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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SONOS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA PRESENTS TWO WORLD PREMIERES
AND A MEMORIAM TO FINNISH COMPOSER PEHR HENRIK NORDGREN**

**Performance to Include Two World premiere Commissions:
Brian Wilbur Grundstrom: *American Reflections*
James Nyoraku Schlefer: *Concerto for Shakuhachi and Chamber Orchestra*;
and the United States Premiere of Pehr Henrik Nordgren's *Cronaca for strings***

[March 3, 2009 – New York, NY] **SONOS Chamber Orchestra**, conducted by **Erik E. Ochsner** will perform on **Sunday, May 10, 2009** at the Good Shepherd Church (208th Street and Broadway, in the Inwood section of Manhattan) at 3PM; and on **Wednesday May 13, 2009** at the Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Center (129 West 67th Street) on Manhattan's Upper West Side at 8pm.

This is Brian Grundstrom's second commission by SONOS Chamber Orchestra, the last being *Celebration* in 2003. Having composed mostly for film, *American Reflections* has allowed Grundstrom the opportunity to compose freely, yet still suggesting a brush of his historical past, having lived in Gettysburg, PA. In the style of concerto grosso, the principal string players have solo parts, in addition to their roles as sections leaders. This quasi Copland-esque style creates a fond memory of an earlier time, while still touching on some modern harmonies of the 21st century.

Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus is a work for harp and string orchestra by Ralph Vaughan Williams. The composition is based on the folk tune "Dives and Lazarus." Commissioned for the 1939 World's Fair in New York City, the first performance was at Carnegie Hall in June 1939, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

Finnish composer Pehr Henrik Nordgren (1944-2008) composed *Cronaca* in four movements, building up dynamic tension through contrasts between rather than within movements. The first movement (Adagio) presents a static soundscape from which the melody lines emerge. The second movement (Duo) divides the string section in two: the solo violin and solo viola converse against a partially aleatory background. The ensuing Agitato is the most dynamic and rhythmic movement. An Epilogo ends the piece on a nostalgic note. Descending patterns can be discerned twice in the slow-moving acoustic surface of the finale, which might bring to mind one of Nordgren's favourite works, Arvo Pärt's Cantus to the Memory of Benjamin Britten. While this work was premiered in 1991, this performance represents the United States Premiere of the work.

James Nyoraku Schlefer's *Concerto for Shakuhachi and Chamber Orchestra* is his first orchestral work. It is a three movement work that follows a classic fast-slow-fast concerto form. Scored for shakuhachi solo, strings, harp and percussion, snare drum, taiko drums, glockenspiel, celeste, xylophone, cymbal, sand blocks, hyoshigi, and wood blocks, the work is indicative of Mr. Schlefer's on-going fascination with bringing together the traditional musical instruments of Japan and those of the West. Mr. Schlefer will also be the soloist in this world premiere performance.

James Nyoraku Schlefer is an American composer who is also a Grand Master of the shakuhachi (the traditional Japanese bamboo flute) and one of only a handful of non-Japanese artists to have achieved this rank. Mr. Schlefer first encountered the shakuhachi in 1979, while working towards a career as a flutist and pursuing an advanced degree in musicology at CUNY (Queens College.) Today, he is considered by his colleagues to be one of most influential Western practitioners of this distinctive art form.



Conductor **Erik E. Ochsner** currently serves as Music Director and founder of SONOS Chamber Orchestra, rehearsal conductor for Academy award/Grammy award winning composer Tan Dun (“Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”; “Hero”). In November 2007, as part of the Tan Dun Composer Festival, Erik conducted members of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra in two chamber music pieces of Tan Dun’s. Ochsner started his collaboration with Tan Dun, in 2002, conducting rehearsals for the world premiere of Tan Dun’s “Tea” in Tokyo. He has been involved with other Tan Dun performances in Amsterdam, Beijing, Denver, Lyon, Macao, New York, Leuven, Perth, Seoul, Stockholm, and Wellington, New Zealand. In 2006, he served as assistant conductor for the workshop of the Tan Dun’s “The First Emperor” in Shanghai, a Metropolitan Opera commission.

In October 2006, Erik conducted the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra in performances of Howard Shore’s evening length “Lord of the Rings Symphony.” He has traveled on tour with the production to twenty-five cities. Previously Ochsner also served as Assistant Conductor Brooklyn Philharmonic under Grammy-award winning conductor Robert Spano, Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony.

In May of 2007, Ochsner conducted the Chinese premiere of Arnold Schoenberg’s *Pierrot lunaire* as part of the Beijing Modern Music Festival. Future concerts are under discussion.

Based in Washington Heights, **SONOS Chamber Orchestra** is a flexible and versatile group of artists devoted to the performance of traditional and innovative forms of classical music in the New York City area. In a city that is internationally recognized for its active arts scene, SONOS is committed to the performance of under-appreciated works as well as standard works of the classical repertoire. For complete repertoire and concert performances, visit www.sonoschamberorch.org.

SONOS Chamber Orchestra

Sunday May 10, 2009: Good Shepherd Church, 608 Isham St., New York, NY, 3pm.
Ticket prices: “Suggested donation” \$15

Wednesday May 13, 2009: Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Center
Goodman House, 129 West 67th Street, New York, NY 10023 8pm.
Ticket prices: \$25/\$15. Tickets online: www.sonoschamberorch.org

PROGRAM

Brian Wilbur Grundstrom	b. 1963	<i>American Reflections</i> for string orchestra and harp	13:00
<i>World Premiere</i>			
<i>SONOS Commission</i>			
Pehr Henrik Nordgren	1944-2008	<i>Cronaca</i> for string orchestra	28:00
<i>United States Premiere</i>			
<i>Intermission</i>			
Ralph Vaughan Williams	1872-1958	<i>Five Variants on Dive and Lazarus</i> for strings and harp	10:30
James Nyoraku Schlefer	b. 1963	<i>Concerto for Shakuhachi, string orchestra, percussion and harp</i>	23:00
<i>World Premiere</i>			
<i>SONOS Commission</i>			
<i>encore</i>			
Ennio Morricone	b. 1928	“Falls” from <i>The Mission</i> (arr. Ochsner)	2:00

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