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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mark Landson launches his new version of Elvis Costello and the Brodsky String Quartet's "The Juliet Letters", performed by Neo Camerata and tenor Sergio Cepeda, January 13, 2018 at "Cave Without A Name" in Boerne, TX.

JANUARY 2, 2018, Dallas, Texas: Mark Landson's Neo Camerata launches a project to bring to wide attention the profoundly moving early 1990's song cycle collaboration between Declan McManus, widely known as Elvis Costello, one of the era's greatest pop rock singer-songwriters, and the Brodsky String Quartet, one of Britain's leading classical string quartets of the time.

"The Juliet Letters", song cycle for voice and string quartet, was released as an album in 1993. It was inspired by real-life letters written to Shakespeare's fictional Juliet Capulet. The work takes us on a journey of imagined correspondence of enduring love, family disputes, chain letters, and suicide notes.

Mark Landson sees the work not only as a deep artistic experience, but also as a historically significant work which was unjustly overlooked by the classical industry at the time.

"Classical composition created in our time will never be a relevant art form for most artistically inclined people unless it speaks in the language of the pop culture world that surrounds us on a daily basis. Here you have a string quartet in the Brodskys that grew up in the first generation of classical performers that also loved and admired pop music. And you had a profoundly talented and successful songwriter that was looking to expand his expression beyond what the rock genre was able to do. They were fans of each other's work, became friends and wanted to see what each could bring to the other's world. And the result of the collaboration is just absolutely stunning and profoundly moving."

"They very much wanted to stay clear of the term cross-over when they released it, to avoid the connotation of silly dumbed-down classical. They felt it was neither classical nor pop, but it was something new. However, in hindsight, I would definitely place it in the classical genre that we *should* have, because it does what the greatest classical music does. It takes one on a journey of emotions over time, rather than setting up a groove with hooks and playing it out."

"In contrast to so much contemporary classical, the lyrical content is both beautiful and straight forward. At the time of its release, that was especially frowned upon. Now, with the songs and operas of Jake

Heggie and others bringing lyricism back to the classical vocal realm, and pop artists like Gabriel Kahane creating song cycles that straddle genres, I think it's time to revisit this great work, which was not only the first of its kind, but in my mind, still the finest example of it."

"Lately, some of the individual pieces have been showing up on classical chamber music concerts and vocal recitals, including on a recent album by Anne Sophie Von Otter and Brooklyn Rider. But the true genius of the work can only be shown by presenting a number of pieces back to back, and allowing the profound nature of the music and lyrics to build the emotional tension over time. Because of the unique nature of Costello's vocal range, which is large at about two and a half octaves, and the enormity of the full work at 62 minutes, it really hasn't had a serious revival, despite the fact that the classical public has recently shown a greater acceptance to this type of 'serious art' being created by composers who have had success in the pop genre."

To overcome the challenges of presenting the work, and to create the most profound and moving experience possible, Landson has created a slightly abbreviated version, which will have a running time of 53 minutes without pause. Neo Camerata, Landson's music group which performs new classical works of his own and others will provide the string quartet, and the vocalist for performances will be Fort Worth based tenor, Sergio Cepeda.

Premier Concert details: Saturday, January 13th, 7:00pm. Cave Without A Name in Borne, TX. Tickets are \$30 in advance. <http://cavewithoutaname.com/content/neo-camerata-juliet-letters>

Neo Camerata is a sponsored project of Open Classical, a non-profit organization founded by Mark Landson to facilitate the enjoyment and connection to classical music for audiences and to create new opportunities for performers at both the amateur and professional levels. Open Classical produces over 100 events yearly. Learn more at <http://openclassical.org>

About Mark Landson:

Mark Landson is a violinist, violist, composer, founder and Director of Open Classical, and the founder of the new classical chamber group Neo Camerata. Based in Dallas, Texas, he has been featured in numerous television and radio interviews and press articles as a prolific contributor to the creative culture of North Texas. Dallas Observer has featured him in "Top 100 Creatives in Dallas", and arts magazine TheaterJones featured him in their "Forward Thinkers" arts entrepreneurs series. His new classical compositions have been praised in reviews as "Stravinsky at his most lyrical", and "a unique combination of pop inspiration and classical craft".

In composition and performance, Landson is driven by the mantra: "It's not the audience's job to pay attention. It's the role of the artist to command attention."

Recent commissions include an operetta "Goldilocks" (Dec 2015), ballet "Le Mozart Noir" (Feb 2016), and "Moments In Memory" cello sonata (April 2017). In December, 2016, the first movement of his string quartet "Travels" took first place at "The Ear" competition in New York, chosen among 750 overall entries, and 9 final live round contestants.