**Wilds of Alaska Inspire Student Composer**

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— To pen her most recent music composition, Illinois

Wesleyan University music major Madz Negro’15 (New Berlin, Ill.) camped

without electricity inside Denali National Park, then flew by bush plane to a

remote mining camp near Alaska’s Yukon River.

The wilderness experiences were part of the 2014 Composing in the

Wilderness field course. Negro and eight other composers spent over a week in

the backcountry of two remote national parks in Alaska. Faculty musicians of

the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival then perform the composers’ new pieces.

Now in its third year, the program is a joint venture between Alaska

Geographic, Denali National Park, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

and the Fairbanks festival. Negro learned about the program from Fern

Rosetta Sherff Professor of Composition and Theory David Vayo.

Madz Negro’15

Negro, who is also majoring in environmental studies-ecology, said the

experience combined her two deepest loves: music and the earth.

“When I backpack, kayak, hike, run or do anything in nature, I hear so much,” said Negro, who said she spent a large

portion of her life growing up in Alaska. “Life cyles, animals communicating, water, landscape contours – all of that

can be interpreted as the music or hum of the earth.”

Negro wrote the piece over four days. She said the annual thawing of permafrost in Denali originally inspired her to

create the work for violin, viola and piano.

“When the small, frozen wood frogs come back to life, they exchange sparse chirps to one another that convey a hopeful

sound of the oncoming warmth,” she said.

“However, the permafrost temperature over time is drastically increasing, causing the permafrost to rapidly decrease,

the land to become unglued, and vegetation to crawl farther up on the mountainsides.

“Being in this raw, changing and terribly beautiful land of Alaska sparked something deep and essential in my soul to create

this piece of music,” she added.

[Listen to Permafrost.](https://soundcloud.com/madz-negro/permafrost)