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For Immediate Release,

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**COMPOSER CHARLIE MAGUIRE SELECTED FOR
NEWPORT, Wash., CONTINENTAL HARMONY PROJECT
Artist Will Collaborate With CREATE to
Write a Musical Celebrating David Thompson**

St. PAUL, Minn., February 10, 2003— The American Composers Forum announced today the next phase of CREATE's participation as Washington's representative in the Forum's nationwide *Continental Harmony* program. CREATE selected composer Charlie Maguire to write a score for their musical play titled "Downriver!" to be performed by local theatrical talent and accompanied by a stage band of local musicians. CREATE has put together a coalition of community groups, including Pend Oreille Players and Pend Oreille River Arts Alliance to carry out the residency and have the music performed. The performance of Newport's music will be July 4, 2004 with additional performances throughout the county and at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture in Spokane, WA.

Continental Harmony 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 across the country together for the creation of original musical works reflecting the unique history, culture and spirit of each community. Maguire will begin his residency in Newport by getting to know people, researching local history and culture, working with students, and making presentations to community groups of all sorts.

Charlie Maguire, of Minneapolis, MN brings a strong background in composition and community engagement to Newport's Continental Harmony project. He attended Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, graduating in 1970 with a degree in liberal arts. Then he took his guitar west and served in VISTA, teaching English as a second language, collecting songs, making field recordings and publishing a songbook for teachers and children of migrant workers in western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming. He eventually set up a circuit of appearances in schools and Head Start centers throughout that area, each

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week singing to the children and families of migrant sugar beet workers, farm owners and cowboys.

Following VISTA, Maguire moved to Minnesota, where a chance meeting with Garrison Keillor in the fall of 1974 led to 10 years of regular appearances on public radio's ever-popular *A Prairie Home Companion*. During that time he wrote and performed some of his most-requested songs: "Goodnight Baby," "Play Us A Waltz," "I'm From Minnesota," "Talking Home Improvement" and "Getting in the Cows," which is included on *APHC's Tenth Anniversary Album*.

Now with some 800 songs and seven albums to his credit, Maguire still takes requests from enthusiastic coffeehouse and festival audiences coast to coast. His songs have been featured on *Good Morning America*, *the CBS Evening News*, *Car Talk*, *Hometime*, *As It Happens*, and other nationally broadcast programs.

He co-wrote the musical *Mesabi Red* (1990), which chronicled a 1916 miners' strike on Minnesota's Iron Range. He also composed the music for *Orphan Train* (2000), a play about the trainloads of immigrant orphan children that made their way from the slums of New York to Minnesota at the turn of the century. Both plays were produced by the Great American History Theatre in Saint Paul, and became the highest-grossing shows in that theater's history.

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 documentary and website.

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.