

ECHO COMMISSIONS PIECE TO ILLUSTRATE CONNECTIONS OF DISTANT REGIONS, CULTURES

The Anchorage Symphony Orchestra announces as part of its 2008/2009 concert season the world premiere performance of *Echoes*, a multimedia symphonic piece incorporating Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Native American music, singing and dancing with New England sea music. The work will be premiered **October 25th and 26th, 2008** during the Alaska Federation of Natives Conference in Anchorage, Alaska.

The Anchorage Symphony performs *Echoes* under the baton of the composer, ASO Music Director Randall Craig Fleischer. Chosen from a pool of applicants, Fleischer was commissioned by the Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations (ECHO), a federally funded educational and cultural enrichment initiative. ECHO is comprised of five regional cultural institutions: Alaska Native Heritage Center and Inupiat Heritage Center in Alaska; Bishop Museum in Hawai'i the New Bedford ECHO project and Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts. First brought in contact with each other through trading and whaling ships, today's partner regions share threads of common history. Fleischer's piece, *Echoes*, illustrates these ties by incorporating indigenous music, images and natural sounds from each region.

Active as a composer, Fleischer is a national leader in the area of symphonic rock and world music fusion. Pioneering these new and growing genres for more than a decade, he has worked with many rock and Native American artists including R. Carlos Nakai, Burning Sky, The Hawk Project, The Benally Family and others. Audiences and critics alike acclaim his work *Triumph*, which incorporates Navajo songs and dances into a symphonic tapestry.

Fleischer notes of his experience researching *Echoes*, "It was just wonderful to meet people from various cultures and engage in good-natured discussions about the history of their music, which is so engrained in their lives. It reinforced my belief that music is the language of peace and brotherhood."

The commissioning of *Echoes*, is part of the ECHO Music and Technology Project, whose purpose is to expand the ECHO partnership's audiences beyond the local public and to educate people in Alaska, Hawai'i and Massachusetts about the geographical, cultural and historical significance of each ECHO region.

In addition to the Anchorage premiere, the National Museum of the American Indian has invited the ECHO Collaborative to perform *Echoes* as part of the annual *Classical Native Series* in November of 2008. Classical Native, which began in 2006, brings classically trained Native American/Alaska Native musicians, composers and chamber groups to Washington DC to present a series of performances, concerts and recitals. *Echoes* will be performed the evening of **Saturday, November 8, 2008 in the Rasmuson Theater.**

Helen Maynor Scheirbeck, Senior Advisor for Museum Programs wrote: "Since the Museum opened in 2004, our goal has been to share the diversity of Native song, dance, and music and spoken word here with our many publics." The performance of *Echoes* can serve this end as

well as ECHO's mandate of creating and delivering programs of national significance that communicate the diversity of indigenous peoples.

Performance of *Echoes* is only a portion of the larger ECHO Music and Technology Project; development of an educational computer game on CD-ROM and a condensed- version website will provide interactivity and an expanded reach in educating the public in the ECHO regions' histories and cultures.