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Contact: [Jessica Di Santo](#) – (317) 229-7082

### **Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Presents Free *Celebration of Black History* Concert Feb. 5**

*28<sup>th</sup> annual event includes conductor Kevin McBeth, baritone Lawrence Craig and local business owner Denise Herd as narrator for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech*

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra is proud to present its 28<sup>th</sup> annual *Celebration of Black History* concert Tuesday, February 5, at 7:30 p.m. at the Hilbert Circle Theatre.

The ISO's *Celebration of Black History* concert honors the significant impact of African-American culture on classical and symphonic music, as well as the artistry and creativity of black artists, conductors and composers. Conducted by Kevin McBeth, a 30-year veteran in music ministry and in leading choral music ensembles, this year's lively and poignant program includes Michael Abels' *Dance for Martin's Dream*, Barber's stirring *Adagio for Strings* with accompanying narration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream Speech" by Denise Herd, founder and owner of Indianapolis-based Herd Strategies, Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown, and Beige*, and several moving spirituals performed by internationally-renowned baritone, Lawrence Craig.

Admission to the ISO's *Celebration of Black History* concert is free; however, a general admission ticket is required. Patrons can pick up tickets in advance or on the day of the concert at the ISO Box Office. Seating for this event is on a first-come, first-served basis. The concert is approximately 90 minutes and is performed without intermission.

This special event is sponsored by *The Indianapolis Recorder* and Indianapolis Power & Light Company. Radio One is the media partner for the program.

#### ***Artist Biographies:***

**Kevin McBeth** was appointed Director of the IN UNISON® Chorus in January, 2011. Kevin is the Director of Music at Manchester United Methodist Church in suburban St. Louis. He serves as full-time administrator for the Music Ministry, which includes 18 choral and handbell ensembles, involving nearly 500 children, youth and adults. Kevin has also recently served as Adjunct Professor in Choral Music at Webster University. Over the past 20 years, he has conducted honor, festival and touring choirs (choral and handbell) in the United States and Canada. Previous appointments include Assistant Conductor of

the St. Louis Symphony Chorus and Music Director of the St. Louis Metro Singers. His 30-year career in church music has included appointments in churches in Houston, Texas and Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

McBeth is a graduate of Houston Baptist University, and has done graduate studies in Choral Conducting at the University of Houston. In addition to being a published composer and author, he was also choral music editor for Abingdon Press. McBeth has recently conducted concerts at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. McBeth has prepared choruses for performances with Sarah Brightman, Josh Groban, John McDaniel, Andy Williams, Billy Porter and Hugh Smith. He also conducted the chorus for the opening ceremonies of the 2001 St. Louis Thanksgiving Day Parade. In the fall of 2002, the National Religious Music Week Alliance named him as one of the top ten Church Music Directors in the country. His orchestral conducting credits include performances with the Houston Civic Symphony, the New England Symphonic Ensemble and with members of the St. Louis Symphony in a concert featuring Garrison Keillor.

Known for his dynamic artistry, **Lawrence Craig** has earned a reputation for his “Fine baritone” (*New York Times*) and “virtuosic talent” (*Zürich Tages-Anzeiger*) in Europe and the Americas in opera, concert, and recital. A student of the late internationally acclaimed bass-baritone, William Warfield, Mr. Craig is a graduate of the Florida Grand Opera and Chautauqua Opera *Young Artist Programs*. As winner of the Monastero Bel Canto International Opera Competition, he studied and performed with artistic staff of the famed Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy. Mr. Craig has appeared in a number of roles, but most notably as Harlequin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Ford in *Falstaff*, Dapertutto in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*. Companies with whom he has appeared include the Albanian National Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Opera Colorado, Opera Ebony, Florentine Opera, Fresno Grand Opera, Harlem Opera Theatre, Latvian National Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Munich Biennale Opera Festival, New York City Opera (Education Division), Opera Festival of New Jersey, Opéra de Toulon, Orlando Opera, Opera Roanoke, Savonlinna International Opera Festival, Trilogy Opera, The Virginia Opera, and the Spoleto Opera Festival USA.

Most recently, not only was Mr. Craig triumphant in his directorial debut for the Albanian National Opera's season opener, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, he also appeared in the cast as Sportin' Life. A wonderful season highlight was the opportunity to sing as part of the New York concert to honor President Barak Obama's receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize and to appear as Sportin' Life for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert to honor Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*.

**Denise Herd** is the visionary leader of Herd Strategies, a local and communications company that provides branding, marketing, public relations, creative design and communications training services to a wide variety of clients. Herd is often called upon by local and national companies to provide guidance and tools for evaluating marketing and public relations efforts. Recently, Herd has launched a lecture series at local colleges centered on business ownership and leadership designed to help college students pursue their dreams of entrepreneurship.

She currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Brebeuf Jesuit High School, the Advisory Board of the Harrison College School of Business, the Board of Directors of the Indianapolis Arts Council, and the Board of Directors of the National Association of Women Business Owners. She is a graduate of the United Way Leadership Training and Development Program and the Stanley K. Lacey Executive Leadership Series, Class XXII. She is also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Herd is the recipient of numerous awards including the International Association of Business Communicators Gold Quill Award, the International Association of Business Communicators Epic Award, the Public Relations Society of America Keystone Award, the Center for Leadership Development “Lis Daily Achievement Award in Mass Media” and the Radio One “Today's Woman of Excellence” award. She has also been listed as one of Indianapolis' Most Extraordinary Entrepreneurs in the Who's Who in Black Indianapolis and To Her Success – a Tribute to Outstanding Women in Indianapolis.