

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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EXPERIENCE A UNIQUE MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO BEN FRANKLIN'S 300th BIRTHDAY BY RELÂCHE AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

PHILADELPHIA, PA (March 2, 2006) – In honor of Ben Franklin's visionary spirit, the musical performing ensemble Relâche, along with the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas Choir, join together to present *In Search of a Better World*, the world premiere commission by Philadelphia's own Jay Fluellen. Fluellen mixes classical, jazz, African American spirituals and gospel song together in this musical tribute to the nation's most accomplished founding father. The National Constitution Center will host performances of *In Search of a Better World* on Saturday, March 25 at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 26 at 3:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for general admission and \$10 for students and senior citizens. **Museum admission is not included.** For ticket information, call 215.574.8248.

In Search of a Better World is a composition in eight movements written for chamber ensemble and gospel choir. Fluellen drew inspiration for his piece from the many facets of Franklin's life and writings including his thoughts on the abolition of slavery in the United States, as detailed in a 1789 address, and his understanding of the irony of fighting for the freedom of the United States from England while the colonies themselves had an institution of slavery.

Dr. Jay Fluellen is a Philadelphia born musician known as a composer, pianist, singer and organist. Dr. Fluellen is currently a teacher with the School District of Philadelphia at the Julia de Burgos Bilingual School, where he teaches general music and directs several choirs. Since January 1997, he has been the director of music at the historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas.

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ADD ONE/RELACHE

For the last 25 years, Relâche has been recognized as a leader in commissioning, presenting and performing innovative and exciting music. It is among the oldest continuously operating non-profit organizations and chamber ensembles dedicated to contemporary music in the United States and consistently offers world-class performances of music by leading American and international composers. In addition, Relâche has always invested heavily in the future of new music through its commitment to the work of young and emerging composers.

The African Episcopal Church of St Thomas Gospel Choir, under the direction of Waltier Blocker, is known for the diversity of its performances, from spiritual and moving songs to the sound of old style, foot tapping music to showcasing the contemporary gospel sound. The Choir released its second CD in 2005, and performed with Peter Nero and the Philly Pops at their 2005 Holiday Pops concerts.

Located at 525 Arch Street on Philadelphia's historic Independence Mall, the National Constitution Center is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and its relevance to Americans' daily lives. Opened on July 4, 2003, the museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising".

Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World, a blockbuster exhibition celebrating Franklin's 300th birthday, makes its world premiere at the National Constitution Center from December 15, 2005, through April 30, 2006. Created by the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary, this exhibition is being hosted locally by CBS 3. Tickets for the exhibition, which also include regular museum admission, are \$14 for adults; \$12 for children ages 4-12, seniors, and college students; and \$8.50 for groups of 20 or more. For advance tickets, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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