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## Illinois Wesleyan Presents: A Cello Celebration

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March 1, 2000

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## **Illinois Wesleyan Presents: A Cello Celebration**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—On Saturday, March 4, at 7:30 p.m., Illinois Wesleyan University will host its first Cello Celebration featuring cellists of all levels and from around the Midwest. The cellists have been invited to participate in this event under the direction of Nina Gordon, assistant professor of cello and chamber music at IWU.

Free and open to the public, the Celebration will take place in Westbrook Auditorium, Presser Hall, 303 E. University Ave., Bloomington.

Performers will include professors and students from IWU, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Millikin, and Roosevelt Universities. Cellists from the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Peoria Symphony, Kansas City Symphony will travel to the event. Also participating will be local music teachers and cellists from Bloomington Public Schools, Normal Public Schools, University High School, Lincoln Land Community College and Franklin Magnet School in Champaign.

Cellist Natalia Khoma, winner of the Tchaikovsky Competition and other international competitions, will also perform in the Celebration concert. She will give a master class to IWU students. All community cellists are invited to attend the master class, which will be held the day of the concert in Room 16 of Presser Hall, from 3-5 p.m.

The Cello Celebration comes to Bloomington by way of Kansas City where Nina Gordon founded and directed it for the last five years. The event has attracted as many as 120 players from places in Minnesota and Ohio. Gordon felt this would be an event that would be of great value to the Bloomington-Normal area.

"The concert will be a very friendly event with lots of fun and surprises," said Gordon. "When people come together to play the cello, it is people playing for each other, enjoying the music and one another's company. It is an event where the participants leave with the desire to stay in touch with one another and cannot wait for the event to come again next year."

Performers will include IWU students--Corinn Brooks, sophomore music major from South Milwaukee, Wis.; Bethany Bilobran, sophomore music education major from Bartlett, Ill.; Karl

Knapp, senior music major from Fort Atkinson, Wis.; April Guthrie, first-year student music major from Overland Park, Kan.; Bethany Von Behren, junior music major from Peoria, Ill.; Christine Mah, junior educational studies major from Buffalo Grove, Ill.; Lori Morgan, first-year student music major from Chesterfield, Mo.; Carrie Zimmerman, junior music major from Rockford, Ill.; and A.J. Robb, first-year student music major from Mount Prospect, Ill.

Also participating will be IWU's String Technique Class members, Kimberly Belluomini, junior music major from Lincolnwood, Ill.; Bilobran, Brooks, Nikki Carnevale, junior music education major from Elmhurst, Ill.; Sabrina Downs, sophomore music education major from Downers Grove, Ill.; Christine Favia, junior music major from Mount Prospect, Ill.; David Maday, junior music major from Arlington Heights, Ill.; Erin O'Neill, first-year student biology major from Crystal Lake, Ill.; Christine Printz, junior music education major from Winthrop Harbor, Ill.; Megan Richards, senior music major from Naperville, Ill.; Sarah Sippl, senior music education major from Joliet, Ill.; Brent Smith, sophomore music education major from Lincoln, Neb.; Lisa Thomson, junior music education major from Shannon, Ill.; Laura Wsol, junior music major from Streamwood, Ill.; Zimmerman and Jeremy Coffman, sophomore music major from Mattoon.

## **About Nina Gordon**

Gordon, the former principal cellist with the Kansas City Symphony for nine years and the founder and music director of the annual "Cello Celebration" in Overland Park, Kan., for six years, is originally from Moscow, Russia.

Gordon has performed with the Israel Chamber Orchestra under Rudolf Barshai and the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta. She was associate principal cellist with the Florida Philharmonic, principal cellist of the Colorado Music Festival, and principal cellist of the Kansas City chamber Orchestra and the Kansas City Camerata.

Gordon has been a faculty member at the University of Missouri—Kansas City (UMKC), Sound Encounters Music Festival in Ottawa, Kansas, and the MidAmerica Music Festival at Ohio Wesleyan University. Currently on the faculty at the Ameropa Chamber Music Festival, held in Prague, Czech Republic, Gordon also appears regularly in solo and chamber music recitals and performs as a soloist with symphony orchestras. Last week she was the guest principal cellist for the Illinois Symphony.

Gordon has studied at the Moscow Conservatory, the University of Tel Aviv (Israel) and the University of Kansas (KU) where she is completing her Doctorate in Musical Arts (DMA).

Music mentors for Gordon have been Natalia Shakhovskaya (Russia), Michael Harran (Israel), and George Ricci (United States). She has also had the privilege of meeting and working with Yo-Yo Ma, one of the leading cellists of today. Gordon first met Yo-Yo Ma in Israel and later when she was principal cellist in Kansas City. He conducted a master class for Gordon's students at UMKC.

"I really admire him," said Gordon of Ma. "Years later, he still remembered my students names and asked how they were doing."

## **About Illinois Wesleyan University**

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,070 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts and a \$1.65 million baseball stadium. Construction is underway on a \$23 million library and \$6 million student center. Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine ranks Illinois Wesleyan University 12th among the nation's 1,600 private colleges in providing a top-quality education at an affordable cost. Also sharing IWU's rank are Princeton and Dartmouth.

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