



Contact:

Amanda Sweet/Bucklesweet

Amanda@bucklesweet.com

347-564-3371

SOUTH DAKOTA SYMPHONY'S LAKOTA MUSIC PROJECT RELEASES SELF-TITLED FIRST RECORDING

Featuring Four New Commissions Written for the Lakota Music Project, plus a Stunning New Arrangement of Amazing Grace including Dakota Flute and Lakota Drumming Group with Orchestra.

Composers include Brent Michael Davids, Jeffrey Paul II, Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, and Theodore Wiprud



Date: On October 28, the **Lakota Music Project**, a collaboration between **South Dakota Symphony Orchestra (SDSO)** and musicians from the Oglala Sioux and Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribes will release its first recording, the self-titled **Lakota Music Project** on **innova Recordings**. Years in the making, this groundbreaking collaboration melds two musical worlds: Native American music including

intergenerational traditional songs and ceremonial works, and the tradition of American compositions born out of the European classical canon.

Recorded on October 20–25, 2021 in the **Mary W. Sommervold Concert Hall of the Washington Pavilion**, *Lakota Music Project* includes four commissioned works that create Lakota Music Project's core repertoire—*Black Hills Olowan* (Brent Michael Davids), *Wind on Clear Lake* (Jeffrey Paul II), *Waktégli Olówanj (Victory Songs) for Solo Baritone and Orchestra* (Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate), and *Desert Wind* (Jeffrey Paul II)—and one new arrangement of the traditional hymn *Amazing Grace* (Theodore Wiprud).

Addressing ongoing racial tension in South Dakota and histories of oppression and erasure against Native Americans across the United States, the Lakota Music Project strives for reconciliation and imagines a new future for all people, one that is egalitarian, open, and authentic.

Upon accepting his position at SDSO in 2004, **Music Director Delta David Gier** recalls, “I came to South Dakota with a conviction that an orchestra should serve its unique community uniquely.” For Gier, this meant meeting with tribal elders and community members, hearing about the history of his new home, and learning about the communities, traditions, and tensions between Native Americans and whites within South Dakota. “Early on, we learned this lesson that we needed to give up control of how we've always done things, and that is how we slowly built the impactful programming that has led us to where we are today.”

First created between 2005 and 2008 through a collaboration between the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra and leaders of the Lakota community, the first Lakota Music Project concerts in 2009 included the SDSO and the New Porcupine Singers (a renowned Lakota drumming group) performing songs from each culture based on archetypal themes of love, war, grief and celebration in six of South Dakota's nine reservations. This inaugural concert tour was successful, according to Gier, “because of all the relationships that we had already established across the state. This wasn't just an outreach program, but true engagement developed over time through intercultural cooperation and sharing our stories and songs with each other.”

Emmanuel Black Bear is the Keeper of the Drum for the Creekside Singers, featured in this recording. About the Lakota Music Project, Black Bear says, “Every culture has music. If we can fuse our music together, we can be human together. I've been doing the Lakota Music Project for all of these years because I want to lessen racism and prejudice for my children and grandchildren.”

During the last decade, the Lakota Music Project has evolved and grown, adding Dakota cedar flute, solo Lakota singers and hand drums in concert with SDSO's full and chamber orchestra, string quartet, and wind quintet, performing throughout the state to bring the music directly to audiences. In 2017, Jerod Tate, composer-in-residence at the time, created the Music Composition Academies which are designed primarily for Native American students, who during a weeklong, tuition-free summer camp compose their own pieces for either a wind quintet or string quartet. In September, when school starts, SDSO musicians perform the student compositions at their schools. Theodore Wiprud has nurtured the Music Composition Academies since 2018.

Over 10,000 people have experienced a total of 27 Lakota Music Project performances in 12 towns and 6 reservations across South Dakota from 2009-2021. In 2019, SDSO musicians and the Lakota Music Project performed outside of South Dakota for the first time for a series of concerts in Washington, D.C. as South Dakota cultural ambassadors.

Gier explains one important locale where the Lakota Music Project had not previously performed: "But, we never performed Lakota Music Project on our mainstage until last October. This was always designed to be free to the public, performing on Indian reservations and community centers, creating maximum access for everybody. No barriers meant no concert halls."

In celebration of SDSO's centennial season, all of the music featured on this recording was featured for the first time in one Lakota Music Project concert on the mainstage at the Washington Pavilion at Sioux Falls on October 23, 2021. Featuring the Creekside Singers and Dakota cedar flute player Bryan Akipa, this was the first time many of SDSO's dedicated subscribers had the opportunity to hear this collaboration.

The *Lakota Music Project* recording celebrates sixteen years of bridging cultures, fostering friendships and community, listening and learning, exchanging ideas, and creating new musical works together.

Gier shares:

"What I always hear from our Lakota musicians about why they play is they hope to pass their stories and culture onto the next generation. And that's exactly what we do, too, as classical musicians. We play 500 years worth of music. We are all stewards of this artform; we hope to pass it onto the next generation better than we found it. So that

was a real connection point for us, musically. This is where this all began and this is where we continue to go.”

The South Dakota Symphony Orchestra thanks First PREMIER Bank, PREMIER Bankcard, and the Gilchrist Foundation for their support in making this recording possible.

Lakota Music Project Tracks:

Black Hills Olowan

Composed by one of the foremost Native American composers **Brent Michael Davids**, a member of the **Stockbridge Munsee Community**, *Black Hills Olowan* articulates the fraught history of the Black Hills—a place of deep cultural importance to many Native American tribes—that was stolen by the U.S. Government in the Act of 1877, a taking found ultimately to be illegal by the United States Supreme Court a century later. Lakota cultural leader **Ronnie Theisz** introduced a well-known Lakota song to Davids that has been interwoven throughout the entire piece creating the orchestral texture. Featuring the **Creekside Singers**, a legendary Northern Plains-style traditional Lakota singing group, *Black Hills Olowan* recaptures the myth and meaning of the Black Hills, a song of *survivance*, active resistance and creating a thriving culture and community.

The commission for Black Hills Olowan was generously funded by a grant from the American Composers Forum.

Wind on Clear Lake

For **Jeffrey Paul II**, Clear Lake situated near the Sisseton Reservation is a place of tranquility and reflection. He was inspired to write this work celebrating the aural sounds of nature alongside **Bryan Akipa**, Dakota flutist, to be played on the cedar flute. Originally composed as the second movement of the larger work *Pentatonic Fantasy*, *Wind on Clear Lake* creates a symphonic soundscape of the natural world: wind whistling through cottonwood trees, the croaking of frogs, and the patter of a summer rain upon the earth.

Waktégli Olówan (Victory Songs) for Solo Baritone and Orchestra

Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, a Chickasaw composer and pianist, created a suite honoring five leaders and warriors: Red Cloud (Maḥpíya Úta), Two Strike (Núm KaḥpÁ), Gall (Phizí), Crazy Horse (Tḥašúnke Witkó), and Sitting Bull (Tḥaḥánka Íyotake). Inspired by the seminal work *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains* by the Santee Sioux Indian physician and historian Charles Alexander Eastman, *Victory Songs* is a sweeping orchestral rhapsody of symphonic and vocal poetry, featuring bass/baritone singer **Stephen Bryant**.

The commission for Victory Songs was generously funded by a MusicAlive grant from New Music USA.

Desert Wind

SDSO's principal oboist **Jeffrey Paul II** composed ***Desert Wind*** on a pawnshop electric guitar. *Desert Wind* depicts the internal vastness of each individual as wide and universal as the arid landscape of the desert. The composition was expanded during a snowy evening on Pine Ridge with the Dakota String Quartet, Dakota Wind Quintet, and the Lakota drumming group the **New Porcupine Singers** during an extended jam session.

Amazing Grace

Composer Theodore Wiprud's works often explore spiritual experiences. While composer-in-residence at SDSO, he wished to arrange a setting of a traditional Lakota religious song. Singer Emmanuel Black Bear shared that *Amazing Grace*, one of the most beloved hymns in the United States, has been adopted as a traditional Lakota song, performed at pow wows and other important events.

The commission for Amazing Grace was funded by a grant from New Music USA.

For a full history of the Lakota Music Project, please visit:

<https://www.sdsymphony.org/education-community/lakota-music-project/>

SDPB, the South Dakota PBS affiliate, produced the half-hour documentary "*Victory Songs*" about the history of the Lakota Music Project:

<https://watch.sdpb.org/video/victory-songs-the-lakota-music-project-mjkhbu/>

About Lakota Music Project

The Lakota Music Project is the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra's flagship Bridging Cultures Program. Created between 2005-2008, the Lakota Music Project (LMP) addresses a history of racial tension, builds bridges between whites and American Indians, and creates an environment of openness through the sharing of music. Essentially, it is a practical demonstration between white and American Indian musicians to advance cultural understanding.

The LMP concert program features combinations of South Dakota Symphony musicians, the Creekside Singers, a Lakota drumming group, and Dakota cedar flutist Bryan Akipa, each performing music of their heritages as well as unique repertoire commissioned for the musicians to play together. To date, four works and one arrangement for Lakota artists and SDSO musicians have been commissioned for the LMP.

About South Dakota Symphony Orchestra

The mission of the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra is *to celebrate the tradition of live orchestral music and enrich the lives of people throughout our region.*

As the state's preeminent arts organization, the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra is nationally recognized as a driver for how an orchestra engages with its community. Founded in 1922 at Augustana University, the SDSO is now a fully professional 75-member orchestra with a history of performing in towns throughout South Dakota. The SDSO's 10 subscription concerts feature a diverse mix of classical and pops programming. The SDSO's home is the beautiful and acoustically superb Mary W. Sommervold Concert Hall at the Washington Pavilion. The orchestra's nine full-time musicians make up the Dakota String Quartet and the Dakota Wind Quintet. These two ensembles perform over 100 times annually in schools, hospitals, senior living communities, behavioral health and community centers throughout the region.

SDSO performances are heard by over 50,000 people including 18,000 children annually. To reach as many people as possible, orchestra concerts are live streamed and available free of charge through a partnership with South Dakota Public Broadcasting. A robust digital library includes virtual recitals, music education videos, and podcasts.

The SDSO's award-winning Lakota Music Project has been recognized by the League of American Orchestras as a national model of cultural understanding and is the flagship community engagement program of the SDSO. With the Lakota Music Project as a foundation, the SDSO has fostered additional programs with the intention of celebrating cultural similarities and embracing classical music as a medium for collaboration. These programs are part of the larger Bridging Cultures initiative which have featured music from diverse cultures and backgrounds including Arab, Iranian, Indian, Filipino, Mexican, and Chinese composers.

Educating future audiences is a fundamental priority for the SDSO. Music education programs include the long-standing annual Young People's Concerts for over 3,000 third and fourth graders, the South Dakota Symphony Youth Orchestra, Young Musician Concerto Competition, Music Composition Academies, and regular engagements throughout the academic year by the Dakota String Quartet and Dakota Wind Quintet in Sioux Falls Public Schools.

Known for engaging a community through classical music, Music Director Delta David Gier is also a champion of living composers. He is the 2022 recipient of the Ditson Conductor's Award for his championship of works by American composers. Underscoring the SDSO's innovative programming and community impact; a recent review in *The New Yorker* of the world premiere of John Luther Adams "An Atlas of Deep Time," describes the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra as "one of America's boldest orchestras."

About innova Recordings

innova Recordings serves the needs of original, visionary, creative musicians by

offering artistic and technical guidance throughout the recording and publication process; amplifying the reach of new musical ideas through access to our marketing and distribution networks; and actively working together to maximize professional impact. Together, we champion a curated body of diverse and compelling American musical voices to the listening public.