



Pandemic-Delayed World Premiere of New Work Inspires Community Collaborations, Hybrid Concert on May 16

May 16, 2021 - Oklahoma City - Canterbury Voices, Oklahoma's largest and oldest community chorus, will present an original commission, *Of Perpetual Solace*, featuring soloist-cantor Lisa Reagan Love and the Oklahoma City Philharmonic, on Sunday, May 16, at 3:00 PM, at the Civic Center Music Hall in Oklahoma City.

The 45-minute work – in commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Murrah Building Bombing – was written by Oklahoma composer Edward Knight and librettist M.J. Alexander for full orchestra, cantor, large chorus, chamber choir and children's chorus. The husband-and-wife team, who live within walking distance of the bombing site, drew inspiration from conversations with survivors.

Originally scheduled to premiere in March 2020, *Of Perpetual Solace* was postponed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and has been rescheduled for Sunday, May 16, 2021, at 3:00 PM. Canterbury, led by artistic director Dr. Randi Von Ellefson, reimagined rehearsals and performances in light of the pandemic and found a way to sing again through the innovative use of specialized singers' masks developed by the Broadway Relief Project; socially-distanced rehearsals and safety protocols. A pared-down chorus, joined by the OKC Philharmonic orchestra, combined with the power of video production and will feature musical sequences from the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. The audio-visual production team included siblings Matt and Pat Horton of Norman.

A large-scale, multimedia concert event, *Of Perpetual Solace* will also feature a 47-voice children's chorus and 18 member adult ensemble. "I feel I've been preparing my entire life to write this music," said composer Edward Knight. "It has been years in the making, and demanded that I tap deep into our shared human spirit to bring out the essence of what is good and important and lasting."

Due to strict health and safety protocols, six hundred socially-distanced audience members will be allowed into the Civic Center Music Hall, one-third of the normally 2,400 seats. The performance will also be offered as an on-demand streaming event from May 23 to June 20, 2021.

Of Perpetual Solace progresses from darkness into light – toward an embrace of comfort, hope, and serenity. "This is the most ambitious commission we have undertaken in our 51-year history," Pam Mowry, Canterbury's Executive Director, said. "It is an epic work that has a profound meaning to so many of us. It was written by Oklahomans for Oklahomans, and offered to all who have dealt with grief, mourning, and recovery."

The work progresses from darkness to light, progressing toward an embrace of comfort, hope and serenity. The libretto weaves original and classic poetry with excerpts from prayer services honoring the fallen; President Bill Clinton's eulogy delivered on site in the hours after the attack; words of Martin Luther King, who preached at nearby Calvary Baptist Church; and the epitaph of Quanah Parker. The closing notes linger with echoes of the breath of life, as each singer whispers the name of a community member lost in the bombing and a continuing heartbeat, representing the hope for peace and of perpetual solace.

For additional details and ticket information, please visit <https://canterburyokc.com/of-perpetual-solace/>.

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About Canterbury Voices:

Now in its fifth decade, Canterbury Voices has grown into the premier symphony chorus of Oklahoma, bringing singers and audiences from throughout Oklahoma to the place where music truly comes alive. Since 1969, Canterbury Voices has served central Oklahoma with song. Canterbury Voices continues its mission to transform lives, inspire communities, and educate the future through excellence in choral artistry.
