

Goddard College

Contact: Michelle Barber

Phone: 802-322-1617

E-mail: michelle.barber@goddard.edu

Date: February 1, 2010

Grammy Award Winning Performer Attends Goddard College

Thirza Defoe, MFAW student, wins Grammy for *Best Native American Music Album*

Thirza Defoe started to compose the music and lyrics to her Grammy Award winning performance on *Come to Me Great Mystery Native American Healing Songs* when she started attending Goddard College. "Writing at Goddard has opened a whole new world up to me," Defoe said. She is currently enrolled in the MFA in Creative Writing Program.

Defoe worked with Grammy Award winning producer Tommy Wassinger and several other Native American singers including Doug Foote, Lorain Fox, Allen Mose, and Dorothy Tsatoke. Some of the music from the album was also in a film Defoe worked on called "The Only Good Indian," starring Wes Studi, about the Native American boarding schools in the US. Called an "outstanding revisionist western," the film played at Sundance Festival in 2009.

Twenty-eight years old and clearly a rising star, Defoe recently co-wrote *Drum is the Thunder, Flute is the Wind*, a nationally touring show fusing traditional Native American dance and song with contemporary music, theatre, and dance. *Drum* was awarded the prestigious American Masterpieces, a dance grant for excellence in traditional/contemporary crossover dance. The project is funded by the New England Foundation for the Arts.

"Goddard has influenced me so much. I am taking oral traditions and presenting them in a new format of writing," Thirza Defoe said of her recent work at Storytellers Symposium at the National Museum of the American Indian.

The Goddard College MFA in Creative Writing Program offers student-centered studies in a wide variety of genres and styles, including poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, memoirs, playwriting, screenwriting, and cross-genre writing.

For more information on Thirza Defoe's work, visit www.thirzadefoe.com. For more information on Goddard College, visit www.goddard.edu.