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## *Continental Harmony* Premiere in Kan., New Composition is a Celebration of the Heritage and Landscape of the Solomon River Valley

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For Immediate Release

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St. PAUL, Minn., February 17, 2003—Composer Greg Sanders' original composition for Solomon Valley area high school bands will be premiered as a celebration of the heritage and landscape of the Solomon River Valley. The piece was commissioned by the Solomon Valley-Highway 24-Heritage Alliance, Inc., The Nicodemus Historical Society, Stockton Area Arts Council, Glasco Chamber Pride, Downs Arts Council, and Cloud County Community College Department of Music as part of *Continental Harmony*, the nation-wide community-based composer residency program of American Composers Forum, St. Paul, Minn.

The premiere of the piece, titled "Dreams and Faith: The Solomon Valley Anthology," is Tuesday, March 18 at 7:00 pm at Mankato High School by the Pike Trail League West band clinic under the baton of Mr. Scott Freeby, Manhattan, KS, conducting/clinician. This league includes schools from Mankato, White Rock, Jewel, Waconda, and Beloit's St. Johns School. The piece will also be performed March 25 at the Pike Trail League East band clinic at 7 p.m. at Glasco High School with Mr. Milt Allen from Salina conductor and clinician. This League includes schools from the Southern Cloud, Pike Valley, Hillcrest, and North Central regions. The final performances of the piece are April 28 at the Downs High School Spring Concert at 8:00 PM at the high school, and May 13 at Glasco Junior - Senior High School Spring Concert at 7:30 PM, at Glasco Grade School.

"Dreams and Faith: The Solomon Valley Anthology" consists of four movements: "Enchanted Sky," "Freedom: A Long Time on its Way," "Distant Hymns," and "Plows on the Prairie." Audio samples of movements of the work are available at: [www.tamuk.edu/music/gregsanders/Kansas](http://www.tamuk.edu/music/gregsanders/Kansas)

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The Solomon Valley-Highway 24-Heritage Alliance was formed in response to the needs of 22 rural communities in northwestern Kansas that are connected by the Solomon River and the Highway. The communities have joined together to celebrate their common histories and to confront the need to maintain themselves as viable in the face of the challenges to agriculture in today's economy. The Alliance is working to promote awareness of the interesting histories and ecosystem of its region in order to promote cultural tourism.

The highway was known as part of the historic Midland Trail and was a primary route for western migration in the 1800's. In addition, the well-known folk song, "Home on the Range," was written in the area and makes reference to the Solomon River.

*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.

To learn more about *Continental Harmony*, visit [www.continentalharmony.org](http://www.continentalharmony.org). To contact the composer, visit [www.gregsanders.org](http://www.gregsanders.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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