Gary Small (Northern Cheyenne) **"*Just one Indian talking*"**

Lesson Guide and Discussion Questions – Suggested Grades: 6-8

Gary Small is an award-winning guitarist, songwriter, and member of the Northern Cheyenne Nation. With a career spanning decades, Gary's music blends blues, reggae and rock like no other.

Small has garnered four Native American Music Awards, including Best Male Artist, Best Songwriter, Best Rock, and Best World Music of the Year. Small was also the reigning Wyoming Blues Challenge winner for three consecutive years.

This video and discussion guide supports instruction related to **Essential Understanding #3** - The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

Special thanks to the Music Teachers from East Helena Schools for creating the discussion guide and questions: Cole Bass, Jon Cantrell, Mathew Krantz, Traci Mazanec, and Tamika Schoppe.

Instructions: Watch the linked video as a class. After viewing, complete this worksheet to the best of your ability. When finished, go through your answers as a class and facilitate a class discussion.

INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL
Montana Office of Public Instruction

1. How does Gary Small characterize his distinctive guitar style?
   A. He prefers a gritty tone to reflect the harsh realities he sings about.
   B. He primarily plays acoustic guitar to honor traditional Native American music.
   C. He takes a vocal approach, aiming to make the guitar 'sing' with a sustained tone.
   D. He emulates heavy metal musicians by focusing on speed.

2. Which groups does Gary Small mention as influences for his ideal band setup that includes a Hammond B3 organ and multiple percussionists?
   A. Santana, War, and Bob Marley
   B. Crow and Assiniboine tribal musicians
   C. The Beatles and The Who
   D. Rockabilly and Folk artists

3. What does Gary Small consider to be the function of the instrumental pieces on his album *Hostiles and Renegades*?
   A. They showcase his guitar technical skills and prowess.
   B. They are modern interpretations of ancient Cheyenne ceremonial songs.
   C. They serve as background music for the vocal tracks.
   D. They are a form of pre-language communication that taps into the human psyche.

4. According to Gary Small, from where do the lyrics for his songs primarily originate?
   A. From translating stories passed down by his father
   B. From his own private journals and personal reflections
   C. From historical documents about notable Native Americans
   D. From listening to the things people say in the world around him

5. How does Gary Small prefer to be identified in a musical context?
   A. Primarily as a world music artist
   B. As a spokesperson who explains what it means to be ‘Indian’
   C. As a musician who happens to be Native American
   D. As a blues guitarist

6. Reflecting on your own life, is there a specific skill, hobby, or profession that you feel defines you more accurately than the cultural or social labels others might place on you?

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7. Think about a time you learned something profound about another person's reality by simply listening to their stories. How did hearing about their personal struggles or triumphs change your perspective or inspire you to create something of your own?

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Answer Key

1. How does Gary Small characterize his distinctive guitar style?
   A. He prefers a gritty tone to reflect the harsh realities he sings about.
   B. He primarily plays acoustic guitar to honor traditional Native American music.
   C. He takes a vocal approach, aiming to make the guitar 'sing' with a sustained tone.
      a. *He states, "I prefer to take the vocal approach to the guitar so... my guitar is very sustained... and make it sing just like it's like a voice."*
   D. He emulates heavy metal musicians by focusing on speed.

2. Which groups does Gary Small mention as influences for his ideal band setup that includes a Hammond B3 organ and multiple percussionists?
   A. Santana, War, and Bob Marley
      a. *Gary lists these three groups when describing his love for the B3 and percussion instruments.*
   B. The Crow and Assiniboine tribal musicians
   C. The Beatles and The Who
   D. Rockabilly and Folk artists

3. What does Gary Small consider to be the function of the instrumental pieces on his album *Hostiles and Renegades*?
   A. They showcase his guitar technical skills and prowess.
   B. They are modern interpretations of ancient Cheyenne ceremonial songs.
   C. They serve as background music for the vocal tracks.
   D. They are a form of pre-language communication that taps into the human psyche.
      a. *Gary describes instrumentals as 'pre-language.'*

4. According to Gary Small, from where do the lyrics for his songs primarily originate?
   A. From translating stories passed down by his father
   B. From his own private journals and personal reflections
   C. From historical documents about notable Native Americans
   D. From listening to the things people say in the world around him
      a. *Gary states, "If you really listen in this world, the lyrics come to you…"*

5. How does Gary Small prefer to be identified in a musical context?
   A. Primarily as a world music artist
   B. As a spokesperson who explains what it means to be 'Indian'
   C. As a musician who happens to be Native American

a. *He states he'd rather be seen as a musician that has something to say musically and spiritually.*

D. As a blues guitarist