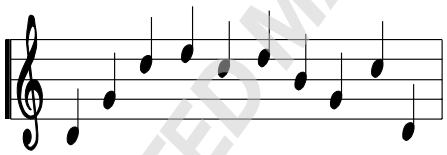
Unit One

Native American Music



Contents

Unit One: Overview

By the time Christopher Columbus arrived in North America in 1492, there were over six hundred Native American groups living on the continent with their own languages, systems of government, religions, ceremonies, and musical traditions. They sang, danced, and played drums, rattles, and rasps. Their songs were passed through the generations by the oral tradition. Ethnomusicologists have grouped Native American music into regions according to similarity in styles. The regions are Eastern Woodlands, Plains, Southwest, Great Basin and Plateau, California, Northwest Coast, Subarctic, Arctic, and Hawaii.

Singing is considered the most important part of most Native American music. Singing can carry important tribal history and values, or contain the power to heal a sick person or bring good luck in hunting. Sacred songs are highly honored and usually performed only at special occasions. Other songs include social songs, love songs, lullabies, and memorial songs.

Rhythm instruments, when played along with the singing, serve to call forth spirits and bring spiritual power. The most common rhythm instruments in traditional Native American music are drums, rattles, and rasps. Rhythm instruments are generally played as accompaniment to the singing and dancing, and not as featured instruments themselves. Traditionally, they were made from materials that were found nearby—for example, tree trunks and animal skins for drums, turtle shells and animal horns for rattles, sticks for rasps, and so on. Traditional pitched instruments include flutes, whistles, horns, and string bows. Flutes were not usually played in ceremonies or dances, but were played by the men as love calls to the women. Whistles were used for calling long distances or sending warnings, or in special dances. Horns imitated the call of animals and scared away enemies. String bows were plucked.

Contemporary Native American musicians continue to sing and perform the ancient music in special ceremonies and occasions and come together to share traditions at modern intertribal powwow gatherings. Some contemporary Native American musicians are mixing the traditions of their ancestors with rock, jazz, country, folk, and rap and composing lyrics that describe current issues, lifestyles, concerns, and experiences.

This unit provides an overview of Native American music traditions, including songs, dances, instruments, regional styles, and contemporary styles. Native American populations treat music with great respect and reverence. In teaching this music, it is important to consider certain issues that may not be common knowledge. For example, keep the following in mind:

- Many Native American songs are reserved for special occasions only. It would be inappropriate to sing one kind of a song out of context—for example, to sing a healing song on a stage or in a public auditorium. Similarly, it is not always appropriate for the general public to sing certain tribal songs. The songs provided in these lessons are public songs offered with permission.

- Many Native American tribes were given names by foreigners who did not know their real names in the Native American language. Whenever possible try to use the name the tribes call themselves. For example, the Sioux call themselves *Lakota, Dakota,* or *Nakota.* The Nez Percé were named by the French for their pierced noses; they call themselves *Nimi'ipuu.* The *Ani Yunwiya* were called Cherokee by a neighboring tribe, meaning "the people who speak another language."

Lesson 1. Traditional Native American Singing

Lesson Overview

Native American singing styles vary from tribe to tribe and region to region across America. The songs are influenced by the conditions and traditions of each tribal group and are performed for reasons ranging from healing to love. Sacred songs are highly honored and are usually performed only at special occasions. In most traditions, singing with drums and rattles can be used to call forth spiritual influences to aid in healing and other important outcomes. Social songs are performed in public for thanksgiving, honor, memorials, and social gatherings.

Vocabulary. Singing, traditions, compose, oral tradition, sacred songs, ceremonials, lullaby, rhythm, high pitches, low pitches, call-and-response, chorus, lyrics, vocables, chants.

Purpose. To introduce songs from a variety of traditional Native American cultures; to learn about different singing styles; and to learn where Native American songs come from.

Preparation. Read the **Traditional Native American Singing** student handout to familiarize yourself with the material. Preview the CD samples (see cues in student handout) and have the CD ready for playing for the students. Be prepared to do some or all of the activities included in this unit. Also, make sure that each student has a music notebook for keeping handouts, activity sheets, opinion pages, and so on, when they've completed them. *Suggestion:* Invite students to sit in a talking circle for any discussions about Native American music. (See next section for description of talking circles.)

Materials

- **Traditional Native American Singing** student handout *(following)*
- **Traditional Native American Singing Quiz** *(following)*
- **Traditional Native American Singing Quiz Answer Key** *(following)*
- **Music Vocabulary** activity sheet *(Appendix)*
- **My Opinion Page** activity sheet *(Appendix)*
- **How to Teach a Song** teacher guide *(Appendix)*
- **Music notebooks**
- **CD music** examples on accompanying CD; cues in student handout
- **Additional music selections**

Activities

- Pass out the **Traditional Native American Singing** handout for students to read silently or aloud as a group. Afterwards, have students put the handout in their music notebooks. *(Link to language arts, history, geography, social studies.)*
- Give the **Traditional Native American Singing Quiz** to assess student understanding of the lesson.
- Go over the music vocabulary at the top of the student handout either before or after reading the text. Refer to the glossary for definitions. *Suggestions:* Include these words in a regular class vocabulary lesson, or pass out flashcards with a vocabulary word on one side and the definition on the other and allow students to drill each other. Use the **Music Vocabulary** activity sheet to write out definitions. *(Link to language arts.)*
- Offer the **Vocabulary Challenge.** Students pick some or all of the words in this lesson's vocabulary list to use in a paragraph, essay, short story, or poem. *(Link to language arts.)*
- **Talking Circle.** Discuss the lesson's topic as a group before and after reading the student handout. Consider having the discussion in a "talking circle." *Step 1:* Have everyone sit in a circle. *Step 2:* Explain the rules: you'll use a "talking stick" (or other object, such as a stone, feather, or large bead) to pass from person to person. The person holding the object is the one whose turn it is to speak. Students should listen and respect each other's opinions. Each is allowed to speak honestly, without interruption, and opinions are not criticized, judged, or argued. Students are free to let the object pass without speaking if they choose. *Step 3:* Ask students to say what they already know about Native American music. *Step 4:* Read the student handout aloud or silently, then discuss it again, passing the talking stick or object around the circle, allowing each to add what they've learned. *Suggestion:* Allow extra turns if desired. *(Link to language arts, social studies.)*
- **The Oral Tradition.** The oral tradition is the practice of passing words or songs from one person to another by telling or singing; this practice has kept Native American songs alive for many generations. This activity demonstrates this tradition by playing the game "Telephone." *Step 1:* Sit in a circle and announce that this activity is like the game Telephone. In this version, each student in the circle counts as a "generation." For example, the first student is the "child," the next student is the "parent," the next is the "grandparent," the next is "great-grandparent," and so on, until every student is named (you may have twenty-five "generations" but it will clearly illustrate the concept). *Step 2:* The oldest generation (the last great-grandparent) begins by whispering a short phrase to the person next to him or her. Keep the phrase simple so that it is easy to remember. *Suggested phrases:* "The hunting is good beyond the meadow" or "The blueberries are very sweet this year." Each student passes the phrase by

whispering to the student next to him or her until it reaches the last student (that is, the last generation) who says the phrase aloud to everyone. *Step 3:* Discuss what happened to the phrase as it passed from generation to generation. What did it start out being? What did it end up being? How does this process happen in real life? *Step 4:* Do it all again with a different intent. This time stress the importance of memorizing the phrase and getting it right. In this round, make sure each person is clear on what was said, even requiring the person hearing it to repeat it back to be sure. Note that Native Americans take great care to teach the songs and histories of their culture so that they will be remembered accurately from generation to generation. *(Link to social studies.)*

Extension Activities

For step-by-step directions and activity sheets, see the appendix.

- **My Opinion Page.** Give students a chance to express freely their own opinions about the music they hear. *(Link to language arts, critical thinking.)*
- **Sing a Song.** The goal of this activity is to learn a simple song from this lesson. *Suggested songs to sing:* "Gayowajeenayho," "Haagú S'é," "E Komo." *(Link to singing, language arts, rhythm, melody.)*
- **Illustrate the Music.** Students illustrate a song or piece of music by drawing or painting their ideas of what the music "looks" like visually. *Suggested songs to illustrate:* "Song for a Woman Who Was Brave in War," "Coyote Warrior Song," "Arowp—Song of the Mockingbird," "Haagú S'é," "Ockaya—Corn Grinding Song." *(Link to language arts, visual arts.)*
- **Music on the Map.** Create a map and legend showing musically important places, such as musicians' birthplaces and the music hot spots mentioned in the lesson. *(Link to geography.)*
- **Invite a Music Expert.** Invite a Native American musician to visit your class and share his or her instrument and musical talent with the students. *(Link to social studies.)*
- Consider bringing in **additional selections of music** from other sources to expand the music examples for this lesson. Search the Internet, library, or local music store to find them. Try *www.oyate.com*.

Name Date

Iroquois singers and dancers

Traditional Native American Singing

Vocabulary: *singing, traditions, compose, oral tradition, sacred songs, ceremonials, lullaby, rhythm, high pitches, low pitches, call-and-response, chorus, lyrics, vocables, chants*

All Native American cultures have **singing** in their **traditions**—whether singing to a baby or singing to remember a war hero, ask for good weather, or perform a blessing ceremony. Sometimes songs are **composed** by an inspired person. At other times they come to people in dreams, or in visions, offering wisdom and guidance; these are not considered to be made up by the composer, but rather "given" to him or her by a higher power.

Many Native American songs are ancient, passed through the ages by the **oral tradition**. Early Native Americans did not use written language to record their songs, histories, and traditions. Instead, they passed this information from one person to another by telling, or singing. For example, a father might teach his son a healing song. The son then grows up and teaches it to his son, and he to his son, and so on for many generations. In this way, ancient songs and their messages are remembered throughout time. In modern times, traditional songs are also being sung to reinforce cultural identity and learn traditional languages.

Singing can hold special meaning at important occasions and is always respected for its power. Singing, with drums and rattles, is used to call forth spiritual help to aid in healing, success in war or hunting, and other important outcomes. Singing is also performed at social occasions where the people sing welcome songs, dance songs, love songs, memorial songs, and exit songs. "Gayowajeenayho" is a welcome song sung at social gatherings from the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) tradition in the Eastern Woodlands region.

Gayowajeenayho—Welcome Song

Gayo-wah-jee-nay-hay yah-ah hay-ay-oh
Gayo-wah-jee-nay-ay-ho *(Repeated)*

Michele Stock. Used by permission.

Sacred Songs

Sacred songs are like prayers. They can be requests for guidance or calls for help. They can be used as an expression of worship or a way to show thanks. Native American sacred songs are not usually performed in public or recorded on tapes or CDs. It is their very nature to be reserved for special occasions and treated with respect.

Sacred songs are often performed in ceremonies for special outcomes. Hawaiians perform sacred songs to help the plants grow large and strong. The Diné (Navajo) *Night Chant* ceremony is for healing. The Plains *Sun Dance* is performed for the rebirth of the spirit and to renew the natural relationship between humans and nature.

In many groups, singing songs by one group demands a response from another group to ensure social and spiritual balance.

Because sacred songs are not usually performed in public, it is rare to hear them unless you belong to a Native group or receive a special invitation to hear them. It is important to note that many tribes had property laws that governed the ownership of songs.

Heroes and Heroines

Like other people from all cultures, Native Americans sing about heroes and heroines—describing great acts of courage and important events in their histories. Songs may tell about a famous war hero, or recall someone who was able to fight a bear and win, or a clever tribe member who outsmarted an evil spirit. Through songs, people and events are remembered and their stories are passed down through the generations.

"Song for a Woman Who Was Brave in War" tells the story of *Bicáganab,* an Ojibwa (Chippewa) woman from the Eastern Woodlands region who fought the neighboring Dakota (Sioux) warriors when they raided her camp. She fought them with a club and then jumped into the water. When they followed her, she ripped and tore at their canoe, the canoe fell apart, and the warriors fell into the water where she hit them with her paddle. The people watching said she looked like a ferocious bear.

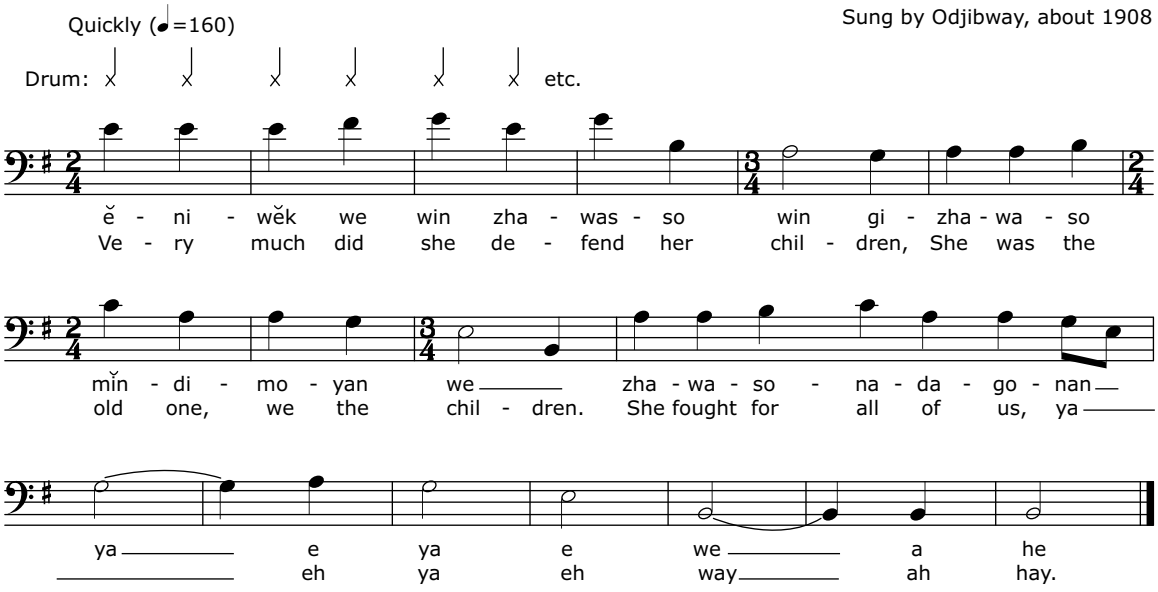
Song for a Woman Who Was Brave in War

Eh-nee-wek way ween zhah-wah-so
Ween ghi-zhah-wah-so
Min-dee-mo-yahn
Way . . . Zhah-wah-so-nah-dah-go-nahn
Yah, eh, yah, eh, way, ah, hay.

Very much did she defend her children.
She was the old one,
We the children.
She fought for all of us.
Yah, eh, yah, eh, way, ah, hay.

Song for a Woman Who Was Brave in War
CHIPPEWA

Sung by Odjibway, about 1908



ĕniwĕk: very much | we: meaningless | win: she [gi-]zhawaso: defending her children | mĭndimoyan: the old one (female) ([gigi-]zhawasonadagonan: fought for us all | ya e we a he: meaningless

Warrior Songs

Warrior songs offered power for fighting and success in war. In many traditions, warrior societies sang and danced in **ceremonials** that called for success and protection in war. The women sang songs of missing the warriors, and sang of their relief when the men returned. The Pawnee "Coyote Warrior Song," from the Plains region, asks for protection.

Coyote Warrior Song

Ah! Tee-rus tah-kah-wah-hah
Tee-raht-pah-ree—ho!
Tah-tah-rah kee-ta-wee-rah
Hah-wah reh-rah-wee-rah—heh-yo!

Oh great expanse of the blue sky,
See me roaming here,
Again on the warpath, lonely.
I trust in you, protect me!

From *The Indians' Book,* by Natalie Curtis.
Dover Publishing, New York, 1907. Used by permission.

Cheyenne warrior, circa 1927. Photograph by Edward S. Curtis.
Courtesy of McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Library, Evanston, Illinois. Used by permission.

The Kiowa *Wind Songs* were sung by both the warriors and those who stayed at home. "Gomda Daagya" is a woman's song.

Gomda Daagya—Wind Song

Pah-ko eh'k'ianda
Pah-ko eh'k'ianda
Pah-ko eh'k'ianda
Ayee apo
Hayee ankom oyom gee-ee-eh

I have one love.
I have one love.
I have one love.
And he is far away,
On the warpath.
Eh-yeh, eh-yeh.
Lonely are the days and weary.

From *The Indians' Book,* by Natalie Curtis.
Dover Publishing, New York, 1907. Used by permission.

Nature and Animal Songs

Many traditional songs are inspired by things in nature: the weather, the animals, or the natural environment. The Yup'ik (Eskimo) in the Arctic hear songs blowing in the coastal winds. In the Ni Míi Puu (Nez Percé) tradition, receiving a song from an eagle brings good luck in hunting. A Cherokee legend tells of parents singing songs to their children that they learned from listening to the wolves singing to their puppies and to the bears singing to their cubs. A Pawnee legend tells of a man who went into the wilderness and met a bear who taught him songs and dances to bring back to his village.

The Inupiat (Eskimo) song "Aa Narvaga—Song of the Loon and the Muskrat" is a song to the loon who is visiting the muskrat's lake.

Aa Narvaga—Song of the Loon and the Muskrat

By Jennie Jackson

Aa narvaga
Aa narvaga
Aa narvaga
U-kiu-mun ag-laan nar-van?

Ah, my lake.
Ah, my lake.
Ah, my lake.
Is it your lake even in winter?

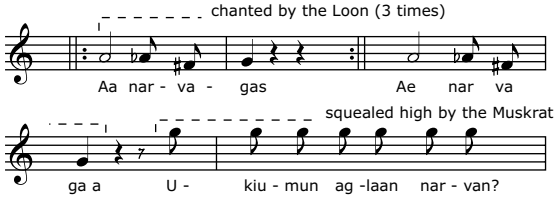
Jennie Jackson. From *Introduction to Alaska Studies: Creative Response.* University of Alaska Rural Education Materials Development Center. Courtesy of Northwest Arctic Borough School District. Used by permission.

AA NARVAGA

Masruan

Aa, narvagaa
Aa, narvagaa
As, narvagaa
Ukiumun aglaan narvan?

Taamnagguuq Malgi akpittuq. Aagauraagaqsiruq uvva narvautaa ni Kigvaluuram. "Aa, narvaga," itnauraaqhuni. Kigvaluuram sauk tignigaa, "Ukiumun aglaan narvan?"



THE SONG OF THE LOON AND THE MUSKRAT

Jennie Jackson (Inupiaq)

Ah, my lake
Ah, my lake
Ah, my lake
Is it your lake even in winter?

It is said that Loon was singing, oh so proudly. He raised his head up so high and sang. Here is was on Muskrat's lake, yet he was singing, saying the words, "Ah, my lake." Muskrat suddenly scolded him in a squeaky but harsh little voice. "Is this your lake even in winter?"

Credit: "The Song of the Loon and the Muskrat" by Jennie Jackson. Illustration by J. Leslie Boffa. Courtesy of Northwest Arctic School District. Used by permission.

Songs can be requests for good weather for growing crops. In the Southwest region, good weather songs are performed during elaborate ceremonials with dancers, drummers, and singers. The Hopi *Snake Dance* is sung as part of a nine-day ceremonial performed to bring rain. The ceremonial includes collecting snakes from the desert and dancing with them around the neck, and even in the mouth. A perfectly performed ritual is very important for a good outcome, and so great care is taken in performing these songs and dances correctly.

Lullabies

Parents have always sung to their babies to soothe them and to teach them. In old times, **lullabies** offered "sleep magic" to lull babies to sleep in cradleboards hanging from trees, rocking to the **rhythm** of the song. Lullabies also offered gentle instructions for how to grow up with good values and skills. Mothers sang to their daughters about being good sewers and gatherers. Fathers sang to their sons about being good hunters and warriors.

"Haagú S'é"—A Boy's Lullaby—is a Tlingit lullaby. It encourages little boys to grow up to be good fishermen.

Haagú S'é—A Boy's Lullaby

From Charles Joseph, Kaal.átk'

Haagú s'é, Haagú s'é
K'isáani heeyahaa
téel' aaheix oowax'aká
wa.éich gwaa eeyataká
hee eenaa aa, hee eenaa aa
hee eenaa aa, hee eenaa aa

Come here a moment, little boys.
Dog salmon are resting
By the log jam in the stream.
You can go spear one!

From Charles Joseph, Kaal.átk'. Used by permission.

Comanche mother and child, 1921. Photograph by Edward S. Curtis. Courtesy of McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Library, Evanston, Illinois. Used by permission.

Women's Songs

Historically, Native American women sang songs that reflected the events of their lives. Navajo blanket weavers sang to bring magic to their blankets and to make them more attractive. Mothers sang game songs with their children to keep them entertained. Zuni women sang while grinding the corn, calling for the rain to nourish their crops. "Ockaya" says that the corn is talking, saying that the clouds are coming. The song asks for the clouds to come this way.

Ockaya—Corn Grinding Song

Eh-lu hon-kwah lo-nah, ee-yah-ah-neh
Eh-lu hon-kwa hli-tohn ee-yah-neh
Leh-kwa
Kay-lah ai-yahn toh-wah
Peh-neh ai-yah-yeh
Mah-ai-ho-mah ahn-tu-nah
Ai-yahn-tu-nah
Ho-lon-eh-leh-teh
Lilth-no keh-lah
Kiah-weh kwai-ee-nu-wah-neh

Beautiful, see the cloud, the cloud appear.
Beautiful, see the rain, the rain draw near.
Who spoke?
[It was] the little corn ear,
High on top of the stalk.
Saying while it looked at me,
Talking aloft there.
Ah, perchance the floods
[This way] moving.
Ah, may the floods come this way.

From *The Indians' Book,* by Natalie Curtis.
Dover Publishing, New York, 1907. Used by permission.

The Cheyenne "Rabbit Song" is sung while bouncing babies playfully on laps, like little rabbits. It is also sung for children while they hop around on the ground, making bunny ears with their fingers.

Rabbit Song

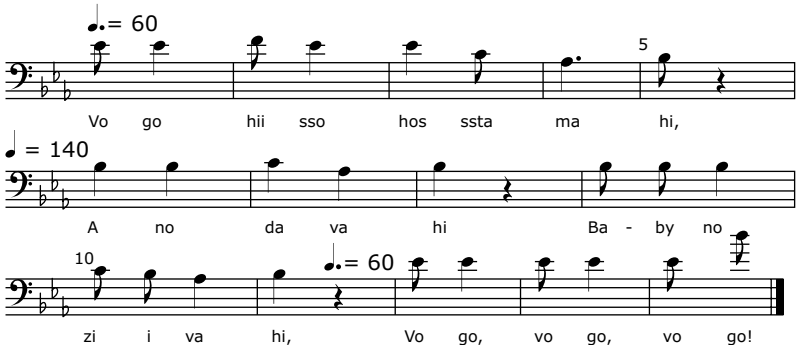
By Rhoda Young Bird Braxton

Vo go hii sso
Hos ssta ma hi
A no da va hi
Baby no zi i va hi
Vo go, vo go, vo go!

Little rabbit, little rabbit,
Threw me out, kicked me!
Little rabbit, little rabbit, little rabbit!

Rhoda Young Bird Braxton. From *Southern Cheyenne Women's Songs,*
by Virginia Giglio. University of Oklahoma Press,
song no. 6, p. 66. Copyright © 1994. Used by permission.

"Rabbit Song"
Rhoda Young Bird Braxton, 1/19/91



Singing Styles

Native American singing styles vary from region to region. Some sing in the middle pitches with relaxed throats and smooth melodies, while other traditions have developed strong, high-pitched voices with pulsing rhythms.

In Plains singing, both the men and the women sing. Traditionally, the women sat behind the drummers and their voices sang above the men's voices. In many songs, the singers begin singing on **high pitches** and then descend down to **low pitches** in the course of a song. Plains singers are also known for adding shouts, or yips and howls, in the middle of a song.

Native singing sometimes imitates things in nature, like animals and birds. In a Hupa "Brush Dance Light Song" the singers make yipping sounds like coyotes. In a Kwakw'ala (Kwakiutl) "Raven Song" the singer calls "gka, gka" like a raven. In an Unangax̂ (Aleut) dance song, the singers imitate the cries of seagulls.

Inuit (Eskimo) throat singing in the Arctic is a style of singing usually performed by two women. The singers stand close together with their faces almost touching, repeating low sounds in a fast, pulsing rhythm. The singing goes back and forth, and can go on for a while or end abruptly when one of the singers laughs or smiles. Throat singing is said to represent the sounds of animals and birds.

One distinct practice among some tribes is the **call-and-response** style of singing. Call-and-response is when a leader sings out a line and a **chorus** answers back. In the eastern traditions, there were men's choruses and women's choruses who sang back and forth to one another.

Call-and-Response Singing. Call-and-response singing is when a leader "calls" and the others "respond." It is also called *antiphonal* singing. *Anti* has to do with "opposite" and *phonal* has to do with sound. Opposing-sound! With call-and-response, the singing goes back and forth. This can mean two groups taking turns back and forth, or a leader singing first and a chorus responding.

Lyrics and Vocables

Traditional Native American songs are sung with both **lyrics** and **vocables.**

Lyrics are the words of a song. Lyrics have meaning and they tell a story or describe a situation, like the story of General Custer's defeat at Little Bighorn in Wilmer Mesteth's song "I Had No Ears," or the woman fighting enemy warriors in "Song for a Woman Who Was Brave in War." Vocables are syllables without recognizable meaning, but they are just as important as the lyrics because the sounds themselves can have power and influence.

Chants may be made up of both lyrics and vocables. They may be long like a poem, or have no recognizable meaning as with vocables. Chants can last for hours or even days. In both the Diné (Navajo) *Night Chant* curing ceremony and the Zuni *Creation Story,* the singers sit for many hours and chant the sacred texts in ceremonials that last many days and nights.

Singing styles vary from region to region and depend not only on the traditions of the group but on outside influences, including the environment, contact with other groups, revelations from the Creator, and personal experiences.

CD track #1. Listen to "Gayowajeenayho—Welcome Song," performed by Michele Stock. This song is sung at social gatherings in the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) tradition in the Eastern Woodlands region. Notice the melodious and smooth singing style.

"Gayowajeenayho—Welcome Song," sung by Michele Stock. Recorded by Milt Lee. Ⓟ 2000 Oyate Productions. Used by permission.

CD track #2. Listen to "I Had No Ears," performed by Wilmer Mesteth, from the Plains region. This is a historical song describing the Lakota people's victory over General Custer's soldiers in 1876. The song begins with vocables, then follows with lyrics in the Lakota language. Listen to how the pattern of vocables-lyrics repeats several times. Also notice the strong, pulsing rhythm and high-pitched to low-pitched singing.

"I Had No Ears," sung by Wilmer Mesteth. Recorded by Milt Lee. Ⓟ 2000 Oyate Productions. Used by permission.

CD track #3. Listen to Sandoval Begay, a Diné (Navajo) from the Southwest region, singing with rattles in "Dance Song of the Night Chant."

Recording: "Dance Song of the Night Chant" (Navajo) by Sandoval Begay from the recording entitled *A Cry from the Earth: Music of the North American Indians,* Folkways 37777, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. © 1979. Used by permission.

CD track #4. Listen to "Haagú S'é" (A Boy's Lullaby), from the Northwest Coast region, performed by Roby Littlefield in the Tlingit language.

"Haagú S'é," from Charles Joseph, Kaal.átk'. Recorded and sung by Roby Littlefield at Dog Fish Camp on the *Tlingit Dléigoox' (Tlingit Lullabies)* CD. Ⓟ 1998 Roby Littlefield. Used by permission.

CD track #5. Listen to "The Spider Song," performed by John Pingayak (Cup'ik), from the Arctic region. This song tells about a singer's experience with a spider.

"The Spider Song," sung by John Pingayak. Recorded by Milt Lee. Ⓟ 2000 Oyate Productions. Used by permission.

CD track #6. Listen to "E Komo," sung and played by Charles Ka'upu, from Hawaii. This is a dance song that pays homage to Pele, the Goddess of Fire, and her creative forces. Its melody is accompanied by an *ipu* (traditional gourd drum).

"E Komo," sung by Charles Ka'upu. Recorded by Milt Lee. Ⓟ 2000 Oyate Productions. Used by permission.

Name _____ Date _____

Traditional Native American Singing Quiz

Instructions: After reading the **Traditional Native American Singing** student handout, answer these questions (use back of the page if necessary).

1. What are **sacred songs?**

2. In what ways did Native Americans traditionally learn songs?

3. What kinds of songs are there in traditional Native American music?

4. What is the difference between **lyrics** and **vocables?**

Traditional Native American Singing Quiz: Answer Key

1. What are **sacred songs?**

   SACRED SONGS ARE SPIRITUAL OR RELIGIOUS SONGS. THEY ARE LIKE PRAYERS. THEY MAY BE REQUESTS FOR GUIDANCE OR CALLS FOR HELP. THEY ARE TREATED WITH RESPECT AND OFTEN KEPT SECRET OR RESERVED FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

2. In what ways did Native Americans traditionally learn songs?

   BY WORD OF MOUTH. THEY WERE PASSED THROUGH THE ORAL TRADITION FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

3. What kinds of songs are there in traditional Native American music?

   SACRED SONGS, SOCIAL SONGS, HERO AND HEROINE SONGS, WARRIOR SONGS, NATURE AND ANIMAL SONGS, LULLABIES, WOMEN'S SONGS.

4. What is the difference between **lyrics** and **vocables?**

   LYRICS ARE WORDS TO SONGS; THEY TELL A STORY OR DESCRIBE A SITUATION. VOCABLES ARE SYLLABLES WITHOUT RECOGNIZABLE MEANING.

Lesson 2. Traditional Native American Instruments

Lesson Overview

Traditional Native American cultures use musical instruments in ceremonies, rituals, games, social events, courting, and for communication. The most common rhythm instruments are drums, rattles, and rasps. Rhythm instruments traditionally played the accompaniment to the singing and dancing. In older times, they were rarely played by themselves and never played in orchestras. Pitched instruments include flutes, whistles, horns, and string bows. Flutes were commonly used by men to call and attract women. Whistles were used for calling long distances, sending warnings, and only occasionally during ceremonies. Horns imitated the calls of animals or scared away enemies. This lesson introduces a variety of traditional Native American instruments, what they are made of, how they make sound, and how they fit into larger families of instruments called membranophones, idiophones, aerophones, and chordophones.

Vocabulary. Rhythm, rhythm instruments, accompaniment, sacred, drums, amplify, resonator, vibration, rattles, shaker rattles, clapper rattles, rasps, pitch, pitched instruments, flute, melody, whistle, horn, vibrating, string bow, fiddle.

Purpose. To introduce instruments played in Native American music; to learn how these instruments fit into larger families of instruments called membranophones, idiophones, aerophones, and chordophones; to expose students to how sound is made with these instruments.

Preparation. Read the student handout **Traditional Native American Instruments** to familiarize yourself with the material. Preview the CD samples and have the CD ready for playing with the students. Be prepared to do some or all of the activities listed here. Also, make sure each student has a music notebook for keeping handouts, activity sheets, opinion pages, and so on.

Materials

- **Traditional Native American Instruments** student handout *(following)*
- **Traditional Rhythm Instruments Quiz** *(following)*
- **Traditional Rhythm Instruments Quiz Answer Key** *(following)*
- **Traditional Pitched Instruments Quiz** *(following)*
- **Traditional Pitched Instruments Quiz Answer Key** *(following)*