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Continental Harmony Premiere in Visalia, Calif., New Composition Celebrates Young Mariachi Performers

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St. PAUL, Minn., October 12, 2004—Composer Joseph Julian Gonzalez' original composition entitled "Son de San Joaquin" will be premiered by the Tulare County Symphony Orchestra and mariachi in Visalia's Fox Theatre Tuesday, October 19 at 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for students. The Central California Alliance for the Preservation of Mariachi (CCAPM) and the Tulare County Symphony Orchestra are collaborating partners in this commissioning project as part of *Continental Harmony*, the national community-based composer residency program of American Composers Forum, St. Paul, Minn. "Huapango de Moncayo," a classic mariachi symphonic piece written by JP Moncayo with a special mariachi arrangement by Juan Morales, music director of CCAPM's Honors Mariachi class. For tickets, contact the Tulare Symphony at 559-732-8600 or infotcsymph@mindinfo.com.

The mission of the CCAPM is multipurpose. The central concern is to teach young people to perform mariachi authentically and with the highest degree of artistry; at the same time, the students are taught music theory and history, and life skills such as discipline, responsibility and family values. Parents actively support their children in the program. At present there are about 17 youth mariachi groups throughout the southern part of California's Central Valley. The purpose of this project is to continue to raise the artistic level of the young musicians and to encourage cross-cultural exchange through the creation of a work for mariachi ensemble and classical orchestra that will combine the two musical traditions.

According to Eva Camacho, coordinator for CCAPM, "We are excited about the opportunity to collaborate with the Tulare County Symphony in premiering this original piece by Joseph Julian Gonzalez. Fifteen students were selected from our honors class of 32 students from throughout the valley, which meets weekly. They have been preparing this piece, and are excited about performing for their community

(more)

members. It will truly be a unique experience for our young musicians; we know the audience will enjoy their presentation."

In addition to providing quality musical experiences for Central California, the Tulare County Symphony works to champion new music. The Symphony gained national attention in 1993 when it commissioned and premiered American composer Alan Hovhaness' "Violin Concerto #2" in recognition of the Armenian heritage and contributions to Tulare County. The symphony also commissioned composer Paul Hurst to write "Sequoia Rhapsody" and "The New Age of Man - Fanfare for Trumpet and Orchestra;" San Joaquin Valley composer, Tony White, wrote "Refuge(e);" Cellist and composer, Milt Friesen, wrote "Good Providence."

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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