

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: AUGUST 5, 2022

**Opera Performances at All Nations Teepee Village
Yellowstone Revealed**

August 24, 2022 - August 25, 2022 at 5pm
Madison Junction, Yellowstone National Park

In partnership with Intermountain Opera Bozeman, Mountain Time Arts (MTA) is excited to bring two evenings of classical performances to Yellowstone National Park featuring Indigenous opera singers, Soprano, Kirsten C. Kunkle (Myskoke) and Mezzo-Soprano, Kate Morton (Cherokee). Michael Sakir, Artistic Director of Intermountain Opera Bozeman will accompany Kunkle and Morton on the piano and Sapphire Ferguson-Jetty (Dakota and Chippewa) will play Métis fiddle music on both nights.

The performances will take place at 5pm on August 24th and 25th at All Nations Teepee Village in Madison Junction during Yellowstone Revealed.

Kunkle will be premiering an art song commissioned specifically for Yellowstone Revealed called "Reclaim the Land," and it focuses on the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Yellowstone.

Also being performed both nights is "Fire" by Ian Cusson (Métis). The piece speaks to the "interconnectedness of nature, strength of women, and voices of mountains". Our performance will be the United States premiere of the work. Coupled with Kunkle's world premiere of her own work, this will be quite the momentous program.

Yellowstone Revealed is a series of place-based projects by an inter-tribal group of Indigenous artists and scholars that will premiere in Yellowstone National Park in August 23-27, 2022. Yellowstone Revealed's upcoming public artworks are non-invasive, temporary projects designed to demonstrate the historic and continued presence of Indigenous people in the Yellowstone region. The multidisciplinary artworks coincide with Yellowstone National Park's 150th anniversary and will seek to put forward Indigenous truths and perspectives. Yellowstone Revealed will provide a platform and long-overdue opportunity to envision and co-create the future of the park.

Mountain Time Arts (MTA) drives change through the cultivation of bold and engaging public art projects and programs that explore the history, culture and environment of the Rocky Mountain West and its Sovereign Nations. To learn more about Mountain Time Arts, visit: mountaintimearts.org.

Intermountain Opera Bozeman inspires and creates community and collaboration through world-class opera, musical theater, and educational engagement. To learn more about Intermountain Opera Bozeman, visit: intermountainopera.org.

MTA is grateful for the support of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Poss Family Foundation, The Henry Luce Foundation, The Parks County Environmental Council, National Park Foundation, Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, JB Askew, Janet Offensend and individual donors.

Media Contact: Francesca Pine-Rodriguez Francesca@mountaintimearts.org
Jaimi Boyd jaimi@mountaintimearts.org

About the Artists:

Dr. Kirsten C. Kunkle is lauded as the leading Native American soprano in today's classical music world and is a voting citizen of the Mvskoke Nation. She has been hailed as an outstanding singing actress with a voice that has been described as beautiful, ethereal, powerful, fiery, and bewitching. Kunkle commissioned and premiered sixteen original compositions, including one of her own, based upon the poetry of her ancestor and highly-acclaimed poet of the Native American Muscogee Nation, Alex Posey. Her recordings are collected at the Library of Congress, the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian Institution (NMAI), and the Merkel Area Museum in Merkel, Texas. Kunkle is included on the list of Classical Native American Artists and Musicians at the Smithsonian Institution's NMAI and on the Molto Native Music list of performers. She was featured as a composer and soloist for the Circle of Resilience concert, with Intermountain Opera Bozeman in May, 2021.

Kate Morton, mezzo-soprano, is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma. Most recently she was an emerging artist with the Seagle Festival where she performed the roles of Queen Aggravain in *Once Upon a Mattress*, Suor Infermiera in *Suor Angelica*, and covered the role of Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*. She was also a guest artist with the Alexandria Summer Nights Music Festival and the Castleton Festival in their production of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* as Cherubino. Morton has performed as a soloist with the Oklahoma City Philharmonic for the celebration of the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City. Her other credits include Jo March in *Adamo's Little Women*, Secretary in *The Consul*, Street Singer in *Die Dreigroschenoper*, Cinderella in *Into the Woods*, Third Spirit in *Die Zauberflöte*, and the Princess in *The Snow Queen*. In 2021 she was a guest artist with Intermountain Opera Bozeman in their Circle of Resilience Concert series which highlighted Native American classical composers and performers. Morton is the recipient of the 2021 Timothy Long Award, as well as a recipient of the Cherokee Nation Trail of Tears Award for Excellence. Morton holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Oklahoma City University in both Music Theatre and Vocal Performance.

Sapphire Ferguson-Jetty is descendant of the Spirit Lake Dakota and Turtle Mountain Chippewa, and she is very passionate about fiddle music. Ferguson-Jetty has been playing fiddle for most of her youth and she has performed at the Myrna Loy Theatre as part of a Metis cultural celebration and this past winter she was a featured performer at the Montana Playwrights Winter Lodge Rendezvous. She has attended numerous fiddle camps and has placed in several Montana fiddle contests, and she often plays at the Helena Farmers Market and at community gatherings. Ferguson-Jetty plays western style fiddle tunes, and her repertoire includes traditional Metis fiddle music. In addition, she is a jingle dress dancer and participates in regional powwow and is a recent graduate from Helena High School.

Conductor Michael Sakir serves as the Artistic Director of Intermountain Opera and has been praised for his "artistic authority," "fluidity of expression," and "great delicacy of feeling." Sakir has held chorus master, assistant conductor, and coach positions for nearly three dozen productions with Santa Fe Opera, Washington National Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Sarasota Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Pensacola Opera, and Opera Boston. Sakir holds bachelor degrees in Piano Performance and Music History from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and a graduate degree in Orchestral Conducting from The Boston Conservatory. He was a participant in the 2017 OPERA America Leadership Intensive. He is a native of Northern California.