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Continental Harmony Premiere in Kenai and Homer, Alaska New Composition Celebrates Nature and Life on Kenai Peninsula

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St. PAUL, Minn., July 11, 2006—Composer Adrienne Albert's new *Continental Harmony* piece titled "Facing the Elements" will premiere as part of the Summer Music Festival Gala Concerts of the Kenai Peninsula Orchestra August 11 in Kenai at the René C. Henderson Auditorium and August 12 in Homer at the Mariner Theatre, both at 7:30 p.m. General admission for the concerts is \$15; Raven's Club members, \$12; seniors, \$13; students, \$7; and families, \$40. In addition to the premiere, the concert will include the Mozart Concerto #1 in G Major for flute featuring guest artist Laura Koenig, flautist and adjunct professor at University of Alaska-Anchorage, and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

The Summer Music Festival Gala Concerts will premiere the first movement of Albert's "Facing the Elements." The second movement, "Animalogy," was premiered June 16 at the Pratt Museum in Homer by a woodwind quintet comprised of Barbara Horn, bassoon; Tammy Vollom-Matturro, clarinet; Karen Syvrud, flute; Jan Coldwell, oboe; and Heather Beggs, French horn. All three movements of the work will be premiered April 29, 2007 as part of the 25th Anniversary Season of the Kenai Peninsula Orchestra. The April performance will feature the Kenai Peninsula Orchestra and Kenai Peninsula Community Chorus and Homer High School Choir.

Albert began her *Continental Harmony* project by visiting the communities along the Kenai Peninsula and getting to know the people that comprise these areas. After gaining the knowledge of the richness of this region, she went to work writing a piece of music that weaves together the many cultures represented in this community, as well as the mingling of its inhabitants with the surrounding nature and animal life.

According to composer Albert, "Working on this *Continental Harmony* Project with the wonderful people of the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska has been a dream come true. Although I've always loved to travel, I had no idea that the wanderlust in me to see and do as much as possible would be translated into a musical work. As gorgeous as the Kenai Peninsula is, ultimately, this experience is about the people of this land. So, as the work progresses, the three movements will be: 1. The Land; 2. The Animals; 3. The People. The first movement is titled "Facing the Elements", something the people of Alaska do everyday.

Programmatic by nature, the work opens quietly, ominously, with the lowest instruments of the orchestra imperceptibly growing, as the violins appear playing harmonics producing an eerie sound. Evolution

(more)

occurs; tectonic plates move, mountains form, glaciers appear, oceans and bays rise and fill, and the glorious land that we know as the Kenai Peninsula is formed.”

This project is sponsored by the Kenai Peninsula Orchestra in partnership with the Pratt Museum and Pier One Theatre, as part of the American Composers Forum’s Continental Harmony project. According to Kenai Peninsula Orchestra Artistic Director Mark Robinson, “The incredible thing about this work is that it is not only for us but about us. It is humbling and exciting to have a composer of Adrienne Albert's caliber compose about both where we live and who we are. It is very rewarding to have a tangible musical expression of our wonderful Kenai Peninsula.”

The Kenai Peninsula Orchestra performs two Gala concerts each summer, which are the culmination of two weeks of intense rehearsals, clinics and master classes. There are free luncheon concerts by various ensemble performances around the Kenai Peninsula, as part of the two-week orchestra festival. Members of the KPO and visiting out of state musicians attend rehearsals in Ninilchik, which is half way between Homer and Soldotna. Dress rehearsals are held in Kenai and in Homer in the performance venue. The two concerts usually feature a guest artist or two, performing a concerto with the KPO, as well as other large works of the orchestral repertoire. Some of their guest artists have included Linda Rosenthal, Mark Wolbers, Zdenek Prouza, Linn Weeda, Dean Epperson, and members of the DeVere Quartet, as well as several local musicians.

Continental Harmony has been recognized as a model of local community artistic initiative. The initiative has been launched by the American Composers Forum in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts as a way of bringing composers and communities together each for the creation of original musical works reflecting the unique history, culture and spirit of community. Each host site identifies a theme, an occasion, and local performers for a musical work that will be meaningful to its citizens. With the assistance of American Composers Forum, the community group then selects the composer best able to write the music and carry out the residency.

During the inaugural round of the program in the year 2000, American Composers Forum discovered that *Continental Harmony* projects bring people together, heighten community feeling and sense of place, and encourage the formation of collaborations among groups. At the same time the artistic resources of the area are often strengthened and validated. As a result of this inaugural round, Twin Cities Public Television created an award-winning documentary and website. For more information, visit www.continentalharmony.org

Continental Harmony is a leadership initiative of the American Composers Forum and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional funding provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, and Marshall Field's Project Imagine with support from the Target Foundation.

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