"The Pow Wow Trail DVD series is one of the most comprehensive and engaging resources available on the incredibly vibrant and complex social and musical world of modern day Pow Wow. Each DVD is a great mix of oral history, documentary archival material, and modern developments. The greatest strength of the series is the depth and breadth of the interview material. These DVDs are dominated by Native voices, bringing to life the kaleidoscope of deep cultural and historical meanings embedded within these song and dance practices. I use these videos constantly in my undergraduate Native American music classes."

Christopher Scales - PhD
Professor of Ethnomusicology:
College of William and Mary

POW WOW TRAIL Episode 1 – The Drum
DVD 3001 (DVD)
Everything begins with the drum. It is the heartbeat of our people. Different drums exist for different purposes…for healing, for ceremony. When we hear the drum in a lodge, or across the plains, we know it is communion with the spirit world. Hundreds of drum groups exist today. Each hold their own drums, each has its own purpose. We will explore how drum songs are distinguishable from one another, each with different beats, and different meanings.

POW WOW TRAIL Episode 2 – The Songs
DVD 3002 (DVD)
Pow wows are nothing without the songs. They carry the stories, which in turn carry the culture. Some stories tell of great exploits, acts of bravery, and even the simple pleasures in life. The words themselves are secondary; for it is the sound that is heard by the spirits of all living creatures. The music possesses a mystical element within it, and is said to touch the soul. It is this that the songs and the beat of the drum appeal to. Though the words have been lost, the meanings behind the songs survive.

POW WOW TRAIL Episode 3 – The Dance
DVD 3003 (DVD)
Each dance tells a story with its own historical significance, perhaps even the nation’s creation mythology. Within the dances and songs, vital elements of Indian culture are expressed and preserved: it was meant to be showy and exhibitionist. The spirit of Native people is embodied in dance.

POW WOW TRAIL Episode 4 – The Grand Entry
DVD 3004 (DVD)
A pow wow begins with the Grand Entry. The Eagle Staff leads the procession as the traditional flag made of feathers from an eagle. Traditional dancers enter from the East, following the Eagle Staff, then come the fancy dancers, then the Hoop dancers, followed by the Shawl Dancers, and finally the boys and girls. An Elder gives a prayer in the traditional language and finally the pow wow begins.

POW WOW TRAIL Episode 5 – Grass Dance & Men’s Traditional
DVD 3005 (DVD)
Religious in nature, The Grass Dance evolved from warrior society dances. It is one of the oldest dances, and portrays a warrior in search of a proper ceremonial place.

The traditional dance expresses the pride and dignity of the brave warriors of past and present; it is here where Indians honor their past. The best dancers are able to tell a story through their body movements, capturing the courageous thrusts of the battlefield, or the humility of everyday life.
POW WOW TRAIL

Episode 6 - The Fancy Dance
DVD 3006 (DVD)

This competition has always been the climax of the pow wow. It is a test of speed and endurance. It allows the dancer to display his most intricate steps and body movements, incorporating their own style. Knees pumping brought up high to the chest, he exudes perfect rhythm, the beat governs his body, and the song gives voice to emotion. It is the very soul of the people.

POW WOW TRAIL

Episode 7 - Pow Wow Rock
DVD 3007 (DVD)

Expressing themselves in the White Man’s world, Indian musicians have adapted their traditional music into a new style, which has found its way into the mainstream.

Several Native artists have made their mark throughout the years blazing a trail for all the new up-and-coming talented artists who will be the international voice of Native Americans for the future.

POW WOW TRAIL

Episode 8 - Women
DVD 3008 (DVD)

Old customs gave women a special role within the pow wow; the women would dance in one spot, stationary, at the outer edge of the circle, holding an eagle fan, an expression of their beauty and grace.

The Jingle dress dance; an Ojibway dance form, it is also a healing ceremony. The dance has since grown into one of the most popular intertribal dance styles at pow wows.

POW WOW TRAIL

Episode 9 - The Grand Exhibition
DVD 3009 (DVD)

As pow wow has evolved, so too has the entertainment on the grandest scale. Schemitzun, Connecticut attracts the largest crowds, and the best dancers. We travel to the land of the Pequots, a tribe attempting to recapture its heritage through dollars generated through their casino. They pull out all the stops to run a multimillion dollar pow wow. As it was told in the original legend of the Big Drum, the pow wow was a spectacle for all to see and behold; the Pequots certainly bring out the brightest and most intricate outfits, as well as the best dancers.

POW WOW TRAIL

Episode 10 - The White Man’s Indian
DVD 3010 (DVD)

There are those who embrace Indian culture, see the pow wow dances as ballet, and regard Native people in general as both fascinating and honorable. They come from such places as the Sweden, Denmark, Germany etc. They put on their own pow wows, having learned the languages and dances from our people. It is an interesting commentary on how Europeans in general are a-cultural, meaning they seek out identities to latch onto, because their own culture and spirituality leave more questions than answers pertaining to existence.

POW WOW TRAIL

Episode 11 - Pow Wow Fever
DVD 3011 (DVD)

Anyone who has ever attended a pow wow notices there is something about the people who travel with the pow wows; sometimes on beat up old buses, sometimes the cars themselves are held together with duct tape. There are cars from hundreds of miles away, and as many as a dozen people can pile out of an old Chevy.
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