



Music of Minnesota American Indian Tribes and Communities

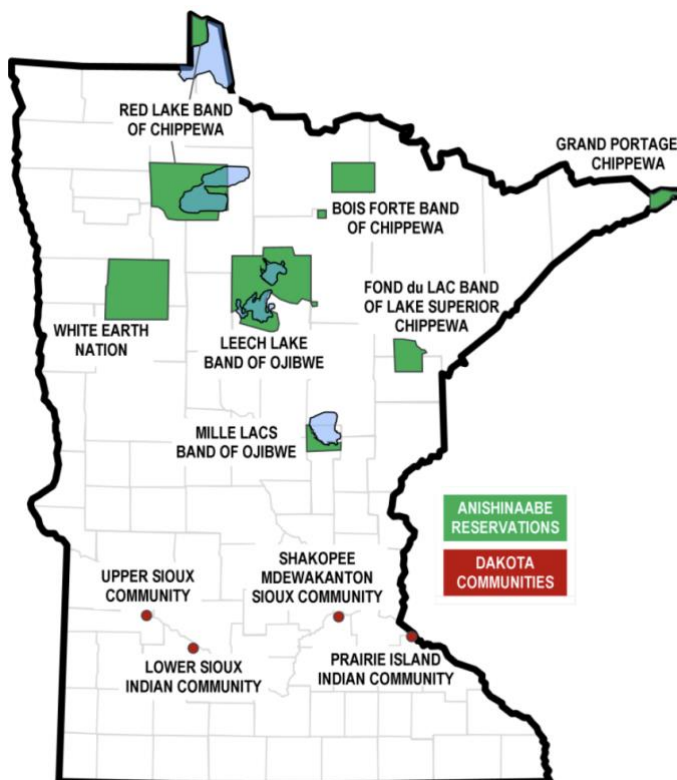
Wendy Barden, PhD – Music Education Specialist, Professional Development and Resource Programs

Native Land Acknowledgement and Resources*

As we begin our workshop today, we take a moment to recognize and acknowledge that the land we are standing on across Mni Sota Makoce is the homeland of the Dakota and Ojibwe people. We further acknowledge that the state of Minnesota encompasses 11 tribes and communities of the Dakota and Ojibwe people, who are the original caretakers of the land, and are still here and thriving. Even in a virtual workshop it is critically important to acknowledge and honor this indigenous history and ongoing presence. We must acknowledge the colonization that took place in this state and that it is an unresolved condition of our country's founding and continued existence. We must acknowledge that the internet and technology that makes this workshop possible can be a colonizing mechanism and that it is not equally available to all peoples. We ask everyone gathered here to think of this statement not as an end in itself, but as motivation to deepen our commitment to understanding the aesthetic, cultural, and political history of Native peoples and Native land.

*Marissa Carr – playwright, actor, and co-founding Artistic Director of the Turtle Theater Collective

Stephanie Lein Walseth, PhD – Theater Education Specialist, Professional Development and Resource Programs



Anishinaabe – Ojibwe, Chippewa
Dakota – Sioux

We are not all the same people.
Each community has its own culture;
its own songs, dances, stories, art and
ceremonies.

Connect with a “culture bearer” in your school’s community. They may have resources for you. They will help you know “what’s OK.” Who is a “culture bearer”? Your Indian Education Dept and/or neighboring tribes might have suggestions. **Note:** Plan to focus your lessons on listening to and describing the music of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities **and not on performing the music.**

Ideas about Native American Music

(Which is why it can be difficult for non-Native people to teach it in music classrooms)

- The act of making sound is sacred.
- Singing and dancing is often prayerful.
- Songs and dances can be “medicine” or healing.
- Musical instruments have spirit, when awakened.
- Sometimes making music is just for entertainment.

How are we to know what music is OK for the classroom?

- If it’s a contemporary recording by a native artist, chances are it’s not a “sacred,” contextually bound, song. (Recordings older than 50 years are questionable and it’s best to consult with a culture bearer before bringing into class.)
- Use contemporary recordings... there are a lot and they can be found quite easily with the internet
 - YouTube has pow-wow songs and dances
 - iTunes, Spotify, Reverbnation, etc.

Aesthetics of Native American Music

- Traditional Anishinaabe and Dakota music is mostly songs with drums or shakers.
- There are wooden flutes and some tribes use fiddles in ceremony.
- Most music is monophonic, although exact unison is not always a sought-after trait. It can be heterophonic or even polyphonic.
- Often the vocal line is not in the same meter or tempo with the percussion.
- Newly-composed traditional music may be more influenced by American popular music aesthetics.

What is “real” indigenous music?

- Music that is made/composed by Indigenous People
- Music that is performed by Indigenous People

Minnesota Native American composers and performers

Tall Paul

Keith Secola

War Bonnet

Lyz Jaakola

Leah Lemm – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soo42NGtsso> Ruins

More online Resources

www.indianhouse.com – Traditional American Indian recordings

<https://americanindian.si.edu> – National Museum of the American Indian (Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.)

<http://www.oyate.com/oyate-store.html> – Native American Stories and Songs

(2018) MN Arts Standards Anchor Standard 10: Demonstrate understanding that artistic works influence and are influenced by personal, societal, cultural, and historical contexts, including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities. **Note:** *Plan to focus your lessons on listening to and describing the music of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities and not on performing the music.*

Information on page 2 of this handout comes from “Indigenous Perspective on Minnesota Music Education: American Indian Standards,” a session presented by Lyz Jaakola at MMEA Midwinter Clinic on February 13, 2020