CHRISTMAS WITH MUSICORUM

Saturday, December 13, 2025 · 6:30pm
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

www.musicorum-mn.org

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

PRAIRIE LAKES regional arts council

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

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
Drew Burling
Chuck Christenson
Glen Ferguson
Julie Fleming
Jeffrey Flory
Brandy Gullickson
Scott Hermanson
Taylor Jones
Ole Karstad
Erin Kingland
Scott Kingland
Linden Kirscht
Billy Krager
Rick Kramlinger
Megan Kreinbring
Sarah Krolak
Paige Lang
Charlie Leftridge
Grace Matson
Melissa Meouchy
Don McGinness
Alex McLean
Chris Paul
Elizabeth Paul
Julia Pelzel
Jeannie Phillips
Megan Poehler
Leah Renne
Helena Satterness
Rob Satterness
Anja Scheidel
Ben Scheidel
Cindy Shirk
Fred Slocum
Andrew Stumbo
Jill Torrison
Brad Ufer
Bart Weelborg
Beth Winterfeldt
John Zehnder

A Note from the conductor:

Tonight's program is a collection of old favorites and recent gems that all speak to the Advent and Christmas season. Tonight's program is also personally meaningful. My dad was the central choral conductor in my life and I lost him to cancer this year. I sang a number of the pieces on tonight's program with him over the years, and I heard his choirs perform many of the others. His handwriting is on the scores from which I am conducting. I feel his presence in this place and in this music.

The first three works come from the late Renaissance/early Baroque era and provide different perspectives on the nativity. Sweelinck was a Dutch organist, composer, and teacher. His life and writing reflects both Renaissance polyphony and early Baroque elements. **Hodie Christus Natus Est** proclaims the joy and excitement of "today" (*hodie*, in Latin). Vittoria's **O Magnum Mysterium** reflects on the wonder and mystery of the birth of Christ. This beloved classic choral work moves from dreamy to joyful in the closing Alleluias. **Quem Viditis Pastores,** by the English Renaissance composer, Richard Deering, offers the viewpoint of the shepherds who have seen the child and witnessed the angels proclaiming his birth. Deering uses an antiphonal approach and alternates the three-part upper voices with the three-part lower voices and builds to exhilarating Alleluias. This is my first encounter with this wonderful piece, and I am told by a longtime member of Musicorum that the last time the ensemble sang it was 1998. We hope to perform this piece again before another 27 years go by! To end our opening set we invite you to join us in our first audience carol: **O Little Town of Bethlehem**. The alternate tune may surprise you, but I find it even more singable and lovely than the one we usually associate with this text.

Our next set is three works that focus on flower imagery, beginning with Praetorius' **Lo How a Rose e'er Blooming**. Published in 1509, this carol is a contemporary of the three pieces that opened the concert. We then jump forward 310 years to British composer Herbert Howells' **A Spotless Rose**, written in 1909. Howells sets the 15th century poem with such beauty and care, allowing the text to shift the meter throughout. The rose named in both pieces can be a metaphor for Mary, Jesus, and the hope they bring. In **What Sweeter Music,** John Rutter sets the poetry of Robert Herrick, an early 17th century poet and Anglican cleric. Rutter draws out the sweetness of the text with satisfying harmonies and a beautiful organ accompaniment. After three gentle pieces we all need an energy injection, and **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing** with its glorious descant by David Willcocks on the final verse is the perfect medicine.

There is no shortage of moving poetry in this program, and John Tavener's setting of William Blake's **The Lamb** is particularly beloved. The surprising melody and sometimes dissonant harmonies are caused by mirroring intervals. For example, when the altos first enter they invert the melody the sopranos just sang. While a lesser composer may have gotten swept away in this cerebral exercise, 20th century Tavener balances the dissonance with gorgeous moments of consonance and openness. It's a gem of a piece that flows straight into Bob Chilcott's setting of **The Shepherd's Carol**.

Published in 2001, this modern carol is narrated by the shepherds as they tell Mary of all that they have seen. The line "Oh, a voice from the sky, Lady," is both literally and musically one of the peak points of our program and a favorite moment for many of the singers tonight. We close the opening half with an arrangement of an ancient melody, **Personent Hodie**. Like **The Lamb**, it closes with open fifths that sound unfinished to our modern ears, but it's hard to object when we've had so many beautiful major chords leading up to this moment.

The second half of the program is a sampling of carols from Europe. We begin with two French carols, the first a setting of **What is this Lovely Fragrance?** by Canadian composer and church musician Healey Willan. The best carol settings let the beauty of the melody and text shine through. Willan does just that. **Masters In This Hall** is a narration of the Christmas story by a poor servant speaking to his wealthy patron. There's always room for subversive social commentary in a choral program, so note that the speaker proclaims that God "hath poor folk raised and cast a-down the proud." Next, Gustav Holst sets a 15th century text in **Lullay my Liking**. The refrain is a lullaby and the verses offer commentary on the events of the nativity. While the text is certainly medieval, its meaning is clear enough and charmingly delivered by a variety of soloists. As our final audience carol, we sing together another alternate melody to a well-known carol text in **Away in a Manger**.

Like **Masters in This Hall**, the traditional Spanish carol **Hacia Belén va un borrico** is arranged by Alice Parker and Robert Shaw. Their settings are always well-constructed, approachable, and a joy to sing. As the story is from the perspective of a chocolate laden donkey, be sure to read the translation to get a sense of the humor and playfulness. Our European tour leads us next to Poland through Paul J. Christiansen's setting of **Infant Holy, Infant Lowly**. I love the simplicity of this piece and how the alto part has repeating suspensions (where a note from a previous chord is held into the next chord creating a brief dissonance before it resolves). Listen for it and see if you find it as satisfying as I do. This has been primarily an a capella program, but we finally incorporate some instrumental accompaniment in our penultimate piece. Contemporary Norwegian composer Ørjan Matre uses a traditional tune from the Valdres region of Norway as the melody in **Eit barn er født i Bethlehem.** Note how the folk setting of the 14th century carol benefits from a bright choral tone and feels different than anything else in the program. We close with Minnesota composer Carolyn Jennings' arrangement of **Go Tell It On the Mountain** to joyfully send us out.

As you go on your way I'll leave you with the final stanza of Madeleine L'Engle's poem "First Coming," which has been a comfort to me while preparing this music: "We cannot wait till the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice, for to share our grief, to touch our pain, He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!" So, here we are, persevering in the insanity to raise our songs with joyful voice. Thank you for joining us.

- Dr. Elisabeth Cherland

Hodie, Christus natus Est
Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562 - 1621)

Hodie Christus natus est:	*Today Christ is born:*
Hodie Salvator apparuit:	*Today the Savior appears:*
Hodie in terra canunt Angeli,	*Today the angels sing on earth,*
Laetantur Archangeli	*and the Archangels rejoice.*
Hodie exultant justi, dicentes:	*Today the just exult, saying:*
Gloria in excelsis Deo.	*Glory to God in the highest.*
Alleluia.	*Alleluia.*

O Magnum Mysterium
Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548 - 1611)

O magnum mysterium	*O great mystery*
et admirabile sacramentum,	*and wonderful sacrament*
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,	*that animals should see the newborn Lord*
jacentem in præsepio.	*lying in a manger*
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt	*Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy*
Portare Dominum Jesum Christum.	*to bear Jesus Christ the Lord*
Alleluia.	*Alleluia*

Without pause for applause

Quem Viditis, Pastores
Richard Dering (1580 - 1630)

Quem vidistis, pastores?	*Whom have you seen, shepherds?*
Dicite, annuntiate nobis, quis apparruit?	*Speak, proclaim to us, who has appeared?*
Natum vidimus, et choros Angelorum	*We saw the newborn child and choirs of angels*
collaudantes Dominum.	*praising God.*
Alleluia!	*Alleluia*!

Audience Carol: O little Town of Bethlehem
Traditional English Hymn; arr. R. Vaughan Williams

1. O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in they dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

2. O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to all on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.

3. How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still
The dear Christ enters in.

4. O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
Oh come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Lo, How a Rose e'er Blooming
Michael Praetorius (1571 - 1621)

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
As men of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it,
The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
She bore to all a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

Without pause for applause

A Spotless Rose
Herbert Howells (1892 - 1983)
Billy Krager, solo

A spotless Rose is blowing
Sprung from a tender root
Of ancient seers' foreshowing
Of Jesse promised fruit
Its fairest bud unfolds to light
Amid the cold, cold winter
And in the dark midnight.

The Rose which I am singing
Whereof Isaiah said
Is from its sweet root springing
In Mary, purest Maid
For through our God's great love & might.
The blessed babe she bare us
In a cold, cold winter's night.

Without pause for applause

What Sweeter Music
John Rutter (b. 1945)

What sweeter music can we bring
Than a carol for to sing
The birth of this our Heavenly King?
Awake the voice, awake the string

Dark and dull night, fly hence away
And give the honor to this day
That sees December turned to May

Why does the chilling winter's morn
Smile, like a field beset with corn?
Or smell like a meadow newly-shorn
Thus, on the sudden? Come and see
The 'cause, why things thus fragrant be

'Tis He is born, whose quickening birth
Gives life and luster, public mirth
To Heaven, and the under-Earth
We see him come, and know him ours,
Who with his sunshine and his showers
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

The darling of the world is come
And fit it is we find a room
To welcome him, to welcome him.

The nobler part of all the house here
Is the heart
Which we will give him and bequeath
This holly and this ivy wreath
To do him honor who's our King
And Lord of all this revelling

What sweeter music can we bring
Than a carol for to sing
The birth of this our Heavenly King?

Audience carol: Hark the Herald Angels Sing
(#270) Felix Mendelssohn, Arr David Wilcox.

1.Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

2. Christ by highest Heav'v adored
Christ the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the God-head see
Hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

3. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

The Lamb
John Tavener (1944 - 2013)

Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life & bid thee feed
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb I'll tell thee
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb
We are called by his name
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

Without pause for applause

T**he Shepherd's Carol**
Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

We stood on the hills, Lady, our day's work done
Watching the frosted meadows that winter had won.
The evening was calm, Lady, the air so still
Silence more lovely than music, for in the hills
There was a star, Lady, shone in the night
Larger than Venus it was and bright, so bright!
O a voice from the sky, Lady, it seemed to us then
Telling of God being born in the world of men.
And so we have come, Lady, our day's work done
Our love, our hopes, ourselves, we give to your Son

Without pause for applause

Personent Hodie
Words and Music from Piae Cantiones (1582)
arr. John Rutter

Personent hodie	*Let resound today*
Voces puerulae	*The voices of children,*
Laudantes jucunde	*Joyfully praising*
Qui nobis est natus,	*Him that is born to us,*
Summo Deo datus,	*Given by most high God.*
Et de virgineo Ventre procreatus.	*And conceived in a Virgin's womb*
In mundo nascitur,	*He was born into the world,*
Pannis involvitur	*Wrapped in swaddling clothes*
Praesepi ponitur	*And laid in a manger*
Stabulo brutorum,	*In a stable for animals,*
Rector supernorum.	*The master of the heavens.*
Perdidit spolia princeps infernorum.	*The prince of Hell has lost his spoils.*
Magi tres venerunt,	*Three Magi came,*
Munera offerunt;,	*They were bearing gifts*
Parvulum inquirunt,	*And sought the little one,*
Stellulam sequendo,	*Following a star,*
Ipsum adorando	*To worship him*
Aurum thus, et myrrham ei offerendo.	*And offer him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*
Omnes clericuli,	*Let all the junior clerics*
Pariter pueri,	*And also the boys*
Canent ut angeli:	*Sing like angels:*
Advenisti mundo,	*"You have come to the world,*
Laudes tibi fundo	*I pour out praises to you,*
Ideo gloria in excelsis Deo!	*Therefore Glory to God in the Highest!"*

~ INTERMISSION ~

What is this Lovely Fragrance?
Healey Willan (1880 - 1968)
Drew Burling, Julie Fleming, Sarah Krolak, Grace Matson, Jeffrey Flory
Billy Krager, Rick Kramlinger, Alex McLean, Fred Slocum, small group

What is this lovely fragrance wafting
Like to the scents of flowers in spring!
Shepherds, O tell us, whence such beauty,
Hear you not heavenly caroling?
What is this lovely fragrance wafting
Like to the scents of flowers in spring.

What is this light so fair, so tender
Breaking upon our wondering eyes?
Never the Morning Star so radiant
Followed his course o'er eastern skies.
What is this light so fair, so tender,
Breaking upon our wondering eyes?

Shepherds, O haste with eager footsteps
Seek the Savior, born today.
Low at His feet we lay our treasure,
Heart's adoration, love for aye.
Shepherds, O haste with eager footsteps
Seek the Savior, born today.

Without pause for applause

Masters in this Hall
Robert Shaw (1916 - 1999) & Alice Parker (1925 - 2023)

Masters in the hall,
Hear ye news today
Brought from over sea
And ever I you pray;

(*Refrain*) Nowell! Nowell! Nowell!
Nowell sing we clear!
Holpen are all folk on earth,
Born the Son of God so dear.
Nowell! Nowell! Nowell!
Nowell sing we loud!
God today hath poor folk raised
And cast a-down the proud.

Going o'er the hills,
Through the milk-white snow,
Heard I ewes bleat
While the wind did blow.
Then to Bethlem town
We went two and two,
And in a sorry place
Heard the oxen low. (*Refrain*)

Therein did we see
A sweet and goodly May
And a fair old man,
Upon the straw she lay
And a little child
On her arm had she,
"Wot ye who is this?"
Said the hinds to me. (*Refrain*)

This is Christ the Lord,
Masters, be ye glad!
Christmas is come in,
And no folk should be sad! (*Refrain*)

Lullay My Liking
arr. Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934)
Julie Fleming, Sarah Krolak, Alex McLean, Billy Krager
Fred Slocum, Drew Burling, Grace Matson, solos

Refrain: Lullay my liking, my dear Son, my Sweeting;
Lullay my dear Heart, mine own dear Darling.

I saw a fair maiden sitten and sing
She lulled a little child, a sweete Lording. *(Refrain)*

That Eternal Lord is He, that made alle thing;
Of alle Lordes He is Lord, of every King He's King. *(Refrain)*

There was mickle melody at that Childes birth
Though the songsters were heavenly they made mickle mirth. *(Refrain)*

Angels bright they sang that night and saiden to that Child
"Blessed be Thou, and so be she that is so meek and mild" *(Refrain)*

Pray we now to that Child as to His mother dear,
God grant them all His blessing that now maken cheer. *(Refrain)*

Audience carol: Away In A Manger
(#278 in Cranberry Hymnal)

1. Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jusus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with you there.

Hacia Belen va un Borrico

Robert Shaw (1916 - 1999) & Alice Parker (1925 - 2023)

Rob Satterness, Alex McLean, solos

Hacia Belén va un borrico,	*A donkey is going to Bethlehem*
Yo me remendaba, yo me remendé,	*(All day long I've been mending patches.)*
cargado de chocolate.	*loaded with chocolate.*
Lleva su chocolatera,	*It carries its chocolate pot,*
Yo me remendaba, yo me remendé,	*(All day long I've been mending patches.)*
Yo m'eché un remiendo, yo me lo quité,	*Sew one on, take another one off.)*
su molinillo y su anatre.	*its little wooden whisk, and its stove.*
Maria, Maria, ven acá corriendo,	*Mary, Mary come running here,*
que el chocolatillo se lo están comiendo.	*for somebody's eating all the chocolate!*
En el Portal de Belén,	*In the Bethlehem manger,*
gitanillos han entrado;	*young thieves came in,*
y al Niño que está en la cuna	*while the Child was in the cradle,*
los pañales le han quitado.	*they took his swaddling clothes.*
Maria, Maria, ven acá corriendo,	*Mary, Mary come running here,*
que los pañalillos los están cogiendo.	*for they're taking his swaddling clothes;*
Maria, Maria, ven acá volando,	*Mary, Mary come flying here,*
que los pañalitos los están llevando.	*for they're taking his swaddling clothes!*
Con un sombrero de paja,	*Wearing a straw hat,*
al Portal llega un gallego;	*a Galician arrives at the manger.*
mientras adoraba al Niño,	*While he was adoring the Child,*
el buey se comió el sombrero.	*the donkey ate the hat.*
Maria, Maria, ven acá corriendo,	*Mary, Mary come running here,*
que el sombrero el buey se lo está comiendo.	*for the donkey is eating the hat.*
Maria, Maria, ven acá volando,	*Mary, Mary come flying here,*
consuela al gallego que está aquí llorando.	*comfort the Galician who is crying here.*

Infant Holy
Traditional Polish carol
arr. Paul J. Christiansen (1914 - 1997)

Infant holy, infant lowly
For his bed a cattle stall
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the Child is Lord of all
Swiftly winging, angels singing
Bells are ringing, tidings bringing
Christ the Child is Lord of all

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keepin
Vigil 'til the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story
Tidings of a gospel true
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
Praises voicing, greet the morrow
Christ the Child is born for you

Without pause for applause

Eit barn er født i Betlehem
Traditional Norwegian
arr. Ørjan Matre (b. 1979)
Jim McGuire, guitar
Alex Renton, bass
Elisabeth Cherland, violin
Julie Fleming, solo

Et barn er født i Betlehem,
No frydar seg Jerusalem.
Halleluja.
Her ligg han i eit krubberom,
Men rår med evig herredom.
Halleluja.
Men okse der og asen stod,
Og såg den Gud og Herre god.
Halleluja
Tre kongar kom frå Austerland,
Gull røykjels myrra gav dei han.
Halleluja.
Ein gong vi vert Vår Herre lik.
Han leier oss til himmelrik.
Halleluja.
Lov takk og pris i æva all
Treeinig Gud det vera skal!
Halleluja!

A child is born in Bethlehem.
And so rejoice, Jerusalem
Hallelujah.
Here he lies in a manger,
but he rules with eternal dominion.
Hallelujah.
There the ox and ass stood,
And saw that he was God.
Hallelujah.
Three kings came from Austerland,
And gave him gold and myrrh.
Hallelujah.
One day we will meet our Lord,
and he will lead us to Heaven.
Hallelujah.
Endless thanks and praise
to the God of all!
Hallelujah!

Go Tell it On the Mountain
arr. Carolyn Jennings (b. 1936)

Chorus: Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

While flocks in fields were sleeping
So silently that night,
The sky above was radiant,
A holy star shone bright. *(Chorus)*

The shepherds, all a trembling
Beheld the wondrous sight;
And angel voices ringing,
Proclaimed a birth that night. *(Chorus)*

A humble stable manger
In Bethlehem so small,
Revealed a gift from heaven;
A Savior for us all. *(Chorus)*

Thank you for attending this Musicorum performance!
We delight in sharing the gift of music with you.

Once a year, we complete an audience survey as part of an assessment we conduct as a condition of receiving funds from the State of Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage (ACH) grant program. In the 2008 election, Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, which ensured funding for land and water conservation, parks, and the arts throughout Minnesota over the next 25 years. Musicorum and other artists and arts groups are very grateful to Minnesota's people and lawmakers for supporting the amendment, which has enabled the ACH grant program. In accepting ACH funds, Musicorum also accepts an obligation to the State of Minnesota and its people, to be intentional in establishing objectives, offering programming (music performances) and most importantly, measuring how well we carry out our objectives and using that information to pursue future improvements.

Therefore, this survey is important in measuring the outcomes of Musicorum's activities. We ask that you complete this anonymous survey and submit the results before you depart tonight.

Survey Link:

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 **Megan Poehler** for designing our poster and program cover.

Visit us online at **www.musicorum-mn.org**

Save the date!

Musicorum Spring Concert
Saturday, April 18, 2026
6:30 pm