



## Dragon Ritual Drummers at Wisteria's Cornstalk Festival

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Everybody wanted to get up and dance at the Dragon Ritual Drummers first energetic performance at Wisteria's Cornstalk Festival. One of the festival attendees put it this way, "It wasn't a feeling of

wanting to dance; it was more a feeling of having to get up and move." Utu, the band's spokesman started the concert off with a prayer and drumming offering to the "Rain Spirits" to greet them, honor them and make them happy so they would let the band play outside without getting us all wet. What amazing energy these seven Canadian guys from Niagara Falls have and what power in their magik and their drums. Whatever inside line Utu has with the rain spirits, his offering and honoring worked and the rain held off while the crowd danced ecstatically to the primal beat these men created. The Green Man pub at Cornstalk was jumping, the Gods were pleased, and so was the crowd.

The Dragon Ritual Drummers began in 1999 as members of the Niagara Pagan Men's Circle. They concentrated on the drum as a main tool to help expand and explore their magik. They became interested in the dragon energy of Niagara Falls and began to create rhythms that brought his ancient history to life.

Utu explains further about the dragon energy: "Our totem dragon spirit of Niagara Falls was now becoming known to many. Giving life and honour to an ancient, and in some texts vilified, deity has been an experiment and reward that we could have never anticipated. With regular ritual and offerings, meditation and exchange we have been able to feel and share the beauty of awakening an ancient power in the modern age. It has taught us the gifts and joy, as well as the hard work and commitment of working and serving a living serpent power that has been in the area for thousands of years. Known to the original inhabitants of the area, he was eventually secured in a not so glorious picture of the evil giant serpent slayed by the Iroquois nation, those who in history wiped out the Onguiaahra, or as the French explorers called them "the Neutral Indians". They in fact were also not the first inhabitants of the area, the serpent mound builders from the Ohio valley region came before the neutral nation and Clovis as well as Pre-Clovis people were here and their artifacts and tombs and some mounds have been found and excavated."

The band never expected the level of success they experienced. Dragon Ritual Drummers have released four CDs and sold 1000s in North America and in Europe. Utu continues: "We originally set out to create a performance or drum opera telling the whole story (of the water dragon of antiquity associated with Niagara Falls.) In that process a world of music opened up for us. In that time the members of the troupe participated in a ceremony of having the dragon's image tattooed on us, an all day event that had a guest who was at the time, the producer for the morning show for 97.7 southern Ontario's best rock. He thought we should come on and be part of the morning craziness; we did and it was a great success."

After that things really took off for the band. They released their drum opera, "The Epic," in 2008.

Utu continues, "We recorded, with drums and percussion (no synthesizers or electronic samples) the entire history of Niagara falls from its birth, the water dragons legacy and story and his

supposed slaying by the Iroquois lightning and thunder god to his modern day awakening. It has won much acclaim and heard around the world on radio stations and podcasts. It has allowed us to travel to new places and meet new friends."

Here is the Dragon Ritual Drummer performing in Salem, MA on Youtube.

Here is the live broadcast from PaganSpace.net for the Dragon Ritual Drummers on the main stage at Wisteria's Cornstalk Festival.