

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
College of Fine Arts and Communication
& School of Music

present a

GRADUATE CHORAL
CONDUCTING RECITAL

FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SINGERS
& CHAMBER SINGERS

Sierra Jesanis, conductor
Dr. Po-Chuan Chiang, piano

Sunday, April 24, 2022
3:00 PM

THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS AND COMMUNICATION PROUDLY
CELEBRATES OVER 50 YEARS AT WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

College of Fine Arts
and Communication Recital Hall

W | Western Illinois
University

FROM THE CONDUCTOR

The COVID-19 pandemic has not left any one of us immune to hardships. Though each person and their journey through life is unique, we all have in one way or another experienced heartache and loss. My own experience during the pandemic has shown me how easy it is to lose sight of the horizon when everything feels so hopeless. The pieces on this program were selected not only to demonstrate those feelings of hopelessness and pain, something that all listeners can empathize with, but also to serve as a reminder to all who need it that this too shall pass. While the program on the surface highlights more of a spiritual journey, it is meant to signify and be applicable to whatever journey you may find yourself on. It is my hope that this program and our performance will revitalize our listeners and perhaps help them regain sight of the horizon once more.

Sierra Jesanis, conductor



RECORDING POLICY

The use of unauthorized recording devices is strictly prohibited.

PERFORMANCE ETIQUETTE

So that others around you may enjoy the performance without distraction, we ask that you refrain from: speaking audibly; flash photography; entering or leaving the hall unnecessarily; or any other aural or visual distractions.

Thank you.

Visit our website at www.wiu.edu/choirs



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Dr. William “Buzz” Hoon - Acting Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communication
Dr. Jeffrey Brown - Director, WIU School of Music
Joanie Herbert - COFAC Recital Hall Manager
Blake Rosser and Chamari Willis - WIU Choral Graduate Assistants
Charmirose Durante, Madalyn Pridemore, Savannah Lisner-Johnson,
and Ryan Simester - Instrumentalists
Phil Weiss and James Land - Production Staff

Special thanks to the members of University Singers and Chamber Singers for their dedication and preparation.

Enormous gratitude to Dr. Brian J. Winnie & Dr. Jason Hawkins. I have grown more in these past two years than I had ever thought was possible, and I owe that growth to your teaching, leadership, and dedication. Thank you both.

PROGRAM

Gran dolor di mia vita

Philippe Verdelot
(1480-1550)

Gran dolor di mia vita	Great suffering of my life,
Quella che mi vedea negli occh'il core	She who saw in my eyes my heart
Et nella fronte la fede scolpita	And faithfulness sculpted on my brow
Fatt'ha da noi partita	has left us.
Si che biastemm'et ne disprezz'amore	So that I curse and despise love
Et dico invid'amor e dispietato	And say "Envious Love, who are pitiless
Ad un felice stato	To one in a happy state
Tu non perdesti mai l'antich'usanza	You never lost your ancient habit
Privar l'huom nel più bel della speranza.	Of denying man of hope in his happiest hour.

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CHAMBER SINGERS
Sierra Jesanis, conductor

I love my love

Gustav Holst
(1874-1934)

Elijah Rock

arr. Jester Hairston
(1901-2000)

Verleih uns Frieden

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich	Grant us thy peace,
Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten.	Almighty Lord, O source of ev'ry blessing.
Es ist doch ja kein andrer nich	We cannot keep thy saving word
der für uns könnte streiten	unless thy peace possessing
den du, unser Gott, alleine.	except you, our God, alone.

Dr. Po-Chuan Chiang, piano

From Earth to Heaven

Craig Courtney
(b. 1948)

Charmirose Durante, violin
Madalyn Pridemore, violin
Savannah Lisner-Johnson, viola
Ryan Simester, cello
Dr. Po-Chuan Chiang, piano

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SINGERS
Sierra Jesanis, conductor

CONDUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Ms. **Sierra Jesanis** is in her final year of the Master of Music in Choral Conducting at Western Illinois University under the direction of Dr. Brian J. Winnie. During her time at WIU, she has had numerous opportunities to conduct the flagship ensemble in both rehearsal and performance. Prior to her studies in Illinois, she taught middle school choir and general music in Worcester, MA. While at this job, she conducted the high school choral ensemble throughout a tour of Pennsylvania, including a performance at the Franklin Institute.

Sierra Jesanis holds a Bachelor's of Music in Music Education from Susquehanna University, where she studied under the batons of Dr. Julia Thorn, Dr. Jason Vodicka and Dr. Gregory Grabowski. Sierra's goal as a choir director is to elicit excellent musicianship from her singers and cultivate an environment of passion for choral music both within her ensemble and within the surrounding community.

PROGRAM NOTES

Gran dolor di mia vita – Philippe Verdelot

Philippe Verdelot was a French composer of the Renaissance period who spent the majority of his life in Italy. Though he composed in a variety of styles, he is best known for his Italian madrigals and is widely considered to be the father of the genre and, if not that, was at the very least a vital pioneer.

A common theme in Verdelot's madrigals, and in the Italian madrigal genre as a whole, is of unrequited love. *Gran dolor di mia vita* is centered around this very same idea. The narrator, overcome with heartbreak, reflects on the ending of his relationship with his love. She, who "saw his heart in his eyes" and his "faithfulness sculpted on his brow," had left him. The narrator now views love through the lens of this heartbreak and actively "curses" and "despises" it. A lingering flicker of hope for love is perhaps signified in the Picardy third in the final cadence of the piece, the major chord foreshadowing the narrator finding love once again.

I love my love – Gustav Holst

Gustav Holst was an English composer and music teacher during the late Romantic period who is most famously known for his instrumental works. Of the instrumental works, his most widely recognized is his multi-movement work for orchestra, *The Planets*. His choral works, though not as infamous, were also exemplary. His work as a choral composer is widely thought to have vastly contributed to the development of choral music and the revitalization of the English vocal and choral tradition during the Romantic period.

I love my love is an arrangement of a traditional Cornish folk song that details the love story of a man and his love, a woman named Nancy. In this story, Nancy is sent to Bedlam, a notorious mental hospital in London where the wealthy sent their enemies, by the parents of the man she loves in hopes that he would find someone else. Just as all hope appears to be lost, he finally hears his love is in Bedlam and comes to rescue her. Their reunion affirms their constant, never-ending love for one another, ends Nancy's suffering, and leads to their marriage and "happy ending".

Through numerous text-painting compositional devices and vivid storytelling, *I love my love* showcases the importance of patience and hope in the face of hardship, driving home the message that love maybe can overcome all obstacles.

Elijah Rock – arr. Jester Hairston

Jester Hairston is an African-American composer/arranger, choral director, and actor who was known worldwide. Of his many accomplishments during his lifetime, he is best known for his choral arrangements that were featured in Hollywood films as well as for being a leading expert in African-American spirituals. Some of his most notable spiritual arrangements include *Poor Man's Lazarus*, *Mary's Boy Child*, and *Elijah Rock*.

Elijah Rock is an African-American spiritual that first originated as a slave song during the 19th century. This slave song has been arranged by many prominent composers of the spiritual genre, including the prominent developer of African American spirituals in the choral context, Moses Hogan. Hairston's arrangement, however, is one of the earliest choral arrangements we have of this specific spiritual. *Elijah Rock*, though it is a setting of a Biblical story of the Christian prophet Elijah, also served as a message of hope, resilience and determination to the enslaved population. The parallel messages of Elijah ascending to heaven in his fiery chariot and of the fervent hope for freedom from slavery simultaneously work together to express one overarching idea: there will be relief after all of this suffering.

Verleih uns Frieden – Felix Mendelssohn

Felix Mendelssohn was a German pianist, composer and conductor born to a Jewish family in Hamburg, Germany. His family converted to Christianity when he was very young, and he began his career as a pianist in his early childhood and quickly established himself as a child prodigy. He composed a number of operas and eleven symphonies by the time he was nine years old, the age he also made his public debut in Berlin. His compositional output over his short life is vast, consisting of operas, oratorios, instrumental works, cantatas, concertos, and a wide variety of choral works.

Verleih uns Frieden is one of Mendelssohn's sacred chorale cantatas and is perhaps one of his most frequently performed smaller sacred works. It is widely considered a standard in the choral repertoire and is recognized by its beautiful melody. Though it is based on a Lutheran text and hymn, Mendelssohn composed a different melody that was more indicative of the hymn style of the period. The piece is a setting of one of Martin Luther's prayers for peace and is a song of humble reverence, admiration, and above all gratitude for the peace from the trials and tribulations of the human existence. In the context of this program, *Verleih uns Frieden* signifies the light at the end of the tunnel and affirms that all of the pain and heartache is finally over.

From Earth to Heaven – Craig Courtney

Craig Courtney is an American composer, pianist, and cellist from Indiana. He received his Bachelor's in piano performance from the University of Cincinnati and went on to study piano in Milan, Italy. It was during this time in Europe where he was invited to join the voice faculty of the famed Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria and began conducting a church choir. He started composing sacred choral music due to the absence of English music in the Austrian church, and he quickly became renowned for his abilities as a composer. His compositional output consists of more than seventy sacred choral octavos, five vocal collections, and four extended works for chorus and orchestra.

From Earth to Heaven is one of his more recent compositions and features string quartet. This beautiful, atmospheric setting of a Samuel Francis Smith poem details the journey from Earth to heaven and spans from pensive reflections of the narrator's time on earth to joyous celebration now that they are in heaven. Courtney's usage of text-painting devices reinforces the composition's bittersweet affect as well as provides an immersive experience for the audience as this program comes to a close. The narrator, and hopefully the listeners as well, will reflect on their obstacles and barriers they have overcome and be revitalized with a new sense of hope that "heaven", whatever that may be, will soon be theirs.

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SINGERS

SOPRANO

Eden Beier
McKenna Churchill*
Abigail Domann*
Mackenzie Glasmann
Katie Hying
Sarah Lanoue
Racquel Rawlins
Lucy Rieke*
Maya Steinke
Taryn Trevier

ALTO

Laura Centers
Madelyn Doran
Emma Garcia
Julia Graham
Sierra Jesanis*
Natalie Nanninga
Amaris Oliva-VanDeWalle
GraceAnn Prince
Victoria Webster*
Chamari Willis*

TENOR

Dallas Foss
Wesley Hunt*
Blake Rosser*
Isaac Weese*
Landon Wink

BASS

Guilbert Aclibon
Andrew Foss
Dietrich Gossmeier
Grant Hobbeler
Cole Jensen*
Joshua Massey*
Alexander Smith
Hunter Stuart

*Denotes members of Chamber Singers

Sierra Jesanis performs this recital in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting.



UPCOMING EVENTS

June 6-11 – Summer Music Institute Week 1:
Youth Day Camps

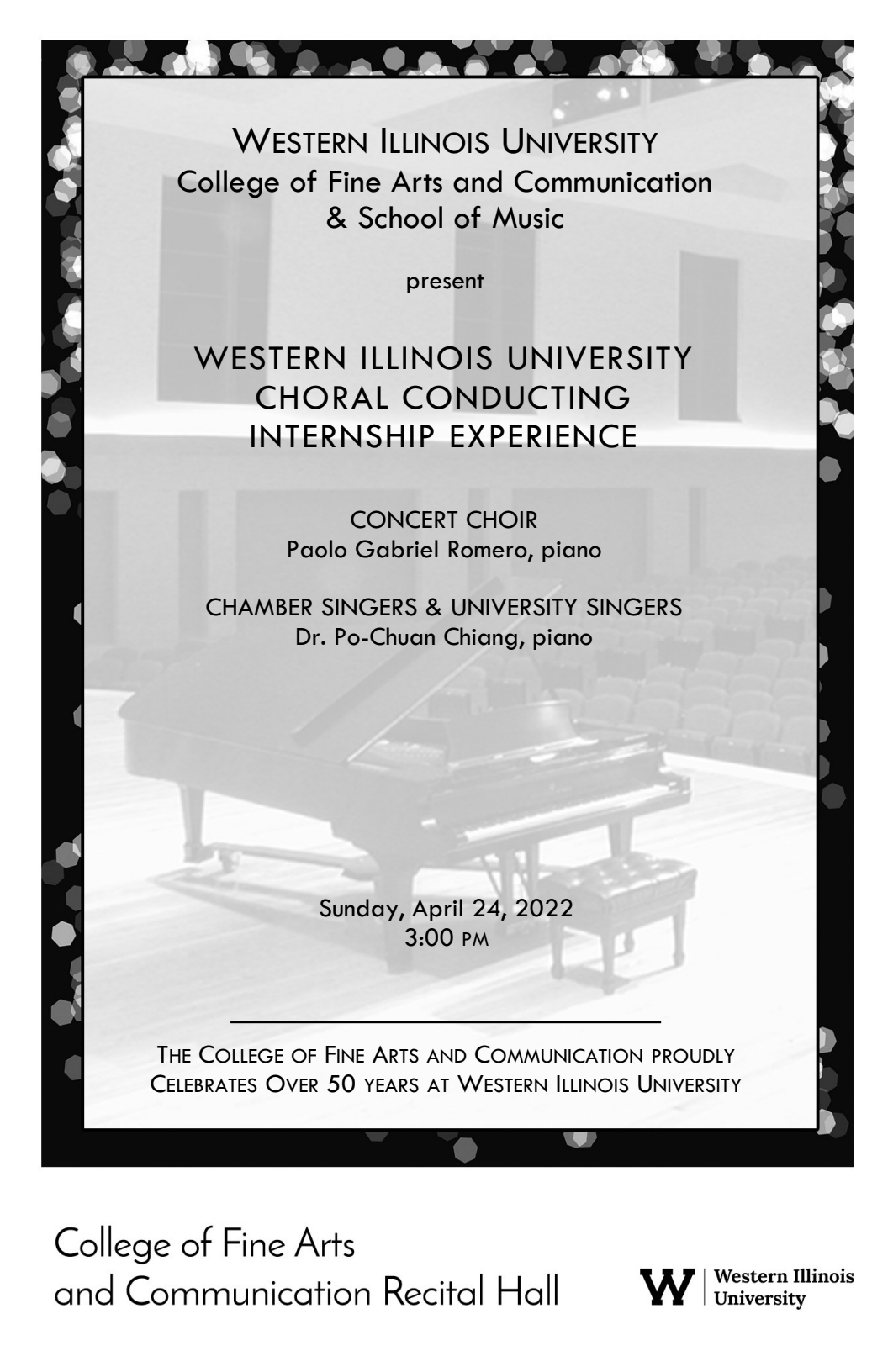
June 12-17 - Summer Music Institute Week 2:
Junior and Senior High Choir Camp; Jazz Combo Camp

June 19-24 - Summer Music Institute Week 3:
Junior and Senior High Band Camp; Marching Band Leadership Camp



Guests are required to wear a mask at all times in the COFAC Recital Hall auditorium and lobby.

Ushering services provided by the Western Illinois University Chapter of Mu Phi Epsilon.



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present

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHORAL CONDUCTING
INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

CONCERT CHOIR
Paolo Gabriel Romero, piano

CHAMBER SINGERS & UNIVERSITY SINGERS
Dr. Po-Chuan Chiang, piano

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W | Western Illinois
University

PROGRAM

The Pasture
Lucy Rieke, student conductor
Paolo Gabriel Romero, piano
Z. Randall Stroope
(b. 1953)

Earth Song
Blake Rosser, graduate conductor
Frank Ticheli
(b. 1958)

Flight Song
Joshua Massey, student conductor
Paolo Gabriel Romero, piano
Kim André Arnesen
(b. 1980)

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHOIR

Just In Time
Dr. Whitney Ashe, piano
Matt Sulla, bass
Kyle Goldsmith, drums
arr. Steven Zegree
(1953-2015)

A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square
Dr. Jason Hawkins, conductor
arr. Gene Puerling
(1929-2008)

Dance in the Graveyards
arr. Justin Havard
(b. 1981)

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CHAMBER SINGERS

Dr. Brian J. Winnie, conductor

There is Faint Music
Dan Forrest
(b. 1978)

Chamari Willis, graduate conductor
Dr. Po-Chuan Chiang, piano

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SINGERS

The annual WIU Choral Conducting Internship Experience provides an opportunity for a select number of students to rehearse and conduct a piece of repertoire with a Western Illinois University Choir. Students must be a current junior or senior music major enrolled in either University Singers or Concert Choir in order to audition. Interested students audition at the beginning of each spring semester which entails selecting a piece of repertoire, creating a lesson plan, and leading a ten-minute rehearsal with Concert Choir. Students are assessed on their lesson planning, score analysis, conducting, rehearsal technique, and professionalism. This year those students awarded an internship were given a minimum of six rehearsals (ten minutes each) to teach their selected octavo with Concert Choir. Feedback was given to student conductors by both Dr. Hawkins and Dr. Winnie on a weekly basis.

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHOIR

SOPRANO	ALTO	TENOR	BASS
Emma Bachman	Alex Angeloni	Leo Boddicker	Andrew Foss
Charlyne Banks	Alysa Averill	Jaiden Brown	Ismael Garcia
Emily Bennett	Mary Bausman	Charlie Cross	Jared Johnson
Brianna Cangro	Anah Chamberlain	Zander Eckermann	Fabian Miller
Jamie Childe	Madelyn Doran	Dallas Foss	Wesley Oliver
Heather Hartvigsen	Makenna Frank	Brayden Rodriguez	Nathan Penrod
Geena Hayes	Emma Garcia	Jordan Rouse	William Schehl
Karter Kelly	Julia Graham	Blake Rosser	Alex Smith
Charlene Kornoski-Du Vall	Sydney Hollis	Ayobami Timothy	
Madi Maross	Sierra Jesanis		
Logan Maus	Olivia Knox		
Kamryn Meeks	Nichole Koch		
Mariana Miranda	Megan Maroney		
Evelyn Ortman	Harmonie Petty		
Kate Senger	Giselle Sánchez Diaz		
Emily Sikes	Chloe Sibert		
Maya Steinke	Chamari Willis		
Taryn Trevier			
Mariah Walker			
Ragean Woollen			

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SINGERS

SOPRANO	ALTO	TENOR	BASS
Eden Beier	Laura Centers	Dallas Foss	Guilbert Aclibon
McKenna Churchill*	Madelyn Doran	Wesley Hunt*	Andrew Foss
Abigail Domann*	Emma Garcia	Blake Rosser*	Dietrich Gossmeier
Mackenzie Glasmann	Julia Graham	Isaac Weese*	Grant Hibbeler
Katie Hying	Sierra Jesanis*	Landon Wink	Cole Jensen*
Sarah Lanoue	Natalie Nanninga		Joshua Massey*
Racquel Rawlins	Amaris Oliva-VanDeWalle		Alexander Smith
Lucy Rieke*	GraceAnn Prince		Hunter Stuart
Maya Steinke	Victoria Webster*		
Taryn Trevier	Chamari Willis*		

*Denotes members of Chamber Singers

WIU SCHOOL OF MUSIC FACULTY & STAFF

Jeffrey Brown - Dir., School of Music/Piano
Ryan Aguirre - Music Education
Linda Andrews - Organ
Whitney Ashe - Dir. Jazz Studies/Piano
Matt Bean - Voice/Musical Theatre
Courtney Blankenship - Music Business
Bruce Briney - Trumpet
Richard Cangro - Music Education
Charlie Chadwell - Saxophone
Joanne Chang - Staff Accompanist
Terry Chasteen - Voice
Po-Chuan Chiang - Staff Accompanist Coord.
Hong-Da Chin - Theory/Composition
Alfonzo Cooper, Jr. - Voice
John Cooper - Jazz Trumpet
Denise Coovert - Music Therapy Clinical Trainer
Kate Curry - Office Administrator
Brisa de Paula - Bassoon/Humanities
Mike Fansler - Director of Bands
Jena Gardner - Horn/Dir., Comm. Music School
Eric Ginsberg - Clarinet/Humanities
Anita Hardeman - Music History/Humanities
Jason Hawkins - Choir/Music Education
Joanie Herbert - COFAC Recital Hall Manager
Matthew Hughes - Bass/Humanities
Brenda Iglesias - Voice
Jennifer Jones - Music Therapy
Jade Kastel - Music Librarian
Suyeon Ko - Flute
Richard Kurasz - Asst. Dir. SOM/Percussion
Anneliese Land - Recruitment Coordinator
James Land - Tuba/Audio Technician/Brass. Ens.
Natalie Landowski - Piano
Kenny Lee - Cello/Dir. of Orchestral Activities
Brian Locke - Music History/Humanities
Rebecca McGuire - Oboe
Julieta Mihai - Violin
John Mindeman - Trombone/Euphonium
Kevin Nichols - Percussion
James Romig - Theory/Composition
Alonso Rubio - Music Library Specialist
Emily Sevcik - Music Therapy
István Szabó - Viola/Humanities
Matt Thomas - Assoc. Dir. Bands/Marching Band
Lynn Thompson - Voice/Musical Theatre
George Turner - Guitar/Humanities
Phil Weiss - Video Services/Recording
Brian Winnie - Director of Choral Studies
Bethany Worrell - Voice



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