Native American Arts and Culture Festival
Colgate University, Hamilton, New York
Saturday, October 22, 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Performance Groups

**Ayazamana** is a music and dance troupe performing traditional dances of the various regions of Ecuador -- coast, Andes, Amazon, and the Galapagos Islands. Indigenous, Spanish and African influences have resulted in the formation of unique sounds, rhythms and movements throughout the four regions. Performing with traditional instruments and costumes, the group provides explanations of the cultural aspects of each musical piece. Dance is an important component in celebrations, rituals and daily life. Since dancing in Ecuador is an inclusive, community activity, the audience will have an opportunity to join in the dances. In the Kichwa language, Ayazamana means “Peaceful Rest of the Soul.”

**Haudenosaunee Singers and Dancers** is led by award-winning dancer Sherri Waterman-Hopper of Onondaga. Sherri has been teaching young Iroquois boys and girls to dance over the past two decades, as well as organizing public performances. In addition to Sherri herself, the performers include youngsters in elementary school, teens, and young adults. At the same time that she is insuring the continuation of traditional culture in her own community, Sherri is sharing it with non-Indians. During a performance, she explains the origin and purpose of each dance. She also invites participation from the audience. The performance includes only social dances, which are open to the public. A typical performance begins with a communal circle dance or a dance honoring women. As Sherri explains, the Iroquois are a matrilineal people, and during the dance the women shuffle to keep their feet in contact with Mother Earth. Other dances include the rollicking duck dance and the alligator dance adopted from the Seminole Indian people of Florida.

**Tlacopan Aztec Dancers** is a troupe based in Mexico City that perform fast-paced dances accompanied by traditional drums. The dancers wear dramatic costumes, beads, and plumed headdresses. The leader, Tomas Salinas, teaches young Aztec (Mexica) children to carry on the ancient style of Aztec dancing. The Mexican contingent will be joined by their relations Wanda Wilson and her sons from the Six Nations Reserve in Canada. Wanda provides a narration that helps the audience to interpret the dances and spectacular regalia.

**Al Cleveland** is a well-known Mohawk/Cree flute maker who has spent most of his life involved in the native community -- from the Wounded Knee era until today. His flutes are found across the U.S. in the hands of stellar performers including Joanne Shenandoah, Bill Miller, Mark Thunderwolf, Joe Firecrow, Cody Blackbear, Mary Youngblood, John Huling and others. His flutes have been heard at the Grammies, Nammies and the Canadian Aboriginal Music awards festival, and on his CD “Shylo’s Song.”