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# Composers Chosen for Nationwide *Continental Harmony* Program

## Rob Maggio and Ana Lara to Write Music for Commissioning Program

St. PAUL, Minn., January 13, 2003—The American Composers Forum announced today the next phase of Long Beach's participation as California's representative in the Forum's nationwide *Continental Harmony* program. This project is unique in that it will combine the artistry of two composers, one from the U.S. and one from Mexico, and will be performed by two orchestras both in the US and our southern neighbor. Finally, the project features a partnership between the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra and The Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México and the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach.

Rob Maggio from Media, PA and Ana Lara from Mexico City, Mexico will collaboratively write a brand new piece of music for the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra and The Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México titled "Pan-American Windows." The work will musically explore the mutual influences of American and Latin American visual art based on actual pieces of art from The Museum of Latin American Art. The composers will visit Long Beach January 15 through the 18<sup>th</sup> to begin their collaboration.

Lara stated, "I think the most important element of this commission is the experience of relating music to visual arts, this will be the first time I attempt to do something of the sort. Usually I have related more to poetry of literature, but never to the visual arts." Maggio will represent the "American" side of the piece while Lara will express the "Latin" side. According to Maggio, "I've never written music with another composer before, so I anticipate exciting new challenges. I

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think my background in collaborative arts (dance and theater) have prepared me in some ways for such an innovative project. I'm hoping that Ana and I spend some time taking each other's ideas in new directions. I think the process will be a great learning and growing experience."

The piece will be premiered in the 2004-2005 seasons of both the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra and The Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México. During that season the Museum of Latin American Art will create an exhibit and lecture series based on arts collaborations, whether between music and the literary, visual arts, between North and South, or between American and Latin American. In the meantime, the composers will begin their residency in Long Beach by getting to know each other, community members, researching local history and culture, working with students, and making presentations to community groups of all sorts.

Rob Maggio of Media, PA brings a strong background in composition and community engagement to Long Beach's Continental Harmony project. Upon the 1996 release of **Seven Mad Gods**, Maggio's first CD, American Record Guide called his music "lyrical, passionate, melodic, and rhythmically charged. . . a very important release from a young composer who bears watching." The following year, the American Academy of Arts and Letters honored him with the Goddard Lieberman Fellowship, stating that "Maggio does not fear being beautiful in his music which is both grand yet reticent, tuneful yet tough, gorgeous in sound yet lean in method." In 1998, Maggio was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, and in 1999 he won a Pew Fellowship in the Arts. Fanfare magazine's review of Maggio's most recent CD, **Riddles**, noted "his keenly disciplined working methods and intelligent passion [which] leave us with music of substance and eloquence."

In 2000, Maggio composed *Skylines* for the Boston Pops in honor of the Aaron Copland centenary. That same year, he wrote ***South Mountain Echoes*** for the Adams County Bicentennial Band's July 4th celebration, commissioned by the American Composers Forum's Continental Harmony Project.

In 2001, Maggio was commissioned to write music for Matthew Neenan's ballet, *Le Travail*, for the Pennsylvania Ballet. He has also composed music for modern dance companies (Stephen Pelton Dance Theater, Randy James Dance Works, Leah Stein and Dancers) and songs and incidental music for professional theater productions, including those at Yale Repertory Theater, Philadelphia Theater Company, Peoples Light and Theater, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz.

Maggio began piano studies at age 7, started composing at 15, and completed a one-act

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musical comedy the following year. He studied music at Yale and the University of Pennsylvania. Maggio lives with his partner, Tony La Salle, and their daughter, Annamaria, in Media, Pennsylvania, and is Professor of Music Theory and Composition in the School of Music at West Chester University.

Ana Lara of Mexico City, Mexico, is an active promoter of new music and composer of mostly stage, orchestral and chamber works that have been performed throughout the Americas and Europe. Lara attended the Conservatorio Nacional de Música, where her teachers included Daniel Catán and Mario Lavista; she also studied at CENIDIM with Federico Ibarra. Her post-graduate work was with Włodzimierz Kotonski and Zbigniew Rudzinski at the Warsaw Academy of Music, on a Mexican-Polish study grant.

In 1989, Lara founded the Mexican Society of New Music, serving as its president for two years; she was also a member of the board of ISCM from 1990-93. In 1998, she founded the International Festival Música y Escena and has since served as its artistic director. This festival obtained the annual Award of the Mexican Union of Critics of Theater and Music (2001).

Lara has received the grant for young creators from the Mexican Ministry of Culture (1990), two three-year grants for creators (1994-97, 1998-2001), the USA/Canada/Mexico Creative Artists' Residency Program Grant (1997), and the Bellagio Artistic Residency (2000). She also served as composer-in-residence of the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico in 1993-94. She is an active cultural promoter, has also collaborated in various musical magazines and has produced a program at University Radio (Radio UNAM) devoted to contemporary music since 1990.

*Continental Harmony* has been recognized as a model of local community artistic initiative. 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

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documentary and website.

To interview Rob Maggio, contact him at 610-361-9411 or robertmaggio@comcast.net, or to interview Ana Lara, call 011-5255-55-958-314 or analara@att.net.mx.

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