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## **A Geologic Symphony: A Model for Scientific Engagement through the Arts**

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As part of its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2013, the Geological Society of America commissioned Symphony No. 1: Formations from composer Jeffrey Nyтч and premiered the work, performed by the Boulder Philharmonic, and the GSA's annual meeting in Denver. The project attracted national and international attention for its mix of music and geology: unlike most musical works inspired by landscapes, Formations was inspired by geological processes themselves—specifically, those that shaped the Rocky Mountains. Nyтч, who holds undergraduate degrees in both geology and music, will discuss how the project educated laypersons in the basics of Rocky Mountain geology while simultaneously building an audience for the orchestra. The Formations project is a type example of how the arts can be used to increase understanding within communities of the science happening all around them, provide the scientific community with a new lens through which to see their work, and establish a new channel for arts organizations to engage their community and build their audience. This complementary dynamic results in increased knowledge, understanding, and community amongst and between groups of people who might not otherwise experience each other's worlds, and suggests that the arts can play a significant role in increasing scientific literacy and understanding.