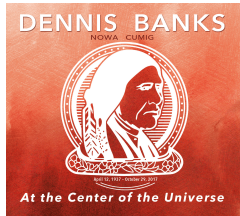


Ojibwa Warrior Productions & Limitless Sky Records present an album by  
Dennis Banks, Co-founder of the American Indian Movement.



Dennis' intention with this album is to give us a window into Native American culture. Its as though you are sitting at the fire with the nurturing Elder Dennis grew into. Listen to stories of the drum and the songs, the folktales and jokes. Learn about the important work that defined his life and empowered Indigenous Peoples the World over.

***"It is sad when mistreatment, abuse, neglect and murder of Indian people becomes common. This is where it started, and this is where it is going to end. Its a good day to die" - Dennis Banks, Co-founder of the American Indian Movement, February 6th, 1973, Rapid City.***

Seized upon by many to forward the hatred and fear of Native American people, those words rang loud across the land. On February 27th, 1973, the United States Government sent tanks and war planes to Wounded Knee, the sight of the first major protest organized by The American Indian Movement. From that day to his last, Dennis Banks worked tirelessly to improve the lives of Native American and all Indigenous peoples everywhere.

*How this album came about - Michel Tyabji*



In 2009 I got the job to score sound design and mix "A Good Day to Die", a film about Dennis Banks. I think the film Producer and Director choose me because of my collaborative nature, International outlook and natural affinity with the drum.

My first step was to invite Dennis to stay with me. I wanted to hang out as much as possible so I could catch a vibe - I had a lot to learn. I wanted to record Dennis singing and drumming as much as possible because I wanted to use his voice in the score as much as possible. A good example of that is "Hero's". I made the music for that track based on Dennis singing "Leech Lake".

Dennis' stay was life changing (for me). Aside from hosting one of the most important modern figures, from eating breakfast, lunch and dinner with him, from spending hours listening to songs and stories, from driving Dennis (in my cargo van) to his incredible friends homes to sing (the Big Drum Dennis traveled with needed a cargo van)- aside from all of that, there was a constant flow of visitors, many wearing full on regalia. One afternoon a Medicine Woman came by. She and her son brought herbs from the local hills. We spread them out on the living room floor to sort. We then cleaned, cooked or steeped them. In fact, the sage tea Dennis mentions in "Minnesota Song Story" was one of the gifts this Medicine Woman's brought by. It turned out that the Medicine Woman's son was a good singer, so I ended up recording him too. He sang about Grandfather in Ha Tsa. We put that song in the movie. Dennis invited Glen Begay who played a drum in a way I didn't know existed. That sound is all over the film as well. Glen can be heard on "The 49 Song Story" and "The Boy Who Became the Teacher".

Dennis sang a lot of songs in the studio and invited friends by to sing more. I think Dennis became very comfortable at our place and in our studio. I recorded everything and spent the next six months working with those recordings, immersing myself in the feeling. Whatever music I made for the film was directly influenced by Dennis.

One morning Dennis got into the studio and started telling stories, telling jokes and just let loose. It was a very special few hours and I recorded everything. Before we parted ways, I expressed to Dennis that I planned on making a sound track album for the film. He said something like "naaa, lets make a comedy album"!

In early 2019 I got the head space to begin work on the "A Good Day to Die" sound track album. My plan was to use dialog and score from the film, much like I did for the "Dalai Lama Renaissance" soundtrack album. While scouring through the hard drives, I came across that morning session where Dennis let loose.

I understood then that Dennis' free flow that morning was the album. It had everything. He sang and explained all the important songs. He told jokes and stories leading one to understand the depth of the pressures forced upon his culture. All I had to do was select and add score from the film. I did write some new stuff, I made adjustments and re-arrangements, so its not exactly the same music. Dennis jokes gave me an opportunity to let loose as a sound designer too. At first I thought there would be sound design for only the comedy. But I ended up adding sound design to everything.

On a personal level, my intention with this album is to be a small part of making sure Dennis' voice and leadership lives on in todays Zeitgeist. On a professional level, I need to make sure that our collective work is honored.

To these ends, I present Nowa Cumig - Dennis Banks, At the Center of the Universe. Rest in Power.

<https://nowacumig.com>