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Continental Harmony Premiere in Grand Forks, N.D., New Composition Explores the Traditions of American Indians and European Settlers

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St. PAUL, Minn., March 28, 2003— “Meeting Ground” a new work by composer Geoffrey Hudson will have its world premiere on Thursday, April 10th at the North Dakota Museum of Art. The piece was commissioned by the North Dakota Museum of Art and the Greater Grand Forks Symphony through the *Continental Harmony* program, the national community-based composer residency program of American Composers Forum of St. Paul, Minnesota. The work is a concerto for string quartet and orchestra that was commissioned for performance by the Greater Grand Forks Symphony and the Chiara String Quartet.

Grand Forks, North Dakota’s second Continental Harmony project brings together two cultural traditions of the Northern Plains — that of the American Indians and of the European settlers. The project also brings together two Grand Forks arts organizations in a unique collaboration. The North Dakota Museum of Art has commissioned the work of two artists that examine the interface of American Indian and Western European culture. In honor of the Continental Harmony premiere, the Museum commissioned Michael Boyd of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to paint a mural depicting contemporary Indian life. He will be working in the East Gallery of the Museum for the next two months. In the early 1990s American landscape photographer Mark Klett completed a series of photographic murals of American Indian Shields on Rock Art for the North Dakota Museum. These will be seen for the first time. Both Klett and Boyd’s work will be on exhibit in the Museum through May 18.

Geoffrey Hudson has been a prolific composer of vocal and instrumental music throughout the 1990s. A graduate of the New England Conservatory and Oberlin College, Hudson studied with Malcolm Peyton and Richard Hoffman. He was awarded an earlier commission from the

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American Composers Forum's Faith Partners Program. Hudson lives in western Massachusetts where he is on the faculty of the Greenwood Music Camp.

The powwow was chosen as a theme for Geoffrey Hudson's composition because of its significance to American Indians and to the greater Grand Forks community. The powwow is both a major focal point for the reassertion of American Indian culture and also a celebration to be shared among neighbors, both Indian and non-Indian. Following the premiere in the Museum of Art, the work will be performed in concert by the Greater Grand Forks Symphony Orchestra and the Chiara String Quartet on Saturday, April 12 at 7:30 pm and again on Sunday afternoon at 3 pm, both at the Empire Art Center in Grand Forks. The premiere performance is free. Tickets for the weekend symphony concert cost \$15, \$12, and \$5; they may be reserved by calling the box office at 701-777-4090.

"Meeting Ground," the name both of Hudson's work and the April 10th premiere event, will include vocal performances by Annie Humphrey and Sissy Goodhouse in addition to the presentation of Hudson's concerto. Goodhouse, a Lakota from Standing Rock Reservation near Cannonball, North Dakota, has made two recordings with Makoché, an award winning independent label, located in Mandan, North Dakota, well known for presenting the best in American Indian influenced music. Goodhouse will be performing traditional music accompanied by her husband and son on drums. Annie Humphrey was born and raised on the Ojibwe Indian reservation in Northern Minnesota where she learned first-hand the struggles of growing up as a minority. After leaving the reservation she joined the United States Marines, traveled the country coast to coast, and was stationed in Japan. Humphrey has written much of the material included in her albums "Falling Down and Falling Apart" and "The Heron Smiled," both of which she recorded for Makoché.

The Chiara String Quartet, whose members studied at Juilliard in New York, spent the last two years in Grand Forks as a recipient of a Chamber Music America Rural Residency Award. In the fall of 2002, the Quartet returned to New York to continue their professional career. In addition to their chamber music performances, the quartet present concerts for area school children through Young Audiences of New York, just as they appeared as teaching artists in public schools throughout the Grand Forks region while they were in residence. Last May, the Chiara won first prize in strings in the 2002 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. In early

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April they will perform in Carnegie Hall. Following the premiere of "Meeting Ground," they will depart for the Naumburg Competition, an invitation-only event for the world's leading new chamber ensembles.

These collaborative events between the Museum and the Symphony are sponsored in Grand Forks by Xcel Energy and by a grant from the North Valley Arts Council and the City of Grand Forks.

The Greater Grand Forks Symphony Orchestra, now in its 94th year, is a sixty-member community orchestra performing five concerts a year under the direction of Conductor Timm Rolek. Guest artists from the U.S. and Canada regularly join the Symphony for outstanding performances including world premieres of new music. The Symphony has received nationally competitive awards from Meet The Composer, Inc. and Chamber Music America. Last fall, through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Symphony brought its own commissioned work to the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in Belcourt, North Dakota, to perform for community members and area schoolchildren. The Symphony Association also sponsors a comprehensive regional youth orchestra program for student musicians in middle school through college.

The North Dakota Museum of Art is the official art gallery of the State of North Dakota. It has won numerous awards and has been recognized by national media including the *New York Times* and CBS News Sunday Morning. The mission of the North Dakota Museum of Art is: to bring universally significant art, artists, performers, humanists and cultural events to rural America; to respond to our indigenous Native American audiences by consistently exhibiting the best of Native American arts and artists, both historical and contemporary; to seek out artists who transform the materials of the Plains and Prairies into visual language which illuminates the past, the present and the future of rural America; to record the artistic history of our region through exhibitions, publications and acquisitions for the permanent collection; to explore the realm of rapidly developing technologies as artistic means; to introduce the arts to outlying audiences through innovative educational practices; to place artists of our own region within a larger, more universal context; and to provide a place of refuge and ceremony.

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

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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.

To learn more about *Continental Harmony*, visit www.continentalharmony.org. To contact the composer, call 413-634-0277 or email hudsongs@earthlink.net.

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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