

VERMONT ABENAKI ARTISTS ON-THE-BUS GUIDE

A REMINDER FOR STUDENTS ABOUT THEATER ETIQUETTE

- LISTEN, EXPERIENCE, IMAGINE, DISCOVER, LEARN!
- GIVE YOUR ENERGY AND ATTENTION TO THE PERFORMERS.
- PLEASE DO NOT EAT OR DRINK IN THE THEATER.
- TALK ONLY BEFORE AND AFTER THE PERFORMANCE.
- TURN OFF WIRELESS DEVICES.
- NO PHOTOS, VIDEOS, TEXTING, OR LISTENING TO MUSIC.

*These are guidelines... We understand that some students may need to experience the performance in their own way, and we are here to support all students and their unique needs.

"The special skills necessary for being a storyteller are really very simple. Those basic skills are to listen, to observe, to remember, and to share."
-Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki author)

REFLECTING AND RELATING

As you're watching the show, think about this quote. How do the artists incorporate listening, observing, remembering, and sharing into their performances? Why do you think these for actions are important in honoring culture? How can we integrate listening, observing, remembering and sharing into our daily lives? What impact might this have on our communities?

CONCEPTS OF CULTURE AND TRADITION

Different cultures have different traditions of food, clothing, language, and arts. The arts of each culture are often offered as ways to celebrate and share our different cultures.

Activity: Give students a chance to reflect on the idea of culture and tradition through a series of quick writing exercises. For each of the following prompts give students five minutes to respond in writing.

- What are some of the cultural traditions you celebrate?
- What other cultural celebrations or traditions are you familiar with?
- What can you learn about people by experiencing the art that they create?
- How do these art forms help people express their emotions and/or tell their stories?

HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN EXPECT TO SEE:

First, **Chief Roger Longtoe Sheehan** will welcome everyone to this artistic experience through sharing a traditional calling in song and a traditional greeting song. He will provide context for how these songs are used in Abenaki cultural traditions.

Second, **Bryan Blanchette** will share contemporary Abenaki music, as he says, breathing life into the culture through language, which will include a participatory element for the audience.

Closing the show will be **The Laughing Couple**, who tell traditional Abenaki folktales while drawing/creating an intricate mural that also tells the story. The mural process will be projected for all to see!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pre-performance discussion questions

- What stories do you like to listen to or read? Where do you think these stories come from? Are they completely new or do they have origins from a specific culture?
- Why is it important to understand other cultures? How does your background make you different from other people? How does it make you similar?

Things to look for

- What did you discover about the Abenaki culture that you did not know previously?
- Which methods were used to *transport* and invite you to experience traditions of the Abenaki culture?
- How did the dance, music, and drumming sound similar or different to what you have heard before?

Post-performance discussion questions

- What did you enjoy most about this performance? Why do you think this aspect resonated most with you?
- Why do you think it is important to the Abenaki people to share their traditions with people who are not Abenaki?
- What did you learn about the traditional music and dance of the Abenaki people?
- What did the stories tell you about the Abenaki people?