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THOUGHTS ON BEING THE DESCENDANTS

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Trumpeter

When Whites and Indians come together, there is often a plethora of experience. Leonard George said at a Stein Festival, "Follow your own people's paths." Later I heard someone refer to some White people as Wannabe's. A voice from the back of a camper said, "Who'd wanna be like us?" Huh.

Yet on the surface, here we are, coming together to hear music, talk about "issues" of justice, political process, corruption, despair, beauty, humour and what it is to be Indian - with an added flare of performance, mostly by aboriginal natives: North American, New Zealand, African. Are these performances full of pretence, meaning, both? Do the players "Play" with us, losing the focused inspiration of the dance - can I talk of such things - me a White outsider?

I was born in Toronto. At nine months old, I travelled the great Canadian railways to Calgary, Alberta. I grew up on the streets of an urban neighbourhood and on the shores of Kootenay Lake in B.C. My father was born in Labrador, my mother somewhere back east. Her parents were from Norway and changed their name when they crossed over because Newberg sounded better than Auss in English. It's all I know of them. My mother died when I was four, and my father's not a talker. My home is here on an island on the west coast.

When I look deeply at my motives for being there - at the Stein Festival in 1991 - I can only say it's a spiritual calling - the gathering together of people with similar goals to find a way to come together to balance this energy we have created here on planet earth, Gaia.

I've written well over five songs about it. My partner Garth has written well over 15. World wide there must be a few thousand at least. When you think about Gaia as being nature and ourselves as a natural species of that planet and that nature, then there are no other songs, and we're all native.

N.A. Indians may be able to go back more directly to their "roots", yet that pathway involves two centuries of domination where what it means to be Indian was hidden and often outlawed. Now the descendants of the colonists want to know what it is to be Indian. In fact they request it, as though it is a performance of some kind. And there is sincere desire to reconnect the ancient circuits -

"Go back to your roots," he said. Why? I feel ashamed for what harm has been done, the domination and the raping of nature. That's why I'm here! It is the time to pay tribute to those who have passed on.

"They're lost" I heard them say. And of course we are, just like you are. We've been left a world devoid of diversity and much that is wild or natural. We "inherited" a world insane. People value money and power more than their children's lives and the lives of all species, if it comes to mind at all.

So here we are looking for a way out. This is why we came here. To listen, and to ponder, and to experience together the dream/vision of a harmonious future.

A place I'd wanna be.

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