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For Immediate Release

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NEWS SERVICES

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Review

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--What do a cello, the theme for "Star Trek IV", Kenny Rogers, and a Dec. 1 *WILL-FM* broadcast of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony have in common?

The answer: Barbara Smith Hedlund, an adjunct instructor in strings at Illinois Wesleyan University since 1985, who is marking the 25th anniversary of her professional debut as a cellist this year.

Hedlund's varied career has taken her to Hollywood to record a movie sound track; to Carnegie Hall for a concert with pop singer Kenny Rogers; to South Africa to perform with Shirley Bassey--famous for her renditions of "Goldfinger" and "Diamonds are Forever" from the James Bond films; and to Broadway where she performed for a decade in musicals such as "Annie", "The Wiz", "Peter Pan", and "My Fair Lady". She also has performed with more than 100 symphony orchestras. Now she's juggling a heavy schedule of performances, spanning the classics to pop music, and teaching.

By blending careers as a teacher and performer, Hedlund said, "I bring to class a sense of reality, a sense of what it takes to survive in this business. I have great experience in various venues--opera, orchestra, string quartets, and pop gigs--and I give that experience back to students".

Robert Kvam, director of IWU's music school, said, "Over the years Wesleyan's music program has had two focuses: preparing students to perform and to teach. So it's a real strength to have teachers who are strong performers--they make the very best teachers and are good role models for students".

Hedlund will be featured on the 2 p.m., Dec. 1, *WILL-FM* (90.9) broadcast as a soloist and principal cellist in a performance of "Don Quixote--Fantastic Variations on a Theme of Knightly Character", an epic tone poem written in 1897 by the German composer Richard Strauss.

In 1986 Hedlund studied the composition's history and was able to turn up only a half-dozen women who had performed the work in nearly a century.

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"Don Quixote", Hedlund said, is a technically challenging and lengthy piece, requiring stamina to play 10 variations and other portions of the work. "Each variation," she explained, "tells a different tale about the supposed knight in Cervantes' novel and his fantasies--each variation reflects a fantasy, a delusion. You need to know how every single note relates to the story--remorse over losing battles or happiness over a single victory".

The broadcast is a recording of a Nov. 15 concert, performed by the Champaign-Urbana Symphony at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois. Hedlund also performed in the program's other piece, "Symphony No. 5 in E Minor" by Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky.

The pop and classical music cultures present interesting contrasts, Hedlund said, noting that pop music audiences are demonstrative--yelling and jumping up and down at times--while audiences at symphonies are demure.

"There's more room for interpretation in pop music and less need for practice", Hedlund explained. "But the challenge is to present pop music as fresh every night. As a pop performer, you have to overcome the problem of repeated performances. You have to remember that the audience hasn't seen the show before and is expecting an opening night-type performance".

"With symphonic music" Hedlund added, "there are more challenges in terms of technique, style, and culture. There's more variety, especially when you face new conductors and new soloists with new interpretations".

Hedlund's memories of performances with top headliners include Kenny Rogers closing out a show by tossing souvenir frisbees to the audience in usually prim-and-proper Carnegie Hall; almost getting stampeded by enthusiastic fans at a Diana Ross concert; and five days in Los Angeles in 1986 when she recorded the sound track for "Star Trek IV" and had the chance to see the Paramount Studios and actor-director Leonard Nimoy, alias Mr. Spock of "Star Trek" fame.

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Despite the glamour, the life a professional musician does have a price. For Hedlund it meant driving 1,000 miles a week for nine months each year between 1984-91, shuttling among various orchestras. This year, Hedlund performed in 34 cities in six weeks as part of the American tour of "The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber", the British composer, whose credits include box-office smashes like "Cats", "Evita", and "Phantom of the Opera". Overall, she has performed in about three-quarters of the states and several nations.

Hedlund, who was born in Orlando, FL, began studying piano at age 7. She switched instruments three years later when her father purchased a cello at an auction for \$10 and her brothers wanted no part of it. She studied music at Florida State University and the Philadelphia Musical Academy.

Immediate plans for Hedlund include readying students for a May recital and making new recordings.