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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**World Premiere of "*The Portals of Saint Bartholomew*,"  
Neely Bruce's groundbreaking work for chorus, vocal soloists,  
and instrumentalists to be presented FREE to the public by  
St. Bartholomew's Church Wednesday, May 14, 2008**

On Wednesday, May 14th, St. Bartholomew's Church will present the world premiere of *The Portals of Saint Bartholomew*, a leading-edge spatial musical work composed and conducted by Neely Bruce, Professor of Music and American Studies at Wesleyan University and author of over 700 musical works. The concert, free to the public, will begin at 7:30 pm.

The work is scored for three choruses (children, women and men), six vocal soloists, two flutes, clarinet, two trumpets, three trombones, two tubas, six timpani (one player) and the glorious 12,422-pipe Aeolian-Skinner organ, the largest organ in the city of New York and widely regarded as one of the finest organs in the world. These forces will be spatially configured, surrounding the audience.

Located on Park Avenue at 50<sup>th</sup> Street, the church, with its Romanesque architecture and lofty Byzantine dome, is itself a major player in the work, combining and resonating the many voices and instruments placed throughout its lofts, choir stalls and balconies, each performing an independent composition. The result will be a brilliant harmonic overtone produced by the many distinctly different elements -- women's voices as one group, children's as another, men's another, low brass, and finally the organ of St. Bartholomew's Church.

Throughout the church are messages, texts and scriptural references -- some hidden, some gracing ceiling and church font. Admonishing, welcoming, instructing, commemorating -- these texts become the words of *The Portals of Saint Bartholomew*.

In making the announcement, the Rev. William McD Tully, St. Bart's Rector, remarked, "This world premiere celebrates the spirit of Henry Brant's spatial music, the creativity of a fine 21<sup>st</sup> century composer, the generosity of two dedicated arts patrons, and the magnificence of a true New York architectural and musical treasure."

Commissioned and underwritten as a gift to the people of New York by St. Bart's parishioners, Sarah and Richard Bayles, the work is dedicated to composer, Pulitzer winner and musical iconoclast Henry Brant and to the memory of philanthropist Robert H. Brimberg. "We were thrilled that Neely, my dear friend and teacher, was able to take on this important commission, and that we will be able to bring his work once again to St. Bart's, a mecca for the performing arts in midtown Manhattan," Sarah Bayles added.

The church is located at 50<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Avenue, Manhattan. The concert begins at 7:30 pm and admission is free and unreserved.

### **The Composer and the Artists**

Participating in this 40-minute work are

Neely Bruce, conductor and composer

William Trafka, Music Director and principal organist of Saint Bartholomew's Church

Paolo Bordignon, Associate Music Director, second organist and director of the Choristers

St. Bartholomew's Choir

St. Bart's Singers

St. Bartholomew's Boy and Girl Choristers

St. Bartholomew's 12,422-pipe Aeolian-Skinner organ

Brass, woodwind and percussion ensembles

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This concert was made possible through the generosity of

**Richard and Sarah Kendall Bayles**

*For further information, see the following web sites:*

<http://stbarts.org/organ.asp>

<http://neelybrucemusic.com/index.htm>

<http://www.jaffe.com/BrantBio.html>

<http://stbarts.org/stbartshistory.asp>

***St. Bart's makes music throughout the year:***

**Great Music**, a series of more than 90 concerts of choral, organ and chamber music

(<http://stbarts.org/greatmusic.asp>),

**Stravinsky Festival**, hosting two of the five events in April 2008

(<http://www.millertheater.com/Events/EventsList.aspx?seriesid=37>)

**Midtown Concerts**, free lunchtime concerts of early music

([www.midtownconcerts.org](http://www.midtownconcerts.org)),

**Summer Festival of Sacred Music**, a 13-week series of great sacred choral music sung as part of regular worship each Sunday during the summer

(<http://stbarts.org/sacredmusic.asp>).