

THE WAGER

For Immediate Release:
January 12, 2007

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“THE WAGER,” COMING TO THE MESA ARTS CENTER, IS THE CLASSIC STORY OF JOB IN A MODERN DAY MUSICAL

Apache Junction, ARIZ – Internationally known, hometown composer Eugene Anderson has spent nearly a decade of his life working on a project bigger than himself. “The Wager” (based on the Book of Job, one of the most enduring texts of classical literature) is an innovative musical that challenges the conventional forms of genre.

The Wager’s six shows will be preformed at the new Mesa Arts Center over the President’s Day holiday weekend February 17th, 18th and 19th at 2:00pm and 7:30pm with the exception of the 19th when the evening show will be at 7:00pm. Tickets can be purchased for \$55 to \$75 by going to www.MesaArtsCenter.com or by calling 480-644-6500. Group discounts of 10% for 20 or more are available. Tickets are expected to go quickly for this truly unique world premiere event.

“*The Wager* is a story of tragedy and triumph, loss and redemption. It plumbs the depths of human emotion and test the limits of faith, taking the audience on a journey of the soul in search of inner peace and joy,” said Mr. Anderson, writer and composer of *The Wager*. “The Wager” is Mr. Anderson’s first musical theater composition, but it is not his last as two other productions are already on the drawing board. *The Wager* is Anderson’s largest work to date, of over 150 compositions. Some may recall Mr. Anderson’s comparison in the late 90s to the *real* “Mr. Holland’s Opus” because of his 27 year wait for his orchestral debut, much in the same way Glenn Holland’s story with which the movie based on his life, starring Richard Dryefuss was derived.

The Wager is set in Manhattan, in modern time. The show tells the story of 43 year old Jonathon Brytson, America’s richest businessman. Unbeknown to him, his mentor and chief competitor, J., and Lou, contract a bet that puts everything Jonathon has at risk. The terms of the wager requires the mentor, J., to abandon his protégé for 30 days, and have him compete head to head with Lou. The two protagonists wager over Jonathon’s character and integrity and play out the bet on a chess board and in his life,

simultaneously. “For the greatest truth of Job is this: that the greatest possessions we have in life are not the *external* ones we work to own, but rather the *internal* ones we choose to own.” Based on the classic story of Job, “The Wager” is the first full musical ever written on this great tale.

“*The Wager* is the greatest script ever written on Job, it’s perfect!,” Job scholar, opera singer and theater critic, Rabbi Albert Plotkin said. High praise from someone who initially told Mr. Anderson that a musical on the story of Job was impossible! He of course has since changed his mind.

About Eugene Anderson: Born and raised in Brookfield, Wisconsin and married to wife Jeannie, Mr. Anderson received his Bachelor Degree in Music from the University of Wisconsin and a Master’s of Music in composition from Arizona State University. After teaching for two years at ASU, he then went on to be director of bands at Apache Junction High School for the next five years, winning several awards. Mr. Anderson has performed with the Madison Civic Symphony, Toledo Orchestra, Toledo Ballet, Toledo Brass Quintet, Phoenix Symphony, and Mesa Symphony. He has published seventy works so far which have sold worldwide through his own music publishing company. His concerto for tuba and orchestra is the largest solo work to date for this instrument. A recording has been made of the concerto by famed sound engineer Joseph Magee of Los Angeles, included special work performed by recording artist Samuel Pilafian.

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