

The Water Drum: The Channel to Connect One's Spirit with Earth

Teacher Background



Drums have been around for thousands of years and throughout history have been often involved in warfare or Native American ceremonies. Indian tribes in North American history have all used drums in various ways to interact with a higher power, the Great Spirit. To Native people, Indian drums are much more than just decorations or nice musical instruments. American Indian drums are thought to speak to the drummer. Native drums being made in a circle represent the earth and never-ending life- the circle of life. A beating drum is compared to the beating of a human heart and is said to represent the heart beat of the earth.

The Water Drum is a traditional Cherokee instrument. It is made by hand, when a deer's hide is pulled over a hollowed log or clay pot. What makes the water drum special is that it has some water inside of it. When water is added to or taken out of the drum, it is tuned differently—meaning, it makes higher or lower sounds depending on how much water is in the drum with water. The drum beats of water drums are distinctive and their sound differs depending on the amount of liquid in the drum as well as any physical activity.