



# Sewam American Indian Dance Company

## School Show Study Guide

Luther Burbank Center for the Arts

April 2021

# Sewam American Indian Dance Company

## Teacher's Guide K-6

### About the Artist:

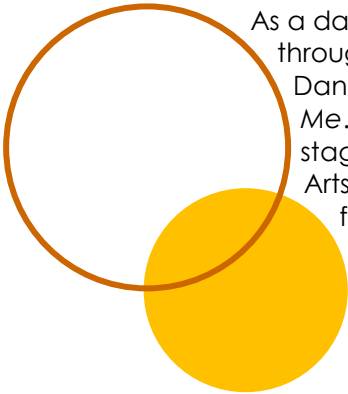
Sewam American Indian Dance Company specializes in the dance and culture of the United States Plains Indian tribes. Members have performed to critical acclaim throughout the western United States, including educational venues, veteran's homes, convalescent homes, and most notably at the 1984 Olympic Games and the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival.

Edwardo Madril is a member of the Pascua Yaqui tribe of Southern Arizona and Northern Sonora Mexico. He is an active member of the Native American community and a representative of his culture as a dancer, singer, teacher, playwright and filmmaker. For over 25 years, his involvement and commitment to native heritage has provided him with the opportunity to share a wealth of information amongst diverse communities.

Madril has included the presentation of residencies in Bay Area schools, working with students and encouraging the development of appreciation and respect for American Indian dance, music, culture, history, art and sign language. He is currently teaching classes in American Indian studies at San Francisco State and was a three-year recipient of the California Arts Council Artist-In-Residence grant.



As a dancer and educator, Madril has performed throughout the western United States, including the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival and World Arts West's arts education program *People Like Me*. As a playwright and filmmaker, his works have been presented on stage in San Francisco at such venues as The Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and The Brava Theater. His short films have been accepted and featured in American Indian Film Festivals in San Francisco, Oklahoma and South Dakota since 2004. He has worked on films with other independent film directors and is currently working on his first full-length feature film as a writer/director.



## About the Program:



Native dancing and music represents a beautiful expression of Native American heritage. It is one of the most meaningful ways in which such heritage is presented to contemporary society, Indian and non-Indian alike. Every song, dance and gesture illustrates a part of Native American heritage as a people with roots in the distant past. Through the singing, dancing, drumming, and colorful regalia, the spiritual and symbolic aspects of humanity are reenacted. Although many of the dances are social, they are also steeped in spiritual significance.

In this program, students will be introduced to some of the most popular and rare Native American dances. Origins and meanings of each dance will be discussed. There will be an opportunity for participation in the exciting Friendship Dance.

## Program Goals:

- To build awareness and appreciation for Native American culture both past and present.
- To leave students with a deep and positive impression of the rich dance traditions of the Native American Plains Indians.
- To encourage students to reflect and take pride in their own culture and traditions.

## Preparation for the Performance/Follow-Up Activities:

- 1) Geography/Social Studies:
  - There are three nearly 500 distinct tribes in the United States. Between these tribes and those of Canada and Northern Mexico, the languages, traditions and dances differ greatly. Look at a map of the United States and identify which tribes live or lived in which states. There are probably some students with Native American ancestry. Do they know which tribes or where they lived?
- 2) Life Skills:
  - Lead students in a discussion about stereotypes. Today, Native Americans live like everybody else does in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some customs have become associated with all Native American tribes. For instance, although the Plains Dances have been popularized through Powwows, not every Native American tribe held the custom of Pow wows. (The term "Powwow" probably derives from the Algonquian word "Pauau", meaning, "a gathering of people".) Here are some myths to dispel: Indians do not tap their mouths and make a "whooping" sound. Not all Indians lived in tipi's. Indians don't say "How".

- 3) Social Studies/Environmental studies:
- The environment plays a significant role in the development of a culture. It determines available food sources, affects clothing, shelter and belief systems. Research some of the Plains Indians tribes (look at the resource list) and differentiate between the customs and lifestyles of different tribes. What effect might geography or environmental factors have had on the customs of those tribes. How would people live in the snow of the Northwest coast verses the desert of the Southwest? The mountains and lakes of the West verses the marsh and grasslands of the Southeast? How would they build their homes? What would they eat? What celebrations do you think they would have and why?
- 4) Music/Dance
- Make up a dance or a song that reflects your environment such as your classroom, your city or your hobbies.

*REMINDE students that they will be an audience at a live performance.*

*LEAD students into discussion of their job as audience members, i.e. listening, responding, using their "mind's eye".*

## **Vocabulary:**

<b>Sewam:</b>	Pronounced "say-wahm"; means flower.
<b>Bustle:</b>	A cluster of feathers that are attached to a person's back
<b>Drum:</b>	An instrument used by many Natives, representing the heartbeat
<b>Grand entry:</b>	A procession of all dancers in a Powwow into the arena or arbor.
<b>Regalia:</b>	Personal attire worn by a dancer. Not a costume.
<b>Roach:</b>	Porcupine hair headgear worn by male dancers

## Modified from a curriculum guide by Young Audiences of Northern California for Four Winds American Indian Dance Group.

### Bibliography:

*Drumbeat...Heartbeat*, Susan Braine, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. Editions  
*Native North America*, Larry J. Zimmerman, Little, Brown  
*Native American History*, Judith Nies, Ballantine  
*Exiled in the Land of the Free*, Oren Lyons (and others), Clear Light Publications

### Publications:

Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions, Charlotte Heath, ed., (National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution & Starwood Publishing, Inc., Washington D.C.), 1992. Call 1.800.992.2908.

Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children, Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, (Fulcrum, Inc., Golden, Colorado), 1988.

The Other Side of the "Christian Curtain": California Indians and the Missionaries, Edward D. Castillo, *The Californians*, September/October, 1992.

Drumbeat...Heartbeat: A Celebration of the Powwow, Susan Braine, (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co.), 1995.

Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations and the US Constitution, Oren Lyons, et.al, (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers), 1992.

### Bay Area Resources:

San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival  
World Arts West  
Fort Mason Center, Landmark Building D  
San Francisco, CA 94123-1382  
415-474-3914  
[www.worldartswest.org](http://www.worldartswest.org)

American Indian Contemporary Arts  
23 Grand Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415/989.7003  
[www.cominguptaller.org/profile/pr04multi.htm](http://www.cominguptaller.org/profile/pr04multi.htm)

Intertribal Friendship House  
523 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Oakland, CA 94606  
510/452.1235  
<http://bapd.org/ginise-2.html>

International Indian Treaty Council  
Information Office  
2390 Mission St. Ste 301

American Indian Educ. Projects  
1950 Mission Street, #12  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
415/241.6229 & 415/241.6230

Oakland Unified Schools  
Office of Indian Education  
Harper Building  
314 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 5  
Oakland, CA 94606

South & Meso-American Indian Info. Center  
P.O. Box 7829  
Oakland, CA 94601  
510/534.4882 - Administration Office  
510/834.4263 - Abya Yala News  
<http://saiic.nativeweb.org/>

Marin Museum of the American Indian  
2200 Novato Blvd.  
Novato, CA 94947  
415/897.4064

Old Union Clubhouse, Rm #12  
524 Lasuen Mall  
Stanford, CA 94305-3064  
650/725-6944

American Indian, Alaska Native & Native  
Hawaiian Program at Stanford University  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
415/641.4482  
[www.treatycouncil.org/](http://www.treatycouncil.org/)