

Singing Still: A tribute to LeAnne Howe Agenda

March 2020 San Antonio

Travis Hedge Coke Moderator, Ryan Neighbors Panelist, Oscar Hokeah Panelist, Deborah Taffa Panelist, and Michael Wasson Panelist — Shauna Osborn Organizer

Type of Event: Tribute

Event Description: As an award winning poet, playwright, novelist, scholar, and instructor, LeAnne Howe has been instrumental in transforming the landscape of Native American literature over the course of two decades. She has taught in multiple universities, lectured internationally, and helped create seminal works of literary criticism. Come celebrate Howe's' contributions to Native letters, theater, and her recent Savage Conversations with members of the Indigenous Aboriginal American Writers Caucus.

Statement of Merit: Howe is a highly regarded award winning author of the Choctaw Nation. She has published 7 books of poetry and prose, 3 plays, directed 4 films, and taught for 20 years. Having lived in both Texas and Oklahoma for many years, she is a regionally relevant topic for this conference. The panel consists of regional authors and IAAWC members. The Indigenous Aboriginal American Writers Caucus requests a forum to celebrate Howe's career accomplishments to date.

Bios

1. Travis Hedge Coke is a writer, editor, and teacher, working with Along the Chaparral to story interred veterans at the Riverside National Cemetery. Former writer of the Hugo- nominated Pop Medicine column, and current author of the weekly, Patricia Highsmash, from Comic Watch.
2. Ryan Neighbors is a Lecturer at Texas A&M University in McAllen where he teaches writing, literature, and film courses. His prose and poetry have appeared in a variety of journals, including Tampa Review, Stoneboat Literary Journal, The Barely South Review, and elsewhere.
3. Oscar Hokeah is a regionalist Native American writer of literary fiction, interested in capturing intertribal, multicultural, and transnational aspects within a contemporary Native landscape. He is half Native American (Kiowa/Cherokee) and half Hispanic.
4. Deborah Taffa teaches CNF at Wash U in St Louis. Her work has appeared in Salon, A Public Space, The Best American series, etc. She'll read her desert poetry onstage at the Lincoln Center with R. Carlos Nakai in 2020. A memoir about life on the res is forthcoming. Rep'd by Georges Borchardt, Inc.
5. Michael Wasson is the author of This American Ghost. He earned an MFA from Oregon State University. He is the recipient of a Native Arts & Cultures Foundation National Artist Fellowship, Adrienne Rich Award for Poetry, Joyce Carol Oates Commencement Award, and Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation. He is nimiipuu from the Nez Perce Reservation in Idaho.
6. Shauna Osborn is Executive Director of Puha Hubiya, a nonprofit literary arts organization, and author of Arachnid Verve (a poetry collection) which was a finalist for the Oklahoma Book Awards. They have won awards from the New York Public Library, AROHO, TSWC, and a Crescendo Literary Fellowship.

AGENDA

Call to Order

Introductions

Discussion, Readings, and Oral Tributes

- Deborah Taffa: The novel, *Shell Shaker* and Howe's essay, "The Chaos of Angels," sit at the top of my list in terms of discussion. My interest in LeAnne Howe as an artist (what I'd like for the audience to take away) is the freedom she displays as an artist. I admire her cross-genre abilities, and the fact that every project she undertakes seems to find its form in the content. I plan to re-read some of her work, including the following: "The Chaos of Angels," "Choctalking on Other Realities," and "Tribalography." These are all nonfiction.
- Oscar Hokeah: I'm excited to honor LeAnne Howe and her contributions to our field. Like Deborah, I'd be excited to delve into *Shell Shaker*.
- Ryan Neighbors: I definitely agree about *Shell Shaker*, and I'd also like to add *Miko Kings*. I think "The Story of America: A Tribalography" deserves a mention as well. I really look forward to the tribute!
- Travis Hedge Coke: I want the most to talk about the way Howe has freed us, how she freed herself by establishing that we simply don't have to look, even at the colonial world, through colonized or colonizing eyes. The sense that perspective and approach do not have to be 100% or fair, they need to be effective and helpful, and it's up to us for whom they are. There is a seeding and game-playing sensibility even in her critical work. But, doing that in five to eight minutes. Kind of a flower blooming or burst of evocation more than anything in-depth. Cross-Cultural Understanding is Not a Fair Game. Something like that. Noble Savage Sees a Therapist split into Therapist, then Noble Savage. Some quick commentary re "The Chaos of Angels" and *Miko Kings*, and a couple critical notes from others to show how she's affected the field.

Questions/Remarks from Audience

Discussion Materials/Recommended Reading: "Singing Still" by LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker* by LeAnne Howe, *Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story* by LeAnne Howe, "Tribalography: The Power of Native Stories" by LeAnne Howe, "The Chaos of Angels" by LeAnne Howe