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CEC ArtsLink Supports US Project SILENT STEPPE CANTATA
Performed during Kazakhstan's Independence Day Celebrations
in Astana, Dec 10, 2011

NEW YORK, Nov 25, 2011 – New York-based arts non-profit CEC ArtsLink is proud to announce that the US project THE SILENT STEPPE CANTATA is performed in the Kazakh capital Astana on December 10, as part of the festivities commemorating Kazakhstan's twenty years of independence from the Soviet Union on December 16, in the Norman Foster-designed Palace of Peace and Reconciliation.

THE SILENT CANTATA will be performed in three languages: Kazakh, Russian and English, with music by LA-based Anne LeBaron, a composer of "uncommon imagination" (*The Washington Post*), and the first American woman composer to work with a major folk instrument ensemble in Central Asia. Kazakh singer Timur Bekbosunov, recently profiled in *LA Weekly's* BEST OF LA PEOPLE 2011, will star in the production. Acclaimed US filmmaker Sandra Powers has been following the three year long-project in a poetic, multi-format documentary called THE NOMAD'S SONG, which is slated for a release in the fall of 2012.

As one of the project's co-producers, CEC ArtsLink provided seed funding to help LeBaron explore Kazakhstan's culture and history. The New York-based non-profit produces exchange programs for visual and performing artists and cultural managers in the US and 32 countries overseas. "CEC ArtsLink was founded almost fifty years ago to enable citizens of the United States and the Soviet Union to accomplish what their governments would not do: open doors and build mutual trust," comments executive director Fritzie Brown. "I'm very proud that twenty years after the fall of the Soviet Union, we continue to help artists share their ideas – even though we have recently expanded our program to include other countries apart from the former Soviet bloc, such as Afghanistan and Turkey.

Today's transformed and complex world makes citizen diplomacy more urgently necessary than ever."

LeBaron's original approach focuses on expanding the traditional classical music cantata form into a multilingual/world-music cantata for the 21st century. The fusion of epic Kazakh poetic forms with hip-hop should appeal to global music devotees as well as to fans of contemporary music. The cantata celebrates Kazakhstan's dramatic history and current multi-ethnic make-up on the edge of both Europe and Asia. For many centuries the territory of ancient Kazakhstan was an important meeting place of civilizations throughout Central Asia, as the original motherland of Huns and Turks. Modern

Kazakhstan, the ninth largest country in the world, is home to a melting pot of different cultures.

As composer Anne LeBaron explains, “My inspiration to write the *Silent Steppe Cantata* initially came from three sources: hearing the unusual and beautiful folk instruments; learning about the incredible resilience of the great nation of Kazakhstan; and reading the powerful poetry of Abai, of Olzhas Suleimenov, and many other Kazakh poets and writers.”

About CEC ArtsLink:

CEC ArtsLink promotes international communication and understanding through collaborative, innovative arts projects for mutual benefit. As an international organization, it believes that the arts are a society's most deliberate and complex means of communication and that the work of artists and arts administrators can help nations overcome long histories of reciprocal distrust, insularity and conflict.

Website: www.cecartslink.org

About THE SILENT STEPPE CANTATA:

Support for the project has been provided by JSC Sovereign Wealth Fund Samruk-Kazyna (www.samruk-kazyna.kz); the Embassy of Kazakhstan in the United States and Ambassador Erlan Idrissov; the United States Embassy in Kazakhstan; the City of Astana Department of Culture; KCell, and Rixos Almaty Hotel. The Silent Steppe Cantata project was initiated through several grants from American organizations: CEC ArtsLink; California Institute of the Arts, City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs; Puffin Foundation; Art of Opera Foundation; and Center for Cultural Innovation.

When: Dec 10, 5pm

Where: Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, Astana

Entry: free tickets available from the Astana Philharmonic box office

Website: <http://www.thesilentsteppe.org>

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