



University of Wisconsin  
**Whitewater**

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THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
PRESENTS:

MEISTERSINGERS  
Brian Leeper, *conductor*

CONCERT CHOIR  
Robert Gehrenbeck, *conductor*

CHAMBER SINGERS  
Robert Gehrenbeck, *conductor*

VOCAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE  
Sharri VanAlstine, *director*

May 5, 2021

# PROGRAM

## MEISTERSINGERS

Brian Leeper, *conductor*

O Captain! My Captain! ..... John Leavitt  
(b. 1956)

David Baker, *soloist*  
Mitch Richards, *pianist*

Ride the Chariot ..... Traditional Spiritual  
arr. William Henry Smith  
(1908-1944)

Tyler Walker, Jacob Krueger, Shawn McCarron, Hunter Gebauer, *soloists*

## CONCERT CHOIR

Robert Gehrenbeck, *conductor*

Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around ..... arr. Leatha Stanley

## CHAMBER SINGERS

Robert Gehrenbeck, *conductor*

Distance Can't Keep Us Two Apart ..... Chen Yi  
(b. 1953)

Everyone Sang ..... Kile Smith  
(b. 1956)

## VOCAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Sharri VanAlstine, *director*

The Hymn of Acxiom ..... Vienna Teng  
trans. Tyler Walker

Pass Me the Jazz ..... Anders Edenroth

# PERSONNEL

## MEISTERSINGERS

Brian Leeper, *conductor*

### Tenor I

Nicholas Freymiller  
Hunter Gebauer  
Jack Madish

### Bass I

Tanner Engeseth  
Jacob Krueger  
Marc Ziems

### Tenor II

Tommy Devona  
Brady Janquart  
Shawn McCarron

### Bass II

David Baker  
Bryce Giammo  
Tyler Walker

### Piano

Mitch Richards

## CHAMBER SINGERS

Robert Gehrenbeck, *conductor*

### Soprano

Paris Barker  
Alexis Nungaray  
Annika Potter  
Lindsi Starrett  
Bekah Trussler  
Molly Wanless

### Tenor

Renee Blaesing  
Tommy Devona  
Hunter Gebauer  
Shawn McCarron  
Daniel Szelogowski

### Alto

Claire Allen  
Emily Babcock  
Sydney Bush  
Cassie Coenen  
Melinda Janesch  
Holly Holmberg

### Bass

Colin Allison  
David Baker  
Paul Borden  
Tanner Engeseth  
Jacob Krueger

# PERSONNEL

## CONCERT CHOIR

Robert Gehrenbeck, *conductor*

### Soprano

Katie Aldred  
Laine Bucklin  
Rylie Emmerich  
Aubrey Papenthien  
Anna Tolle  
Sydney Troy

### Tenor

Drew Barron  
Brady Janquart  
Halden Kreklow  
Jack Madish  
Mitch Richards

### Alto

Kara Devine  
Natalie Hirsch  
Sarah Meyle  
Malayna Oswald  
Katie Childs

### Bass

Elliot Bogner  
Nick Freymiller  
Bryce Giammo  
April Wright  
Marc Ziems

## VOCAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Sharri VanAlstine, *director*

### Soprano

Megan Dillman  
Morgan Jensen  
Molly Wanless

### Tenor

Hunter Gebauer  
Shawn McCarron  
Parker Rundquist

### Alto

Claire Allen  
Cassie Coenen  
Alexa Wilhelm

### Baritone/Bass

Owen Burri  
Jacob Krueger  
Tyler Walker

### Combo

Jeffrey Phoumyvong, *piano*  
Monica Burian, *bass guitar*  
Maggie Hillock, *drums*

## Texts – Meistersingers

O Captain! My Captain

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!  
It is some dream that on the deck,  
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

—Walt Whitman

Ride the Chariot

I'm gonna ride the chariot in the morning, Lord!  
I'm gonna ride the chariot in the morning, Lord!  
I'm gettin' ready for the Judgment Day,  
I'm waitin' for my chariot 'cause I'm ready to go.

Are you ready, my brother?  
Are you ready, for the journey?  
Do you want to see your Jesus?  
I'm waitin' for my chariot 'cause I'm ready to go.

Are you ready, my sister?  
Are you ready for the journey?  
Do you want to see your Jesus?  
I'm waitin' for my chariot 'cause I'm ready to go

I never can forget that day  
When all my sins were taken away.  
My feet were snatched from the miry clay;  
I'll serve my Lord 'til Judgment Day. —African-American spiritual

## **Texts and Notes – Concert Choir**

Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around,  
Turn me around,  
Turn me around,  
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around,  
I'm gonna keep on walking, keep on talking,  
Marching up to freedom land.

Ain't gonna let racism turn me around...

Ain't gonna let hate turn me around...

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around...

We're gonna march, march, to freedom,  
We're marching, yeah, marching for freedom.  
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around,  
We're marching, yeah, marching for freedom.  
I'm gonna keep on walking, keep on talking,  
Marching up to freedom land.  
—African-American spiritual/Leotha Stanley

This spiritual was often sung during the civil rights movement, with its words updated for the moment at hand. One of the more famous adaptations occurred spontaneously in Albany Georgia in 1962, where a Federal Court issued an injunction banning demonstrations. The crowd attending a mass meeting where the injunction was read, responded by singing, "Ain't gonna let no injunction turn me 'round." Leotha Stanley has done something similar in his arrangement this year by adding the

verses, “Ain’t gonna let racism turn me around” and “Ain’t gonna let hate turn me around.” Mr. Stanley, who directs UW-Whitewater’s Gospel Choir, also produced the virtual choir video for this selection.

## **Texts and Notes – Chamber Singers**

Distance Can’t Keep Us Two Apart

If I have a friend who know my heart,  
Distance can’t keep us two apart.                      —Wang Bo (650-676)  
   translated by Chen Yi.

The lyrics of this song seemed perfectly suited to the time of Covid, but Chen Yi wrote her musical setting in 2012 on a commission from the American Choral Directors Association. Given the recent rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans, we felt strongly about including this song by one of the leading Asian-American composers working today. The music unites the styles of traditional Chinese music—with its emphasis on parallel fourths and fifths and sliding tones—and Western classical styles. The Chamber Singers recorded this piece in their cars using wireless microphones, while listening to each other on their car radios. Audra Lange, Director of Public Events for the College of Arts and Communication, filmed the video in the lobby of Young Auditorium and in the atrium of the Center for the Arts.

Everyone Sang

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;  
And I was filled with such delight  
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,  
Winging wildly across the white  
Orchards and dark-green fields;  
on—on—and out of sight.

Everyone’s voice was suddenly lifted;  
And beauty came like the setting sun:  
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror  
Drifted away ... O, but Everyone  
Was a bird; and the song was wordless;  
the singing will never be done.

*Everyone Sang* was written just last year, at the beginning of the Covid pandemic, by Philadelphia-based composer, Kile Smith. He designed the music to allow for online rehearsals and performances, because the voices aren't supposed to line up exactly in the outer sections of the piece. The Chamber Singers were able to rehearse this song on Zoom during in January and February, when the extreme cold prevented us from using our parking lot or outdoor rehearsal formats. The lyrics of *Everyone Sang* are by British poet Siegfried Sassoon, who wrote the poem at to celebrate the end of World War I and the end of the 1918 influenza pandemic. The composer elaborates:

At the beginning of the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, Trey Davis, who directs choirs at Louisiana State University, commissioned me to quickly produce a work for virtual choir. For the text, he had in mind Siegfried Sassoon's "Everyone Sang," written at the end of World War I. For the music, he envisioned the soundscape of Gaelic psalm singing. I immediately fell in love with both ideas and composed *Everyone Sang*.

The piece uses the concept of a leader "lining out" a phrase, which is also used in Sacred Harp and other traditions. These solo introductions are for any high voice. I put non-aligning rhythms and elaborations into the voices, inspired by the pibroch style of bagpipe playing. This makes the piece ideal for virtual performances with their endemic lag-time challenges, since for much of the music, the voices aren't supposed to line up cleanly. The sound of free heterophony is what I wanted to capture: many voices singing one melody, each in its own way, all at the same time. The sonic image is similar to a flock of starlings swarming over a field—flowing, hovering, shifting, swooping—all moving individually but all moving as one.



# DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Baritone **Brian Leeper** joined the music faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in 2004. He currently teaches Studio Voice, Meistersingers Choir and directs the Opera Workshop. An active soloist and clinician, he also presents masterclasses and recitals at Universities across the US and abroad. He is also on the voice faculties of two international opera programs in Italy; FIO-Italia and Operafestival di Roma.

Equally at home with Oratorio and Opera, Mr. Leeper has performed over twenty major operatic roles, including a national radio broadcast concert performance of *Candide* with the Cleveland Orchestra. He has appeared as soloist in oratorio with conductors Leon Botstein, Robert Page, Weston Noble and Vance George. Most recent solo appearances include Brahms *Deutches Requiem*, *Elijah*, *The Creation*, the *St. John Passion*, *Messiah*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'Elisir d'amore* and *Die Fledermaus*.

Mr. Leeper formerly served on the voice faculties of Butler University, Anderson University, Western Illinois University, Nebraska Wesleyan University and Lutheran Summer Music. His students have won numerous awards and competitions, and are currently singing in houses in the United States and Europe. His UW-W graduates have gone on to earn performance degrees at New York University, Boston University, Indiana University, Louisiana State University, Peabody Conservatory, Baylor University, The University of Nebraska, The University of Minnesota and The University of Wisconsin.

Brian holds degrees from Luther College and The University of Nebraska, and has done further graduate study at Florida State University. He is a past president of the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, and in 2011, he was the recipient of the Instructional Excellence Award for Academic Staff at UW-Whitewater.

**Leotha Stanley** has directed UW-Whitewater's Gospel Choir since 1999. He has had a long and varied career, both in music and in other endeavors, including as Assistant to the Director of Community Relations at UW-Madison, as a paramedic with the Madison Fire Department, and as a US Olympic Team finalist in track and field. As a musician, Lee began playing piano for his church choir at age 13, and he founded the Gospel Choir at

# DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHIES

UW-Madison while an undergraduate there. He regularly collaborates with, and composes music for the Madison Symphony, and he has served as Music Director for Mt. Zion Church in Madison for over 30 years. He has been an Artist in Residence at numerous Madison area schools, and the choral conductor of Madison's Martin Luther King commemorative programs for over 20 years. He is the author of two children's books, and composer and arranger of scores of songs for numerous groups in Wisconsin and beyond. Always learning new skills, Lee has honed his talents as a producer of virtual choir videos since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic last year.

**Robert Gehrenbeck** is Director of Choral Activities at the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, where he conducts the UW-W Chamber Singers, Concert Choir, Singing Sirens, and opera and musical theatre productions. Since 2008 he has served as Artistic Director of the Madison-based Wisconsin Chamber Choir, leading that ensemble in critically acclaimed performances of choral-orchestral masterworks as well as familiar and rarely heard *a cappella* works. Gehrenbeck's choirs have been invited to perform at state and regional conferences and in Europe, most recently on a 12-day tour of Germany and Poland with the UW-W Chamber Singers in May, 2019. As a singer, Gehrenbeck has appeared with the Robert Shaw Festival Singers, Boston's Cantata Singers, New York State Baroque, and the Bloomington Early Music Festival. A committed advocate on behalf of living composers, Gehrenbeck has conducted twenty world premieres within the past ten years. Dr. Gehrenbeck holds degrees from Macalester College, Boston University, and Indiana University, with additional studies at the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Conservatory in Leipzig, Germany.

**Sharri VanAlstine** joined the faculty at UW-Whitewater in 2011. Her courseload revolves primarily around music education - both secondary choral music education courses and music methods for elementary classroom teachers. Dr. VanAlstine also directs the UW-W Vocal Jazz Ensemble, an auditioned group that performs frequently in the community and region. The ensemble focuses on contemporary a cappella literature and vocal jazz songs in a variety of genres. They also work on improvisation, developing skills as a soloist as well as in the context of vocal conversation.

# DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. VanAlstine has received several awards, including the Excellence in Teaching Award and the Excellence in Research Award from the UW-Whitewater Music Department and the UW-Whitewater College of Arts and Communication. She was also selected to participate in the Wisconsin Teaching Fellows and Scholars Program and the UW-Whitewater Teaching Scholars Program.

Dr. VanAlstine has presented locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Her research agenda and presentation topics include an internationalized approach to instruction, world music preferences, undergraduate research in music, edTPA performance, madrigal dinner procedures, and most recently, self-efficacy as it relates to improvisation in vocal jazz. In addition, Dr. VanAlstine has publications in a variety of journals, including *Music Educators Journal*, *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, as well as a range of conference proceedings.