


Waukesha Choral Union Presents

Choose Something Like A Star

A young boy with dark hair is looking up at a Christmas tree. The tree is decorated with warm white lights and has a large, bright star on top. The background is a soft, warm glow, suggesting a festive indoor setting.

Friday, December 19 at 7:30 PM
St. Luke's in Waukesha

Saturday December 20 at 1:30 PM
St. John's in Brookfield



Welcome from the Director

Humans love symbolism—the idea that things can represent other things. Doves represent peace; apples remind us of ancient temptation. We have been looking up at the stars for as long as we have existed, and so stars, too, are some of our favorite symbols. This program explores the many meanings of stars: as symbols of peace and contentment, tools for self-examination amidst great mystery, signs of salvation, or, as you'll hear in Randall Thompson's setting of Robert Frost's "Choose Something Like a Star," as a standard to live up to.

This Christmas season, the Waukesha Choral Union has made wishes upon stars for ourselves and for you. You can see them displayed around the room. We wish for peace, for kindness, for joy, for all to be fed. We wish for rest, for help plowing our snowy driveways, for health—and that you, and we, will look up to see the stars, those great mysteries.

Thank you for joining us! We wish you and your family a very happy holiday season and hope to see you at our next concert on March 1st, 2026, as we perform John Rutter's *Requiem* free to the public in a continuation of the Fred and JoAnn Portz Community Concert series!

Dianne Buser



Thank You!

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Waukesha West High School
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Choose Something Like a Star

Danielle Bridges, artistic director
Dr. Simone Gheller, collaborative pianist



Star in the East

arr. Jordan Sramek
ed. Daniel Mahraun

Jake Bergman, Charlie Hummel, and Michele Rinka, soloists

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.

Chorus:
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 is laid.

Cold on his cradle the dew drops are shining;
Low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore Him, in slumber reclining,
Wise men and shepherds before him do fall.

(Chorus)

Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Eden and off'rings divine?
Gems from the mountain, and pearls from the
ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

(Chorus)

Vainly we offer each ample oblation;
Vainly with gold we His favor secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration;
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Ave maris stella

José Maurício Nunes Garcia

Ave, maris stella,
Dei mater alma,
atque semper virgo,
Felix cæli porta.

Hail, star of the sea,
Nurturing mother of God,
And ever virgin,
Happy gate of heaven.

Alleluia, angelus Domini

Garcia

Karen Bieszk, Sue Wallenslager, Tyler Walters,
and Charlie Hummel, soloists

Alleluia. Angelus Domini apparuit in somnis
Joseph dicens:
Surge et accipe puerum et Matrem ejus
et fuge in Aegyptum.
Alleluia.

Alleluia. The angel of the Lord appeared in a
dream to Joseph and said,
"Get up and take the boy and his mother
and flee into Egypt."
Alleluia.



Program

Reading: When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

Walt Whitman

Anne Wandler, reader

Sure on This Shining Night

Morten Lauridsen

Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wandering far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.

The Language of the Stars

Katerina Gimón

Bekah Jaspersen and Maddi Weinstock, soloists
Ricki May and Maureen Hair, small ensemble

Ye brilliant orbs that deck the sky,
Shrouded in deepest mystery,
To thee my song I sing!
I long to know of what thou art,
Of this great universe a part,
I feel thy glory in my heart
While to the earth I cling!

Mysterious questions, answered not,
With deepest meaning ever fraught,
Flooding this life below,
When rolling years no more shall be,
When we shall find our destiny,
When time unveils eternity;
Perhaps, we then shall know.

I long to traverse thy bright spheres,
To stand above the flight of years
Remembering earth's dark sod;
Who formed thy glittering, gilded gems,
Who framed thy starry diadems,
Who all the golden glory bends
Of the resplendent sun!

Alleluia

Randall Thompson

Alleluia. Amen.

Reading: Stars

Marjorie Pickthall

Susan Till, reader



Program

O Come, All Ye Faithful

arr. David Willcocks

The audience is invited to sing on the bolded text.

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels!
Refrain: O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

God of God, Light of Light,
lo, He abhors not the virgin's womb;
very God, begotten not created; [Refrain]

Lo! star-led chieftains, magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child bring our hearts' oblations:
[Refrain]

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God in the highest: [Refrain]

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy
morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
[Refrain]

Go Where I Send Thee!

Gospel Spiritual

arr. Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory

Children, go where I send thee!
Children, how shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send thee one by one:
One for the little bitty baby,
The baby boy born in Bethlehem.

Children, go where I send thee!
Children, how shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send thee two by two:
Two for Paul and Silas,
One for the little bitty baby,
The baby boy born in Bethlehem.

Children, go where I send thee!
Children, how shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send thee six by six:
Six for the days when the world was fixed,
Five for the bread they did divide,
Four for the Gospel writers,
Three for the Hebrew children,
Two for Paul and Silas,
One for the little bitty baby,
The baby boy born in Bethlehem.

Children, go where I send thee!
Children, how shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send thee twelve by twelve:
Twelve for the twelve disciples,
'leven of 'em singin' in heaven,
Ten for the ten commandments,
Nine for the angel choirs divine,
Eight for the eight the flood couldn't take,
Seven for the day God laid down his head,
Six for the days when the world was fixed,
Five for the bread they did divide,
Four for the Gospel writers,
Three for the Hebrew children,
Two for Paul and Silas,
One for the little bitty baby,
The baby boy born in Bethlehem.

Intermission





Program

The First Noel

Traditional

The audience is invited to sing on the bolded text.

The first Noel the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Refrain: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.
[Refrain]

And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.
[Refrain]

This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.
[Refrain]

Reading: Sunset

Rainier Maria Rilke

Abby Coppock, reader

Frostiana: Seven Country Songs

Randall Thompson

1. The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

2. The Pasture

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I sha'n't be gone long.—You come too.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I sha'n't be gone long.—You come too.



Program

3. Come In

As I came to the edge of the woods,
Thrush music — hark!
Now if it was dusk outside,
Inside it was dark.

Too dark in the woods for a bird
By sleight of wing
To better its perch for the night,
Though it still could sing.

The last of the light of the sun
That had died in the west

Still lived for one song more
In a thrush's breast.

Far in the pillared dark
Thrush music went —
Almost like a call to come in
To the dark and lament.

But no, I was out for stars;
I would not come in.
I meant not even if asked;
And I hadn't been.

4. The Telephone

"When I was just as far as I could walk
From here to-day,
There was an hour
All still
When leaning with my head against a flower
I heard you talk.
Don't say I didn't, for I heard you say—
You spoke from that flower on the window sill—
Do you remember what it was you said?"

"First tell me what it was you thought you
heard."

"Having found the flower and driven a bee
away,
I leaned my head,
And holding by the stalk,
I listened and I thought I caught the word—
What was it? Did you call me by my name?
Or did you say—
Someone said 'Come'—I heard it as I bowed."

"I may have thought as much, but not aloud."

"Well, so I came."

5. A Girl's Garden

A neighbor of mine in the village
Likes to tell how one spring
When she was a girl on the farm, she did
A childlike thing.

One day she asked her father
To give her a garden plot
To plant and tend and reap herself,
And he said, "Why not?"

In casting about for a corner
He thought of an idle bit
Of walled-off ground where a shop had stood,
And he said, "Just it."

And he said, "That ought to make you
An ideal one-girl farm,
And give you a chance to put some strength
On your slim-jim arm."

It was not enough of a garden,
Her father said, to plough;
So she had to work it all by hand,
But she don't mind now.

She wheeled the dung in the wheelbarrow
Along a stretch of road;
But she always ran away and left
Her not-nice load.

And hid from anyone passing.
And then she begged the seed.
She says she thinks she planted one
Of all things but weed.

A hill each of potatoes,
Radishes, lettuce, peas,
Tomatoes, beets, beans, pumpkins, corn,
And even fruit trees.



Program

And yes, she has long mistrusted
That a cider apple tree
In bearing there to-day is hers,
Or at least may be.

Her crop was a miscellany
When all was said and done,
A little bit of everything,
A great deal of none.

6. Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

7. Choose Something Like a Star

O Star (the fairest one in sight),
We grant your loftiness the right
To some obscurity of cloud -
It will not do to say of night,
Since dark is what brings out your light.
Some mystery becomes the proud.
But to be wholly taciturn
In your reserve is not allowed.
Say something to us we can learn
By heart and when alone repeat.
Say something! And it says "I burn."
But say with what degree of heat.
Talk Fahrenheit, talk Centigrade.

Now when she sees in the village
How village things go,
Just when it seems to come in right,
She says, "I know!

It's as when I was a farmer—"—"
Oh, never by way of advice!
And she never sins by telling the tale
To the same person twice.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Use language we can comprehend.
Tell us what elements you blend.
It gives us strangely little aid,
But does tell something in the end.
And steadfast as Keats' Eremité,
Not even stooping from its sphere,
It asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

Silent Night

arr. John Rutter

The audience is invited to sing on the bolded text.

Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft, einsam wacht,
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar.
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds poor saw the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiance beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.



The Waukesha Choral Union

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*Section leader



WCU Artistic Staff



Danielle Bridges is the Artistic Director of the Waukesha Choral Union. She received her B.M. in Vocal Music Education from the University of Central Arkansas and her M.A. in Choral Conducting and Pedagogy from the University of Iowa. During her studies, Ms. Bridges discovered a particular interest in developing creative, communal textual analysis and nonverbal communication methods for use during choral rehearsals. She is a proponent for music by women composers and founded the Iowa Women's Music Collective to advocate for the research and performance of music by women. Ms. Bridges has been selected to share her research at conferences

including the International Voice Foundation Symposium and the inaugural Theorizing African-American Music conference. In addition to her experience teaching choral music in contexts ranging from middle school to community choirs for singers in retirement communities, Ms. Bridges has served as a choral consultant for public and private schools. She is the current Director of Music at Community United Methodist Church in Elm Grove, WI, where she conducts the Chancel Choir, Clarion Bells, and Festival Choir.



WCU Artistic Staff

Collaborative pianist **Simone Gheller** received master's degrees in Piano (1999), Organ Performance & Organ Composition (1999), Music Education (2003), and Choral Music & Choral Conducting (2004). He also received a doctorate in Organ Performance and Organ Composition, magna cum laude (2006). He studied at the University of Vienna, and he received two "Medaille d'Or en Superieur d'Interpretation" at the Conservatoire Superior des Music de Paris. Gheller also studied at Oberlin College, where he completed the Artist Diploma—a great distinction in music. Currently, he is Music Director and Organist at St. Jerome Church in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. He is also the accompanist of Bel Canto Chorus and the Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy.



Gheller has an extensive international performing history spanning the last 35 years, with concerts in prestigious locations. He has garnered many awards, including first prizes at several national and international organ competitions.



About Us

The Waukesha Choral Union has been musically active in the community for over 60 years. Originally a combination of the Carroll College student chorus and community singers named the Waukesha Choral Society in 1949, the group became the Town and Gown in 1961 and the Waukesha Choral Union in 1974, taking its present form as an auditioned choir in 1978. Over the years, the Waukesha Choral Union has developed a reputation for excellent choral music performances in southeast Wisconsin.

The Waukesha Choral Union pursues artistic excellence through a variety of musical programming. The WCU challenges, enriches and educates its members, audiences and community. The Chorus also impacts the community through collaboration with area schools, youth choral groups, and local arts organizations in Waukesha County.



Sing with the Waukesha Choral Union!
Interested in singing with the WCU?
Scan the QR code for information on auditions.



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Danielle Bridges- Artistic Director

* Denotes non-singing community member



Thank You to Our Donors

The Waukesha Choral Union acknowledges the individuals, corporations, and foundations who have supported us in the last 12 months as of December 15, 2025. Thank you!

If you would like to join these generous donors in supporting local music, scan the QR code to make an individual, tax-deductible contribution. If you are interested in corporate partnership, please email fundraising@choralunion.org.



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Waukesha Choral Union Presents

Requiem

By John Rutter

The Waukesha Choral Union joins with members of the community to present John Rutter's poignant Requiem in a concert dedicated to remembrance.

Free Event!

Sunday, March 1, at 3:00 PM

Dr. Martin Luther Church, Oconomowoc

325 S. Main St.

