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Albany Symphony Resident Composer and Hackett Middle School Students Present *"The Quest of Henry Hudson"*

Concert Tops Off Year-long Educational Collaboration with Performances of Original Student-Composed Pieces

(ALBANY, NY) - On Tuesday, May 18, 2010, students of Albany's Hackett Middle School will present a concert featuring the culmination of a year-long educational collaboration between the Albany Symphony, the orchestra's resident-composer Stacy Garrop, and the City School District of Albany's Hackett Middle School. The concert will begin at 7PM and also features the school's chorus, orchestra, and band.

Throughout the 2009-2010 school year Garrop has worked with students in an interdisciplinary educational effort centered around musical composition, as well as history, art, theatre, and creative writing. The project's culmination is a lightly staged production involving over 45 students from the middle school's music programs. Throughout the year, students worked with Garrop in small groups with these students to create short pieces for voice and piano. Each group's compositions will be premiered as part of the production, weaved into a tale of exploration and discovery reflecting New York's storied history. Additionally, Garrop has composed pieces for the school's string orchestra to tie each student compositions together, creatively connecting the various parts of the production while giving the students involved the chance to perform a piece written just for them by a professional composer in national demand.

Stacy Garrop, a Chicago-based composer and professor of composition at Roosevelt University, is the Albany Symphony's Resident "Composer-Educator" Partner for the 2009-2010 season, as part of the orchestra's Composer to Center Stage program funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The program, a three-year initiative that fosters collaboration between the ASO and several nationally-acclaimed composers, focuses on engaging the greater community with innovative and unique experiences as part of these collaborations. In November, the Albany Symphony performed Stacy Garrop's exciting *Becoming Medusa* in November 2009, and will present a world premiere of a new work by the composer

during its annual American Music Festival at RPI's Experimental Media Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) on May 23, 2010.

The project at Hackett Middle School primarily involves the school's seventh & eighth grade band, orchestra, and chorus students, but also has involved a majority of the school's students in various art, reading, and writing projects associated with the May 18 performance. Students from Albany High School have also become involved in the project, providing both musical reinforcement and the chance to involve more of the District in this creative collaboration.

For more information on this or any other of the Albany Symphony's guest composers, community engagement projects, or award-winning educational programs, please visit www.albanysymphony.com or contact Education Coordinator Jim Sector at (518) 465-4755 x31.

About the ASO

The Albany Symphony is one of this region's most revered music and cultural institutions, having won numerous national awards for its adventurous concert programming, recording projects, composer residencies, and innovative educational efforts involving area schools throughout the region. As the only professional symphony orchestra based within the Capital Region, the Albany Symphony enriches a broad and diverse regional community, engaging over 150,000 people each year across an extended geographical area. After reviewing the Albany Symphony's recent 2009 recording of music by resident composer George Tsontakis, American Record Guide proclaimed: "The Albany Symphony is now one of the country's great orchestras."

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