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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

***“Letter from Italy, 1944: A New American Oratorio”* Documentary
Nominated for Two Emmys**

Middletown, Conn. (May 31, 2016) - Narrated by Meryl Streep, winner of three Oscar Awards, the documentary, “Letter from Italy, 1944: A New American Oratorio,” has recently been nominated for two Emmy Awards by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences’ New England Chapter. Commissioned by Middletown’s GMChorale, the nominated documentary was written, directed and produced by the winner of five previous Emmys, Karyl Evans of Karyl Evans Productions, North Haven.

“Letter from Italy, 1944: A New American Oratorio” describes the creation of a new musical work by a collaboration of Connecticut artists. Sarah Meneely-Kyder, Grammy-nominated composer of Old Lyme and poet Nancy Meneely of Essex joined forces with GMChorale Artistic Director Joseph D’Eugenio of Hamden to create the musical drama. Over 100 Connecticut musicians performed in the oratorio’s premiere.

Effective and poignant, the oratorio is set against the history of the fabled 10th Mountain Division’s elite military ski troops during World War II. Told in music, it is the true story of how one soldier’s PTSD affected generations.

At several recent screenings, medical experts have praised both the oratorio and the documentary, hailing them as useful agents in the process of healing. Others have focused on the oratorio’s artistic and musical aspects, pronouncing them “Brilliant!”

Joseph D’Eugenio, Artistic Director of the GMChorale, produced the oratorio’s book and then directed the soloists, orchestra and the 80-voice GMChorale in the original production at the Middletown Performing Arts Center. Based in Middletown, the GMChorale, commissioned the music in 2012 and produced the oratorio, community conversation events, and the nominated documentary.

The documentary explores the evolution of the GMChorale's commissioned oratorio into a community project of national importance. "GMChorale commissioned the documentary with the hope that *Letter from Italy, 1944's* healing message could reach a wider audience," said D'Eugenio. "With 22 veterans a day committing suicide, we need to address a major national problem - Post Traumatic Stress and its effect on our veterans and their families. Music is one very effective and powerful way to do that."

Emmy categories in which the documentary and Karyl Evans have been nominated are:

Historical/Cultural Program/Special, and Director/Post Production. Evans has also been nominated for an Emmy in the Interstitial category for her work on another documentary, "Connecticut Cultural Treasures – The Shore Line Trolley Museum."

The Emmy Awards will be announced at the Annual Awards Ceremony on June 4 in Boston, Massachusetts.

Support for the Emmy-nominated documentary came from many generous individuals and the following Connecticut entities: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development/Office of the Arts; Tenth Mountain Division Foundation; Kaman Corporation; City of Middletown, Mayor's Office; CThumanities; Community Foundation of Middlesex County/ Ann & George Petry Art Fund; New England Foundation for the Arts; Pratt & Whitney/UTC; Middletown Commission on the Arts; and McPhee Electric, Ltd.

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