American Indian Music: More than Just Flutes and Drums

A Guide to American Indian Music
by Scott S. Prinzing, M.Ed.

Published by the
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Introduction

The goal of *American Indian Music: More Than Just Drums and Flutes* is to assist Montana teachers in incorporating an appreciation for Indian music into music and social studies curricula to meet Indian Education for All criteria.

There is often confusion regarding terminology related to the study of the history and culture of the indigenous people of the North American continent. For the purposes of this handbook, the term "Native American" refers to the original human inhabitants (and their descendants) of this continent at the time of first recorded European contact (1492), including the contiguous United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Central America, and the Caribbean Islands. The term "American Indian" (or "Indian") will refer primarily to the original inhabitants of the contiguous United States. Special attention will be given to Indian musicians connected to the seven reservations and 12 Indian Nations within the borders of the state of Montana. Many tribes are known by more than one name: often a common name and one they call themselves. For example, the Crow Nation is known in its own language as the Apsáalooke.

Most Montanans, like their fellow Americans across the country, are likely to associate American Indian music with either the powerful and rhythmic vocalizations of powwow drumming or the gentle and contemplative melodies of the Native American flute. Granted, varieties of both of these musical forms are important to Indians all across America. However, it is limiting to overlook the contributions to American music by Indian musicians in virtually every major genre of music, including traditions often associated with distinctly non-Indian ethnic groups, e.g., rap, reggae, and country western.

This handbook looks at the history and development of Indian music from the traditional to the contemporary and explores a broad spectrum of American Indian music – including drums and flutes – ranging from blues to folk, country to gospel, and heavy metal to hip-hop. Neither teacher nor student will be able to think of Indian music as simply drums or flutes any longer; they will realize that Indian musicians are creating sounds in many genres.

Topics covered in this handbook include traditional forms of music associated with several larger culture regions of Indian America at the time of first recorded European contact; the development of contemporary Indian music by genre; how Indian music record companies and the Native American Music Association (presenters of the annual Nammys) influence the development of Indian music; and how internet tools such as CDBaby and MySpace are allowing once relatively segregated musicians on reservations to share their music with the global community.

Bibliographical information for further study, as well as recommended listening and contact information for all artists, genres, and tribal traditions discussed can be found in the web resource lists.

Traditional American Indian Music

At the time of the first verified arrival of European visitors on the shores of the North American continent, there were approximately 500 separate nations of indigenous peoples. Each of these nations possessed unique cultural traditions including language, art, music, architecture, spiritual beliefs and practices, subsistence practices, and shared some of them within larger regional culture areas.

Issues to Consider for Music Educators

- Be tribal specific if you can when introducing different types of historic and contemporary American Indian music forms.
- With respect to songs or music that deals with religious or spiritual aspects, please have students show proper respect in order to not trivialize sacred songs and other forms of religious expressions.
- Please use caution if thinking about performance-based music curriculum. For example, singing at a drum is not something to be taken lightly. For many tribes there are cultural protocols that should be followed. Some tribes do not allow women to sit at the drum. Please check with local tribal education departments if you have tribal specific questions. Directory of Indian Education Programs in Montana
- If you are thinking about performance-based music that is about American Indian themes, please check into the accuracy and authenticity of the piece. There are some examples of Indian themed musical pieces that are not accurate or authentic and were written without any tribal collaboration.
- Movies such as Disney's *Peter Pan* and *Pocahontas* include examples of historically inaccurate representations of American Indian music. Most of your students have probably seen these movies. As an introductory activity you could show clips highlighting stereotypical representations such as Indians cupping their hands over their mouths and going woo woo - not a tradition practiced by any of the tribes in Montana or anywhere else. You could then show examples of more accurate and authentic musical forms. There are many authentic examples included in this curriculum guide.
- Montana Arts Content Standards 5 and 6 have numerous benchmarks that reinforce teaching this type of content.

Development of American Indian Music

American Indian music prior to European influence consisted primarily of voice, rhythm instruments (drums/rattles/shakers), or wind (flutes/whistles). Musical elements first introduced to American Indian music by Europeans were string instruments (fiddle/guitar), the accordion, and the use of harmonization. As Europeans migrated westward and brought enslaved Africans to the

Americas, European as well as African musical traditions began to influence American Indian music traditions. In some cases, this led to the development of new musical genres, such as Waila (or Chicken Scratch) in the southwest and Metis fiddle music in Canada. Metis fiddle music can still be heard in Montana and a contest is held yearly in Lewistown.

As American culture changed and developed over time, American Indian music has done so as well. While many American Indians, both past and present, continue to perform traditional styles of music, many others study and perform within the musical forms and instrumentation originating in Europe (classical symphonic music and opera), American genres (blues, country, folk, gospel, hip-hop, jazz, rock 'n' roll), as well as more international forms (heavy metal, reggae). All the while, new hybrids have been, and continue to be, created by American Indian musicians.

Traditional Music

Music created by American Indians was traditionally intended for specific purposes. Whether it was as part of ritual, a prayer, or to accompany dancing, it was not generally performed for the purposes of pure entertainment. There are many examples of songs that have both spiritual and entertainment value such as the songs associated with the hand/stick game. While there were activities that may have appeared to European eyes and ears to resemble musical theater – particularly in cultural areas that utilized masks, e.g., the Northeast and the Northwest Coast – those performances may have more closely resembled the theater of ancient Greece. The music conveyed oral tradition in cultures without formal written language.

Vocal

The primary instruments in making music among Indians were the human voice and percussion. The use of wind instruments varied among tribes and the use of stringed instruments was rare.

Traditional vocals may have resembled chanting to European ears. Melodies were often limited to only a few vocal tones, with repeated lines. The singing may have included the use of language, vocables (non-words), or a combination of the two. Both solo and group vocals were used, but harmonization was rare. In some cultures, males and females sang songs separately.

Drums

Drumming or the use of other percussion instruments accompanied both singing and dancing. The drum often represented the heartbeat, whether that of the human heartbeat, that of an animal, or even that of the Earth as Mother. Drums would vary between culture regions depending on available materials. In woodland areas, logs could be used as drums; in the Southwest, pottery might form the body of a drum. Animal skins were most often used to stretch over a circular opening for a drum head. Drums tended to be played with a stick or beater rather than played by hand(s). Drums might be held in one hand and played by one person, or larger drums would be encircled by groups of drummers playing in unison, much like contemporary powwow drum groups.

Percussion

Other percussion instruments include rattles, shakers, or bells. Gourds or other hollowed-out plant material were used to make rattles. Shakers might involve shells, bones, or teeth. Hooves were utilized in much the same way as bells. Tobacco tins were used regularly after the introduction of metal trade goods.

Wind Instruments

Many cultures used bone whistles – usually for ceremonial purposes. Wooden flutes were often used either as forms of prayer or as part of courtship practices. There were a few places where a simple reed trumpet-like instrument was used.

String Instruments

Even rarer was a type of fiddle that involved a single string stretched tight over a large reed that was bowed with a single string bow.

The above examples are all general descriptions that would have unique variations within each culture area and even more distinct features from tribe to tribe, clan to clan, even family to family. While many songs and instruments have been lost to time, many singing traditions and instruments are still in use today, passed down from generation to generation. Some contemporary Indian musicians incorporate traditional singing and instrumentation into modern genres, thereby creating new traditions and sounds with each generation.

Developments in American Indian Music by Genre

There have been many American Indian musicians creating music in virtually every genre in the past century. Below is a sampling of some of the most celebrated artists in various genres.

Ambient/New Age/World

One of the most well-known Native artists to create music widely used for meditation, relaxation, yoga, etc., is R. Carlos Nakai, a Dineh/Ute. He has recorded over 30 albums as a solo artist playing flute and with many other pairings and ensembles, including the R. Carlos Nakai Quartet. See www.RCarlosNakai.com. Another very successful artist is Lakota keyboardist Brule, who performs solo piano as well as tours with his band, AIRO (the American Indian Rock Opera), featuring his son and daughter on guitar and flute. His daughter, Nicole LaRoche, has released a solo flute album as well. Learn more at www.BruleRecords.com.

Blues

The blues have influenced countless musicians (especially guitarists) in every genre, so some of the best-known musicians in this genre straddle styles beyond traditional blues. The Gary Small Band has multiple Native American Music Awards (NAMA or Nammy) nominations and Small himself, a Northern Cheyenne raised in Montana and Wyoming, won the Songwriter of the Year Nammy in 2002. See Gary Small Band. Another indigenous blues act recognized far beyond Indian Country is the Nakota family band called Indigenous. Guitarist/vocalist Mato Nanji leads the band with his brother, sister, and a cousin. Their music is reminiscent of the soulful blues rock of Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Listen for yourself at Indigenous Rocks. Montana's own Jared Stewart (Crow) is an in-demand performer throughout the region and Indian Country. Read more in the Montana Indian music section.

Classical

The Western Classical music tradition is not the place one might first think of finding American Indian musicians. But like many non-Indian children in America, Indian children often first learn to play musical instruments in elementary school bands and high school orchestras. One important artist is flutist Brent Michael Davids (Mohican). He has performed with the Kronos Quartet and has been commissioned to perform works by the Joffrey Ballet, among others. Learn more at Brent Michael Davids.

Country and Western

As most Indian Reservations are in rural areas, it's no surprise that country and western music is popular with many Indian people. Few fans of the genre realize that a few of its biggest stars have Indian ancestry. Two country singers that have been inducted into the Native American Music Association's Hall of Fame are country legend Hank Williams (Creek/Cherokee ancestry) and Crystal Gayle (Cherokee ancestry). But there have been many tribal members making country music as well. Another NAMA Hall of Fame member is Buddy Red Bow (Lakota). Floyd Red Crow Westerman (Dakota) is a country/folk singer, activist, and actor (*Clearcut*, *Dances with Wolves*, *The Doors*, *Powwow Highway*). Any internet search will reveal much more information about these important artists.

Gospel

Since virtually every Indian reservation was once assigned a Christian denomination to try to "civilize" and evangelize them, there are many Christians throughout Indian country. Many Indians practice a blending of their traditional spirituality and Christianity. The Native American Church is an organized denomination that formalizes that blending. There are a few contemporary artists in Montana that present a gospel message through hip-hop music (Evan Lee and Supaman for example, both Crow). There is also a project to record and transcribe traditional Crow Christian hymns. Contact Little Big Horn College for more information.

Hard Rock/Heavy Metal

Many American Indian musicians have performed in hard rock and heavy metal bands comprised of non-Native members (Anthrax/Blackfoot/The Cremains/Ozzy Osbourne/Testament). One of the finest all-Native bands is the sibling trio, Blackfire. The two brothers and sister of the Benally family (Dineh) have had recordings produced by both C.J. and Joey Ramone of the iconic punk band The Ramones, toured Europe multiple times, and performed in northern Africa. They also perform traditional music and dance with their uncle as the Jones Benally Family. Be sure to read about metal band Warcry in the Montana Indian music section.

Hip-Hop/Rap

The hip-hop/rap music that grew out of the urban areas of New York and Los Angeles has spread far and wide across the globe and Indian Country has been influenced by it as well. There are many talented rappers with large followings. One of the most successful, the Nammy-winning Litefoot (Cherokee) began as an actor (*Indian in the Cupboard*, *The Song of Hiawatha*, *Mortal Kombat II*, *Kull the Conqueror*). He is the CEO of Native Style, Inc. and spokesperson for the non-profit organization, the Association for American Indian Development. Robby Bee & Boyz from the Rez (Dakota), led by the son of XIT founder Tom Bee, were one of the first Native hip-hop groups. Their 1993 CD, *Reservation of Education,* is highly recommended for classroom listening. The Crow group Rezawrecktion is led by Supaman, a clever and amazing freestyle rapper. See Montana Indian music section for further details.

Jazz

One of the truly original musical genres that arose from the new nation of the United States of America is jazz and its various sub-genres. So, it's no surprise to find American Indians contributing to its history. Two seminal artists are the jazz singer Mildred Bailey (Coeur d'Alene) and sax player Jim Pepper (Muscogee Creek/Kaw). Ms. Bailey is considered one of the all-time greatest jazz singers. She was directly involved with helping the early careers of legendary vocalists Tony Bennett, Bing Crosby, Billie Holiday, and Frank Sinatra, as well as being the vocalist with Benny Goodman's big band. Jim Pepper was one of the founders of jazz/rock fusion along with guitarist Larry Coryell. He sought to blend jazz with his American Indian heritage. His best-known example of this was the song "Witchi Tai To," which reached No. 69 on the pop charts in 1968. He also recorded with Keith Jarrett and played sax on the Classics IV hits, "Spooky" and "Stormy." Google searches will reveal many links for these two artists.

Opera

There have been several "American Indianist" operas composed in the 20th century by non-Indians (most notably, Arthur F. Nevin's *Poia* in 1907), but American Indian opera is especially noteworthy from its humble beginnings with composer, author and teacher Gertrude Bonnin (known as Zitkala-Sa in Lakota), who composed the grand opera, *The Sun Dance*, with fellow musician William F. Hansen in 1913. One contemporary Indian opera singer is Barbara McAlister

(Cherokee), a mezzo-soprano who has performed with German repertory opera companies in several cities, as well Hong Kong, France, Spain, and Portugal. She has also performed with the Arizona Opera, the Florentine Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, the Tulsa Opera, the Anchorage Opera, and the Boston Opera New England. Ms. McAlister is a recipient of the Cherokee Medal of Honor. résumé and audio samples

Peyote Songs

The genre known as peyote songs has an ancient history but has become one of the most commercially successful of Indian recordings. The instrumentation in peyote ceremonial music is the cast-iron kettle water drum, the eagle bone whistle, the gourd rattle, and the human voice. Derived from the sacred music of the Native American Church, which utilizes peyote as a sacrament, the recordings were originally made and distributed on 78 rpm records among NAC members in the 1940s but have since grown to include a category at the Nammys. One 1966 recording by Nelson Big Bow (Kiowa), *Kiowa and Comanche Peyote Songs*, was recorded at Crow Agency. Another prominent duo, Primeaux and Mike (Lakota and Dineh), have even been awarded a Grammy for Best Native American Music Album in 2002.

Powwow

Without a doubt, the most widely disseminated genre of American Indian music is the powwow drum group. Growing from traditional tribal dances and feasts, the powwow has become a pan-Indian mainstay all across Indian country that finds dancers and drum groups from tribes all over North America coming together – usually in competition for valuable prize money. Similar in some respects to the rodeo, the prize money is both a way to fund the traveling expenses of dancers, singers, and their families, while also giving individuals and groups a goal to strive for excellence. Two of the most successful powwow drum groups are Black Lodge (Blackfoot) and the Northern Cree Singers (Cree). Both groups have been nominated for Grammys and Nammys, with Black Lodge winning Drum Group of the year in 2000. Montana drum groups with CDs include Blackfoot Confederacy and Young Grey Horse (both based on the Blackfeet Reservation). Read more in the Montana Indian music section below.

Reggae

In addition to powwow music and country western, another sound enjoyed across Indian Country is reggae. Most likely a combination of the importance of rhythm, the reverence for spirituality, and the common themes of enduring as oppressed peoples, this inclination has led to nearly as many t-shirts featuring Jamaican reggae icon Bob Marley being worn by American Indians as any Indian artist. Around 2000, Crow blues guitarist Jared Stewart brought reggae superstar Jimmy Cliff to Crow Agency for a successful concert attended primarily by Natives.

One of the most prominent Indian reggae artists is Casper Lomayesva (pronounced Lo-Ma-Da-Wa) a Hopi/Dineh from Arizona. Casper has opened for reggae greats such as The Wailers and Burning Spear. He received a Nammy for Best World Music in 2001. Casper Lomayesva

Rock ‘n’ Roll

The term "rock ‘n’ roll" can refer to the larger genre of popular music or it can refer specifically to the music of the mid-50s to early-60s. In this case it refers to the latter. Link Wray (Shawnee/Cherokee) is commonly credited for pioneering the distorted electric guitar’s power chord in his 1958 instrumental hit, “Rumble” (by Link Wray and His Ray Men). Before “Rumble,” electric guitars commonly produced clean sounds and jazz chords. Wray achieved his trademark sound by punching holes in his amplifier speakers. His fans have included Bob Dylan, John Lennon, and Bruce Springsteen, among many others. His music has been featured in many major motion pictures including the Oscar-winning *Pulp Fiction*. Learn more about this rock ‘n’ roll legend at Wikipedia - Link Wray.

Rock

As in several of the more popular genres, American Indians can be found throughout rock music’s myriad sub-genres with far too many to list. One very important artist is session guitarist Jesse Ed Davis (Kiowa/Comanche), who performed on albums by (among many others) Jackson Browne, Eric Clapton, Leonard Cohen, Mac Davis, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Arlo Guthrie, Emmy Lou Harris, George Harrison, Richie Havens, John Lee Hooker, Albert King, BB King, John Lennon, Taj Mahal, Steve Miller, Keith Moon, Willie Nelson, Harry Nilsson, Helen Reddy, The Rolling Stones, Leon Russell, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Ringo Starr, Rod Stewart, and perhaps most importantly, with poet/activist/actor John Trudell on their collaboration *AKA Graffitti Man* in 1986, two years before his (Davis) untimely death at age 44.

Other prominent American Indian rock acts include Jim Boyd (Colville), and the important ’70s bands XIT (pan-tribal) and Redbone (Yaqui/Shoshone), who had two Top 40 hit singles (“Witch Queen of New Orleans” and the No. 5 hit, “Come and Get Your Love”). A Google search will find many related websites.

Waila/“Chicken Scratch”

The distinctly southwestern Indian music known as Waila or Chicken Scratch is a hybrid of German polka, Tex-Mex, and indigenous music of the Pima and Papago Indians. The mostly instrumental music is played by ensembles of three to five musicians playing bass, drums, guitar, and featuring accordion and/or saxophone (occasionally the fiddle) as the primary melody instrument. The American Indians, Los Papagos Molinas, Los Reyes, and the Tohono O’odham Braves are all well-known groups across the southwestern states. See Canyon Records for various CDs in this genre.

Contemporary American Indian Music Web Resource List

Irene Bedard (Inupiat/Metis) actress (*Smoke Signals*, the voice of *Pocahontas*) and singer

Robbie Bee & the Boyz from the Rez (Dakota) hip-hop

James Bilagody (Dineh) singer/songwriter

Blackfire (Dineh) sibling metal trio

Jim Boyd Band (Colville) blues/rock guitarist and singer/songwriter

Jesse Ed Davis (Kiowa) guitarist

Annie Humphrey (Ojibwe) singer/songwriter

Indigenous (Nakota) blues/rock

Jana (Lumbee) R&B

Julian B (Muscogee) hip-hop

Litefoot (Cherokee) hip-hop

Russell Means (Lakota) poet/activist/actor

Robert Mirabal (Taos) singer/flutist/percussionist

R Carlos Nakai (Dine) flute

Night Shield (Lakota) hip-hop

Paul Ortega (Apache) singer/songwriter

Jim Pepper (Kaw/Creek) sax; "Witchi Tai To," "Spooky")

Martha Redbone (Shawnee and Chocktaw/African American) R&B

Buddy Red Bow (Lakota) country

Buffy Sainte-Marie (Cree) singer/songwriter

Joanne Shenandoah (Oneida) singer/songwriter

Tiger (Miccosukee) rock

John Trudell (Lakota) poet/AIM activist/actor

Walela (Cherokee) plays with Rita Coolidge with her sister and niece

Mitch Walking Elk (Cheyenne/Arapaho) singer/songwriter

Floyd Red Crow Westerman (Dakota) folk singer/actor

Without Rezervation (Paiute/Navajo) rap

XIT (Pan-Tribal) rock

Contemporary Popular Artists with Indian Ancestry

There are many professional musicians in popular genres of music who have Indian ancestry but don't promote themselves in that way. There are also a number of groups that may have one or more members that are either enrolled tribal members or have Indian ancestry. Below is a selective list of some artists, ranging from household names to the less well known, with tribal affiliation or ancestry, brief descriptions, and URLs (where available) for further information.

Joey Belladonna (Iroquois) singer for metal band Anthrax

Chuck Billy (Pomo) singer for metal band Testament

Blackfoot (pan-tribal); led by current Lynyrd Skynyrd guitarist Ricky Medlocke

Tommy Bolin (Sioux) guitarist with Deep Purple and James Gang

Randy Castillo (Isleta/Cherokee) drummer for Ozzy Osbourne/Motley Crue

Cher (Cherokee) iconic singer/award-winning actress

Rita Coolidge (Cherokee) pop singer with hits: "Higher & Higher (Your Love Has Lifted Me)," "We're All Alone"

Shannon Curfman (Ojibwe) blues guitarist

Micki Free (Cherokee/Comanche) guitarist for Shalamar

Crystal Gayle (Cherokee) country singer and little sister of Loretta Lynn

Jimi Hendrix (Cherokee) legendary rock guitarist/vocalist NAMA Hall of Fame member

Loretta Lynn (Cherokee) country music legend and big sister of Crystal Gayle

Redbone (Yaqui/ Shoshone) No. 5 hit-makers with "Come and Get Your Love"

Robbie Robertson (Mohawk) leader of Bob Dylan's one-time backing band, The Band

Stevie Salas (Mescalero Apache) rock guitarist

Hank Williams (Cherokee) country singer

American Indian Musicians in Montana

Like Montana musicians generally, there are countless Indian musicians across the state who have never performed professionally or recorded any of their music (and may never do so). There are also a growing number who have built professional or semi-professional careers from their artistry.

Below is a list of some of those Montana Indian musicians who have recordings available for purchase. Only a few are signed to record labels. In the 21st century, opportunities abound that allow musicians to record affordably at home or in local studios, reproduce recordings on compact discs, and distribute those CDs through the internet.

Thanks to websites like the independent music distributor www.CDBaby.com, social networking sites like MySpace, and online music hosts like purevolume and AllMusic Indian musicians that a decade ago may have never hoped of being heard beyond their reservation are reaching fans worldwide. Even musicians of the past few decades who did have recordings of their music might only have been heard on reservation radio stations. Most of the artists below are performing and selling their CDs through avenues like these or their own websites. There is a plethora of drum groups that may never record but can be heard throughout Montana performing at social gatherings, official functions, and/or powwows.

Alphabetical List

Apache (Northern Cheyenne/Choctaw; rap)
A teenage rapper who is on a crusade against meth. He lost his older brother, also a rapper, when his brother committed suicide after trying to get off of meth. Apache is part African American as well.

Blackfoot Confederacy (Blackfeet; powwow drum group)
The historical Blackfoot Confederacy, formed by Montana's Blackfeet Nation, and the Kainai, the Piikani and the Siksika, each in southern Alberta, are all represented in the Native American drum group of the same name. Singers from the four nations gathered together at one drum initially to lay claim to the songs of the Chicken Dance, sacred to the Blackfoot people. Their CDs include *Setting the Record Straight* and *Confederacy Style*.

Crow Elders (Crow; traditional Crow hymns)
A project to record and transcribe Christian hymns in the Crow language as sung by Crow elders. The hymns are not translations of European hymns, but traditional Crow solo and group singing about Jesus. Some songs are a cappella, others have a tambourine. The recordings resemble anthropological field recordings in both their authenticity and the recording quality.

Exitwound (Northern Cheyenne; metal guitarist)
One-man-band Paul Underwood has recorded seven mostly instrumental, “cool metal” CDs in the past four years. The “Native American Axeman” plays all the instruments, engineers, and does all the vocals on his inspired instrumental-jams-as-spiritual-journey. His most recent CD, *The Native Axeman Cometh*, is a compilation of his favorites from the first six releases plus a few new tracks.

Joseph FireCrow (Northern Cheyenne; flute/vocals)
Winner of two Native American Music Awards (Nammys) and Grammy nominee Joseph FireCrow plays Native American flute and percussion and sings with a beautiful tenor voice. His albums have covered traditional Northern Cheyenne music, collaborations with contemporary rock and jazz musicians, and a performance with the Billings Symphony Orchestra and Chorale. His CDs include *FireCrow, Legends of the Warrior, Cheyenne Nation,* and *Red Beads,* an enhanced CD with two short but informative interviews about his flutes and his music.

Jack Gladstone (Blackfeet; singer/songwriter)

Blackfeet singer/songwriter Jack Gladstone has released a dozen albums over the past two decades. His recent innovative idea was to release over 100 songs as MP3 files on a single disc. *Buckskin Poetsongs* includes all of his original recordings and PDF files with printed lyrics. Gladstone has been nominated for both Grammys and Nammys. He collaborated with country singer/songwriter Rob Quist for the Lewis & Clark commemorative album, *Odyssey West*.

Evan Lee (Crow/Sioux/Assiniboine; hip-hop)
A young Crow singer and rapper who started out as a gospel singer and has become more of a rapper. Evan Lee has been making music since childhood in his father's professional recording studio. Nominated for a Native American Music Award (Nammy) for New Artist of the Year in 2003 and in 2004 for Best Native American Christian Recording.

Rezawrecktion (Crow; rap)
This Nammy-winning group from Crow Agency feature celebrated rapper Supaman, plus hype-man Sabatage, a 2007 graduate of MSU-Billings. They have also won *Billings Outpost* Tuney Awards. They intersperse their songs with short comedy skits. While primarily a Christian group, they also sing of reservation life and do not use objectionable language.

Mason Runs Through, Jr. (Assiniboine; rock)
Performing under the name Buck Native, Runs Through uses rock and country music to share Nakoda history through an Assiniboine's life experiences. He has two CDs available.

Jared Stewart (Crow; blues)
Jared Stewart is probably one of Eastern Montana's hardest working musicians. In addition to playing every weekend with his rockin' blues trio, Stewart has also served as a representative to the Crow Nation's tribal legislature and is a motivational speaker. When performing, he lets his guitar do much of the motivational speaking, but he has a powerful, soulful voice as well. He has won more *Billings Outpost* Tuney Awards than any other act.

Supaman (Crow; rap)
This Crow Agency rapper has won the *Billings Outpost* Tuney Award for Best Rap Artist more than anyone else. He is known for his freestyle rapping, and for creating "beats" for other emcees to rap over.

Robert Turgeon (Lakota; Native American flute)
Native American flute player Turgeon recorded his 1995 album, *Voices from the Spirit World* in Helena. He has two other albums, *Shaman's Journey* and *Stone Song*. His current goal is to donate 100% of the net sales of his music to the Seven Fires Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to support indigenous children and traditional medicine people.

Warcry (Salish-Kootenai; metal)
An intense heavy metal band from the Flathead Reservation, Warcry plays thrash metal that is for fans of this genre only. While not easy to listen to, their lyrics are thought provoking and deal with Native themes.

Phillip Whiteman, Jr. (Northern Cheyenne; storyteller)
A storyteller and traditional singer, Whiteman has been a familiar face in the powwow arena and winners' circles since he was a small boy. He dances the old-style grass dance. His dancing career has taken him far: from the powwow arena and Wild West Shows, to the Broadway stage in New York City, to the high-profile events of both President Clinton's and Senator Campbell's inaugurations to touring countries throughout Europe. He is a two-time Indian World Champion saddle bronc rider and 22-time Indian National Finals qualifier.

Jeannette Winters (Potawatomi ancestry; flute)
A Native American flute player with 1/8 Potawatomi ancestry, Jeannette Winters plays flute pieces inspired by the natural world. She lives in Missoula.

The Woodland Consort (Ojibwe; guitar/flute/harp)
An instrumental trio led by Kalispell classical guitarist Steve Eckels. Recorded in Wisconsin in 1990, *Woodland Winds* was recently re-released. A non-Indian himself, Eckels collaborated with Ojibwe flute player Anakwad for this album of beautiful classical guitar, Native American flute, folk harp, and simple percussion.

Young Grey Horse (Blackfeet; powwow drum group)
Since 1995, the grandchildren of the late Wayne Bear Medicine – who founded the Young Grey Horse Society as a way to preserve traditional Blackfeet ways for future generations – have respectfully carried the Young Grey Horse name and drum. The Browning, Montana group originally released *Songs of the Blackfeet* in 1977 before going on to influence many great powwow singers and dancers over the years. The younger Young Grey Horse sing from the heart and soul and have now earned themselves a firm reputation among powwow fans. Their CDs include *Generations*, *It's Just a Tribe Thing*, *Loyal to tha Old Man*, and *Thunder Across the Plainz.*

Montana Indian Music Hall of Fame

There are plans in the works to create a physical Montana Indian Hall of Fame. A likely location will be on the campus of University of Montana in Missoula.

The Hall of Fame idea originated with a desire to recognize Montana's Indian musicians and dancers, but the intent now is to recognize Indian people who have made a variety of contributions to society and their communities.

The idea originated with Stan Pretty Paint (Crow), whose father, Perry Pretty Paint, a traditional singer, was its first inductee. Other members of the Hall of Fame are Johnny Arlee (Salish), Earl Old Person (Blackfeet), and Johnny G. Meyers (Chippewa-Cree), a traditional songkeeper from the Rocky Boy Reservation.

Organizers plan to choose an honoree from each of Montana's 12 tribes before turning the nomination process over to the individual tribes for selecting future inductees.

For further information, contact Stan Pretty Paint at University of Montana's Office of Continuing Education, 406-243-5620 or at e-mail.

Native American Music Awards

The Annual Native American Music Awards, or Nammys, proudly honor outstanding musical achievements of American Indian artists from across the country in over 30 award categories.

The event is not just about entertainment. It was launched in January 1998 as the first and only national awards show in the world honoring Native American and Aboriginal music. The Native American Music Awards was born out of a need to provide greater opportunity and recognition for traditional and contemporary Native American musicians. It has grown to become the country's leading source for preserving and promoting the songs of American Indians from all four directions. Today, the Nammys are honoring songmakers, fostering pride, providing national exposure, and celebrating the gift of music with others around the world.

The Nammys has all the professionalism and production values of much larger events like the Grammy Awards and the American Music Awards. By request of the Grammys, the Native American Music Association also assisted in the creation of a Native Music Grammy category in 2000. They now maintain the nation's largest Native American music archive.

Just as the BET Music Awards, MTV Video Music Awards, the American Music Awards, the Grammys, Canada's Juno Awards, and the Latin Grammys continue to grow mainstream awareness for their perspective genres, so do the Nammys.

Billboard Magazine wrote, "There is no better indication of the remarkable variety of today's Native American music than a glance at the award categories for the Native American Music Awards."

Over 150-plus artists submit recordings each year for nomination consideration. Over a period of several months, over one million people participate each year in a national voting ballot campaign by visiting Native American Music Awards. Both members and the general public listen to music tracks of featured artists in over 30 categories and vote on their favorites. An advisory panel officiates and makes final decisions.

American Indian Music and General Web Resources

The Encyclopedia of Native Music: More Than A Century of Recordings From Wax Cylinder to The Internet, Illustrated with Photographs and Album Covers

Montana Office of Public Instruction's Indian Education page

Makoche Music

Native American Music Association

Native Radio

Sound of America Records

Wikipedia: Indigenous Music of North America

WWW Virtual Library – Native American music resources on the Internet

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About the Author

Scott Prinzing is the Director of Education and Coordinator of Music and Native American Programming for MusEco Media and Education Project, a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit based in Billings.

He earned a B.A. in American Indian Studies, including two years of Dakota language study (Univ. of Minn. '92), an M.Ed. in Teaching as a Second Career (MSU-Billings '99). He is a Montana-certified elementary teacher and a provisionally certified vocational teacher. He currently teaches part-time for the Friendship House in Billings, providing media literacy education with the United Way's After School Discover Zone program at Lewis and Clark Middle School, and with American Indian teenagers living in foster care through In-Care Network's Vision Seekers program.

In addition to his formal educational work, Scott Prinzing is a performing musician (bass guitar/vocals/mandolin/dulcimer with his wife Kris in the acoustic duo *Earthshine*), a music journalist (*The Billings Outpost*, *Montana Magazine*, the Montana Arts Council's *State of the Arts* newsletter, etc.), and a radio producer (*Montana Muse*, Yellowstone Public Radio). He is a member of the national Association of Music Writers and Photographers and of the Society for Ethnomusicology, an international academic association.

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