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Showcase

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A time to act, a time to heal

BY SARA FIEDELHOLTZ
staff reporter

What do a spiritual healer, modern shaman and artistic director have in common? They are all terms used to describe Blanche Blacke.

While living in Los Angeles in 1993, Chicago-native Blacke had a near-death experience that initiated her connection to the spiritual realm.

"I teach people how to understand what areas of life are connected to what areas of energy and provide exercises on how people can heal themselves. There are different aspects of the spirit that help make life better," Blacke said.

Before her initiation as a shaman, Blacke was a singer, actor, composer and writer. In the early '80s, she co-founded the music group Phil 'n' the Blanks.

It is not surprising that Blacke wanted to return to the theater as well as continue in spiritual healing.

In 1999, after doing intentional shamanic theater as a guest artist with the MASS Ensemble, Blacke founded the multimedia performance ensemble Shakura Ensemble Ritual Theatre.

"Our performances are meant to be healings for the world as well as to entertain," said Blacke. "We want to take theater back to the source to make it real and to move people's souls. That is its intention."

Since its founding, the ensemble has presented eight new works and has had a total of 12 productions throughout Chicago.

Theater pieces have been focused around Tibetan traditions and chants as well as with Navajo Indians. Blacke is working on a production that focuses on healing the energy of an "eye for an eye." The piece will incorporate Hebrew and Arabic cultures. She expects to stage the production in April.

"We want to teach tolerance, enhance consciousness and educate the public on indigenous world cultures through the performance of multimedia theater," said Blacke.

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Shakura Ensemble Ritual Theatre founder Blanche Blacke melds entertainment and spiritual healing.