

## Notes for the Round Dance

Early in powwow history, the War Dance was a primary focus and was exclusively a man's dance (the latter is no longer true). The Plains Round Dance eventually developed into a balancing foil for the War Dance. Wind River Shoshones used to call it the Women's Dance because it was the women's choice: either to form their own dance circle, or to ask men to dance with them— as partners side-by-side, or two women on either side of a man. Etiquette used to require that the man had to pay for the privilege of the dance. (Old-timers remember with amusement how old men used to keep quarters in one pocket to pay the young women who asked them to dance, and dimes and nickels in the other pocket, to pay the old women.) The drum part in Round Dance songs establishes an underlying three-beat pattern, which distinguishes the Round Dance from both the Flag Song and War Dance, which are in 2/4 time. The drum is struck on beats one and three, with a slight accent on beat one, setting the musical wheel in motion: da tuh, da tuh, da tuh, etc. In their melody, the singers play against this drum pattern, often avoiding the first beat altogether and accentuating in a variety of ways the second beat, the silent beat on the drum.

Drawing on my research and knowledge of the Round Dance song genre, I have composed my own Round Dance song, which is the basis for the second movement of "Powwow Time for String Quartet"(and "Powwow Time for Organ and Flute").