

Sousa on the Rez: Marching to the Beat of a Different Drum

VIEWER DISCUSSION GUIDE



Program Synopsis

When you hear the phrase “Native American music” you may not think of tubas, trumpets, and Sousa marches. Yet, this rich musical tradition has been a part of Native American culture for over one hundred years.

Combining profiles of contemporary bands with fresh historical research, *Sousa on the Rez: Marching to the Beat of a Different Drum* offers viewers an unexpected and engaging picture of this little-known Native music scene. The documentary challenges viewers to expand their definition of Native American music and broadens their understanding of contemporary Indian life.

“The Iroquois Indian Band playing their instruments just lets other people know that there’s more to an Indian than feathers and furs.”

— Neil Patterson, Sr., President,
Iroquois Indian Band

Photos from top left: Drummer William Farnham, Jr. of the Iroquois Indian Band at the New York State Fair. The Fort Mojave Indian Tribe Band leads the 2011 Indian Days Parade in Downtown Needles, Calif. Larissa Thomas and Jodi Patterson of the clarinet section of the Iroquois Indian Band rehearse for an upcoming performance at the New York State Fair.

Photos by Cathleen O’Connell.

FORT MOJAVE INDIAN TRIBE BAND & IROQUOIS INDIAN BAND



Iroquois Nation
pictured in orange
within the state of
New York.

Fort Mojave Tribal Land
pictured in orange within
the states of California,
Nevada, and Arizona.

Producer's Notes



Cathleen O'Connell

In 2001, I was hired by the Fort Mojave Tribe to produce a video to promote the work of one of their cultural centers. While I was there one of the Mojave elders, Llewellyn

Barrackman, asked if I had time to record some oral histories with tribal members. I said, "Of course!" The first story I recorded was with Mr. Barrackman himself. He shared the history of the Fort Mojave Tribal Band, a community-based marching band founded in the early 20th century. I love music, all types, and had worked on several films about music, but had never heard of Native marching bands before. When I began to research the subject, I knew that this was a story that others might find fascinating—and unexpected, as well.

Over the past decade, it has been my privilege to spend time with members of the Fort Mojave Tribal Band, the Iroquois Indian Band, the Navajo Nation Band and Zuni Pueblo Band, all vibrant community bands that perform

both on and off reservation. It's a film about music, but more significantly, it's a story about people. The musicians in this film are regular folks who are passionate about music, who take time out of their busy lives to juggle jobs, family, and band practice. We don't often see the joy of everyday life represented in the media, especially in films about American Indians.

What I'd like people to take away from the film is a greater appreciation for the resilience of Native people, and also perhaps a reminder that people you might think are different maybe aren't so different after all.

Sousa on the Rez is dedicated to the memory of Llewellyn and Betty Barrackman.



Trombonists Jeremy Printup and Taydem Printup of the Iroquois Indian Band rehearse for an upcoming performance at the New York State Fair.

Photo by Cathleen O'Connell.

By the Numbers

1. *Sousa on the Rez: Marching to the Beat of a Different Drum* profiles two contemporary Indian community bands: the Iroquois Indian Band from upstate New York and the Fort Mojave Tribal Band based in Needles, Calif.
2. In the 1800s and 1900s, dozens of Indian bands existed in the United States. Most Indian boarding schools had their own bands, including the band at the Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania. School bands were not the only Native groups performing marches and parade music, many tribal communities organized their own community bands that performed for both Native and non-Native audiences. Professional ensembles toured both the U.S. and abroad—providing employment opportunities for musicians in a time when opportunities for Native people were limited.
3. As march music became less popular, many of these groups disbanded. Today, four multi-generational community-based tribal bands remain, carrying on the rich tradition of "Sousa on the Rez."
4. The Iroquois Indian Band is a multi-generational community band comprised of musicians of Haudenosaunee descent including those of Tuscarora, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Mohawk, and Oneida heritage. The band performs at a host of Iroquois community events including the Tuscarora Picnic which is held annually in July. They also play every year at the New York State Fair in Syracuse.
5. The Fort Mojave Tribal Band was founded in 1906 by graduates of an Indian boarding school who took the musical training they received at the school and used it to celebrate their Indian identity and blaze new paths for themselves in a changing world. In 2012, the Fort Mojave Tribal Band continues this tradition and is an integral part of the cultural scene in Southern California.
6. The Zuni Pueblo Band originated on the Zuni Pueblo in northwestern New Mexico and consists mostly of members from the Zuni Tribe. They proudly wear the traditional Pueblo style of dress and exquisite Zuni jewelry, most of which is made by Zuni Tribal members. In recent years, the Band has had members ranging in age from 8 years old to 80 years old. They perform throughout the Southwest and marched at the Presidential Inaugural Parade in Washington, DC in 2005.
7. As ambassadors to the Navajo Nation, the Navajo Nation Band is an organization that provides quality and family musical entertainment to the general public. The Band has marched in three United States Presidential Inaugural Parades, the Arizona and New Mexico State Fairs Parades, and the Fiesta Bowl Parade. An audition is required for membership.
8. Mrs. Walter Baker, of Boston, donated the first set of brass instruments to the Carlisle Indian School as a way to replace the "tom toms and flutes."

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The Early Carlisle Band.

Photo courtesy of the Visual Archives at the U.S. Army and Heritage Center.

Reflect & Relate

1. In an address to a convention of Baptist ministers in 1883, Richard Henry Pratt wrote, "In Indian civilization, I am a Baptist because I believe in immersing the Indians in our civilization and when we get them under holding, them there until they are thoroughly soaked." What do you think of Pratt's intention to "immerse" Native people into mainstream culture? What positive results have come from this plan? What negative results? Explain your thoughts.
2. Do you think that expecting Indians to only play Native music is one way of stereotyping people? What other stereotypes are often used when we think of Native Americans? Explain your thoughts and ideas.
3. Native people have a long history of adopting and adapting things from the people and cultures they encounter. What are some ways your own tribe or community has absorbed ideas from other cultures? Is cultural identity static and unchanging or does it shift and evolve over time? Explain your ideas.
4. At the end of the film, Rayna Green talks about the bands saying, "The fact is, that Indians long ago Nativized, Indianized all of these things. They are no longer alien. They are a part of what they do, and an absolute essential part." What do you think Rayna Green meant by this statement? In what ways do you think that the tribes made marching music their own?

Ideas for Action

1. Compare the images of the Native marching bands with images from the old Wild West shows you can find in books or on the internet. Compare the performances of Indians in a Wild West Show with the performance of an Indian band playing a jazz tune or a Sousa march. How were these different and what messages about the identity of Native people did these two types of performances send to audiences in the early 20th century?
2. Music is a universal part of every culture from ancient times to today. How do you think music affects individuals within any culture? Why is it so universal? Do you think it matters whether the music is specific to an individual culture?
3. Are there musicians or musical traditions in your culture, community, or family? What kind of music is played and what are its roots? Talk to relatives and learn more about your own family's musical history and traditions.
4. Music can be a reflection of a culture whether is traditional or contemporary music. Either individually or as a group explore the music of at least 3 different cultures besides your own. Listen to CDs, explore the web, or watch a concert. How do you feel when you listen to music from an unfamiliar culture? What did you learn about that culture?



U.S. Indian Band with Vice President Curtis Charles, April 26, 1929.

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Resources

Internet Resources

www.sousaontherez.com

www.facebook.com/sousaontherez

www.carlisleindianschool.org

<http://mojaveindiantribe.com/tribal-marching-band>

www.navajonationband.navajo-nsn.gov

www.zunipuebloband.com

www.fnci.org

Additional Resources

Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879-1934 by John Troutman. This fascinating book documents how music and politics intersected to impact the lives of Native Americans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Indians In Unexpected Places by Philip Deloria. Deloria's terrific book uncovers a "secret history" of Native American agency in music, sports, and technology.

American Indian Performing Arts: Critical Directions edited by Hanay Geiogamah and Jaye T. Darby. Contains an essay by Janis Johnson entitled "Performing Indianness and Excellence: Nez Perce Jazz Bands of the Twentieth Century" which is an in-depth look at one tribe's jazz heritage.

Away From Home: American Indian Boarding Schools by M. Archuleta, T. Lomawaima and B. Child. Contains an essay by Rayna Green and John Troutman entitled "By The Waters of the Minnehaha: Music, Pageants, and Princesses in the Indian Boarding Schools" which explores government and missionary attempts to assimilate Indians in boarding schools, and many of the student's adaptive strategies for cultural preservation and resistance.



Daniel Eagle of the U.S. Indian Industrial School Band in Carlisle, Penn..

Photo courtesy of the Visual Archives at the U.S. Army and Heritage Center.

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This Viewer Discussion Guide was developed by Jamie Lee, an author and former instructor at the Oglala Lakota College, where she taught for five years. Lee has a Master's in Human Development and has been a communications trainer and an educator for the past 30 years. Her stories and articles have appeared in *The South Dakota Review*, *Winds of Change Magazine* and several other anthologies. She has published three non-fiction books along with one novel and a collection of writings from Oglala Lakota College students. Her first novel, *Washaka: The Bear Dreamer*, was a PEN USA finalist in 2007. Lee has written over 70 documentary programs including Public Radio's landmark 52-part Native music series, *Oyate Ta Olowan: The Songs of the People*.

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Educational resources for this film are available at www.visionmakermedia.org/education/sousa_on_the_rez.

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