



# PATRIA MUSIC/THEATRE PROJECTS NEWS AND VIEWS

June 2002

## PATRIA DESIGN PROJECT - part 2

An interview with Diana and Jerrard Smith by Sarah Ojamae

**"Quartet No. 8** seemed to draw Schafer back to a more expressive lyricism than is sometimes evident in his music. That doesn't mean that this quartet is less intricate, but that the intricacies seem more easily read on the surface. "  
*Alan Conter, Globe and Mail*

*(In part 1, Sarah recounted how Diana and Jerrard came to meet Murray, their rich, enduring collaboration with the composer and with other members of the creative team)*

Patria Music/Theatre Projects produces R. Murray Schafer's works outside of the financial and bureaucratic structure of the traditional theatre. "Most theatre companies produce 2 or 3 shows a season. We used to be lucky to produce one every two to three years," said Jerrard, "We almost start at square one every time we put on a production."

As long-time collaborators, Jerrard and Diana are sometimes asked to do work not traditionally that of set or costume designers. Diana spoke of the couple's experience in Brazil, and the efforts that they made to get ***The Enchanted Forest*** produced in the South American country. Diana and Jerrard were ambassadors who, with Barry Karp, did the kind of work usually undertaken by a producer such as planning logistics, transportation, negotiating use of locations, musician requirements, accommodations, fundraising, personnel, etc..

Staging music-theatre in

the natural elegance of the outdoor environment, rather than in opera houses means that even the fundamentals cannot be taken for granted. Virtually every aspect of production requires special considerations, from costume storage to audience seating.

For set and costume designers, the process of working on a Patria production begins long before the other principal members of the creative and production team are required. The process for Jerrard and Diana begins with research. Both are sensitive to the serious task of featuring another culture on the stage. Diana especially relishes researching the cultures represented in each of the Patria productions. Before designing the exquisite costumes at the centre of ***The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix***, Diana spent several hours pulling picture files at the Toronto library, studying the history, the drama and the architecture of the T'ang Dynasty. Since works in the Patria cycle unfailingly feature certain archetypes, those of Wolf and of Ariadne, in different cultural contexts, considerations of culture are as important as imagination in the design process.

While research is intrinsic to the Smiths' designs, neither copy 'verbatim' the various design elements of the culture and the historical period to be staged.

Diana and Jerrard work independently, while referring to one another for insight and inspiration. Like other successful artists, some of the work of designing a show involves delving into the subconscious. For Jerrard, the creative process is long and sustained, both in terms



Preliminary sketch of *Earth Mother*. by Diana Smith

of preparation and actual production. He immerses himself so deeply into the work that he dreams about it, all the while drawing thumbnail sketches - some 500 or 600 for each show. Slowly and ***Continued, page 4***

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# The Synergy of Wolverton Hills and R. Murray Schafer's Productions

by Debbie White, Co-Proprietor of Wolverton Hills

After retrieving the mail at the road today, I decided to walk through some trails to enjoy the fresh air while surveying the land for any wind damage from the last storm. The dogs, enjoying a run, flushed out a grouse that favours the protection of the pines. Even though I admonished the dogs for bothering the bird, I could not help but secretly be in awe of the beauty of the grouse, which, unless flushed out, are never seen, as they hide so well.

Approaching the pond, I reflected on the past few years and how blessed we were to live on such a beautiful property. "Wolverton Hills", the endearing name we gave the property after we purchased it three years ago, seems to resonate throughout the land.

The old familiar ballad "Wolverton Mountain" depicts a place of open country, mountains, and nature. "Wolverton", brings to mind wolves, the wonderful, mysterious, majestic creatures of nature. Being on 200 acres of the Oak Ridge Moraine, we see beautiful treed rolling hills in all directions, therefore; "Wolverton Hills" was born.

We knew when we found this property that there were greater forces at work, that this property was not just for us to enjoy, but to share our "lil' piece of heaven" with others. Our vision of Wolverton Hills is to offer a place where one can come to restore and revitalize oneself through the use of our quaint cottage on Wolverton Pond in nature and solitude, and healing aromatherapy massage or other holistic

bodywork treatments and workshops. Groups like to use the property for workshops and enjoy the many kilometres of interpretative hiking trails.

In the fall of 2000 we were approached by Patria and asked if we would consider hosting R. Murray Schafer's production, **The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix**. We were thrilled about the opportunity, not really knowing what we were getting into, but felt it would be the perfect venue for Murray's work and an honour to host the production. Murray's environmental philosophy echoed our own. The idea of blending music with nature and the natural acoustics of the land seemed like it was meant to be. The production was a great

success, thrilling over 1,450 patrons over four nights.

Again, this year with the offering of another of Murray's works, **The Enchanted Forest**, we felt the synergy at work and accepted another production. Coincidentally, we already had a trail named **The Enchanted Forest**, which should truly enchant the audiences. I am sure that Mother Nature will be thrilled to have the air filled with the sound of music. *Check Out Wolverton Hills for more information and rates:*



[www.wolvertonhills.com](http://www.wolvertonhills.com)

## Artistic Director's Report

Plans are now well underway for the September production of **Patria 9: The Enchanted Forest**. The production team has spent several pleasant days at Wolverton Hills

working out the route the audience will take as they move through the forest, searching for the lost child Ariane. In the daylight this is fun; at night it will be quite

different – beautiful and mysterious. This is definitely a family show suitable for everyone, including children as young as 10 years old. A certain amount of hiking is involved, so be prepared for that.

On other matters: we plan to remount **Patria 8: The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix**, probably in August 2003 to avoid those cold September nights of last year. We are also seriously thinking of restaging **Patria 3: The Greatest Show** in the summer of 2004. Has anyone got a million dollars?

This July we will be taking possession of a very attractive office and rehearsal space in a new arts building on George Street in

Peterborough. This will enable us to consolidate our activities and provide opportunities to workshop smaller pieces and present readings and concerts.

Let me conclude by saying how gratified we have been by the donations we have received from individuals who attended last year's **Cinnabar Phoenix** production. Your generosity will help to raise our productions to the highest level our talented performers and creative team can achieve.

*The Enchanted Forest*

by R. Murray Schafer

**Tickets now on sale  
call (705)750-1072**

**Wolverton Hills in the Oak Ridges Moraine,  
Pontypool, Ontario.**

**Evenings Sept. 13, 14, 19, 20, & 21, 2002**

"The Enchanted Forest is magical, humourous and alive with meaning."

- Robert Everett-Green, *The Globe & Mail*

[www.patria.org](http://www.patria.org)

# The Forest as Performance Place and Playground

by Jan Buley

One stunning view carries me through the whole year from August to August: the sight in the Haliburton Forest of Wildcat Lake's pristine shoreline with its gnarly fingers of grey tree-stumps, flanked by rock and moss. It is a perennially humbling thing, I've discovered, to stand in the midst of a 60,000 acre tract of hardwood forest, breathing in the air shared by some fifty lakes, streams, numerous ponds and untamed meadows. This unspoiled natural environment is a jewel—the first certified forest in Canada, meaning that the entire setting is managed to internationally recognized standards. First surveyed in 1862, the Haliburton Forest was originally destined to become 100 acre farming lots. Eventually, this plan was viewed as impractical, and the Canadian Land and Emigration Company became renamed the Algonquin Corporation, and lumbering was its focus. In the 1930's, the Algonquin Corporation had, as its main objective, to harvest much of the lumber in this rich tract of land. Valuable virgin white pine stands were cut down by local residents who were hired by nearby lumber companies. The logs were then floated downstream through the vast network of lakes and streams to the south and the east. Today, there are still faint remains of old lumbering camps, log shoots and blacksmithing repair points. Thankfully, this forest has been rescued from ruthless chainsaws and money-hungry lumbering enterprise.

Forestry professor, Dr. Peter Schleifenbaum is the gentle giant who oversees and nurtures the Haliburton Forest—a wooded tract of

wilderness equal in size to the city of Winnipeg. Peter followed in his father's environmental footsteps, officially taking over the responsibilities of managing the forest in 1987. In addition to providing a "living wildlife classroom" for University of Toronto forestry students, the Haliburton Forest boasts a wolf centre, a logging museum and forest canopy tours. There are abundant trails and paths criss-crossing the forest, inviting visitors to view this unique wooded setting abundant with wildlife, stately sugar maple, American beech and Eastern Hemlock. Peter Schleifenbaum loves this forest. You can see it in his eyes when he speaks of what he does. Rather than harvesting the best wood from the forest, Haliburton foresters remove ageing or low quality trees, making the forest much healthier in the long run.

When people hear of the Haliburton Forest, they are quick to associate camping, fishing and hiking with the setting. Most surprising, therefore, is the fact that the Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve is the location for a very exciting theatrical/music event. ***And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon***, the epilogue in a cycle of musical-dramatic works called ***Patria*** (homeland) initiated by Murray Schafer in 1966, is a two week-long production given in the forest. Schleifenbaum has, for the past twelve years, very generously allowed Schafer and the 64 Wolf Project participants to use the Haliburton Forest as the location of this event. The unifying thread in the ***Patria*** works is the journey of Wolf, as he searches for his spirit and soul, while assuming many guises and names. The

intrigue in performing and shaping "The Wolf Project" year after year rests with the theatrical setting—the wilderness of the Haliburton Forest. Schafer openly states, in his book ***Patria—and Theatre of Confluence***, that "what distinguishes this from the traditional theatrical setting is that it is a living environment and therefore utterly changeable at any moment. Hence, the living environment enters and shapes the success or failure as much as or more than any human effort" (page 110).

The Haliburton Forest unleashes the most extraordinary creative potential for Wolf Project participants. This is collaborative creativity at its height. Mother Nature is the stage manager, director, script-writer and lighting designer. She is most certainly in charge of sound effects. It's the "what ifs" that keep this project energized

year after year, and little planning can genuinely occur in cities, during telephone conversations or through email. The real magic can only happen when participants are seated together inside the forest. Then, a fallen Hemlock tree can become a puppet theatre. A discovered cave is an explosive acoustic space for a double bass dialogue with a storyteller. Forest pathways become trails within storytelling trails. Rocks talk. Rain-clouds tease and swirling winds pull at masks and costumes. And beavers can make the waterways passable or impassable for canoes loaded down with heavy camping gear and audiences. Ultimately, we're the guests in Schleifenbaum's paradise—and the Haliburton Forest is our intriguing unpredictable host.

**Visit:**  
[www.haliburtonforest.com](http://www.haliburtonforest.com)



The Molinari Quartet privately performing R. Murray Schafer's  
*8<sup>th</sup> String Quartet* at Guido Molinari's Studio  
Saturday, March 2, 2002.

"On March 1, 2002 we had the great, great pleasure of hearing for the first time R. Murray Schafer's ***8<sup>th</sup> String Quartet*** performed at Redpath Hall in Montréal by the wonderful Molinari Quartet. The piece was commissioned to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of our parents, May and Fred Karp." **Ellen Karp**, Member of the Board of Directors, Patria Music/Theatre Projects.

# PATRIA

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## PATRIA DESIGN PROJECT - part 2, cont.

surely, through the series of sketches, the shape of the masks and the sets emerges. Only then does Jerrard begin to take the designs to a final stage from which they can be built. Diana does busy work, building a head of steam – then works in bursts, maintaining momentum until her vision is manifest as a design. Once the creative team comes together, Jerrard and Diana present their preliminary designs. It is the early production meetings that Jerrard thinks are the most creative. Often these meetings begin formally, but evolve into free-associative brainstorming sessions. On *The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix*, Jerrard and Diana worked especially closely with Ann and David Powell, of Puppetmongers Studio; the Powells, themselves visual artists of acclaim, made suggestions about the design of the puppets, while the Smiths contributed to the development

of the characterization of the puppets on stage. Jerrard explained that there is a design continuity throughout the *Patria* works. Over the years, Diana has developed a series of different 'Ariadnes.' That the two have collaborated with Murray for more than twenty years means that they've developed a vocabulary, shorthand that is shared between them. This, coupled with a sense of the other's artistic sensibilities, makes the creation of visually spectacular sets and costumes almost inevitable.

*For those interested in a discussion of the exhilarating, and sometimes exasperating, nature of designing for Patria productions, please go to the Patria Design Project website, maintained by Jerrard Smith, at <http://www.patria.org>.*

### We need your help!

Since the Banff Centre production of *Princess of The Stars*, in 1985, it has been a pleasure to be associated with various *Patria* productions. I believe I speak for us all when I say our association with R. Murray Schafer has been a life-changing experience. It is my sincere hope that this newsletter will help to keep us all abreast of the current events we feel so strongly in supporting.

Please continue to show your support. Become a friend of *Patria* by saying, "Yes, I want to help continue to share the magic of R. Murray Schafer and Patria!" and fill out the enclosed newsletter donation form below.

Finally, thank you to all who donate of their time, energy and dollars and continue to help make *Patria* possible.  
Michael Cumberland,  
Secretary of the Board of Directors, *Patria Music/Theatre Projects*

#### ***Patria Music/Theatre Projects* Donation Form**

Friend of *Patria* donations should be made payable to: ***Patria Music/Theatre Projects***  
And sent to: *Patria Music/Theatre Projects, 3296 Cindy Cres. Mississauga, ON, L4Y 3J6*

*Yes! I want to continue to share the magic of R. Murray Schafer and Patria!* \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (enclosed)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*I would also be interested in contributing as a volunteer.*

- constructing sets     performing     front of house     helping to build the labyrinth for the final Patria creation  
 newsletter     publicity

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