



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](mailto:mail@composersforum.org) • *Web site:* [www.composersforum.org](http://www.composersforum.org)

March 13, 2002

For Immediate Release,

For more information, contact:  
Patricia Shifferd at American Composers Forum, (651) 251-2818  
[harmony@composersforum.org](mailto:harmony@composersforum.org)  
Connie Bonfy at Cowley County Community College  
[bonfy@paws.cowley.cc.ks.us](mailto:bonfy@paws.cowley.cc.ks.us)

**COMPOSER PHILIP AABERG SELECTED FOR ARKANSAS CITY AND WICHITA,  
KAN., CONTINENTAL HARMONY PROJECT  
Artist Will Collaborate With Cowley County Community College To Celebrate American  
Long Grass Prairie**

St. PAUL, Minn., March 13, 2002 — The American Composers Forum announced today the next phase of Cowley County Community College's participation as Kansas' representative in the Forum's nationwide Continental Harmony program. 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.

Cowley County Community College's has selected composer Philip Aaberg to write a piece for the Winfield Regional Symphony as a celebration of the ecology, uniqueness, and beauty of the American long grass prairie. Cowley County Community College has put together a coalition of community groups, including Chamber Music at the Barn and the Winfield Regional Symphony, to carry out the residency and have the music performed. The new work will be premiered on June 7, 2003, at PrairieFest. Aaberg will begin his residency in Arkansas City and Wichita by getting to know people, researching local history and culture, working with students, and making presentations to community groups of all sorts.

Philip Aaberg, of Montana brings a strong background in composition and community engagement to Arkansas City and Wichita's Continental Harmony project. As a composer, Aaberg writes music that puts the listener smack in the new American West with all its bittersweet complexity. His music — characterized by Digital Audio magazine "as evocative of place as the works of Dvorak and Sibelius" — has been performed by many ensembles including the Boston Pops, George Winston, and the Great Fall Symphony. Characteristic of this emphasis on the land, his recent commissions include a work for cello and piano based on Gary Snyder's epic poem "Mountains and Rivers Without End."

(more)

His album, "Live from Montana," was a nominee for a 2002 Grammy Award, and an earlier performance on PBS's "All-American Jazz" was nominated for an Emmy. More than 60 of his piano pieces have been published by Hal Leonard and Sweetgrass Music.

As a performer, he has premiered many works of new music with the Paul Drescher Ensemble. He tours with master fiddler Darol Anger, slide guitar wizard Roy Rogers, and the bluegrass group NewGrange. As a solo pianist he has played in many of the world's great concert venues.

In 1995 he received the Montana Governor's Award for the Arts. He has carried out residencies and workshops throughout the United States, including a Cultural Trust Fund residency in northern Montana and a week in Gloucester, Mass.

He was educated at Harvard through a Leonard Bernstein Music Scholarship. His musical versatility is indicated by his performances with jazz, rock, folk, chamber music, and improvisational theater groups. He lives in Oakland California and Chester Montana with his wife and infant son; he also has three grown sons who are artists in their own right.

During the inaugural round of the program in the year 2000, Continental Harmony projects brought people together, heightened community feeling and sense of place, and encouraged 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 Web site.

*For an electronic version of Philip Aaberg's picture, contact Patricia Shifferd, [harmony@composersforum.org](mailto:harmony@composersforum.org). To interview Aaberg, contact him at [patty@philipaaberg.com](mailto:patty@philipaaberg.com).*

###