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**COMPOSER DAN RAGER SELECTED FOR COLUMBIA, S.D., CONTINENTAL
HARMONY PROJECT**

**Collaborations with Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge will celebrate Centennial of
Wildlife Refuge system**

St. PAUL, Minn., July 22, 2002—The American Composers Forum announced today the next phase of the Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge's participation as South Dakota's representative in the Forum's nationwide music program, *Continental Harmony*. In the program, which has been widely recognized as a model of local community artistic initiative, each host site identifies a theme, an occasion, and local performers for an original 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.

Composer Dan Rager of Chesterland, Ohio has been selected by the Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge to write a piece for the Aberdeen Community Municipal Band as a celebration of "The James River—Connecting Wildlife and People." The work will celebrate the centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge system, which was established by act of Congress in 1903. Mr. Rager will begin his residency in South Dakota by getting to know people, researching local history and culture, working with students, and making presentations to community groups of all sorts.

Mr. Rager brings a strong background in composition and community engagement to Columbia's *Continental Harmony* project. His Symphony No. 1, "Bridge To A Millennium," has earned him international acclaim with performances in Cleveland, Amsterdam, Russia, and Japan. He also composed the opening fanfare for his hometown of Cleveland's 1996 bicentennial celebration.

He has published more than 100 compositions and arrangements, ranging from large-scale works for orchestras and symphonic bands to works for soloists and chamber ensembles. These pieces have been performed and recorded by many ensembles, including The Cleveland Chamber Symphony, State Radio & Television Orchestra of Moscow, Apollo String Quartet, The United States Navy Band, and The Cleveland Philharmonic Winds.

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Mr. Rager holds bachelors and master's degrees in music theory and composition from Cleveland State University and teaches at Lakeland Community College. His book, "Creating & Marketing Your Demo CD," encompasses many aspects of the business of music.

The Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge has put together a coalition of community groups, including Aberdeen Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, Dakota Prairie Museum, and Aberdeen Community Municipal Band to carry out the residency and have the music performed. The performance of the music will be July 4, 2003 on the sound stage of Wylie Park in Aberdeen.

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.

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. Additional funds are provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Target Foundation.

For an electronic version of Dan Rager's picture, contact Patricia Shifferd at harmony@composersforum.org. To interview Mr. Rager, contact him at (440) 423-1576.

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