

Kung Jaadee — Haida storyteller , singer, drummer



About the Artist



I did not choose to become a storyteller; storytelling chose me. I was once a shy, awkward, quiet person. I felt ashamed (because of racism I experienced while attending a Canadian Armed Forces School) to be a Haida Indigenous person. Storytelling changed all that. I started telling stories because my eldest son; he was 5 years old. I could see he would grow up ashamed because I was ashamed. I forced myself to tell my first story for his Kindergarten classroom. I told the story of my button robe. This moment changed my life. I saw the pride in my son's face, I noticed his joy.; I wanted him to always be proud of who he is. The other teachers invited me into their classrooms. Many encouraged me to visit other schools and before I knew it I was invited across the country. I will always tell stories; I will always be proud of who I am.

About the Performance

- I will be performing traditional Haida stories as well as sharing a personal story about how I became a storyteller. I alternate with a traditional song, I accompany myself with my hand drum. If time permits, I will teach a song and a dance. As I perform, I teach my language, and encourage audience participation. My presentation will be 55 minutes in length, leaving a bit of time for questions.
- If students are feeling wiggly, I get everyone to stand (while using my language, providing translation).
- If I'm performing in a large space, like the gym, I will need a microphone. I always need a chair, to rest my drum and my regalia on. I stand for my presentation.
- I wear my button robe, my dancing apron, my ravenstail headband, my vest while I perform.
- Link to my web site: <http://www.sharkhouse.ca> (I apologize, it is outdated)

About Storytelling

- We all tell stories, whether it be sharing with our friends and family how our day went, or an interesting dream we've had, or about our weekend adventures. Everyone comes from a cultural background of telling stories. When our world was new, we didn't have television, radios, computers. We had each other, and we visited with one another, telling stories. There was a time when all humans had oral traditions only, languages weren't always written, and there was a time when the poor could not read. They could tell stories and they did. Stories teach lessons, teach history-whether it be family history, or history of the community. Songs would be sung throughout the stories. These stories connected us to one another when living was more challenging. We have been telling stories since when we learned to use language.
- I perform traditional Raven trickster stories, of how Raven created our world out of darkness. I drum and sing traditional songs after each story. I might share a personal story of how I became a storyteller. If I have older students, I share some historical stories.
- The main idea I like to share is teaching about love, and loving oneself. I also like to share though all of us humans are quite different; there are some things that connect us, whether it is food, language, a story, a dance. We will not be completely the same, however, some small thing will make us see one another as potential friends.
- If I am asked, I also share about our clan system and how our clans are passed onto the next generation.

Links to Curriculum

- Students will learn the reason for oral storytelling, song and dance.
- Students will learn the importance of the Trickster in society.
- Students will learn of First Nations values through traditional legends.
- Students will learn about the history of the Haida Nation.

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

- Can you list three things you know about Haida people?
- What is a Trickster? What is a Creator?
- Can you recall a time when someone told you a story? What do you remember from this experience?
- Do you remember telling stories? To your family? To your friends? What stories did you share with them?

Post-Performance Activities



- Link to First Nations storytelling: <http://firstnationspedagogy.ca/storytelling.html>
- There are short videos regarding First Nations storytelling on this web site. They demonstrate different aboriginal groups telling stories. Some of these might provide examples of how other First Nations share their stories.
- Watching videos as a class, and then providing a discussion regarding what was shared, with questions: Who were the main characters in the story? What do you remember about what happened in Kung Jaadee's story?
- Get students to sit in a circle. Ask if they know where their name(s) came from, were they named after a grandfather, a grandmother? Do they know what their name means? Have them do some research (asking their parents/guardians) if they know about their name. Students can practice in small groups how to tell this story, and when ready, they will share this information with the class.
- For younger students, ask them to draw a picture about what they remember from the storytelling session, or from one of the videos on this link. Ask them what stands out the most for them in the story?
- Link to First Nations resources, children's books, including Kung Jaadee's book, Raven's Feast: www.medicinewheel.education

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- What will you do to help keep storytelling alive? Will you practice telling stories, too? Will you ask your grandparents to tell you stories about how things were when they were younger?
- Can you retell your grandparent's story? If you don't have a grandparent, do you have an uncle, or an aunt who can tell you a story from when they were younger?
- For older students: What do you know of Haida history? What do you know of the first contact with Europeans? What do you know about potlatches? What do you know about the crests used on Haida totem poles?

Learn more about this artist online at artstarts.com/aotd