

abendmusik

AT FIRST-PLYMOUTH



Music that inspires



2023-2024 CONCERT SEASON



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AT FIRST-PLYMOUTH



Our Mission: Gathering to experience music that inspires
Our Vision: To enrich community and empower collaboration

OUR SEASON SPONSORS

Thanks to these generous sponsors, Abendmusik's 2023-2024 concert season is offered free, as a gift to the community, both in-person here at First-Plymouth Church and online at www.abendmusik.org.



WITH SUPPORT OF THE NEBRASKA ARTS COUNCIL AND THE NEBRASKA CULTURAL ENDOWMENT



Jon & Joan Michelsen	Rhonda Seacrest
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Conant Family Endowment	Estate of Norma Somerheiser

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AT FIRST-PLYMOUTH



Music that inspires

Whether performing at home or representing Nebraska beyond our borders, Abendmusik has delivered critically acclaimed performances. Their work with diverse artists brings innovative and fresh perspectives to the local arts scene.

—Dr. John H. Casey

Abendmusik is a Nebraska treasure! Invite a friend and be inspired by the soul-filling beauty.

—Patty Pansing Brooks

The positive educative singing experiences that our students receive from the annual Youth Masterworks Festivalis incredible. Not only have our students been exposed to large choral works, they have also been provided the opportunity to work with master conductors, students from other high schools, and an orchestra made of their peers.

—Dr. Marci Malone DeAmbrose, Doane University

Composer, conductor, organist, preacher, and teacher Tom Trenney has been blessed to serve as Minister of Music to First-Plymouth Church and Artistic Director of Abendmusik since 2009. In 2019, he became Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choirs at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Tom's choirs have been honored to perform for state, regional, and national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), and they have been award winners in the American Prize for choral ensembles.



TOM TRENNEY,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

CONNECTIONS

S ometimes a connection made early in a person's life can endure far past what one might expect. It can survive the test of time, distance, and all kinds of changes. Such is the connection made between First-Plymouth Church, Abendmusik, and Dr. Frank Thompson.

In the early 1970s, Frank Thompson had gone from UNL to Nashville for his first job after college, but an unexpected diagnosis of epilepsy led to the loss of that job and a prediction of a somewhat bleak future, given the medical thinking of the time. Frank returned to Lincoln, feeling like it was home, and he sought out a church and quickly found First-Plymouth to be the place he was looking for. The preaching of the Rev. Otis Young and the music program, led by a young Jack Levick, combined to create a ministry focused on loving one's neighbor as oneself. Frank found solace in that.

At a "mixer" for young singles hosted by the church, Frank was recruited by Jack Levick for the choir. Although Frank had not done any choral singing since junior high, Jack was insistent that he should come to a rehearsal and try it out. Frank found that he learned a lot from both Jack and other choir members and was able to fit in well.

As Frank worked on a Ph.D. in Economics and Actuarial Science, he continued to sing in the choir from 1972 to 1977. Frank was there for the first performances of Abendmusik and remembers being surprised and impressed by what the choir could do. Jack had helped every choir member "stretch to achieve something difficult but not unattainable."



In 1977, Frank met his wife Beth, and they moved to Iowa State and later the University of Cincinnati, where he taught. In 1980, he was called for a time to work in Washington, DC. He found in those places good music, good churches, and sang in various church choirs, but found nowhere with quite the same commitment to the ministry of Christian message and music that he had experienced with First-Plymouth and Abendmusik.

Frank and Beth began supporting Abendmusik financially from a distance early on, trying to fund one program per year. As they saw Jack Levick trying to minister to Lincoln with many kinds of music, so they still see this work continued and expanded by the current staff at First-

Plymouth led by Tom Trenney and the Rev. Jim Keck. Frank delights in First-Plymouth's strong presence on the internet and the many choir performances available worldwide on YouTube. Frank and Beth sponsored Abendmusik's 50th Anniversary Reunion Concert in May of 2022, and they will co-sponsor Christmas with Abendmusik this year. The Thompsons also provide two scholarships for high school students who sing in the Plymouth Choir and Abendmusik Chorus.

Frank and Beth now live in a gorgeous part of North Carolina near Asheville, but they remain committed to Abendmusik—now more than 50 years since Frank found his connection here. We are grateful that the Thompsons continue to help Abendmusik make music that inspires.

by Julia Doerr

MEMORIES

R

uth Amen was born in Lincoln in 1909. A graduate of Lincoln High and the University of Nebraska, she was a musician and a music educator. She taught in Nebraska, Colorado, and Michigan, and lived for a time in New York where she helped found the New York City Opera Guild. In 1968, she returned to Lincoln, and four years later, Jack Levick arrived, and the first Abendmusik performance was held. Ruth was an active patron of Lincoln's musical arts, and she supported Abendmusik from the beginning. Jack and Ruth were kindred spirits, and they often attended Lied Center and Lincoln Symphony performances together. He was once introduced as her son, and they delighted in the misunderstanding so much that it became a running joke. Ruth's generosity until her passing in 2002 helped fuel Abendmusik during its first 30 years. The Ruth Marie Amen Gallery Organ in the balcony of First Plymouth and the Ruth Marie Amen Performing Arts Fund at the Lincoln Community Foundation are both lasting legacies of her partnership in "music that inspires."



N

orma Somerheiser was born in 1934 and, like Ruth, was a Lincoln native and a graduate of Lincoln High and the University of Nebraska. Norma was well rounded, very athletic, especially in her youth, but also a lover of music. She was great with numbers and worked for Lincoln Telephone for 42 years. She was also very warm and personable and loved sharing stories as an active volunteer with the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, an organization that Ruth helped found. Norma was a member of First Plymouth Church and a frequent audience member for Abendmusik concerts. Without fanfare, she quietly included Abendmusik in her estate plans. After her passing in 2018, her generosity began providing an annual season sponsorship, sharing her joy and inspiration with all of us and with new generations of concert-goers.



You Can Help Us to Make More Abendmusik

Abendmusik is made possible only through the generous donations of our community. Please contact our Executive Director, Matthew Finkner, at 402.450.4522 or matthew@abendmusik.org, or visit www.abendmusik.org/support to learn more about how to make a donation, sponsor a concert, or establish a legacy gift to help Abendmusik make more music that inspires.



Truer Words

Te Deum Chamber Choir
Matthew Shepard, conductor

York University Singers
Clark Roush, conductor

Sunday, September 24, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Freewill offering to benefit
Voices of Hope



Sponsored by
Ray & Carolyn Zeisset

TE DEUM

Te Deum was founded in Kansas City by Matthew Christopher Shepard in 2008 to fulfill an expressed need by both singers and audiences in the Kansas City area to present sacred choral music concerts of the highest quality. The chamber choir has built an impressive and varied repertoire that spans centuries of time and wide ranges of composition style. In fall 2013, Te Deum began its Antiqua series, offering historically informed performances of repertoire from the 12th-17th centuries.

MATTHEW SHEPARD, CONDUCTOR

Matthew Shepard is founder and conductor of Te Deum. He is frequently engaged as a conducting clinician, with a growing reputation in the Early Music field. Mr. Shepard's work and contributions to the field have twice been featured in the publication *Early Music America*, and he has presented lectures on historical chant performance, music history and performance practice.



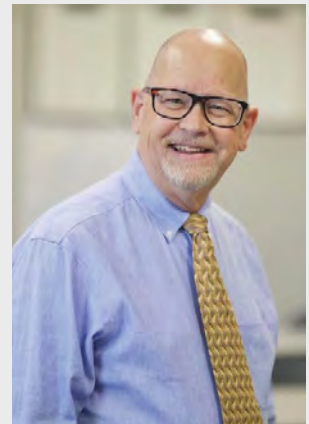
THE YORK UNIVERSITY SINGERS

University Singers is the premier performing ensemble at York University. Members are required to meet a rigid rehearsal schedule in addition to maintaining a minimum grade point average. They have been selected to perform four times for the Nebraska Music Education Association state music conference and three times with the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra. The group is comprised of all grade classifications, and a wide variety of majors.



CLARK ROUSH, CONDUCTOR

Dr. Clark Roush is in his 38th year as conductor of University Singers. He serves as professor of music, Endowed Chair for the Performing Arts, and leader of the music department, which offers degrees in vocal performance, music education, and worship ministry. He is the York University's senior faculty member. Dr. Roush received degrees from Harding University and the University of Iowa.





Bluegrass with Monroe Crossing

Plymouth Choir

Tom Trenney, Conductor

The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass- Carol Barnett

Sunday, November 5, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Monroe Crossing performs an electrifying blend of classic bluegrass, bluegrass gospel, original bluegrass and some surprising selections outside the bluegrass genre. Named in honor of Bill Monroe, the Father of Bluegrass Music, Monroe Crossing's superb musicianship and on-stage rapport have entertained audiences throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

For over 20 years this Minnesota based band has averaged over 100 shows a year performing in intimate rooms, community theaters, major venues and outdoor festivals. They are favorites among bluegrass connoisseurs and non-bluegrass audiences alike. They love introducing newcomers to bluegrass music!

Freewill offering to benefit
Clinic With A Heart



Sponsored by
Susan Sehnert Stuart



Handel's *Messiah* Community Sing

First-Plymouth Schola cantorum
Abendmusik Chamber Orchestra
Tom Trenney, Conductor

Jubilate in D Major - Henry Purcell
Messiah (Part One) - George Frideric Handel

Sunday, Nov. 26, 2023 at 4 p.m.



Freewill offering to benefit
Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach



Co-sponsored by Fred & Margaret Rickers
with the support of Denny & Arlene
Van Horn, Joe & Jeanette Adams,
and Susan Clifford

Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room

Christmas with Abendmusik



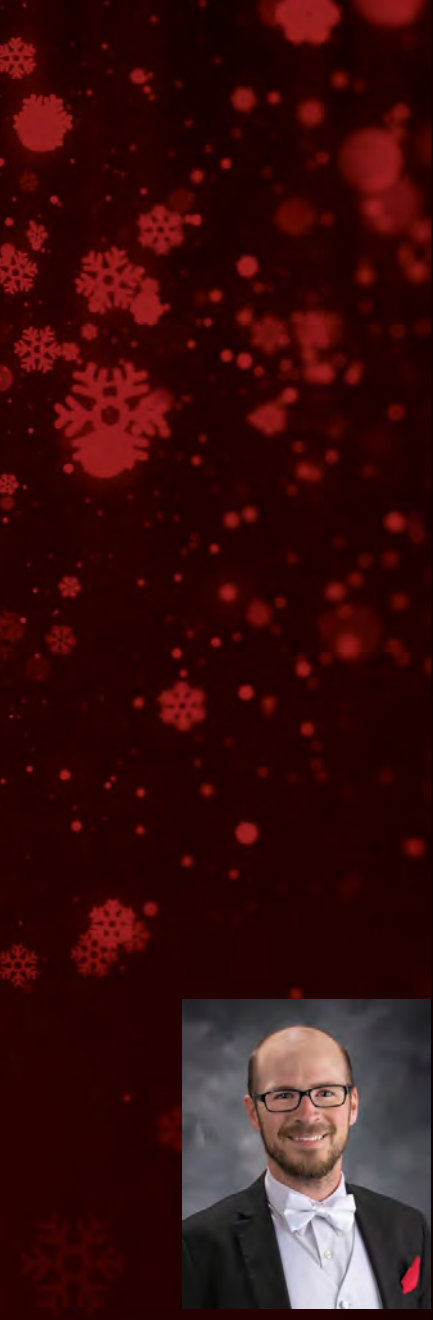
Plymouth Choir, Plymouth Ringers,
Abendmusik Orchestra, & Lincoln Boys Choir
Tom Trenney and Ariel Merivil, conductors

Sunday, December 10, 2023
at 4:00 and 6:30 p.m.

Freewill offering
to benefit
ECHO Collective
Refugee Support



Sponsored by Lorraine Beadell Love, Co-sponsored
by Dr. Andrew F. & Elizabeth U. Thompson,
Cindy & Chad Mohr, and by Mike Fultz & Linda
Schwarzkopf Fultz and Cary & Debbie Wheeland
in honor of Lou Lau, featuring a commissioned
work funded by Jon & Joan Michelsen



LINCOLN BOYS CHOIR

The Lincoln Boys Choir is a performing group with 120 boys ranging in ages from 8 to 17 in the sixth to 12th grades. They have performed at the National Orff and Kodaly convention, the Nebraska Music Educators Association conference, the Nebraska Choral Directors Association conference, the Nebraska governor’s inauguration, and many other community events. Touring has included Kansas City, New York City, Chicago, Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, and Ireland. In 2014, Lincoln Boys Choir received the Richard Hay Arts Organization Award selected by the mayor of Lincoln and the Lincoln Arts Council.



ERIC WYLER, CONDUCTOR

Eric Wyler is in his fifth season with the Lincoln Boys Choir. He has previously served as Music Director at St. John Lutheran Church and as head director at Lewis Central High School, both in Council Bluffs, IA. Eric holds a bachelor’s degree in vocal music education from Nebraska Wesleyan University and a master’s degree in music from UNL.





New Year's Eve Last Blast

Plymouth Brass | Alcée Chriss, Organist
Sunday, December 31, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.



ALCÉE CHRISS

A featured star in the PBS documentary *Pipe Dreams* (2019), Alcée Chriss III is an organist and keyboardist from Fort Worth, TX. Dr. Chriss is the winner of the 2017 Canadian International Organ Competition and the Firmin Swinnen Silver Medal at the 2016 Longwood Gardens International Organ Competition. Dr. Chriss serves as Assistant Organist at Trinity Church Wall Street and as University Organist at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.

PLYMOUTH BRASS

Founded in 1977 by Jack Levick, the Plymouth Brass is Nebraska's oldest ongoing brass ensemble. The Plymouth Brass has performed frequently in worship and First-Plymouth Church and is often featured on the *Abendmusik* Concert Series.

Freewill offering to benefit
People's City Mission



Co-sponsored by Chuck & Mary Ann Erickson and the Ruth Marie Amen Performing Arts Fund, with the support of Lois Thomas

My Funny Valentine

AN ABENDMUSIK FUNDRAISER
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M.
ONLINE ONLY. TICKETS REQUIRED.

Enjoy Valentine's Day in the comfort of your own home with entertainment from Tom Trenney and the Great American Songbook and with a gourmet meal from Chef au Chef delivered right to your door. Won't you be Abendmusik's valentine?



TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE JANUARY 1, 2024 AT [ABENDMUSIK.ORG](https://abendmusik.org)

Kaleidoscope

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Performances of artistic excellence that celebrate racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.



Friday, February 9, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Also featuring the
Nebraska Wesleyan Unity Choir and
Omaha Central High School Choir



Omaha Central High School Choir

Freewill offering to benefit
the Asian Community
and Cultural Center



Sponsored by Robert McMaster
& Maureen Ose



KALEIDOSCOPE VOCAL ENSEMBLE

The Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble presents vocal music with artistic excellence, while celebrating racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. Led by Artistic Director Arianne Abela, the group of professional singers from around the United States and Canada have thriving national and international solo careers as well as a love for vocal chamber music, and focus primarily on presenting early and new music.

ARIANNE ABELA, CONDUCTOR

Arianne Abela is Director of the Choral Program at Amherst College and is founder and director of the Detroit Women's Chorus and Detroit Justice Choir, ensembles dedicated to social-justice and community empowerment. She directed Detroit's historic Fort Street Chorale, conducted choirs at University of Michigan, and the UMS Choral Union.



OMAHA CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR

The Omaha Central High School A Cappella Choir was formed in 1931 and is composed of juniors and seniors, with a few select sophomore tenors and basses. The A Cappella Choir performs at least one concert each quarter and has performed with the Omaha Symphony and with choirs from Nebraska Wesleyan University and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

SARA COWAN, DIRECTOR

Sara Cowan is in her twelfth year of teaching at Omaha Central High School. Ms. Cowan was named the NCDCA Outstanding Young Choral Director in 2016, the Central High School Teacher of the Year in 2021, and earned a Teacher of Excellence Award from the Country Music Awards Foundation in 2022.



NEBRASKA WESLEYAN UNITY CHOIR

The Nebraska Wesleyan Unity Choir is in its first season with a mission to engage in the communal singing of music from diverse composers and cultures traditionally underrepresented in collegiate music departments. NWU students join with faculty, staff, alumni, and other Lincoln community members in a decidedly multigenerational ensemble, learning about the historical context and stylistic interpretation of the music they perform.

ARIEL MERIVIL, DIRECTOR

Ariel Merivil serves as the Associate Minister of Music to First-Plymouth Church, where he leads in worship as a conductor, organist, pianist, and vocalist. While at First-Plymouth, Ariel has helped to lead and foster diverse styles of music in worship including the Negro-spiritual, gospel, global, and other contemporary music styles.

Youth Masterworks Festival

Monday, February 26, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.
Lied Center for Performing Arts

More than 300 students from
Lincoln area high school choirs
join Lincoln's Youth Symphony
Orchestra and professional soloists
on the Lied Center stage.
Arianne Abela, conductor



Freewill offering to
benefit Cedars



Sponsored by Dr. John H. Casey and
Dr. Pamela F. Starr, featuring commissioned
works funded by Jon & Joan Michelsen
and the Pearle Francis Finigan Foundation

Lincoln East High School Singers

Denise Cotton and
Lisabeth Wissink, directors

Lincoln High School Choir

Colten McCauley, director

Lincoln Southeast Court Choir

Riley Herringer, director

Lincoln Southwest Concert Choir

Marci Malone DeAmbrose, director

Norris High School Titan Singers

Wes Hansmeyer, director

Lincoln Youth Symphony Orchestra

Clark Potter, director



Lincoln Mayor's Arts Award Winner

“Outstanding Event”

Abendmusik Youth Masterworks Festival

The Mayor's Arts Awards honors and celebrates individual artists, arts organizations, and creative project leaders who are making an impact through the arts. Abendmusik is proud to have received this year's “Outstanding Event” award recognizing our 2022 Youth Masterworks Festival at which more than four hundred local high school students performed onstage at the Lied Center for Performing Arts to an audience of over 1,200 patrons, friends, and proud families.

It is a powerful experience to join one's voice with that of others, to join voices and instruments together, to hear in real time the power and impact of choir and instruments, to be a part of something much bigger and grander than oneself. And this experience became real for these young people on this day.

—Dr. Marilyn Moore

St. John Passion

by Johann Sebastian Bach

sounding light chamber choir

Plymouth Choir

Abendmusik Chamber Orchestra

Tom Trenney, conductor

Good Friday, March 29, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.



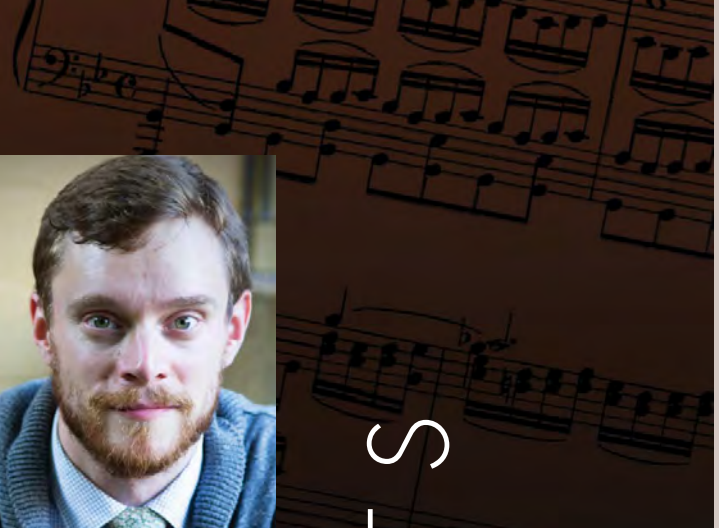
The Plymouth Choir sings weekly for worship at First-Plymouth Church. The choir's rich history has included more than a dozen recordings, five international tours, and performances under legendary conductors including Robert Shaw, Randall Thompson, Stacey Gibbs, David Willcocks, John Rutter, Alice Parker, Anton Armstrong, Jake Runestad, Rosephanye Powell,

and Aaron Copland. Recent performances have taken the choir from McCook, Nebraska to Painesville, Ohio; from the Lied Center to Carnegie Hall; and from Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach to the Nebraska State Penitentiary. The choir's ministry is experienced around the world through more than 14 million views on its YouTube channel.

Freewill offering to
benefit justNeighbors



Co-sponsored by Phyllis Martin Owen and the Levick Legacy Society, with the support of Paul Levi Dunn, Mark Kanitz, and Lowell & Jane Nickolaus



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Nathaniel Sullivan
Jesus/Bass



Karen Cook
Maid/Soprano



Steven Soph
Evangelist



Hayley Shoemaker
Alto



Jeff Keele
Peter



Lindsay Kesselman
Soprano



Trey Meyer
Pilate/ Bass



Michael Jensen
Servant

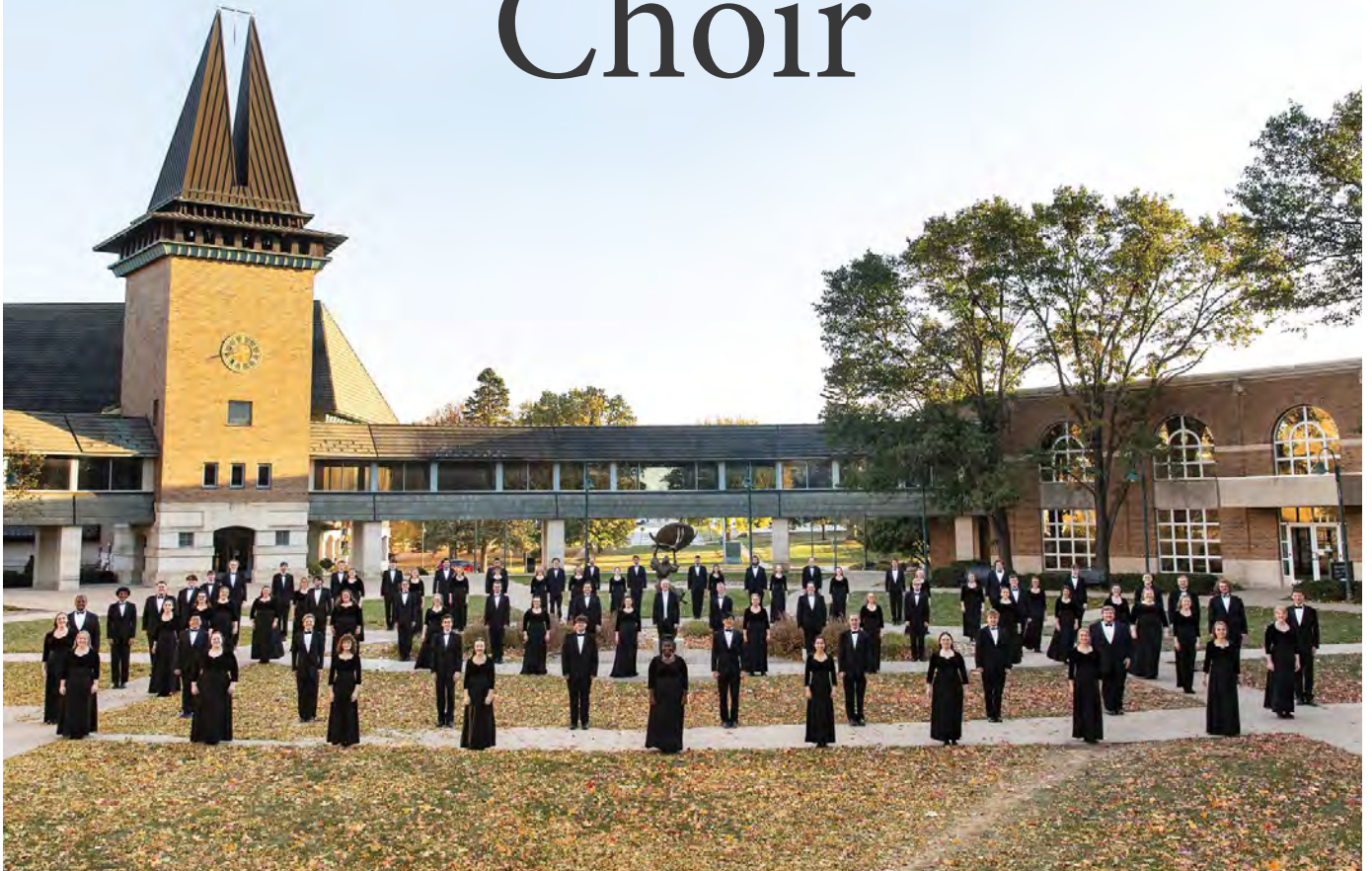


Matthew Clegg
Tenor



Rebecca Shane
Alto

The Wartburg Choir



Saturday, April 27, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Wartburg Choir

Lee Nelson, director

Harlan Community High School Concert Choir

Daniel Novotney, director

Freewill offering to benefit
Center for People



Sponsored by the
Trenney family

WARTBURG CHOIR

Founded in 1937, the internationally acclaimed Wartburg Choir performs sacred music from all historical periods and styles and often collaborates with contemporary composers. Choir members are chosen by audition and represent various academic disciplines on campus. Wartburg Choir is a story of dedicated service and learning, told by scores of choir members who have truly learned what it means to be a servant leader. Their experiences create a rich testimony of the choir's ongoing purpose and passion over the past 85 years.



LEE NELSON, DIRECTOR

Dr. Lee Nelson holds the Patricia R. Zahn Chair in choral conducting and serves as the Director of Choral Activities at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa. Wartburg College recognized Nelson's work as an educator by awarding him the *John O. Chellevold Student Award for Excellence in Teaching and Professional Service*.



HARLAN CONCERT CHOIR

The Harlan Concert Choir is a non-auditioned mixed choir composed of students in grades 9-12. HCHS choirs have performed at Disney World, Worlds of Fun, and The Big Apple Classic. They receive consistent Division 1 ratings at Large Group Contest.



DANIEL NOVOTNEY, DIRECTOR

Daniel Novotney is in his second year of teaching in Harlan, IA. He currently teaches 7-12 vocal music. Mr. Novotney attended Wartburg College in Waverly, IA, where he sang in the Wartburg Choir, Castle Singers, Ritterchor, and Festeberg.



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JOSHUA BELL



WYNTON MARSALIS



MOMIX: ALICE

APPLIED TO

JAKE SHIMABUKURO	OCTOBER 12, 2023
JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS	OCTOBER 22, 2023
BEHZOD ABDURAIMOV	DECEMBER 5, 2023
KINETIC LIGHT	JANUARY 27, 2024
BEETHOVEN'S 5TH & 7TH SYMPHONIES FEATURING: LES GRANDS BALLETS & LINCOLN'S SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	FEBRUARY 14, 2024
ORCHESTRADRUM TAO	MARCH 7, 2024
SHOW WAY THE MUSICAL	MARCH 26, 2024
MOMIX: ALICE	MARCH 30, 2024
JON NAKAMATSU	APRIL 7, 2024
JOSHUA BELL AND LARISA MARTÍNEZ	MAY 9, 2024



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SEASON



EDWARD POLOCHICK
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Classical concerts include banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck, Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, and several premieres of new music. The season also includes a pops concert of Star Wars music, LSO's annual Deck the Halls concert, and two family concerts.

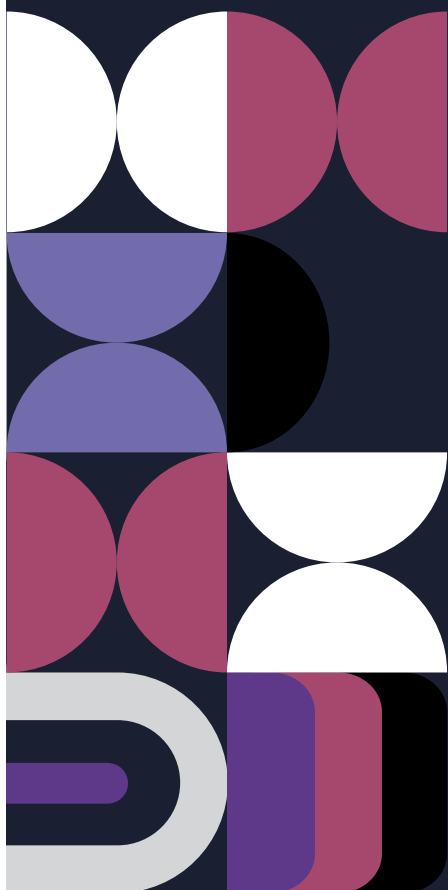
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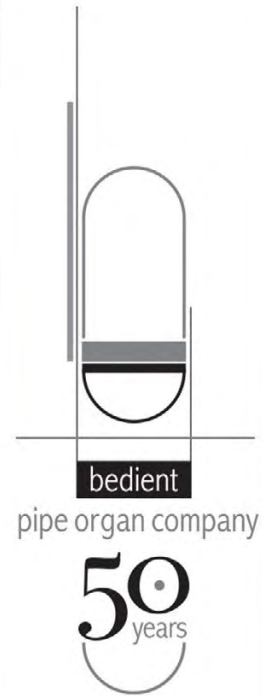
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Sunday, September 24, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Bluegrass with Monroe Crossing

Sunday, November 5, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Handel's *Messiah*: Lincoln's Community Sing

Sunday, November 26, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room: Christmas with Abendmusik

Sunday, December 10, 2023 at 4:00 and 6:30 p.m.

New Year's Eve Last Blast

Sunday, December 31, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble

Friday, February 9, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Youth Masterworks Festival (Lied Center for Performing Arts)

Monday, February 26, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

St. John Passion

by Johann Sebastian Bach

Good Friday, March 29, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

The Wartburg Choir

Saturday, April 27, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.