



news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Western Reserve PBS to premiere Gospel Meets Symphony: Celebrating 16 Years!

*Station's newest production showcases annual Akron event*

KENT, Ohio — Friday, Jan. 30, 2009 — The soul-stirring beauty of gospel music mixes with the graceful elegance of a symphonic orchestra to create one uncommonly uplifting sound once a year in Akron. Western Reserve PBS documents the successful event's legacy in its new production, **Gospel Meets Symphony: Celebrating 16 Years!** The half-hour production premieres on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2009 at 8 p.m. and will repeat on Saturday, Feb. 7 at 6:30 p.m.; Sunday, Feb. 8 at 10:30 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 12 at 2 a.m.

The Gospel Meets Symphony story begins with the late Akron Symphony Orchestra maestro Alan Balter, who brought together orchestra, church choir and community members to found the event in 1994. Rev. Cleo Myricks, Ann Lane Gates and Virginia Robinson tell how the musical concept was brought from the church to the stage. Akron Symphony Orchestra Music Director Christopher Wilkins; guest conductors Raymond Wise, Roland Carter and Charles Myricks Jr.; and orchestra and choir members all share in painting the picture of how Gospel Meets Symphony has become a community hallmark.

Western Reserve PBS chronicles the event's history and follows its success as one of the longest-running Gospel Meets Symphony events in the United States. Funding for the project is provided by Akron Community Foundation, The Kulas Foundation, The Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation, Summa Health System, The County of Summit's Regional Arts and Cultural District Board, The W. Paul Mills and Thora J. Mills Memorial Foundation and the Welty Family Foundation.

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Western Reserve PBS also will also present highlights of this year's Gospel Meets Symphony concert in an hour-long program that will air in April. The concert will capture Maestro Christopher Wilkins leading the combined Akron Symphony Orchestra and the 150-voice volunteer gospel choir from over 50 area churches.

#### **About Western Reserve Public Media**

Western Reserve Public Media is owned and operated by Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation and consortium of Kent State University, The University of Akron and Youngstown State University. A trusted community resource, Western Reserve Public Media uses the power of commercial-free television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire.

Western Reserve PBS, a service of Western Reserve Public Media, is the only broadcast television service that reaches all of northeast Ohio. It is available to 1.8 million households and 4.4 million people in the Cleveland and Youngstown designated market areas. In an average week, over 500,000 households tune in. Through funding from eTech Ohio, Western Reserve Public Media provides K-12 educational technology training and instructional television programming to 21,500 educators and 256,700 students in eight Ohio counties. For more information, visit [WesternReservePublicMedia.org](http://WesternReservePublicMedia.org) or call 1-800-554-4549.

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