



A M E R I C A N C O M P O S E R S F O R U M

NATIONAL OFFICE:

332 Minnesota Street, Suite E-145 • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1300 USA

Telephone: [651] 228-1407 • Fax: [651] 291-7978

E-mail: mail@composersforum.org • Web site: www.composersforum.org

Continental Harmony Premiere in Phoenix, Ariz., New Composition Celebrates the Cultural Heritage of the Valley of the Sun

January 5, 2004

For Immediate Release

For more information, contact: Pat Shifferd at American Composers Forum,
651-251-2818, harmony@composersforum.org, or
Aaron Rinsema at Phoenix Symphony,
602-495-1117 ext. 346 or arinsema@phoenixsymphony.org

St. PAUL, Minn., January 5, 2004—Composer Joseph Curiale's original composition for The Phoenix Symphony and collaborating performing arts organizations entitled "Valley of the Sun" will be premiered January 25, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. at Symphony Hall, Phoenix, AZ. The piece was commissioned by The Phoenix Symphony as part of *Continental Harmony*, the national community-based composer residency program of American Composers Forum, St. Paul, Minn. Admission is free, but tickets are required. Tickets can be picked up at any Phoenix Public Library location and the Civic Plaza Box Office beginning 8 days prior to the concert.

Phoenix's rich artistic heritage draws upon decades of interaction between many cultures including Mexican-American, Native American, and European-American traditions. This *Continental Harmony* piece honors the diverse roots by uniting ensembles from these distinct cultures through a new musical work and community performance.

The commission includes movements performed by Mariachi Alegre, Native Spirit Productions, Primavera Folklorico Dance Company, and the Phoenix Children's Chorus — each performing solo or accompanied by The Phoenix Symphony. The final movement will bring all of the ensembles — and many of the city's rich cultural traditions — together for the grand finale.

"We're all very excited about the January premiere of this collaborative new musical work by Joe Curiale," comments Aaron Rinsema, Education Manager for The Phoenix Symphony. "The whole process of working together, of having music written for this unique cross-section of Valley performing artists, has been truly inspirational and rewarding. It's not just a new piece written for The Phoenix Symphony, but a new musical work for which we all feel ownership. We're thrilled to be working together as a community."

(more)

Curiale is greatly inspired by the power and beauty of the Southwest. Its longtime role in his life as a place of both physical and spiritual renewal makes his work with the Phoenix *Continental Harmony* project especially gratifying. Curiale said, "I had no idea exactly how uplifting this project would be for me, but it certainly stands out as one of the most healing and loving human experiences I have ever had. I'm supremely grateful to the American Composer's Forum, The Phoenix Symphony, and the participating groups for allowing me the honor."

The premiere of "Valley of the Sun" is produced by the City of Phoenix as one of The People's Pops Concert Series, sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department's Phoenix Center for the Arts.

Continental Harmony has been recognized as a model of local community artistic initiative. A partnership between the American Composers Forum and the National Endowment for the Arts, the initiative is designed to bring composers and communities together for the creation of original musical works reflecting the unique history, culture and spirit of each community. Each host site identifies a theme, an occasion, and local performers for a musical work that will be meaningful to its citizens. With the assistance of American Composers Forum, the community group then selects the composer best able to write the music and carry out the residency.

During the inaugural round of the program in the year 2000, American Composers Forum discovered that *Continental Harmony* projects bring people together, heighten community feeling and sense of place, and encourage the formation of collaborations among groups. At the same time the artistic resources of the area are often strengthened and validated. As a result of this inaugural round, Twin Cities Public Television created an award-winning documentary and website (www.continentalharmony.org).

Continental Harmony is a leadership initiative of the American Composers Forum and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional funding provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, and Marshall Field's Project Imagine with support from the Target Foundation.

###