



A Performance in Collaboration  
from Astrolabe Musik Theatre,  
Turning Point Ensemble  
and Westbank First Nation

# The Lake | N-ha-a-itk

Based on the opera *The Lake*  
by Barbara Pentland and Dorothy Livesay

August 15–17, 2014  
Quails' Gate Winery, West Kelowna, BC



# Welcome

Way' xast sxəlxʔalt, kʷu limt kʷckikx kl iʔ tmʷulaxʷ is suqnakinx/syilx sqilxʷ!

Hello, and welcome to the lands of the Okanagan/syilx First Nations people! We are also very honoured to have been able to work with Astrolabe Musik Theatre, Turning Point Ensemble and Quails' Gate Winery to host the tremendous collaboration that highlights the ongoing relationship between the original peoples of these lands—the syilx people—and the European settlers, many of whom have maintained these relationships since contact.

Okanagan Lake has always been a hub for activity. Traditionally, thousands of members from neighbouring tribes and nations would come to the Okanagan Valley to celebrate, trade, and relish in the resources provided by these magnificent stretches of land and water. We in turn give thanks to the lake by providing offerings of medicines and tobacco during ceremony to acknowledge our responsibility to maintain the cleanliness of the lake and river systems in order for it to provide for future generations.

N̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ is our word to describe “the spirit of the lake.” This spirit is embodied by the mythical creature that inhabits the lake (commonly referred to as the Ogotogo) and that consists of all aspects of the lake and river systems. There are countless stories of encounters and sightings of N̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ that predate the time of contact between European surveyors and settlers with the syilx people and extend to the present day. Although there is not any scientific proof of the existence of the Ogotogo, our people understand and believe N̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ is real and have been paying their respects for centuries.

Jordan Coble, Westbank First Nation

Quails' Gate and the Stewart family are honoured to be part of this landmark production. As the stewards of the Allison's first Okanagan residence we are deeply committed to preserving the history of another pioneering family. Our participation in *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk* helps bring to life a true piece of Canadian history and highlights the initial collaboration between Westbank First Nations and early pioneers to this wonderful valley.

Tony Stewart, Quails' Gate Winery

*"This special project... inspires for me... a better understanding of 'place', whether that be the land upon which I live, or of the space I take up in this world."*

JEREMY BERKMAN

We are privileged to have your company as a 19-year old dream reaches its fulfillment. Bringing *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk* to the very site where the story takes place is a journey that began in 1995 when soprano Heather Pawsey won First Prize in the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition with a program that included the opera's opening aria, and has finally arrived "home" in a way none of us could have imagined. But journeys sometimes take you where you didn't expect to go, with deeply fulfilling results.

We are very grateful to our visionary co-producers for their commitment and integrity; in particular it has been a humbling experience to work with our generous, gifted collaborators from Westbank First Nation, who have taught us so much. But we also would not be here without the unwavering support of Quails' Gate Winery and its dedicated team. Heartfelt thanks to Ben and Ruth Stewart of Quails' Gate Winery for their early interest, and to Tony Stewart now, and to Jordan Coble and Delphine Derickson of WFN for enabling us to share this journey with you.

Susan Allison was a pioneer, not only for venturing into what was, for them, new land, but also for immersing herself in the surrounding aboriginal culture. Barbara Pentland and Dorothy Livesay were pioneers in Canadian music and poetry, giving us this masterwork. And you are pioneers, entering the unfamiliar landscape of *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk* and opening yourselves to the experience. Thank you for being with us as we explore a deeper understanding of our shared history.

Heather Pawsey, Artistic Director, Astrolabe Musik Theatre  
Jeremy Berkman, Project Director, Turning Point Ensemble



Susan Allison and some of her children. Photo courtesy of the Allison family; used with permission.





Allison House at Quails' Gate. Photo credit: Mary Ingraham.

*The Lake* | *N-ha-a-itk* is a unique collaborative project between Westbank First Nation, Astrolabe Musik Theatre, the Turning Point Ensemble and Quails' Gate Winery. During the performance, Westbank First Nation songs and dances, newly created scenes and a new work by composer Leslie Uyeda are integrated into an historical opera entitled *The Lake* by Barbara Pentland (composer) and Dorothy Livesay (librettist). The opera was composed in 1952 and is set in 1873 on the very site now occupied by Quails' Gate Winery. The opera tells the story of four historical characters—pioneer Susan Allison, her husband John Allison, Métis handyman and guide Johnny MacDougall and their sylix child nurse and helper Marie. The original Allison House is recognized by the Okanagan Heritage Society and can be viewed above the parking lot.

# The Lake | N-ha-a-itk

A Performance in Collaboration from  
Astrolabe Musik Theatre  
Turning Point Ensemble  
Westbank First Nation

Based on the opera *The Lake* by Barbara Pentland and Dorothy Livesay

## Artists and Production Team

<i>Owen Underhill</i>	music director
<i>James Fagan Tait*</i>	director
<i>Leslie Uyeda</i>	composer, <i>Incantation</i> **

## Cast, in order of appearance

<i>Delphine Derickson</i>	syilx artist
<i>Heather Pawsey*</i>	Susan Allison
<i>Angus Bell*</i>	John Allison
<i>Kwangmin Brian Lee*</i>	Johnny MacDougall
<i>Barbara Towell*</i>	Marie
<i>Jordan Coble</i>	syilx; Curatorial and Heritage Researcher, Sncəwips Heritage Museum
<i>Corinne Derickson</i>	syilx artist

*Reba DeGuevara, Krystal Lezard, Chayton Coble, Brock Harper  
and other members of Westbank First Nation*

## Turning Point Ensemble

<i>Brenda Fedoruk</i>	flute
<i>David Owen</i>	oboe
<i>Tom Shorthouse</i>	trumpet
<i>Kinza Tyrrell</i>	piano
<i>Domagoj Ivanovic, Peter Krysa</i>	violins
<i>Isabelle Roland</i>	viola
<i>Marina Hasselberg</i>	cello
<i>Meaghan Williams</i>	bass
<i>Owen Underhill</i>	conductor
<i>Rachel Iwaasa, Kinza Tyrrell</i>	rehearsal pianists

## Production

<i>Josef Chung</i>	production manager, technical director
<i>Mara Gottler</i>	costume designer
<i>Gerald King</i>	lighting designer
<i>Geoff Hollingshead</i>	sound designer
<i>Sheila Munn*</i>	stage manager
<i>Jeremy Berkman</i>	project manager
<i>Karen Pledger</i>	general manager, Turning Point Ensemble
<i>Laura Murray Public Relations</i>	marketing and media relations
<i>Mary Ingraham, Brianna Wells</i>	program coordinators
<i>Mary Scobie</i>	program design
<i>Tim Pawsey</i>	cover image, Okanagan Lake

\* appears courtesy of Canadian Actors' Equity Association \*\* world premiere

# Program

## ACT ONE

### Meeting of Cultures and Languages

The time is 1873. A syilx female elder and pioneer Susan Allison introduce their respective lands and cultures in language and song. syilx and Chinook greetings are shared with all. The women leave to continue the language lesson over tea.

### *The Lake Part One: Opera by Barbara Pentland and Dorothy Livesay*

As the opera opens, a pregnant Susan Allison is making notes as she watches the Dutch oven. She gazes out at the lake as she sings. Her husband John enters from the trail. Susan urges John not to go down to the lake today because of the lake creature N-ha-a-itk and the stormy weather. John says he must. He has work to do in preparation for the winter. Johnny MacDougall enters and preparations are made for the trip to Okanagan Mission. Johnny Mac tells Susan that N-ha-a-itk has been seen, and explains his plan for handling the creature by feeding it a piglet and a hen.

### A First Nations Context

Jordan Coble, Curatorial and Heritage Researcher for the Snc̓w̓w̓ps Heritage Museum and collaborator on *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk*, comments and gives insight on the authentic syilx traditions as referenced in the opera.

### Intermission

The audience is invited to experience and share Westbank First Nation cultural activities including stick games.



Susan Allison and eight of her children at her home near Princeton, ca. 1893. Photo courtesy of the Allison family; used with permission.



Okanagan Lake. Photo credit: Tim Pawsey.

## ACT TWO

### *Strawberry Song*

Honoured teacher of syilx language and cultural knowledge Delphine Derickson performs her composition, the *Strawberry Song*.

### *The Lake Part Two: Opera by Barbara Pentland and Dorothy Livesay*

After John and Johnny Mac have left, Susan and Marie remain. Susan asks Marie to tell the story of N-ha-a-itk. The story references a peaceful time long “before the white man came.” In the story, the advent of white men greedy for gold unsettles N-ha-a-itk, who now “hates all men.” As Susan and Marie watch, the waters in the lake churn as the storm is coming. They cannot see the boat, but instead see the lake creature N-ha-a-itk. Susan asks Marie to take care of the children and rushes down to the shore.

### *N-ha-a-itk Dance*

World Premiere of a new *N-ha-a-itk Dance* created by Westbank First Nation cultural leader and syilx dancer Corinne Derickson for *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk*.

### *The Lake Part Three: Opera by Barbara Pentland and Dorothy Livesay*

John and Johnny Mac return, having survived a close encounter with N-ha-a-itk. They argue about what occurred. As they return to the house they find Marie, but Susan is still at the lake in the darkness. They call for Susan and she responds and returns panting up the trail. Johnny Mac tells her the true story of what occurred. A skeptical John Allison does not believe it. As daylight comes, Susan goes into labour—“The pain beginning, the new life beating.” The opera ends with all four singing a wish that they might live in peace and contentment with each other, the land, and N-ha-a-itk.

### *Finale—Incantation*

World Premiere of new composition *Incantation* by Vancouver composer, pianist and conductor Leslie Uyeda commissioned for *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk* by Astrolabe Musik Theatre and the Turning Point Ensemble.

### *Round Dance*

The audience is invited to perform a traditional First Nations round dance.

## Syilx Perspective of n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ (commonly referred to as the Ogopogo)

The word n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ, pronounced n-ha-ha-eet-kew, translates to “the sacred spirit of the lake”, an embodiment that is to be respected and honoured not feared or trivialized. Although the syilx people have referred to the creature of the lake as n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ for centuries, n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ actually refers to more than just one single creature. It is the creature(s), the lake itself, the rivers and waterways that feed the lake, the flora and fauna that surround the lake as well as all fish and other life that reside within the lake. n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ is exemplified through our connection to all its facets.

There are stories of n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ being seen by syilx Nation members throughout the entirety of Okanagan Lake but the majority of occurrences take place within the central region. Stories of n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ not restricted to water are also prevalent and serve as a reminder that the spirit of the lake is not confined to the water but reaches out to all aspects of the land that help sustain its health. Today, syilx people perceive n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ as a metaphor for sustainability. When the lake can be restored to a healthy state, n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ will once again play in the waters that have been its home since time immemorial.

There are numerous protocols related to n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ, many of which focus directly on the area where it is believed that n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ resides, commonly referred to as Squally Point, and known in the syilx language (nsyilxcən) as n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ citxʷ. These protocols are centred on respect for the lake and its spirit and also acknowledge that if this respect is not maintained, the waters will become angry; n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ will appear and not be kind to those who disregard these protocols. Although n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ is not a monster or lake demon, there is still potential for n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ to cause harm as a way to remind us all of our responsibility to acknowledge the sacred spirit of the lake.

It is a common misperception that syilx people would honour n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ by offering sacrificial animals to n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ, specifically chickens and pigs. This is not true. Although we do provide food offerings (very small portions) as part of paying our respects during ceremonies and gatherings, we never offer sacrificial animals to appease n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ or any other spiritual being or person. We pay our respects by offering medicines to the water in the form of tobacco or sage. However, it is through the daily practices of living in harmony and balance with the natural world in a sustainable manner, a notion that requires revitalization within our own community, that n̄xaʔx̄ʔitkʷ is truly respected and honoured.

Jordan Coble, Westbank First Nation



Squally Point. Photo: Mary Ingraham



## The Lake | N-ha-a-itk: A Unique Collaboration



Susan Allison. Photo courtesy of the Allison family; used with permission.

*The Lake | N-ha-a-itk* is in a sense a project and a history that has been 141 years in the making. The steps along the way are the real-life story and interaction of Okanagan pioneers Susan and John Allison with the syilx people in the 1870's; the 1952 creation of a remarkable chamber opera titled *The Lake* by two of Canada's most distinguished women artists—composer Barbara Pentland and poet Dorothy Livesay; the rediscovery and championing of the opera by soprano Heather Pawsey eventually leading to the first professional performance by Turning Point Ensemble and Astrolabe Musik Theatre in 2012; and the 'return' of the opera to its authentic location as part of a cross-cultural collaboration with Westbank First Nation in August 2014.

When the semi-staged version of *The Lake* was mounted in 2012 in Vancouver with James Fagan Tait as Director, we were very pleased to have the involvement of Westbank First Nation's Jordan Coble, who skillfully and graciously provided aboriginal cultural context in an educational

event hosted by Vancouver Opera. We were also excited when syilx elder and cultural leader Delphine Derickson attended our performance and showed an interest in working together on a future project. As a result of these interactions, and the long-time vision of Heather Pawsey to perform Pentland's opera on the historic site of the Allison homestead overlooking Lake Okanagan, we started a journey towards a jointly created new production. With the generous support of Quails' Gate Winery and the active participation of our Westbank cultural contributors, audiences will experience a rare connection of culture and place that integrates living and vital syilx aboriginal traditions with a premiere of a fully staged British Columbian opera, all in their natural setting.

From our earliest discussions with Jordan Coble and Delphine Derickson about a possible new work for the Quails' Gate site at Westbank, a spirit of generous collaboration was apparent. Jordan foresaw an opportunity to introduce syilx traditions and stories that would enrich the project and in some respects set the record straight on points of view expressed in the opera. Delphine wished to present aboriginal songs and language side-by-side with the western opera tradition, and from the beginning expressed an interest in singing together with Heather. This openness led us to develop a full-length performance that would interfold parts of the opera with Westbank First Nation commentary, song and dance.

With this basic structure in place, we held a variety of workshops and meetings. A number of developments resulted including an opening scene created by Heather and Delphine in which Susan Allison and a syilx elder share elements of their respective cultures; the introduction of original songs composed by Delphine based on syilx tradition; and the creation of two new works designed for the production—a N-ha-a-itk dance from Corinne Derickson and a new composition by Vancouver composer Leslie Uyeda entitled *Incantation*. We also decided to animate the site with a variety of syilx cultural activities involving Westbank youth taking place in advance of the performance and at intermission.

*continued*

We are delighted to have benefitted from the sensitive and experienced direction of James Fagan Tait. James participated in our meetings and visited the site, choosing a location where we could set the opera in such a way that the characters are seen against the mountains and the lake, with their movements reenacting the very actions as described in the opera. Building on his work in the semi-staged version, James' detailed direction has deepened and revealed the inner psychologies and relationships of the individual characters. James is also an experienced cross-cultural collaborator and he has gently and skillfully found ways to enable the interactions of the various parts of the production. *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk* performance interweaves the opera, divided into three segments, with Westbank cultural material and newly created scenes, dances and compositions. The many connections and references between the various layers engage the audience in a thoughtful interaction of cultures and histories.

Finally, I would be remiss not to point out the common theme of the contributions of a number of remarkable women, both historical and present-day. Their presence is fundamental to the production: Susan Allison, Barbara Pentland, Dorothy Livesay, Heather Pawsey and her teacher Phyllis Mailing, Delphine Derickson and her daughter Corinne Derickson.

Owen Underhill

*"Being invited to share a musical and vocal tradition different from my own, and discovering the joy and freedom of experimenting with / trading / expanding the received boundaries of each, with generous, gracious and gifted colleagues has been one of the most important benefits for me in this creative collaboration."*

HEATHER PAWSEY

*"I had originally thought our collaboration would involve parallel activity... but the spirit of collaboration... has inspired this process to be more integrated than I could ever have hoped."*

JEREMY BERKMAN

## Creating *The Lake*: Connection, influence and commitment

When Barbara Pentland (1912–2000) and Dorothy Livesay (1909–1996) first met in 1930 as young women on a trans-Atlantic ship travelling between France and Canada, they likely discovered much in common. They were both born in Winnipeg; they had both been studying in France, Pentland at a finishing school in Paris where she had been studying music composition and Livesay at the Université d'Aix-Marseille. They were ambitious and engaged in finding their way as young artists and individuals in an international world at the cusp of the North American Depression and a long period of European turmoil. Given that Pentland and Livesay would become two of the most important and influential Canadian modernist artists in their respective disciplines in the twentieth century, it is fascinating to imagine what that first meeting might have been like. Two decades later they met again, their journeys in the interim not dissimilar, but markedly different.

Dorothy Livesay embarked on a life of commitment to writing, political causes, and justice issues including poverty, racism, dehumanization, militarization, womens' experience and environmental concerns. Inspired by the intense leftist political movements in France and responding in Canada to the Depression years and her contact with American anarchist Emma Goldman, Livesay became a Communist in the early 1930s. Her 'political' poetry appeared in such journals as *Masses* and *New Frontier*, and in addition she chose the field of social work, working first in Montreal and later in New Jersey. She married in 1937 and settled in North Vancouver where her two children, Peter and Marcia, were born. During this time period, she was a co-founder of the magazine *Contemporary Verse*. Although she became disillusioned with communism in the late 1930s, throughout her life she remained fervently active on a variety of issues including, for example, the internment of Japanese Canadians during WWII. Her 1950 radio play on this subject, *Call my People Home*, was published and broadcast on the CBC.

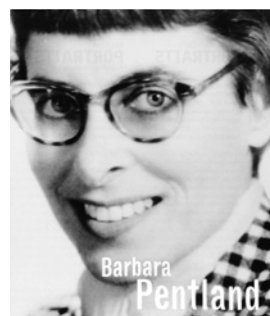
Barbara Pentland was committed to being a composer against her parent's wishes. Ultimately, she left Winnipeg in order to develop her craft, receiving a scholarship study at Juilliard in New York between 1936 and 1939, returning to the US on a number of occasions afterwards to further develop her voice as a composer in light of leading trends of the time. And it was during the summers of 1941 and 1942 at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood that she met and worked with composer Aaron Copland. In 1942, Pentland moved to Toronto and during the next half decade, she was at the centre of a small group of influential avant-garde Canadian composers that included John Weinzweig and Harry Somers. In 1949, Pentland left Toronto for Vancouver at the invitation of composer Harry Adaskin to teach at UBC.

In 1952, now living in the same west coast city and teaching at the same university, Pentland and Livesay reconnected to collaborate on the opera *The Lake*. Although Pentland was never a social activist in the same sense as Livesay, she was certainly a humanist and an engaged artist who was extremely concerned with political and environmental developments. In those works where Pentland set Livesay's poems, the extraordinary depth, potency and imagistic power of the text is reflected in Pentland's dramatic, colourful and striking music.

Owen Underhill

*"She wasn't afraid to go out on a limb and try some of these new techniques. [...] I feel that she was leading forward all the time and this was, I think, a very good thing for the generations of women composers that were to come because they then were not afraid to take this leap as well..."*

PHYLLIS MAILING (1929–2004), MEZZO SOPRANO



# "Learning together" through cross-cultural collaboration

*The Lake* | *N-ha-a-itk* is a rare event in its collaborative scope and its historical stretch. As part of an inter-institutional research project on the effectiveness of cross-cultural collaboration and musical partnerships, this project has provided fruitful ground for observing the negotiation and collaborative creation of a unique intercultural event. As lead investigator, I have found the journey to these performances to be as fascinating as the end result, with partners "learning together", as syilx artist Delphine Derickson describes it, through observing and listening to each other, learning when to take the lead and when to wait, and respecting the places, people, spirits and knowledge we have the privilege to share.

In 2012, I began listening to the stories of the spirit of Lake Okanagan following my first contact with Delphine Derickson and Jordan Coble of the Westbank First Nation. From here, the idea of identifying and including the multiple voices, stories and ways of telling suggested in Dorothy Livesay's text and Barbara Pentland's music of the opera *The Lake* turned into a pre-concert presentation about the opera that included Jordan, soprano Heather Pawsey, and conductor Owen Underhill. As the project developed, participants began to weave the elements of storytelling together to create a new performance context that would situate the opera within historical and cross-cultural perspectives that were both culturally sensitive and educational.

Early meetings involved simply talking about *how* to work together, with details of *what* would be done coming much later. Shared principles of reciprocity, responsibility, non-intrusive observation and connection to logic and heart underscored all participants' involvement. But collaboration is never without challenges: composer Leslie Uyeda admits to struggling at first with "how to incorporate three contrasting styles of singing and languages" in her composition *Incantation*, while Heather found herself "humbled by [her] own ignorance and grateful for the learning process in this collaboration, such as how to listen; to hear what's being said; what's not being said; what to ask and when;

and in recognizing that we are guests in Westbank First Nations' culture". The challenges Leslie and Heather describe were compounded by a need to find common ground within oral traditions, written storytelling and musical representations; they were all met and overcome through conscious and constant self-reflection. "Collaborations of this nature," Jordan tells us, bring "more awareness regarding Indigenous perspectives and worldviews" but they also allow performers and audiences to experience their own echoes within indigenous and non-indigenous worlds and to consider what it means to 'belong' in contemporary, intercultural society.

Susan Allison's stories are echoes of her own experiences as an early settler in the Okanagan, in which she built and maintained respectful relationships with Okanagan s̓qilx<sup>o</sup>. While her efforts at recording and publishing traditional stories from the community are by no means unproblematic in terms of exposing the colonizers' gaze, they are



Susan Allison as a child. Photo courtesy of the Allison family; used with permission.



also, in a sense, an early effort to translate and understand in European terms the indigenous perspectives on the land we know as British Columbia. In Delphine's telling, the "Okanagan sqilx<sup>w</sup> /syilx is connected to the land, animals and environment. It is who we are and we begin our stories like this: Once we were all together and then a spark happened and changes started. *puti? ła captik<sup>w</sup>əł yʃat stim uł ʔix<sup>w</sup>əx<sup>w</sup>əlm yʃat stim*. This is how our oral tradition is passed down from generation to generation." The 'spark' of which Delphine speaks, and the connection of First Nations traditions and stories to the historical perspectives of Susan Allison, Dorothy Livesay and Barbara Pentland serves both indigenous and non-indigenous communities in this intercultural production, and is arguably the most respectful path forward in building new community connections across existing historical, geographical, artistic and ethnic identities.

Modeling the syilx belief in contemporality, this performance invites storytelling without reference to chronological time: the stories of the past expose history's teaching and impart meaning for today. In the shared performance context of this event, inclusive of syilx oral traditions and the Western European genre of opera, the multiple narratives appear also to move forwards and backwards, at once suspending and reversing time in a motion that brings us back to Susan's telling of the story and forward to Delphine's contemporary song and Leslie and Corinne's creative responses. "In the words and songs of my people," Delphine says, "I bring to you the deep rich culture of who we really are." And "when we say 'we'," Jordan explains, "we refer to our ancestors and us all in the same time because that's what it means to us. We live the stories, we re-live the stories through the way that we treat each other and the way that we move forward." Continuing the story, then, is part of everyone's responsibility.



Susan Allison and totem—a gift from the Band. Photo courtesy of the Allison family; used with permission.

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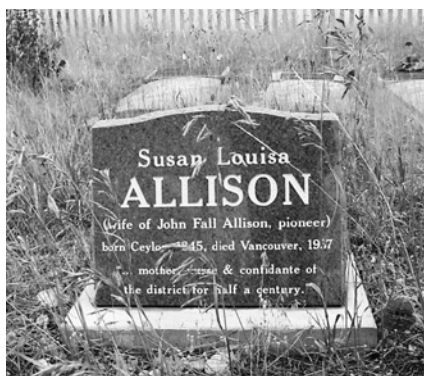
*"This collaboration was a journey of discovery into a rich and beautiful history and culture of which I had previously been ignorant."*

HEATHER PAWSEY

*The Lake | N-ha-a-itk* is the result of significant interchange that has produced new relationships, new performance context for a newly staged opera, new opportunities to perform in cultural collaboration and even completely new creative materials. There is ample room for such collaborative work in our communities and ample places for 'learning together'. And while the opera may have provided the motivation, the stories and ways of telling that reverberate around it result in a truly unique event. The shared performance context of syilx performers, history and spirituality with a settler story and an historically European art form reveals the tensions of shared place and stories but it also encourages new dialogues for further intercultural exchange.

Near the end of the last chapter of *Research is Ceremony* (Fernwood Publishing, 2008) Shawn Wilson writes that "if research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right." Wilson, an Opaskwayak Cree from Manitoba, suggests that we share responsibility for each other, and for each other's stories. *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk* illustrates our shared responsibility to history and culture. It is an event that enhances the impact of Livesay and Pentland's remarkable opera by including multiple communities and ways of telling, through songs, dances, images, costumes, artifacts and oral transmission as well as transcriptions of materials across cultures and across time. All are presented in the context of a dramaturgical structure based on storytelling itself, a feature of traditional teaching and learning. What will endure from this collaboration, I suggest, is a new and dynamic conversation between the syilx whose stories are at the centre of the performance and the many voices that echo them for contemporary audiences.

Mary Ingraham, professor of musicology, University of Alberta



Susan Allison's gravestone. Photo courtesy of the Allison family; used with permission

## Artist Biographies



### Angus Bell, bass-baritone

Bass-Baritone Angus Bell, a versatile singer in both opera and oratorio, has performed throughout Canada and the United States. Born in Australia, Angus obtained a music degree in Houston, Texas at Rice University, with further studies at McGill University. He is a regular soloist and chorus member at Vancouver Opera, most recently as the Jailer (*Tosca*), the Customs Sergeant (*La Bohème*), and the Second Armed Man (*The Magic Flute*). He recently added his first Wagnerian role to his repertoire (Alberich in *Das Rheingold*), which he performed in concert with Vancouver's ViVaCE. Angus has appeared with Pacific Opera Victoria, Vancouver Island Opera and Burnaby Lyric Opera and the Brevard Music Center in North Carolina. He has also performed many oratorios including Handel's *Messiah*; the requiems of Brahms, Verdi, Mozart, Fauré and Duruflé; Haydn's *Creation*; and Bach's *Weinachts-Oratorium*.



PHOTO: DENE MOON PHOTOGRAPHY

### Jordan Coble, syilx; Curatorial and Heritage Researcher, Sncəwips Heritage Museum

Way' xast sxelxalt! I'sk'wist / My name is Jordan Coble; I am a proud Westbank First Nation member and the Curatorial and Heritage Researcher at the WFN Sncəwips Heritage Museum. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree from UBC-Okanagan in Cultural Studies and years of local knowledge based on working with and learning from elders, leaders, children and other community members. I was born in Kelowna, raised in my community and have lived in Westbank/West Kelowna my whole life. I strive to clarify cultural misunderstandings by working collaboratively with organizations and institutions to generate a better understanding of my culture and the benefits of traditional knowledge. I pride myself on always being willing to learn more through working with community members to ensure the history, traditions and culture of the syilx Nation and people, are told through the perspective of the sqilx'w (First Nations) people.



### Josef Chung, production manager, technical director

Josef was born in Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory. After residing there and in the Sechelt peninsula region of British Columbia he settled in Metro Vancouver. He studied stagecraft at Douglas College and the Banff Centre for the Arts, and has been working as a professional craftsman in the performing arts since 1993. Some favourite past projects include Stanley Park's 125th birthday (Celebrate Stanley Park 125), Vancouver's 125th birthday events (Birthday Live! and Summer Live!), Vancouver International Children's Festival, Vancouver Folk Music Festival and Vancouver Fringe Festival. Josef currently works at Eponymous, an arts and culture management agency where upcoming projects include the 2014/2015 seasons of Vancouver New Music and Dance House. He last worked in Kelowna for the year 2000 New Year's celebration at what was then called Skyreach Place.



### Corinne Derickson, syilx artist

Cori is a syilx artist. She has studied at Enowkin Institute of the Arts (UVIC) and will be attending her 4th Year at UBC in the Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree Program majoring in Performance. Her works are inspired from her indigenous traditional family knowledge and history and include dance, sculpture, music, song, writing, animation and production of multi-media works. Cori has performed her beautiful, artistic and

spiritually moving dances both locally and internationally. Cori has lived most of her life on the beautiful Westside of Okanagan Lake, where, being of Westbank First Nation, the land is very much a part of her heritage. Before moving to her family ranch lands along McDougal Creek, Cori's family lived on "Sunnyside", and the first winter of her life was spent in a small cabin above where the Allison Pioneer Family log cabin stands now.



PHOTO: DARREN HULL

### Delphine Derickson, syilx artist


way̓ x̓ast s̓əl̓x̓'alt—Hello. My name is Delphine Derickson, née Armstrong, I am an Okanagan sqilx̓. I was born in Penticton and live in Westbank, BC. I am a Certified Okanagan Language Instructor, translator and interpreter of the syilx language, and have written numerous language CDs and developed the Language Revitalization Tupa Booklet and CD for pre-school and elementary students in the region. I have named some of the streets at UBC–Okanagan and have been involved with the designing of Bernard Avenue, Kelowna, in providing street names of animals, plants and greetings in the nqilx̓'cn language. I am President of the Language Association, Language Authority Officer for the Okanagan, and on the Aboriginal Council of School District #23. As a true Okanagan sqilx̓, I am passionate about all that is the true identity of the Okanagan sqilx̓. I have been teaching language, songs and stories of the Okanagan people the way it is supposed be passed on for over thirty years and teach at Enowkin Centre. I received the Dream Catchers Award in Education 2009. I am also a traditional Okanagan singer, nominated in 1992 for a Juno for Best World Recording for *Till Bars Break* and a composer of n̓xa?x̓'itk̓—Ogopogo and other traditional songs; I am a traditional author (*We get our Living like Milk from the Land*) and a traditional storyteller.



### Mara Gottler, costume designer

Mara is an Artistic Associate and founding member of Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Cymbeline* will mark her 65th productions there as resident costume designer. Local design productions include the world premiere of *Pauline* (City Opera of Vancouver); *Fall Away Home* (Boca del Lupo); *The Romeo Initiative* (Touchstone Theatre) and *Home is a Beautiful Word* (Belfry Theatre). International credits include *La Tempête* and *Le Rossignol*, projects created with Robert Lepage and Ex Machina. Mara has been twice nominated for the prestigious Siminovitch prize for excellence in costume design, and her costume designs have been featured in two World Stage Design Exhibitions and catalogues.

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**Geoff Hollingshead, sound designer**

Geoff is thrilled to be working on *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk* in the sunny Okanagan. Coming from a theatre and film world, Geoff is expanding his repertoire to include opera and this production marks his first. Geoff is a Leo Award nominee and has his own audio company, Positively Post, where he specializes in sound editing for film and TV as well as live mixing. In his spare time Geoff is working on obtaining his commercial pilot's license.



**Gerald King, lighting designer**

Gerald has worked with many Equity and independent not-for-profit companies across the country, including (locally) Ballet British Columbia, Bard on The Beach, Vancouver Opera, Arts Club Theatre, Vancouver Playhouse Theatre, Kokoro Dance, Karen Jamieson Dance and Touchstone Theatre. Outside of Vancouver his work has been seen with the National Ballet of Canada, National Arts Centre, Pacific Opera Victoria, Baltimore Opera, Cincinnati Playhouse, Edmonton Opera, Opera Omaha, Western Canada Theatre and numerous others. Gerald has won a number of awards for his lighting design and is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada.



**Kwangmin Brian Lee, tenor**

Tenor Kwangmin Brian Lee has a Master's degree in Opera Performance from UBC. He has sung principal roles in *Così fan tutte*, *Street Scene*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Merry Widow*, *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Rusalka*, *Land of Smiles* and *La Cenerentola* with Vancouver Opera, Vancouver Opera in Schools, UBC Opera Ensemble, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, European Music Academy, Prince George Orchestra and others. He recently sang the role of Hoffmann in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with UBC Opera Ensemble conducted by Maestro Leslie Dala. He has worked with renowned singers and coaches such as Ben Heppner, Judith Forst, and Stuart Hamilton. He had his Vancouver Opera debut with a role in *Salome* in 2009, and will be singing in next season's productions.



**Sheila Munn, stage manager**

Sheila Munn was the resident stage manager at Vancouver Opera for 19 seasons, where she worked on over 80 productions. Favourite shows there include *Nixon in China* (2010), *The Barber of Seville* (2012) and *Albert Herring* (2013). Sheila has also worked with the UBC Opera Ensemble, most recently as stage manager of *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Last summer she was the stage manager for *When the Sun Comes Out*, a new opera by Leslie Uyeda created for the Queer Arts Festival. Sheila has stage managed for Festival Vancouver and for many of the theatre companies in Vancouver, including three seasons at the Vancouver Playhouse where she also worked on co-productions with Canadian Stage in Toronto and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.



**Heather Pawsey, soprano; artistic director, Astrolabe Musik Theatre**

Acclaimed for her “stylistic versatility” and “gorgeous operatic power” (*Halifax Chronicle Herald/Vancouver Sun*), soprano Heather Pawsey has sung roles for Vancouver Opera, Burnaby Lyric Opera, Prairie Opera and Opera Viva, and performed as soloist for the Vancouver Symphony, Scotia Festival of Music, Turning Point Ensemble, Vancouver Island Symphony, Aventa Ensemble, Land's End Chamber Ensemble, Music on

Main, and CBC Radio, among others. First-prize winner of the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition, in 2009 she was honoured as one of only 50 Ambassadors of the Canadian Music Centre for having “played an exceptional role in shaping the Canadian music scene and raising the profile of Canadian music”. A native of Regina, she performed a Saskatchewan centenary recital for the Lieutenant Governor at Government House. Heather holds a Voice Performance degree from UBC, with further studies at the Banff Centre, and in England and Austria. A Playwright member of Playwrights’ Theatre Centre, Heather is on faculty at Capilano University and is the Founding Artistic Director of Astrolabe Musik Theatre.



**James Fagan Tait, director**

An acclaimed director, actor, and playwright, James Fagan Tait directed his own adaptation of *The Idiot* (PuSh Festival); *The Life Inside* (Belfry Theatre), *Cyrano* (Arts Club Theatre); *Old Goriot* (PuSh Festival); *A Christmas Carol* (Vancouver Playhouse); *Crime and Punishment* (Critics’ Innovation Award; PuSh Festival); *King Lear* and *Timon of Athens* (Bard on the Beach); and wrote *Vassily the Luckless* (Critics’ Innovation Award), *The Shoes That Were Danced to Pieces* and *Quasimodo* for Boca Del Lupo. He has been nominated for 16 Jessie Awards, winning twice. He most recently acted in the Electric Company’s *Tear the Curtain* (Arts Club Theatre/Canadian Stage, Toronto) and directed the world premiere of Leslie Uyeda’s opera *When The Sun Comes Out* (Queer Arts Festival). Mr. Tait has worked on several productions with Runaway Moon Theatre in Enderby (four as co-productions with the Splatsin band), the latest of which, *Tuwitames*, he co-directed with Rosalind Williams.



**Barbara Towell, mezzo-soprano**

Canadian mezzo-soprano Barbara Towell is known for her ease in a variety of repertoire from opera to art song to jazz, with a voice often described as “dark, rich and full of colour.” She made her operatic debut with Vancouver Opera in 2001 in the role of Ida in *Die Fledermaus*, and since has performed many comprimario roles from the Page in *Rigoletto* and *Salome* to her most recent role, Berta, in the 2012 production of *The Barber of Seville*. In 2012 Barbara performed as soloist in Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* with the Vancouver Bach choir conducted by Maestro Leslie Dala. In spring 2015 she will tour BC with Quintessence, an exciting new classical vocal ensemble.

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**Owen Underhill**, conductor; artistic director, Turning Point Ensemble

Owen Underhill, a composer, conductor and faculty member (School for the Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University), is the conductor and one of the co-founders of the Turning Point Ensemble. He has also conducted the CBC Radio Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra and served as Artistic Director of Vancouver New Music from 1987–2000. Owen has a special commitment to Canadian music and interdisciplinary collaboration, and was honoured as one of 50 ambassadors for Canadian music by the Canadian Music Centre. He composed new works in 2014 for the Novo Ensemble, Vancouver New Music, and the Jane Hayes/Francois Houle piano/clarinet duo. His *Canzone di Petra* (2004) for flute and harp was the winner of the Western Canadian Music Outstanding Composition Award. In 2013, Owen was elected as a fellow to the Academy of Arts of the Royal Society of Canada.




**Leslie Uyeda**, composer

Leslie Uyeda, a composer, conductor and pianist, was born in Montréal, and lives in Vancouver, BC. For many years Leslie was Chorus Master for Vancouver Opera, where she also conducted several mainstage productions. Her most recent commissions and premieres include *Blue House*, a piece for tenor and the Standing Wave Ensemble, and *Midnight Watch*, a three-song cycle for soprano Robyn Driedger-Klassen and pianist Terence Dawson, with poetry by the great Canadian poet, Lorna Crozier. Uyeda and Crozier are currently working on a dramatic scene for soprano, mezzo-soprano and instrumental ensemble—*Your Breath, My Breath*. Uyeda's opera *When The Sun Comes Out*, premiered in 2013, was recently performed in concert in Toronto. Leslie Uyeda's music is performed throughout Canada, the US, and the UK. Leslie is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre.

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# About Astrolabe Musik Theatre

Astrolabe (from the Greek “star-taker”): *A historical navigational instrument used to explore uncharted territory. Lab: A room or building for experimentation.*

Astrolabe Musik Theatre presents compelling multi- and inter-disciplinary works of music theatre, frequently in non-traditional or site-specific venues. Driven by a passion for Canadian creators and performers, the company is dedicated to the commissioning and performance of new works by Canadian artists.

Since 2011, Astrolabe has presented 8 productions in Vancouver, Richmond, Britannia Beach and Kelowna. These include: *Apparitions*, featuring George Crumb’s *Apparition*, choreographed by Tara Cheyenne Friedenberg, with Music on Main; *Tasting Notes* (Canadian composer Gabriel Charpentier’s chamber opera *A Tea Symphony, or, The Perils of Clara*), featuring a cello with a secret liquor compartment, with Minoru Chapel Opera, Richmond; *In Passing*, a multi-disciplinary examination of mourning and mortality at the Western Front as part of Vancouver’s 125th birthday celebrations; *Composers’ Cuvée*, a chamber music concert showcasing the works of five Okanagan Valley composers and performed at Summerhill Pyramid Winery as part of the Canadian Music Centre’s “New Music in New Places” initiative; *The Sex Lives of Vegetables... And Other Delicious Distractions*, featuring the world premiere of composer Leslie Uyeda’s chamber music songs of the same name, with poetry by Governor General Award winning poet Lorna Crozier, at the VanDusen Botanical Garden; and *NEWmatica*, a site-specific, multi-disciplinary concert for voice, percussion ensemble and contemporary tap dancers, at the historic Britannia Mine Museum.

A poster for the Opera Kelowna 2014-15 season. The background is black with a large, detailed image of a crystal chalice on the right side. In the top left, a grey circle contains the text "14 | 15 season". To its right is the Opera Kelowna logo, which consists of three overlapping white circles and the text "opera KELOWNA". Below the logo, the season's schedule is listed in white text, with each month in bold. The schedule includes: OCT: Masters of Eastern Europe (11) - BLACK TIE GALA DINNER | MAINSTAGE CONCERT | AFTER PARTY; DEC: A Classical Christmas (13) - MAINSTAGE CONCERT | COCKTAILS; FEB: Belle Nuit d'Amour (14) - CONCERT | COCKTAILS | HORS D'OEUVRES; MAY: Fashion Show — "A Royal Affair" (30) - CONCERT | COCKTAILS | HORS D'OEUVRES; AUG: Artistic Director's Brunch — "A Royal Fascination" (08) - CONCERT | COCKTAILS | BRUNCH | FASCINATOR DESIGN CO.; AUG: The Marriage of Figaro (15) - OPERA MAINSTAGE PERFORMANCE. At the bottom, the website address www.operakelowna.com is listed.

14 | 15  
season

opera  
KELOWNA

**OCT** Masters of Eastern Europe  
11 BLACK TIE GALA DINNER | MAINSTAGE CONCERT | AFTER PARTY

**DEC** A Classical Christmas  
13 MAINSTAGE CONCERT | COCKTAILS

**FEB** Belle Nuit d'Amour  
14 CONCERT | COCKTAILS | HORS D'OEUVRES

**MAY** Fashion Show — "A Royal Affair"  
30 CONCERT | COCKTAILS | HORS D'OEUVRES

**AUG** Artistic Director's Brunch — "A Royal Fascination"  
08 CONCERT | COCKTAILS | BRUNCH | FASCINATOR DESIGN CO.

**AUG** The Marriage of Figaro  
15 OPERA MAINSTAGE PERFORMANCE

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## About Turning Point Ensemble

Founded in 2002 by its musician members, Turning Point Ensemble's core of 16 instrumentalists and conductor have a mandate to bring to the stage extraordinary music for large chamber ensemble written in the last hundred years. Our goal is to draw audiences to this music through outstanding performances and intelligent programming that creates a lively context for the music. Turning Point Ensemble's programming explores relationships and connections between composers, their music, the communities where they create, and our audiences.

Winners of the 2011 Rio Tinto Alcan Performing Arts Award (Music) and recently named one of Vancouver's best classical music ensembles by *Georgia Straight* and *WE* newspaper readers, Turning Point encourages and nurtures new work. The ensemble has commissioned and/or premiered large-scale creations from prominent Canadian and international composers. We have recorded three commercially released CDs: *Strange Sphere* (the music of Rudolf Komorous), *Disasters of the Sun* (the music of Barbara Pentland) and *Liquid*, featuring music for clarinet and large chamber. We have been broadcast nation-wide by the CBC and recorded two film scores.

The 2014/15 season features a mini-tour to Salt Spring Island, Abbotsford, and White Rock as well as the subscription series in Vancouver at three premiere venues: the Vancouver Playhouse, Simon Fraser University Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, and the Telus Studio at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts. In 2015, we are broadening our acclaimed education program "Creating Composers", with co-presentations throughout BC, and by participating as ensemble-in-residence with Vancouver Pro Musica's 2015 Sonic Boom Festival.



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## About Westbank First Nation

Westbank First Nation (WFN) was established in 1963 as we formally separated from the Okanagan Indian Band located in Vernon, BC. WFN is one of the 8 member communities that comprise the syilx Nation (Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands, Upper Nicola Indian Band, Okanagan Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Colville Confederated Tribes (USA), Westbank First Nation), which is represented by the Okanagan Nation Alliance. We are syilx in that we share a common language (nsyilxcən), and traditionally we would share in the resources that were provided throughout our territory and that we have established borders surrounding our lands.

The syilx people have resided in this territory since time immemorial. The syilx territory spans north to Mica Creek; south to Wilbur, Washington; east to Kootenay Lake; and West to the Nicola Valley. We were semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers and today we continue to practice our culture and traditions despite the attempted elimination of our language, history and people. Today we pride ourselves by empowering our community to govern ourselves, rewrite history, and walk these lands with our heads held high.

We have never surrendered, sold, traded or undergone any treaty process in regards to any portion of our lands. Prior to the time of settlement, our people had effective education, justice, and governing structures in place centering on community and the health of the lands and resources. We viewed and respected each aspect of the community as equals and were always happy to celebrate with one another. We were thriving and had established very organized and respectful protocols with neighbouring nations to ensure peace on our lands. Despite our established systems and protocols, reserves were allotted to us by the Canadian government without consent or consultation. It was not until we were confined to reserves that our people and lands began to suffer, leading to a history of misunderstanding and misrepresentation.

We continue to work as a Nation to address the misrepresentations and the issues surrounding colonization, assimilation and the mismanagement of lands and resources. Today our people must balance traditional knowledge with contemporary ideologies. It is a difficult path but we have a responsibility as Okanagans (suqnakinx) to carry our messages to the top or highest end so that our people, place and knowledge is respected as a viable contribution to society as a whole.

Today WFN is recognized as self-governing. Westbank First Nation is the youngest of all communities within the syilx Nation and one of the smaller communities consisting of just over 800 WFN members and over 5000 acres of land. However, WFN lands are also home to over 9000 non-WFN members represented by the WFN Advisory Council, the most non-member residents on reserve lands in all of Canada.

To be syilx is to be actively intertwined with the many threads that are combined to make our community to be one strong fabric inclusive of all community members' ideas and gifts. Today, you become part of that fabric by experiencing the rewriting of our history from our perspective. Today, our community becomes stronger by representing ourselves and our community with pride.

The Collaborative Partnership would like to thank the following supporters of *The Lake | N-ha-a-itk*



Astrolabe Musik Theatre, Turning Point Ensemble, and Westbank First Nation gratefully acknowledge the support of many individuals and organizations that have contributed meaningfully to the development and presentation of this production. These include:

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