



## news release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# Gospel Meets Symphony TV Production to Air Nationally

*Western Reserve Public Media's Gospel Meets Symphony: Let Freedom Ring! program picked up for national distribution*

KENT, Ohio — Thursday, Jan. 21, 2010 — **Gospel Meets Symphony: Let Freedom Ring!**, a 2009 Western Reserve Public Media production, has been chosen for national distribution by American Public Television (APT) beginning this month. APT is the second-biggest distributor of programs for public television stations across the country.

**Gospel Meets Symphony: Let Freedom Ring!**, which premiered on Western Reserve PBS in April 2009, features the Akron Symphony Orchestra in concert with its 200-voice Gospel Choir celebrating Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday. It will air again on Western Reserve PBS (45.1/49.1) on Tuesday, Feb. 2, at 9 p.m. and on Fusion (45.2/49.2) on Saturday, Feb. 6, at 9 p.m. A companion production, **Gospel Meets Symphony: Celebrating 16 Years!**, which documents the event's history, will air on Western Reserve PBS on Monday, Feb. 1, at 10:30 p.m. and repeat on Tuesday, Feb. 9, at 9:30 p.m.

"Akron is fortunate to have a great symphony and gospel choir and Western Reserve Public Media has a top-notch production team capable of creating award-winning, national-level programs. This is a perfect example of how bona fide collaborations can produce something greater than what each entity could do on its own."

In the production, Maestro Christopher Wilkins and guest conductor Roland Carter share the podium for performances including Jerry Smith's "When I Rose This Morning," Verdi's Nabucco Overture & "Va pensiero" and the spiritual "Ride On King Jesus." Special guest Charles J. Myricks Jr. conducts works from his musical "Paul: A Musical Journey."

"I think that what we are is an astonishing array of varieties of music," explains Wilkins. "The choral members get this wonderful sense that this music that they love can be exalted – can be brought to an epic scale – by the addition of the orchestra. It makes it so grand and so powerful." Gospel Meets Symphony was founded in 1994 and is one of the longest-running gospel-and-symphony events in the United States.

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## **About Western Reserve Public Media**

Western Reserve Public Media (formerly PBS 45 & 49) 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 the organization, 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. The organization also operates three standard definition channels, Fusion (WNEO.2/WEAO.2), MHz Worldview (WNEO.3/WEAO.3) and V-me (WNEO.4/WEAO.4).

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 about the organization, visit [www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org](http://www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org) or call 1-800-554-4549.

## **About Akron Symphony Orchestra**

For nearly 60 years, the Akron Symphony Orchestra has been a driving musical force throughout the Greater Akron area. Widely recognized for musical excellence and performance versatility, it is committed to meeting the needs of its community.

The Akron Symphony Orchestra began in 1949 when Mabel Lamborn Graham received \$500 as “seed money” from the publisher of the Akron Beacon Journal with the instruction to begin raising money for a professional, union orchestra. After three years of intense fundraising, spearheaded by Mrs. Graham and other dedicated volunteers, the Akron Symphony’s Classic Series was established in the organization’s first season (1952-1953) to provide concerts performed by professional musicians of the highest caliber. Guest conductors and soloists of regional and national stature have been an integral part of the Classic Series since its onset, and remain a high priority for the Symphony.

The Akron Symphony Orchestra is operated by the Greater Akron Musical Association (GAMA). GAMA is committed to providing quality symphonic and choral music, through performances and educational programs, to the largest number of people possible in the greater Akron area. This mission is realized by operating the Akron Symphony Orchestra, Akron Youth Orchestras, Akron Symphony Chorus, and numerous special outreach and educational programs.