



CONCORDIA COLLEGE
MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA

MUSIC
DEPARTMENT
NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Dear Newsletter Readers,

Welcome to our latest issue! The past year has been a vibrant one for our department and our students. Having started the school year with the largest first-year cohort of music majors in over a decade, we hope to repeat that success this coming fall. We are excited about our growth and the amazing students we are privileged to nurture and serve!

Our students, faculty, and staff were busy this past semester – composing, studying, practicing, and performing an increasingly varied, distinctly relevant, and always high-quality array of musical topics, ideas, and repertoire. January featured the annual circuit721 electronic music composition recital. February included the premiere fully staged production, with live orchestra, of composer-in-residence Jonathan Stinson's opera *The Three Bears* and the Concordia Band's annual domestic tour in Minnesota. March included the Concordia Choir's tour of the Southeastern U.S., Chapel Choir's regional Minnesota tour, and the Concordia Orchestra's Senior Honors concert, as well as multiple guest artist visits and numerous student recitals. April included the annual Masterworks concert, this year featuring the Faure *Requiem* and Robert Ray's *Gospel Mass*. To cap off the semester, the Concordia Choir toured to Sweden and Norway in May. So much to celebrate!

Looking ahead, next fall will feature many of our regular fall concerts, including Homecoming, Three Choirs, PRISM, Fall Bands, Honor Strings, and Christmas Concerts, as well as the Concordia Band's tour to Montana (the Concordia Orchestra will tour in the spring this coming year, as well as the choirs). We invite you to view event listings and tune into live and recorded performances via our UStream page linked from <https://www.concordiacollege.edu/music/performances-and-events/>.

At Concordia's music department, we continue our commitment to influencing the affairs of the world by representing what is happening around us through music and offering solace, inspiration, and artistic reflection for our students and members of our community. We aim to include everyone, uplift underrepresented voices, explore unfamiliar musics with humility and curiosity, and expand the range of musical expression available to students while sustaining a commitment to upholding the most enduring aspects of past and present musical traditions around the world.

Please keep in touch! Let us know what you are up to, musically and otherwise. Feel free to share this newsletter with others who may enjoy it.

-Dr. Nat Dickey, Music Department Chair

Newsletter edited by J. Curtis Thompson

Masterworks

Written By : Dr. Joseph Kemper

Assistant Professor, Choral Music; Conductor, Chapel Choir, and Kantorei

This spring's annual Masterworks Concert at Concordia College was a powerful celebration of musical diversity and collaboration. Performed by The Concordia Choir, Chapel Choir, Kantorei, and The Concordia Orchestra, the program featured Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* and Robert Ray's *Gospel Mass*—two contrasting works that invited students to explore different vocal techniques and cultural traditions.

Conducted by Dr. Joseph Kemper with preparatory musical support from Dr. Michael Culloton, Dr. Kevin Sütterlin, and collaborative pianist Andrew Steinberg, the concert offered students the opportunity to engage deeply with both the French Romantic and Black American gospel traditions. Ray's *Gospel Mass* featured a dynamic gospel band with Hammond organ, piano, electric bass, guitar, and drums, bringing high-energy spirit and authenticity to the performance. Several student soloists were featured across both works, showcasing the breadth of vocal talent within Concordia's choral program.



To prepare, students explored the historical and cultural contexts of both works—studying the liturgical foundations of Fauré's *Requiem* and the development of gospel music from African musical traditions, spirituals, blues, and jazz. A two-day residency with Dr. Eugene Rogers (University of Michigan, The Washington Chorus) deepened this learning through rehearsals, a conducting masterclass, and sessions on African and Black American vocal genres—enriching the entire Concordia community.



Concordia Opera

The Three Bears

Written By : Dr. Robin Griffeath

Associate Professor, Voice; Director of Concordia Opera

In February, composer Jonathan Stinson joined Concordia Opera as composer-in-residence for a production of his opera *The Three Bears*. Thanks to a grant from the Lake Region Arts Council, 250 students from Dorothy Dodds Elementary School were able to attend a special preview performance. This production marked a new collaboration between Concordia's music and theatre departments and featured the Concordia Orchestra, along with fully realized costumes, props, and sets. A professional video recording of the performance will be submitted to both the National Opera Association's Collegiate Opera Production Competition and The American Prize Opera Competition later this year.



NATS Winners



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
**TEACHERS
OF SINGING**

North Central Region

Three Concordia College voice majors—**Jacob Schlueter, Tabatha Poppe, and Hank Bell**, students of Dr. Robin Griffeath—competed in the North Central Region of the National Association of Teachers of Singing

(NATS) this spring, with all three earning top placements and advancing to the National Student Auditions. Schlueter and Poppe each took second place in their respective divisions, while Bell placed fifth. Schlueter has since been named a national semifinalist, one of just fifteen underclassmen selected nationwide. Joining him as a semifinalist is Eleanor Iversen, a private student of Dr. Griffeath and high school junior from Fargo North, who is among only eight high school upper-class students advancing nationally. The live semifinal and final rounds will be held June 26–28, 2025, at Temple University in Philadelphia.



33rd Annual Percussion Day

Written By : Dr. Roberto Palomeque

Assistant Professor, Percussion; Director, Percussion Ensemble and Marimba Choir

The 33rd annual Concordia Percussion Day, held on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at Concordia College, was a resounding success. The day commenced with a dynamic performance by Moorhead High School's "Spud" Line and the Concordia Drumline, which set an energetic tone for the proceedings. Participants engaged in specialized clinics and performances led by guest artists Jenny Klukken, Mark Walker, and the Twincussion Duo. The day's festivities culminated in a concert featuring performances by the guest clinicians, Concordia's Percussion Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, and Marimba Choir, offering a rich tapestry of musical styles and compositions. The success of Percussion Day was significantly bolstered by the support of Minnesota Lake Region Arts Council (LRAC), Concordia's Cultural Events, and the Music Department alongside all our sponsors, including Yamaha, Steve Weiss, Pearl-Adams, Marimba One, Paiste, and Innovative Percussion.

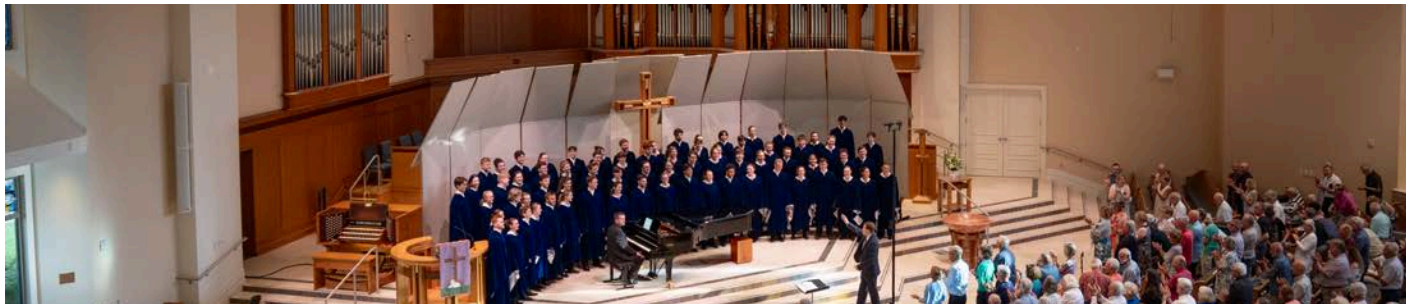
The Percussion Studio at Concordia hosted the Duo Vibracor (Aquim Sacramento and Ricardo Camponogara) on February 18, 2025. They offered a masterclass on Brazilian drums and played different street beats called "Batucada," an ensemble of drums approaching traditional rhythms and patterns. The students enjoyed this collaboration, learning and exploring different beats from Brazil. Their visit culminated with a concert at Christiansen Recital Hall, performing repertoire of Latin-American composers.

Duo Vibracor



Director – Dr. Michael Culloton

Director of Choral Activities; Associate Professor, Vocal Music Education and Church Music



2025 Southeast Choir Tour

The Concordia Choir's 2025 tour was a powerful journey of music, connection, and celebration. The tour began with a heartfelt mini-tour weekend in Sioux Falls and Maple Grove, featuring collaborations with local high school choirs and enthusiastic audiences. From March 1–16, the choir traveled across the Southeast United States, performing in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee, with additional concerts in Minnesota.



Highlights included collaborations with school and community choirs, such as in Charlotte, Orlando, and Gainesville, and special performances of Dr. Sandra Peter's commissioned piece *"There Is Room, There Is Love."* The choir performed in iconic venues like The Basilica of Saint Peter (Columbia, SC), Roswell United Methodist Church (GA), and First Presbyterian Church (Nashville), where they honored a milestone moment in their history with

a deeply moving return. Throughout the tour, the choir enjoyed moments of joy and rest—from beach visits in Florida to sightseeing at Silver Springs State Park. A surprise appearance by former conductor **René Clausen** in Stillwater, MN, who conducted his beloved *"O My Love's Like a Red, Red Rose,"* provided an unforgettable emotional finale.

The tour concluded with a sold-out home concert in Moorhead, leaving the singers and audiences uplifted and inspired. Grateful for the memories made and the communities they connected with, the choir now looks ahead to future tours—next stop: the Northeast United States in 2026.



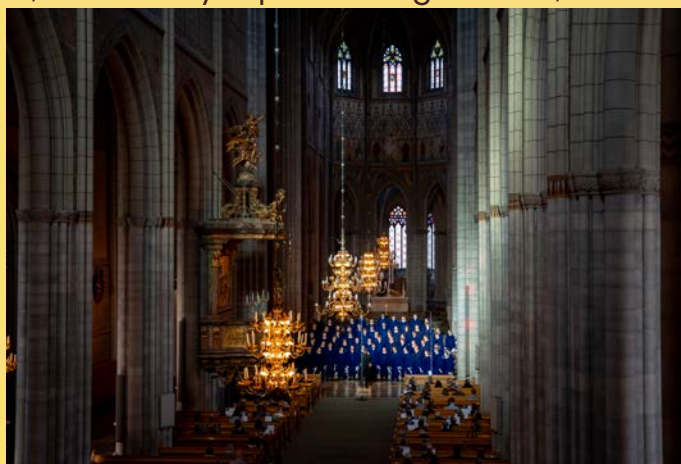


2025 International Tour

The Concordia Choir's 2025 international tour to Sweden and Norway was a breathtaking journey of music, culture, and unforgettable experiences. The trip began in Stockholm, where the choir explored historic Gamla Stan, toured the Vasa Museum, and performed at the Katolska Domkyrkan. They then traveled to Uppsala, delivering their first concert at the majestic Uppsala Domkyrka, the largest church in Scandinavia.

In Norway, the choir was warmly welcomed in Oslo, where they explored Frogner Park, visited the Olympic ski jump, and performed at Paulus Church in collaboration with Schola Cantorum. Their journey continued to Bergen and Lillehammer, including a moving concert at Lillehammer Kirke with Mannskoret Klang, a men's choir with 125 years of history. A spontaneous performance in the acoustically stunning Hamar Glass Cathedral added another memorable moment.

The tour also featured breathtaking scenic travel. A day of train travel on the famed Flåm



Railway offered panoramic views and waterfalls, followed by a ferry cruise through the UNESCO-listed Nærøfjord. Onboard, the choir sang "*Norge, mitt Norge*" while surrounded by some of Norway's most awe-inspiring landscapes—a highlight of the tour.

The following day, the choir performed in Bergen's Johanneskirken, made even more meaningful by a visit to Edvard Grieg's tomb earlier that day. The trip concluded with a concert at St. Petri Kirke in Stavanger,

and the last day of the tour included an optional hike to the famous Preikestolen, or Pulpit Rock. Now back home on summer break, the choir reflects with gratitude on the friendships, beauty, and music that made this international tour unforgettable.

Companion Tour

In addition to the choir, we also had a group of family and friends traveling alongside the tour. The group included many parents and grandparents of singers in the choir, as well as alumni and friends of Concordia. Companions attended all the concerts and got to experience both Sweden and Norway while building new connections and friendships along the way! The alumni office offers many opportunities to travel internationally, and upcoming trips can be found at ConcordiaCollege.edu/AlumniTravel.

Director – Dr. Peter J. Haberman

Director of Bands; Professor, Instrumental Music Education



2025 Domestic Band Tour

The 2025 Domestic Tour was a resounding success! While on tour, the band worked with high school bands, coached chamber groups, provided masterclasses and lessons, and performed six concerts. Their stops included Willmar, Little Falls, St. Michael-Albertville, St. Paul, White Bear Lake, and Farmington. In White Bear Lake, they performed Kelijah Dunton's *"Stillwater"* with an ensemble of over 200 people. This year's repertoire also included *"Picture Studies"* by Adam Schoenberg, *"Prism Rhapsody for Marimba and Wind Ensemble"* by Keiko Abe featuring soloist Andrew Kocher '25, *"Let My Love Be Heard"* by Jake Runestad conducted by assistant conductor Joseph Koroll '25, *"Motu"* by Christopher Buchanan, and *"Bamboo Shoots and City Streets"* by Benjamin Barker. The Concordia Band also premiered *"Triumphant Concordia"* by Ethan Hyvari '25 written in honor of the 125th Anniversary of band at Concordia.

Joseph Koroll, Assistant Conductor of The Concordia Band says, "Being the first assistant conductor of The Concordia Band was an incredibly enriching and



moving experience. It was both an honor and a privilege to work alongside such talented musicians and dedicated colleagues. I deeply cherish the moments of connection that I shared with the band (personal and communal), the extremely kind and loving community of the ensemble, and the joy of performing together. This experience will remain a highlight of my musical journey and a source of inspiration for years to come."



Director – Dr. Kevin F.E. Sütterlin

Associate Professor, Instrumental Conducting; Director of Orchestral Activities;
Conductor, The Concordia Orchestra

Senior Honors Concert

The Concordia Orchestra's spring 2025 semester was filled with dynamic performances, student spotlights, and concert preparations. Rehearsals began in January with Johannes Brahms's *Symphony No. 4* for the anticipated Senior Honors

Concert. February brought the debut of *The Three Bears* by Jonathon Stinson, delighting local elementary students and audiences alike.

On March 22, the orchestra highlighted two outstanding soloists: Ellie Chang '25, a Flute Performance major, and Jon Marsyla '26, an Instrumental Music Education major. Ellie performed the third movement, *Allegro vivace*, from Aram Khachaturian's *Violin Concerto in D Minor* on flute. Jon played Erich Wolfgang Korngold's *Cello Concerto, Op. 37*. The program also included the Minnesota premiere of Lawren

Brianna Ware's *The Moirai* and Johannes Brahms's *Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 98*.

In April, attention turned to the Concordia College Masterworks Concert. The orchestra collaborated with The Concordia Choir, Chapel Choir, and Kantorei to prepare Robert Ray's *Gospel Mass* and Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*.

This year, The Concordia Orchestra had 15 graduating seniors. We wish them all the best in their next venture!



PERFORMANCES HIGHLIGHT: PATÁX

Patax, Spain's most prominent fusion band, performed at Concordia College. Audience members were treated to unique versions of iconic songs from the Beatles and Michael Jackson, along with an unexpected mix of flamenco, jazz, and Afro-Cuban rhythms, all of which created an unforgettable musical experience. In addition to working with our students, the group was joined by Concordia music faculty musicians **Russ Peterson, saxophone**, **Robert Palomeque, percussion**, and **Nat Dickey, trombone**, guest **trumpet virtuoso Kellin Hanas**, and Concordia student **Evan Strand '27, bass**.

2025 VOCAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

The 2025 Vocal Jazz Festival, held at Christiansen Recital Hall, featured two days of performances, clinics, and presentations led by guest artists **Matt Falker** and **Alyssa Allgood**. The festival included student ensemble clinics, a headline jazz recital, and sessions on music careers and songwriting. A final Q&A with the artists concluded the event, highlighting their expertise and the festival's focus on jazz education, collaboration, and artistic growth. You can look forward to the next Vocal Jazz Festival in **January 2026**.

A FAREWELL AND A WELCOME



After two years as Assistant Professor and conductor, Dr. Joseph Kemper accepted a position at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN. Although we will miss him here at Concordia, we wish him the best of luck!

Dr. Stephanie Tubiolo will assume the role of Assistant Professor and conductor of the Chapel Choir and Kantorei this fall. Dr. Tubiolo says, "I am very excited to join the music faculty at concordia College and honored to become part of a choral tradition that has deeply inspired me. I can hardly wait to start making music with the incredible singers of Chapel Choir and Kantorei and to uplift the profound spirit of community that already runs so strong. As I prepare to make Moorhead my new home, I feel especially grateful for the opportunity to build spaces of belonging through song."



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MARIA CLAPP

Maria Clapp, a 2026 Piano Performance major, made a string of impressive accomplishments this past semester. Maria was recently named one of the winners of the **2025 Senior Honors Concerto & Aria Competition**. She will perform Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor*,



Op. 37: Movement I. Allegro con brio with the Concordia Orchestra this fall.

Locally, Maria earned first place in the **Dorothy Sewall Hector Scholarship Award** by the Fargo Moorhead Area Music Club. This accolade aims to recognize and support exceptional collegiate musicians in the Fargo-Moorhead community. She also recently presented her Junior Recital, which is now available for viewing through the Concordia College Archive, showcasing her artistry and dedication to her craft.

RECITALS

This past spring, Concordia College welcomed a dynamic lineup of guest artists who brought diverse musical styles and global experiences to campus. Highlights included **Kari Watson**, an acclaimed composer and sound artist exploring identity through immersive electronic performance; **DnD Duo**, guitarist Matt Denman and harpist Emily Duncan, who shared virtuosic performances and insights into their educational paths; and **Duo VibraCor**, featuring Brazilian musicians Aquim Sacramento (vibraphone) and Ricardo Camponogara (guitar), showcasing vibrant Latin American works. **Espen Lilleslåten**, esteemed violinist and orchestral leader, offered a rich perspective from his international solo and chamber music career. Alumna **Lexi Broulliard** returned for a flute recital, while trumpeter **Marissa Benedict**, known for her work with major orchestras and in film recording, shared her wide-ranging professional experiences. Closing the season, **Nick May** (saxophone) and **Nathan Froebe** (composition) presented *The Big Gay Recital*, celebrating queer artistry and identity through powerful new music.



January 19 – circuit721
Kari Watson, composer



January 22 – DnD Duo
Matt Denman and Emily Duncan,
guitar & harp



February 18 – Duo VibraCor
Aquim Sacramento and
Ricardo Camponogara,
vibraphone & guitar



March 14 – Espen Lilleslåten, violin



March 23 – Lexi Broulliard, flute



March 29 – Marissa Benedict, trumpet



**March 31 –
The Big Gay Recital**
Nathan Froebe and Nick May,
composition & saxophone



PRESENTATIONS & MASTERCLASSES

In addition to performing artists, we were visited by a diverse group of guest artists and clinicians who shared their expertise through presentations and masterclasses. Composer **Mari Valverde** led impactful sessions on transgender and gender expansive vocal pedagogy, choral composition, and rehearsal techniques. Alumna **Dr. Sarah Weisbrod** offered a flute masterclass and a valuable seminar on self-promotion for musicians. **Dr. Yung-chiao Wei** brought her internationally acclaimed artistry to a double bass masterclass. Alumnus **Peter Jacobson** introduced students to the benefits of Alexander Technique through a general session and string-focused workshop. In April, trumpeter and content creator **Kellin Hanas** and celebrated composer **James Stephenson** inspired students as clinicians for the 2025 Honor Jazz Band and Honor Band, respectively, rounding out a rich season of learning and artistic growth.

February 12 – Mari Valverde,
composer



February 22 – Dr. Sarah Weisbrod,
Flute Masterclass and presentation

February 27 – Dr. Yung-chiao Wei,
Double Bass Masterclass



March 12–13 – Peter Jacobson,
Alexander Technique

April 6 –
Kellin Hanas,
guest artist, 2025 Honor Jazz Band
James Stephenson,
guest composer, 2025 Honor Band



CONCERTS

Be sure to mark you calendar for our concerts next year.

Homecoming Concert – 6:30 pm, October 4, 2025 – Memorial Auditorium

Fall Choirs Concert – 4:00 pm, October 5, 2025 – Memorial Auditorium

Jazz Bands Concert – 7:00 pm, October 12, 2025 – Buxton Hanson Rehearsal Hall

Band Home Concert – 2:00 pm, November 2, 2025 – Memorial Auditorium

Orchestra Senior Honors Concert – 7:00 pm, November 8, 2025 – Centrum

PRISM Concert – 12:00 pm, November 23, 2025 – Memorial Auditorium

Fall Bands Concert – 6:00 pm, November 23, 2025 – Buxton-Hanson Rehearsal Hall

Christmas Concerts – 7:30 pm, December 5, 2025 – Memorial Auditorium

2:00 pm, 7:30 pm, December 6, 2025

2:00 pm, December 7, 2025

Music Scholarship Concert – 7:00 pm, February 15, 2026 – Memorial Auditorium

Jazz Bands Concert – 7:30 pm, February 24, 2026 – Buxton-Hanson Rehearsal Hall

Orchestra Home Concert – 2:00 pm, March 14, 2026 – Memorial Auditorium

Choir Home Concert – 4:00 pm, March 15, 2026 – Memorial Auditorium

Percussion Day Concert – 4:00 pm, April 11, 2026 – Memorial Auditorium

Jazz Bands Concert – 4:00 pm, April 19, 2026 – Buxton-Hanson Rehearsal Hall

Masterworks Concert – 6:00 pm, April 26, 2026 – Memorial Auditorium

Commencement Concert – 3:00 pm, May 2, 2026 – Memorial Auditorium

You can find all upcoming events at the
Concordia College
Performances and Events Page

