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**From:** Rankin, Roberta

**To:** Martha Woods

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 08, 2007 12:46 PM

**Subject:** "First Person . . . ."

Dear Martha,

Thank you so much for the wonderful experience of being your guest for the world premiere performance of *First Person: Stories from the Edge of the World* on April 26, 2007 at the National Geographic Society's Grosvenor Auditorium in Washington, D.C. It was a memorable evening in so many ways!

As you know, I am a huge admirer of Ensemble Galilei: I fell in love with their music long before I had the privilege of twice presenting them here at Young Harris College. They are delightful individuals, engaging teachers, superb musicians whose creative artistry continues to lead them in new and exciting directions.

Their latest project, *First Person: Stories from the Edge of the World*, is a seamless multimedia experience joining the music of Ensemble Galilei and photos from the National Geographic Image Collection with the vocal talents of NPR's Neal Conan and Liane Hansen, and Bill Pullman. *First Person . . .* engages our senses through music, visual images and the spoken word, and our minds through the quality of writings chosen, first-person narratives of men and women who have journeyed on extraordinary expeditions. The production concept is stunning, the execution flawless in every sense. I have been an inveterate theatre-goer and concert-attender for over fifty years, now, and a cultural programmer for almost twenty-five, and I must say that *First Person . . .* has joined my memory-gallery of great evenings in the theatre. Compelling writing, expressive narrative voices, stunning visuals, transcendental music communicated through the minds, hearts, and spirits of master artists—I was completely engaged intellectually, sensually, spiritually (and physically, too—how can anyone's toes NOT tap when Ensemble Galilei launches into a dance tune?).

While "*First Person . . .*" will appeal to a variety of audiences, it is a perfect offering for educational institutions: it exposes students to the fine arts of music, literature, photography and performance; appeals to their "high-tech" savvy with its multi-media format; expands their intellectual and sensory horizons. Teachers will find a multitude of ways to integrate *First Person . . .* into their curricula. The scope of the narrative texts alone, ranging as it does from the writings of Darwin to Ibn Battuta to Jacques Cousteau to George Mallory to Constantine Cavafy to Gretel Ehrlich provides opportunities for exciting interdisciplinary collaboration.

I am thrilled that Young Harris College has booked "*First Person . . .*" for next September as the signature event of our new cultural series, *IDEAS* (Intellectual Development and Experiences in the Arts and Sciences). The *IDEAS* theme for fall semester is "Into the Unknown." *First Person: Stories from the Edge of the World* will be our students' ideal introduction to an academic year—and, hopefully, a lifetime—of exploring new territory within an well as outside themselves.

A word of thanks to you and the Jonathan Wentworth Agency for continually offering artists and productions of the highest professional quality, and for working with presenters so ethically, reliably and enthusiastically; Wentworth is never less than excellent. I look forward to continuing a collaboration that is now well into its second decade.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Roberta Rankin  
Professor of Theatre  
Chair, Arts & Assemblies Committee  
Young Harris College

