

VERMONT ABENAKI

ARTISTS

PARENT/CAREGIVER GUIDE

NOV. 15, 2017

Use this guide to jump-start a conversation with your child about the performance they saw recently – not only will you get to learn about what your child experienced, but it will also help them to process and reflect upon the onstage material.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was the performance about? (Was it based on a book? Did it connect to history? To science?)
- What did the performance make you think about? (Did it spark any new thoughts or give you any new understanding?)
- How did you connect ideas in the performance to ideas or realities in your own life? In your school work? In the rest of the world?
- Can you remember something about the performance that you particularly liked or disliked? If so, what was it and why did it stand out to you?
- Did you have a favorite moment in the performance? Tell me about it.
- What stories do you like to listen to or read? How do you think it will be different to see a story told by one person? How might it be like a movie? How might it be different?
- Why is it important to understand other cultures? How does your background make you different from other people? How does it make you similar?
- What did you discover about the Abenaki culture that you did not know previously?
- How did the dance, music, and drumming sound similar or different to what you have heard before?

HERE ARE SOME ELEMENTS OF THE SHOW

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!



"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?