

Title: The Last Salmon

Ki Gottberg

I will create a chamber musical theatre performance based on the children's book The Last Salmon by Phil Davis. The book and performance honors the abundance of the earth, pointedly enacting how native peoples protect and nourish this precious resource so tied to their livelihood. Through song and story, we travel the world of wild salmon; how they come up against and deal with the human-created obstacles to their life cycle. The story has a specific reach into our human existence and the choices we can make, forming a tangible life-affirming link between fish and human lives. Created for children and people who love them, The Last Salmon will be developed at The Merc Playhouse in Twisp, Wa., an area which is deeply connected to the rivers and fisheries of the area, and the show will eventually tour to schools. The intention is to build awareness of the intricate web that binds all of us to our earth, and in particular of these beings we usually only have awareness of on our plates. Teaching respect and care for animals that nourish us is an active part of Native teachings. We want to make this idea manifest through the theatrical music and narrative of The Last Salmon. Working with me will be composer Casey James, with whom I have created a number of musical theatre pieces. He has written music for Elton John, The Spinners, Johnny Mathis, Lou Rawls and many other singers. Our intention is to work with musicians from the Methow Valley, including Native people. The music will be created for a small ensemble, with both a pop and an American Indian sound.