

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 15, 2010

Accompany Camerata Nova to the time of First Contact with Medieval Inuit

WINNIPEG, Manitoba – Return with Camerata Nova to the time of first contact and experience the music of the Inuit people and the Europeans who first encountered them in **Medieval Inuit**. Conductor Mel Braun will lead us in a truly unique musical event inside the beautiful and soaring spiral of **Église Précieux-Sang** (Precious Blood Church), 200 Kenny Street, St. Boniface on **Saturday, March 13 at 8 pm** and **Sunday, March 14 at 3 pm**.

Camerata Nova's Artistic Director, Andrew Balfour, has partnered with Inuk singer and songwriter Madeleine Allakariallak to celebrate a fascinating range of music. *Medieval Inuit* offers traditional Inuit songs and throat singing from Madeleine and her partner for this event, Sylvia Cloutier; songs passed down from generation to generation shared by elders Elisapie Ootova and the late Minnie Allakariallak, Madeleine's grandmother; medieval music coinciding with the time when Europeans and the Inuit first met; early Scandinavian and Icelandic folksongs and arrangements of Inuit folk songs by Balfour.

"I recently took a trip to the far North and was deeply inspired by the people, their culture and the land, by the sense of isolation and yet also of community. *Medieval Inuit* is a response to a truly Canadian experience", explained Andrew Balfour.

Medieval Inuit is also the name of a major new choral work from Artistic Director Andrew Balfour and will feature Inuit singing, viola and percussion. This premiere is based on the theme of the early encounters between the two cultures, their sounds and rhythms, and incorporates experiments in combining throat singing with rhythmic medieval chant.

The musical experience of *Medieval Inuit* will be enhanced by the projection of powerful Arctic images from the early 1900s. Fred Ford's grandfather was a fur trader and began a three-generation legacy of photographing the Inuit and their art, as well as life in the Canadian North. The image archives of the Ford family are rare and early witnesses of northern culture.

Near to Madeleine Allakariallak's heart is the plight of St. Jude's Cathedral in Iqaluit. In 2005, arson destroyed the iconic igloo-shaped structure. The Cathedral was more than a building. It was a nerve centre for the community, providing services such as a soup kitchen and outreach activities linked to the local hospital and correctional facility. At the concerts, Madeleine will tell the story of the rebuilding of St. Jude's, inviting Manitobans to provide assistance.

Madeleine Allakariallak and Andrew Balfour will give a pre-concert talk before each performance, at 7:15 pm on Saturday, March 13 and at 2:15 pm on Sunday, March 14, in the Précieux-Sang parish hall (attached to the church).

Medieval Inuit

Église Précieux-Sang (200 Kenny Street, St. Boniface)

Saturday, March 13 at 8 pm and Sunday, March 14 at 3 pm

Tickets (adults \$22, seniors \$20, students \$10) available over the phone (918-4547), online at www.cameratanova.com, at McNally Robinson Booksellers or at the door. Camerata Nova is an eyeGO to the arts participant (www.eyego.org).

Biographies provided on page 2.

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Camerata Nova was founded in 1996 as a Winnipeg vocal ensemble dedicated to the exploration and performance of Renaissance music. Today, the group enjoys stretching the boundaries of its repertoire, performing a range of works from medieval songs to new Canadian works, including compositions by its Artistic Director, Andrew Balfour. The group has produced three CDs: *Camerata Nova*, *Mystica* and *Nova Noël*, as well as a DVD entitled *Wa Wa Tey Wak*, featuring Madeleine Allakariallak.

Madeleine Allakariallak grew up singing hymn songs at a very young age in Resolute Bay, Canada's second most northern community, and was taught traditional Inuit songs in high school in Pond Inlet. As a singer-songwriter, her first CD album *TUDJAAT* won several awards. Madeleine has performed all over the world including South Africa, Japan, Europe, across Canada and the United States. She has performed for the Queen of England, three Governor Generals and numerous other dignitaries. Most recently, Madeleine won a songwriting and composition contest celebrating the Nunavut Territory's 10th anniversary. She is constantly inspired by her four children in Iqaluit, where she lives with her partner.

Sylvia Cloutier is a Kuujuaq-based throat-singer, drum dancer and performance artist and is also a founding member of the Inuit performing group *Aqsarniit*. In 2009, Sylvia was named Woman of the Year by *Pauktuutit*, the National Voice of Inuit Women in Canada.

Fred Ford is a Winnipeg-based photographer who continues the legacy of his family by documenting life in Canada's far North and maintaining the Ford Family collection of rare images from the early 1900s.

Conductor Mel Braun is a versatile baritone singer himself who has performed and collaborated nationally. Mel teaches voice and works with opera ensembles at the Marcel A. Désautels Faculty of Music, University of Manitoba, where he is Head of the Voice Department.

Andrew Balfour is the founder, conceptual creator, arranger and Artistic Director of Camerata Nova. He has a wide variety of choral experience, including extensive coaching and clinician work with a variety of choirs in Winnipeg. He was the curator of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's very first Indigenous Festival, held in April 2009. Andrew has been involved extensively in editing and arranging music for 20 years. Since Camerata Nova's inception in 1996, he has specialized in arrangements of medieval, Renaissance, early Baroque and Byzantine choral music. Andrew has also produced many experimental arrangements using unusual instruments in conjunction with voice. Andrew, of Cree descent, started writing his own compositions in 1998. Since then, he has written a great number of choral, instrumental and orchestral works. Many of Andrew's works have been broadcast locally, nationally and internationally. As well, several are featured on Camerata Nova's recordings. In 2007, Andrew received the Mayor of Winnipeg's Making a Mark Award, sponsored by the Winnipeg Arts Council to recognize the most promising midcareer artist in the city.

Further information about Camerata Nova and the artists at: www.cameratanova.com.

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To arrange an interview, photos or sound clips or for more information, please contact:
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