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Spreading the joy of classical music and inspiring youth, Kirk Muspratt to be recognized with honorary degree

Raised in Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, Kirk Muspratt cultivated his love of music into an impactful career as a conductor and educator, dedicating his life to spreading the joy of music through magical, inspiring performances. For his unwavering passion and enthusiasm for music and music education, the University of Lethbridge will present Muspratt with an honorary degree at Spring 2025 Convocation.

“Kirk Muspratt is remarkable for his unwavering commitment to make classical music accessible and enjoyable for all people,” says ULeithbridge Chancellor Terry Whitehead (BA ‘94). “His unique approach breaks barriers and invites people, especially younger audiences, into the classical world, entertaining and educating all at once. He is richly deserving of an honorary degree.”



Muspratt will be bestowed with an honorary Doctor of Letters, honoris causa, at Spring 2025 Convocation, Ceremony III, on Friday, May 30, at 9 a.m. in the Centre for Sport and Wellness gymnasium.

Kirk Muspratt

An internationally renowned conductor and music director, Maestro Kirk Muspratt came from humble beginnings. Music was part of his life from an early age; he had his first piano lesson with Mrs. Madeline Pinkney after his first day of school. He credits her with shaping what was to follow in his life. He was six years old when he participated in music festivals in the Crowsnest Pass and eight when he entered festivals in Lethbridge. Muspratt joined the Crowsnest Pass Symphony Orchestra at age 11. After high school, he was accepted at the prestigious Juilliard School in New York City. He went on to study at Temple University in Philadelphia and the Vienna Conservatory. Muspratt had a summer apprenticeship with Leonard Bernstein at Tanglewood, the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s summer academy for advanced music study.

In his professional life as a music director and conductor with the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra, New Philharmonic and the Dupage Opera Theater, Muspratt focuses on bringing classical music to the masses without the stuffiness with which it's typically associated. He's especially keen on thinking of ways to introduce younger people to the genre and following up with opportunities to expand their interest and encourage ongoing involvement. Muspratt developed a Just Ask Kirk program so audience members could ask him questions. The Cookies with Kirk and Interactive Intermission initiatives allow patrons and musicians to meet, and the Kirkature cartoon supports his belief that symphonic music can have broad appeal.

Another popular program he developed is the Solo Competition for Children, which results in a different child being chosen to perform at a Northwest Indiana Symphony concert. High school students get the chance to perform with New Philharmonic musicians through the Side by Side concerts. Muspratt implemented an Orchestral Fellowship Program with Indiana's Valparaiso University, and his vision helped found the South Shore Music Festival.

His career has included serving as assistant conductor at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, music director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra, associate conductor at the Utah Symphony Orchestra, resident conductor at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and music director of the Alberta Ballet.

Muspratt has earned many accolades for his work and has been a guest conductor with orchestras around the world. He possesses boundless enthusiasm and passion for music. He remains proud of his southern Alberta roots. Muspratt owns the house where he was born and spends as much time in the community as his schedule allows, adjudicating festivals in Lethbridge and Crowsnest Pass and mentoring young performing artists.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/spreading-joy-classical-music-and-inspiring-youth-kirk-muspratt-be-recognized-honorary>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people

and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.