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April 13, 2009

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Illinois Wesleyan Civic Orchestra to Perform Verdi's *Requiem*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – The Illinois Wesleyan Civic Orchestra (IWCO) will host a concert on Friday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts (110 E. Mulberry St., Bloomington). The concert is supported in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, by a gift from President and Mrs. Wilson and by contributions from the music fraternities Sigma Alpha Iota and Phi Mu Alpha.

Requiem, a mass composed by Giuseppe Verdi, was completed in April 1874. It was composed at a tribute to Alessandro Manzoni, a celebrated poet who Verdi admired.

In the fall of 2008, IWCO Conductor and Professor of Music Stephen Eggleston took a sabbatical to prepare for the performance of *Requiem*. He examined other performances of this work, studied the choral conducting and trained to conduct and rehearse the orchestral score.

Along with the IWCO, this performance will feature a choir consisting of more than 150 participants, including the Illinois Wesleyan Collegiate and University choirs, the Illinois State Civic Choral, Cantus Novus, a Bloomington-Normal mixed choral ensemble, and many community members.

There will be four soloists featured during the performance of the *Requiem*, and each has a connection to IWU. Shelley Jameson, class of '86, Suzanne Shields, class of '01, and Joel Jameson, class of '86, are Illinois Wesleyan alumni, and Harold Meers is an adjunct faculty member of the School of Theatre Arts at Illinois Wesleyan.

Shelley Jameson, a soprano, has sung at both national and international opera houses. Her repertoire includes *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Magic Flute*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Boheme*, *Faust*, *Carmina Burana* and *Suor Angelica*. Jameson is an artist-in-residence at Nyack College in Nyack, N.Y. She runs the opera program there and teaches private voice lessons.

Shields, a mezzo-soprano, has been performing since age nine as a member of the Lyric Opera of Chicago Children's Chorus. She has performed in such operas as *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Turandot*, *La Traviata* and *Norma*. Shields has performed with the Cincinnati Opera and has performed in numerous recitals and master classes. In 2004, she won the Farwell Award from the Musicians Club of Women, and in 2008 she won the Eleanor Pierce Sherwin Award

from the American Opera Society.

Meers, a tenor, made his professional opera debut in *Così fan Tutte* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. He has also performed with the San Francisco Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Baltimore Opera, New Orleans Opera, Boston Lyric Opera and Cleveland Opera. Meers holds degrees from Judson College in Marion, Ala., Illinois State University in Normal, Ill., and the Opera Institute at Boston University.

Joel Jameson, a bass, has performed in such operas as *Aida*, *Rigoletto*, *Don Carlo*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Bohème* and *La Jolie de Perth*. Jameson is also a conductor and has held positions at churches as the director of choirs where he has conducted Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and *Hear my Prayer* and Mozart's *Requiem*. He is currently assistant professor of music in voice and choral at Nyack College, Nyack, N.Y.

General admission for the IWCO concert is \$10 for adults, \$5 for seniors and IWU alumni and \$2 for high school and Illinois Wesleyan University students. Children of elementary school age and younger are admitted for free. Tickets are available at the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts Box Office (600 N. East St., Bloomington) at 309-434-2777 and online at www.artsbloomington.org.

For additional information, contact the IWCO office at 309-556-3346.

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