

Jazz Beyond Borders

For Immediate Release

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New Album Features Native American Downtempo Music

In the relative calm before the crazed American turkey to tinsel holiday rush, Grammy Nominated world music artist Dawn Avery announces the release of her CD *Crane on Earth, in Sky: a Journey*. One of dozens of albums recorded by Avery, it is a testimony to her skills as a composer, cellist and vocalist and reflects the deep spirituality of her Native American (Mohawk) heritage.

With lyrics in Mohawk and English, this Native downtempo recording features storytelling through sonic landscapes created with the sounds of animals, strings, and vocals as well as electronics and electric guitar contributed by producer and contributing composer Larry Mitchell. The album will be available from major online sales outlets in November 2017. (Visit <https://store.cdbaby.com/Artist/DawnAvery>.)

The recording began as the soundtrack of the IBEX Puppetry theatrical production “Ajijaack,” (pronounced ah-GEE-jack). Created by Heather Henson of the Jim Henson family legacy, and Grammy Award winning multidisciplinary artist Ty Defoe (Ojibwe/Oneida), the play and its music tell the story of a majestic Crane who restores language, culture, and balance to the earth with the help of the Native ancestors she meets on her migratory journey from Canada to Texas and back.

The characters Ajijaack meets along the way (fellow cranes, coyote, buffalo, deer and snake) prepare her to meet her destiny to help restore Mother Earth. Avery sees the work as an opportunity “to share Native wisdom, to give listeners more tools to help the environment, and to inspire all of us to follow our own destiny to make change.”

She was invited to compose for this show by Ty Defoe, who, with Henson, was determined to include as many Native artists as possible in the project. (Defoe and Avery had collaborated on many past projects.) Both a student and teacher of Mohawk tradition, Avery runs a World Music program at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland where she is a full professor. She holds a BM from the Manhattan School of Music, an MFA from NYU and a PhD in ethnomusicology from the University of Maryland, College Park with primary research in native classical contemporary composition and the application of Indigenous research techniques.

Avery looks for opportunities to make a difference through music, especially those that benefit Native communities, are highly spiritual and communicate positive messages about women. This project met all three goals. She composed most of the music in her home studio in Virginia. Appearing on the CD with her and Mitchell are Ty Defoe (Native flute and chanting), and young singers Kaia Long Koumoutseas and Kaydee London Zotigh.

Performances

While the music stands strong on its own merits, theatrical performances will also be offered. On **January 27, 2018**, “Ajijaack” will be showcased in the 40th Anniversary Year of the International Performing Arts for Youth Festival (IPAY) in Philadelphia in the Kimmel Center’s Perelman Theater.

When the play runs at La Mama in New York **February 8 -18**, the audience will see larger than life puppets, crane kites soaring through the audience, and crab puppets dancing around the stage – all created in the Jim Henson studio in New York.

Much of the music will be heard at a World Arts Festival multi-media concert, “Water is Life” **March 29** in the Recital Hall of Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland. The event includes lectures, new videos and music performed by Dawn Avery, Ty Defoe and Kate Freer.

Visit <http://www.dawnavery.com> for more information.