



**Angelia Cantanti Youth Choirs — Cantabile Choir**  
Minneapolis, MN

**2024 ACDA 47th Annual Minnesota State Conference**  
Friday, November 22  
3:00pm  
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Mahtomedi, MN

## Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs

The Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs (ACYC), founded in 1980, is an award winning children's community choral program and among one of the oldest in the Twin Cities. Recognized for its outstanding music education and renowned for excellence in performance, ACYC has become an established pillar of our arts community. The Artistic Staff includes Directors Ann Williams, Michelle Gehrz, Elizabeth Egger, Philip Brown and Nancy Grundahl. The ACYC organization offers ten ensembles, serving youth from grades K-12, with an adaptive class for singers with special needs and an alumni adult chorus. ACYC has been selected to perform at the 2025 National ACDA Conference in Dallas, TX in March; the Cantanti Singers, our SATB High School choir, will proudly represent Minnesota as the only ensemble from our state. ACYC singers performed at the 2018 Super Bowl at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis and were named "Best Community Choir in MN" by WCCO-TV. Learn more at [www.angelicacantanti.org](http://www.angelicacantanti.org).

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**Michelle Gehrz** is the conductor of ACYC's Cantabile Choir (grades 4-6) and also leads Angelica's Prelude Choir Class (K-1) and Prep Choir Class (grades 1-3). Michelle is a passionate and joyful choral conductor, music educator, accompanist, church musician, and organist in the Twin Cities. She holds degrees in music education, sacred music, and organ performance from St. Olaf College, University of Notre Dame, and University of St. Thomas (ABT) and has her Orff Certification from UST.

Michelle is the Artistic Director of Bella Lumina – an adult treble choir based in Hopkins, and also directs the Music Association of Minnetonka Senior Chorale (55+). She is a collaborative pianist for ACDA-MN Honor Choirs, MMEA All-State Choirs, Minnetonka High School, and Mound Westonka High School. She has served as the R&R Chair for Children's/Youth Choirs for ACDA-MN. Michelle was the conductor of the ACDA-MN 4-5-6 Girls State Honor Choir in May 2023. Her school music teaching career has spanned all grade levels K-12 and has included teaching at Mounds Park Academy (St. Paul), St. Croix Preparatory Academy (Stillwater), and in the Wayzata School District. She has served as Organist/Choir Director at many churches including the Cathedral of St. Paul, Lake of the Isles Lutheran, Mount Calvary Lutheran (Excelsior), Hennepin Avenue UMC, and St. Anthony Park UCC. In 2024, This year Michelle will receive the Choral Director of the Year award from ACDA-MN.

Michelle's greatest calling and wish for her time on this earth is simply to be a bringer together of singers. "I hope to be a catalyst for others to spread light, to find hope, and to feel immense joy through song!"



## Director's Notes

The theme for this concert, "I Am Song," was born out of a very positive and empowering experience that Cantabile had singing the piece "I Am Song" last Spring 2024. My singers LOVED working on this piece and then performed it at Orchestra Hall for our spring concert. It was one of those magical performances. The singers felt it, the audience felt it, and I felt it. Our guest musicians – who are with us today! – added so much musical nuance and energy to the performance. It left such a strong, lasting impression with me that I themed this concert around this song and the idea of each of us being song and having a voice.

Once I found the piece "Lift Up Your Voice" I knew more deeply what I wanted this program to express:

Each of us as singer/artist has a strong connection to the beauty and power of music. It grounds us. It stirs us. It builds character.

It connects us to something bigger than our individual self. Those of us that have the privilege of making music with others have an opportunity to use our singing voices for good, for change, for bringing awareness, for expressing that which is difficult to express, for comfort, for healing, and for joy!

The first set of this program is simply about "using our voices to share joy and hope with others." Beth Melin Nelson's canon "Sing a Joyful Song" is our welcome to you, our audience, followed by our theme song "I Am Song" to kick off the concert!

Using two Swahili texts and a traditional American hymn text, the second set of the program focuses on "using our voices to sing for freedom and strength." Oh, how singing can uplift and pick us up when life gets heavy and when hope is waning.

I believe that the last set of the program may be the most important for our young people to hear, and perhaps for you as well. When we use our voices, we can "speak up for ourselves and for all who deserve to be heard and loved." In this fast-paced world that is so connected in some ways yet so separated in other ways, we can feel alone, undervalued, not heard, not welcome, and not loved. I SO want the messages of this last set to resonate with all that hear it – you are NOT alone, you ARE valued, you are HEARD, you are SO welcomed, and you are LOVED.

I love these young people who are singing today. I believe in them. I am proud to share them with you today and hope that you will leave feeling hopeful and uplifted.

– Michelle Gehrz

## I Am Song

*Please hold applause between songs for the entire program.*

### I Am Song: "When I use my voice... I can share joy and hope with others."

Sing a Joyful Song..... Beth Melin Nelson

I Am Song .....Mark Burrows

### I Am Song: "When I use my voice... I can sing for freedom and strength."

Lift Up Your Voice (Kwa Maneno Nguvu)..... James DesJardins

Singabahambayo..... Trad. South African, Arr. Henry Leck

How Can I Keep From Singing? ..... Robert Lowry, Anna Bartlett Warner

Arr. Stephen Rew

### I Am Song: "When I use my voice... I can speak up for myself and for all who deserve to be heard and loved."

I Have a Voice ..... Frank Wildhorn and Robin Lerner, Arr. Mac Huff

Sololists: Alayna Moenga, Anne Temple-Hanson

We Will Sing..... Penny Stone

*Audience, please join in singing on each Refrain:*

Wheth-er you're a friend or a strang - er, one world we're trav - 'ling  
through, wheth-er you're fear - ful or in dan - ger, we will stand with you.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the refrain, with lyrics underneath. The second staff continues the melody for the second line, including a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3' above them. The piece ends with a double bar line.

A Melody of Love..... Jim Papoulis

Michelle Gehrz, Conductor  
Jeffrey Patry, Collaborative Pianist  
Jeff Bina, Percussion

Christopher Larson, Bass  
Roma Duncan, Flute  
Monica Healy, Percussion

### **Sing a Joyful Song**

Sing to life and sing to laughter,  
Sing to friends who are gathered here.  
Joyfully singing in harmony,  
Lift your voices to sound the cheer.  
So let us sing a joyful song.

### **I Am Song**

I am the spark that grows in you,  
A warmth you've felt before.  
I am the voice that grows in you,  
A sound you can't ignore.  
I believe in you and will weave in you a melody  
sure and strong.

Bring me your stars, bring me your sunshine,  
bring me your pouring rain.  
Bring me your tears, bring me your laughter,  
bring me your joy and pain.  
What is found in you, what resounds in you  
has been held in for far too long.  
Time to breathe me into the world.  
I am song.

I am the hope that springs in you,  
an ever flowing stream.  
I am the truth that rings in you,  
A plea, a prayer, a dream.  
I believe in you and will weave in you  
A melody sure and strong.  
I am warmth, I am truth, I am hope.  
I am song.

### **Lift Up Your Voice (Kwa Maneno Nguvu)**

Lift up your soul,  
Bring peace to the violence.  
Lift up your mind and open your eyes.  
Lift up your voice for those who fall silent.  
Lift up your heart, and freedom will rise.

Kwa imani milele, Na elimu ya.  
Kwa maneno nguvu, Na umoja.

#### *Translation*

With eternal faith, with education,  
with mighty words, with unity.

### **Singabahambayo**

Singabahambayo thina kulomhlaba kepha  
sinekhaya e-Zulwini.  
Zulwi Sithi haleluya.

#### *Translation*

Oh we are marching for freedom,  
We're going home.  
Our hearts are filled with song,  
So sing out strong.

### **How Can I Keep From Singing?**

My life flows on in endless song above  
earth's lamentation.  
I hear the real though far-off hymn that hails  
a new creation.  
Through all the tumult and the strife,  
I hear the music ringing.  
It sounds an echo in my soul,  
How can I keep from singing?  
While though the tempest loudly roars,  
I hear the truth, it liveth.  
And though the darkness 'round me close.  
Songs in the night it giveth.  
No storm can shake my inmost calm,  
While to that rock I'm clinging.  
Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth.  
How can I keep from singing?

### **I Have a Voice**

I have a voice, simple and clear,  
It speaks the truth for all to hear.  
It gives me hope, it gives me faith,  
It lifts me up, it keeps me safe.

I have a voice, it's mine alone,  
It comforts me, it is my own.  
Although it's small, I'm not afraid,  
For I am strong, in its embrace.

No one can say what I have seen,  
Or understand where I have been.  
For what I found inside myself,  
Belongs to me and no one else.

If I were blind and had no eyes to see,  
Still I would hear that voice inside of me.  
I wish that you could hear it, too.

I have a voice, it's mine alone,  
It comforts me, it is my own.  
I know it's small, but it is strong,  
I have a voice, it is my song.

Speaker 1 - Adelynn Stock

Speaker 2 - Tilda French

Speaker 3 - Franki Gile

### **We Will Sing**

When they build walls, we will build bridges;  
Open up a diff'rent way.  
When they close their eyes, we will sing.

#### *Refrain:*

Whether you're a friend or a stranger,  
One world we're trav'ling through,  
Whether you're fearful or in danger,  
We will stand with you.

When they teach hate, we will love;  
Open up our arms so wide.  
When they scream and shout, we will sing.

When they hide the truth,  
We will keep singing;  
Shining out the brightest light.  
When they try to silence us, we will sing.

When we stand together,  
I'll go hand in hand with you.  
When they push us down, we will sing!

*4th verse composed by Cantabile singers Rosie  
Fischer, Franki Gile, Clara Keyes, Annaliese Lahr*

### **A Melody of Love**

When I'm in the silence of my heart,  
I imagine worlds of what could be.  
If I could share a hope,  
Then you could see my dreams.

Can we sing as one voice?  
Can we care as one heart?  
If we sing as one voice,  
We could sing a melody of love.

It seems so easy to understand,  
To find the beauty in small moments.  
If I could share a hope,  
Then you could see my dreams.

Sing with love, sing with hope,  
Share my world, hear my voice.  
Stand with me, as I sing.  
Share my world, sing as one.

**The Cantabile Choir** of the Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs (ACYC) is all about singing with joy, heart, and beautiful tone! At weekly rehearsals, the members work on vocal technique, note-learning, and ensemble singing through a rich array of music and a variety of genres. The roster includes elementary age singers in grades 4 - 6 from communities and schools all over the Minneapolis and St. Paul area.

Ruby Blomgren	Morgan Folk	Annaliese Lahr	Louie Salmen
Colin Bousu	Tilda French	Elise Loving	Finley Schmidt
Nico Caffari	Franki Gile	Greta Lutgen	Madeleine Schroeder
Kaitlyn Catalano	Colette Glaus	Hannah Lymangood	Anya Solodin
Kate Cook	Shiprah Grantham	Eliana Manrodt	Cate Standley
Elizabeth Doty	Ella Harrington	Ariana McGillberry	Adelynn Stock
Madeline Dybsky	Charlotte Hersey	Kendall McGuire	Ghinad Tchoffo
Paige Eiden	Julia Huss	Vivienne Meland	Anne Temple-Hanson
Beatrice Eisenschenk	Naomi Jurrens	Silvano Mercado	Ryan Warmka
Mae Eisenschenk	Clara Keyes	Alayna Moenga	Graham Westlie
Nichole Ellis	Asha Khariwala	Hazel Morey	Jamieleen Zamora
Anja Engelbert	Jean Koenen	Emmi Ninow	
Rylee Fincham	Elinor Kornis	Aaron Richter	
Rosie Fischer	Julia Kozisek	Isabel Roukoz	
Luna Fisher	Amelia Lahr	Nora Rudlang	

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**Executive Director** – Audrey Riddle

**Choir Manager** – Andrea Dittmer

**Operations Assistant** – Elliana Meier

**Rehearsal Assistants** – Monica Healy, Jennifer Koenen,  
Avery Cracauer and Zöe Zarth

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