

Three Western Canadian artists' dreams come true.

CALGARY, ALBERTA - Six years ago, three artists began a journey of discovery about the fairies that live up in the meadows behind Canmore. The result was the *rocky mountain fairy tales* — a children's CD featuring four original stories about the Canadian Rocky Mountains and a beautifully illustrated booklet. Each story was uniquely accompanied by one of the four instrument families of the symphony orchestra. This independently produced CD sold out of its first run and acquired a large following of young people in Calgary and throughout Alberta.

Creator Samantha Whelan Kotkas is a Calgary Arts Partnership in Education (C.A.P.E.S.) Artist and has enjoyed outstanding success in raising the musical awareness of students across Alberta. To date, Whelan has performed the *rocky mountain fairy tales* in numerous Calgary schools, at the Canmore Children's Festival, for the National Symposium on Art Education and at the Young Writer's Conference.

On March 25, 2006 the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) performed the World Premiere of the fifth rocky mountain fairy tale, *Winter Solstice*, as part of their Young People's Discovery Series to a record crowd. *Winter Solstice* is the largest production in the *rocky mountain fairy tales* series and includes narration of a brand new story, 45-minutes of music commissioned for full orchestra and seven stunning banner-sized pieces of art work.

The artists working with the Orchestral Production are:

- **Samantha Whelan Kotkas**, creator and narrator. Whelan is the second trumpet for the Red Deer Symphony and an extra musician with the CPO. She is also a Music Ambassador for the National Arts Centre and teaches with Arts Smarts and C.A.P.E.S. Whelan also teaches privately and has been an artist-in-residence at The Banff Centre, where she first began writing the *rocky mountain fairy tales*.
- **Keon Birney**, composer. Birney is the General Manager of the Melange Chamber Ensemble. He is also an active freelance musician and music teacher. His compositions have been performed by the Alberta Wind Symphony and the Canada National Honour Band. Other recent work includes *Prelude, Kuloscap and the Ice Giants for Solo Percussion* performed by Brett Balon at the University of Saskatchewan in March 2005.
- **Lynne Huras**, artist. Huras' recent shows include: Art on the Mountain - group exhibit (Canmore, October 2005), Alberta Landscapes - group exhibit (Calgary, September 2005), Art En Plein Air (Banff, August 2005). Other projects include: *Nature's Waves* reproduction - Jazz at Banff cd cover & insert, *Soleil & Always the Sun* reproductions - Colours of Mime cd cover and *Canyon I* reproduction - Dave Douglas cd cover & insert. Huras is currently the Program Coordinator for Music & Sound at The Banff Centre.

Also contributing to *Winter Solstice* is award-winning lighting designer, **Brian Pincott**. He is the Production Manager at Alberta Theatre Projects and has been responsible for more than 60 productions over the past 11 years. Pincott has won the Betty Mitchell Award for Outstanding Lighting Design four times.

Winter Solstice combines engaging storytelling, dramatic visuals and the music of the orchestra for a truly magical afternoon. The story is about a girl cross-country skiing into the very majestic, magnificent and mysterious Mt. Assiniboine, the sense of discovery one finds in the outdoors and the spirit of friendship.

For interviews / information:

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