

# Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Anima Mundi Productions sets local pandemic stories to music in the world premiere of “*Six Feet Apart: Stories of Resilience and Transformation*”**

ASHLAND, OR — This summer, Rogue Valley-based nonprofit Anima Mundi Productions will collaborate with an LA-based professional vocal ensemble called HEX to record and release a new multimedia choral oratorio called *Six Feet Apart: Stories of Resilience and Transformation*. This unique work harnesses the power of music, poetry, and art to amplify diverse voices and foster collective healing in Oregon and beyond during the COVID-19 pandemic. This project will close out the second season of Anima Mundi’s *Heart of Humanity* concert series. The series is based in Ashland, but all the 2020-21 season will be released as online videos free of charge.

### **Important Partnerships**

Anima Mundi Productions is proud to be partnering with the Southern Oregon Historical Society and to have received consultation from other area nonprofits in our effort to collect and make available to the public a diverse cross-section of Oregonians’ experiences during the pandemic.

### **Collecting Oregonians’ Pandemic Stories**

The stories collected for this project reflect the diversity of Oregonians’ pandemic experiences. Composer Ethan Gans-Morse and poet Tiziana DellaRovere and their collaborators collected stories via Zoom and phone calls as well as online submissions throughout the fall of 2020, including from students at H.B. Lee Middle School in Portland.

### **Public Archive**

All of the stories collected will be made available to the public online this summer in a new website being curated by the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

### **Current and Former Poets Laureate and a Renowned Artist**

This project has also received submissions from three particularly renowned Oregonians: current and former poets laureate Anis Mojgani and Kim Stafford have contributed their poetry to the project, and artist Betty LaDuke has contributed images from her *Pandemic Masks* series, which will appear at key moments in the oratorio video.

### **Turning Pandemic Stories into Poetry and Music**

Lead poet Tiziana DellaRovere has written the poetry based on the stories collected, and composer Ethan Gans-Morse is now setting these poems to music. The final oratorio will comprise DellaRovere’s poetry plus the special guest poetry contributed by Mojgani and Stafford, totaling nine poems in all that will be set to music. And all the stories—whether or not they’re set to music—will be made available via the Public Archive.

### **About the World Premiere**

*Six Feet Apart* will culminate in the world premiere release of video featuring the performance of the HEX Ensemble, chamber instrumentation, and the artwork of Betty LaDuke.

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“When the pandemic hit, and as weeks turned into months, we knew we had to do something,” said Gans-Morse, “As artists in our state, it felt like a call to action for Tiziana and me. Our experience has been that sharing our community’s stories through music can be profoundly healing. It is our hope that harnessing these stories and acknowledging the diverse and life-changing experiences of people from around our state will foster greater unity and appreciation for what our fellow Oregonians are going through.”

“Art and life intertwine to find solace in the sharing that exposes systemic injustices. Much to my surprise, when I am interviewing for these stories people thank me for listening and they tell me that they feel unburdened just by talking to me about their trauma,” said DellaRovere.

*Six Feet Apart* will also be accompanied by a live Q&A segment, during which attendees will have the opportunity to interact with the creative team. Following the premiere and Q&A, the video and accompanying compilation of pandemic stories will be shared free of charge.

### **Grant Support**

This project was awarded a \$15,880 Cultural Development Grant from Oregon Cultural Trust and a \$3,888 Arts Build Communities Grant from the Oregon Arts Commission. Anima Mundi Productions is grateful for their support and for that of our other sponsors: the Oregon Community Foundation, Miller Foundation, and Claudette and George Paige of Ashland.

**Anima Mundi Productions presents:** *Six Feet Apart: Stories of Resilience and Transformation*

**WHEN:** The finished piece will be released in summer of 2021 (specific date TBD)

**WHERE:** Online at <https://www.sixfeetapartstories.com/>

**COST:** World Premiere event with Q&A, \$10/person. Thereafter, free.

### **About Anima Mundi Productions:**

The mission of Anima Mundi Productions is to create, promote, and produce new musical works that harness the power of the arts to stir the soul, foster community, and address urgent social and environmental problems by creating concerts and public arts events that support the personal and collective healing of at-risk segments of society such as those who have experienced trauma, abuse, discrimination, and other forms of injustice.

The mission of our **Heart of Humanity** concert series is to feature world-class musicians giving voice to marginalized people with compassion and depth, turning the concert hall into a space for renewed hope, communal healing and mutual understanding.

Website: [animamundiproductions.com](http://animamundiproductions.com)

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