

DANCE PUTS THE 'CULTURE' IN AQUACULTURE

by Thierry Chopin
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Inspired by a farming practice being developed in New Brunswick, an Ontario dance theatre company brings Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) to a new and unexpected place – the stage.

Artists can find inspiration anywhere, or maybe inspiration finds them. It can come from relationships, world issues, love, life and so much more. On October 14, Motus O Dance Theatre's performance of "Perspectives", at the Imperial Theatre in Saint John, touched on many themes including Parkinson's disease, mother-daughter relationships and violence against women. There were also more quirky and comedic dances in the performances, making for a beautiful and thought-provoking evening.

The highlight of the night was a dance that hit close to home in Saint John and Southern New Brunswick. The dance was called "IMTA".

Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture doesn't exactly roll off the tongue and the scientific study of cultivated mussels and kelps near salmon farms doesn't exactly conjure images of interpretive dance.

Nevertheless, through friendship, Motus O learned about IMTA in an unexpected manner. Cynthia and James Croker and Jack Langenhuizen, the three co-artistic directors of Motus O, have become good friends of our family since our daughters, Marine and Morgan, performed in their version of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Imperial Theatre in March 2005.

In the spring of 2007, the Motus O trio stopped at our place while touring Atlantic Canada and a wonderful and creative evening ensued. Motus O was in the



Dr. Thierry Chopin, centre, and representatives from Cooke Aquaculture including Dr. Keng Pee Ang and Nell Halse, join the Motus O dancers in the entrance of the Imperial Theatre following their performance of "IMTA" in Saint John on October 14.

process of developing a new show that would address, through the art of dance, issues facing our present day society.

For me, securing our food will be a big issue in the future. As the human population increases, more efficient food production systems will have to be developed and one of the solutions is IMTA. So, I proposed that Motus O create a piece on IMTA. At the beginning, we were laughing not knowing where to start, but as the project ripened it became a wonderful venture in which I was offering scientific advice and they were adding their unique artistic interpretation.

I had for some time contemplated the idea that we should find a way of communicating to the non-scientific community what this relatively complex IMTA concept is all about and the relevance of our research

to society. My challenge was that I did not know which medium to use. I knew I would have to leave the Ivory Tower of Science and I have been extremely fortunate to meet these talented and creative artists, also ready to leave their Ivory Tower.

Our association has been an amazing voyage in which scientific inspiration and expertise combined with the imagination of Motus O flourished into a purely delightful choreography, with surprising costumes, decors and videos, in which six dancers – wonderfully morphed into kelps, blue mussels and salmon – dance, swirl and interlace in a synergistic crescendo towards a harmonious co-cultivation in which they all thrive better together than if they were on their own! The result is a stunning piece simply titled "IMTA". Imaginative, physically risky and irrepressible in spirit and energy,

The Motus O Dance Theatre Company performs "IMTA" – part of their show "Perspectives" in Saint John on October 14. The dancers have adapted the concept of IMTA – the farming of salmon, invertebrates and seaweeds – to the stage in a unique and entertaining marriage of art and science.



IMTA is beautifully told through physical inventiveness, wonder and revelation.

It is quite a long piece by dance standards (just short of 15 minutes), the longest of "Perspectives", but people generally comment that they do not see the time pass because the piece is so captivating and unusual.

"I was mesmerized, glued to my seat", "How you were able to artistically transform this complicated scientific concept is absolutely breathtaking", "What a message of hope for responsible seafood production for the future" are some of the comments Motus O often hears after they perform "IMTA", and the audience of the Imperial Theatre reacted the same way.

I was particularly excited that people from the Saint John area would have an opportunity to see the show because IMTA is already practiced at several of our industrial partner's, Cooke Aquaculture Inc., sites in the Bay of Fundy. IMTA is not an abstract concept. It is really happening in our backyard.

"IMTA" has become one of the greatest hits of the Motus O repertoire since they launched it in 2009. Motus O received the award of Ontario Artist of the Year in 2010.

On October 14, we reached 459 people at the Imperial Theatre, and, hopefully, had an impact on people who are generally not our usual audience. For me, it is about disseminating the message outside the scientific community and giving a new perspective on science by translating it into new media for different audiences.

As a scientist, I have the scientific primary publication (which has its role) in my tool box to reach the scientific community, but, if I want our science to be relevant to and understood by society, complicated and specialized scientific publications will not do the trick.

I have to think outside of the usual box; I need to find the appropriate media to reach out to other audiences, be it a National Geographic TV documentary, a video with Cooke Aquaculture Inc., an article in Time Magazine, or a dance performance. These provide a powerful way to reach, educate and dispel some perceptions to a wider audience, and show that aquaculture practices are evolving.

That evening was an amazing moment when science and dance met to create unique sparks. I always say that the solutions are at the interfaces of disciplines and that is why our IMTA project is inter-disciplinary (environmental, economic and social sciences). Add the artistic dimension and this becomes a feast at the theatre and a food for thought bag to take home after the performance!

This rare evening treat was generously sponsored by Cooke Aquaculture Inc. and the Canadian Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture Network (CIMTAN; <http://www.cimt.ca/>).

COOKE AQUACULTURE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Communication is essential in any successful Health and Safety Program and at Cooke Aquaculture we want to ensure our employees are getting the safety messages needed to garner the support and buy-in necessary to accomplish our safety goals and objectives. In this installment of the Cooke Aquaculture newsletter we want to share with everyone our Health & Safety Policy. The policy is a general statement that reflects management's commitment to safety and outlines management's and employees' roles and responsibilities regarding safety in the workplace.

Cooke Aquaculture Inc. is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment to all employees within all of our divisions. We expect full commitment and active participation of every employee and manager to achieve the goal of excellence in safety and health performance.

It is mandatory for all employees to comply with this policy and established safe work practices and procedures for their division. In addition employees are expected to work in a manner that ensures the protection of themselves, their fellow workers, the general public, and the physical assets of the Company.

Management will enforce compliance with all relevant regulations, and this company's Health and Safety Program. It is our responsibility to ensure that the highest possible standards are incorporated into the design, operation, and maintenance of the Company's facilities and equipment. Management will also dedicate its active leadership in supporting occupational safety, health, fire protection, and security programs while paying due regard to the protection of the environment.

The control of accidental loss is achieved by combining good management with active employee involvement. Every manager and employee in this company shares responsibility and accountability for identifying, prioritizing and managing risks of work under their direct control. All employees need to work together to achieve and maintain mutual trust and respect for each other's health and safety needs and to reach our corporate health and safety goals. Everyone's objective should be to go home to his or her families safe each day.

- Glenn Cooke, CEO

WEIR IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Rogers TV camera operator Andre Arsenault and host Terry James visited Cooke Aquaculture operations for a feature story for their show Weir In Charlotte County, which aired in the fall on Rogers TV in New Brunswick.



ST. ANDREWS SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

Seafood buyers, chefs, food writers, government officials and industry representatives gathered in Charlotte County in June for the St. Andrews Seafood Festival. Here the group enjoys lunch on Deer Island, with a Cooke Aquaculture salmon farm in the background. They started the day touring the bay, watching lobster fishers haul traps, visiting a salmon processing facility and later visited the Patrel lobster facility on Deer Island.

