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Hey there! Welcome to episode 33 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I am delighted to have you here with me today.

The month of November is Native American Heritage Month. One of my very favorite episodes I've recorded so far on the podcast is an episode I did last year during the month of November -- it's episode number 6 -- on musical instruments from Native American music. I consulted with my friend and former neighbor when I lived in Montana, Dr. Shane Doyle who is a member of the Crow Tribe. Dr. Doyle taught me so many things about Native music and opened my eyes and ears to some Native musicians who I had not been familiar with and whose music I have come to love. So before we go on with today's episode of Busy Kids Love Music, I wanted to just give a bit of a plug to that episode and encourage you to check it out, if you haven't already. It's at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/6 and I'll link to it in the show notes as well.

So as I mentioned earlier, November is Native American Heritage Month, and in today's episode we are going to explore the music of Native American Pow-wows. A powwow is technically any gathering of Native people, but among Native tribes it is a cultural event that brings together diverse indigenous nations to sing, dance, honor traditions of their ancestors and pass along these traditions from one generation to the next.

Powwows specific to individual tribes have existed long before European settlers came to the United States, but today we are going to focus on the music of modern day powwows, which are an intertribal and inclusive event, meaning that they are open to anyone who wishes to attend.

Powwow music is an important and celebrated element of the 21st century powwow. Individual singers gather in a circle around a large drum. And provide the music to which dancers move in cultural celebration of their heritage. Aspects of the music are different, based on the location of the powwow. In the “Northern Style” of powwow, which takes place in the northern United States and Canada, music and dance styles include those from the Lakota, Dakota and the northern Plains peoples such as the Blackfoot and Ojibwa.

In Northern Style singing, the pitch will be higher, and songs have accented drum beats called “honor beats” that occur within the song. They are stronger, louder and slower. Dancers acknowledge the beats in different ways, but often they indicate their appreciation for the Creator’s blessing by lifting a feather fan or raising a staff to the sky.

In the Southern tradition of singing, which includes the Southern Plain tribes, the pitch of the singers is lower. Drumming is done by male tribal members in the southern tradition, who play the drum while singing. Women stand in a circle around the men and join in the singing. Three accented drum beats introduce each verse.

In both traditions, the powwow songs have very similar structure. There is a constant, steady drumbeat and key phrases that are either words or syllables that echo the beat of the drum are repeated throughout. Powwows begin with a Grand Entry -- a procession of dancers that bring together the tribes. They enter the dance circle by age and style of regalia, which are the elaborate and beautiful outfits worn by the Native dancers. As the dancers enter, a Master of Ceremonies -- who is sort of like the emcee of the powwow -- explains traditions, guides dancers and helps viewers understand the program that is taking place. After the Grand Entry, a

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presentation of flags takes place and a Flag Song plays, honoring traditional, native, state and American flags. Many tribes even have their own flag songs that focus on veterans -- they're sort of like a "national anthem" for each tribe.

Be sure to check out this episode's curated playlist on Youtube, which I link to in the show notes, because the powwow music and singing that you've heard during this episode has such incredible visual elements as well that you'll be able to see when you watch the videos from this playlist. You'll find that link in the show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/33.

I've so enjoyed sharing a few elements of Native American powwow music in today's episode, and I hope that you'll join me again for more musical discoveries in two weeks on the next episode of Busy Kids Love Music. Bye for now!