

Grammy nominees to perform traditional music

☒ This year's Ocmulgee Indian Celebration will feature Grammy nominees **R. Carlos Nakai** and **Joanne Shenandoah** during a special performance at 8 p.m. on Sept. 20 at The Grand Opera House in Macon.

☒ Of Navajo-Ute heritage, Nakai is the world's premier Native American flutist, whose expertise on the cedar flute has the power to enrapture the listener. His music has a sophisticated sound, yet is authentically Native American, filled with the richness of his traditions. During his performance, Nakai covers a spectrum of musical genres. He has produced 27 albums in his career and has sold over three million recordings.

☒ A singer, songwriter, performer and composer, Shenandoah has drawn upon her rich heritage to become one of America's foremost Native recording artists. Her original compositions, combined with her striking voice, enable her to embellish the native songs of the Iroquois, using a blend of traditional and contemporary instrumentation. A member of the Wolf Clan of the Iroquois Confederacy, Oneida Nation, Shenandoah has been hailed by *Billboard* magazine as the Enya of her culture.

☒ Tickets are \$22-\$28 and are available by calling The Grand Opera House at 478-301-5470.



Sacred Grounds

by Roban Johnson

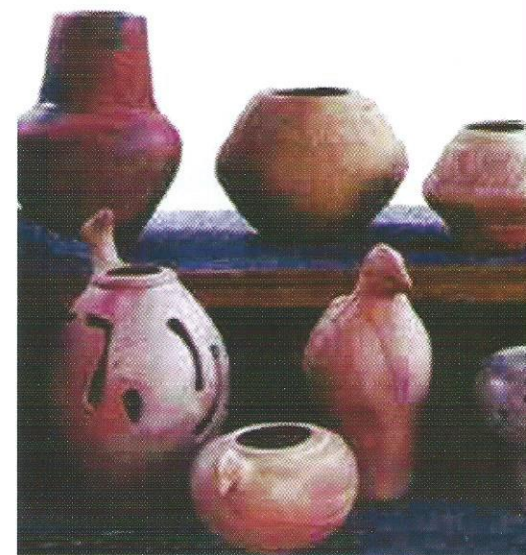
The Ocmulgee National Monument is usually a quiet place, where peace and solitude go hand-in-hand. That changes each fall when Native Americans from across the country return to their ancestral homeland, bringing with them the customs, stories and cultures of the people who first inhabited these lands.

Billed as one of the top 20 events in the Southeast, the Ocmulgee Indian Celebration is a feast for the senses. Brightly-colored regalia adorn the Creeks, Choctaws, Cherokees, Chickasaws and Seminoles who take part in the festival, while foot-stomping music shares the spotlight with storytelling and the traditional and haunting sounds of the cedar flute.

Held this year on Sept. 20-21, the 12th annual Ocmulgee Indian Celebration may be the best ever. "People who have been here before will see a lot of new things," says **Jim David**, Superintendent of the Ocmulgee National Monument. "We'll have nine encampments, or campsites, set up this year, including a traditional clothing and beadwork encampment and one that will feature traditional finger weaving of the Cherokee."

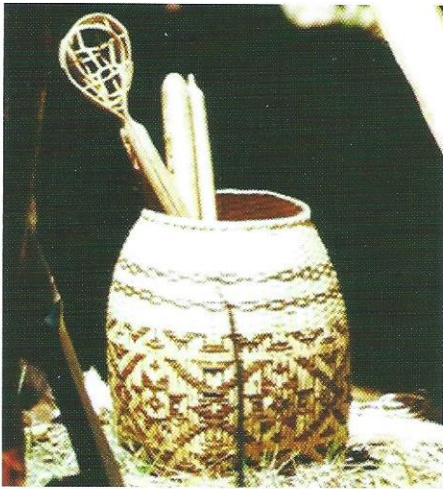
There will also be a hunter's encampment, demonstrations of pre-historic and early Southwestern pottery, porcupine quill jewelry making, and basket weaving.

One artisan returning this year is **Bradley Cooley**, who sculpted the



Dance, Demonstrations Highlight Ocmulgee Indian Celebration

Ancient Times



bronze statue of Otis Redding that now stands in Macon's Gateway Park. Another is **Dan Townsend**, who is well known for his shell carvings. Both will demonstrate and sell their art.

Storytellers from a variety of cultures will also be at Ocmulgee to share traditional stories and history that have been passed down through the generations. You'll also revisit the past through primitive skills demonstrations and can learn about the various symbols Native Americans painted on their horses during live demonstrations throughout the day.

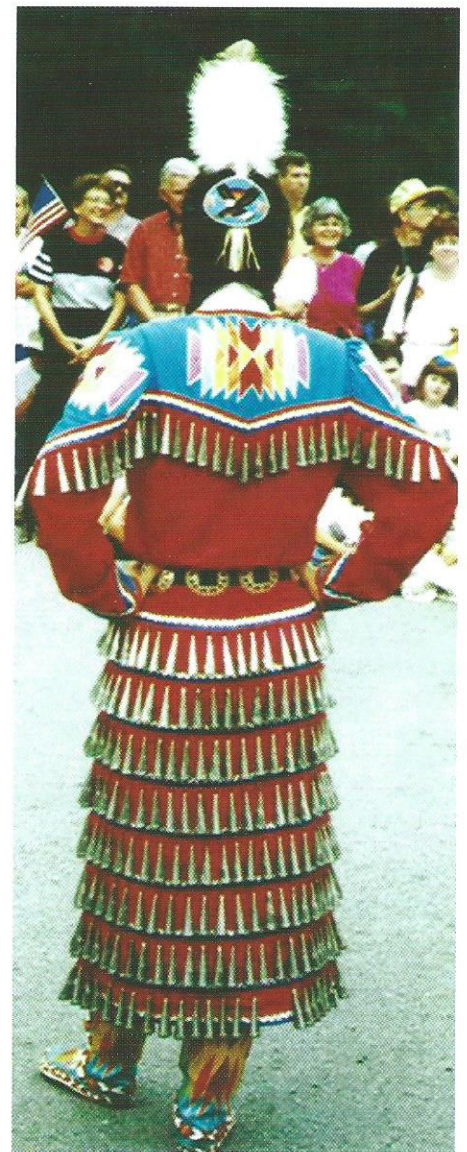
Visitors to the Celebration have come to expect an exciting



display of both traditional and fancy dance demonstrations during the Celebration. "You'll see elaborate regalia and a fast-pace when they demonstrate fancy dance," says David. "You'll also be able to see the traditional style of dance, which is called a stomp dance." It's not unusual for children watching from the sidelines to be invited to join in at the end of a dance demonstration.

If all the activity works up an appetite, don't worry. You'll be able to sample authentic Buffalo burgers, roasted corn, Indian fry bread and Indian tacos. "You can experiment with new food, or get your old standby," says David, adding that hotdogs and other "traditional" foods of Macon will also be available.

In spite of the Celebration's lively atmosphere, David says Native Americans who visit the Mounds find their trip to be deeply meaningful and contemplative. "According to the Creek oral tradition, Ocmulgee is where they first sat down as a



people to establish the Muscogee Confederacy," he says. "It's very sacred land for them. This is their homeland."

Demonstrations and storytelling take place throughout the Celebration. Gates are open 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Friday, Sept. 19, and Saturday, Sept. 20. Admission is \$5 for adults and children 13 and over; free for children 12 and under.

For more information about the 12th annual Ocmulgee Indian Celebration visit www.nps.gov/ocmu or call (478) 752-8257.

Photos opposite, top, circle and cross; bottom, traditional pottery. Photos this page, top, beadwork; left, basketry; and right, a jingle dancer.