

## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

*Harmonizing Tradition and Creativity***Max Dawes to conduct original composition at Benaroya Hall**

In the heart of Suquamish tradition lies a story as old as time itself—the tale of Creation. For Max Dawes, a 21-year-old Suquamish tribal member and senior at Cornish College of the Arts, the ancient story served as both muse and guide in a composition to be performed at Seattle’s Benaroya Hall on April 19.

Created in collaboration with Tribal Elder and storyteller Barbara Lawrence, Dawes will conduct his original symphony *Creation* with a 25-member orchestra drawn from north Kitsap’s Kids in Concert program. Also among those performing from tribal member households are: Elilai Abraham, Kylie Cordero, Amaya Lawrence, Dio Lawrence, Zac Mabe, Corrina Sigo, Everly Sigo, and Corrina Sigo, and Ana Villa.

**From Guitar Hero to Creation maestro**

Dawes’ journey into the world of music is as eclectic as it is inspiring.

Dawes was first drawn to music playing Guitar Hero when he was five years old, strumming along on the plastic guitar-shaped game controller to Black Sabbath and Jimi Hendrix with his family. He would soon take up playing a real guitar, learning chords and songs by watching YouTube videos. It wasn’t long before he was learning just about ev-

ery instrument he could get his hands on — bass, piano, drums, saxophone, and more.

By the time he was a sophomore at Kingston High School he was a blossoming musician and joined Kids in Concert, a free, after-school music education program, funded in part by the Suquamish Foundation.

After learning viola, Dawes wanted to write his own music, and the KIC staff connected him with a composition teacher and eventually helped with his enrollment into Cornish.

And then the pandemic hit. That’s when Dawes found himself

drawn back to the timeless tale of Creation. The KIC staff had been searching for an original Native American composition, and the Suquamish Tribe’s Culture Committee gave them permission to commission Dawes to score the *Creation* story.

“It was still the height of the pandemic, so we stood out in my yard — at a safe distance — and he recorded me telling the *Creation* story,” recalls Barbara Lawrence. It was a daunting task to even consider translating the story into music, Dawes says. “But her storytelling inspired me.”

**A journey of creation**

From there, Dawes spent months crafting his piece, listening to Lawrence’s words over and over again, usually with an instrument in hand, jotting the notes and melodies that emerged into a sheet music program on his computer.

He describes his method as “very workman-like. I couldn’t wait for inspiration to come to me. I had to just work at it every day,” Dawes explains.

He describes the composition as a reflection on “humankind’s place in nature. Because to me, that’s what the *Creation* story is about. How to live on the Earth. And how to live with the Earth.”

By the time he was done composing his piece, he hated it.

**How to co-exist**

*Creation* is the story of how Creator makes the world — first the plant people, then the animal people, and finally the human people — and teaches them how to be in the world. In her rendering of the story, it’s what Lawrence calls the “Original Instructions” — how to live and co-exist in a good way.

Creator gives the human people languages to help them remind each other of the Original Instructions. Creator asks the plant people and the animal people to help the humans as well. The plant and animal people agree, as long as the human people are thankful.

When he first listened to the playback of his finished composition on his computer program, Dawes thought it just fell flat.

“At first, I honestly didn’t like it,” says Dawes. But if music is a kind of language and thankfulness sparks the power of creative co-existence, Dawes soon found his composition hitting sweeter notes.

“When the kids played it, it just came to life for me. It all unlocked as real music that now exists in the world. I loved it. I was so thankful for them,

**(Continued on p7)****Free Tickets for April 19 Concert**

Free tickets to Potlatch Symphony, which will include Suquamish tribal member Max Dawes’ adaptation of the *Creation* story, among other Native American performances at Benaroya Hall, are available here: [bit.ly/4afqV2L](https://bit.ly/4afqV2L)

Also among those performing are:

Elilai Abraham	Narration
Kylie Cordero	Cello, Narration
Amaya Lawrence	Narration
Dio Lawrence	Percussion, Narration
Zac Mabe	Narration
Corrina Sigo	Percussion
Everly Sigo	Viola, Narration
Corrina Sigo	Percussion
Ana Villa	Bass

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and how well-suited they were at playing it.”

As the world began to emerge from the pandemic, the composition premiered with a performance at Kiana Lodge in the spring of 2022. And now, the composition will make its way to Benaroya Hall.

“It has been an amazing privilege to see Max grow as a musician and human over the years,” says KIC’s founder and Artistic Director Laura Milleson. “His boundless talent, curiosity, and dedication to life and music are inspiring, and I can’t wait to watch him conduct his composition at Benaroya!”

During a recent rehearsal with the Kids in Concert musicians, Dawes says he is filled with a mix of excitement and gratitude. This opportunity to conduct his composition in such a prestigious venue, alongside these talented musicians, feels like the hard work of creating and collaborating is paying off in ways that just feel right.

Dawes is thankful to be among the human people who have remembered the Original Instructions and who offer their own retelling of these teachings in a good way.

“It’s not surreal. It just feels like what we’ve been working towards. And I am so very thankful.”

By Jon Anderson

A CELEBRATION OF  
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A FREE COMMUNITY EVENT

Featuring “Creation”  
by Suquamish tribal member and KIC grad  
**Max Dawes**

And The World Premiere of  
**Potlatch Symphony 2020**

Benaroya Hall | April 19, 2024

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Kids in Concert

**SEATTLE SYMPHONY**

## Suquamish Tribe breaks ground for new ‘Clearwater Market’

### First in a new chain of outlets planned throughout Kitsap County



The Suquamish Tribe has begun construction in Poulsbo on the first in a new chain of “Clearwater Market” retail outlets.

Located at the intersection of Bond Road and Gunderson Road, the 7,700-square-foot facility marks the first business venture by the Suquamish Tribe outside the Port Madison Reservation.

The Poulsbo Clearwater Market will include a 5,000-square-foot convenience store with a 9-pump gas station, alongside a 2,700-square-foot Agate Dreams cannabis store. Tribal business leaders expect to welcome the market’s first customers by the end of the year.

“We ask our ancestors for guidance when we do these things,” said Tribal Elder Peg Deam, offering a blessing at the groundbreaking. “I am thankful to our ancestors, our Elders, and especially our leaders at Tribal Council and PME for making the decisions that get us to events like to today.”

Considered a sign of blessing, a bald eagle flew overhead throughout the ceremony, which also included traditional songs offered by Suquamish Song & Dance.

“This is an important milestone for our tribe. We’ve come a long way to get to this point, dating from when we overcame many challenges just to get our first bingo hall open on the reservation,” said Suquamish Tribe Chairman Leonard Forsman. “We’ve worked hard over the years to create businesses offering quality services, good value, and a warm hospitality that reflects the spirit of

our people. Now, we are bringing all that to the wider community across our ancestral territory.”

Indeed, run by the tribe’s business arm Port Madison Enterprises, additional Clearwater Markets are planned in Silverdale and Bremerton, among other potential locations.

“We’re doing a lot at PME in terms of working really hard to extend our retail footprint into your ancestral homelands, reestablishing our presence out there in the community and to let folks know that this is your territory,” Port Madison Enterprises CEO Rion Ramirez told a gathering of tribal members and PME staff during a groundbreaking ceremony at the site.

“It is very exciting to go off the reservation,” said PME Chief Operating Officer and Tribal Council Secretary Irene Carper. She said she is looking forward to seeing Clearwater Market build on the brand and reputation of the tribe’s other enterprises that include the Clearwater Casino Resort, White Horse Golf Course, Agate Dreams cannabis stores, and three convenience store-gas stations, among others.

“Thank you to everyone who made this possible,” said Forsman. “We’re looking forward to more of these to come.”

By Jon Anderson



Scan to watch groundbreaking video.