



2024 Midwestern ACDA Division Conference  
Holland Performing Arts Center, Omaha, NE  
Friday, February 9, 2024  
9:30am

Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs — Cantanti Singers  
Minneapolis, MN  
Philip Brown, Conductor  
Jamie Schmidt, Collaborative Pianist

**Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs** is one of the oldest children's community choir programs in the Twin Cities. Founded in 1980, ACYC is dedicated to providing consistent, high quality choral music education with excellence in performance. Members include singers in Kindergarten through Grade 12, representing communities and schools across the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. Led by conductors Ann Williams, Michelle Gehrz, Elizabeth Egger and Philip Brown, rehearsals are held weekly in Bloomington. Singers in ACYC performed at the 2018 Super Bowl at US Bank Stadium, 2019 at the National ACDA Conference in Kansas City and the organization was voted "Best Community Choir in Minnesota" by WCCO-TV. [www.angelicacantanti.org](http://www.angelicacantanti.org). 952-563-8572

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**Philip Brown** is the Director of Choral Activities at Totino-Grace High School and conductor of the high school choirs with Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs. He graduated summa cum laude from Bethany College (KS), majoring in K-12 music education. He later received his M.M. degree in music education from Northern Arizona University.

His choral groups have been selected for performances at: CMEA Conference, CU-Boulder Madrigal Festival, MMEA Mid-Winter Conference, ACDA-MN Fall Conference, NC-ACDA Conference, MSU-Mankato Choral Festival, ACDA-MN Choral Arts Finale, St. Olaf College Choir Festival, Concordia College Choir Festival, Northern Voice Festival, and the Americana Portrait Festival with Mack Wilberg. Choirs under his conducting have collaborated with the Minnesota Oratorio Society, Minnesota Choral Artists - The Singers (Morten Lauridsen Festival), Great Northern Union, VocalEssence (!Cantare!), Northern Lights Chorale, Cantus, and the National Lutheran Choir. While on tour his choirs have consistently received superior ratings, best in class awards, and grand sweepstakes awards at various music festivals and competitions.

Philip was honored as the 2011 ACDA-MN Young Director of the Year. He was selected as the Director of Note for Minnesota by Choral Director Magazine in 2012. In 2013 he received the VocalEssence/ACDA-MN Creative Programming Award for his repertoire philosophy and programming. Philip was named the Bethany College Gold Award recipient for 2015 and was the Winner of the Youth Choir Conducting Division for The American Prize 2016, and again in 2020. He was also the featured community member in the Eden Prairie Lifestyle Magazine for 2020. He conducted the Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs - Treble Singers at the 2019 National ACDA Conference in his hometown of Kansas City, Missouri. In the spring of 2024 he will get the honor of guest conducting Singers in Accord, based in the Twin Cities.

Philip is an active clinician and professionally affiliated with ACDA and NafME. Recently he was named the ACDA Repertoire and Resource Chair for Senior High School choirs.

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### Acknowledgements

Buy a Mile donors, parents and families of the Cantanti Singers. Liz Gust, Dr. Merrin Guice Gill, Dr. Mark Potvin, Cathy Challman—program design



## Director's Notes

It is an absolute joy and honor to perform at this year's Midwestern ACDA. I have always enjoyed the concert sessions, workshops, and authentic dialogues that regional ACDA conferences make possible. In today's performance, we explore the concept of "change." Sometimes easy, sometimes difficult, change can be understood on many levels, and challenging on just as many. People can welcome transition and flexibility while also yearning to retain vital traditions and rituals. Perhaps the critical point is recognizing that we do have the capability to choose change.

*Dawn and Dusk* (Fajar Dan Senja) by Ken Steven opens the program. This evocative piece initially presents a dark, calm night, and evolves into joyful singing when a glimpse of light awakens sleeping souls. The

composer tells us the piece had its origin in an extemporaneous poem about the rising and setting sun, which he translated into musical terms to express the magic of growing and fading light through varying "colors of vocal quality."

Our performance of *Komm, Süßer Tod* by J. S. Bach draws musical guidance and interpretation from arrangers Knut Nystedt ("Immortal Bach") and Rhonda Sandberg ("Bach Again, Come Sweet Death"). The chorale reflects on the theme of death and the desire for a peaceful end of life. Bach conveys a sense of calm and resignation. After performing the original chorale, the choir returns to the first three phrases of the song as tone clusters performed with corresponding hand signs.

Jake Runestad's *Ritual* is a song that "alludes to societal rituals that persist for the sake of tradition, but necessitate deeper reflection and reconsideration." Runestad creates a dialogue in which the soloist's suggestions for change are met with a chorus and drums committed to the power of tradition. The intensity of the work in the first and third parts contrasts with the lyrical and sensitive middle.

*Apple Tree* was composed by Norwegian artist Aurora and arranged by Katerina Gimon. Aurora describes the song as being about the potential in each of us to promote change. "We can all save the world if we put our minds to it. The world won't listen to scientific proof that the world is dying, so maybe it will listen to the dreamers, the children. In a bleeding world the power of the individual is our only hope. Let her save the world. Let him save them all. Believe in us, and maybe we'll be the generation that saves the world, rather than the one that killed it."

The choir changes riser formations for the final two selections. *My Heart Be Brave*, by Marques Garrett, was a response to a request for a song that aligned with social justice. Garrett states that "in the midst of discrimination, our heart - the core of our being - must lead us into rightful change. And as we continue to do right, the principles of honesty, love, and justice will give us the power to strive for what is due all of humanity."

The program ends with *You Are Enough*, from "You Are Enough: A Mental Health Suite," by Aron Accurso. The composer writes that the work aims to "advocate for and elevate conversations regarding mental health awareness." Our selection is the third and final movement in the suite, and is inspired by the words of Sierra Boggess: "You are enough, you are so enough, it's unbelievable how enough you are!"

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## **Program**

Philip Brown, Conductor  
Jamie Schmidt, Collaborative Pianist  
Jeff Bina, Percussion

## **Dawn and Dusk**

By Ken Steven  
Jenna Baumgartner, Siena Becchetti,  
Hannah Frauensuh, Maya Zhaivoronok, Quartet

## **Komm, süsßer Tod.**

Music by J. S. Bach, Arranged by Knut Nystedt,  
Rhonda Sandberg, Edited by Philip Brown

## **Ritual**

By Jake Runestad  
Catalina Perkins, Soloist

## **Apple Tree**

Words and Music by Aurora Aksnes,  
Odd Martin Skalnes and Magnus Skylstad  
Arranged by Katerina Gimon

## **My Heart Be Brave**

By Marques L.A. Garrett,  
Words by James Weldon Johnson

## **You Are Enough**

Third movement from the suite  
“You Are Enough: A Mental Health Suite”  
Words by Rachel Griffin, inspired by  
Sierra Boggess, Music by Aron Accurso

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## **Dawn and Dusk**

*(Fajar dan Senja)*

From composer Ken Steven:

The piece is inspired by this short poem that I wrote.

It was a quiet night  
When a glimpse of light slowly gazed  
upon the sky  
Awakening the sleeping souls  
Joyfully singing  
Dancing in the ray of light  
And slowly  
It will descend again from its mighty throne

This piece is an exploration of sounds with the human voice. I intended to capture the magical moments as expressed by the poem itself through the variety of colors of vocal quality produced by the ensemble. Based on the Indonesian exotic Melayu scale, the music portrays the folk life atmosphere in a vibrant sound experience. The words have no exact meaning, rather they are just playful syllables to bring the poem to life.

## **Komm, susser Tod.**

*Komm, süßer Tod, komm selge Ruh!*

*Komm führe mich in Friede,  
weil ich der Welt bin müde,  
ach komm! ich wart auf dich,  
komm bald und führe mich,  
drück mir die Augen zu.  
Komm, selge Ruh!*

Come, sweet death, come, blessed rest!  
Come lead me to peace  
because I am weary of the world,  
O come! I wait for you,  
come soon and lead me,  
close my eyes.  
Come, blessed rest!

## **Ritual**

From composer Jake Runestad:

*Ritual* is a rhythmically-driving, sonic narrative that uses a created language for colorful timbral effects. The title alludes to societal rituals that persist for the sake of tradition, but necessitate deeper reflection and reconsideration. The drums and chorus rage with gritty intensity, while a lone soloist offers a softer, more thoughtful perspective. Despite the soloist's attempt at change, their voice is ultimately overtaken as the chorus and drums drown out any possibility of an alternative perspective.

## **Apple Tree**

Words and music by Aurora Aksnes, Odd Martin Skaalnes, and Magnus Skylstad

All of my life I've been hunting.  
I've been a girl, I've been a boy.  
Digging my feet into the ground like an apple tree.  
Wanting to live with a purpose,  
Skin is a word, love is not a sin.  
People are bad, people are good.  
Just like the moon is a stone.  
But it's a star when it's dark and now she's hiding.

If you've seen what a heart is, you've seen its color.  
If I ever knew how we could guide it,  
I would take care of its children,  
become their mother.  
If I ever knew how we could hide it, hide it.

Let her save the world, she is just a girl.  
Let him save them all, he is just a boy.

Hunger is quiet if you do it right.  
Hunter is loud and predictable,  
scaring away every prey  
So they're gone before the hunter arrives.  
Would you be kind and put away your sword?  
You cannot cut away what we've got.  
You cannot kill what we are.  
We are not here in physical form.

## Apple Tree *continued*

You've seen where the knife is, its dark location.  
If I ever knew how we could fight it  
I will cut into our anger, make pure emotion.  
If I ever knew how we could hide it, hide it.

Let her save the world, she is just a girl.  
Let him save them all, he is just a boy.

Can you carry the weight of mortality?  
The explosions around you are your symphony.

Let her save the world, she is just a girl.  
Let him save them all, he is just a boy.

## My Heart Be Brave

Sonnet by James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)

My heart be brave, and do not falter so,  
Nor utter more that deep, despairing wail.  
Thy way is very dark and drear I know,  
But do not let thy strength and courage fail;  
For certain as the raven-winged night  
Is followed by the bright and blushing morn,  
Thy coming morrow will be clear and bright;  
'Tis darkest when the night is furthest worn.  
Look up, and out, beyond, surrounding clouds,  
And do not in thine own gross darkness grope,  
Rise up, and casting off thy hind'ring shrouds,  
Cling thou to this, and ever inspiring hope:

Tho' thick the battle and tho' fierce the fight,  
There is a power making for the right.

## You Are Enough

Words by Rachel Griffin

You've carried words that aren't true so long:  
The labels they put on you.  
You've gotten lost in these storms of thoughts,  
And forgotten the way to break through.  
Erase them one by one,  
you're not who they decide.

You are enough. You're so enough.  
It's unbelievable how enough you are.

You've let them write who you are, so far,  
They're wrong, you are up to you.  
You've gone adrift in a sea of doubt  
And forgotten the love that you knew.  
Write your life in bold, there's no reason to hide.

You are enough. You're so enough.  
It's unbelievable how enough you are.

Let the light come in and find a home in you.  
Let the light multiply with everything you do.

You are enough. You're so enough.  
It's unbelievable how enough you are.  
You are, You are! You are enough!



## ANGELICA CANTANTI YOUTH CHOIRS

### Cantanti Singers

The Cantanti Singers is a mixed choir for SATB voices in grades 9-12 with members that come from 36 high schools and communities from all over the Twin Cities. The group rehearses once a week, September-May in Bloomington.

#### Soprano

Maggie Banks  
Jenna Baumgartner  
Siena Becchetti  
Hazel Collins  
Elliott Cook  
Zoey Edeburn  
Hannah Frauenshuh  
Lauren Gomez  
Charlotte Husten  
Diya Kayalah  
Catalina Perkins  
Mia Prahl  
Gabrielle Stockton  
Ava Welter  
Julia Wuebben  
Maya Zhaivoronok

#### Alto

Katherine Bennett  
Evie Bischoff  
Sadie Cinnamon  
Elena Colacci  
Avery Cracauer  
Gabby Haake  
Natali Jorgensen  
Jenavieve Lawrence  
Elizabeth Marston  
Mariyana Mork  
Annika Nelson  
Sarah Piper  
Kelsey Rasinen  
Kate Regan  
Anja Seifert  
Olivia Vanneste  
Aimee Weaver

#### Tenor

Jacob Berna  
Axel Cracauer  
Wesley Dulyx  
Colton Gregerson  
Nikolas Gruss  
Stellan Joyce  
Jericho Juenemann  
Joseph Klein  
Elijah Layne  
Conor McCrave  
Cannon Miller  
Rostislav Tomasevich  
Jack Trygstad  
Hogan Vaupel

#### Bass

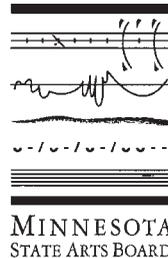
Christopher  
Alvarado-Salazar  
Christopher Bennett  
Jordan Campbell  
Leo Choi  
Samuel DeToffol  
Joseph Docken  
Elling Dyrud  
Jonas Gerold  
Cade Hatlestad  
Nicholas Haugen  
Ronan Koll  
Nathaniel Mayfield  
Owen McKnight  
Thomas Pollack  
Levi Potchinsky  
Will Rafn  
Kieran Winegarden

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**Jamie Schmidt** is a freelance collaborative pianist in the Twin Cities. She has a BA in music and accounting from Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, IA and an MM in Collaborative Piano with Vocal Emphasis from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She specializes in vocal coaching, including opera, art song, musical theater, and choral repertoire. She works with high school, collegiate, and professional vocalists and is currently the Collaborative Pianist for Angelica Cantanti's Treble Singers, Cantanti Singers, and Encore choirs in Bloomington, MN. Jamie is also the Director of Sacred Music at The Church of the Sacred Heart in Robbinsdale and does vocal & orchestral direction for various theater companies in the Twin Cities.

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This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.





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**Executive Director** – Audrey Riddle

**Choir Manager** – Andrea Dittmer