometimes, or do you mostly sing the songs that have been passed along?

A: Once in a while we create a song- we'll sit back for a couple of hours and, you know- the one song we sang was our- we created from a big drum group. We couldn't sing the high pitch so we made our own based on a vocal or a vowel that we can change, eh?

BW: Right. And the songs that you sing, you said that you tend to go with your Dad's side, but you- the songs are mostly Secwepemc (trouble pronouncing again)

A: You can just go with Shuswap.

BW: Okay. So mostly Shuswap songs, right?

A: yeah.

BW: And are they mostly vocables- like, not specific words, but more sounds that you make?

A: yeah.

B: for the most part

A: They're all vocals that are, I would say, repeatable once you get the hang of it, but they're- uh- some people say chants and I just laugh, right? Because for us it's not a chant it's a prayer. You know, when you're in to singing and drumming it's a prayer that we share and the journey when I shared you that song, right, that was my prayer to bring you back and that drum back in the circle. Because that drum meant a lot to me. Its back here- the journey its gone on and its come back to our circle.

BW: mmhmm. That's cool. So does everyone in your community more or less drum at one time or another, or is it just that there is a sort of specific- I don't know- I guess community is a very broad term, but...

S: There are a lot of people who are joining the drum community- singing. You know, people are given drums at gatherings or special events like birthdays. Yeah- like, he's made a lot of drums and he's given away a lot of drums and there's people learning. And some people have drums that are just sitting on the wall and they're not even being used.

BW: Mmhmmm

S: Yeah.

BW: Do most people get drums gifted, is it pretty-?

S: Pretty much, Yeah.

A: It's a pretty common thing. I make 8 or 10 drums at a time

BW: Oh wow

A: and if I sell one I go buy more frames but then I give the rest away, right? I like to buy frames from an old timer because it's his retirement money. You know, trying to keep the circle going around. I help him. Like that drum, for instance?

BW: yeah, he makes beautiful frames!

A: It took a lot of work, and on a gifted drum, I see a gift in something. And I see a gift- it might have been a challenge and it might have been something you accepted of my life that you wanted to see. And for me, when I gifted you that drum I see the challenge of you accepting our culture into your life, so I wanted to give you something to remind you of that time we shared, all the time. When you pick up that drum, you'll say "oh wow, I dragged that deer down the mountain! I stood over and I took a bite of the heart!" That will always be with you, even if that drum accidentally goes and disappears from your hand, you'll always remember that- because you'll think: "Well, I wonder if I should ask for another one, or tell Ax7wil about it and I'll say "well, lets talk about it and lets sing and we'll see what comes of it."

BW: Mhmm. [Its] probably the most important thing I've ever done, and I'm really glad that I am able to pray about it and sing about it with this drum when I need to, yeah.

A: We have drum circles constantly. A lot of it is family gatherings- like I could have phoned all of my family. We could have been here drumming and singing for you, and we could have had a little potluck dinner, just hanging out, right? Because there's always somebody coming from 50 / 60 miles "oh, I want to be there! I want to be there- want to learn" Sit in the circle- and- its not about saying we're different. Its saying, you know, we want to share. And we're just having fun. So the culture and the tradition- the song and the beat gets passed on and then later on the teaching will come with it.

BW: That's really very appreciated. Its great. And I appreciate you sharing this with me too so that people know that it's, you know, an open door.

BW: So, do particular people usually dance? Is there some, you know, like, are there signs or signals that its time to dance, or is it something that people do?

S: its just a feeling. Yeah- if you feel like dancing you just get up and dance. If this song really hits you and you think "oh, I feel like dancing" if the beat is right and everything then you just go with it. You go out there and you dance and you do your performance on the floor and it's just- and while you're dancing too it's another thing - you pray too. Maybe you pray for yourself, or for your family, or community, or somebody has asked you to pray for somebody else to make their life better or whatever. Whatever it may be.

BW: Mhmm. And are there some songs that have specific dances that have sort of been passed down? Would you know particular movements that you would do with certain dances, or can you sort of just move whenever to whichever song kind of moves you?

A: No there's different songs that have different movements. There's the paddle song, the spear song, then there's that one- the bear song, like there are berry picking songs, There's the Lahal? Hall? Songs...welcome songs, farewell songs, right? So there's a vast, you know, like my wife said: its specific, you know, if I'm singing a song and somebody's dancing its hard for me to stop singing because I'm being honored as a singer to have somebody dancing for me so I try not to stop singing until they're tired and they go sit down.

all laugh

A: Because they're honoring something. They're in prayer. So for me to just say "ok I'm done" [there's] no specific time. I would say *swyep-məx* – white people- "you've got two minutes"- and then they quit. Ours is spiritual- it's all spiritual. Its not about time or anything- you know you can't quit singing if Spuska7 is up there dancing- I can't.

BW: Yeah. Can you describe any differences between drumming in different places such as inside or around a sacred space or around a fire? And do the settings affect the way you feel connected to the other people you're with?

A: hmmm.

BW: hmmm!

S: hmmm! I think they do. I think- say from here to William's Lake- the songs will be different. Maybe some of them might be similar- they may sound similar, but I don't know about- I hardly ever go down the coast so I don't know what their songs sound like. I've been mostly in the interior and from here to over [to] the St'atliam nation I think – even though the songs are different – and I'm learning more Shuswap songs, but I've grown up with the St'atliam songs.

BW: And you do notice there's some differences?

S: yeah.

BW: Are there any differences you can describe in words, or is it more different feelings?

S: Different sounds.

BW: Different sounds. Is it *how* people are singing that is a little bit different?

S: yeah.

BW: And do you think that is affected by the settings? I had someone say to me that the type of climate, and whether there are a lot of trees, or whether it is the desert, or whatever- she thought it really effected how people sang and danced, and how ceremonies went about. You know, whether it was down in the US in the Appalachian Mountains- those songs sounded like the Appalachian Mountains to her, and whatever,

S: Wow.

BW: So I don't know- because the climates are different, maybe...

A: Are you talking about sight specific, or?

BW: yeah...

A: To me, I've never noticed that

BW: No?

A: Not in my journey- I don't – it may be more touching in the mountain because we're all mountain people. For me, when I go to the mountain and have a ceremony it may touch me more because I really love the trees and love the mountains and being out there, you know, but then when I'm sitting here with my family and I hear my little nephew singing I really, like, the *tone* may change a little bit because I want to be softer, but over all the spiritual teachings - my little nephew sitting there singing touches my heart and my spirit and I want to sing more, and I want to sing more. And it has that same feeling and vibrancy [as] in the mountain- when you're singing and all of a sudden you hear that gush of wind in the trees and you say "oh wow, the trees are talking now"
And if you go to a different community - for me, I go to a different community and a lot of people want me to sing because they see me as a lead singer and I just stand there and wait for someone else and they're all looking at me.

BW: *laughs*

A: and then: "are you going to sing?" And they're -

S: Its just, yeah

BW: eye contact?

S: Yeah, eye contact- and it's your turn. It's his turn

A: I just look down and there's something- because a lot of it is feeling. If I go to a community and sing- a lot of it is feeling- what am I feeling from somebody in the room.

BW: yeah.

A: if I go to a funeral I know what they're feeling, so I'll sing that type of song for them. If I go to a birthday party and everybody wants to party I won't sing the healing songs, I won't sing the crying song, I'd sing upbeat- learn a two step song or something, right?

BW: Yeah. Um, so, for you I guess- now this is a broad question and you can answer it however you want- but one question was "what is the role of music in ceremony for you?"

A: Music- music. No, no.

A: *thinking*

BW: No? not that one [meaning not that question]?

A: No- I'm just thinking about it. I can't say it like- its *laughs*

BW: Its hard to articulate!

A: No, no- just hang on- I'm not going to say music. I'm going to say drumming and singing *is* our ceremony. It's not the ceremony itself. Drumming and singing is a way of life in our culture and how we deal with things to carry on. The passage of somebody's life is a celebration, actually, it's what we want to do. It's a very important thing in our culture that we share that. So I don't like "music", eh?

BW: Music is a funny word. Actually, when I was writing out these questions I wasn't even sure if music was the right- yeah, if it was the right term to use. It's drumming and singing- that's the right term.

A: And that's being specific. Because "music, to me," you're talking about white people's music. When you're talking about our culture and our way of life, you say drumming and singing, how does that affect you? How do you do that in ceremony and have a connection. I know what that's about. So you can change that in your next question.

BW: I will!

they laugh

A: Or your next person. We're talking about cultural people. You don't say music, because that kind of- you're asking me to relate to you and the white man...and I can't do that.

BW: About Bob Dylan or something

All three laugh

BW: Do you have a favourite song, either of you? And why?

S: laughs. I do, but I can't sing it. I'm learning it, though.

BW: Oh!

A: is it the new one that we started? The Cane tapper?

BW: Cane tap? Like as in c.a.n.e. [spells it out]?

A: yeah.

BW: Oh! And did somebody write it that you know?

A: It was passed down. We asked permission when we sing it. I told the guys, "I'm going to learn this song! I'm going to sing it!" And he says go right ahead! Its awesome.

BW: So is it a party song?

A: It's a real nice song- I'm just trying to pick it up here- *hums to himself. After a minute he says "I'd better get my drum" and laughs*

BW: That'll help!

A: Sings track 3: The Cane Tapper song

A: *to Spuska7* Is that the one hun?

S: *smiles* Yes.

A: I've got a lot of favorite ones, though, for me I love the mountain song because that's the way I am. I love it in the mountains. I love being in the mountains with my boys and- even when you're down at the river that's still part of the mountains. We go to the river, we catch fish and stuff, and.

S: in the mountains you go hunting...

A: in the mountains I go hunting...

BW: So do you always sing it if you've caught a fish, do you sing it after you've caught a fish?

A: There's a lot of songs you sing when you're fishing. When you're *not* catching fish you're singing more!

all three laugh

A: You're singing a lot of songs to pass the time when you're not catching fish, you know.

BW: Do you go out in a boat, or do you- just offshore?

A: no, we dip-net. Like that picture up there. See that guy standing there? That's the portrayal of how we fish.

BW: Really?!!!

S: yeah, and that white part is the river going through.

BW: wow! What kind of fish do you usually get?

A: Sockeye salmon

BW: Oh good- nice. Yeah, I liked that one too.

BW: So, how do you think drumming and singing brings people together.

S: just by the sound of it once you hear it. If they're standing outside during a gathering and somebody's inside a hall or whatever- and once they hear the sound of the drum beating it pulls them in. they all come in and go: "hey, I like that song!" They all come in and sit around and they want to join.

A: Especially if it's a song that somebody knows...they'll come in – like what I was doing at the shed up there, at the gathering, I just sat there and sang. Next thing I have a shed full of people- because they're drawn in- they come in to see what's going on and I'm sitting there singing and I'm smiling at everybody and they come in- you're welcome! You know you're welcome to come in, and if you're at a celebration of life people will come in to pray. They'll come in to pray. If you're at a gathering where we're all family....my cousin: "oh, we've got to teach our kids- they should sit here!" I said "no no, I said if we're sitting in here singing in the living room- they can hear us. I'm going to sing loud enough so they can hear us" and they'll eventually come and see us laughing and see what's going on and they'll feel free. They'll feel that connection and know: Its ok to learn. And that's all we want to do is teach and learn. Its being drawn in – it's a spiritual thing if you're on the journey. If you're on that journey to learn.

BW: I always think its interesting, you know, if people were standing around the fire having a conversation, you know, at IILG [2011 International Indigenous Leadership Gathering], for example, if people were just talking. You'd feel pretty weird just coming in and standing there, listening to them talking. You wouldn't do that. So its just- music is such a powerful thing- because it is okay to come in and just stand and just be present there while people are singing, even if you don't feel comfortable joining in yet. It's pretty interesting to think about that way.

A: Well you feel okay to be a part of it.

BW: yeah

A: And at IILG, that's what it was all about, you know, sharing, joking around and trying to get somebody: "come on, be part of us! There's no difference, right? We're trying to help and we're trying to share something. And I'm sure a lot of people left there wanting to learn more.

BW: yes. Oooh yes.

A: Because at the fire there was so much question, so much left and right, you know, all of these and- this- how many months did you finally make it back to ask these questions of us because of that spiritual connection? Because you want to learn more. You may call it your thesis, you may call it trying to do research, but your spirit wants to learn, right? To be part of something I'd say greater than all of us. I'm just sharing, that's all. We're just sharing.

BS: yeah. When I first got to hear some drumming and singing I wanted to learn more. So the first place, because I was a music student, the first place I went was to the library because I thought maybe somebody had written about their experiences drumming and singing, you know, a First Nations person had something- and I couldn't find anything and I didn't know- I couldn't find anything from first nations perspective- all I could find was early ethnographers writing down their observations, and, uh, I didn't know where to start looking for people that would teach me some of this information or, you know, so- its very generous and I hope people might be able to read this and then know that there are places they can go to hear music and be a part of-

A: if you want to learn, if you want to know you've got to go to the sweat lodge

BW: Mhmm

A: Right? *laughs* That's all there is to it because that's where you can make connections with other- with the singer. Like my old friend, he told me, he says: "if you want to learn, you go to the sweat lodge." There's thousands, THOUSANDS all over turtle island. Pick and choose the ones you want to go to because you're allowed to. Go to every one. Go to three or four night sweat lodges a week and watch who you want to learn from. Then understand that there are some guys out there, that they use it the wrong way- egotistical thing or whatever it is- boasting all the time...I've seen that. I went to - I don't know how many sweat lodges I went to when I first sobered up. I went to the old timers sweat lodges, I went to the young, I went to different communities for sweat lodges. I travelled, eh? And came back to my old timer friends, and I sat there and they were singing sundance songs.

BW: oooh.

A: and my old friend [says] “aren’t you going to sing?” And I sit there with my drum and I just tap, eh? *Ax7wil taps his drum* And the song was over and he asked me, “[Ax7wil], how come you don’t sing with us?” I said “they’re BEAUTIFUL songs, I love them sundance songs- I said “wow. But they’re not what I want to learn.” And he says: “well what do you want to learn” I says I want to learn Shuswap songs. You guys sing those ones once in a while and I try to learn. It was kind of weird, eh? And I sit there and they start talking in the language. And I sat there- and I couldn’t understand Shuswap- and I sat there and they were talking in the language. And that old guy, he was laying down in the sweat lodge and I could hear him rustling around and he sat up and he sat up and he started talking in the language and then they said “aha” and I said: “oh, its over- oh, aha” and that guy sitting beside me, he says: “we talked. We’ll sing you Shuswap songs if that’s what you want to learn” And I just said “wow.” And then they started singing. So...and that’s my thing to you. If you want to learn, learn from the community that you’re in. Not from where you come from. Because it will draw you from where you come from later on, if you learn from where you are right now. And that’s a teaching that my old friend told me. He says: learn our ways, he says, we’ll teach you our song- learn our ways. And then when you go home you’ll have something to offer. You’ll have something to give. And he says, besides, it will make our nation stronger, he says

all three laugh

BW: yeah, it seemed like there were a lot of different songs from different nations, and that was okay- to have everybody playing their own songs and sharing them. Ownership is not- it doesn’t seem like it’s a big issue in these parts, right? Its not- I mean, you respect people’s songs and know that they, sort of, belong to that person, is this right? But its not, um, really very restrictive?

A: We can’t take ownership. I can’t take ownership on my songs that I share and sing, and I can’t- I can’t sell them.

BW: Right.

A: Who I am I going to ask? I’ve got to ask the creator- and I’ve got to ask how many people in the Shuswap nation?

BW: *laughs*

A: I’ve got to ask them all if I have the right to sing a song and sell it and, you know, its going to come back: “no, you have no right”. But I do have the right to carry the songs and sing them. So, I would share all of my songs, but I can’t give you the right to sell them.

BW: Yeah.

A: I can give you the right to record them and give the music away, but I can’t sell them.

BW: Yeah. That's the way it should be- that's what I think.

A: And that's what you got from around the circle, from around the fire. It wasn't spoken, right, but you had that feeling, right?

BW: Mhmmm, yeah. And it was very apparent- it was very clear that it was okay to sing those songs. Sometimes, I've heard songs where I went home and thought: maybe its not my place to sing this, so I'll keep in inside. But there are a couple of songs that I sing regularly at home that I learned- that I sang around the fire with all of you, because I feel that...it's okay. You know, because it's in my mind and I want to sing it. So that's- that's quite nice to have, yeah.

S: good, good.

BW: And so what do you feel is the purpose of drumming and singing, then.

A and S: *boisterous laughter*

A: Starts to sing track 4 immediately.

A: What was the question again?

BW: *laughs* You just answered it. [The question was]: What is the purpose. But that was a good answer.

A: Why did I sing you that song?

BW: because I had forgotten that song until you just played it now. And we sang it so much last summer, and as soon as you started singing I felt like we were back there and I felt connected to you, [and to Spuska7] and to all of- to everyone. To even the people who are not here.

A: That was one of the first songs that I learned when my old timer friend was- now I can say his name because I sang the song in honor of my friend- Ken Dennis. He is my teacher and I wanted every word- wherever he went I was there with him and, you know, it was my journey I wanted to go on. So I sing that song in honor of my old friend- the Bear Dancer- because...why do we sing these songs- that was the question?

BW: The purpose.

A: It is to heal- to bring our people together so we can pass on our knowledge of the songs in the way that we belong to the group. We belong to the Shuswap Nations and we bring- different cultures come together to learn our songs. You're coming together to learn our songs, right? And drumming is very powerful. In our way of life- it is *very* powerful. When I'm sitting here and I'm feeling upset or depressed or whatever and I start singing and I start and then I start crying, my wife [Spuska7] will understand. She

says: “oh, healing is taking place”. It’s a connection that we share. And we sing an honor song- that’s our honor song, eh? And I needed to sing that because I kept mentioning him and I wanted to mention his name so, that’s why we sing them.

BW: thank you.

Interview Part II, Home of Ax7wil and Spuska7, Kamloops BC, April 29/2012

BW: So one question was: Do you drum and sing alone sometimes and what are some differences between drumming alone and drumming with a group?

S: For me it would be more, like if I was in mourning, crying, or if I need to get something out then yeah, I would sing because it would be more meaningful.

BW: So it’s mostly healing songs that you sing on your own. And at sweat lodges people sing healing songs often, right?

S: Oh yeah. Yeah.

BW: And what do you think Ax7wil?

A: I sing alone lots. Lots, yeah. Because you’ve got to heal yourself, right? That’s paramount. When you’re drumming and singing- and if you want to be a helper or healer you’ve got to be able to help yourself. So I sing a lot by myself. And sometimes when I’m here and, like I say, I just pick up my drum and sing and my wife knows that I’m having a ceremony- there’s something tough going on in my life and she’ll allow me that time. And I don’t think its- it is a bit different in community when you do it there, because when I go to community its for a specific reason- you know, like, I don’t just go to a community event and there’s nothing going on. There’s got to be a reason and when they want me to drum and sing there’s a reason, right? It’s either in celebration, or mourning, or grieving, or loss, or you know- whatever it might be. So when I’m with community singing with a bunch of people its specific. And when I’m at home for myself it’s still specific, but its personal. So when you’re in community you’re trying to help the whole group of people. And its usually one or two people that are going to have a tough time so then they’re the ones that we focus on and we try to help them grieve- we try to help them let go- we try to help them move on, we try to help them pick up their spirits- whatever it might be.

BW: Yeah.

A: And I remember when you were talking about your Grandma

BW: Mhmm.

A: That was very paramount to me because I had to be careful with you

BW: uhuh.

A: Right? I didn't want to trigger you- to break you down. Because I didn't know anything about you so I went about it in our own cultural sense, in our own way, that I would treat a sister. I wouldn't treat you any different just because you're white or your black or you're Chinese- when you're in grieving or mourning I have to be careful with that. How I say things or what I do – the songs are going to be specific to help you understand, right? The passing of a life- the deer- the dragging it down the mountain. The girls that drag the deer down the hill! *all three laugh*. All the guys all walking- this is the way it is, yeah! *all three laugh again* Wanting you to do the work! Hehehe!

BW: I, uh, I had borrowed a dress that day and I had ripped her skirt on some barbed wire and got some blood on it, and she loves wearing that dress- she calls it her power dress.

A: her deer killing dress!

BW: yeah. *all three laugh again*

I've told my mom that story in a couple of stages because- for the same reason. I think for her to hear the story and to talk about the deer and that it was representative of dealing with death for me- and I told her the story and it was interesting to hear her commentary on it and realized that it taught her a lot as well. I told my whole family- I told my uncle, who was my grandmother's other child- and, uh, all of them, I think, interpreted the story in their own way and took from it- took something that they needed from it. But it was the same thing- I couldn't tell everything right away. I waited and, kind of, kept bringing it up at different times. And one of the things that my Mom really focused on is that later, after I had mentioned the story a few times, she said "Oh, his name was *Ax7wil*"- well, because that is my middle name and that was my grandfather's middle name- and I think my Mom has always, you know, been in mourning for my grandfather and it was really important to her that your name was *Ax7wil*.

A: Mhmm

BW: And really symbolic for her, so she really thought that was a sign and that was really important.

A: Wow. To heal.

BW: Yeah. And I really think it did heal her, even though she wasn't at- even though she wasn't present, I think it means a lot to her that, uh, the teachings that I brought home and shared with her I think made her think about different things that she could learn.

A: And now you can bring songs home too.

BW: yeah- yeah! I'm so lucky.

S: And I thought too that you were also in mourning of your Grandma, too, at the same time that you were learning- so it triggered..

BW: it was meant to be that way, I really do think that it was. So it meant a lot.

BW: We've answered a lot of these [questions] I think.

BW: You mentioned you make your own drums. What does the drum represent for you, if anything?

A: That drum up there- that's my life. That's where everything of me comes from, actually. From the gift of trust and love- that's where that comes from, my Mom. When she first passed that down to me that's what I got from it. She finally had learned to trust me. She'd finally given me something that was so powerful for me at that time. And the healing and the love and the caring that it is, eh? The drum- called the pumín in our language- helps us connect to the creator in our songs and in our spiritual way, right, that when we sing we pray. You and the creator get to talk. That's why you see me close my eyes sometimes when I'm singing- it's because I'm in prayer. It may only take a second or two seconds- but that's when you're at one with the creator. And that drum there, you know, that's a gift of my Mom. No matter what happens in my life I'll always honor that drum. But I'll also take my own and I'll honor my gift that I give to the culture and people, and that sobriety. And learning to walk carefully, learning to, you know, not be judgmental on others- not to go boasting. To be a drum carrier- singer of our people- is a very important job. My old friend says we've got to live the simple life. Sometimes I kind of hate that, but...

BW: *chuckles*

A: But we do live the simple life here. We don't go drinking, we don't go do drugs, and we don't go bragging or boasting that "I'm the lead singer" or- I don't go do that. I don't go to the community and boast about teachings. I let the community ask me what I want, you know, when I go to drum circles and they acknowledge me: "we want to hear you sing". I love to sing; I love to sing- you know, "what do you want to hear?" So, it's the meaning of life, eh? The drum- the pumín. It means life, it means the way I teach others about our culture, our traditions, our way; how we walk. If you're going to be on the journey, you'll learn that. And you're learning that, little piece at a time through your grieving process- through sharing that story of your mom and your family- the grieving process- that time; allowing them to heal, in spirit. And it's all about that. It's all about the balance of everything that's in our life- not just a drum. Not just a song.

BW: And Spuska7, as a woman and as a woman that, you know, at certain times has the power to not even be present with the drum, do you have any other additional, sort of perspectives on what the drum means to you?

S: Well I know not to touch it when I'm on my time, and that's once every month for seven days or whatever- however long it may be. And I try my best not to sing either,

because I've heard that when a woman who sings while she's on her time- it takes the power away from the men, especially your husband. It takes his voice away because we're so powerful that we do that. And I try my best not to, but sometimes the song is – you like it so much you just end up singing it anyway, but then you kind of stop yourself and go “oh gosh, I can't!” So *chuckles* its hard, but it's training yourself- training yourself to be, you know, because it's a sacred time.

BW: It's very respectful that you refrain even though you really want to, I'm sure! It's very respectful.

So how are we doing? You're both- stamina is okay? You're comfortable? I'm almost done- I just have a couple of questions left.

A: I thought you had a whole binder there!

all three laugh

BW: No!!! hahah- Okay, so page 402...

A: Can you rephrase this question...

laugh

BW: one more time!

laugh

BW: Actually, one question I had was what type of songs do you sing? You mentioned quite a few- what about lullabies? Do you have lullabies? And...you had said there's...

S: There's a Státime lullaby, but I hardly ever sing it.

A: We have a few lullaby songs

BW: really?

A: sings track 5

A: Lullabies are beautiful- “I saw an eagle the other day” is part of a- Someone has been there; someone has seen that, and it touched them so they made this song and we sing it to heal, right? Lullabies are healing; lullabies- there's some that are fun- that get people because the vocals and vowels are so easy that you can get everybody to sing, right?

BW: Its very gentle sounding

A: And that's what its meant to be when you're sitting around, maybe at a campfire, maybe up at a home, around a tent you'll sing a song- put a child to sleep.

BW: So do you know, uh, do you know where a lot of songs came from? You said that one, somebody wrote it about an eagle, um, probably during their experiences. Are a lot of the songs just something that everybody shares and you don't necessarily know who the composer was or, you know, what the story was behind their actual composition process but it exists as sort of an image for everybody in the community?

A: you want to touch that? *to Spuska7*

A: I can relate to the Shuswap songs, eh? A lot of the songs that we sing today- these ones today that we sing, they come from times like that. That homeland security picture there? A lot our songs come from that struggle in our culture and our ways of life that are very meaningful because [of] where we come from and our way of life; what the elders went through, what *their* elders went through, so, them are the songs that seem to evolve- that keep coming back- are the struggle for the rights of our people, you know, and somebody sat by the road with the guns like that and sang songs and they'd be- and St'atliam territory and Shuswap territory...they sat around days and nights and..."let's try this song, like the way we do here, but we're not out there" They made a song because it was very powerful at that time. Some of the songs that are old, old, old have been handed down from generation to generation. The 1910- the old chief song, um, kind of ironic that the DIA guys - [they] said they created that song at that time when they signed the 1910 declaration of the (load?) of Indian tribes- but that song has been in our tribes for generations and generations, not just since 1910. It's just- the white man recorded it. As far as I know, you know what my old friend says: when we started making drums- we knew the songs before that.

BW: Mhmm

A: So, there's a lot of myths and a lot of stories behind it, but that's all I can share is that my old friend, he says, yeah- when we made a kill, the songs were before we made the kill and they're part of the drums. The songs are there and they were given to us by the creator. Given to us as our healing and our right.

BW: So, I think that you've answered all of my questions here in one way or another, uh, the only other- I wrote "are songs ever given as gifts"but yeah, you've mentioned a few ways that songs have been given as gifts to you. And then the final question was: "do you ever sit and listen without drumming, singing, or dancing, and this can be either in the context of drumming and singing circles in your community or, say, at a concert. Do you experience different things as an audience member than you do as a participating music maker?"

A: hmmm. I try to do that all the time! *laughs*

BW: To participate all the time?

A: No, no! To try to sit back and to watch and listen, eh? It's a different experience because you're trying to pray with somebody else while they're singing. And I've hardly ever sat back...that's why when you walked in I knew you had a drum. That's the first question I asked: "did you bring your drum?" right? Because its – if you just sat there without your drum I would have given you a drum anyway! *laughs*

BW: *laughs*- I know!

BW: OK. Well that's- thank you so much. Is there any- Are there any other statements you'd like to make or points you'd like to elaborate on that I haven't asked you about? Things that are important that I didn't think to even ask about?

S: I noticed that Ax7wil- he *has* sat back and listened to other people singing, because at his Mom's gathering, his niece in law- she's from Saskatchewan and she sings way different songs than we do or we hear, and hers are really powerful. They're also like prayer songs, and the way she sings is – the different vocals of her songs...yeah, there's also other meanings but she can go way down low and then go way up high, and she can do that throughout her whole song. And that is a time when he *has* sat back and listened to her. And also learning while he's doing that, you know, he's always challenging himself to learn a new song.

A: Do you want to sing a song to close it?

BW: yeah

A: Which one?

BW: *pauses*

A: *laughs*

BW: I know!

BW: Starts to sing track 6, *The Women's Warrior Song*

BW: There's that extra part! I don't quite remember it but I think there's that extra little part- I forgot it in the beginning.*

* Ax7wil later commented on this, asking why he didn't correct me when I sang this extra part...I said "because I probably would have stopped singing" then he said: We don't correct that because songs are living.

S: That's pretty good- way to go! I'm impressed- awesome.

BW: That one I've always got- those two. The Men's Warrior song too. *Brooke hums Men's warrior song*

A: I'm trying to get *The Lonely Song*. You were talking about your Grandma, eh? This Lonely Song was given to me and when my Grandma passed away I sat on the end of her bed- she was dying- and I said: oh kyé7e - that's Grandma in our language- oh kyé7e I'd love to sing you this song, but I don't know it. And some part of me- I heard her say well pick up your drum; I'll give you this song. You sing it for love of your family and people. I always try to sing it when you talk about- when anybody talks about Grandma. It's not a song when you want to- [it's] when you want to honor; be grateful. *Ax7wil plays drum for a while but the song won't come- it came to him later while we were in conversation, after the recording device had been turned off

Appendix C Orthography

Nuučaanu¹

Consonants

	bilabial	alveolar	alveolar affricate	palato- alveolar	lateral	velar	rounded velar	uvular	rounded uvular	pharyngeal	glottal
voiced stop	(b)	(d)									ʔ
voiceless stop	p	t	c	č	ʎ	k	k ^w	q	q ^w		
ejective stop	p̣	ṭ	c̣	č̣	ʎ̣	ḳ	k ^w _̣	(q̣)	(q ^w _̣)		
voiceless fricative			s	š	ʃ	x	x ^w	χ	χ ^w	ħ	h
nasal / resonant	m	n		ɲ	(l)	ŋ	w			ʕ	
glottalised n/r	ṃ	ṇ		ɲ̣	(ḷ)		ẉ				

Vowels

	front	central	back
high	i – ii		u – uu
mid		e – ee	(o – oo)
low		a – aa	

¹ Christopher Harvery, “Wakashan: Nuuchahnulth (Nootka),” Languagegeek, 2002-2011, <http://www.languagegeek.com/wakashan/nuuchahnulth.html> (accessed June 19, 2012).

Secwepemctsin²

Consonants

	bilabia l	alveolar	alveolar affricat e	lateral	retrofle x	palatal	velar	rounded velar	uvular	rounded uvular	pharyngeal	rounded pharyngeal	glottal
voiceless stop	p	t	ts				k	kw	q	qw			ʔ
ejective stop	p̰	(t̰)	ts̰	t̰ (*)			k̰	kw̰	q̰	qw̰			
voiceless fricative			s	ll			c	cw	x	xw			h
nasal / resonant	m	n		l	(r*)	y	r	w			g	gw	
glottalised n / r	m̰	n̰		l̰	(r̰*)	y̰	r̰	w̰			g̰	gw̰	

Vowels

	front	central	back
high	i		u
mid	e (a)	(e)	o
low		a(ah)	

² Christopher Harvery, "Salishan: Secwepemctsin (Shuswap)," Languagegeek, 2002-2011, <http://www.languagegeek.com/salishan/secwepemctsin.html> (accessed June 19, 2012).

Ucwalmícwts (Státimcets language)³

Bouchard Orthography⁴ – Consonants

	bilabial l	alveolar	alveolar affricate e	retracted alveolar affricate	lateral	retracted lateral	palatal	velar	rounded velar	uvular	rounded uvular	glottal
voiceless stop	p	t	ts	t̚s				k	kw	q	qw	ʔ
ejective stop	p̚		t̚s		t̚			k̚	kw̚	q̚	qw̚	
voiceless fricative			s	s̚	lh			c	cw	x	xw	h
nasal / resonant	m	n	z		l	l̚	y	r	w	g	gw	
glottalised n / r	m̚	n̚	z̚		l̚	l̚	y̚	r̚	w̚	g̚	gw̚	

Bouchard Orthography – Vowels

	front	front retracted	central	central retracted	back	back retracted
high	i	ii			u	o
mid			e	v		
low			a	ao		

³ Christopher Harvery, “Salishan: Státimcets / Ucwalmícwts (Lillooet),” Languagegeek, 2002-2011, <http://www.languagegeek.com/salishan/statimcets.html> (accessed June 19, 2012).

⁴ Based on a practical writing system developed by linguist and author Randy Bouchard.

Appendix D Verbal Consent Script

The process of obtaining verbal consent entailed a brief reading of my primary responsibilities as a researcher and the possibilities surrounding dissemination of their knowledge and perspectives, followed by their verbalized willingness to proceed with the interview. The responsibilities outlined were as follows, though not read verbatim:

1) This thesis paper will eventually be made available through the University of Victoria Library—and maybe other libraries as well if they request it—so the perspectives and teachings of you and other First Nations music makers who I will be interviewing will be available for people to read. I will make sure you get a copy once it's finished, and we could send one to any other places you would like, such as the Tribal Council, or the public library in (Kamloops/Ahousaht).

2) Once I've written a rough draft of my thesis I'm going to send it to you. I'll also send it as a CD version with me reading so that you can listen to it in the car, at home, or at work. The reason I want to do this is so that you have a chance to hear it before it is made available to others. I want to make sure that I have properly interpreted the perspectives you've shared with me, so if you listen to this CD and anything seems not quite right or you would like some things taken out, you can let me know and we'll rearrange things no questions asked.

3) I will give you a copy of this part of the recording, where I read my responsibilities to you out loud.

4) Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time without any explanation, penalty, or risk of your knowledge being published. This pertains not only to the Tri-Council and University of Victoria's guidelines for Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada, but also the PPCRNC, which includes the following article:

Article 2.4, Participation: "All Nuu-chah-nulth-aht have a right to participate in or refuse participation in research. Reasons for inclusion and exclusion in research must be clearly outlined prior to onset of research. Participants must be given adequate time (24 hour minimum) to consider their participation in the research and must be permitted to withdraw participation at any time without."

5) If you would like to use a name that differs from your English name please let me know and you will go by that name in the written paper.¹

¹ Ax7wil and Spuska7 chose to use their Stlatiumh names, while James (?Uu-Kwa-Qum) Swan suggested placing his Nuu-chah-nulth name ?Uu-Kwa-Qum in brackets between his English first and last name.

6) If you would rather not answer any of these questions just let me know and we'll move on

7) Feel free to ask me any questions throughout this interview. Do you have any questions?

All three individuals requested that I use their Native names, however James recommended that I include both names and place his Nuu-chah-nulth name ʔUu-Kwa-Qum in brackets between his English first name and surname. None of the culture bearers had questions at this time.

Appendix E

CD Track Listing

Notes on Song Transcription Methodology

All recorded songs were converted into an mp3 format and transcribed into a visual representation using an Open Source Vector Graphics Editor called Inkscape. The transcriptions, which are intended to be universally readable, were simplified by removing underlying graphs with numerical pitch markings and transferred into the thesis as jpeg images.

CD Track Listing

Track 1: “Song of the Waves”, James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan

Track 2: “The Cheyenne”, James (ʔUu-Kwa-Qum) Swan

Track 3: “Honour Song”, Ax7wil

Track 4: “The Cane Tapper”, Ax7wil

Track 5: “The Women’s Warrior Song”, Ax7wil and Brooke Wilken

Track 6: “Secwepemc Lullaby”, Ax7wil