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Odyssey Productions
Pacific Studio + AldrichPears Associates
Hilbulb Cultural Center: Tulalip Tribes

Longhouse

The Show: Preparing for a Celebration

Concept Draft

Longhouse

The Show: Preparing for a Celebration

A multimedia Object Theater experience

Pre-show--ambient soundscape: Interactive soundscape that seeks to gently create the sense of being in a dwelling in the time before contact with western culture and technology. Sounds will come from various places and may appear to move (for example, following a barking dog running along the outside wall. The volume is low and non-intrusive. Possibilities include: children – firemaking – cooking – people talking in Lushootseed, laughing – dogs – birds outside – many kinds of wind – rain – thunder – ocean waves.

Visitors enter longhouse

Sounds	Loud rhythmic drumming coming from outside and inside the space. A haunting bone-whistling. Feet moving across a dirt floor. Soft background sounds of rain hitting the wooden roof.
Lighting	The space is dimly lit. The fire crackles and glows.
Shadows	Firelight flickers boldly on the walls.
Object Theater	
Elder	

Elder welcome

Shadows	The large ominous shadow of a raven, flapping its wings, flies 360 degrees around the space.
Sounds	The other-worldly croaking of the raven. A dog yelps.
Object Theater	A full-size raven, sitting on a branch.
Lighting	The fire flares up. The lights go down.
Elder	The Elder appears, ghost-like, above the fire, the glow

	reflected on his face. He greets us and welcomes us to the Longhouse.
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Called by spirit whistles

Sounds	Rain pounds on the roof. The wind howls. Tree branches creak and brush against the roof and walls. Dialogue of people speaking Lushootseed – "sit here," squealing children, guiding adults.
Lighting	Firelight.
Shadows	Around the room, shadows of Native Americans wearing (capes and basket hats) move about as though taking their seats.
Object Theater	A cape. A basket hat.
Elder	The Elder tells us that we were called here for the winter ceremony by spirit whistles. Winter – short wet days and long dark nights – is the time the spirits visit.

Time for ...

Elder	The Elder continues: <i>Time for feasts ...</i>
Object Theater	Huge elaborate dishes with food, ornate carved spoons, baskets
Sounds	Many voices laughing and talking festively in Lushootseed.
Lighting	Firelight.
Shadows	Firelight shadows.

Elder	<i>Time for music, and dancing.</i>
Shadows	Shadows of Native Americans dancing, perhaps with long robes that have glimmering objects sewn into them that flash on the walls like the reflection off a disco ball. Perhaps see a shadow of someone wearing a huge mask with a long beak.
Object Theater	A dance costume. A drum. Drumming sticks.
Sounds	Chorus of voices, chanting. Dozens of people beating split sticks in rhythm
Lighting	Firelight.

Elder	<i>Time for stories.</i>
Shadows	Shadows run amok: A wolf runs partway around the space. A giant frog leaps. A bear stands on its hind legs and claws at the sky.
Sounds	The drumming and beating get louder and louder. A wolf howls. Frogs croak. A bear growls a long "W-o-o-o-o-o-o-o"
Object Theater	Perhaps a totem pole or elaborate mask.
Lighting	Firelight.

The storm

Sounds	Rattles shake out a loud, fast, lively rhythm.
Lighting	The fire flares up again.
Elder	Smoke swirls around the Elder and we no longer see him; only faint colors as though he's still there in the smoke.

Sounds	The rattles slow and soften to create a background rhythm. Ocean waves lap at the shore. A ghostly voice comes from the fire: <i>Long, long ago, in the land of the Tulalip, two brothers went to live in the ocean and became killer whales.</i>
Shadows	Shadows of two men in the ocean who are transformed into orca whales.

Sounds	A huge thunderclap. The ghostly voice continues: <i>One winter many years later, unusual storms struck. People could not put food by as usual. By spring, they were starving.</i> Sounds of many people wailing, crying and praying in Lushootseed.
Lighting	Flashes of lightning.

Sounds	The rattles continue. The ghostly voice continues:
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	<i>Just in time, the salmon run started. The people thought their suffering was at an end.</i>
Shadows	Shadows of many salmon swimming past.

Sounds	The rattles continue. The ghostly voice continues: <i>But seals came and devoured all the salmon.</i> Sound of seals grunting and snorting. <i>The people were in despair. It was then they remembered their ancestors, and called to them for help.</i>
Shadows	The salmon shadows disappear all at once. Shadows of seals swim past.

Sounds	The rattles continue. Voices of many people saying the phrase to call for help in Lushootseed. They repeat the call.
Shadows	Perhaps shadows of hands reached upward in supplication.

Killer whale rescue of the Tulalip people

Sounds	The rattles continue. The ghostly voice continues: <i>The killer whales heard the people's call. They caught the seals and tossed them on the beach. In that way they saved the people from starvation, and preserved the salmon run for future generations.</i> Accompanying sounds: Splashing of waves, whoosh of whales' spouting, thumping sound on beach, voices of celebration.
Shadows	Shadow of killer whales swimming and splashing

Carving revealed

Object Theater	The dramatically carved killer whale is revealed behind the scrim.
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Elder	The Elder emerges again from the swirls of smoke and says that we honor the killer whale who brings us food.
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Celebration

Sounds	Food preparation sounds. Boiling water, movement, cutting, pounding. Happy voices in Lushootseed. Drumming from the beginning starts in again.
Lighting	Brilliant daylight streams in from the skylights/smokeholes.
Shadows	Perhaps shadows of eagle down surrounding the space, looking almost like confetti
Object Theater	Cooking basket on fire with boiling rocks.
Elder	The Elder says simply, <i>Now it is time for the feast.</i> The Elder completely disappears.