

BOOMERANG ENTERTAINMENT

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UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Spiritual exploration

UW Symphony to premiere new multi-media piece

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The University of Wyoming Symphony Orchestra is set to perform the world premiere of a new work by composer Gwyneth Walker next week.



Gwyneth Walker

The performance is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Buchanan Center for the Performing Arts Concert Hall. Tickets are \$12 for the public, \$8 for seniors and \$6 for students and are available at the Buchanan Center and Wyoming Union box offices or at www.uwyo.edu/finearts.

Michael Griffith, director of the UW Symphony Orchestra who will be conducting the performance, described Walker's work, "Earth and Sky," as a multi-media piece that includes string trio, orchestra, narration and projected images.

Walker, a well-renowned composer who lives in Vermont, quit an academic job in 1982 to work full-time on music. She spent 30 years living on a dairy farm and has traveled the country working with groups that are rehearsing her work. Her catalog includes more than 350 commissioned works. "If I mention her name to my colleagues



COURTESY PHOTO

The string trio Musica Harmonia commissioned a new work by composer Gwyneth Walker, which will premiere Oct. 25 during a performance of the University of Wyoming Symphony Orchestra. "Earth and Sky" is a multi-media piece that includes a string trio, narration, projected images and orchestra.

around the country, they're impressed that we're getting to do a brand-new piece of hers," Griffith said.

"Earth and Sky" was commissioned by

Musica Harmonia, a chamber group that includes UW faculty cellist Beth Vanderborgh. The other members are violinist Joan Griffing and Diane Phoenix-Neal on viola.

IF YOU GO

What: University of Wyoming Symphony with Musica Harmonia

When: 7:30 p.m. Thursday

Where: Buchanan Center for the Performing Arts Concert Hall

How much: \$12 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens and \$6 for UW students

More info: www.uwyo.edu/finearts

The piece explores spiritual ideas about connections between people and the earth, as reflected in the music, the images and passages written by Henry David Thoreau, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Tribe and Chief Seattle of the Suquamish Tribe. Narrators will be Peter Parolin, Mia Holt and Eric Bennett.

Images in the performance were chosen by John Waggener, a curator at the American Heritage Center.

Griffith described Walker as a modern composer with a sound that's "fascinating" instead of harsh.

"It's something that audiences will find interesting rather than extraordinarily demanding of them," he said.

The concert is scheduled to open with "Dawn on the Moscow River" by Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky before proceeding to "Earth and Sky." The second half of the concert will be "Symphony in D Minor" by French composer Cesar Frank.

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