



For Immediate Release:

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**"Let Freedom Sing!"**

*Symphony of a thousand on February 11 to honor Lincoln,  
unite community*

**Springfield, IL** — Patriotic and inspirational music for the entire family will be featured at "Let Freedom Sing!" a musical extravaganza on Wednesday, February 11 at 7 p.m. at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in downtown Springfield. The concert will be preceded by a Gospel Showcase beginning at 6:30 p.m. This concert is free to the public and requires no ticket or advance reservations.

Under the direction of Maestra Karen Lynne Deal, music director of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, the evening will feature the Lincoln Celebration Chorus, a group of more than 500 church and student singers assembled just for this event. Also on the program will be the Springfield High School Band, the Sangamon Valley Youth and Community Orchestras, the Four Sopranos, Melanie Dennison, the Feitshans Academy Bell Choir, and the St. Andrew's Pipes and Drums. In addition, WICS-TV's Jerry Lambert, award winning TV journalist and producer Bill Kurtis, and Springfield's own Abraham Lincoln - Fritz Klein - will narrate. "This is the largest concert we have ever tried to organize, but we are hopeful that if we build it, they will come – and coming they are!" said Deal.

"At the 1909 Lincoln Centennial held at the old Armory building, only white men were invited to participate," said Deal. "Women were relegated to observe from the balcony, and African Americans only participated as servers. When our 2009 event is written in the history books, it will show that the entire community was welcomed, all ages, races, beliefs and political views. Music is the perfect vehicle to honor Lincoln, and to recognize how far we've come."

To date, almost 1,000 performers have volunteered to join the Illinois Symphony Orchestra for this 90-minute concert. Armed Forces personnel, the National Guard, police, fire, and other uniformed service people are encouraged to attend and be recognized for their service to the country. Several thousand are expected to attend and seats are first come first served. A pre-concert Gospel Showcase will begin at 6:30 p.m. to entertain the audience as they arrive.

The February 11 concert is officially sponsored by the Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, and

will be the final Bicentennial event prior to the observance of Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday on Thursday, February 12.

The Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission is working closely with numerous organizations, tourism agencies and institutions in 2008 and 2009 to organize events and programming for the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. The commission is also partnering with local communities on their bicentennial plans. Visit [www.lincoln200.net](http://www.lincoln200.net) for more information.

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