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For Immediate Release,

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**COMPOSER JANET ALBRIGHT SELECTED FOR
SOUTH ORANGE/MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY
CONTINENTAL HARMONY PROJECT**

New Piece Will Celebrate Communities' Annual Interfaith Gathering

St. PAUL, Minn., March 18, 2004— The American Composers Forum, St. Paul, Minn, announced today the next phase of the South Orange/Maplewood Coalition's participation as New Jersey's representative in the Forum's nationwide Continental Harmony program. Representatives of a coalition of community groups in South Orange and Maplewood have selected composer Janet Albright of Fairfax, Virginia, to serve a residency culminating in an original musical work to be performed by a consortium of ensembles including the Opera for the Young, Maplewood Community Bands, Youth Orchestras of Essex County, Stirling Chamber Orchestra, Voices in Harmony, South Orange/Maplewood School District Fine Arts Department along with district music teachers and school bands, orchestras, choirs along with a number of local professional jazz and classical musicians. Albright will begin her residency in South Orange and Maplewood by getting to know people, researching local history and culture, working with students, and making presentations to community groups of all sorts. The new music will premiere July 3, 2005 at the annual interfaith community gathering.

Continental Harmony is an initiative of 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. The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition and its community partners, which include the consortia of ensembles and performers listed above as well as Maplewood/South Orange Adult School, and SOMAcom (South Orange and Maplewood

(more)

Community Cable Station), were selected through a competitive process to be New Jersey's representative in the Continental Harmony program.

Janet Albright began her musical studies at age five in Ardmore, Pennsylvania with Florence Leonard who also encouraged her to begin composing. She has composed in a wide variety of musical forms and styles including both traditional and contemporary for solo, small ensemble, full orchestra, and choir. In addition to her compositions, she performs regularly as a freelance violinist, pianist, harpsichordist, and organist in Texas, Switzerland, Virginia, Colorado, Washington, D.C., and Germany. She has served as principal violist of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra in Virginia, the American Symphony Orchestra League Institute Chamber Orchestra, and the Wandesbek Symphony Orchestra in Hamburg, Germany, as well as the pianist or violist of an additional ten orchestras across the globe. Her travels as a performer and composer have taken her around the world, literally from east to west, as a pianist on a cruise ship. As artistic director of "Hello Symphony" she developed an award-winning educational enrichment program for which she composed many works.

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.

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.