



BERKSHIRE CHILDREN'S CHORUS PRESENTS

CIRCLES

FEATURING ARTWORK BY ELIZABETH NELSON

THE COMMON ROOM,
ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
74 FIRST STREET, PITTSFIELD, MA

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 1PM

FREE ADMISSION. DONATIONS GLADLY ACCEPTED.

WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM



www.berkshirechildrenschorus.org

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Berkshire Children's Chorus
is now enrolling singers
in grades 3-8 for Fall 2023.

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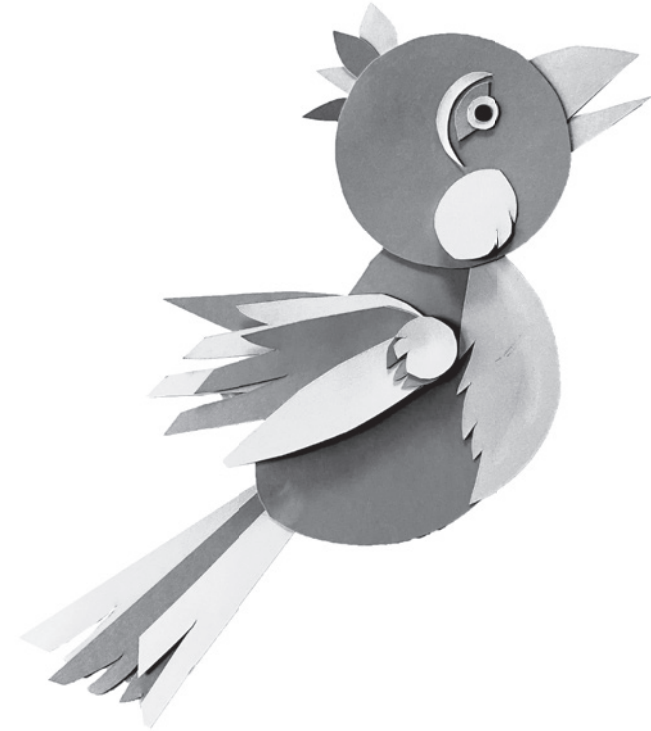


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Please refrain from taking photographs or video during the concert. Thank you!



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This program is supported by grants from a number of local cultural councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.



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CIRCLES

Circle I: Creation

Circle of Life..... Hanz Zimmer & Lebo M
arr. Audrey Snyder

The Berkshire Creation Song..... Robin O'Herin & Berkshire Children's Chorus

Tres Canciones de los Elementos..... Victor C. Johnson

- I. Escuchar al viento
- II. La lluvia está cayendo
- III. ¡Fuego!

Circle II: The Cosmos

Dance Upon the Moon..... Michael Jochen

Claire de Lune..... Claude Debussy

AARON LIKNESS, PIANO

This Pretty Planet..... Tom Chapin

Circle III: Community

Circle Game..... Joni Mitchell

ROBIN O'HERIN, VOICE & UKULELE

Our Story..... Mark Burrows

Ubuntu..... Mark Hayes

Berkshire Children's Chorus

Ryan LaBoy, conductor

Aaron Linkess, piano

Alaisia DiSola-Staples

Sarah Ehrich

Ryleigh Fillio

Ellie Grebin

Adelaide Grella

Fiona Guy

Sophie Jadow

Anika Libetti

Kate Lippert

Veda Mahaney

Irving Meoni-Markoff

Eden Plotkin

Colaine (Lainey) Rosier

Shea Ryan

Malini Stoepker

Amelia VanTassel

Play & Sing! - Pittsfield

Maisy Burgess

Ailyn Edathol

Paige Filiault

William Kellogg

Tiffany Mejia-Lopez

Valentina Mendoza

Natalia Morales

Liberty Ortiz

Ainslee Rodriguez

Isabella Rosales

Sophia Seme

Leila Sevilla O'Brien

Khloey Simmons

Charlie Smith

Guest Artists

Aaron Likness, piano

Elizabeth Nelson, artist-in-residence

Robin O'Herin, ukulele

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Jessica Mahaney

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Matt Fillio

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Gary Osborne

Uniform Team

Julie Anidjar

Gary Osborne

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A Welcome from Artistic Director Ryan LaBoy

Dear Audience,

When working with our children, it is important not only to sing fun songs, but also to inspire their imaginations and to think of creative ways our music can fit altogether. What I love about *Circles* is how it illustrates that a simple concept can serve as a seed that grows into a fuller and more beautiful idea over time— especially in community with others! This afternoon’s program features three different circles for us to explore: Creation, the Cosmos, and Community (note: all start with a C, which is “pretty circular” as one singer noted).

We open with the iconic “Circle of Life” from Disney’s *The Lion King*, which features a chant repeated over and over again, in a circular manner, but also talks about the delicate balance and cycle that ties us all together. Then, with our ukulele teaching artist, Robin O’Herin, we will present a world-premiere creation of our own: *The Berkshire Creation Song*, which students co-wrote with Robin throughout the spring. Lastly, we’ll sing a set of three short songs in Spanish about the power of the elements in our natural world.

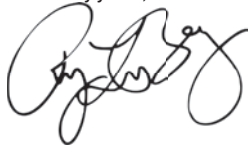
Next, in The Cosmos, we take to the skies and sing about how we’d like to “Dance Upon the Moon”— a circular and mysterious place to be! Then, our very own pianist, Aaron Lickness, will serenade us with Claude Debussy’s *Claire de Lune*, helping us to imagine what it’s like to bask in the evening moon’s rays back here on planet Earth. Lastly, we sing an ode to “This Pretty Planet” we call home with Tom Chapin’s soothing round— what’s that?! Another circle! (A round is like a melody that plays tag with itself and creates beautiful harmony as it overlaps.)

Our final set of music features three songs about Community. At Berkshire Children’s Chorus, our weekly rehearsals usually take place in a full circle. This is important because, while the performance is a gift we’re excited to share with you today, our weekly rehearsal is a gift we get to share with each other! We connect and smile and sing and talk to each other, creating a social circle that is just as magical as the music we make. And, you probably can’t help but notice that our circle is wider this year! Not only have we grown our Chorus in Sheffield, but we have also successfully launched a first-time program in Pittsfield, too, in partnership with Berkshire Music School. This monumental achievement helps Berkshire Children’s Chorus live more deeply into our vision of connecting all of the Berkshire’s children through song, and ensures that our circle will keep growing!

Our Circles theme would not be complete without the support of our incredible artist-in-residence, Elizabeth Nelson! As we delved into the meaning of our music, Elizabeth helped us to think visually about what we are singing by co-creating with us a series of mandalas— a round, repetitive pattern and meditative practice used to help focus attention and engage our spirit— which you see so vibrantly on display here today.

Thank you for being here, for supporting our singers, and for joining our circle! We hope you enjoy the show.

Musically yours,



Ryan LaBoy

Text/Translations

Circle of LifeHanz Zimmer and Lebo M, arr. Audrey Snyder

Sung in Zulu:

Here comes a lion, father,
Oh yes, it’s a lion.
A lion and leopard come to this open place.

Sung in English:

From the day we arrive on this planet,
And blinking step into the sun,
There is more to see than can ever be seen,
More to do than can ever be done.
There is far too much to take in here,
More to find than can ever be found,
But the sun rolling high through the sapphire sky,
Keeps great and small on the endless round.
It’s the circle of life,
And it moves us all,
Through despair and hope,
Through faith and love.
’Til we find our place,
On the path unwinding,
In the circle,
The circle of life.

The Berkshire Creation SongRobin O’Herin & Berkshire Children’s Chorus

Swimming in the summertime,
Catch a trout, throw out a line,
Taking hikes and riding bikes.
Clear blue lakes and rivers shimmer,
Fireworks that give me shivers,
Tanglewood and starry nights.

Chorus:

Hills are ringing, birds are singing,
With each girl and boy,
God’s creation in the Berkshires,
Joy, joy, joy!
Joy, joy, joy!

Red and yellow, orange leaves,
Fall from all the Berkshire trees,
Frosty nights and sunny days.
Autumn colors line the streets,
All the pumpkin smell so sweet,
I love the autumn haze.

Chorus

Shorter days and longer nights,
Skiing, skating, snowball fights,
Winter with its snow-capped mountains.
Frozen rivers, lakes, and streams,
Sweet hot cocoa, fireside dreams,
Holidays and Ho, Ho, Hos.

Chorus

Lilacs, lilies, and lavender,
Flowers on the calendar.
Zinnias, bluebells, daffodils,
Flowers give me lots of thrills!
Through the winter they've been snoozin',
Roses, daisies, black-eyed Susans!

Trees and flowers blossoming,
Birds start singing in the spring,
Building nests for their new babies.
Peepers peeping, frogs are leaping,
Ice is melting, children singing,
Listen to the crickets and the bees.

Chorus

Tres Canciones de los ElementosVictor C. Johnson

Sung in Spanish:

I. **Escuchar al viento**

Listen to the wind,
Blowing through the night,
Breathing peace to all.

II. **La lluvia está cayendo**

The rain is falling,
Falling all over the earth.

III. **¡Fuego!**

Fire! Fire!
See the red glow!
See the orange flame!

Dance Upon the Moon Michael Jothen

Dance! Dance!
I want to dance!
To dance upon the moon!
To dance, to dance, to play among the stars!
To leap and soar each day forevermore!
I want to dance!

If I were dancing on the moon,
I'd float on the moonlight,
Slide on starlight,
Walk on sunshine!

I want to dance!
I know someday I'll dance upon the moon!
I will dance,
Dance, dance, dance,
I want to dance upon the moon!

This Pretty Planet Tom Chapin

This pretty planet,
Spinning through space,
You're a garden, you're a harbor, you're a holy place.
Golden sun going down,
Gentle blue giant, spin us around.
All through the night,
Safe 'til the morning light.

Circle GameJoni Mitchell

Yesterday a child came out to wander,
Caught a dragonfly inside a jar,
Fearful when the sky was full of thunder,
And tearful at the falling of a star.

Chorus:

And the seasons, they go round and round,
And the painted ponies go up and down,
We're captive on the carousel of time,
We can't return, we can only look,
Behind, from where we came,
And go round and round and round, in the circle game.

Then the child moved ten times round the seasons,
Skated over ten clear frozen streams,
Words like, "When you're older" must appease him,
And promises of someday make his dreams.

Chorus

16 springs and 16 summers gone now,
Cartwheels turn to car wheels through the town,
And they tell him, "Take your time, it won't be long now,
'Til you drag your feet to slow the circles down."

Chorus

So the years spin by and now the boy is 20,
Though his dreams have lost some grandeur coming true,
There'll be new dreams, maybe better dreams and plenty,
Before the last revolving year is through.

Chorus

Our Story Mark Hayes

When I feel alone and voiceless,
You're there to help me sing my song.
You reach out a hand of friendship
To help me know that I belong.
Though we're different we can see,
We are one in harmony.

Chorus:

There is heart enough for us to help each other,
There is strength enough to build up and be kind.
We can give, we can care in this world we all share.
I'm a part of your story,
And you're a part of mine.

And I promise I will be there,
(I'm a part of your story),
When you need help to make it through,
(You're a part of mine).
I will take the time to listen,
(I'm a part of your story),
To always see the good in you,
(You're a part of mine).
And together we will grow,
Lifting others as we go.

Chorus

Together we will hope.
Together we will rise.
We're more connected than we'll ever realize.
We will rise!

Chorus

Ubuntu Mark Burrows

Sung in Zulu:

A person is a person by and because of other people.

Sung in English:

I am me because of you,
And you are you because of me,
I need you and you need me,
We are one big family,

Chorus:

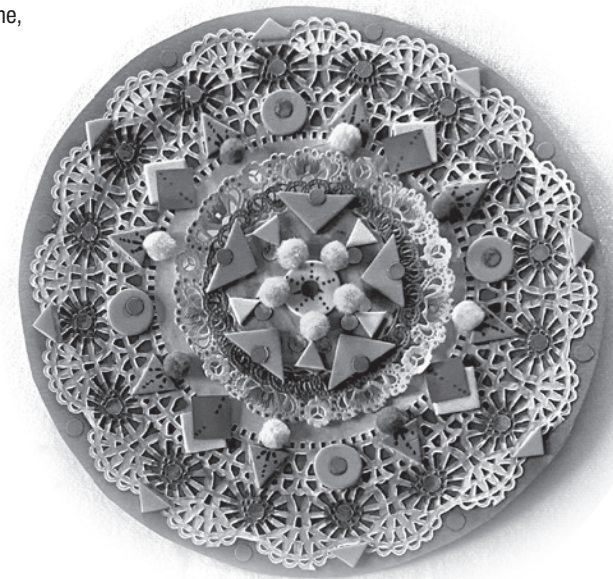
I am human just like you,
And we have differences, it's true.
I will see the best in you,
And I know that you will see the best in me!

I will guard your dignity
We will live in harmony,
I will lift your spirits high,
Wipe the teardrops from your eye.

As a chorus we are strong,
When everyone of us sings along,
So lift your voice and sing your part,
Let us head what's in your heart.

Chorus

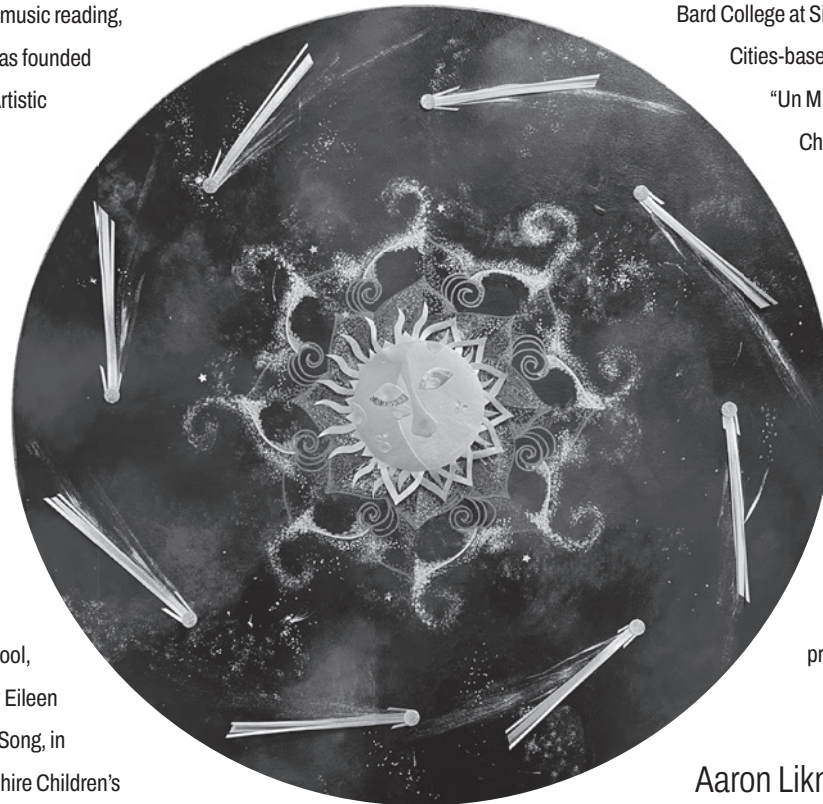
I am me because of you,
And you are you because of me,
I need you and you need me,
We are one big family;
Let us sing in harmony;
Show the world our unity!



With a mission to “create a place of belonging where young people grow and find their voices by singing together”, Berkshire Children's Chorus uses music to spark new friendships between singers from across the region. Weekly rehearsals feature the development of individual self-confidence and teamwork skills, as well as music reading, ear training, and vocal technique. The Chorus was founded in 1990 by Nancy Loder and is currently led by Artistic Director, Ryan LaBoy.

Recent accomplishments include an interdisciplinary performance of *The Ballerina* and the *Clown* with Bard College at Simon's Rock Chorus and Dance programs, a first-ever Valentine's Day Teddy Bear Drive to benefit Berkshire Medical Center, a performance with Wanda Houston at The Egremont Barn, a co-commission and world-premiere performance with Stockbridge Sinfonia, the introduction of ukulele study through a partnership with Berkshire Music School, and a 20-minute video performance inspired by Eileen Spinelli's children's book, *Three Pebbles and a Song*, in collaboration with Silo Media. Previously, Berkshire Children's Chorus has had the honor of performing at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall in New York City, completed two European concert tours, and has collaborated with local artistic partners including Berkshire Bach Society, Berkshire Choral International, Cantilena Chamber Choir, Chorus Angelicus, Crescendo, Berkshire Lyric, and the Norman Rockwell Museum.

Berkshire Children's Chorus is a non-profit community organization with a renewed vision to transform and connect our community in the Berkshires through choral music education, opening up a world of experiences, confidence, and collaboration for all children.



Ryan LaBoy, Conductor

Praised for his collaborative spirit and eclectic music programming, Ryan LaBoy is a singer, conductor, and educator, currently serving as Artistic Director of Berkshire Children's Chorus, Choir Director at Bard College at Simon's Rock, and Music Director of Berkshire Concert Choir. He also sings with Twin Cities-based chamber ensemble, Border CrosSing, which recently released their debut album “Un Milagro de Fe” to critical acclaim, and is the 411 Youth & Education Advisor for GALA Choruses—an organization dedicated to empowering LGBTQ+ choruses.

Previously, Ryan served as Director of Choirs & Voice at North Hennepin Community College (Brooklyn Park, Minnesota) where he conducted Concert Choir and Chamber Singers and led the Voice Studio, and served as Founding Music Director of ComMUSICation-- an El Sistema-inspired youth chorus St. Paul, Minnesota-- leading them to performances with Grammy Award-winners like the Minnesota Orchestra and Leslie Odum, Jr. (Super Bowl LII).

Ryan holds degrees in Choral Conducting and Music Education from the University of Minnesota and Westminster Choir College, respectively, and is currently a doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City. He is proud to live in Pittsfield with his husband, Joel, and their pets, Ruby and Dash.

Aaron Likness, piano

Aaron Likness is a pianist based in upstate New York, hailed for “superb clarity” and “effortless elegance” in performances of a wide variety of classical, avant-garde, and contemporary music. Recent seasons have included appearances across the US and Europe with Boston Musica Viva, Callithumpian Consort, International Contemporary Ensemble, Sound Icon, PROTOTYPE Opera Festival, and violinist Diamanda Dramm. A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music and the University of North Carolina, Likness serves on the music faculty of Bard College at Simon's Rock.

Elizabeth Nelson, artist-in-residence

Elizabeth Nelson is a writer, artist, and marketing professional. Her work has been published in The Raven Review, Heartland Society of Women Writers, Second Chance Lit, Rhodora Magazine, Canyon Voices, Catchwater, Black Box Press, Stage Rights, and forthcoming in JADEN magazine. Colors Inside the Body received a reading at Rattlestick Playwrights Theater in NYC as part of Texas Wesleyan's 2019 Playmarket. The Golden Hour was workshopped in Denver by The Athena Project's 2018 Plays in Progress Series. elizabethnelson.net

Robin O'Herin, ukulele

Robin O'Herin is a performing/teaching musician, specializing in traditional Delta bottleneck blues and fingerstyle guitar, ukulele, singing, and songwriting. A 2022 finalist in the Capitol Region Blues Challenge, she has toured regionally across the US and Europe for over 15 years. Robin has had her original music licensed to PBS, and is currently focusing on recording her original music for TV and films in her home studio. Learn more at www.robinoherin.com



Thank You for Helping Us Sing Our Song! Berkshire Children's Chorus could not exist without contributions from community members who recognize the importance of our work. We are so grateful to our donors for supporting us year after year. The following people contributed between 7/1/2022 and 5/26/2023. A special thank you to those of you who contributed to our "Help Us Sing Our Song" campaign this spring. Thank you!

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Our Mission

Berkshire Children's Chorus creates a place of belonging where young people grow and find their voices by singing together.

Our Vision

To transform and connect our community in the Berkshires through choral music education, opening up a world of experiences, confidence, and collaboration for all children.

Our Values

M-U-S-I-C

Music is a lens through which we experience the world and ourselves. It teaches us new cultures, languages, and skills.

Understanding. We know it's ok to make mistakes because that's how we grow, learn, and become good leaders.

Spirit. We are playful and joyful at Chorus because making music is fun!

Inclusivity. We create a safe, caring, and open-hearted community where everyone belongs.

Connection. We come together from across the Berkshires to sing and create something bigger than ourselves.

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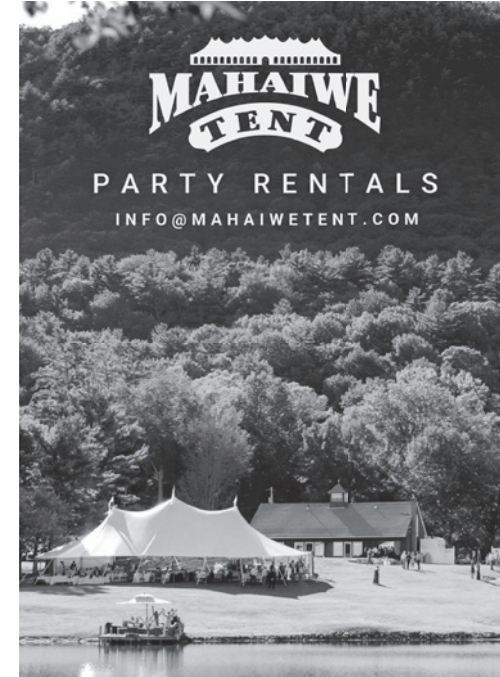


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