

Dancers of Damelahamid Description:

The Dancers of Damelahamid are an inter-generational, First Nations dance company. Their performance, *In Abundance*, shares story, song and dance distinct to their Gitksan ancestry. The Gitksan are part of the Northwest Coastal group of cultures that have the distinctive button blanket regalia. Gitksan means 'people of the river of mists'. According



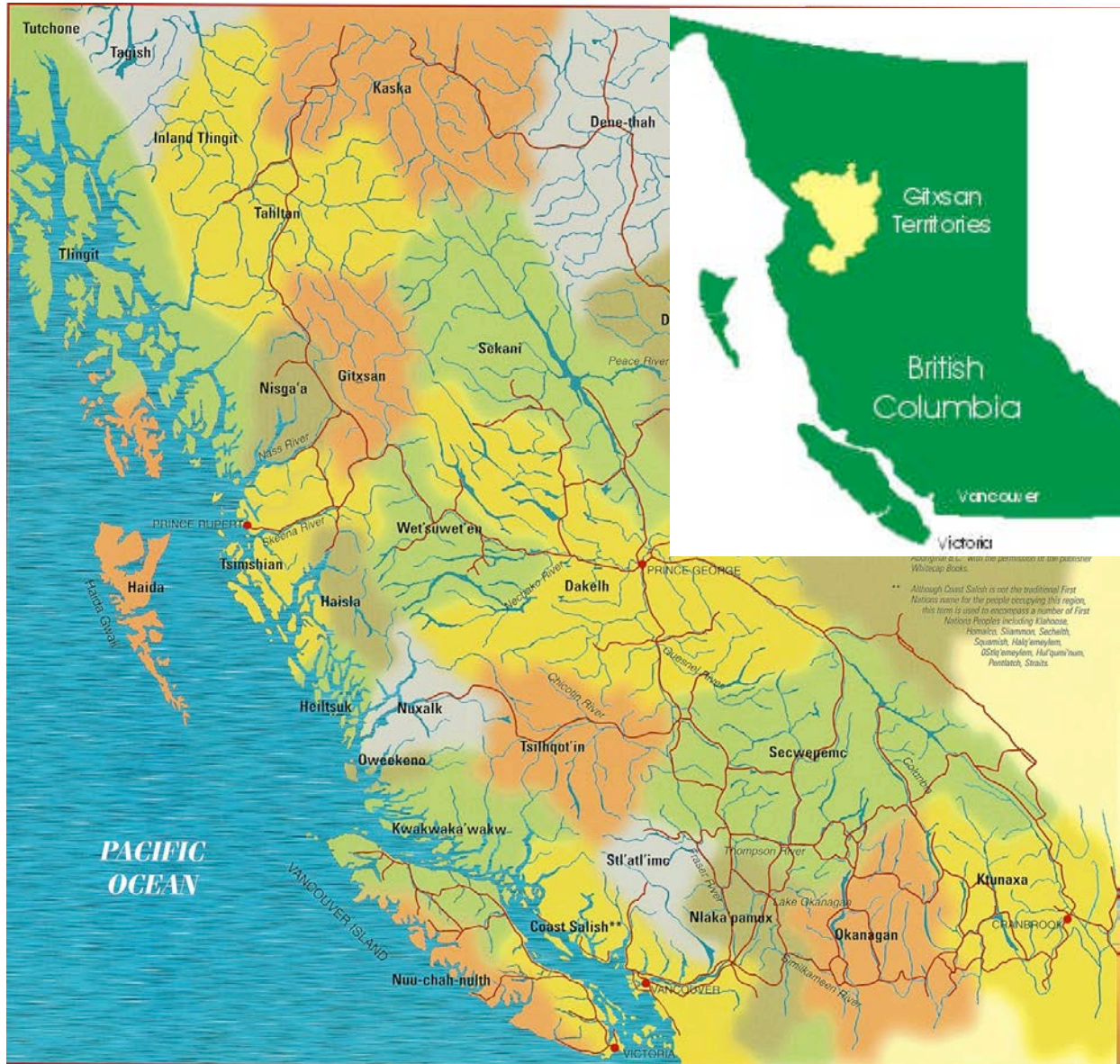
to Gitksan history, Damelahamid is the original city of their first ancestors. Their dance company is named after this city.

The company's mandate is to advance the public's knowledge and appreciation of the art, history, language, and traditions of First Nations' culture through story, dance and song. Students of all ages will gain insight into the continuing traditions of Indigenous people of Canada. The company has performed for audiences across Canada, as well as performed internationally in New Zealand, Australia, China, Germany, Ecuador and Peru.

The Dancers of Damelahamid's new dance piece for young audiences is *In Abundance*. The main theme of the dance piece is based on the salmon cycle, and it also conveys important cultural teachings on balance, community and sustainability. The salmon symbolize abundance and are a key reminder of the importance to value and protect this essential resource. The final teaching of *In Abundance* is that when we take only what we need there is plenty for all, including the salmon needed to spawn for the next year's cycle.

For more information please see our website at www.damelahamid.ca

Map of Gitxsan Territory:



This shows the province of British Columbia and the different First Nations group throughout the province. The Gitxsan territory is in the watershed of the Skeena River of Northwestern BC. www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/map.htm (Note Gitxsan is spelled both Gitksan or Gitxsan)

The Four Clans

All Gitksan belong to one of four clans. They are named the Fireweed (*Gisgahast*), Frog (*Ganada*), Wolf (*Lukiboo*) and Eagle (*Lasxeek*). The Fireweed Clan, *Gisgahast*, is the first clan and began with a Gitksan creation story from which their communities grew and spread. The second clan was the Frog clan, *Ganada*. The third clan is the Wolf clan, *Lukiboo*. The fourth clan is the Eagle clan, *Lasxeek*. Clans are large family groups. The origin of each clan begins with a story that is part of the oral traditions of the people of the Northwest Coast. The people of a clan share common ancestors, crests, properties and privileges. The crests are symbols worn on regalia representing a person's clan. There are also more personal family crests worn on regalia to represent a person's lineage. Regalia is the term used to describe the traditional dress worn such as button blankets, dresses, aprons and head pieces.

Suggested concepts to prepare for the dance presentation:

1. What does the term Gitksan mean? Where is the Gitksan territory located?
2. What is a clan? What are the four clans of the Gitksan?
3. What are regalia? What is a crest?

Questions to keep in mind while watching the performance

1. What is the name of the local First Nations group of the area where your school is located?
2. Look at the regalia worn by the dancers. Identify the colours? Where do you see the clan crests?
3. Listen to the stories. What are some of the teachings that you can learn from the stories? What do we learn about respect for ourselves, one another and our environment?

Dancers of Damelahamid Interactive Songs

These songs are shared with the students for the interactive part of the presentation. Lyrics are in Gitxsan with English translations.

Head and Shoulders

T'im ges – head

Ganhl no'ohl – and shoulders

K'es ii – knees

Se' - feet

'Ni'it tunn, kap kap ii'ya – These are all my parts

Happy Song - Limx luu amagoot ☺

Heh he yeh-he yo ho he-yo ho

Heh he yeh-he yo ho he-yo ho

Heh he yeh-he yo ho he-yo ho

Heh he yeh-he yo ho he-yo ho

Amhl goodi'y noon ga'wesim - I am glad to see all of you

Link for Northwest Coast Painted Designs

http://www.sfu.ca/brc/educator-resources/paint_grades-k-to-3.html

Resource Worksheet:

1. What does the term Gitxsan mean? _____

2. Where is the Gitxsan territory located? _____

3. What is a clan? _____

4. What are the 4 clans of the Gitxsan?

5. What is regalia? _____

6. What is a crest? _____

Questions to keep in mind while watching the performance:

1. What is the name of the local First Nations of the area where your school is located?

2. Look at the regalia worn by the dancers. Identify the colours? Where do you see the clan crests?

3. Listen to the stories. What are some of the teachings that you can learn from the stories? What do we learn about respect for ourselves, one another and our environment?

