



11-23-2009

IWCO to Give Concert

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Recommended Citation

Fields '12, Kristin, "IWCO to Give Concert" (2009). *News and Events*. 439.
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November 23, 2009

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IWCO to Give Concert

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – The Illinois Wesleyan University Civic Orchestra (IWCO) will give a concert on Friday, Dec. 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts (600 N. East St., Bloomington).

General admission is \$10, with a \$5 discount for senior citizens and IWU alumni, and \$2 for high school and college students with a valid ID. Children in eighth grade or younger are admitted for free. Tickets can be purchased through the BCPA Box office, which may be reached (309) 434-2777.

Conducted by Illinois Wesleyan Professor of Music Steven W. Eggleston, the 77-member orchestra will open with Maurice Ravel's arrangement of *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Mussorgsky. Written in 1874 to commemorate the composer's late friend, artist Victor Hartmann, the suite evokes strolling through a gallery, viewing works spanning from *The Marketplace at Limoges* to *The Great Gate of Kiev*.

Siegfried Idyll by Richard Wagner will follow. The piece was written as a holiday present for Wagner's wife and incorporates motifs from his opera *Siegfried*. It debuted on Christmas morning, 1870.

Steve Vogel, the Jubilee Bells and 10 year old Amanda Sipes will join the IWCO in a special multi-media performance of Alfred Reed's famed *Russian Christmas Music*. Vogel will narrate the text of the children's book *A Christmas Bell for Anya*, with Sipes portraying Anya. This will mark the regional premiere of the joined works, which were first performed together by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in 2005.

Written for the Army Air Force Band in 1944, Reed composed *Russian Christmas Music* in only 11 days. The piece draws on 16th century Russian Christmas songs and Eastern Orthodox liturgical music, spanning from gentle carols and church bells to a triumphant crescendo. The work first premiered on a nationwide NBC broadcast on Dec. 12, 1944 and has been recognized by critics as a holiday masterpiece.

A Christmas Bell for Anya was written by Chris and Evie Stewart, with illustrations by Ben Sowards. It tells of the dark Russian winter of 1917, during the revolution.

For additional information, please contact the IWCO Office at (309) 556-3346 or e-mail iwco@titan.iwu.edu.

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