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Continental Harmony U.S. Premiere in Long Beach, Calif. New Composition Celebrates Art from Museum of Latin American Art

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St. PAUL, Minn., April 4, 2005—*Continental Harmony*, the nationwide composer-commissioning program of the American Composers Forum, announces the upcoming United States premiere of a new piece of music. “*Dos Visiones/Two Visions*” was written for the Long Beach, California and Mexico City, Mexico communities, and will be performed by the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra for the U.S. Premiere under the direction of Enrique Diemecke May 21, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. at the Terrace Theatre in Long Beach. Also on the program for the evening is Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 6 *Pathétique*. “*Dos Visiones*” received its world premiere October 1 in Mexico City. This project is unique in that it combines the artistry of two composers, one from the U.S. and one from Mexico, and was commissioned by two orchestras in partnership: the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra and The Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, and produced in partnership with the Museum of Latin American Art (MoLAA) in Long Beach. Artworks from MoLAA are choreographed to the music of the piece and will be projected over the orchestra during the performance using digital film technology. This commission is part of the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra’s *Musical Bridges* Project.

Robert Maggio from Lambertville, New Jersey and Ana Lara from Mexico City, Mexico collaborated to write this 40-minute new work that musically explores the mutual influences of American and Latin American visual art based on actual pieces of art from MoLAA. The piece consists of six movements alternating the composers: I. *Paseando* (Wandering), III. *Fantasia en el circo* (Fantasy at the circus), and V. *Interior* by Ana Lara; and II. *El mago de la lluvia* (Magician of the Rain), IV. *Mujer barbada* (Bearded Lady), and VI. *Auto retrato* (Self Portrait with Roots) by Robert Maggio. According to Maggio, ““The combined effect of our orchestral music and the vividly choreographed images of the MOLAA Collection is fascinating. Both the music and the visual art become more powerful, more intense and vibrant.”

According to Jack Fishman, Executive Director of the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, “The Long Beach Symphony Orchestra is honored to be included in *Continental Harmony*. After five collaborations with the Museum of Latin American Art over the last three years, we are very excited to be bringing their collection to our concert hall. This work is effective because the music illuminates the art work and the art makes the music more understandable and enjoyable. The two together are more than the sum of the parts.”

(more)

During the 2004-2005 season, MoLAA created an exhibit and lecture series based on arts collaborations, whether between music and the literary, visual arts, between North and South, or between American and Latin American. Concurrently, the composers spent time in residence in Long Beach by getting to know each other, community members, researching local history and culture, working with students, and making presentations to community groups of all sorts.

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. For more information, visit www.continentalharmony.org

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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