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World Music Seminar

## Music In Native North America

Materials: *Native American Music in Eastern North America* by Beverly Diamond

### **Day 1: Introduction to Native North America/ Inuit Communities**

Open class with Suquamish Youtube video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0JLMYnWsY0&feature=related>

Greeting

-Introduce Topic:

“Hello how is everyone doing today? As you have guessed we are going to be beginning our unit on Native North America today. The music you listened to walking into the classroom is one that I am very familiar with. These are the Jingle Dancers of the Suquamish Tribe located in Suquamish, Washington”

“I grew up in Kingston, Washington and I was fortunate enough to attend school with members of both the S’Klallam and Suquamish tribes. Also, they were very open about sharing their music with us, giving a performance at our school at least twice a year and always giving a blessing at graduation.”

Take a few minutes to talk with the person next to you about these questions:

- Where (geographically) did you grow up?
- Do you know which Native American Nations/Tribes live in your hometown?
- Were you exposed to Native American music?
- If so, what characteristics do you remember?

Short History of Native North America:

- Indigenous Nations and Tribes can be found all across the United States and Canada
- There are over 500 recognized tribes in the United States and over 600 first nations recognized in Canada
- All of these groups represent a diverse culture with their own unique traditions
- While some traditions may seem similar, and they may be related, they should not be generalized

So how are we going to study over 1,100 cultures???

-We are not

What are we going to focus on?

For our unit we are going to focus on traditions of Eastern North America

-We are going to look at three case studies:

--Inuit Communities

--Haudenosaunee Music Culture

--Contemporary Intertribal and Cross-Cultural Music

Today we are going to focus on Inuit communities

Specifically:

\*Drum-Dance Songs

\*Juggling Songs

\*Throat Singing

So who are the Inuit People?

-Inuit people live Alaska, Northern Canada and Greenland

-We are going to focus on those who speak dialects of Inuktitut:

Nunavut, Nunavik, Inuvialuit, and Sadliermiut

**Refer to map**

The first tradition we are going to look at is that of drum dances called “pisiit” **pi ‘sit**

-Pisiit is performed on a large drum called qilaut **ki’ loUt**

-The qilaut is made of large wooden frame, covered in caribou hide and hit with a thick drum stick

-The qilaut is a solo dance, the drummer is also the dancer

What happens at a drum dance?

-The drummer beats the drum while waving it back and forth

-Requirements for these songs differ from community to community, in some women and men are allowed to play, but often it is only the man while the women accompany in song.

Watch Example:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1GUengQGAQ>

## **Inuit songs and play**

The Inuit have many songs that are associated with social activities that could be performed in very small places and we are going to look at two of them, juggling songs and throat singing

Juggling Songs

-These songs are built around phrases, which determine the music

-The trick is to throw the ball in time with the phrases

Listen to track 4

-Before you listen

-You can almost hear the beats in which the women are throwing the ball

-Listen for the changes

Listen again- this time trying to juggle

-Hand in objects

Throat Singing

-This was another game developed by the female Inuits

How it is performed:

-Women stand very close together, with their arms on each other's shoulders

-Women sometimes hold a bucket up or pull up the hoods of their parkas

Can you think of why?

-The first singer begins and it is sang in strict canon, the goal is to throw the other singer off, and these songs often end in laughter

Play Track 7

-This song is meant to emulate a certain animal, see if you can figure out what it is.

## **Transformations**

The popularity of throat singing has caused many contemporary artists to include throat singing in their music

-Here is one example

Lucy Idlout "E5-770- My Mother's Name"

This song incorporates Idlout's mother's throat singing. The name of the song refers to a time the Canadian government assigned numbers to regions (E5) and individuals (770)

Let's listen to a few seconds

Now Idlout is not the only artist using throat singing, can you think of positive and negative consequences to this popularization of the tradition?

Positive: Brings attention to heritage, keeps tradition alive

Negative: Not what it was intended for, loses the game aspect (such as the parka hoods and laughter)

### **In Recap:**

-Drum Dances

-Juggling Songs

-Throat Singing

Of the Inuit people

Next Class: Haudenosaunee Music Culture

Day 2

## **Haudenosaunee Music Culture**

Who are the Haudenosaunee?

\* Show Map \*

- The Haudenosaunee are members of the nations that were historically called "Iroquois"
- They live in 14 communities from New York state, to southern Ontario, and Quebec
- These communities celebrate an annual cycle seasonal longhouse ceremonies to honor Creation

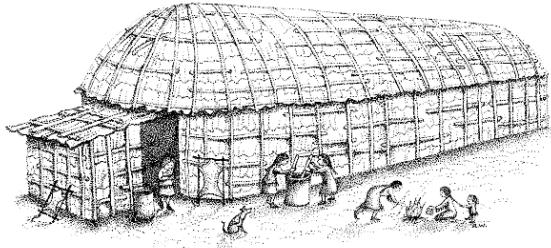
Cycle:

1. Maple and All Tree Ceremony (Late February or early March)
2. Maple Syrup Harvest Ceremony (Late March or early April)
3. Thunder Ceremony (Early April after the first thunder)
4. Feast of the Dead (Middle of April)
5. Medicine Mask Ceremony (End of April)
6. Sun Dance Ceremony (Early May)
7. Moon Dance Ceremony (Early May)
8. Seed Blessing Ceremony (Middle of May)
9. Planting Conclusion Ceremony (Middle of May)
10. Strawberry Festival (Middle of June)
11. Green Bean Festival (Early August)
12. Small Green Corn Dance (Middle of August)
13. Big Green Corn Dance (Late August- three days duration)
14. Harvest Festival (Middle of October)
15. Medicine Mask Festival (Middle to late October)
16. Feast of the Dead (Late October)
17. Code of Handsome Lake (Late October or late November)
18. Midwinter Ceremony (January- five nights after the new moon; eight days' duration)

## **Haudenosaunee Singers and Social Dance Songs**

What happens when you attend a sing?

- Sings take place in Long Houses, these are similar meeting houses, churches, synagogues, or mosques in other cultures.
- Historically a longhouse would house several families with a fire in the middle



- Sings were established in the 1960s and feature “Singing Societies” from each community.
- Singing Societies exist to help raise money for those in need
- These monies may help buy groceries, make repairs on someone’s house, or a number of charitable acts that help support the community.
- A “sing” have may have as many as 500 participants
- The gifts of creation are acknowledged; the sing continues to include songs, Women’s shuffle dances and Social dances, which we will focus on.
- The lead singer plays a water drum, which is made from a hollowed log that is tuned by drawing wet tanned skin tight with cloth wrapped ring.
- The drumstick may be elaborately carved and it is important for the stick to be well balanced.



Other instruments of the Haudenosaunee people:

- Cow Horn rattles
- Gourd shakers
- Chipmunk sticks made of hickory
- Bark shaker
- Turtle Shell rattle
- - The turtle shell ratter is used for both medicine and ceremonial dance. It is made from the body of a snapping turtle is filled with pebbles or cherry pits as rattler.
- Only the water drum and cow-horn rattles are used for sings

The evening of the sing begins with the Standing Quiver Dance (Gada:tro:t)

- Call and response dance
- Stomp dance
- No accompaniment

\* Play “Five Stomp Dance Songs” from *Seneca Social Dance Music* – found @ [www.folkways.si.edu](http://www.folkways.si.edu)

The next dance is the Moccasin Dance- accompanied by the water drum and cow horn rattles

After this the order of dances varies depending on the leaders choices, these often will include dances from visiting traditions, like the "Alligator Dance" of the Seminole of Florida

In Closing:

Social Dances are very important to the Haudenosaunee people. They are included in their annual festival schedule, medicine rituals and these modern day "sings." The Haudenosaunee value the meaning of every dance and song and will not perform it if they do not know its origins. Understanding that these songs are both sacred and secular and serve a purpose of preserving heritage is essential to understanding the music culture of the Haudenosaunee people.

Tomorrow: We will be looking at Contemporary Cross Tribal and Intercultural Traditions

Day 3

## Contemporary Intertribal and Cross Cultural Traditions

Greetings: All semester we have seen how musics of the world have influenced one another and have transformed into new music. Today we will be experience Contemporary Native American music in a unique listening setting. We are going to listen to pieces in their entirety, I will give you information about the piece and you will have specific questions to guide your notes. Please take a moment and write down these questions from the power point.

Guiding Questions:

What influences do you hear in this music?

What instruments do you hear?

What style/genre would you categorize this music as?

What values of the Native American cultures we have studied this week do you hear in the music? (If there are any)

\* Note to the instructor \* There are numerous other songs featured in the textbook. I felt these were a good representation. Any song could be easily switched for another.

Lee Cremo "The Mystery Stepdancer" (Track 19- 2:05)  
(1939-1999) Mi'kmaq Fiddler from Eskasoni, Nova Scotia

What do you notice? (Discussion 3 minutes)

Forever "My Way" (Track 20- 3:24)  
Nova Scotian rock band- vocals, drums, guitars, keyboards, and bass

What do you notice? (Discussion 3 minutes)

Trurez Crew "Why We Rhyme" (Track 21- 4:41)  
Trurez represents the Native American hip hop scene

\* Note for the instructor \* This song may be considered offensive and contains intense profanity. You may want to locate an edited version or choose a different song. Unfortunately, while it may be the most offensive it may also have some of the most honest lyrics.

What do you notice? (Discussion 3 minutes)

Charlie Panigoniak "Sweet Tobacco" (Track 22- 2:36)  
Panigoniak is an Inuit from Nunavut, remind the class this was the first tradition we listened to. His lyrics are specifically from personal experience.

What do you notice? (Discussion 3 minutes)

Murray Porter "1492 Who Found Who" (Track 23- 3:26)  
Blues influenced song with poignant/humorous lyrics.

What do you notice? (Discussion 3 minutes)

Assignment:

Now that you have listened and taken notes on these different songs, for your assignment I would like for you write a one page, double spaced response about which song you most identified with and why. Sound files have been included on the blackboard site and your text has an in depth section on each of these songs in chapter 5. This will be due next class period. Are there any questions?

\* While it may be unconventional have an entire listening day, but after listening to the accompanying CD and reading the chapter I feel like this would be the best way to approach them. I think immersion in a listening experience will help the students relate to this music in their daily lives.



## Works Cited

Diamond, Beverly. *Native American Music in Eastern North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

“Inuit Made Easy: Pronunciation Guide” accessed 11/2/2010,  
<http://www.realduesouth.net/Nation-InuitLanguage.htm>.