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37th Annual Christmas Pageant will not be saying “Happy Holidays”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: “We had a specific reason to choose ‘*Just Say Merry Christmas*’ as our theme this year,” says Thurlow Spurr, internationally-recognized musical creator and director of the annual event now in its 37th year. “We’ve been noticing a lot of businesses and organizations pushing the concept of saying ‘Happy Holidays’ instead. And we wanted to make a statement this year to let people know that we will not shy away from the true reason for the season.”

Additionally, the *Just Say Merry Christmas* show will honor all branches of the United States military by offering free tickets to all active-duty members. There will be a special tribute to the troops and veterans during the extravaganza.

“Our troops go above and beyond the call of duty, missing holidays and special times with their families,” says Spurr. “We want to honor them for all they have done for our country.”

Just say Merry Christmas will visit eight Michigan and Ohio cities in November, offering six matinee and three evening performances. A cast of 300 will present many of the most familiar songs of the holiday season during a series of concerts that feature the pageantry, costuming and special effects reminiscent of a Broadway production.

Produced and directed by Spurr, the concert will feature The CMI Concert Choir, The Spirit Wind Dance Company, The CMI Spurrlovs, The Thurlow Spurr Singers, The Four Divas, The Kids, as well as Rick Everitt & The CMI Brass, The Brotherhood, The CMI GIRLZ, Laura Petrak and Karen Jenkins, the 2007 winner of the “I Want To Be A Star Search” contest. Additional soloists and musicians from the Michigan-Ohio area also will appear during the two-and-one-half-hour concert.

The choir and the musicians have videotaped two made-for-television specials entitled “*Christmas...All Year Long*” and “*Christmas...A Timeless Treasure*.” They will be aired again in major markets this season. The group has recorded three CDs which will be available at the November concerts and on CMI Web site www.cmichoir.org.

The choir has performed in Russia and Israel and has participated in a made-for-TV patriotic special from the Waikiki Band Shell in Hawaii which featured Gospel Music Hall of Fame artist, Larnelle Harris.

Area performances include the following:

- Dearborn – Nov. 7, Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, 2:30 p.m.
- Grand Rapids – Nov. 8, Van Singel Fine Arts Center, Byron Center, 2:30 p.m.
- Saginaw – Nov. 13, Dow Event Center, 7:30 p.m.
- Detroit Area – Nov. 14. Macomb Performing Arts Center, 2:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- Brighton – Nov. 15, Brighton Center for the Performing Arts, 2:30 p.m.
- Toledo – Nov. 20, Stranahan Theatre at the Masonic, 7:30 p.m.
- Flint – Nov. 21, The Whiting Auditorium, 2:30 and 7:00 p.m.
- Lansing – Nov. 22 Holt Performing Arts Complex, 2:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$30 for maestro circle seating, \$22 for premium seating and \$20 for reserved seating. Special pricing is available for organized groups of 20 or more. To order tickets call 800.993.SING (7464) or order online at www.cmichoir.org.