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March 7, 2000

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IWU Collegiate Choir to Perform World Premiere

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.-- On Tuesday, March 21, at 7:30 p.m., the Illinois Wesleyan University Collegiate Choir will conclude its annual tour with a concert at St. John's Lutheran Church, 1617 E. Emerson St., Bloomington. Free and open to the public, the event will feature sacred choral art music from the Renaissance, Baroque and contemporary periods.

This year, the annual IWU Collegiate Choir Home Concert is held in coordination with the IWU School of Music's New Music Series 1999-2000, a celebration of 20th century music. Musical elements of the early part of the 20th century to the present are featured in the performances of world premieres, music by Eastern European composers, music by contemporary American composers and student compositions. The New Music Series 1999-2000 also includes performances by the IWU Jazz Ensemble.

Under the direction of J. Scott Ferguson, IWU associate professor of music and director of choral activities, the 51-voice IWU Collegiate Choir will perform the works of J.S. Bach, Hans Leo Hassler, Henry Purcell, David Hamilton, James Furman and John Tavener.

The program will also feature the world premiere of "Psalm 100," a piece Ferguson commissioned in 1999 from the contemporary Slovak composer Ivan Hrusovsky.

Prior to attending the program on March 21, Hrusovsky will work with the IWU Collegiate Choir. In addition, Hrusovsky will present a lecture on his life in music and the arts in the Slovak Republic on Thursday, March 23, at 4 p.m. Free and open to the public, the event will be held in Westbrook Auditorium of Presser Hall, 303 E. University Ave., Bloomington.

Ferguson, who once served as the director of opera and choral conductor at the State Conservatory of Music in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, met Hrusovsky during an interview for an article on Slovak choral music.

Hrusovsky, a professor of composition and music theory at the Academy of Music and Drama in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, is the most prolific contemporary composer of choral music in the Slovak Republic. Influenced by a background in musicology and a deeper knowledge of philosophy, literature, fine arts and film, Hrusovsky has written compositions for virtually every musical genre--orchestral, chamber music, choral and electroacoustic.

Hrusovsky's works for mixed choir include secular music based on texts by well-known Slovakian poets, sacred compositions and folk song settings. Since many of Hrusovsky's pieces are written on commission for the best Slovak choirs, many are extremely challenging and include wide extremes of range and dynamics.

The IWU Collegiate Choir is comprised of student musicians representing the School of Music and other areas of the university. Members are chosen by audition and maintain a rigorous

rehearsal schedule in preparation for the concert tour and other engagements throughout the academic school year.

"The chance to perform our concert program a number of times allows us to reach a level of understanding and depth of interpretation that isn't possible after one performance," said Ferguson.

The IWU Collegiate Choir has toured annually for the past 40 years. To avoid conflicts with students' class schedules, the tour takes place over IWU's spring break.

Unless otherwise noted, all events will begin at 7:30 p.m. For receptions following performances, reservations can be made at 1-888 IWU-ALUM. For additional information on the IWU Collegiate Choir, Ivan Hrusovsky and the New Music Series 1999-2000, contact the IWU School of Music at (309)556-3061. The IWU 2000 Collegiate Choir Tour schedule is:

- * March 10, First United Methodist Church, 2801 S.W. Walnut St., Blue Springs, Mo.
- * March 11, Church of the Servant, 14343 N. MacArthur St., Oklahoma City, Okla.
- * March 12, Custer Road United Methodist Church, 6601 Custer Rd., Plano, Texas, Reception to follow.
- * March 13, (7 p.m.), Chapelwood United Methodist Church, 11140 Greenbay Dr., Houston, Texas, Reception to follow.
- * March 14, Woodland Presbyterian Church, 5824 Berkley St., New Orleans, La.
- * March 16, Canterbury United Methodist Church, 350 Overbrook Rd., Birmingham, Ala.
- * March 17, Emmanuel United Methodist Church, 2404 Kirby Rd., Memphis, Tenn.
- * March 18, Second Presbyterian Church, 4501 Westminster Pl., St. Louis, Mo., Reception to follow.

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.