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Composer Peter Boyer Chosen for Battle Creek, MI *Continental Harmony* Project New Composition Celebrates Area's Cultural Diversity

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St. PAUL, Minn., December 12, 2005—Composer Peter Boyer of Altadena, California, has been chosen by the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra and W. K. Kellogg Foundation to write a new 20-minute piece of music celebrating the cultural diversity of Battle Creek, Michigan. The Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra, with the Battle Creek Community Chorus; Battle Creek Girls' Chorus; and the Battle Creek Boychoir, will premiere this new work March 10, 2007. Prior to the premiere, Boyer will spend time in the community in a residency of up to six weeks, engaging in community meetings and festivals, visiting area schools, and various "meet the composer" events. "This program offers communities the unique opportunity to be a part of new musical works which celebrate their history and culture," says John Nuechterlein, President and C.E.O. of American Composers Forum. "These exceptional musical celebrations strengthen social bonds and renew the collective spirit." Visit www.continentalharmony.org for more information.

Peter Boyer is emerging as one of the most successful young American orchestral composers. His music has been widely acclaimed by audiences and critics alike for its dramatic strength and evocative power. At 35, his orchestral works have received over one hundred performances by more than forty orchestras. He has conducted recordings of his music with both the London Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia. His works have been broadcast on hundreds of radio stations throughout the U.S., Europe, and Australia. In 2001, at age 31, he became one of the youngest composers in the world to have an entire disc of his music recorded by a world-class orchestra and distributed by an international record label.

Boyer's major work *Ellis Island: The Dream of America*, which celebrates the American immigrant experience, has been his most successful composition to date. This work has been enjoying an extraordinary performance history, with forty performances by twenty orchestras from its debut in 2002 through the 2005-06 season, making it one of the most-performed large-scale American orchestral works of the last decade. Boyer recorded the work with the Philharmonia Orchestra and a cast of well-known actors, including Barry Bostwick, Olympia Dukakis, Bebe Neuwirth, and Eli Wallach. This recording was released by Naxos in its American Classics Series in May 2005, and has been broadcast extensively on

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classical radio stations around the United States. Boyer's *Ellis Island* has just been nominated for a Grammy® Award for Best Classical Contemporary Composition.

Since 1899 the Battle Creek Symphony, Michigan's oldest, has pleased audiences and critics with outstanding classical and pops performances. Led with elegance and flair by Music Director Anne Harrigan, the orchestra is breaking down barriers between the audience and the music with innovative multi-media performances.

Harrigan said, "We are thrilled to be part of this creative process, an example of the power of music to transcend superficial boundaries and unite us." Harrigan joined the orchestra in 2003, following 20 years as conductor of the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra. The Battle Creek Symphony is a program of the Music Center of South Central Michigan, which also encompasses seven choruses and a community music school. Visit www.musiccenterscmi.com for more information.

Continental Harmony has been recognized as a model of local community artistic initiative. The initiative has been launched by the American Composers Forum in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts as a way of bringing composers and communities together each for the creation of original musical works reflecting the unique history, culture and spirit of 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. For more information, visit www.continentalharmony.org

The Continental Harmony: Battle Creek project is generously funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

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