



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 Montpelier, Vt., Two Rivers Center Celebrates the Central Vermont Harvest and Cultural Heritage Festival with New Music

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For more information, contact: Pat Shifferd at American Composers Forum,
651-251-2818, harmony@composersforum.org, or
David Shepard at Two Rivers Center for Sustainability,
802-223-1515

St. PAUL, Minn., July 17, 2003— The Food Works' Two Rivers Center for Sustainability in Montpelier, Vt., will celebrate the second annual Central Vermont Harvest and Cultural Heritage Festival with a with a brand new piece of music. The original work will debut August 15, 2003 at Montpelier High School with a second performance scheduled August 16 at 2:15 pm at the Two Rivers Urban Farm. Written especially for the occasion by composer Larry Siegel of Westmoreland, NH, and Martin Kemple of Food Works, "Rumplestiltskin and the Battle of Milkweed: A Musical Fairy Tale About the Fabrication of East Montpelier of 1848" is the product of Siegel's residency in Montpelier, made possible by the American Composers Forum's *Continental Harmony* program. An entire day of activities is planned for the festival beginning with a community meal at noon and culminating with the premiere of the musical.

"Rumplestiltskin and the Battle of Milkweed" focuses on actual events that led to the separation of Montpelier and East Montpelier in the mid-19th century, setting the stage for rural-urban rivalries that still persist today. This musical drama explores the history of the Central Vermont region. Food Works' cultural historian, regional music historians, and long-time residents collaborated with Siegel and Kemple to create this new work.

Siegel is a composer, theater artist, scholar and performer with a growing national reputation. As artistic director of Tricinium, Ltd. and director of The Verbatim Project, he facilitates participatory, interdisciplinary residencies to create and perform original works of music-theater. Place-based and site-specific art is central to the work he creates directly and in collaboration. A current emphasis is on public policy and environmental concerns. Projects have included such diverse contexts as high school meditations on society, college courses, workshops for

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teachers, and community residencies. In 2000, Siegel was a Millennium Artist in the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation's Artists and Communities Program, in Harts, West Virginia. Other works include "The People's House," an original musical set in the New Hampshire State Legislature and "Monadnock Tales," a large-scale symphonic work with a narrated text. His musical exploration of the issue of climate change will premiere in May 2003 at the Chewonki Foundation's Renewable Energy Conference. A nationally known performer of Celtic, Appalachian and other forms of traditional music on piano, mandolin, and guitar, Siegel performs with several groups.

As part of the festival, young gardeners from around the state will join apprentice herbalists from central Vermont to exhibit their hands-on knowledge of locally grown foods and plants. Workshops and exhibits will be held by children who grew vegetables, herbs and flowers and prepared meals in our statewide Gardens for Learning program, as well as by youngsters who created balms, salves and their own Natural First Aid Kits from backyard medicinal plants during our summer herb camps for kids.

Food Works' Two Rivers Center for Sustainability helps area residents learn about the cultural and natural history of their central Vermont home. In addition to its educational-outreach work, Food Works has acquired an historic farmstead in Montpelier that it operates as an organic farm and education center.

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

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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.

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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