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Kristin Fields '12
Illinois Wesleyan University

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IWU School of Music to Present Spring Opera

March 10, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – The Illinois Wesleyan School of Music will present its spring opera, *Fertile Ground*, on Sunday, March 28 at 3 p.m., Tuesday, March 30 and Thursday, April 1 at 8 p.m., and Friday, April 2 at 7:30 p.m. Performances will take place in Westbrook Auditorium of Presser Hall (1210 Park St., Bloomington). Tickets, which are only available at the door, cost \$10. Students and IWU faculty will be admitted free of charge.

The production is a joint effort between the IWU School of Music and Prairie Fire Theatre.

Composed by Illinois Wesleyan Professor of Music David Vayo and book and lyrics written by alumna Nancy Steele Brokaw class of '71, *Fertile Ground* focuses on the land of Central Illinois and the people who farm it. The show centers on the lives of Ben and Esther Morrow, a Central Illinois couple who farms the old family homestead under increasingly difficult conditions.

Robert Mangialardi, who is the director of opera at IWU, is the director and executive producer of the show. He is also the executive director of Prairie Fire Theatre, which commissioned the work in 2005.

Under the musical direction of adjunct faculty member and University organist Susan Klotzbach, the opera will be fully staged with a 14-piece orchestra, as well as a student cast of 18.

For additional information, contact the School of Music office at (309) 556-3061.

Cast Members: Cassandra Coglianesi* and Sarah Kedzie** (Liddie), Stefan Riley (Ben), Suzanne Whitney* and Emily Hopkins** (Esther), Jonathan Smith (Larry), Brittany Schmutzler* and Hanna Pristave** (Darleen), Paul Hart Cochran (Gene), Holly Haines (Franny), Matthew L. Tannenbaum (Merle), Joseph Muriello (Albert), Matt Skibo (Dave), Ryan Woodall (Leland), Rachel Carreras (Julie), Marissa Jones (Donna Rae), Melissa Adamson (Johnee) and Meagan Melloy (Melody).

* performing on Sunday, March 28 and Thursday, April 1

** performing on Tuesday, March 30 and Friday, April 2

Contact: Kristin Fields, '12, (309) 556-3181