

Mid year CEJS Fellowship Report-Ki Gottberg

Adapting, Writing, Directing, Producing, Marketing & Touring

The Last Salmon, a Chamber Musical for Kids and the People Who Love Them

Phase One: The creation of a chamber musical theatre performance using contemporary music styles, such as hip-hop, based on the children's book The Last Salmon by Phil Davis began with my adaptation of the book. The first "sneak peek" performance (20 minutes of the hour long show) was performed for the boards of the Merc Playhouse and the Methow Conservancy, as well as donors to The Merc, in October of 2015. We used this kick-off to raise more money towards the performance and to get the two boards together for this first time ever collaboration between two important entities in the Methow Valley. The story honors the abundance of the earth by enacting how native people protect and nourish this precious resource so tied to their livelihood. Through song and story we meet a group of American Indian children who are attending their tribal ritual ceremony beginning the fishing season; when the first salmon is caught and released. Of course, these teenage kids are full of attitude, but find themselves drawn into the story wild salmon kids Buck, Spring, Gill and their buddies as they venture, newly hatched, from the spawning grounds of a pristine river into the wide world of the ocean. Traveling this world, growing, coming up against human-created obstacles to their life cycle, the story has a specific reach into our human existence and the choices we make, forming a life-affirming link between fish and human lives.

Phase Two: Completion of the score and lyrics and working with the composer Casey James to use songs to flesh out characters and ideas in the story. Completed January 2016. I have also been involved in writing the marketing materials with the Executive Director of The Merc, Missi Smith, as well as working with a graphic artist to create a marketing image for the show.

Marketing the show to tour to other venues is proceeding along in fits and starts. We are currently in conversation with Performing Arts Centers in Wenatchee and Omak, and with Seattle University to tour the show. There are many parts to orchestrate regarding tours (housing, mileage, fees, equipment, etc), and this aspect is proving to be the most difficult to finalize.

I gave a presentation regarding the project to ICTC in October.

We are pleased that we were finally able to cast a professional Native American Storyteller, Dayton Edmonds, who lives in Omak and already works as an artist in the public schools. This is a coup for our production.

Phase Three: We begin rehearsal February 6 for the full production, which will open February 26 and run until March 6 at the Merc Playhouse. We have 3rd-6th graders attending a school performance from the elementary school in Winthrop on March 4.