

Flute Class Reaches Out To Elders, Young People And Everybody In Between

■ Tribal member Jan Michael Reibach teaches, while his music career begins to gain ground.



Photos by Peta Tinda

Sharing Wisdom — Jan Michael Reibach, tries out Tribal member student Clyde Stryker's flute during Reibach's class, which he teaches at the community center in Grand Ronde. The 20 or so students learn about the history and origins of the flute before being taught how to play from Reibach, who has gained a reputation for his Native flute music recently.

By Peta Tinda

Tribal member Jan Michael Reibach, has been teaching a flute making class recently, in an effort to spread the knowledge of traditional Native flutes with the hope that others will share in the healing and teaching that he receives from flute playing.

"The flute class has been really great," he said. "The feedback has been really good and I am continuing the second part of the class this month," said Reibach.

Over 20 people have enrolled in the class so far, including five Tribal youths and as many Tribal Elders.

The class, which is held during the evening at the community center in Grand Ronde, has a complex syllabus that includes audio and visual presentations as well as text in the form of handouts.

There are also four different books that Reibach sites as references when he teaches the class.

In addition, each student is given his or her own cedar flute as part of the class.

At first the students learn about the history and origin of the Native

flute, which is one of the oldest musical instruments in existence. Flutes over 60,000 years old have been found, making it the third oldest known instrument.

"A lot of people are under the impression that only plains and southwest Indians had flutes, but all Tribes had some form of flutes... my Tribe, the Kalapuya, played river reed flutes," said Reibach.

After the students have learned about the origins and the different types of flutes that are out there, then they are taught to play the flute, during the second part of the class.

The classes have been so well received that Reibach has plans to eventually teach at the college level. He has been in communication with several universities to do the classes.

According to Reibach, sales of his recently released albums "Peaceful Journey," and "Native Blues," have been selling briskly, with over 5,000 copies sold to date. They have also been selling in such far-flung places as France, Germany and

Canada.

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"The thought of somebody listening to my album in Germany just blows my mind," he said.

His company, CedarFeather Productions, has successfully produced over 60 events so far with more to come, including bringing Native recording star Mary Youngblood to Spirit Mountain Casino for a concert performance in May.

He has also been approached while walking in the mall by fans seeking his autograph, which he says was quite a surprise for him.

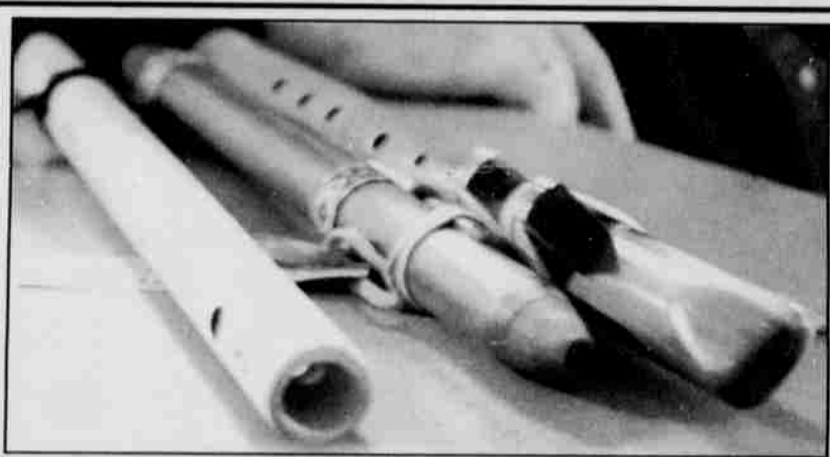
Despite all of this, Reibach remains modest.

"It's really important for people to understand that it's not about being successful, it's not about money, it's about music," Reibach explained.

"The flute doesn't belong to me," he said. "I feel it's about sharing our culture in a way that people can understand and see us in a good, positive way." ■

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~ Jan Michael Reibach



Art — A student's collection of flutes are not only musical instruments, but works of art as well. The flute is one of the instruments featured in Reibach's latest album, "Native Blues," at right, which has generated a considerable buzz in Native music circles, including it possibly being nominated by the Native American Music Awards for "Best New Artist."



Young Tribal Member Reaches Back To His Ancestors For Musical Inspiration

■ 14 year-old Harris Reibach will release "Snow Owl" on his brother's record label.

By Peta Tinda

Grand Ronde Tribal member Harris Reibach, a soft-spoken youth in his freshman year at Willamina High School, has a gift that goes far beyond his fourteen years, all the way back to his ancestors of thousands of years ago.

Reibach plays the Native flute. He started about six months ago, but has already shown enough talent for a song he composed himself, called "Snow Owl," to be released this spring on his older brother's record label — CedarFeather Productions.

Harris's father is Tribal Council member Jan D. Reibach, his mother is Janet Reibach and his grandfather is Harris Reibach.

When asked why he started playing the flute, he replied: "I just tried it and liked it... I like how the notes sound really clean," he said.

"...When you pick it up it's got like a feeling to it, you know?"

Harris is like a lot of Native kids his age. He enjoys playing basketball, likes hanging out with his friends and he dances at pow-wows in the summer. He's also a member of the Willamina High School Native American Club.

But he seems to have deeper understanding of what goes into playing the flute traditionally.

"I get my inspiration from nature," he said. "Because it's peaceful; like the flute. If you're having a stressful day you can sit down and play the flute and it just makes you forget

about everything."

His songs often conjure intense visual imagery. For his song "Snow Owl" he pictured an owl, flying over a snowy forest, and the notes just came out.

"That's how a lot of people get names for their songs," he said.

Harris's musical influences range from the popular drum group Black Lodge Singers, to old school hip-hop, to new school rappers like Xzibit.

He also gets lots of encouragement from his older brother, Jan Reibach.

"He's the base of what I look up to and what I do musically. Without him, I couldn't have cut that track, or done any of that other stuff," he explained.

Harris believes that it doesn't matter what age you are as long you're committed to what you are doing.

"Even though I'm young, I put just as much into it as anyone else."

Harris said he wants to continue to pursue music and one of his goals is to eventually put his own album out, with an emphasis on traditional songs.

"When I play the flute, I want it to sound real traditional, like it did thousands of years ago."

He considers playing the flute to be a way of connecting with his ancestors.

"It's cool to think that the flute is still carrying on after thousands of years," he said.

"Even though the world's changed a lot since then." ■



Photo by Peta Tinda

He Likes Rap & Hip Hop Too — Tribal member Harris Reibach, a young musician who recently recorded a track to be released this spring on an album by CedarFeather Productions.