

# CHORAL MUSIC BRENT MICHAEL DAVIDS



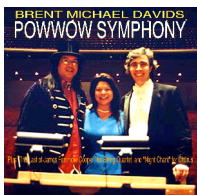
**BRENT MICHAEL DAVIDS**, a Stockbridge Mohican, is a strikingly accomplished composer with dozens of awards and commissions from notable organizations such as ASCAP, NEA, Rockefeller Foundation, Sundance Institute, Bush Foundation, McKnight Foundation, National Symphony Orchestra, Kronos Quartet, Miro Quartet, Chanticleer, and Dale Warland Singers. Davids' film scores include "The World of American Indian Dance" for NBC, The Hallmark miniseries "Dreamkeeper" for ABC, Sherman Alexie's "The Business of Fancy Dancing," and an orchestral re-scoring of the 1920 b/w silent film "The Last of the Mohicans." Brent is the former Artistic Advisor for the FIRST NATIONS COMPOSER INITIATIVE of the American Composer Forum, and coordinates the Composer Apprentice National Outreach Endeavor (CANOE) that teaches written composition to American Indians. Unless otherwise noted, all music listed below is published by Brent Michael Davids and Blue Butterfly Group. Address: 1043 Grand Avenue-Suite 280, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Tel: (651) 778-9611. Web: [www.BrentMichaelDavids.com](http://www.BrentMichaelDavids.com)

## CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

### BRENT MICHAEL DAVIDS WE THE PEOPLE



Copyright ©2004, Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ■ Duration in Minutes: 30:00 ■ Performers: Full SSAATTBB Choir, Full Orchestra (triple winds) and American Indian Wood Flute. ■ **BRENT MICHAEL DAVIDS' WE THE PEOPLE** was composed and orchestrated for large chorus and full orchestra for the opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The complete lyric for **BMD'S WE THE PEOPLE** combines all of the tribal names in the continental United States including Alaska, and a tribute to the Indigenous languages of the Washington DC region. Just as the NMAI pays tribute to all Indians across America while physically resting in Washington DC, **BMD'S WE THE PEOPLE** honors the many tribal names across America while lyrically resting in the Washington DC languages, including Patawomek. The Indigenous People of the North American continent name themselves in their own self-determined ways: We Sun People, We Earth People, We Wind People, We Water People, We Desert People, We Mountain People, We Fire People, We Bird People, We Animal People. **BMD'S WE THE PEOPLE** is a choral accolade that recognizes and celebrates the over 500 unique and vital First Nation Peoples by proclaiming their tribal names for the length of twenty minutes. The hallmark of **BMD'S WE THE PEOPLE** is a complete singing of these names listed one after another without repeats. **BRENT MICHAEL DAVIDS' WE THE PEOPLE** affirms that America could never exist, culturally nor materially, without the Indigenous People of Turtle Island. American Indians have parented the United States into the most affluent country in the world, both in terms of democracy and resources. Benjamin Franklin borrowed the principles of democracy directly from the Iroquois Confederacy (an Iroquois union of individual nation states), as the primary model for the United States government. The wording of the US Constitution itself, "We the People of the United States," derives from the Indian tradition of self-naming, where an Indian might simply say "We United People." Additionally, by usurping the majority of Indian lands with abundant minerals, water, trees and animals, the United States has grown into a resource rich superpower. It is ironic the United States traditionally sees itself as the parent of democracy, forcing tribes to seek federal recognition and adopt "civilized" governments, when it is the American Indians that first taught democracy to the US founders. In a literal way, the great United States story is built on the backs of the Turtle Islanders; culturally and materially, American Indians are the parents, living thousands of years before the child was born. Subsequently, all immigrants to America are inescapable participants in the great Turtle Island story as well. **BMD'S WE THE PEOPLE** honors both the United People of America and the Indigenous People of America, and the pivotal place where their stories converge, The National Museum of the American Indian.



### POWWOW SYMPHONY

Copyright ©1999 Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ■ Duration in Minutes: 40:00 ■ Performers: Full Orchestra (double winds), Full SATB Chorus, Quartz Crystal Flute, Powwow M.C. & Dancers. ■ **POWWOW SYMPHONY** portrays the typical events of a powwow day in 15 movements: 1. Welcome, 2. Sunset (Adagio), 3. Gourd Dance, 4. Grand Entry, 5. Flag Song (Fanfare), 6. Veteran Song (Memorial), 7. Interlude One, 8. Intertribal (Dance), 9. Tiny Tots Dance, 10. Interlude Two, 11. Song Cycle, 12. Final Contest Song (Dance), 13. Honor Song, 14. Prayer Song, 15. Grand Exit. Just as one hears the Master of Ceremonies at a powwow, his voice is heard throughout **POWWOW SYMPHONY** as well -- to direct, explain, announce and entertain. In this case, the M.C. helps direct the symphonic powwow event along with the conductor. Yet there is another aspect of Davids' music that makes **POWWOW** unequalled. Although there is a current trend among modern Non-Indian composers to borrow Native American themes for use in their music, the success rate has been albeit splotchy. Despite a long history of symphonic composers looking for Indigenous inspiration, including

Dvorak and others as far back as Rameau, success in creating true-to-life Indigenous music has been limited to a few composers such as the established Quapaw/Cherokee composer, Dr. Louis Ballard. What sets Davids' work apart is his intense familiarity with Native American traditions, and his expertise as a trained experimental composer. What a Native American composer knows of indigenous life is more exacting than what a non-Indian composer can only imagine -- and it shows. Written as only a Mohican composer could write it, **POWWOW** is a powerful and enriching mix of both the orchestral tradition and Native American life. Davids hopes **POWWOW SYMPHONY** will introduce orchestral music to Native American audiences in a familiar way, and bring an understanding of the powwow to audiences already familiar with the orchestral repertoire. **POWWOW SYMPHONY** was commissioned in part by the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra with the gracious assistance of Ralph Berkowitz, and supported in part by the Djerassi Resident Artist Program, the Rockefeller Foundation, and others.

## FULL CHORUS

### UN-COVERED WAGON

Copyright ©2002, Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ▣ Duration in Minutes: 9:00 ▣ Performers: SSAATTBB Choir, 2 Nose Flutes. ▣ **UN-COVERED WAGON** is sung entirely in Mohican with American Indian "vocables" and tells of the existential reciprocity Indians have with the earth: "You Earth make us, We People make you, We all live here, Always, Ever." One of the first epic Western films "The Covered Wagon" (Paramount, 1923), based on Emerson Hough's novel, portrays the pioneers crossing what they saw as an open territory free-for-the-taking. But obviously, there were other people already living in this so-called "untamed wilderness" -- The Indians. I am struck by how one-sided this American expansion is continually portrayed, not only for the old B/W era, but in today's America too. America creates and sustains an unenlightened legacy of trampling across the continent for its own uses. Sanctioned by all sorts of religious dispensations where a glorious "end of time" reigns carefree and supreme, like protective salvation, this ratified conquering is highly prevalent even today. I wrote the "Un-Covered Wagon" in order to uncover an alternate view -- that America was never empty nor free for the taking at all. The American continent has always been filled with others, people, stories and history, and has been known as intimately as a familiar footpath shared daily by humans and animals alike -- long before America existed. To reveal this musically, I superimposed a racist hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers," one half-step apart in tuning from an Indian background to create a new way of hearing that hymn; the effect of this difficult passage is spooky and surreal. The end of the work calls for three different Indian singing styles to be superimposed upon each other. **UN-COVERED WAGON**, as music and message, urges us to reconsider the seasoned and intelligent tradition of keeping good familial relationships with the earth -- that may in fact suit us better -- and to finally strip that outdated chuck wagon called progress. Life is for sharing, not controlling. Recording available at: <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/B00006K11A/103-1202640-7719055?v=glance>



### SHE IS ONE OF US



Music Copyright ©2000, Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ▣ Text Copyright ©2000, Joy Harjo ▣ Duration in Minutes: 15:00 ▣ Performers: Full SSAATTBB Choir, Quartz Crystal Flute, Hand Drum. ▣ **SHE IS ONE OF US** features the words of Muskogee (Creek) poet Joy Harjo. Joy Harjo, who authored "A Map to the Next World: Poems," and "The Woman Who Fell From the Sky," has received many honors including The American Indian Distinguished Achievement in the Arts Award and the Josephine Miles Poetry Award. **SHE IS ONE OF US** was composed in 3 movements to a poem written by Joy Harjo specifically for this work, "In Praise of Earth," celebrating the Earth and her resiliency despite human negligence. ▣ Sometimes sparse, sometimes rich, sometimes harsh, sometimes gorgeous, **SHE IS ONE OF US** uses many vocal techniques including whisper singing, speaking, and specific Native American vocal sounds. ▣ The ending spirals into a building chant as satisfying as any Arvo Part song, culminating to a wonderful climax. ▣ The work was commissioned and premiered by the Racine Symphonic Chorus in Wisconsin, and later premiered in Minnesota by the Dale Warland Singers.

### MOHICAN SOUP

Copyright: ©1997, Brent Michael Davids. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ▣ Duration in Minutes: 9:00 ▣ Performers: SSAATTBB Choir & Two Skin Drums (Tom Substitutes). ▣ An interesting mix of American Indian and Western European vocal techniques, **MOHICAN SOUP** stirs two languages together into a musical stew: Mohican and American Indian vocables. Foods are important to all Native American gatherings and ceremonies, and the text of **MOHICAN SOUP** is made up of food names such as bread, berries, fruit, corn, beans and, of course, soup. Along with the delicious celebration of Mohican foods, Native American vocables soup-up the work as well, from a beginning simmer to a bubbling broth. Vocables are a type of text used by indigenous people to communicate emotion in intertribal songs. With hand drums and a score created by a Mohican composer, **MOHICAN SOUP** is a powerful and enriching mix of both the choir tradition and Native American life.





## NIGHT CHANT

Copyright: ©1997, Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ▣ Duration in Minutes: 9:00 ▣ Performers: SSAATTBB Choir, 2 Nose Flutes. ▣ **NIGHT CHANT** is both a love song and a night time song reminiscent of the night chants of some Native American ceremonies. The lyrics of **NIGHT CHANT** are both Mohican words and Native American "vocables." Native American vocables form an intertribal way of communicating feelings in songs. **NIGHT CHANT** is written for an operatic sound quality as well as a more nasal sound quality produced by indigenous singers. In one section of the work, nose flutes accompany the voices for an interesting melodic effect similar to the high falsetto vocal quality of some traditional night chants. **NIGHT CHANT** was made possible by a grant by Meet The Composer/Reader's Digest Commissioning Program in partnership with The National Endowment for the Arts and Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund through a consortium of Chanticleer, Dale Warland Singers, Phoenix Bach Choir.

## OF THIS TURTLE ISLE

Music Copyright ©2001, Brent Michael Davids ▣ Text Copyright ©2001, Marcie R. Rendon ▣ Duration in Minutes: 8:00 ▣ Performers: Full SSAATTBB Choir, Quartz Crystal Flute (Orchestral Flute Substitute), American Indian Wood Flute (Recorder Substitute), Narrator. ▣ **OF THIS TURTLE ISLE** features the words of Anishanabe poet Marcie R. Rendon. Rendon is a mother, grandmother, writer and sometimes performance artist. She's received a St. Paul Company's LIN Award, a Loft's Inroads Award and a Jerome Fellowship. Her first children's book, 'Pow Wow Summer' is published by Carol Rhoda, Inc. About **OF THIS TURTLE ISLE** Rendon explains, "When writing, I thought about the Phillips neighborhood [in Minneapolis] and how it seems to be the gathering place for newly landed immigrants, how this land is historically native land, and how my ancestors (indigenous people) welcomed new peoples to this continent until such time as we were brutalized. I thought about how Columbus described the Indigenous people he first saw as 'children of God,' which may be where the real term "Indians" came from, in dios. I thought about how we still welcome people to this continent, no matter how impoverished we are and how most groups, including those who have been here for generations, don't seem to realize that we still exist. Yet the spirits of our ancestors hold out that it is the Indigenous people of the world who will lead the rest of humanity to a more human reality. Our children, no matter how confused it gets in the material world, are still spoken to by spirit, often through our elders. This 'continental' community can only survive by adhering to, listening to, the voices of the ancestors and being at one with Turtle Island."

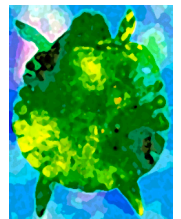


## NATIVE AMERICAN SUITE

Copyright: ©1995, Brent Michael Davids. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ▣ Duration in Minutes: 9:00 ▣ Performers: SATB Choir, Quartz Crystal Flute (Orchestral Flute Substitute), Shakers, Bird Roars & Powwow Drum (Orchestral Tom Substitute). ▣ **NATIVE AMERICAN SUITE** is a percussive suite of three traditional Native American songs including a Lenape song (Delaware), an Apache song ("49" song), and Zuni Sunrise song (Pueblo). Lenape Song is festive, sung by many people together. As the group performs they bring themselves back into the community and the whole tribe into wellness. The 49 song "I Still Love You Yet" is used after powwows when the younger singers are not quite ready to quit. Usually well after midnight, the participants gather in a nearby spot and sing these 49 songs -- a mixture of English lyrics and Native American vocables which form an intertribal way of communicating feelings. This particular piece is one Chesley Wilson (traditional singer, flute player and Apache Violin maker) used to tease his wife who was married to another once before. The final Zuni Sunrise Song celebrates the new day as it calls morning into existence. Commissioned by the Dale Warland Singers, this Suite is an interesting blend of Native American melodies, lyrics and rhythms, as well as some interesting jazz harmonies combined with chorus vocal effects. Score and Parts available at: <http://www.earthsongsmus.com/>

## WAMPE

Copyright: ©1993, Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ▣ Duration in Minutes: 6:40 ▣ Performers: Full SATB Choir & 4 Instrumentalists (Quartz Crystal Flute or Orchestral Flute Substitute, Shaker, Orchestra Bells, Crotales, Skin Drum, 4 Timpani, Cello). ▣ "Wampe" means "good-water" in Mohican and similarly **WAMPE** affirms the life-giving respect that all indigenous peoples and Mohicans in particular give to the water. The text of **WAMPE** consists entirely of the word "wampe" and Native American "vocables," while the musical phrases immerse themselves in imagery of the Mohican creation story. As the story flows, the earth was once water below and the sky was water above. A woman from above decided to come below through a whole in the sky. She flew down to the water, tested the stability of the water with her foot and became impregnated as a result. A turtle under the water looked up at the visitor and saw she had no place to stand. So, the turtle floated on the surface and offered her its back. Grateful, the woman gave the turtle the gift of growth and stood on the turtle. The turtle was thankful and grew larger and larger until it became the land. The woman gave birth to the trees that covered the land and the water people rose up onto the land to become the Mohicans or "People



 of the Ever-Moving Waters."

## MIXED CHORUS



### SPRING WIND DANCES AT THE RIVER: MINNESOTA, SAINT CROIX, MISSISSIPPI

Music Copyright ©2004, Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ■ Text Copyright ©2004, Marcie R. Rendon. ■ Duration in Minutes: 40:00 ■ Performers: 3 Choirs (S, SA, SATB in a very flexible arrangement), Powwow Drum, Various Rhythm Instruments. ■

Written especially for a ceremony held on the banks of the Mississippi River, **SPRING WIND DANCES** is a choral approximation of the convergence of three rivers: the Minnesota, the Saint Croix and the Mississippi. In this way, three separate choir works, named respectively, are performed separately and then sequentially combined, to evoke the mingling of the three rivers. Each work functions as a completely separate composition, specifically depicting its so-titled river. Marcie R. Rendon wrote the lyrics for each, rendering both the character and history of each particular river. Quoted within the new work, is one of the first known compositions by an American Indian composer known to exist, a hymn composed in both music and lyrics by Joseph Renville, a Dakota Indian. Additionally, each river is designed for different age-level choirs, from younger to older: **MINNESOTA** (S), **SAINT CROIX** (SA), **MISSISSIPPI** (SATB). Commissioned to commemorate the Mingling of Waters Ceremony of the Grand Excursion and presented by Xcel Energy, it premiered on Sunday, July 4, 2004 at St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis.



## YOUTH CHORUS

### STORY OF CROW



Copyright: ©1997, Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ■ Duration in Minutes: 10:00 ■ Performers: Boys Choir (Trebles I, II, III) with Story Teller, Quartz Crystal Flute (Orchestral Flute Substitute), Shaker, Tambourine, & Skin Drum. ■ Intended to be an enjoyable work for all ages, **STORY OF CROW** tells the tale of Crow whose life dramatically changed because of his vain and boasting character. The lyrics and narrative are by Joy Harjo. Joy Harjo, who authored "A Map to the Next World: Poems," and "The Woman Who Fell From the Sky," has received many honors including The American Indian Distinguished Achievement in the Arts Award and the Josephine Miles Poetry Award. The music combines elements of western music with Native American melodies and vocables. The vocables are syllables used to communicate feelings in traditional Native American songs. Along with triadic and chordal harmonies of western music, **STORY OF CROW** uses the rhythm, rattles, drum and flute of Native America as well. In addition to four vocalized background patterns sung under the narration, **CROW** includes 6 songs: Introduction Song, Happy Vain Crow, Gaming Song, Crow Magic Song, Soot Song and Human Lesson Song. The composer gratefully acknowledges the Phoenix Boys Choir for commissioning the work and Joy Harjo for her wonderful story and lyrics.



### MOHICAN FRIENDS

Copyright: ©1993, Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ■ Duration in Minutes: 3:00 ■ Performers: Youth Choir (SA) & Instruments (Two Soprano Flutes, Triangle, Shaker, Tambourine, Powwow Drum). ■ **MOHICAN FRIENDS** teaches introductory vocal sounds, words and phrases in the Mohican language while challenging young vocalists with good contemporary composition. This work reveals something of what a traditional Mohican thinks about, namely the importance of good familial relationships, of respecting others including our animal and bird relatives, and of finding goodhearted

ways to share our lives with the world. Our earth, birds, animals and humans are intimately related. We are all family members in this world. The intent of **MOHICAN FRIENDS** is to acknowledge that everyone, our animals and our earth, deserve to be understood on their own terms, respected and treated as cherished relatives. This music celebrates our relatedness and is dedicated to the Stockbridge Band of the Mohican Nation.

### HEARTBEAT SONG

Copyright: ©1990, Brent Michael Davids. All Rights Reserved. ■ Duration in Minutes: 6:00 ■ Performers: Children's Choir (S) & Piano. ■ **HEARTBEAT SONG** is designed to be easily sung by children and teaches about the importance of good familial relationships, and about respecting others and ourselves. A good Mohican respects our animal and bird relatives too, and searches out responsible and goodhearted ways to share our lives with the world. While the **HEARTBEAT SONG** is a fun and cheerful children's song, it is also a song of strength and empowerment. **HEARTBEAT SONG** was originally composed as the theme for a alcohol & drug abuse prevention video produced by Indian Rehabilitation, Inc. in Phoenix, Arizona.

