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**COMPOSER DANIEL VALDEZ SELECTED FOR DENVER, Colo.,
CONTINENTAL HARMONY PROJECT
Artist Will Collaborate With El Centro Su Teatro to Create a
Musical Drama Telling the Story of Denver's Westside Community**

St. PAUL, Minn., February 20, 2003— The American Composers Forum announced today the next phase of El Centro Su Teatro's participation as Colorado's representative in the Forum's nationwide *Continental Harmony* program. El Centro Su Teatro selected composer Daniel Valdez to write a piece for musicians and singers of El Centro Su Teatro with students from L'Academia de la Gente and La Escuela Tlatelolco. The ensemble has put together a coalition of community groups, including the Denver Inner City Parish and La Escuela Tlatelolco to carry out the residency and have the music performed. The performance of Denver's music will be in 2004.

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. Valdez will begin his residency in Denver by getting to know people, researching local history and culture, working with students, and making presentations to community groups of all sorts.

Daniel Valdez, of San Juan Bautista, CA brings a strong background in composition and community engagement to Denver's Continental Harmony project. Valdez, composer, musician, singer and actor, left home at the age of 17 to join his brother Luis, in Delano to fight for the unjust treatment of farm workers. It was January of 1966, that Daniel left San Jose to join Cesar Chavez and the United Farmworkers Union. Valdez learned how to do Teatro on the picket lines and how to incorporate his music to bring the message of the UFW to the workers and the rest of the world. As one of the founding members of El Teatro Campesino, Daniel has been seen in many Teatro productions, including the Chicano film classic,

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"Zoot Suit", for which he also wrote original music and arranged all of the classic 1940's Big Band music. Valdez has performed with many musical artists including playing the romantic lead opposite Linda Ronstadt in her stage production of "Canciones De Mi Padre." He has also worked and performed with such musicians as Carlos Santana, Jerry Gracia, Ruben Blades, Celia Cruz, and Tito Puente, in the critically acclaimed Cinemax special "Latin Sessions."

In 1996 Valdez composed and wrote the original score for the IMAX film entitled "Mexico". It has been named one of the top 15 IMAX films in the world.

In the spring of 2000, Daniel co-starred in the musical, "Selena Forever", which portrays the slain, young Tejana's life. It toured through Texas and Daniel gave his final performance in Chicago. In the summer of 2000 he produced the first CD recorded in El Teatro's own, MENYAH MUSIC studios. It was a cast album of ETC's production of LA VIRGEN DEL TEPEYAC.

Along with Mr. Valdez's stage, film and music credits, he has always worked with community-based organizations and schools as a positive role model for Hispanic youth, with special guest lectures, performances, workshops and benefits for these organizations.

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.

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