GMChorale Documentary Results in Emmy for Karyl Evans

Middletown, Conn. (June 6, 2016) – The GMChorale’s commissioned work, the video documentary “Letter from Italy, 1944: A New American Oratorio,” enabled Karyl Evans to receive her sixth Emmy Award on Saturday. The award was announced in Boston on June 4th at the 39th Boston/New England Emmy Awards Ceremony by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

Karyl Evans, of Karyl Evans Productions LLC, is well known in Connecticut for her award-winning video projects. She has worked in broadcast television nationally and locally on documentaries and series for public television and network affiliates. A number of her works have been seen on CPTV, including a segment of CPTV’s Connecticut Cultural Treasures – The Shore Line Trolley Museum that was also nominated for an Emmy. Her current production work focuses on projects for public television, educational and arts institutions, museums, hospitals and non-profits.

In 2013, the GMChorale of Middletown commissioned Evans to document the composition and production of a new musical work, the oratorio Letter from Italy, 1944. The 2-hour musical drama is about a World War II Tenth Mountain Division soldier and his family, focusing on their struggles with his post-war PTSD. Evans’ documentary includes exclusive interviews with the soldier’s daughters, poet and lyricist Nancy Meneely of Essex and composer Sarah Meneely-Kyder of Lyme, who collaborated with Joseph D’Eugenio, Artistic Director of the GMChorale, to create the acclaimed work.

"This Emmy Award for directing the documentary "Letter from Italy, 1944: A New American Oratorio" means so much to me,” commented Karyl Evans. “It is such an important story to tell - a war veteran coming back with post traumatic stress disorder, how his relationship with his family is changed forever and then his daughters creating a work of art 50 years later that not only healed their hearts, but the hearts of everyone
involved in the making of the "Letter from Italy, 1944" original oratorio performance produced by the GMChorale. Now I think we are poised to heal the hearts of generations of people as the project moves forward. I'm just thankful I was part of it."

The documentary features scenes from the production, rehearsals and the comments of three WWII 10th Mountain Division veterans who attended the 2013 premiere in Middletown. Their remarks, and those of many local people, illuminate the narrative. “One reason the documentary and the original musical work are so significant,” observed D’Eugenio, “is that the conversation about PTSD needs to continue as the nation loses an average of 22 veterans each day to suicide.”

“Letter from Italy, 1944: A New American Oratorio” was screened on June 6 at the New Haven Documentary Film Festival. Plans are underway to have additional screenings in Connecticut in preparation for a new production of the original oratorio in May 2017 by the GMChorale and the Hartford Chorale, accompanied by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra at the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts in Hartford.

Funding for the award-winning documentary came from many generous patrons, and from the Tenth Mountain Division Foundation, Community Foundation of Middlesex County, CT Humanities, Middletown Commission on the Arts, City of Middletown’s Mayor’s Office, and Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development’s Office of the Arts.

GMChorale will celebrate its 40th Anniversary season next season. Its eighty singers are directed by Joseph D’Eugenio in concerts of classical and new music praised for their excellence. The Chorale performs throughout Connecticut and internationally in Europe’s cultural centers. On the 2012 tour the ensemble was the unique chorus providing music for the Sunday noontime mass at Venice’s historic landmark, Basilica san Marco. More information is available at www.gmchorale.org.

Photo below:
GMChorale Artistic Director Joseph D’Eugenio, Oratorio Composer Sarah Meneely-Kyder, Documentarian & Filmmaker Karyl Evans, Poet & Lyricist Nancy Meneely, Oratorio Lead Soloist Jack Anthony Pott at the Emmys celebrate Karyl Evans’ Emmy Award.