



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 02/18/08

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The Song of Roland, a labor of love
Evanston's Musical Offering partners with musician/composer James Falzone

Evanston, IL- The Musical Offering is pleased to announce their latest project *The Song of Roland*, a collaboration with Oakton Elementary School staff and students, professional musicians from The Musical Offering, the Evanston Children's Choir and original libretto and music written and composed by **James Falzone**. The performances will be presented at Oakton Elementary School, 463 Ridge Ave. in Evanston, IL 60202 on May 1 and 2, 2008, in their auditorium under the newly restored WPA murals attributed to Chicago native fine artist Carl Scheffler* depicting the history and legend of the medieval story of Roland. For tickets and more information please call **847-866-6260** or visit www.themusicaloffering.org.

James Falzone's *The Song of Roland: A Music Mural* is based on the original *La Chanson de Roland*, from the Middle Ages and James Baldwin's classic children's book The Story of Roland. The form of Mr. Falzone's original composition is modeled on the Medieval Musical Drama, a precursor to our modern opera. Roland's story of friendship and valor in the time of Charlemagne inspires an eclectic melding of world music, medieval forms and sounds, and visual arts projects that may incorporate both western and Arabic cultural motifs. More than just inspiration, the Roland WPA murals literally become a player in Mr. Falzone's adaptation, as the characters are brought to life with the children's voices floating high above his intricately woven original score.

The Song of Roland is the result of the enormously successful five year collaboration between the Oakton Elementary School and the Musical Offering under the Artistic Direction of Rick Ferguson. The faculty of Oakton School, The Musical Offering, the Evanston Children's Choir under the direction of Gary Geiger, and composer James Falzone are enthusiastically and creatively motivated by the enrichment and cross curricular possibilities inherent in the project. The exposure to opera as an art form, the inclusion of a richly diverse and accessible story line, and the celebration of poetry and history brought to life will give the students of Oakton and the community a personal experience of self-empowerment through their exploration of their identity and relationship to the arts. In an age of MTV and questionable ethics, the project offers a viable alternative and personal understanding of classical music, theatre and the arts as well as positive modeling for the children.

The Song of Roland would not be possible without the dynamic collaborative efforts of Oakton School's faculty and staff, especially music teacher Monica Blaconeri, art teacher Tom Ferguson, Librarian Lillian Sadok, and Principal Churchill Daniels. Made possible by the generosity of the Evanston Community Foundation, the project will serve the entire Oakton School community of 430 students and their families as well, and the Evanston Children's Choir serving close to 2000 residents. The impact of this partnership between children, families, educators and professional artists and musicians can not be measured but for the eagerness of all those involved, and the joy that the creative process engenders in those who experience it from either side of the proscenium. For more information please call **847-866-6260** or visit www.themusicaloffering.org.

*For more information regarding the restoration of the Oakton Elementary School WPA visit <http://oakton.district65.net> or <http://www.chicagoconservation.com/pages/news.htm>.



THE MUSICAL OFFERING MISSION STATEMENT—The Musical Offering is an educational institution committed to the growth and development of the individual and community through music instruction and performance. It is our goal to provide a supportive and nurturing environment in which students, teachers and all lovers of music can explore and deepen their relationship to music and self-expression. The Musical Offering also serves as a meeting place and forum for the musical community in Evanston and the surrounding area. We believe in the promotion of beauty, artistic freedom and self-empowerment engendered by the shared musical experience.

JAMES FALZONE BIO—Clarinetist, composer and improviser James Falzone is working at the intersection of many styles of music including jazz, classical, and folk traditions. He has been featured on numerous public radio and television shows and has performed in concert halls and jazz clubs throughout the United States, Canada and Europe with his own projects and with many of the leading composers and performers in jazz, folk and contemporary classical music.

A composer in many genres, Mr. Falzone's music has been performed recently by The Rockford Symphony Orchestra, The North Central College Women's Chorale, The South Bend Indiana Orchestra, and the Tapestry vocal ensemble. He has developed or taken part in projects that have been awarded grants from the Chicago Cultural Center, the Hillary Swing Fund for Creativity, The Consulate General of the Netherlands, The Rotary Foundation, the New England Foundation for the Arts, and the Vermont Arts Council.

Educated at New England Conservatory in Boston, Mr. Falzone has been a frequent lecturer on music at L'Abri Fellowship both in the U.S. and Europe and has presented master classes and workshops at the University of Notre Dame, Wheaton College Conservatory, Marquette University, Northern Illinois University, and for the College Music Society. He was also a visiting scholar at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, where he assisted the Navy's Strategic Studies Group in thinking through how musical improvisation could shed light on the ever-changing war on terrorism.

Mr. Falzone is on faculty at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, where he teaches courses in the Interdisciplinary and Music programs and acts as the college's Composer in Residence. He is also the Resident Composer and Director of Music for Grace Church in Chicago where he currently resides with his wife and two daughters. **To read more about Mr. Falzone please visit <http://www.allosmusica.org>.**

"Falzone is an inveterate genre-crosser, and though he squawks and swoops with some of the city's best free improvisers, it's his fluency in classical and ethnic European cultures that set him apart. . . . an already important Chicago voice."
~*Matthew Lurie, Time Out Chicago*

"...one of the city's most focused and inquisitive clarinetists, and his compositions favor a rigor and precision that's rare."
~*Peter Margasak, Chicago Reader*

"...an articulate and interesting composer who utilizes the structure of classical music, the rhythms of Klezmer, the spark of polytonality and an abandon witnessed in free blowing to build a vibrant body . . . the effect is stunning."
~*Jerry D'Souza, All About Jazz*

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