THE SOUTH DAKOTA SYMPHONY

Lakota Music Project
Lakota Music Project Goals

• Address a long history of racial tensions;
• Build bridges between whites and Native Americans;
• Advance cultural understanding;
• Create an environment of openness and collaboration through the universal language of music.
Key People Involved

• Delta David Gier, SDSO Music Director
• Barry LeBeau, Native American Liaison
• Dr. Ronnie Theisz, Lakota Music Scholar at Black Hills State University
• Porcupine Singers & Creekside Singers
• Jeff Paul, SDSO Principal Oboe and composer
• Brent Michael Davids, composer
• Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, composer
What is the Lakota Music Project?

• Collaboration between the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra and the Creekside Singers (a Lakota Drumming Group)
• Features four life experiences in every culture:
  – Love/Courtship
  – War
  – Grief/Mourning
  – Joy/Celebration
• Also showcases the rewards of two cultures working together
LMP – Love/Courtship

Lakota culture believes “when you are love that is the worst time to pick a mate for life”. Shown here was a clip of a song from the perspective of a woman making fun of the sentiment of falling “head over heels” in love, contrasted against Tchaikovsky’s “Romeo and Juliet,” performed by the SDSO. A portion of the DVD performance can be viewed here: http://www.sdpb.org/radio/shows.aspx?MediaID=35046&Parmtype=TV&ParmAccessLevel=sdpb-all
Lakota Music Project History

- Began as the brainchild of Maestro Gier in 2005
- 2005-2009 “Getting to know you” period
- Phase 1
  - May 2009: First tour of LMP to three Native American reservations and two South Dakota communities
  - performed at the Governor’s Conference on Tourism in January of 2010, and at Crazy Horse Memorial on Native American Day in October 2010
Lakota Music Project History

• Phase 2
  – Second visit to Crazy Horse Memorial on Native American Day in October 2012
  – World Premiere of Tate’s “Waktégli Olówaŋ (Victory Songs)”
  – Second tour of LMP to four communities on or near South Dakota Native American Reservations
Lessons Learned

• Know your community and audience
  – Is your program relevant?
  – Does the program fill a gap in the community?
• Find the “mover & shaker”
  – Who will get your foot in the door?
  – Who gives you “street cred”?
• Evaluate the program
  – What’s working? What isn’t working?
  – What does the community need/want?