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FEB. 19, 2014 | 021-14

Opera Laurier to explore Aboriginal history in *Giiwedin*

WATERLOO – Opera Laurier will perform *Giiwedin*, an Aboriginal opera composed by local talent, Feb. 28, March 1 and March 2 on Laurier’s Waterloo campus. The performances commemorate Laurier’s Aboriginal Awareness Week, taking place March 1-7.

Giiwedin (The North Wind), blends Baroque and traditional Indigenous music and aesthetics. It was written and co-composed by librettist Spy Dénomme-Welch, an Aboriginal education consultant at Laurier, and Catherine Magowan. Written in Anishnaabemowin, French and English, and set in Northeastern Ontario, *Giiwedin* tells the story of Noodin-Kwe, a 150-year-old Aboriginal woman, and her struggle to protect her ancestral land.

“This production offers a unique opportunity to our students to engage with First Nations history and culture, most of them for the very first time,” said Professor Kimberly Barber, administrative coordinator of Opera at Laurier. “It also allows us to tell an important and mostly untold story about first contact and its impacts and implications in a way that is both accessible and theatrically intense, while allowing students to collaborate with the Aboriginal community.”

The Saturday-night performance on March 1 is one of three events launching Aboriginal Awareness Week. The Aboriginal Day of Celebration begins with a talk by special guest Susan Aglukark at 2 p.m., a reception and dinner at 6 p.m. and the opera at 8 p.m. For more information about these events and how to purchase tickets, visit www.wlu.ca/aboriginal.

Tickets for the opera are free for Laurier students, high-school students and children, \$10 for adults, and \$5 for seniors and non-Laurier university students. Tickets can be purchased at the door before each performance, or in advance by emailing concerts@wlu.ca or calling 519-884-1970 ext. 4439.

Performances take place in the Theatre Auditorium at the following dates and times:

- Friday, Feb. 28 at 8 p.m.
- Saturday, March 1 at 8 p.m.
- Sunday, March 2 at 3 p.m.

Opera Laurier consists of voice performance students enrolled in “The Practice of Opera” course and dedicated student volunteers. Every year, Opera Laurier puts on a production of excerpts in the fall and a full opera in the spring.