

Christmas *with* MUSICORUM

Saturday, December 14, 2024

6:30 pm

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

720 S 2nd St, Mankato

General Admission - \$15

Student/Youth - \$5



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

About Musicorum

Founded in 1995 by David Taylor, Musicorum originally coalesced to perform rarely heard choral works from the late Medieval and Renaissance periods, affording listening variety from the musical ensembles already in existence in southern Minnesota. The chamber vocal ensemble has maintained a tradition of excellence over the past twenty-nine seasons, and the artistic output has expanded to include significant choral repertoire from all historical periods.

Currently, the choir is under the direction of Dr. Elisabeth Cherland, who is also the Director of Choral Activities at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Former artistic directors include David Taylor, Gregory Aune, David Dickau, Andrew Miller, Karen Boubel, Brandon Dean, and Andrew Kendall.

Conductor

Elisabeth Cherland

Collaborative Pianist

David Fienen

Singers

Jessica Auel
Sally Bodlovick
Angie Braunwarth
Sara Buechmann
Chuck Christenson
Alisa Eimen
Jeffrey Flory
Brandy Gullickson
Taylor Jones
Ole Karstad
Erin Kingland
Scott Kingland
Billy Krager
Rick Kramlinger
Megan Kreinbring
Sarah Krolak
Charlie Leftridge
Grace Matson

Don McGinness
Shelbi Morton
Chris Paul
Elizabeth Paul
Jeannie Phillips
Megan Poehler
Leah Renne
Helena Satterness
Rob Satterness
Anja Scheidel
Ben Scheidel
Brian Schrader
Cindy Shirk
Fred Slocum
Andrew Stumbo
Jill Torrison
Brad Ufer
Bart Weelborg

A Note from the conductor:

I don't know about you, but especially in this season of darkness I find myself seeking beacons of light to lead, guide, and give hope. Today's program centers around the morning star – that light, which shines in the deepest night and prevents despair from overcoming us. The morning star theme has been explored for centuries by musicians and artists, and we join this exploration by singing morning star texts and settings that span 400 years of musical periods and styles.

The opening carol, **Rise Up Shepherd and Follow**, literally commands the listener to follow the star. Roland Carter's setting of this traditional spiritual calls us on a journey and provides the energy and excitement to embark.

Phillip Nicolai, a German hymn-writer, Lutheran pastor, composer, and poet, wrote the hymn **Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern** (How brightly beams the morning star) in 1597 and published it in 1599. Other composers such as Bach, Kuhnau, and Buxtehude have also set this text and tune pairing, and the hymn is still sung in many churches today. It is a song of praise to Jesus, who is likened to the morning star. Michael Praetorius was a prolific composer and Lutheran church musician in the early 17th century. In this work he uses a small group to playfully tour each phrase of Nicolai's hymn, then brings in the full choir to deliver a stricter rendition of the same phrase. The joyful mood of the piece is infectious.

We'll continue to explore Nicolai's hymn through Mendelssohn. *Christus*, an unfinished oratorio about the life of Jesus, was published after Mendelssohn's death, and includes the three movements performed here. Like Praetorius, in **There Shall a Star from Jacob Come Forth** Mendelssohn quotes the first verse of Nicolai's hymn, though he delivers the unadorned chorale at the end of the movement. Listen to how this setting of Nicolai's hymn, two hundred years after Praetorius' setting, honors the text and tune.

Our morning star exploration continues with **Star in the East** from the distinctly American shape note singing tradition. There is a distinctive, bright, unrefined, "Appalachian" sound associated with this music which is more raw and earthy than typical choral singing. The change in tone provides a great contrast to the Mendelssohn. It also sets us up for our first audience carol. Please join us in singing **We Three Kings of Orient Are**.

Contemporary British composer, Jonathan Dove, says of **Seek Him that Maketh the Seven Stars**: "The anthem begins with a musical image of the night sky, a repeated organ motif of twinkling stars that sets the choir wondering who made them. The refrain, 'Seek him,' starts in devotional longing but is eventually released into a joyful dance, finally coming to rest in serenity." The piece is technically demanding due to the duple vs. triple rhythms, thick texture, and varying meter. It is unlike any other work in the program. Do you hear how it almost sounds electronic at times?

Shawn Kirschner's sweet setting of the traditional Appalachian song **Bright Morning Stars** is both beautiful and heartbreaking as it asks where our deceased loved ones have gone. Each verse uses different voicings and shows that the answers can bring both deep sadness and great joy. **Huron Carol** was originally written in the mid-17th century by Jesuit missionary Jean de Brébeuf who lived and worked with the

Huron/Wyandot people in present day Quebec, Canada. This retelling of the nativity story uses imagery from the Huron culture and is beautifully set by Minnesota conductor Dale Warland. The inclusion of oboe provides another lovely contrast in timbre.

After so much time spent on stars, it seems fitting to allow the moon to close the first half of our program. Susan LaBarr, is based in Missouri and writes beautifully for choirs. Jan Richardson is an artist, author, United Methodist pastor, and writer of blessings based in Florida. Read the text carefully and notice how the pairing of Richardson's text with LaBarr's music in **Wisdom of the Moon** offers a path to resilience.

The second half of our program shifts slightly from the morning star theme to the journey of following. We invite you to join us in singing the Appalachian carol, **I Wonder as I Wander**, to begin our trek. The choir will then sing a piece that has been on a significant journey of its own. Originally written in Russian as the sixth movement of Serge Rachmaninoff's *All Night Vigil*, American conductor Donald Neuen re-set this movement with the familiar Latin **Ave Maria** text. The shift from Russian to Latin naturally changes the piece, but the beauty of the musical writing is transcendent. We continue our journey with a traditional Wassail song, **We've Been a While a-Wandering**. Wassail refers to both a spiced ale and the old English tradition of going door to door, singing, and jovially asking for food, drink, and gifts. Listen as the choir addresses you as the homeowner and asks for hospitality!

While the wassailing is merry and light-hearted, not all journeys are as easy. The Finnish folk song, **Lost in the Night**, reminds us that sometimes the path is difficult and we can become lost. This piece is the point of the program where anxiety and desolation threaten to overcome us on our journey. Yet arranger F. Melius Christiansen reassures the Christian listener that the birth of Christ prevents the despair from overwhelming us. Notice how angst is replaced with hope in the final phrase. This newfound hope carries us to our destination of the manger in British-Canadian composer Healey Willan's **The Three Kings**. Listen for the back and forth between the higher and lower voices, and the climactic moment when the journey's destination is reached. Finally, sometimes the best part of a journey is remembering it. Latvian composer, Ēriks Ešenvalds, beautifully captures a reflection on childhood with nostalgia and fondness in **Only in Sleep**.

As we approach the end, please join us in singing our final audience carol, **Joy to the World**. We close our program with Victor C. Johnson's **See That Star!** The opening quotes the traditional spiritual, "Behold that Star," and then it moves into Johnson's own playful music and text.

As we explore this theme of the morning star and what it means to follow, we invite you to consider your own journey. What gives you hope? What is worth following? Thank you for joining us and blessings to you in this holiday season.

- Dr. Elisabeth Cherland



Rise up, Shepherd, and Follow

Traditional Spiritual

arr. Roland Carter (b. 1942)

There's a star in the East on Christmas morn,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow,
It will lead to the place where the Saviour's born,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Take good heed to the angel's words,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Leave your flock and leave your herd.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Leave your sheep, and leave your lamb.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow,
Leave your sheep, and leave your lamb.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Follow, follow,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the Star of Bethlehem;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Michael Praetorius (1571 - 1621)

Sarah Krolak, Angie Braunwarth, Scott Kingland, Jeffrey Flory, Chris Paul - solos

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern
Voll Gnad und Wahrheit von dem Herrn,
Die süße Wurzel Jesse!
Du Sohn Davids aus Jakobs Stamm,
Mein König und mein Bräutigam,
Hast mir mein Herz besessen.
Lieblich, freundlich,
Schön und herrlich, groß und ehrlich,
Reich von Gaben,
Hoch und sehr prächtig erhaben!

*How beautifully shines the Morning Star.
full of grace and truth from the Lord,
the sweet root of Jesse!
Your Son of David from the line of Jacob,
my king and my bridegroom,
have taken possession of my heart.
[You who are] lovely, friendly,
beautiful and glorious, great, honorable
rich in gifts,
lofty and exalted in splendor!*

There Shall a Star from Jacob Come Forth

Three movements from "Christus"

Text from Matthew 2: 1-2, Numbers 24: 17, Psalm 2:9

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

Grace Matson, Scott Kingland, Jeffrey Flory, Rob Satterness, Chris Paul, Fred Slocum,
Andrew Stumbo - solos

When Jesus, our Lord, was born in Bethlehem,
in the land of Judea;
behold, from the east to the city of Jerusalem
there came wise men and said:

Say, where is he born, the king of Judea?
For we have seen his star, and are come to adore him.

There shall a star from Jacob come forth
And a Sceptre from Israel rise up
And dash in pieces princes and nations.

How brightly beams the morning star!
With radiance gleaming from afar
With light and comfort glowing!
Thy Word, Oh Lord,
Inly feeds us, Truly leads us, Life bestowing.
Praise, oh praise such love o'erflowing!

Star in the East

Traditional Folk Hymn - *The Southern Harmony*

arr. William Walker (1809 - 1875)

Fred Slocum, solo

Hail the Blest morn, see the great Mediator,
Down from the regions of Glory descend!
Shepherds, go worship the babe in the manger,
Lo, for his guard the bright angels attend. (*Refrain*)

(*Refrain*) Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star in the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer was laid.

Cold was his cradle, the dewdrops were shining;
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him in slumbers reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Sovereign of all. (*Refrain*)

Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
Odors from Eden and offerings divine?
Gems from the mountain and pearls from the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine? *(Refrain)*

Star of the morning, thy brightness declining,
Shortly must fade when the sun doth arise.
Beaming refulgent, his glory eternal,
Shines on the children of love in the skies. *(Refrain)*

We Three Kings - Audience Carol

John Henry Hopkins Jr. (1820-1891)

1. We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star. *(Refrain)*

2. Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
over us all to reign. *(Refrain)*

4. *(Low voices)* Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb. *(Refrain)*

(Refrain) O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light!

3. *(High voices)* Frankincense to offer have I;
Incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, gladly raising,
Worshiping God Most High. *(Refrain)*

5. Glorious now behold him arise;
King and God and Sacrifice:
Heaven signs Alleluia,
Alleluia the earth replies *(Refrain)*

Seek Him that Maketh the Seven Stars

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion
and turneth the shadow of death into morning.
Alleluia, yea, the darkness shineth as the day, the night is light about me.
Amen.

Amos 5:8; Psalm 139

Bright Morning Stars

Traditional Appalachian Song

arr. Shawn Kirchner (b. 1970)

Rob Satterness, solo

Bright morning stars are rising,
Bright morning stars are rising,
Bright morning stars are rising,
Day is a-breaking in my soul.

Oh where are our dear fathers?
Day is a-breaking in my soul.
They are down in the valley praying,
Day is a-breaking in my soul.

Oh where are our dear mothers?
Day is a-breaking in my soul.
They have gone to heaven shouting.
Day is a-breaking in my soul.

Oh where are our dear children?
Day is a-breaking in my soul.
They're on the earth a-dancing.
Day is a-breaking in my soul.

Bright morning stars are rising,
Day is a-breaking in my soul.

Huron Carol

arr. Dale Warland (b. 1932)

Megan Knutson, Oboe solo

'Twas in the moon of wintertime when all the birds had fled
That mighty Gitche Manitou sent angel choirs instead;
Before their light the stars grew dim and wond'ring hunters heard the hymn:
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born; in excelsis gloria.

Within a lodge of broken bark the tender babe was found;
A ragged robe of rabbit skin enwrapped his beauty round.
But as the hunter braves drew nigh the angel song rang loud and high:
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born; in excelsis gloria.

O children of the forest free, O sons of Manitou,
The holy Child of earth and heaven is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant boy who brings you beauty, peace, and joy.
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born; in excelsis gloria.

The Wisdom of the Moon

Susan LaBarr (b. 1981)

Angie Braunwarth, solo

[God of the two lights]
I love the sun,
its revealing brilliance,
its lingering warmth;
but in the dark of night,
let me learn
the wisdom of the moon,
how it waxes and wanes
but does not die,
how it gives itself
to shadow,
knowing it will emerge whole
once more.

- Jan Richardson (2010)

~ INTERMISSION ~

I Wonder as I Wander - Audience Carol

Appalachian Carol

arr. John Jacob Niles (1892 - 1980)

1. I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor ord'n'ry people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.
2. (*High voices*) When Mary birthed Jesus, all in a cow's stall
Came wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
And high from the heavens a star's light did fall,
The promise of the ages it then did recall.
3. (*Low voices*) If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
He surely could have had it, 'cause he was the King.
4. I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor ord'n'ry people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

Ave Maria

Serge Rachmaninoff (1873 - 1943)

ed. Donald Neuen (b. 1933)

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui,
Jesu.
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.

*Hail Mary, full of grace
The Lord is with thee
Holy Mary, Mother of God
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.
Pray for we sinners
Now and at the hour of our death.
Amen*

We've Been a While a Wandering

Yorkshire Carol

arr. O.C.C.

Taylor Jones, Chris Paul, Grace Matson, Billy Krager - solos

We've been a while a wandering amongst the leaves so green
But now we come a-wassailing so plainly to be seen; *(Refrain)*

(Refrain) For it's Christmas time when we travel far and near.
May God bless you and send you a happy new year.

We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door;
We are your neighbor's children for we've been here before; *(Refrain)*

Bring us out a table and spread it with a cloth,
Bring us out a mouldy cheese and some of your Christmas loaf; *(Refrain)*

God bless the master of this house, likewise the mistress too;
And all the little children that round the table go; *(Refrain)*

Lost in the Night

Finnish Folk Song

arr. F. Melius Christiansen (1871 - 1955)

Megan Kreinbring, Helena Satterness - solos

Lost in the night doth the people yet languish,
Longing for morning the darkness to vanquish,
Plaintively sighing with hearts full of anguish:
O, Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?

Sorrowing wand'ers in darkness yet dwelling,
Dawned has the day of a radiance excelling,
Death's deepest shadows forever dispelling,
Lo, Christ is coming soon, Christ is coming soon.

Light o'er the land of the needy is beaming,
Rivers of life through its deserts are streaming,
Bringing all people a Savior redeeming.
He is coming soon! He is coming soon!

Must we be vainly awaiting the morrow?
Shall those who have light, no light let us borrow?
Giving no heed to our burden of sorrow?
O, will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?

Will not day come soon?
He is coming soon.

The Three Kings

Healey Willan (1880 - 1968)

"Who knocks tonight so late?"
The weary porter said.
Three kings stood at the gate,
Each with a crown on head.

The serving man bowed down,
The inn was full, he knew.
Said he, "In all this town
Is no fit place for you."

A light the manger lit;
There lay the Mother meek.
Said they, "This place is fit:
Here is the rest we seek!"

They loosed their latchet strings,
So stood they all unshod.
Come in, come in, ye kings!
And kiss the feet of God.

Only in Sleep

Sara Teasdale

arr. Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977)

Jessica Auel, solo

Only in sleep I see their faces
Children I played with when I was a child
Louise comes back with her brown hair braided
Annie with ringlets warm and wild

Only in sleep Time is forgotten—
What may have come to them, who can know?
Yet we played last night as long ago
And the doll-house stood at the turn of the stair

The years had not sharpened their smooth round faces,
I met their eyes and found them mild.
Do they, too, dream of me, I wonder
And for them am I too a child?

Joy to the World - Audience Carol

Isaac Watts (1674 - 1748)

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let Earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And Heav'n and nature sing!

2. Joy to the Earth, the Savior reigns,
Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love.

See that Star

Traditional Spiritual

Victor C. Johnson (b. 1978)

Jeffrey Flory, solo

Behold that star! Behold that star up yonder!
Behold that star! It is the star of Bethlehem.

See that star, see that star!
See that star of Bethlehem!

There was no room found in the inn,
For Him who was born free from sin.

The Wise Men traveled from the East,
To worship Him, the Prince of Peace.

As the star sent forth its light,
As it gleamed so bright from the highest height,
A song broke forth upon the night
And the star continued to beam so bright!

Oh, see that star, see that star!
See that star of Bethlehem!

Thank You

A heartfelt thank you to the staff of **Bethlehem Lutheran Church** for hosting us in this beautiful sacred space.

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the **Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council**, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Musicorum is a proud member of the **Twin Rivers Council for the Arts**. Visit twinriversarts.org to learn more about arts opportunities in greater south-central Minnesota and for a calendar of upcoming arts and entertainment events.

Thanks to **Katie Danhof** and **Emory Hickethier** for designing our poster and program cover.

Visit us online at www.musicorum-mn.org



Save the date!

Musicorum Spring Concert

Saturday, April 12, 2025

6:30 pm