



A M E R I C A N C O M P O S E R S F O R U M

NATIONAL OFFICE:

332 Minnesota Street, Suite E-145 • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1300 USA

Telephone: [651] 228-1407 • Fax: [651] 291-7978

E-mail: mail@composersforum.org • Web site: www.composersforum.org

Continental Harmony Premiere in Twin Falls, Idaho, New Composition Celebrates Centennials along the Snake River

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For more information, contact: Pat Shifferd at American Composers Forum,
651-251-2818, harmony@composersforum.org, or
Stacey Madsen at Magic Valley Arts Council,
208-734-2787, mvac@pmt.org

St. PAUL, Minn., June 4, 2004—Composer Anthony Scott Watson’s original composition for the Twin Falls Municipal Band and College of Southern Idaho Wind Ensemble entitled “Magic Valley” will be premiered on the 4th of July weekend in Twin Falls and Buhl. The band’s first performance of the composition will be at McClusky Park in Buhl on Saturday, July 3 at 2 pm. The piece will be performed again in Twin Falls on the evening of the 4th at the Twin Falls City Fourth of July Celebration on the College of Southern Idaho Campus. Both performances are open to the public and free of charge. The piece was commissioned by the Magic Valley Arts Council, the Buhl Arts Council and the Municipal Band as part of *Continental Harmony*, the national community-based composer residency program of American Composers Forum, St. Paul, Minn.

The premiere is a celebration of the communities of the Magic Valley situated along the Snake River. 2004 marks the centennials of the City of Twin Falls, the Twin Falls Canal Company, the Twin Falls Municipal Band, and the neighboring town of Buhl. Today, as it has throughout history, the Snake River unites the communities of the Magic Valley. As such, this *Continental Harmony* project honors the river and its place in the lives of area residents.

According to Watson’s program notes, “The determination of those who settled the area at the turn of the Twentieth Century is evident even today. A sagebrush-covered desert has been transformed into an agricultural prize. The magic that fueled the engine of change was water...In ‘Magic Valley,’ for concert band, the spirit of the people of the Twin Falls area is distilled musically. The hymn that opens the piece represents their spiritual nature. A magic water leitmotif, drawn from the opening four notes of the hymn, is laced throughout. The musical portrait closes with the water motif sounding over and over, more and more broadly, suggesting the Magic Valley’s expansive and striking beauty which has attracted and held settlers for one hundred years!”

(more)

The Magic Valley Arts Council is a non-profit umbrella arts agency that fosters cooperation between visual, performing and literary artists, organizations and the community. The mission is to foster and promote arts experiences for all people in the Greater Twin Falls area.

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 for the creation of original musical works reflecting the unique history, culture and spirit of each 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.

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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