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**COMPOSER ERIC FUNK SELECTED FOR ENNIS, MONT.,
CONTINENTAL HARMONY PROJECT
Artist Will Collaborate With Montana Children To
Celebrate the Madison River Music Festival**

St. PAUL, Minn., October 8, 2002— The American Composers Forum announced today the next phase of Madison Valley Cultural Corporation's participation as Montana's representative in the Forum's nationwide *Continental Harmony* program. Over the next two years, communities in all 50 states will join the program. 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.

The Forum announced that Madison Valley Cultural Corporation's selection for the residency – Eric Funk – will write a piece for the Hawthorne School Children's Choir, Gallatin Children's Choir and Bozeman Senior High School Chamber Orchestra as a celebration of the annual Madison River Music Festival. The Madison Valley Cultural Corporation has put together a coalition of community groups, including schools in Southwest Montana, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, and the Helena Symphony to carry out the residency and have the music performed. The performance of Ennis' music will be April 12, 2003. Funk will begin his residency in Ennis by working with submissions from area Montana children, meeting area residents, and rehearsing initial drafts of the piece with the performers. Since the theme of the Madison River Music Festival is Montana youth, area 3rd, 4th and 5th graders are invited to

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submit a painting or drawing of a dream they have had, and include a sentence about the dream along with the artwork. Some of the text will be used in the piece, and the artwork will be displayed in the foyer of the performance hall at the premiere.

Eric Funk's composition's include five symphonies; three operas; six ballet scores; three large works for chorus and orchestra; 13 concertos; several orchestral tone poems; and numerous works for chamber ensembles, solo instruments, and voice. Many of these have been released commercially — including his Symphony No. 5, "Dante Ascending," which was recorded by the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and Opera Chorus under the baton of Terje Mikkelsen.

Funk has been featured on CBS's Sunday Morning show with Charles Osgood, in the New York Times "Arts and Leisure" section, and on NPR's "Theme and Variations." His works have earned him numerous awards and commissions, including 13 ASCAP Standard Awards, the 2001 (Mont.) Governor's Award for the Arts, and three (Mont.) Arts Commission Fellowships.

Funk was born in Deer Lodge, Mont., in 1949. Since 1985, he has lived in Bozeman, Mont., where he spent eight years as music director and conductor of the Helena Symphony Orchestra and the Helena Symphonic Chorus (1994-2002). In 1994, he co-founded the Gallatin Chamber Orchestra. He is currently on the faculty of Montana State University.

Continental Harmony has been recognized as a model of local community artistic initiative. 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 an electronic version of Eric Funk's picture, view his website at www.ericfunk.com. To interview Funk, contact him at 406-582-7885 or ericfunkcomposer@hotmail.com.

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