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**Richard Smith Music Director for *Elegies* Production October 15**

(Brattleboro, VT) In recognition of the 35<sup>th</sup> year of the AIDS pandemic and to honor the work of the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont (APSV), "A Weekend to Remember & Celebrate... Life, Loss, Love" will be presented at the Latchis Theatre, 50 Main Street in Brattleboro, Vermont.

The benefit weekend begins on Saturday, October 15 at 7:30pm with the one-night-only performance of the 1989 show, *Elegies for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens*, the first piece written about the AIDS pandemic. *Elegies* is a song cycle with music by Janet Hood and lyrics and additional text by lyricist Bill Russell. It debuted in 1989 at the Ohio Theatre in Manhattan's SoHo district before moving on to London. Each of the monologues is written from the perspective of characters who've died from AIDS, and the songs represent the feelings of friends and family members dealing with the loss. The piece was developed in the late 1980s and originally entitled "The Quilt" to acknowledge the AIDS Memorial Quilt, founded in 1985 by AIDS activist, Cleve Jones.

Music Director for the show is Richard Smith, the vocal instructor at Vermont Academy who has also been involved locally with Apron Stage in Putney and New England Youth Theatre in Brattleboro. In Keene, NH he has worked with youth at MoCo Arts and is a private instructor at Elm City Music.

Smith has been involved in the industry for decades, beginning as a staffer at Walt Disney and Warner Brothers Studios. Projects include *Tiny Toons*, *Star Trek TNG*, *Ghost*, *Kindergarten Cop*, *High School Musical*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin*.

He has composed over 250 pieces of music in print through Hinshaw Music, Theodore Presser and Universe, and been involved in 40 album productions. **Smith will premiere an original composition to recognize the 35<sup>th</sup> year of the AIDS pandemic at *Elegies* on October 15.**

Lead sponsor for the event is **The Samara Fund**, a component fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, helping to create a vibrant Vermont LGBTQ community and ensure that LGBTQ Vermonters are connected, healthy, appreciated, safe, and empowered. The Fund will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as Vermont's premiere philanthropic organization for LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS causes in 2017. The Vermont Community Foundation is a family of hundreds of charitable funds and foundations dedicated to creating healthy and vital Vermont communities. <http://www.vermontcf.org/samara>

Net proceeds benefit the **AIDS Project of Southern Vermont**, a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 1988. <http://www.aidsprojectsouthernvermont.org/>

For all details about weekend events, visit [www.elegiesvt.com](http://www.elegiesvt.com). To purchase tickets visit <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?ticketing=larts>

