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New *Continental Harmony* Project in Battle Creek, MI New Composition will Celebrate Area's Cultural Diversity

May 4, 2005

For Immediate Release

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St. PAUL, Minn., May 4, 2005—Composers across the country are currently applying for the opportunity to be a part of *Continental Harmony*, a program of the American Composers Forum, for a new project in Battle Creek, Michigan, with the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra.

The composer will be chosen in June 2005 by the host organization, the Kellogg Foundation. The composer will work in the community with various groups to write the commissioned piece and help local musicians prepare the new work for the premiere performance in October, 2006.

Prior to the premiere, the selected composer 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. Visit www.continentalharmony.org for more information.

Organizers in Battle Creek are looking for a composer to write a 20-minute work to celebrate the cultural diversity of the area using Japanese, African, Latin American and Afro-Latin drumming as a point of focus. Potential performing partners with the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra include Battle Creek Community Chorus, Battle Creek Girls' Chorus, Battle Creek Boychoir, Sojourner Truth Choir, Kellogg Community College Choir, area high school and church choirs, high school drum lines, and percussionists specializing in Japanese Kodo drums, Nigerian and West African drums, Latin American drums, and Trinidadian Steel Pan drums.

“This program offers communities — from rural towns to metropolitan areas — the unique opportunity to be a part of new musical works which celebrate their history and culture,” says John Nuechterlein, president and CEO of American Composers Forum. “These exceptional musical celebrations strengthen social bonds and renew the collective spirit.”

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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 Kellogg Foundation.

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