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**Maestro Erich Kunzel Named Honorary Artistic Director  
of 2012 World Choir Games in Cincinnati USA**

*Local legend was instrumental in winning the Games for Cincinnati USA,  
will cast artistic vision for 2012 event*

**CINCINNATI – August 6, 2009** – Erich Kunzel, conductor of the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra and one of the most-decorated and successful American conductors of all time, has been named Honorary Artistic Director of the 2012 World Choir Games in Cincinnati USA.

The World Choir Games, a prestigious competition of vocal groups representing 400 choirs from more than 90 countries, selected Cincinnati USA as the site of its 2012 competition earlier this year and announced the news in a community-wide celebration on June 18. Considered the “Olympics of Choral Music,” the World Choir Games will be held in the United States for the first time ever in 2012, when 20,000 competitors and more than 200,000 visitors are expected to attend.

“Erich is one of Cincinnati’s most beloved ambassadors, taking his passion for the city, music and the arts across the globe,” said Dan Lincoln, president and CEO of the Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors Bureau. “The 2012 World Choir Games will be the largest international event in the history of the region and as Honorary Artistic Director, Erich has put his distinctive stamp on the tone and tenor of the Games. His influence will be felt in many aspects of the event, including “An American Evening” concert hosted by Cincinnati USA in Shaoxing, China in 2010 and the Opening Ceremonies in 2012, when hundreds of thousands of visitors will descend on Cincinnati USA to celebrate the beauty and spirit of choral music.”

The announcement was made by Lincoln, in conjunction with Günter Titsch, president of INTERKULTUR, the German-based organizer of the World Choir Games, as well as Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory and Hamilton County Commission President David Pepper.

Hailed by the *Chicago Tribune* as “The Prince of Pops,” Maestro Kunzel has conducted orchestras across the globe since his professional debut in 1957, including appearances with the National Symphony, the Chicago Symphony and the Boston Pops, among others. Since 1977, he has recorded more than 85 albums on the Telarc label with the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra. In 2006, he was presented with the National Medal of Arts by President and Mrs. George W. Bush, and in May 2009 he was inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame.

As Honorary Artistic Director, Kunzel will help cast the creative vision and tone for the 2012 competition, inspiring competitors and maintaining the high performance standards that the World Choir Games have come to represent.

“I am deeply honored to not only have played a role in bringing the World Choir Games to Cincinnati, but now to be named Honorary Artistic Director for this amazing event,” said Maestro Kunzel. “It was inspiring to watch the local arts and music community rally its resources to win the World Choir Games, and now we have this extraordinary opportunity to revel in the cultural and artistic diversity that the World Choir Games will bring to our great city. I know that the team from INTERKULTUR and the contestants and visitors coming here from all over the world will love everything that Cincinnati USA has to offer.”

Founded in 2000, the World Choir Games have quickly become the largest event of its kind in the world and is a prominent and coveted event aggressively sought-after by countries worldwide. Other host cities include Linz, Austria (2000); Busan, People’s Republic of Korea (2002); Bremen, Germany (2004); Xiamen, China (2006); Graz, Austria (2008); and Shaoxing, China (2010).

“We could not have found a better city than Cincinnati USA to host the 2012 World Choir Games and we could not have found a better person than Maestro Kunzel to serve as Honorary Artistic Director,” said INTERKULTUR’S Titsch. “Erich’s international resume is second-to-none and his passion and love of fine music and deep knowledge of Cincinnati USA’s beautiful concert halls and venues makes him the perfect choice. We value the leadership he has brought to the preparations for 2012, and look forward to his artistic leadership.”

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#### **About INTERKULTUR**

INTERKULTUR has ties to 120,000 choirs made up of 4.8 million choral singers around the world. In the 20 years since it was established, more than 5,000 choirs and some 230,000 singers from 100 nations have taken part in the World Choir Games and INTERKULTUR’s regional choir competitions. The World Choir Games (WCG), which are dedicated to the founding Olympic ideal, take place every two years on a different continent. The next WCG will be held in 2010 in Shaoxing, China.

#### **About the Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors Bureau**

The Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors Bureau is an aggressive sales, marketing and service organization whose primary responsibility is to positively impact Hamilton County’s and the City of Cincinnati’s economy through convention, trade show and visitor expenditures. The travel and tourism industry traditionally has been a \$3.4 billion industry in Cincinnati USA, employing 81,000 people in a variety of fields and, historically, bringing five million visitors to the region annually. To learn more about Cincinnati USA, visit [www.CincyUSA.com](http://www.CincyUSA.com) or call 800.543.2613.