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**Songs and Stories of Migration and Encounter in Unama'ki:
Ukrainian Settler Communities, Intercultural Relationships,
and Collaborative Research-Creation toward Reconciliation**

In 2022, members of the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Parish in Unama'ki (Cape Breton) engaged in a process of relationship-building with local Mi'kmaw people, toward Reconciliation. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided those affected by Indian Residential Schools the opportunity to share their stories and experiences. TRC reports outlined recommendations to the Government of Canada, which recognized that true reconciliation needs to go well beyond the recommendations and requires engagement of all who live here. Building on existing relationships between people of Ukrainian and Mi'kmaw ancestry (including university-based and community-based researchers), and established collaborative methodologies (Ostashewski, Johnson, Marshall and Paul 2020), the research-creation process began with a series of events through autumn 2022. Members of both communities gathered together for meals and workshops in the spirit of Mi'kmaw mawiyomi, to share and learn together, with and from one another, about relationships with the land, traditional knowledge and expressive practices, and healing - which supported critical consideration of the impact of colonial histories, ideologies, and experiences. Simultaneously, parish members led a process of Tan Wenapeksin!—considering their roots – toward the creation of an exhibit, which included reckonings with histories and relationships with First Peoples. All of this took place in the wake of a hurricane that heavily impacted everyone in the area, and in the context of the current war in Ukraine, the latest in centuries of Russian colonial aggression towards the nation. In this presentation, team members, including community-based researchers, share their experiences of the collaborative process, and reflect upon its impacts and outcomes.

Bio

Marcia Ostashewski, scholar, singer, dancer, and Canada Research Chair in Communities and Cultures (Cape Breton University, 2013-18), founded the arts-led social innovation lab, Centre for Sound Communities. Her recent work includes award-winning research with Mi'kmaw researchers, and the collaborative project DIALOGUES: Toward Decolonizing Sound, Music and Dance Studies (including publication at ictmdialogues.org). She also leads the Smithsonian Folkways Recordings "Sound Communities" Initiative (albums, learning resources).