The Departments of Music and Theatre/Dance present

**The Harpies**
by Marc Blitzstein

&

**Signor Delus**
by Thomas Pasatieri

Director: Bruce Cohen
Conductor: Robert Gehrenbeck

Feb. 20 & 26 @ 2:00 pm
Feb. 22 & 24 @ 7:30 pm
Barnett Theatre
THE HARPIES
by Marc Blitzstein

Phineus, a blind old oracle: Hunter Gebauer
Aello, a Harpie: Sarah Keller
Ocypete, a Harpie: Erin McKee
Celanoe, a Harpie: Claire Allen
Zetes, an Argonaut: Nahuel Recoba
Calais, an Argonaut: Robert Chelius
Jason, Leader of the Argonauts: Tanner Engeseth
Iris, Messenger of the Gods: Molly Wanless
Swing Understudy: Makayla Fedler

SIGNOR DELUSO
by Thomas Pasatieri

Signor Deluso: Shawn McCarron
Clara, Deluso's wife: Claire Allen
Celié: Molly Wanless
Gorgibus, Celié's father: Tanner Engseth
Rosine, the maid: Paris Barker
Leon, in love with Celié: Nahuel Recoba
The Town Magistrate: Robert Chelius

ORCHESTRA

The Harpies
Traci Pinzon, flute and piccolo
Marilyn Farias, clarinet
Monica Burian, bassoon
Nick Andersen, trumpet
Brighin Kane-Grade, trumpet (2/26)
Kayla Okus, horn
Callie Knoll, trombone
Sarah Read Gehrenbeck, piano
Charlie Shilhavy, double bass

Signor Deluso
Hailey Hanson, flute
Monica Burian, oboe and english horn
Marilyn Farias, clarinet
Madison Mudrak, horn
Sarah Read Gehrenbeck, piano
Claire Whitney, violin
Rachel Hansen, viola
Erik Schmitt, cello
CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Bruce Cohen
Conductor: Robert Gehrenbeck
Rehearsal Pianists: Micah Behr, Nick Nydereck
Stage Manager: Samantha Ness
Assistant Stage Manager: Valerie Gyorke
Technical Director: Ruth Conrad-Proulx
Asst. Technical Director: Abby Smith-Lezama & Mary Sportiello
Scenic Designer: Eric Appleton
Costume Designer: Tracey Lyons
Wig Designer: Lydia Oestreich
Lighting Designer: Samuel Hess
Props Manager: Michael Bates

PRODUCTION TEAM

Head Electrician: Alexis Gunderson
Light Board Operator: Trevor Brilhart
Scenery Run Crew: Kemi Ajao
Costume Run Crew: Harry Heinrich, Ryan Meverden, Lydia Oestreich
Scene Shop Technical Assistants: Trevor Brilhart, Cody Diedrich, Samuel Hess,
Samantha Ness, Abby Smith-Lezama, Mary Sportiello
Costume Shop Technical Assistants: Abigail Brandt, Makayla Fedler,
Katherine Griepeentrog, Natalie Meikle, Lydia Oestreich
Prep Crew: Kemi Ajao, Daniel Bahr, Michael Bates, Sarah Castelli, Makayla Fedler, Alexis
Gunderson, Valerie Gyorke, Meg Hayes, Myles Lockhart, Ryan Meverden, Lillian Nicholas,
Ariana Peterson, Brigid Pettit, Joshua Stoughton, Carter Waelchli, Madelyn Welbel

This performance is funded in part by the
Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc., New York, NY

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the musical and literary estate of composer Marc Blitzstein. www.kwf.org.

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artist profiles  cast members are in alphabetical order by last name

CLAIRE ALLEN (Celaneo/Clara) is a senior B.M. Vocal Performance major. This is her first full operatic production with UW-Whitewater. She has performed several partial roles with UW-Whitewater Opera Workshop, and has been a frequent soloist in masterclasses and vocal ensembles.

PARIS BARKER (Rosine) is a junior year Choral Music Education major at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. This is her first production with UW-Whitewater. She has performed with other ensembles at UW-Whitewater, including Chamber Singers, Opera Workshop, Singing Sirens, and Concert Choir. She would like to thank her family for supporting her artistic endeavors over the years. She hopes you enjoy the operas.

ROBERT CHELIUS (Calais/Town Magistrate) is super excited to be part both the production of The Harpies, and Signor Deluso. He is especially excited since this is his first production of an opera, and enjoys trying new things.

TANNER ENGESETH (Jason/Gorgibus) Tanner is excited to be back performing and really grateful for the opportunity to be a part of these productions. He hopes you enjoy the show!

HUNTER GEBAUER (Phineus) Hunter Gebauer is a senior Vocal Performance major at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He is very excited to be a part of The Harpies as Phineus. His previous roles on the UW-Whitewater stage include The Gambler (The Addam’s Family) and Nemorino (The Elixir of Love). Outside of UW-Whitewater, Hunter has played Horton (Seussical) and Pip (Moby Dick the Musical). He is glad to be on the stage again and hopes you all enjoy the show!

SARAH KELLER (Aello) is a vocal performance major. Since the age of three, performing has always been part of her life. Whether it was singing, dancing or both, her dream has always been to be onstage and that’s what got her through the pandemic.
MOLLY WANLESS
(Iris, Célíé) is a senior majoring in Vocal Performance with a Spanish minor. She has performed in other UW-Whitewater Productions, playing Wednesday in The Addams Family and Leonide in Triumph of Love. She plans to graduate this semester, and attend a graduate program to focus on music performance. Molly would like to thank her family for being incredibly supportive and the cast/crew for making everything possible!

SHAWN MCCARRON
(Signor Deluso) is an Alum of UW-Whitewater. Since graduating he has begun his career, and is very excited to be part of Signor Deluso since the pandemic put a stop to performing in one during his final year of classes.

ERIN MCKEE
(Ocypete) This is Erin’s fifth show at UW-Whitewater, and she is thrilled to be part of such a wonderfully talented, and hard working cast. She would like to thank everyone involved in this show, from the director to everyone behind the scenes for all of their hard work and support.

NAHUEL RECOBA
(Zetes/Leon) This is Nahuel’s second show here at University of Wisconsin - Whitewater and he is very grateful to be part of such an amazing production. He would like to thank the cast and crew for all their hard work that they’ve put into this show. Previous credits include Uncle Fester in The Addams Family Musical.

BRUCE COHEN (Director) Professor Cohen teaches Directing for the Stage, Theater History and leads the BSE-Theater Education track. He has served on faculty and as administration at Arkansas State University, the New World School of the Arts, and Denison University among others. Elsewhere in the industry, he is a producer and arts administrator. He was the artistic and managing director of the Arkansas Shakespeare Festival, the Utah Musical Theatre and the Director of Theatre for the Jewish Center of Greater Columbus, Ohio. Bruce is a full member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, holds affiliation with Actors Equity Association and is a former State Chair of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. Professor Cohen holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Acting from Adelphi University and a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Directing for the Stage from The University of Alabama.
artist profiles

**ROBERT GEHRENBECK** (Conductor) is Director of Choral Activities at UW-Whitewater, where he conducts the UW-Whitewater Chamber Singers, Concert Choir, and Singing Sirens. He is also Artistic Director of the Madison-based Wisconsin Chamber Choir, recipient of the 2021 Programming Award from the International Alliance of Women in Music. A committed advocate on behalf of living composers, Gehrenbeck has conducted twenty world premieres within the past ten years. In collaboration with the Theatre/Dance Department, he has served as conductor and music director for *Antigone, Addams Family, Triumph of Love, Street Scene, The Tender Land, Sweeney Todd, Into the Woods, The Threepenny Opera,* and *The Marriage of Figaro,* among other productions. Dr. Gehrenbeck holds degrees from Indiana University, Boston University, and Macalester College.

**SAMANTHA NESS** (Stage Manager) is a second year Theatre major with emphasis in Stage Management. She has been the Assistant Stage Manager in three previous shows: *Vanity Fair, Antigone,* and *She Kills Monsters.* This is her first experience as the Stage Manager for a UW-Whitewater production.

**VALERIE GYORKE** (Assistant Stage Manager) is a first-year Theatre Design and Technology BFA student at UW-Whitewater. Previous credits include working as Sound Board Operator for UW-Whitewater's production of *She Kills Monsters.* Other credits include *The Lion King* (Sound & Projections Operator), *Songs for a New World* (Light Board Operator), *School House Rock* (Assistant Scenic Designer), and more. This is her first time working in Stage Management. She hopes you enjoy the show!

**RUTH CONRAD-PROULX** (Technical Director & Stage Management Mentor) Ruth has been a professional theatre manager and technician specializing in production management and technical direction in producing theatrical venues for the past 20 years. She has worked alongside professionals and students alike to meet the ever present challenges each production presents, finding learning experiences everywhere. At UW-Whitewater she oversees the stage management program, the scene shop, electrics, sounds and run crew labs in the Department.

**ABBY SMITH-LEZAMA** (Assistant Technical Director) Abby is in her fifth and final year as a B.A. Theatre major. This will be her first time as Assistant Technical Director with UW-Whitewater. Previously she worked on props for *She Kills Monsters, Antigone, Vanity Fair,* and *Twelfth Night.* Prior to her work in props, she was the Lighting Designer for *Resort 76* in 2019. After graduation, Abby hopes to work with the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and attend Depaul University in Chicago to earn a Masters in Non-Profit Management.

**MARY SPORTIELLO** (Assistant Technical Director) is a junior BFA Design and Technology major with an emphasis in Technical Direction. Her previous work at UW-Whitewater includes stage crew for *Twelfth Night,* Head Electrician for *The
Addams Family Musical, wardrobe crew/camera crew for Antigone, Props Designer for God of Carnage, and most recently Assistant Technical Director for She Kills Monsters. She hopes you all enjoy the shows!

ERIC APPLETON (Scenic Designer & Lighting Design Mentor) is the Associate Professor of Scenic and Lighting Design in UW-Whitewater's Department of Theatre/Dance. Recent designs include UW-Whitewater productions of She Kills Monsters, A Place with the Pigs, God of Carnage, Miss Lulu Bett, and The Addams Family Musical. His latest book, Drafting Fundamentals for the Entertainment Classroom is due to be released in December.

TRACEY LYONS (Costume Designer) Tracey has designed for the CBC, Lincoln Theatre Guild, The Huron Playhouse, Madison Ballet, Madison Theatre Guild, American Folklore Theatre, UW– Madison Music Department and many other theatres. She has toured internationally with Sesame Street Live. Her professional scope includes classical and contemporary theatre, dance, opera, and musicals. She authored Sewing Techniques for Theatre and co-authored Teaching Introduction to Theatrical Design (Focal Press). During the summer of 2017, she directed Rounding Third. Her MFA is in Costume Design and Technology from Wayne State University and BA from CSB/SJU.

LYDIA OESTREICH (Wig Designer) is a senior and will be graduating in May with a BFA in Theatre and an emphasis in costumes. She has worked wardrobe for Twelfth Night, The Addams Family Musical, The Harpies and Signor Deluso, and many more. Her design work in Hair and makeup include Antigone and this production. Costume designs she has completed were shown in God of Carnage and She Kills Monsters. She is currently applying for graduate programs.

SAMUEL HESS (Lighting Designer) This is Samuel's seventh production at UW-Whitewater in the role of Lighting Designer. This past summer Samuel worked with the Kids From Wisconsin, as well as on productions in Sauk Prairie and all around the state. This is Samuel's senior project in design and looks forward to bringing the dramatic action of the cast as well as the entire design team.

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Sarah Read Gehrenbeck
Barbara Grubel
Brian Leeper
Leonard Lehrman
Adam Shelton
Rachel Wood
The Harpies and Signor Deluso are quite different affairs. Particularly in tone and taste, the pairing is not immediately clear. Marc Blitzstein (1905-64) drew from the myth of Phineas and the Harpies for his opera—specifically, the Argonautica of Apollonius. Thomas Pasatieri (b. 1945) looked to Molière and his Sganarelle for the spine of Signor Deluso. Harpies is burlesque with antecedents in ancient Greece (especially the New Comedy). Deluso is a bedroom farce reminiscent of the 17th-century French grandes comedies.

One important thing that does tie the two is stylistic classicism (and, by extension, neoclassicism). Both operas include a deus ex machina as their resolution device. This is a theatrical conceit common to Greek classicism, first introduced by Aeschylus. In the original concept, the god (deus) would be produced on stage via a machine (machina), typically a crane that lowered an actor to the stage. The deus appears at the close of plot, when the action seems to be well past control, and dénouement nearly impossible. It is at this point that an actor costumed as some divinely impressive figure would enter (e.g., the goddess Iris in The Harpies), to pronounce all conflict resolved.

Although later questioned by literary critics, the use of a deus ex machina device served a reinforcing purpose in the drama of the classical world. No matter how chaotic the comedy of human existence, the gods (or the state/authority/traditions) could prevail and provide. Later, during the Renaissance, Italy and France would both produce new takes on these old Greek and Roman philosophies in the strictures and tropes of the commedia d'ell arte and the neoclassic ideal. These innovations were still concerned with systems of cultural regulation and reinforcement, although more subtly. Deus ex machina shows up in these later forms as the voice of common wisdom. Where Apollo may have been necessary to resolve the contrivances of Greek tragedy, in commedia and the plays of Molière, a fool or servant (the maid Rosine in Signor Deluso) now brings the dénouement. Whether divine or mortal, the deus character is an avatar of tradition and conventional/communal/hegemonic wisdom. In both periods, the machina is there to tie-up loose ends and provide moral closure.

—Bruce Cohen, Director
The Directors

With this production of *The Harpies* by American composer Marc Blitzstein, we are all experiencing something rare. UW-Whitewater’s staging is only the sixth production of this work since Blitzstein composed it in 1931. He had to wait a full 22 years for its premiere at the Manhattan School of Music 1953, and revivals have been infrequent since then. In contrast, *Signor Deluso*, by Blitzstein’s fellow New Yorker, Thomas Pasatieri, has received over 8000 performances since its premiere in 1974, including several previous productions at UW-Whitewater. It is one of 24 operas composed by Pasatieri, who also has multiple film orchestrations to his credit, including *Shawshank Redemption*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, and *The Little Mermaid*.

Notwithstanding vast differences in these two operas’ reception, there are similarities between their music, although they sound quite different on first hearing. As with the libretti, the common thread is again neoclassicism, but in the musical sense. In music, neoclassicism refers to a movement during the mid 20th-century, whose adherents incorporated the melodic, harmonic, and formal features of 18th-century “classics” (e.g., Bach or Mozart) into their own modernist style. The leading exponent of musical neoclassicism was the Russian-French-American composer Igor Stravinsky, whose music strongly influenced succeeding generations. Younger composers followed Stravinsky’s example by emulating older music while retaining enough modern twists and turns to make their styles unique and recognizable. Both Blitzstein and Pasatieri embraced neoclassical musical ideals, although in Pasatieri’s case, his style might be more accurately considered neo-Romantic.

In *The Harpies*, neoclassicism manifests itself in the formal balance that undergirds the music. The characters of the Harpies—depicted as half bird and half woman in Greek sources—have a signature, high-pitched musical theme that appears precisely at the beginning, middle, and end of the opera. These passages frame the Baroque-sounding music for Phineus’s long speech in the first half, with the same music recurring in the second half, when Phineus, who can foretell he future, reflects on the action that he predicted would transpire (“I could have foretold all this…”). The opera’s central fight scene features clear, stylized alternations between the cries of the Argonauts and the Harpies, before Iris steps in to save the day. However, despite the opera’s formal symmetry and frequent allusions to older music, Blitzstein’s score is full of unexpected dissonances and shifts of harmony that depict the twists in the plot and the characters’ emotional states. The entire score keeps the listener guessing, and feeling a little uneasy.

With *Signor Deluso*, we are on somewhat firmer ground because of the clear references to more recent operatic models, especially the works of Verdi and Puccini. Deluso has all the trappings of grand opera: extended arias in which a single character obsesses about a strong emotion; speech-like recitatives that move the plot forward; and climactic ensemble
scenography, when everyone on stage sings at once. Pasatieri employs the 19th-century operatic technique of leitmotifs, with each character receiving their own recurring, characteristic turn of phrase, and even their own home key. But, like Blitzstein’s music, Pasatieri’s is also full of pungent dissonances and sudden harmonic shifts, which Pasatieri employs to underscore the constantly changing plot.

In the final analysis, both operas are ultimately spoofs on tradition. In *The Harpies*, Blitzstein not only proclaims his debt to Stravinsky’s neoclassicism, but he pokes fun at the older composer’s music. At the end of the fight scene, the dramatic flow is suddenly interrupted by a bizarre passage that is take-off of some most familiar passages in Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, a work that also depicts a mythological struggle between male and female-gendered characters. In Blitzstein’s music, however, the conflict degenerates to the level of farce, an aspect that Bruce has highlighted with his staging. The music of *Signor Deluso* is farcical in a different way. Despite the preponderance of conventional features, the opera lasts only 27 minutes (unlike, say, six hours for Wagner’s *Meistersinger*). The extreme compression of Deluso, along with its humorous use of spiky harmonies, serve to lampoon the entire operatic tradition, albeit in a respectful and good humored way.

Given the neglect under which Blitzstein and his music have suffered, a short detour into the subsequent life and works of this fascinating composer is in order. The lighthearted and irreverent tone of *The Harpies* paved the way for Blitzstein’s later, better known works, which engaged directly with social issues of the day. This is especially true of his pro-labor musical *The Cradle Will Rock* (1937, film adaptation in 1999). Blitzstein’s multicultural opera *Regina* (1948) prefigured *West Side Story* by Blitzstein’s close friend and supporter, Leonard Bernstein. But Blitzstein’s own most successful work was literary rather than musical: his 1954 English translation of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill’s *Three Penny Opera*. Blitzstein earned more royalties from the one song, *Mack the Knife*, than from all his other
works, combined. The tragic character of Blitzstein’s career culminated in his death. In the early 1960s he was working on an opera that he predicted would be his magnum opus, which the Metropolitan Opera in New York had agreed to produce: *Sacco and Vanzetti*. The libretto tells the story of two Italian-American working-class radicals who were executed in Massachusetts in 1927. After completing a few scenes and roughly sketching other segments, in 1964 Blitzstein was beaten to death in an apparent anti-gay hate crime while on vacation on the island of Martinique. He left not only *Sacco* unfinished but also two, shorter, one-act operas that acquaintances judged to be among his best works. Years later, composer and Blitzstein biographer Leonard Lerhman completed all three operas, working from sketches and manuscripts in the Blitzstein collection of the Wisconsin Center for Theatre Research in Madison. Lerhman also graciously advised Bruce Cohen and myself on our production of Blitzstein’s *Harpies*.

Blitzstein’s music seems to be experiencing slow revival, and while its popularity may never catch up to that of Pasatieri’s, we are grateful for the opportunity to present Blitzstein’s charming, quirky, early gem *The Harpies* alongside Pasatieri’s time-honored *Signor Deluso*. We hope you enjoy our classically balanced but slightly off-kilter afternoon (or evening) of opera.

—Robert Gehrenbeck, Conductor
THEATRE/DANCE DEPARTMENT
FACULTY AND STAFF

Marshall Anderson, Department Chair
Linda Allegretti, Academic Department Associate

Eric Appleton  Sara J. Griffin  Piper Hayes
Bruce Cohen  Barbara Grubel  Tracey Lyons
Ruth Conrad-Proulx  

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FACULTY AND STAFF

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Kat Bastien, Academic Department Associate

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Erin Bauer  Glenn Hayes  Carol Rosing
Dafydd Bevil  Jeff Herriott  Adam Shelton
Karen Boe  Robert Hodson  Matthew Sintchak
Sue Chandler  Alena Holmes  Bradley Townsend
MyungHee M. Chung  Leanne League  John Tuinstra
Jay Craggs  Brian Leeper  Sharri VanAlstine
ChristianEllenwood  Matthew Onstad  Benjamin Whitcomb
Robert & Sarah Gehrenbeck  Suzanne Geoffrey  Tobie Wilkinson

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Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KC ACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KC ACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KC ACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

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Another way for you to support the Theatre/Dance Department is through tax-deductible donations. The UW-Whitewater Theatre and Dance Department’s 5-production season offers hands-on learning-by-doing experiences for our students.

When putting on a production they learn: Contemporary and classic acting styles, Choreography for musical theatre, Contemporary, tap and jazz dance techniques, Carpentry and project management, Sewing and costume construction, Critical thinking in research and script analysis, Scenic, lighting, sound and costume design, Science and math skills in all design and build projects, and more.

Our students use these skills to launch exciting careers in theatre, film and television, as well as stage and project management, game design, teaching and many other fields. We hope you’ll consider making a gift to support the UW-Whitewater Department of Theatre/Dance. Your gifts support the outstanding educational experience our students have come to expect.

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$1,000 = Costumes for one show

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Thank you for being part of what we do.
UPCOMING MUSIC CONCERTS

Jazz I Winter Concert
Tuesday, March 1 at 7:30 p.m.
Light Recital Hall

Faculty Concert: Karen Boe & Friends
Thursday, March 3 at 7:30 p.m.
Light Recital Hall

Whitewater Symphony Orchestra & Chamber Orchestra
Saturday, March 5 at 7:30 p.m.
Young Auditorium

Symphonic Wind Ensemble
Sunday, March 6 at 3:00 p.m.
Young Auditorium

Two Baroque Cellos
Sunday, March 6 at 7:30 p.m.
Light Recital Hall

Vent Faculty Woodwind Trio
Thursday, March 17 at 7:30 p.m.
Light Recital Hall

Chamber Singers & Vocal Jazz
Sunday, March 13 @ 7:30 p.m.
Light Recital Hall

Whitewater Brass Quintet
Sunday, April 10 at 3:00 p.m.
Light Recital Hall

The Vent Faculty Woodwind Trio (flute, clarinet, and saxophone) will performs a wide variety of music from J.S. Bach to Chinese-born American composer, Lei Liang. The program will include a premiere of a new work by Christian Ellenwood as well as MyungHee Chung, piano.

Closing out the Mosaics concert series for the 21/22 season, this concert includes music of Crespo, Koetsier, and more. Faculty performers, Dafydd Bevil, horn, Mike Dugan, trombone, Chris Ramaekers, trumpet, and John Tuinstra, tuba welcome Dr. Matthew Onstad, assistant professor of trumpet at UW-Whitewater.
DanceScapes ‘22 returns to live audiences in Barnett Theatre. An annual audience favorite, this concert features works from UW-Whitewater faculty members, award-winning guest artist Li Chiao Ping, student choreographers Kayley Stoner and Teresa Krogmann, and for the very first time, a piece choreographed and performed by alumni. A showcase of unique talent nurtured in our studios, we hope you'll join us as we celebrate the shared experience of live performance.

The Busybody
by Susanna Centlivre
directed by Sara J. Griffin
April 26 – 29 at 7:30 p.m.
April 30 at 2:00 p.m. **
May 1 at 2:00 p.m.
Barnett Theatre

Parents just don't understand! In a time when arranged marriages were the social expectation, a renegade couple and their friends plot to escape the lousy marriages their controlling caretakers have set up. Will a nosey nobleman ruin their plans or save the day? Join us for this hilarious Restoration comedy full of adventure, love and wit.

**The performance on April 30 at 2:00 pm will take place at the outdoor city of Whitewater Amphitheatre. Tickets are not required for the outdoor performance, but donations are suggested.