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Grassroots 2012 Event Will Provide Polling Insights Into Illinois Voter Sentiments

Bloomington, IL — Grassroots 2012, an interactive political poll that engages respondents as part of a live musical event, will provide a preview of how Illinois voters view the issues, primary races and potential presidential election matchups. A town hall discussion of the issues follows the Grassroots 2012 electronic polling. The event takes place at Illinois Wesleyan's Westbrook Auditorium on Jan. 24 at 7:30 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

"Music has often been associated with political expression, but this is a totally new concept and one that brings people together to express and discuss their views in a very unique and entertaining way," said co-composer David Brian Williams, a retired music and arts technology faculty member at Illinois State University. Williams and University of South Carolina collaborator Tayloe Harding created the Grassroots event during the 2008 presidential campaign, polling audiences in Georgia and Alabama.

This innovative approach to political polling engages the audience with an original music score, digital imagery, electronic polling and a town hall discussion. During the live musical performance, audience members use digital clickers to respond anonymously to polling questions that probe primary and general election issues, with responses instantaneously totaled and displayed on screen. After each set of questions the music changes to reflect the intensity of opinions expressed by the audience. Following the performance and polling there will be a bipartisan town hall discussion and a second round of electronic polling intended to see if the discussion influenced any opinions.

"The importance of bipartisan political dialogue has never been more important than it is today, which is why we are so excited about the opportunities to gather opinions and engage citizens in discussion via Grassroots 2012," says Illinois Wesleyan's Professor of Political Science Tari Renner, an expert in political polling, who will lead the town hall discussion.

First performed in Georgia and Alabama during the 2008 presidential race, this will be the new Grassroots 2012's first performance to engage the audience with a town hall discussion of the issues facing voters in the primaries and fall general election.

Following the Illinois Wesleyan event, Grassroots 2012 will travel to Georgia State University and the University of Delaware. To learn more about Grassroots 2012 go to <http://grassroots-2012.net>

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