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Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival in Easton, MD Showcases U.S. Premiere of Composer Thea Musgrave's Mini Clarinet Concerto

Chesapeake Chamber Music's 27th annual Festival continues through June 17, 2012, featuring 19 artists, including internationally acclaimed chamber musicians and talented newcomers to the Eastern Shore Festival scene. Each year the Festival's Artistic Directors work diligently to develop varied and interesting programs, to solicit new and returning performers, and to provide engaging, memorable performances. This year, the Festival has invited Scottish-American composer Thea Musgrave, one of the world's most respected and exciting contemporary composers, to participate as the Festival showcases her Pierrot for Clarinet, Violin and Piano, as well as her composition, "Towards the Blue."

Festival Artistic Director J. Lawrie Bloom, Bass Clarinet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, comments, "When I played her bass clarinet concerto, *Autumn Sonata*, this fall in Chicago, I got to know Thea Musgrave. I thought our audience would really enjoy getting to know this wonderful lady, and her fantastic music. When Ms. Musgrave offered us the U.S. premiere of her mini clarinet concerto, "Towards the Blue," the stars had aligned, and we had the right time, and the right way to present these lovely pieces."

Musgrave was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and entered the musical life of the United States when she became Guest Professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She served as Distinguished Professor at Queen's College in New York from 1987 to 2002. Characterized by a rich and powerful musical language and a strong sense of drama, Musgrave's compositions

were first performed under the auspices of the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Edinburgh International Festival. Consequently, her works have been widely performed in Britain, Europe, the USA, and at the major music festivals.

“Towards the Blue,” her mini clarinet concerto, was inspired by her visit to the Francis Bacon Exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London in December 2008. At the exhibition she beheld “Figure in a Landscape” (1945) in which a figure depicted by a “grotesque smudge” survives under a layer of bright blue sky. From Musgrave’s perspective, the sky was synonymous with hope as is the clarinet. In his closing commentary on the work, Geoff Brown of the “London Times” wrote about her composition, “Everyone reaches the blue sky by the end, even though given Musgrave’s engagingly emollient style the music is never far from blue to begin with.” The generous financial support from the business community and public enables Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival to offer affordable tickets for the Festival concerts and recitals, as well as access to open rehearsals that are free to the general public. Institutional support has been provided by Wells Fargo and Vantage Wealth Management, Inc., the Talbot County Arts Council, the Maryland State Arts Council, Chesapeake Publishing, Benson & Mangold, and the Midshore Community Foundation. For further information or to purchase tickets, visit www.chesapeakechambermusic.org or call 410-819-0380.