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## For Immediate Release

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February 19, 1996

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Locals**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--*Sister Angelica*, Italian composer Giacomo Puccini's opera about a nun who is an unwed mother, will be staged at Illinois Wesleyan University, March 1.

The performance is at 7:30 p.m. in Westbrook Auditorium, Presser Hall, 303 E. University, Bloomington. While there are no fixed ticket prices, donations will be accepted.

*Sister Angelica* is the tale of a unwed nun and mother who was sent to a convent to repent. Eventually, this daughter of a noble family discovers that her son has died and she commits suicide by poison.

While composing *Sister Angelica*, Puccini spent time at the convent of Vicopelago, where his sister was Mother Superior, to accurately capture the atmosphere of life in a convent.

Puccini, who composed the opera at age 58, was concerned about how the holy sisters would respond to the opera, especially the climax where Sister Angelica receives salvation.

"The story goes that when the opera ended, there was no applause--only the sound of women weeping," said Linda J. Farquharson, IWU associate professor of music and the production's artistic director.

*Sister Angelica*, one of three companion one-act operas, was first performed by New York's Metropolitan Opera on Dec. 14, 1918. The other operas making up the operatic package are *Il Tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi*.

"Its operatic style," Farquharson said, "is ambientismo or an opera with plots that are not only life like, but the music creates the ambiance of the drama."

*Sister Angelica* will be played by Shannon Winter, a senior music major from Austin, Texas.

Other cast members and their roles are:

- Elizabeth Denault . . . the princess
- Stephanie Cox . . . the abbess
- Emily Benson . . . the monitor
- Sarah Zumdahl . . . the mistress of novices

- Yvette Cataneo . . . Sister Genevieve
- Suzanne Gokey . . . Sister Osmina
- Lyndee White . . . Sister Dolcin
- Megan Spangler . . . Sister Lucilla
- Kirsten Arnold . . . the nursing sister
- Melinda Murray and Julie Guzowski . . . the tourieres
- Erin Winter and Amy Goodnough . . . the lay sisters
- Nathan Adams-Stark . . . child
- Meredith Siemsen . . . Virgin Mother
- Heather Buffington, Sadie Gaughan, Allison Isbrandt, Jody Johnson, Tara King, Heidi McLaughlin, and Sandy Schweitzer . . . the novices

Staff support for the production includes:

- Linda J. Farquharson . . . music director
- Lori Adams . . . stage director
- Larry Brown . . . set and lighting director
- Bill Howes . . . technical assistant
- Costumes . . . University of Illinois and Alter Ego
- Tom Tropp . . . assistant music director
- Jennifer Hund . . . rehearsal pianist

Puccini (1858-1924) also composed *Madame Butterfly*, *Tosca*, *La Boheme*, *Girl of the Golden West*, *Turandot*, and other landmark operas.