

## **Artist Statements**

**Wende Bartley** is celebrating close to 10 years of living the life of a Gibraltar Point Center for the Arts co-habitant. Throughout this time, the surrounding spirit of the waters, sands, trees and grasses of this oasis have deepened her creative expression and spawned the unfolding of a myriad of compositions – electroacoustic, music theatre, choral and instrumental, along with various soundtracks and land-based installations. Interwoven with this work has been her expanding relationship with her voice and understanding of the transformative power of sound. During this residency she has explored the healing relationship between sound, image, and the earth while experiencing the support and witnessing of her west coast based co-creators, sisters and spirit-travelers. [www.awakeningyourvoice.com](http://www.awakeningyourvoice.com)

**Barbara Bickel** recently transplanted herself into the Shawnee forest of Southern Illinois from the coast of British Columbia. She lives there exploring the perplexing midlife she has arrived at as a practicing artist, researcher and educator. The studio art she has created at Gibraltar Point is drawn from trance, sound, her body and art making as ritual. In this way she crosses into women's time/space free from forces of gravity and what is known, to explore embodied knowing and unknowing. [www.barbarabickel.com](http://www.barbarabickel.com)

**Nane Ariadne Jordan** is a doctoral candidate in Education at the UBC Vancouver, BC. She holds a BFA in Photography from the University of Ottawa, and completed her MA in Women's Spirituality at New College California. Nane draws inspiration from and loves the Pacific Coastal rain forests, being with her two daughters, husband, family, friends, scholarly colleagues, and extended community of women and midwives around the world. "Spinning and weaving and now wearing red thread, I want to know something of its mysteries, what women know from within their bodies and the earth over centuries past and still to come." She has been deeply present with the residency although absent.

**Medwyn McConachy** is a mother, grandmother, and newlywed re-claiming beauty and joy in her crone time. Her ritual making inspires her collaboration with other women in the sacred container of art as an expression of spirit. Medwyn facilitates restorative learning experiences through spiritual practice and sacred ceremony from her home on BC's west coast. Her work is rooted in the regenerative wisdom of Old Europe's matriarchal cultures. Medwyn's studio work at Gibraltar Point is inspired by the abundant natural world, the stone patterns in the sand and the footprints of the mysterious ones. [www.medwyn.ca](http://www.medwyn.ca)

# **Tracing Absence Sounding Presence a performance ritual**

**Wende Bartley, Barbara Bickel & Medwyn McConachy**



July 2, 2009, Gibraltar Point Center for the Arts  
Toronto Island, ON

## **About the Performance Ritual**

This performance ritual is fed by 4 weeks of co-creative process, which included sounding, trance and movement workings. Our performance ritual begins with the meeting of the ancestors in the center fire. Within the fire sits a nest holding an egg, symbolizing their gestating presence. At the cracking of the egg, their wisdom begins to emerge through our voices as it pools at our feet, and we are guided to create vortices of sound for healing the earth. We transfer the sonic wisdom into our rakes, followed by a tracing of the patterns of absence in the form of a spiral labyrinth onto the sand. These tracings draw into presence the ancestral wisdom of the land. We return to the centre and sound the voices of the labyrinth spirals. Our final reverence and gift to Gaia is delivered directly into her as our sacred tracing tools come to rest.

### **Terms**

#### **Earth SoundHealing**

*Sounding to/with the earth can assist in restoring equilibrium among the elemental worlds of water, earth, wind and fire. As well, our vibrations can heal and transform human global consciousness into a remembering of our interconnectivity with all life.*

#### **Labyrinth**

Crossing cultural and religious boundaries, the symbol of the labyrinth offers a diversity of multi-faith expression. In ancient Cretan society it represented the womb of the Divine Feminine. Used as a walking meditation it leads one into the center of the circle and back out through self-reflective contemplation/prayer.

*Performance Ritual is the manifestation of art and spirit through our bodies. It draws together threads of ceremony and performance using sacred enquiry as the gestation process for its birthed presence.*

#### **Rake**

A tool for working the magic of the earth through cleansing.

#### **Sounding**

An intuitive weaving of voices and sounds informed by intention, listening, and opening to the deeper layers of consciousness and the larger creative forces.

*Trance can be described as a form of active meditation, a waking dream state, where through dropping into an altered state of consciousness the mind is opened to receive sensory information from other realities. This performance ritual partially emerged within a group trance.*

### **Performance Ritual Program**

7pm Performance Ritual begins at Gibraltar Point Beach. Length approximately 20 minutes

We appreciate the withholding of applause at the end of the performance ritual and instead invite you to look closer at the tracings and to walk the labyrinths. The labyrinth patterns are based on nature's version: the spiral.

7:30 - 9:30 Studio Installation & Reception in Studio E  
8:30 Solo Sound & Video Performance –Wende Bartley  
9:30 *Departure with the GPCA van for the Marina boat trip back into the city*

*Co-conceived and performed by Wende Bartley, Barbara Bickel, Medwyn McConachy*

*Video documentation by Johannes Zits, Megan English*

*Thanks to Lisa Cristinzo and Gibraltar Point Centre for the Arts, Marsha Stonehouse, Kathleen Brown and our fellow artists at GPCA.*

*This piece is dedicated to the ancestors of this land.*