regarding the common practices and traditional teachings that define women's public music making at powwows, and she describes how women are, in fact, performing this repertoire contrary to common teachings or as reinterpretations of those teachings. Some all-female powwow groups are being well received in some regions and communities, and Hoefnagels examines the performance choices and music making of an all-female drum group in terms of where and why they choose to perform. As she demonstrates, it is clear that although Aboriginal women respect traditional teachings, many are seeking empowerment and a "reawakening" of their voices through their participation in the performance of powwow music.

Together, the chapters in this section of the anthology illustrate the vitality of Aboriginal traditions and traditional music. The sense of renewal and the engagement with innovative ways of thinking about and making "traditional music" demonstrate the dynamism of tradition. New technologies, revised interpretations of teachings, and the importance of local and personal histories in the construction of cultural understandings and ways of life are all part of this dynamism.

2

Continuity and Innovation in the Dane-zaa Dreamers' Song and Dance Tradition: A Forty-Year Perspective

AMBER RIDINGTON

Informed by performance theory,[1] this chapter takes a contextual approach to trace some of the ways that the Dane-zaa dreamers' dance[2] and song tradition has responded to and been affected by historical, cultural, social, and technological changes over the past forty years. I identify both continuities and innovations in the song and dance tradition over this period of time and relate these findings to responses of resistance and renewal to new social circumstances. The first sections of this chapter introduce Dane-zaa culture and history and place the Dane-zaa dreamers' dance within a broader Indigenous prophet dance movement associated with cultural changes brought on by European cultural encounters and colonization. Moving from a broad, ritualized context with a focus on dance movement, I outline structural elements of the dreamers' songs themselves and then trace continuities and innovations in the maintenance of these musical elements between the 1960s and the present. Taking this analysis a step further, I compare four performances of the same dreamers' song recorded between 1966 and 2008 by different performers in different contexts and discuss the implications of continuities and innovations, as seen in this particular song example, for the tradition's conservation and renewal. Finally, I discuss implications of recording and new media technologies in facilitating preservation, revitalization, and innovation of the dreamers' song tradition; I also address emerging intellectual property concerns and protocols that have arisen in response to this new electronically mediated era affecting the global transmission of Dane-zaa dreamers' songs. To provide the basic cultural and historical

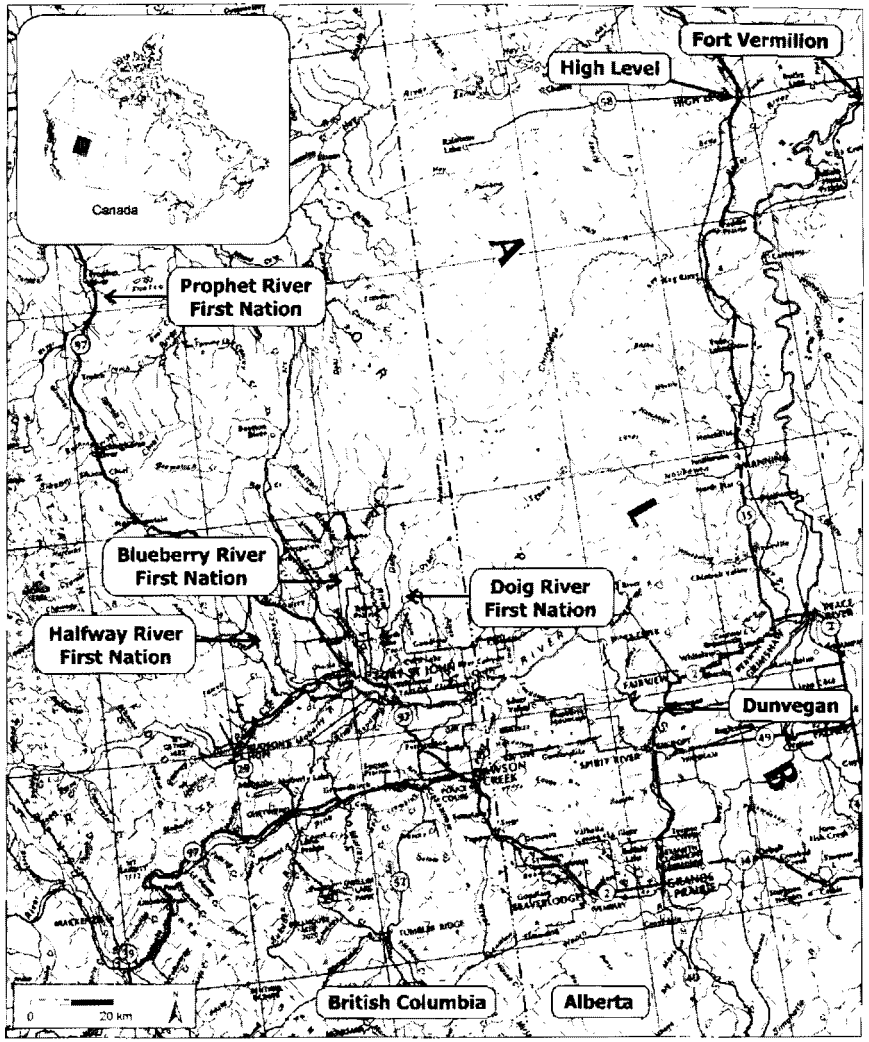
context for the materials discussed here, I draw on the writings and ethnographic fieldwork of Robin Ridington, Antonia Mills,[3] and Jillian Ridington relating to the Dane-zaa, along with relevant work by other ethnographers working in neighbouring Athapaskan communities.[4] I also utilize my own knowledge, experience, and work with the Dane-zaa.[5]

A Brief Introduction to the Dane-zaa

The Dane-zaa, also known as Beaver Indians, are an Athapaskan group indigenous to the Peace River area of north-eastern British Columbia and north-western Alberta. Today, there are approximately 1,000 Dane-zaa living in and around the Doig River, Blueberry River, Halfway River, and Prophet River reserve communities (figure 2.1). Until very recently, the Dane-zaa lived semi-nomadically, travelling seasonally to hunt, gather, and socialize with their kinship groups. After their first known direct contact with Europeans in 1794, when Rocky Mountain Fort was established in their territories (on the Peace River close to the current city of Fort St John), the Dane-zaa began participating in the fur trade and in cultural exchange with European traders and Cree middlemen and porters (Brody 1981; Burley, Hamilton, and Fladmark 1996, 30; Roe 2003).

After the 1860s the Dane-zaa continued cultural exchanges with Catholic missionaries, gold prospectors, government agents, and farmers, and they signed Treaty No. 8 in 1900. Despite these cultural interactions, as well as a drastic population loss due to smallpox and the Spanish flu, Dane-zaa traditional life-ways were not radically affected until their ancestral land was opened up for non-Native settlement and industry through the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942 (Roe 2003). Since the Second World War, the Dane-zaa's life-ways and culture have undergone more rapid change. They have been forced to settle on reserves and to send their children to outside schools, have incorporated new patterns of hunting and community sustainability, have been heavily influenced by Evangelical Christian missionary efforts, and are now influenced by popular culture and media (Ridington 1988a, Doig River 2007, Ridington and Ridington 2006).

These changes have had serious consequences for the maintenance of the Dane-zaa's social networks and for the continuing relevance and use of the Dane-zaa language, as well as their song and dance tradition. Although the Dane-zaa still maintain a sense of identity and actively protect customs and practices deeply rooted in their culture, they struggle with the threat of cultural erosion and practical issues related to alcohol-



2.1 The four Dane-zaa reserves in north-eastern British Columbia and some areas of Dane-zaa traditional use and interaction in north-western Alberta. The Alaska Highway is Route 97. The Peace River runs west to east below the town of Fort St John and turns northward at Dunvegan, Alberta. Base map used with permission of the Ministry of Lands and Parks, Province of British Columbia, "NE BC" (1:2,000,000), 1991.

ism, youth support, employment, education, racism, and community cohesion. Robin Ridington and Jillian Ridington observe that over the past fifty years they "have been privileged to witness the Dane-zaa move from a purely hunting and trapping economy to one that is now integrated,

in a dense and complex way, into the fabric of contemporary political and economic issues" (Ridington and Ridington 2006, 96). Indeed, many Dane-zaa leaders have become adept at negotiating their way through the labyrinth of colonial law to defend their peoples' Aboriginal and treaty rights. In 1998, after a twenty-year fight for justice, the Doig River and Blueberry River Bands received a settlement of $147 million after suing the federal government for breach of trust and lost oil and gas revenues from the 1945 "surrender" of their Indian Reserve (#172) at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney)[6] by the Department of Indian Affairs so that the land could be made available for settlement by returning veterans of the Second World War. Doig River and Blueberry River people, classified as the Fort St John Band at that time, had chosen the reserve land in 1914 pursuant to land allotments set out under Treaty No. 8. They had chosen this land because of its significance as a summer gathering place for their people and because of the dance grounds there called Suunéch'ii Kéch'iige yiné? (the Place Where Happiness Dwells) (Ridington and Ridington 2006, 104–5; Doig River 2007). Virtually overnight, the Doig River and Blueberry River Bands rose from a position of economic poverty to a position of monetary wealth.

The Doig River First Nation has utilized some of its newfound wealth to take a lead in using new media technologies to preserve, revitalize, share, and teach about Dane-zaa culture. This new electronically mediated era of cultural revitalization began with a number of digital heritage-preservation projects in the late 1990s. These heritage-preservation projects led to the creation of a digital archive of Dane-zaa audio, video, textual, and photographic materials recorded by Robin Ridington, Antonia Mills, Jillian Ridington, and their colleagues since 1964, called the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive. Once digitally preserved, the archive materials were virtually repatriated to all the Dane-zaa communities on a 500-gigabyte harddrive curated by the Doig River First Nation in its community centre and accompanied by a password-protected Internet-based catalogue interface (Ridington, Ridington, and Doig River 2003, Ridington and Ridington 2003, Ridington and Hennessy 2008, Hennessy 2010). With new access to these digital cultural-heritage materials, the Doig River First Nation continued to work in collaboration with trusted ethnographers to produce audio CDs, videos, and websites for educational use by its own community and the general public.[7]

The Dane-zaa dreamers' dance tradition has been greatly affected by all of the historical, social, and technological changes detailed above. The dances have ceased to be practised regularly in many communities. Currently, the Doig River community, which contains a core group of singers and drummers, is the only remaining Dane-zaa group to regularly hold community-wide dance gatherings and to take an active role in revitalizing the song and dance tradition. Dynamic and conservative elements of the tradition are detailed in later sections of this chapter as examples of resistance and renewal in the face of changing social contexts.

Cultural Context of Dane-zaa Song and Dance

Like the worldview of most Indigenous northern hunting cultures worldwide, the Dane-zaa worldview has a cyclical perspective that reflects the natural cycles of the world and the natural cycles of life, death, and rebirth. The Dane-zaa worldview is also based upon a belief that there is an interdependence between people, animals, and forces of nature and that people gain power by learning how to communicate with human and animal spirits and forces of nature (Ridington 2006a, 171; Ridington 1968, 91). Dane-zaa songs reflect this practical and sacred practice and are used as a medium for prayer and communication with spirits and forces.

The Dane-zaa have two types of songs. Personal medicine songs, received during vision quests, are called *mayiné?* (my song) and are almost never sung in public or shared with others. They are used only when a person is in dire need of help. I will not be discussing mayiné? here.[8] Songs shared with the community and sung both by individuals on their own and during dreamers' dance gatherings are referred to as *nááchęyiné?* (dreamers' songs), *Nahhatáá?yiné?* (God songs), or prayer songs. These songs are given to a dreamer in Heaven[9] by the Creator/God to help the dreamer guide Dane-zaa people through life and death and for use during their prayer and dance ceremonies (Mills 1982; Ridington 2006a, 172). In recent years some of these songs have also been shared with the public through public performances and on the Internet. A Dane-zaa *nááchę*, referred to as a dreamer or prophet in English, is a person who has gained dream-travelling and prophetic abilities only after a significant experience, such as dying and coming back to life. In the Dane-zaa dreamers' dance, which is described in greater detail later, the natural cycles of the world are symbolically enacted as people dance in a circle following the direction of the sun and retrace their steps through life so that they can eventually follow a dreamer's song along the trail to Heaven (Mills 1982; Ridington 2006a, 172).

The Dane-zaa dreamers' dance tradition can be seen as part of a broader Indigenous North American song and dance tradition. Similar ceremonial practices centred around the circle dance and world renewal have been referred to in various western North American Indian cul-

tures as the prophet dance (Spier 1935, Goulet 1996, 1998, Ridington 1978, 1988a, 1990, Mills 1982, 2004, Cebula 2003, among others), the ghost dance (Vander 1997, Coleman 2000, Shea Murphy 2007, among others), the drum dance (Abel 1993, Asch 1988, Beaudry 1988a, 1992a), and the tea dance (Asch 1988, Moore and Wheelock 1990).[10] All of these terms have come to refer to messianic shamanic movements originating shortly before or after the contact period in western North America. Many dreamers/prophets associated with these traditions predicted the changes, disruptions, and diseases associated with white contact and directed their people to counter these changes by dancing to restore balance in their world (Mills 2004, 288). Although the Dane-zaa dreamers' dance and the other dance movements mentioned above can be seen as rites of resistance to devastating colonial policies, they can also be seen as examples of innovation and cultural syncretism that meld Indigenous and Christian cosmological philosophies. In many instances, the dance movements join Aboriginal shamanic principles about renewing the cycles of the world with Christian messages about the importance of clean living and forgiveness for one's resurrection/redemption on Judgment Day (Vander 1997, 76; Goulet 1996; Ridington 1978, 1988a; Mills 1982, 10; Cebula 2003, 47; Cruikshank 1998a, 119; Shea Murphy 2007, 47).

One of the first dreamers in the Dane-zaa dreamers' dance religion, born in the mid- or late 1700s, was named Makénúúnatane. Like Jesus, he is remembered in particular for his messages of mercy and compassion. Makénúúnatane is credited with predicting the coming of the "whiteman," a new pathway to Heaven, as well as the end of the world (Mills 1982, 10; Doig River 2007).[11] With the influx of Europeans in the late 1700s, the Dane-zaa's knowledge-based technology of the communal hunt was undermined by the introduction of the gun and by changing subsistence patterns. Dreamer Makénúúnatane's teachings and prophecies helped the Dane-zaa people to make sense of the new tools and worldviews introduced through non-Native contact and later colonial policies (Ridington 1978, 46–8).

Robin Ridington points out that the main difference between the Dane-zaa dreamers' dance tradition and the more widespread prophet dance tradition – as well as, I suggest, the adjacent north-western Athapaskan traditions documented by Jean-Guy Goulet (1996, 1998) and by Patrick Moore and Angela Wheelock (1990), among others – is that each song in the Dane-zaa tradition is rooted in the particulars of Dane-zaa experience, genealogy, and narrative tradition. All of the Dane-zaa dreamers can be placed in known family genealogies recorded both in oral tradition and in baptismal and fur trade company records, and all of the dreamers' songs in the repertoire of contemporary Dane-zaa singers derive from these twenty dreamers. Additionally, many of the dreamers' names convey titles that refer to a dreamer's particular influence or teaching (Ridington, Hastings, and Attachie 2005, 117). The Doig River First Nation recently compiled and displayed information about all of its dreamers on its *Dane Wajich* website and included audio examples of many of these dreamers' songs performed by singers and drummers from the community (Doig River 2007).[12] This electronically mediated transmission of dreamers' songs and their contextualizing narratives represent an innovation for the maintenance and revitalization of the Dane-zaa dreamers' song tradition. Indeed, as tradition bearers continue to pass away, CDs, harddrives, and websites are coming to be valued as new song keepers connecting the people with many of their teachers.

Dane-zaa Nááchęyiné? Structure and Customary Use

Although there has been a great deal of literature about prophet dance movements and their development, as referenced in the preceding section, little work has been done to examine the songs that were and are central to these practices. An exception to this in the literature about the Dane-zaa is Brian Lillos's 1977 structural study of forty-five dreamers' songs recorded by Robin Ridington and Antonia Mills between 1966 and 1967. Lillos's study provides musical transcriptions and structural analysis to accompany the recordings of these nááchęyiné?. However, Lillos acknowledges that an analysis of the cultural context and social message revealed by the song recordings he analyzed is beyond the scope of his work (Lillos 1977, 63).

In this section I make an effort to describe the basic structural pattern of nááchęyiné? and the associated Dane-zaa hand drum playing styles in relatively simple language. Here, and throughout this chapter, I also make an effort to contextualize the songs in both Dane-zaa culture and practice from a number of perspectives (e.g., historical, social setting, individual) in order to identify actions, social messages, and symbols revealed by Dane-zaa nááchęyiné? performances.

Vocables and Structure

Songs typically have anywhere from one to three distinct melodic lines that each start on a high pitch and end on a much lower one. These melodic lines with descending contours are made up of a series of vocables, primarily vowels and the letter *h*, which are common sounds used in the

Dane-zaa language. Song keeper Tommy Attachie explains the vocables and melodies used in Dane-zaa dreamers' songs in the following way:

> No words in it.
> Just sing like that ...
> This is no words in there, but the way Creator give to prophet.
> That is the way it is.
> No words. (Attachie 2007)

Attachie also tells me that traditional song keepers place a high value on recreating the song melodies as faithfully as they can. Dreamer and song keeper Ak'ize (Emma Skookum) also emphasizes the importance of maintaining the structure of each dreamer's song:

> Me, I don't change the song.
> I don't move it.
> Me, that's who I am. (Skookum 1966, trans. Madeline Oker 2003)

Although I have noted that the melody is recreated quite closely with each performance, the actual vocables used by each lead singer do have variation. Each singer seems to come up with a distinctive way of singing the song, tailored to his or her own voice and vocable preference, while at the same time maintaining the original melody.[13]

In practice, dreamers' songs can be sung once through, or they can be sung many times in a row, creating a continuous structural sequence. In the case of a two-line song, for example, this can be represented as AB AB AB and so on. The number of times a song is sung depends on the social context of the performance and the singer's preference. At dreamers' dances, for example, the songs are often sung many times in a row, especially if the audience is enjoying the dance and the singers' voices are strong. During more private performances or in instances when the singer sings for himself or herself, the songs tend to be repeated fewer times (Attachie 2007, Oker 2007). A variation to this melodic structure is the occasional addition of a few Dane-zaa words inserted into the last, low register, vocables of the song. Most often, words such as *Yaage Satiin* (Sky Sitter/Sky Keeper) or *Nahhatáá?* (Our Father)[14] are added to a song to emphasize the singers' worship and prayer through their performance (S. Acko 2007).

Although there are no words at the core of dreamers' songs, they are not without significance or meaning.[15] As mentioned earlier, dreamers' songs can be seen as a language – a medium for communicating with animal and human spirits, forces of nature, and the Creator. As well as being a mode of communication, each song has a meaning that is highly contextualized. Narratives, often told before or after a song performance, are used to contextualize the songs and to maintain their genealogical and historic associations. Knowledge about nááchęyiné? is accrued through time as people are exposed to the songs in different performance settings and by different performers with their own body of knowledge about the songs. Information typically associated with each song by song keepers and some community members includes its dreamer, its message from Heaven, and its significance in Dane-zaa history. Song connotations may also include the circumstances of an individual's personal use of the song during prayer.

Song Performers

Traditionally, both women and men, including adolescents, adults, and elders, knew and sang dreamers' songs and used them as part of their prayer practice. Today, women always sing *a capella*, whereas men often accompany themselves with a hand drum (S. Acko 2007, Davis 2007, Makadahay 2007). Many of the current elders remember that their fathers often started and ended the day in prayer by singing dreamers' songs.[16] As Sam Acko recalls, "That is everyday praying for Dane-zaa people" (S. Acko 2007). At dreamers' dances, including those held as part of memorial services, songs are typically sung by a group of male singers who accompany themselves on hand drums. Drumming begins before the singing, usually for just enough time to establish a clear and synchronized beat, and ends with the conclusion of the vocals. One of the song keepers leads the session, choosing the songs to sing and taking the vocal lead. The performers drum in unison and sing together in a monophonic style, without harmony. Lillos (1977, 77) points out that vocal tension is apparent in Dane-zaa dreamers' songs but not to the extent that it is seen in most other North American Indigenous music.

Hand Drum Accompaniment

The Dane-zaa have two types of drums: single-headed snare drums and double-headed barrel drums. They range between one foot and one and one-quarter feet in diameter, are typically made of cow moose rawhide stretched tightly across birch frames, and are secured with babiche

(twisted sinew) (J. Askoty 2007, 01:25). Both types of drum are held by one hand and are beaten with a stick about eight inches in length.

The double-headed barrel drums are used only by dreamers or occasionally by others who have inherited drums after dreamers have passed away. They are about four to six inches deep and are held by a leather thong attached to the top side of the drum frame. Robin Ridington and Antonia Mills recorded dreamer Charlie Yahey performing with a double-headed drum made by dreamer Gaayęą and took a number of photographs of Charlie Yahey with this drum, which are now part of the Ridington/Dane-z̲aa Digital Archive (Ridington, Ridington, and Doig River 2003). Double-headed drums, like the one documented by Ridington and Mills, were often painted by dreamers with maps of the trail to Heaven that they received in their dreams.

The single-headed adjustable snare drum is the type used by most song keepers and singers. It has two thick strands of babiche strung across the bottom of the drum frame at a ninety-degree angle, which are wrapped/webbed at their intersection to make a handle. A thin babiche string, referred to as a snare, is attached to the inside of the drum frame so that it rests horizontally against the bottom side of the drum head but can also be pulled tight by the drummer's thumb. This allows the drummer to put varying tension on the snare as he plays and to create a range of buzzing sounds. Robin Ridington writes that the buzzing sound of snares on the drum head are meant to evoke the dream world and the dreamer's path to Heaven (Oker, Ridington, and Shaak 2000, liner notes). Beverley Diamond and colleagues describe how other northern First Nations, particularly the Innu, describe the sounds of snares as "spirit voices" (Diamond, Cronk, and von Rosen 1994, 87, 140). These examples, both from the Dane-z̲aa and other First Nations groups, indicate that the audience for songs often includes spirits as well as the people who are physically present during the performance. This is an important point that is often neglected, in part due to an etic/outsider perspective that does not take into account the basic worldview that most First Nations people have. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 show some typical single-headed adjustable snare hand drums, which have changed little in design over the years.

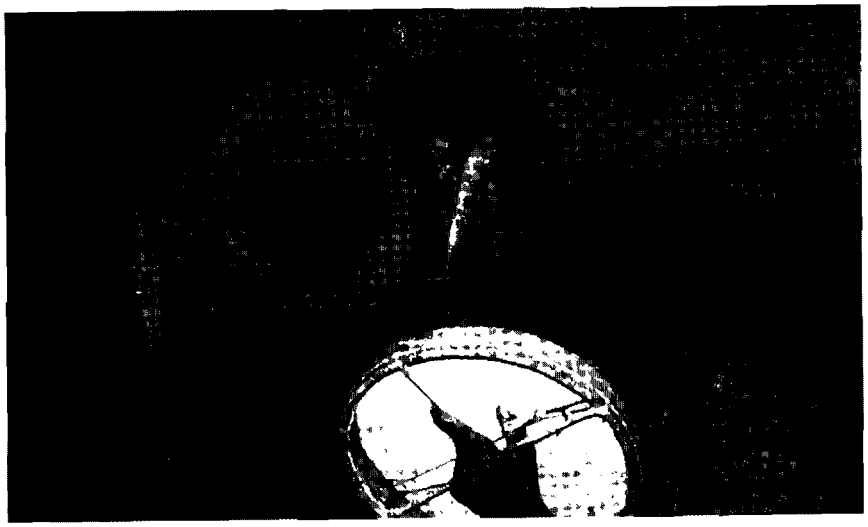
Drumming Styles

Before singing begins, drums are tuned over a fire, or sometimes over an electric stove, to adjust their pitch to the singer's voice. Although drumming is an optional accompaniment for dreamers' songs, the drumbeat is generally fixed for each particular song (Attachie 2007). The most common drumbeat, a steady, unaccented pattern (DUM, DUM, DUM, DUM, DUM ...), evokes the sense of walking over a long distance. The less commonly used drumming pattern, also unaccented, consists of a short percussive beat followed by a longer beat (daDUM, daDUM, daDUM, daDUM, daDUM ...). This short-long drumming pattern is called "jig time," or *Dishinni*, the Dane-z̲aa word for Cree people, as it is the same drumming pattern practised by Cree people who moved to, and often settled in, Dane-z̲aa territory during the fur trade. Dane-z̲aa use of this beat exemplifies how Dane-z̲aa people have incorporated new cultural patterns into their own traditions and have made them their own. Having presented some of the structural elements of Dane-z̲aa dreamers' songs, I now move on to outline stable and divergent aspects of the song and dance tradition over the past forty years.

The Dane-z̲aa Dreamers' Dance of the 1960s

In the 1960s there were still two Dane-z̲aa dreamers living: Charlie Yahey at Blueberry River and Ak'ize (Emma Skookum) at Halfway River (Doig River 2007). At that time, the Dane-z̲aa people were also more actively engaged in traditional forms of subsistence, such as hunting, snaring, and trapping. The adults of this era had not gone to school and had been raised in their small kinship groups travelling seasonally throughout their hunting and trapping grounds and meeting up with other Dane-z̲aa people at dreamers' dances in the summer months. One of the main features of the dreamers' dance of the 1960s was its sacred[17] nature. People believed in the teachings of the dreamers and followed customs to maintain the power relations between themselves and the other living and nonliving creatures of the world that they relied on for sustenance. Robin Ridington describes a typical Dane-z̲aa dreamers' dance from the early 1960s as lasting three or four nights. During the day, he notes, the dreamer may dream for the people or talk to them about his dreaming. Ridington writes,

> The Beavers dance, usually in a large tepee, clockwise, or as they say, "following the sun" around a fire. The fire is the center of the circle and its column of smoke joins heaven and earth, the axis of subjective experience. Extending horizontally out from the fire is a circle of people. The singers and drummers are mainly young adults, the hunters. They sit in the direction of the sunrise [east],



2.2 Dreamers' dance inside a tipi, Doig River, 1966. Drummer on far left is Tommy Attachie, and at centre is Tar Davis. Photograph by Robin Ridington (Ridington/Dane-z̲aa Digital Archive, catalogue no. OS DDD 12), used with permission of Robin Ridington and Doig River First Nation.

> just as they sleep in their own camps toward the sunrise. Older men sit toward the north, and the very old, as well as the Dreamer, if he is present, sit toward the sunset [west]. Women and their children sit along the southern circumference of the circle, and the door is generally the dividing line between men and women. (Ridington 1990, 62)

Figure 2.2 shows gender division at a dreamers' dance in the 1960s. At very large Dane-z̲aa gatherings, the dances were held outside, and people would dance around an open fire with the same physical arrangement based on age and gender as described above.

Rita Makadahay, a current Doig River elder, recalls the sacred nature of dreamers' songs and the dreamers' dance during her youth and notes some of the changes in the current practice:

> I am probably about thirteen, fourteen.
> Then [dreamer] Charlie Yahey used to come to Doig, or Petersen's Crossing.
> They usually have a powwow for about seven days.
> I used to really like that.
> Like not only for dancing, but my mum said also,
> "Think about God when you dance
> because you're dancing unto the Lord.
> This is not for fun!" ...
> It's very different now because most people just dance for fun or something ...
> Now there's no prophet so it's kind of hard.
> I guess the older people they still do dance the way they believe.
> But the younger people should be taught how to respect,
> not only elders, but the song ...
> It doesn't matter how you dance.
> It's how you think when you go into the dance.
> Like mostly people now they pick out songs so if they could dance good to this tune,
> but it's not like that, back then when I was young,
> it don't matter what kind of song,
> "Get up and dance."
> My mum used to tell us that.

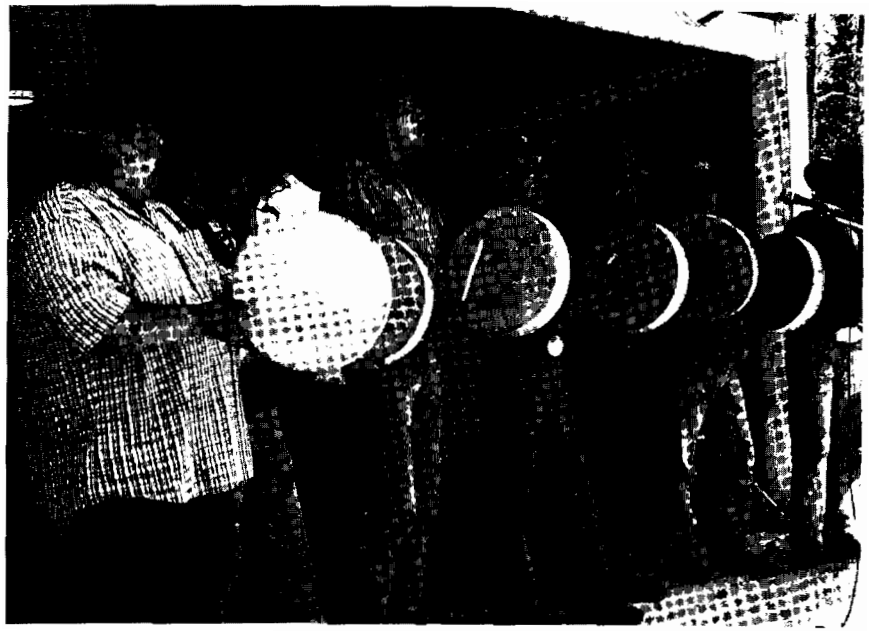
The Dane-z̲aa Dreamers' Dance Today

In the quotation above, Rita Makadahay mentions one of the key differences between the dreamers' dance of her youth in the 1960s and that of today: the partial loss of reverence for the sacred and ceremonial nature of the dance. After the death of the last dreamer, Charlie Yahey, in 1976 and the death of Jack Acko, a respected elder and song keeper in 1979, the Dane-z̲aa people stopped holding tea dances[18] for a short period of time. As elder and song keeper Sam Acko recalls, "it seems like it slowed down for a while. We went pretty close to losing it" (S. Acko 2007). Sam Acko has explained that it took another death, this time of a young Dane-z̲aa man named Mackenzie Ben in 1981, for his community to restore the tea dance tradition. Mackenzie's death helped the community to remember that it had an obligation to help Mackenzie begin his journey to Heaven on a trail of song and that the dreamers' dance is an essential part of the Dane-z̲aa's traditional memorial practice. Revitalizing the song and dance tradition after a brief hiatus became an important affirmation of Dane-z̲aa cosmology despite significant pressure to adopt non-Native lifestyles and Christian funeral ceremonies during this era (S. Acko 2007). Revitalization was also facilitated by the community's access to recordings of the dreamers' songs that Robin Ridington and Antonia Mills had documented in the 1960s. As Sam Acko explains,

From there it picked up again.
And then we listened to a lot of these songs,
like reminder,
like what Robin Ridington did, those tapes ...
So that is why it picked up.
And today it is pretty good ...
But there is still a lot of songs from way back,
Makénúúnatane songs, people never hear it yet.
One day I would like to sing it.
Maybe next tea dance.
I would like to sing them all so people will learn from those songs. (S. Acko 2007)

Although all the Dane-zaa communities have access to the sample of dreamers' songs recorded in the 1960s, the Doig River community is currently the only Dane-zaa group that publicly and actively maintains the song and dance tradition. Doig River community members Tommy Attachie and Sam Acko are respected song keepers who lead a small group of Doig River drummers, occasionally joined by singers and drummers from other Dane-zaa communities.[19] Although they most often practise and perform at their own reserve, the Doig River Drummers are often called to the other three Dane-zaa communities to sing for memorial tea dances after a community member has died.

Today, in contrast to the 1960s, instead of dancing, singing, and drumming for three or four nights, tea dances take place in one evening and are usually over by midnight, in part due to the reduced number of singers in the group, whose voices need a break after five or six hours of singing. Additionally, the singers and drummers sit on a stage, speaker systems are used to amplify the performance, and people appear to sit wherever they like, forming groups related to friendships and kinship ties regardless of age and gender. In the past, when the Dane-zaa relied on hunting and gathering for their principal sustenance, customs and taboos regulated the physical interaction of men and women to a far greater degree. I suggest that since the economy has changed, the older customs that separated genders at tea dances are no longer as relevant and subsequently are not maintained or are only selectively maintained. Although division of the sexes is not maintained, the drummers are still positioned in the east, the direction of the sunrise, and the people still dance around the fire moving in a sunwise/clockwise direction, a symbol of the recurring natural cycle of the sun and the seasons, as was the custom at large summer gatherings in the past.[20]



2.3 The Doig River Drummers performing on stage at Doig Day, 24 May 2007. From left are Brian Acko, Robert Dominic, Chief Kelvin Davis (in background), Freddy Askoty, Sam Acko, Tommy Attachie (lead singer), Leo Acko, and Johnny Askoty. Photograph by Amber Ridington (archived with Amber Ridington and the Whatcom Museum, catalogue no. ARDZDP-5-24-07-E-73), used with permission of Doig River First Nation.

Currently, in addition to holding tea dances as part of memorial services, the Doig River First Nation also regularly holds tea dances as part of its annual spring and summer gatherings. During the spring Doig Day festivities, in which the community invites hundreds of public school children from neighbouring areas to its reserve to learn about Dane-zaa culture, Dane-zaa children dance, accompanied by the Doig River drummers and singers, as part of a cultural performance (see figure 2.3). The traditional summer tea dance marking the summer solstice has become a relatively small part of the contemporary summer gathering festivities at Doig River, which revolve around the Doig River Rodeo. The rodeo, now part of the semi-professional circuit, takes place over two days and is preceded by a tea dance on Friday evening billed as a "cultural day." Almost all of the community members attend the two-day rodeo, but a relatively small number of community members, mostly elders and parents with young children, participate in the tea dance. Although the shift in focus from the dreamers' dance to the rodeo may seem to signal

a change in Dane-zaa traditional culture, I recognize continuity in the traditional practice of Dane-zaa people gathering together from many different communities in the height of summer to socialize, renew their kinship links, and affirm their sense of identity as Dane-zaa people. The dreamers' dance still holds a firm spot in the annual Doig River summer gathering and is maintained by the Doig River drummers and singers, with the support of the chief and the council, even if it is poorly attended compared to the rodeo.

My recent work with Dane-zaa youth has shown that many have limited knowledge of, and intimacy with, the history and significance of each dreamer's song. Despite their lack of knowledge about the songs at this stage in their lives, youth do have experience and knowledge of dancing. They view dancing to be an essential part of their funerary practice as well as an important cultural display used to assert and affirm their Aboriginal identity. Indeed, for all Dane-zaa, the dreamers' dance and song tradition has become an important symbolic marker signifying their people's distinct culture. Dreamers' songs are not just performed at community events, such as memorial tea dances, Doig Day, and the Doig River Rodeo, but are also routinely incorporated into opening ceremonies and opening prayers at public meetings and gatherings with other First Nations as well as with provincial and federal government representatives.

Comparative Analysis: Recorded Performances of Dreamer Gaayęą's "Nedaheyiné?" (Prairie Chicken Song), 1966–2008

In this section I present and compare four recorded performances of dreamer Gaayęą's "Nedaheyiné?," referred to in English as his "Prairie Chicken Song," over a forty-two-year period by different performers and in different contexts. Because this song is referred to as both "Nedaheyiné?" and the more generic term "Jiihyiné?" (Grouse Song) by Dane-zaa song keepers, I use the English term here to avoid confusion.[21] The performance contexts include prayer, a memorial tea dance, a summer gathering, and a studio production. In my analysis of these recorded performances, I offer comments about continuities and innovations within the tradition and about the situated nature of song meaning and interpretation. To frame my analysis, I first share the historical context of the creation of Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song," told to me by song keeper Tommy Attachie. This is a good example of how dreamers' songs and their narratives have functioned together to maintain Dane-zaa cultural history about people, places, events, and connections to the land.

As Attachie relates, Dreamer Gaayęą brought the "Prairie Chicken Song" back from Heaven in a dream he had in 1922 while camping at Sweeney Creek, Alberta, not too far east of the Doig River reserve. In the morning when he sang the song for the first time, a covey of prairie chickens appeared and began to dance. The male singers camped with Gaayęą at Sweeney Creek helped him to remember the song by following his lead and singing the melody over and over as they drummed. You can watch Tommy tell this story in far greater detail at Sweeney Creek in 2005 on the *Dane Wajich* website (Doig River 2007).[22]

1966 "Prairie Chicken Song" Performance

The first "Prairie Chicken Song" example I discuss here is a field recording by Robin Ridington performed by dreamer Charlie Yahey at his home at Blueberry River early in the morning on 2 January 1966. Other people present included a number of family members, both adults and children, four elders visiting from Prophet River, as well as ethnographers Robin Ridington and Antonia Mills. In his field notes, Robin writes that the weather was fiercely cold at the time and that drumming and singing were used to pray for and bring about a change in the weather (Ridington 1966). He further describes, "About 3 in the morning Charlie began singing and talking by himself. No one got up but everyone must have listened with interest. Paul [Notsetta] and Sally [St Pierre] said that maybe he had had a dream when we told them about it. He began talking, a very long serious uninterrupted speech in the morning. It was a very solemn atmosphere. Then the singing began, first Charlie and then Sam [St Pierre] and Jumbie, and I brought the tape recorder over and taped some of it and some oratory" (Ridington 1966). As part of this singing session, Charlie Yahey sang the "Prairie Chicken Song" three times in a row with the following structural pattern of melodic lines with descending contours: ABC BC ABC. He accompanied himself with his double-headed barrel drum given to him by dreamer Gaayęą using the steady, unaccented rhythmic pattern. Doig River drummer and singer Leo Acko translates Charlie Yahey's narrative surrounding the song as follows:

> Why are these spirit chickens gone?
> Even the last one prays.
>
> [Charlie Yahey drums and sings Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song" three times in a row. For these three repetitions, the

structural pattern of melodic lines with descending contours is ABC BC ABC.]

Even those animals, some time they say that.
And some people aren't afraid to pray.
Even with these prayer songs, I don't hear anybody pray with these songs in the evening.
You're all like white people now. Thinking like white people.
They all adapted to *Monias* (white man's) way.
But they won't be living forever.
It's long ways to Heaven.
(Ridington/Dane-z̲aa Digital Archive, catalogue no. CMC4-1, 9:09–11:20, trans. Leo Acko 2007)

In his introduction to the song, Yahey does not directly name or reference Gaayęą as the dreamer of this song but refers to the "spirit chickens." He knows that the majority of the audience already knows the historic context of the "Prairie Chicken Song" and the narrative of how it came to Gaayęą in a dream at Sweeney Creek. After singing the song, Yahey warns about losing one's way to Heaven by abandoning dreamers' songs and prayer traditions. Robin Ridington has written that dreamer Charlie Yahey, in a prophetic way, understood the role of the tape recorder and the role of the anthropologist as a messenger to help distribute his songs and teachings. For example, in 1966 Charlie Yahey said, "I will not live long. I am sending messages to other people with this tape recorder. God made all those things for people (Ridington 1978, 88; Ridington and Ridington 2003, 62). This 1966 field recording is now part of the Ridington/Dane-z̲aa Digital Archive, which is accessible to the Dane-z̲aa communities. The recording quality is crisp, and Charlie Yahey's strong, unaccompanied voice is clearly audible, making it an excellent audio example for people to learn from.

1994 "Prairie Chicken Song" Performance

The second example of dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song" was performed almost thirty years later in 1994 by a group of drummers and singers led by song keeper Albert Askoty at a memorial tea dance for his wife, Alice Askoty. Albert Askoty, now deceased, was a respected song keeper whom Charlie Yahey mentored. The memorial tea dance took place close to the couple's former home at Petersen's Crossing, not far from Doig River. This event was recorded by Garry Oker, who is Alice Askoty's grandson and Albert Askoty's step-grandson. Like Charlie Yahey often did, Albert introduced the song with a short narrative in his language to situate the performance and to guide the audience's interpretation of the song. Garry Oker has translated Albert's introduction to the song's performance as follows:

> In a dream, one will, one dreamer, will know us. One will quickly be aware, that's what they said, sing two songs, sing two songs, sing them all, sing two dreamers' songs. There are many dreamers, one will know us, they said. He is a dreamer, that is the way. (Albert Askoty, trans. G. Oker, in Oker 2008a, liner notes).

Following his verbal introduction, Albert begins drumming on his single-headed snare drum in the steady, unaccented rhythmic pattern. Then he and the group of drummers who had joined his lead sing the "Prairie Chicken Song" four times in a row with the following structural pattern of melodic lines with descending contours: ABC BC ABC BC. Alice's son, Freddy Askoty, told me that throughout this tea dance many of the audience members, both family and community members, danced in a circle to help Alice begin her journey to Heaven (F. Askoty 2007). Albert's introductory oratory is not specifically directed to Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song" but rather is made relevant to the context of the memorial dreamers' dance. By directing his audience to "sing two songs, sing them all," Albert refers to the role of the singers and dancers present to help the deceased – in this case, Alice Askoty – to meet a dreamer who will "know us" and guide her as she begins to retrace her steps in life along her journey to Heaven. This autoethnographic recording by Garry Oker was included on the first of a series of audio CDs of dreamers' songs produced for the Dane-z̲aa communities by Garry Oker and various collaborators (Oker, Ridington, and Shaak 2000, track 21).[23] As well as being distributed within the Dane-z̲aa communities, the 1994 recording has been shared with the public on the *Dane Wajich* website (Doig River 2007).[24]

2004 "Prairie Chicken Song" Performance

The third example of dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song" was performed by the Doig River Drummers, lead by Tommy Attachie, as part of the 23 July 2004 Doig River Cultural Day festivities, which preceded the Doig River Rodeo. The other drummers/singers are Brian Acko, Garry

Oker, Leo Acko, and Clarence Apsassin. After the death of song keeper Albert Askoty in 1994, Tommy Attachie took on a leading role as singer and song keeper. Tommy began drumming with his elders and singing dreamers' songs in his youth. He has never stopped practising and studying the dreamers' songs and is now recognized as a leader in revitalizing the dreamers' dance and song tradition as he teaches others about both the songs and their contextualizing narratives.

I recorded the entire 2004 summer tea dance, which took place between 7:00 and 11:30 PM and had about forty people in attendance. Dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song" was sung twice that evening. The example discussed here was sung close to the end of the tea dance when the singers were becoming tired and their voices were getting a bit hoarse. Tommy was the only singer in that group who could take the lead, so by the end of the evening his voice was less strong. The melody was sung five times in a row with the following structural pattern of melodic lines with descending contours: ABC BC ABC BC ABC.

The singers accompanied themselves on single-headed snare drums and used the steady, unaccented rhythmic pattern. Much of the audience danced to this song, following the lead of elder Annie Oker around the fire. Typical of the other songs performed that evening, Tommy began the song by mentioning its dreamer, Gaayęą, and ended it by referencing two of the names used to refer to it, "Jiihyinéʔ" and "Prairie Chicken." Tommy's contextual comments were made so that his fellow drummers and singers would know what song he wanted to sing and so that they could continue to learn about the tradition. He mentioned the name of the song in both the Dane-z̲aa and the English languages. This could have been for the benefit of some of the younger drummers who are less fluent in the Dane-z̲aa language, or it could simply have reflected the increasing use of English words and phrases among Dane-z̲aa people. The comments were not made loud enough for the audience to hear and were not directed into the speaker system microphone. However, the comments were picked up by the lavalier microphone that lead singer Tommy Attachie was wearing and that I used to record the tea dance. This partial separation from the live audience distinguishes this performance from the more intimate performance context of dreamer Charlie Yahey's home in 1966, when everyone present could hear him speak about the songs. However, the 2004 field recording, including its contextualizing narrative, is now available to a worldwide audience through its inclusion in the *Dane Wajich* website (Doig River 2007).[25]

2008 "Prairie Chicken Song" Performance

The 2008 example of dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song" is a studio recording that samples from the 1994 field recording discussed previously and adds new content. The recording was directed and co-produced by Doig River First Nation member Garry Oker, a musician, visual artist, and one of the current members of the Doig River Drummers. Garry first started sampling from and re-mixing dreamers' songs in the recording studio to make a soundtrack for a video he directed, *They Dream about Everything* (Oker and elders of the Dane-z̲aa First Nation 2005, Oker 2005c, Oker 2007). Later, in 2007, Garry attended the Aboriginal Music Lab at Vancouver Community College, where he found inspiration and support for his sampling of, and experimentation with, traditional dreamers' songs from workshop leaders and other Aboriginal artists (Oker 2007, 2008b). In 2008 Garry partnered with producer Harris Van Berkel, who had mentored Garry at the Aboriginal Music Lab, to record and produce Garry's own CD of "recomposed" dreamers' songs for release and sale to the general public. The album, entitled *Dane-zaa Dreamer's Melodies* (Oker 2008a), is currently available for purchase online at the Apple iTunes store.

The first track on this recording, entitled "Sing Two Songs," uses the 1994 recording of dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song" performed by Garry's step-grandfather, Albert Askoty (discussed previously), as an inspirational base. As with the rest of the songs on the album, it is credited as "Composed by traditional Dane-z̲aa Dreamers, Recomposed by Garry Oker" (Oker 2008a, liner notes). Although the specific dreamer and the performance sampled are not referenced in the liner notes, I was able to recognize the core section of "Sing Two Songs" as dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song." I had become familiar with this song through listening to the recording of Albert Askoty singing it in 1994, which was included on the CD compilation of dreamers' songs mentioned earlier (Oker, Ridington, and Shaak 2000, track 21), as well as through listening to my own recording of the song by Tommy Attachie and the Doig River Drummers in the summer of 2004. In addition to recognizing the melody, I understood that the name, "Sing Two Songs," references Albert's introductory narrative to his 1994 performance, a translation of which is also included in the liner notes of the CD compilation. The connotations that I have for this particular song are a good example of the polyvocality of sampled songs. Listeners bring with them their own body of know-

ledge that helps them to find meaning and cultural associations in the samples. In Dane-zaa tradition, song keepers accrue knowledge about the songs through narratives passed along by their teachers and in turn carry forward the tradition by transmitting this knowledge through narratives during their own performances.

For an outside audience, Garry contextualizes the song as follows: "The message of the dreamers to the tribal members is to continue practicing songs, so that they will be able to recognize their spiritual path through these prayer songs" (Oker 2008a, liner notes). This general contextualization is in contrast to the way that song keeper Tommy Attachie uses narrative to place the song specifically in both genealogical and historical context and the way that dreamer Charlie Yahey and song keeper Albert Askoty addressed their community audience and directed its members to participate in traditional practices of prayer, dance, and spiritual connection through their framing narratives of dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song."

"Sing Two Songs" is not initially recognizable as a Dane-zaa dreamer's song. It begins with piano, joined by electric guitar, flute, and synthesizer, all played by professional session musicians in a four-four metre. After twenty-six seconds Albert Askoty's introduction in the Dane-zaa language to his 1994 performance of the "Prairie Chicken Song" is added to the instrumental mix. His voice is electronically distorted so that it is slower and echoes and has the effect of sounding distant and otherworldly. This verbal sample is followed by the addition of a single Dane-zaa drumbeat played on the single-headed snare drum in the steady, unaccented rhythmic pattern. Shortly thereafter, Garry sings dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song" three times in a row, with the Dane-zaa drumbeat dropped from the mix for the third repetition of the song. The structural pattern of melodic lines with descending contours is ABC BC ABC. "Sing Two Songs" ends like it began with an arrangement of new musical content, played on instruments from outside the Dane-zaa musical tradition and following the newly applied four-four metre.

Co-producer Harris Van Berkel explained the process of production and recomposition for this song, as well as the other songs on the CD, to me in an interview about the production. He recalls that Garry selected the traditional Dane-zaa dreamers' songs he wanted to use in the production from recorded sources and provided Harris with these recordings, as well as direction about the sound and feel that he was after. Harris then transcribed each traditional dreamer's song in musical notation and composed parts for additional musical instruments that would fit with the melody and rhythmic pattern of the original dreamer's song and Garry's vision for the recomposition (Van Berkel 2008). For "Sing Two Songs," Garry explained that instead of including the inspirational song as a layer in the mix, he laid down his own vocal performance by listening to the source recording through headphones and following Albert's lead while he sang and drummed along with it in the studio (Oker 2008b).

Although the beginning and ending of "Sing Two Songs" are not recognizable as parts of a Dane-zaa genre of music, the actual vocal performance at the centre of the song is very traditional, and the song melody is easily recognizable to those familiar with the dreamers' song repertoire as Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song." As with the previous examples from 1966, 1994, and 2004, the melody is sung through in its entirety, with no significant variation, and the steady unaccented hand drum rhythm used is consistent. The core structural sequence of melodic lines with descending contours – which for this song consists of three melodic lines, represented as ABC, with the first line, A, dropped with every second verse – is consistent in all four performances. Similarly consistent in all four performances is the variation in vocables used for the melodic lines by each performer, an attribute that is part of the Dane-zaa performance tradition. However, the 2008 recomposition as a whole is quite different from the other examples discussed here. It is a pastiche of musical styles that samples from and recreates a traditional Dane-zaa dreamer's melody but ultimately represents a new hybrid genre of music that iTunes has categorized as "new age."

To summarize, the first three examples of dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song," from 1966, 1994, and 2004, are similar in form and performance context. All are live performances by traditionally trained Dane-zaa musicians staged for a Dane-zaa community audience and within the context of a sacred tradition: as prayer, as a memorial, and as a summer world-renewal ceremony. The biggest differences between these examples and Garry Oker's 2008 recomposition include: (1) taking the performance out of a live and natural community context, (2) electronically sampling and manipulating the performance in the studio, (3) adding new musical content and performers from outside the Dane-zaa tradition, (4) copyrighting and commoditizing the material for global distribution beyond the Dane-zaa communities, and (5) altering the primary use from sacred to secular, noting that those familiar with the Dane-zaa dreamers' song tradition may still find sacred meaning in the dreamer's song at the core of the recomposition. Oker acknowledges that

his recompositions are different from the traditional dreamers' songs but also asserts that they can still be used for personal prayer, even if they no longer fit within the dreamers' dance tradition as it is currently practised. He states,

> This is not dancing stuff.
> This is just more for getting into a groove.
> You can stand in one place and just do it.
> Just like a traditional song, they used to have songs like that
> where you just stand in one place and dance ...
> This is one of them. (Oker 2007)[26]

In comparing these four performances of dreamer Gaayęą's "Prairie Chicken Song" over a forty-two-year period, I have tried to identify patterns in the song structure and the context of the performances so that the meanings and connotations of the song for a variety of different participants – drummers, singers, lead singers, and various audience segments, both local and distant – can be better understood. As will be discussed further, some view the 2008 recomposition as a distinct break from the dreamers' song tradition, whereas others see it as a continuation of the tradition that ultimately renews it and makes it relevant for the current sociocultural environment.

Conclusion: The Emergent Nature of Dane-zaa Song Creation and Recreation

Singing, drumming, and dancing are still important ceremonial practices for Dane-zaa people, particularly as part of their funerary custom, personal prayer, and public cultural display. However, this is a critical time for Dane-zaa dreamers' songs because traditional song keepers are few and younger generations are less engaged than in the past with traditional culture. Recordings and new media tools, including digitization, databases, and websites, have emerged as new types of song keepers that connect the community to samples of the song repertoires and teachings of past dreamers and song keepers. At the same time as these electronic song keepers are maintaining the tradition, the new technology has also facilitated and inspired artistic innovation.

A current topic of debate is whether it is appropriate to change the songs and alter the tradition as Garry Oker has begun to do with his dreamers' song recompositions. Many in the community (B. Acko 2007, L. Acko 2007, S. Acko 2007, Attachie 2007, Davis 2007, Makadahay 2007) suggest that these innovations are inappropriate, as they change the form, accompaniment, and performance context of the song tradition from sacred, affirming the Dane-zaa's worldview and oral history, to a secular commodity. For example, Brian Acko, one of the younger members of the Doig River drumming and singing group (in his early forties), is an advocate for the maintenance of dreamers' song forms. He says,

> I don't agree with that.
> I was kind of choked for that, because these are prayer songs.
> Why you want to mix something with the songs that the
> dreamer, that God gave them?
> Why you want to go play around with them? ...
> They are just like gospel music, same thing.
> It is no different than that.
> That's what my grandpa used to say, my uncle Jack,
> "These are Heaven songs ...
> You never forget it!" (B. Acko 2007)

A similar critical view of the sampled and remixed dreamers' songs was expressed during a community-wide survey earlier in 2007 to review and approve content for Doig River's (2007) *Dane Wajich* virtual exhibit, which I co-curated with Kate Hennessy. The initial storyboard for the "songs" section of the virtual exhibit had included one of Garry's recompositions along with numerous traditional dreamers' song recordings. However, the majority view expressed during our community consultation was that the remixed/recomposed dreamers' songs did not belong in the Doig River First Nation's public display of its sacred dreamers' song tradition, and it was removed from the exhibition's storyboard. Another discussion centred around whether it was culturally appropriate to circulate recordings of dreamers' songs outside of the community context at all, let alone to a global audience on the Internet. Following a debate, it was agreed that although nááchęyiné? are considered to be powerful, and need to be honored and respected, they are given to dreamers to be used by everybody and that the power of the songs would not be compromised by their being shared publicly. It was also agreed that the benefit of asserting Dane-zaa identity and tradition by sharing dreamers' songs outweighed concerns of piracy or appropriation.[27] This community-wide content review for *Dane Wajich* also hastened intense discussions about how the community can control the use and distribution of archival recordings of dreamers' songs and other forms of digital cultural heritage, now more easily duplicable as part of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Ar-

chive, and about who should have the right to control specific archival materials.

Although intellectual property rights have been antithetical concepts for this nonhierarchical hunting and gathering group, whose members have traditionally valued individual knowledge over material possessions, the creation of song recordings and the more recent use of new digital media (e.g., CDs, Internet) for the duplication and transmission of these heritage materials to an outside audience have prompted an interest in them as both individual and cultural property. The Doig River community, and other Dane-z̲aa communities with a shared interest in these cultural materials, have begun to develop and articulate their own cultural protocols for controlling the distribution and attribution of this valued heritage. The following provisional guidelines became implicit following the discussions during the production of *Dane Wajich*. The dreamers' songs themselves are considered to be collective heritage shared by the group. However, distribution of recorded performances of dreamers' songs outside of the community should be approved by the performer. If the performer is deceased, then the approval of the performer's family would be required. Kate Hennessy and I have written elsewhere about these developing cultural stewardship and cultural property issues surrounding Dane-z̲aa digital cultural heritage (Ridington and Hennessy 2008; et al. 2011, 235–7). Additionally, Kate places Dane-z̲aa people's engagement with their digital cultural heritage within the global context of Indigenous repatriation in her recent dissertation (Hennessy 2010).

Garry Oker has responded to these intellectual property attribution concerns by adopting the newly articulated kinship-based clearance guidelines. Currently, he samples only from the recordings of his stepgrandfather, Albert Askoty, or from recordings of his own performance with the Doig River Drummers, as these are relatively clear for him to use under the provisional rights clearance protocol and aren't likely to be challenged. He has also started to avoid the clearance issue by recording his own performances of dreamers' songs instead of sampling from archival recordings. In response to community concerns about altering the accompaniment and form of dreamers' songs, detailed above, Oker has suggested that in order to revitalize the dreamers' song tradition, now actively practised by only a handful of singers, the songs need to be framed in a modern sound because, as he says, "if we don't explore and develop new traditions with the songs, people are going to forget about it, especially the younger generation" (Oker 2007). Although he continues to sample from and experiment with traditional Dane-z̲aa dreamers' songs, Oker has made an effort to ameliorate some of the community concerns about altering the dreamers' melodies. For example, in "Sing Two Songs," discussed previously, he has been careful to faithfully recreate Gaayea's "Prairie Chicken Song" and use it as a base melody to mix with musical arrangements and instruments from outside of the Dane-z̲aa musical tradition, a process that he calls recomposition. He explains, "It is only adding and filling the spaces in between the beats. That is what I'm doing. I am not actually altering the sound, I'm just filling in the blanks to make it more contemporary" (Oker 2007).

The Dane-z̲aa dreamers' song and dance tradition has been dynamic since its inception as an Indigenous movement that has helped Dane-z̲aa people to adjust to cultural changes brought on by European encounter, the fur trade, and the impacts of colonization. With the rapid cultural, social, and technological changes since the Second World War, the Dane-z̲aa dreamers' song and dance tradition has continued to adapt. Although technology has been important in the preservation and revitalization of the dreamers' song tradition, the current era of easy digital reproduction and distribution of recordings, touched upon briefly in this chapter, has also inspired artistic innovation as well as resistance to these innovations. As Dane-z̲aa songs move onto a global stage through the Internet and public release on CDs, the Dane-z̲aa, like many other Indigenous groups, are being forced to find a balance between sharing and protecting their sacred musical heritage.

NOTES

1 Mary Magoulick summarizes performance theory as it is often applied in folkloristics, and as I utilize it here, in her online article "Fieldwork/Ethnography and Performance Theory," http://hercules.gcsu.edu/~mmagouli/performance.htm (accessed 9 June 2011).

2 Throughout this chapter the terms "dreamers' dance" and "tea dance" are used interchangeably. "Dreamers' dance" is an etic (outsider) term used by scholars to categorize the tradition in relation both to the dreamers' songs, which are central to the dance, and to the religious and spiritual elements of the practice.

Please note that Robin Ridington and Antonia Mills used the term "prophet dance" in most of their earlier writing about the Dane-z̲aa. However, "dreamer" has become the preferred Dane-z̲aa translation of their source word, *nááchę*, so in recent years the terms "dreamer" and "dreamers' dance" have replaced the terms "prophet" and "prophet dance" in their writings.

"Tea dance" and "powwow" are emic (insider) terms used frequently by the current group of Dane-z̲aa people to describe their song and dance tradition.

The Dane-zaa's use of these terms should not be confused with the particulars of other Native North American tea dance and powwow traditions. Dane-zaa people use the term "tea dance" simply because "they make tea" when their communities gather together socially to dance (S. Acko 2007, Davis 2007). Similarly, the Dane-zaa have adopted the term "powwow" to refer to their dreamers' dances as a way of identifying them as a type of Indigenous dance gathering.

As is described further in note 10, throughout this chapter I have chosen not to capitalize the first letters of dance genres such as dreamers' dance, prophet dance, and tea dance.

3 Antonia Mills conducted her initial fieldwork with the Dane-zaa while she was married to Robin Ridington and initially published under the name Antonia Ridington. Since 1978 she has published under the name Antonia Mills.

4 Robin and Antonia began documenting the Dane-zaa in 1964 as Harvard University graduate students in anthropology and spent a great deal of time living in Dane-zaa communities until 1970. Since 1974 Robin and Antonia have continued their work with the Dane-zaa separately. As of 1978 Robin has been joined in his work with the Dane-zaa by his current partner and colleague, sociologist Jillian Ridington.

5 As the daughter of Antonia Mills and Robin Ridington, I spent extended periods of time with the Dane-zaa as I was growing up, primarily during the summer months. Since 2002 I have worked collaboratively with the Doig River First Nation, one of the four Dane-zaa bands, on a number of digital heritage projects. The first of these involved coordinating the digital preservation of the Ridington collection of Dane-zaa audio and video recordings and photographs compiled since 1964. My most recent collaboration is a participatory Internet-based multimedia exhibit entitled *Dane Wajich – Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* (Doig River 2007).

6 Linguistic anthropologist Dr Patrick Moore has provided orthographic transcriptions of the Dane-zaa words that appear in this chapter. Much of this linguistic work was done as part of the *Dane Wajich* project (Doig River 2007). Pat has kindly helped me with the new terms I use here. You can learn more about the Dane-zaa language and orthography at http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/resources/language.php (accessed 19 April 2011).

7 These digital heritage projects include four audio CDs of traditional Dane-zaa dreamers' songs (Oker, Ridington, and Shaak 2000, Oker 2005a, 2005b, 2005c), videos (Oker et. al 2001, Oker and elders of the Dane-zaa First Nation 2005), a CD of Garry Oker's remixed dreamers' songs prepared as a soundtrack for the video *They Dream about Everything* (Oker 2005d), and two participatory and collaborative multimedia web exhibitions (Doig River 2004, 2007).

8 See note 6.

9 The word "Heaven" is capitalized throughout this chapter. I use it as a proper noun to represent the way the Dane-zaa think of Heaven as a tangible place. The Dane-zaa's use of the term appears to reference a hybrid concept that draws from both their precontact belief system and Christianity.

10 The use of capitalization to refer to these Aboriginal dance genres varies in academic use. Throughout this chapter I have chosen not to capitalize the first letters of these dance genres according to standard grammatical practice.

11 http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/dreamers/dreamer.php?action=dreamer/makenuunatane (accessed 19 April 2011).

12 http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/dreamers/dreamers.php (accessed 19 April 2011).

13 Elsewhere, I have described as "oral curation" this dynamic yet conservative process that underlies the transmission of oral forms of narrative and song (Ridington and Ridington 2011).

14 *Yaage Saatin* (Sky Sitter/Sky Keeper) and *Nahhatáá?* (Our Father) are the two terms currently used to refer both to the Creator and to God in the Dane-zaa language. *Nahhatáá?* (Our Father) is a translation for "God" introduced by Catholic missionaries. It is unclear whether the term *Yaage Saatin* is exclusively an Indigenous Dane-zaa term for the Creator, whether it is another term used to reference the Christian concept of God, or whether it represents a hybrid concept that draws from both the precontact Dane-zaa belief system and Christianity (personal communication with Robin Ridington and Patrick Moore, June 2008).

15 Charlotte Frisbie's (1980) work on Navajo vocables and the many ways they have meaning has helped me to think about and to inquire about the meanings of Dane-zaa dreamers' song vocables.

16 These elders include Tommy Attachie, Sam Acko, Madeleine Davis, Johnny Askoty, and May Apsassin.

17 I have applied the terms "sacred" and "secular" in an etic manner to describe my own categorization of songs according to their use.

18 See note 2.

19 Dreamer Charlie Yahey's son, John Yahey, from the Blueberry River community, has been an important song keeper for much of his adult life. His sons, who are now elders themselves, are also song keepers. Charlie Yahey's grandsons, along with a few other elders at Blueberry River, continue to sing dreamers' songs but seldom do so in public or for the rest of their community. Because of their predominantly private practice at this time, these singers can be seen as passive tradition bearers who do not publicly transmit their knowledge to the wider Dane-zaa community.

20 As was the practice in the 1960s, when dancing indoors in the wintertime, the community dances around a table placed in the centre of the room as a symbolic representation of the fire and its trail of smoke, which connects the dancers to the spirit world and Heaven.

21 My thanks to anthropological linguist Dr Patrick Moore for his orthographic transcription of the phrase "Prairie Chicken Song" and for the following explanation of variants in an e-mail on 7 February 2011: "*Jiihyiné?* translates literally as 'grouse song.' *Jiih* means 'grouse' and can be applied to any type of grouse, including ruffed grouse, spruce grouse and prairie chicken. *Yiné?* means 'song' when it is used in a possessed form. 'Song' on its own is *shin*. *Nedahe* means specifically 'prairie chicken' so *nedaheyiné?* would be 'prairie chicken song.'"

22 http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/video.php?action=fla/sweeney_chicken_dance (accessed 19 April 2011).
23 See note 7.
24 http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/songs/askoty_chickensong.php (accessed 19 April 2011).
25 http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/songs/drummers_chickensong.php (accessed 19 April 2011).
26 Jean-Guy Goulet notes that according to explorers such as Samuel Herne and Alexander Mackenzie, earlier Beaver dance styles from the beginning of the twentieth century tended to be more interpretive and individual, with participants standing in place. The dominant symbols in the prophet dance – *the circle*, seen in the orientation of all participants around the fire, and *the path*, represented by the dancers' clockwise movement around the fire – Goulet suggests, are relatively new among the Dene Tha and other related groups (Goulet 1998, 226–7).
27 These discussions took place in concert with a parallel debate about whether it is culturally appropriate to display a digital picture of a sacred dreamer's drawing on the Internet, where it can be seen anytime by anyone. Traditionally, in order to safeguard the power of a dreamer's drawing, it is shared only with the community on special occasions and is cared for according to particular taboos and customs. Because some community members felt that uncontrolled access to the digital copies of these powerful drawings could be damaging, all images of dreamers' drawings were excluded from the online exhibition.

3

From Tea Dance to iTunes: Recomposing Dane-z̲aa Dreamers' Songs

INTERVIEW: GARRY OKER WITH AMBER RIDINGTON

The following edited interview was recorded on 14 January 2008 over dinner at a restaurant in Vancouver (Oker 2008b). At the time, Garry Oker was in the final stages of producing his CD *Dane-zaa Dreamer's Melodies* and was kind enough to talk to me about his music, his musical inspiration, and his process of production. On this CD, Garry mixes traditional Dane-z̲aa dreamers' songs with "modern sounds." During our conversation, as Garry explained his musical approach, the following themes surfaced: (1) innovation within tradition, (2) artistic expression, and (3) issues of intellectual property rights that emerge with commercial distribution of sampled traditional songs.

Garry's CD *Dane-zaa Dreamer's Melodies* can be purchased online at the Apple iTunes store. Since this interview, Garry has continued to create new music inspired by Dane-z̲aa dreamers' songs. Visit www.garryoker.com to learn about Garry's most recent productions.

My thanks to linguistic anthropologist Dr Patrick Moore for transcribing the Dane-z̲aa words in the interview using Dane-z̲aa orthography. My chapter in this volume may serve as helpful background information on Dane-z̲aa culture and music.

GO: My name is Garry Oker. I'm a descendant of a *nááchę* [dreamer]. I am also a Dane-z̲aa music keeper. I've been playing music for a long time, and I'm finally finding my own voice. Years and years ago my Grandma and Grandpa told me their last words before they left. They said,