

WISCONSIN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

# A Charlie Brown Christmas with Strings

FEATURING MR. CHAIR  
& MEMBERS OF MADISON YOUTH CHOIRS



Artwork by Ben Ferris of Mr. Chair

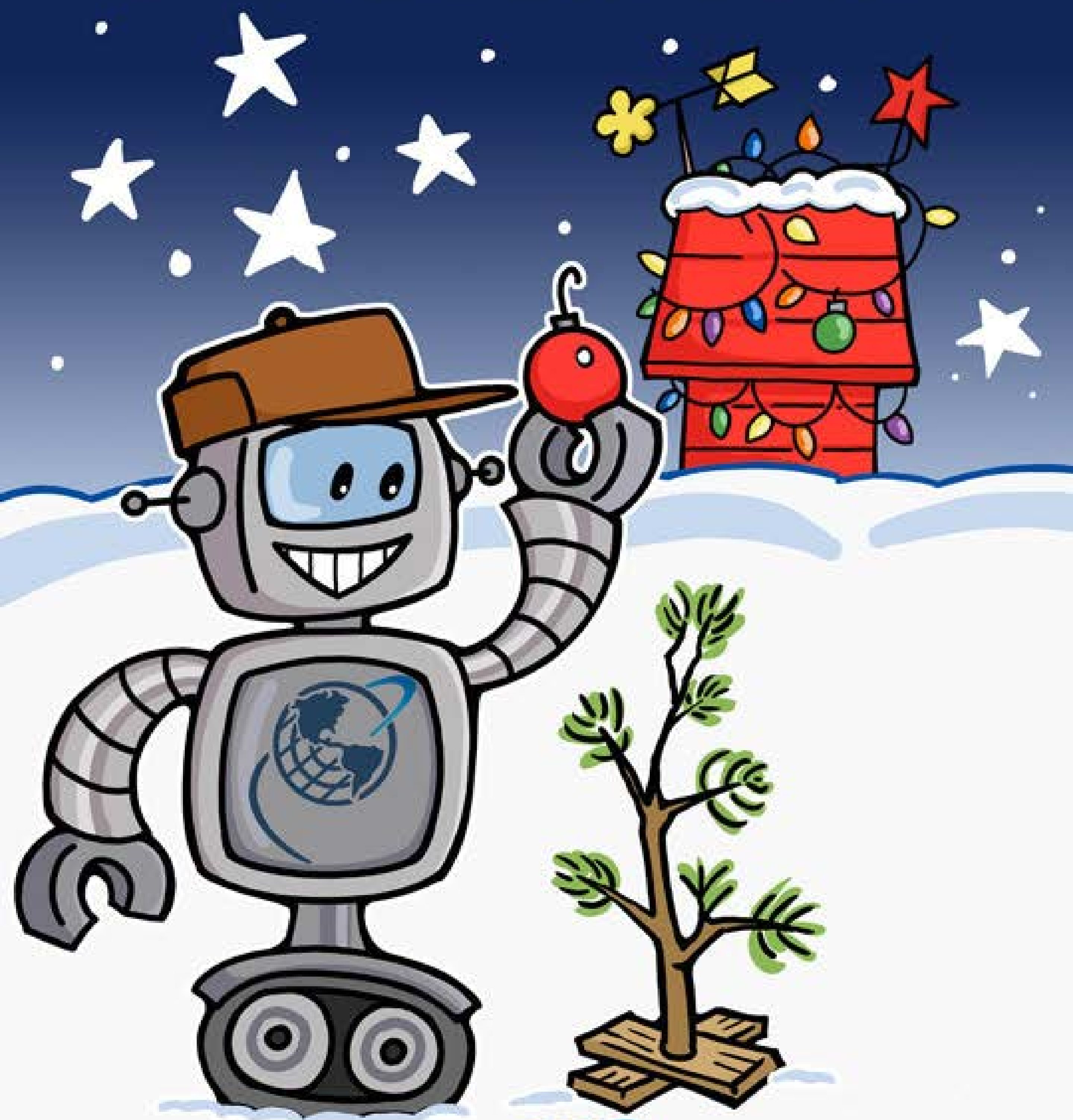
A Holiday Classic With a Madison Twist

THE  
**Oupheum**  
THEATER ★ MADISON

# SUPRANET

## SUPPORTS THE ARTS

### THE WISCONSIN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA





# Table of Contents

**Andrew Sewell, Music Director**

**Performer Roster**

**Text to Give**

**Repertoire**

**Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra**

**Mr. Chair**

**Madison Youth Choirs**

**The Bounty**

**Youth & Education Programs**

**Partners Program**





# Andrew Sewell

## MUSIC DIRECTOR, WCO



Andrew Sewell enters his 26<sup>th</sup> season as Music Director for the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, and 9<sup>th</sup> season with the San Luis Obispo Symphony on California's central coast. A conductor in demand, he has successfully built the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra into a regional and nationally known ensemble. In California, he has inspired the central coast community with exhilarating performances at CalPoly's Performing Arts Center in San Luis Obispo.

During his tenure with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Maestro Sewell has raised the orchestra to new artistic heights, expanded the repertoire, and provided new experiences for the audiences through innovative and adventuresome programming. In 2023 the WCO embarked on a five-year recording project, *Musical Landscapes in Color*, recording living Black composers and composers of color. Two albums, *Harmony in Black*, and *Convergence*, have been released in 2024 and 2025. The third album, *Endeavor*, will be released in 2026.

A native of New Zealand, Maestro Sewell received his music training on the violin, piano, and cornet, and began conducting at age 16. Six years later, he made his professional opera debut with the Mercury Opera and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. Winning the Australian Guarantee Corporation's Young Achiever Award allowed him to further his studies abroad. Sewell holds a Master of Music degree with Honors in Conducting from the University of Michigan.

In 2025, he was awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award by Destination Madison, for his 25 years service as Music Director of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. In 2017, he was awarded the Service to Music Award from the Association of Wisconsin Symphony Orchestras, and in 2013, the Rabin Youth Arts Award for Individual Achievement, by the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra, for his services to youth and education. He and his wife, Mary, live in Madison, WI.



# Orchestra Roster

## Violin I

Leanne Kelso+

Sherri Zhang++

Kristian Brusubardis

Clayton Tillotson

## Violin II

Gerald Loughney\*

Timothy Kamps

Wes Luke

Steven Wilke

## Viola

Nora Frisk\*

Diedre Buckley

## Cello

Karl Lavine\*

Timothy Archbold

## Bass

Matthew Boothe\*

*+ Concertmaster*

*++ Assistant Concertmaster*

*\* Principal*





# Mr. Chair

Jason Kutz, piano

Ben Ferris, bass

Mike Koszewski, drums

# Members of Madison Youth Choirs

Tessa Blakeslee

June Bresette

Andreas Bushland

Kalea Cummings

Jay Kang

Daniel Kim

Joshua Kim

Christian Moore

Addison Murphy

Mackenzie Saha

Abby Soukup

Thora Stetson

Iris Violi

Isobel Voss

Elizabeth Younkle



# TEXT TO GIVE TODAY

## help the music play

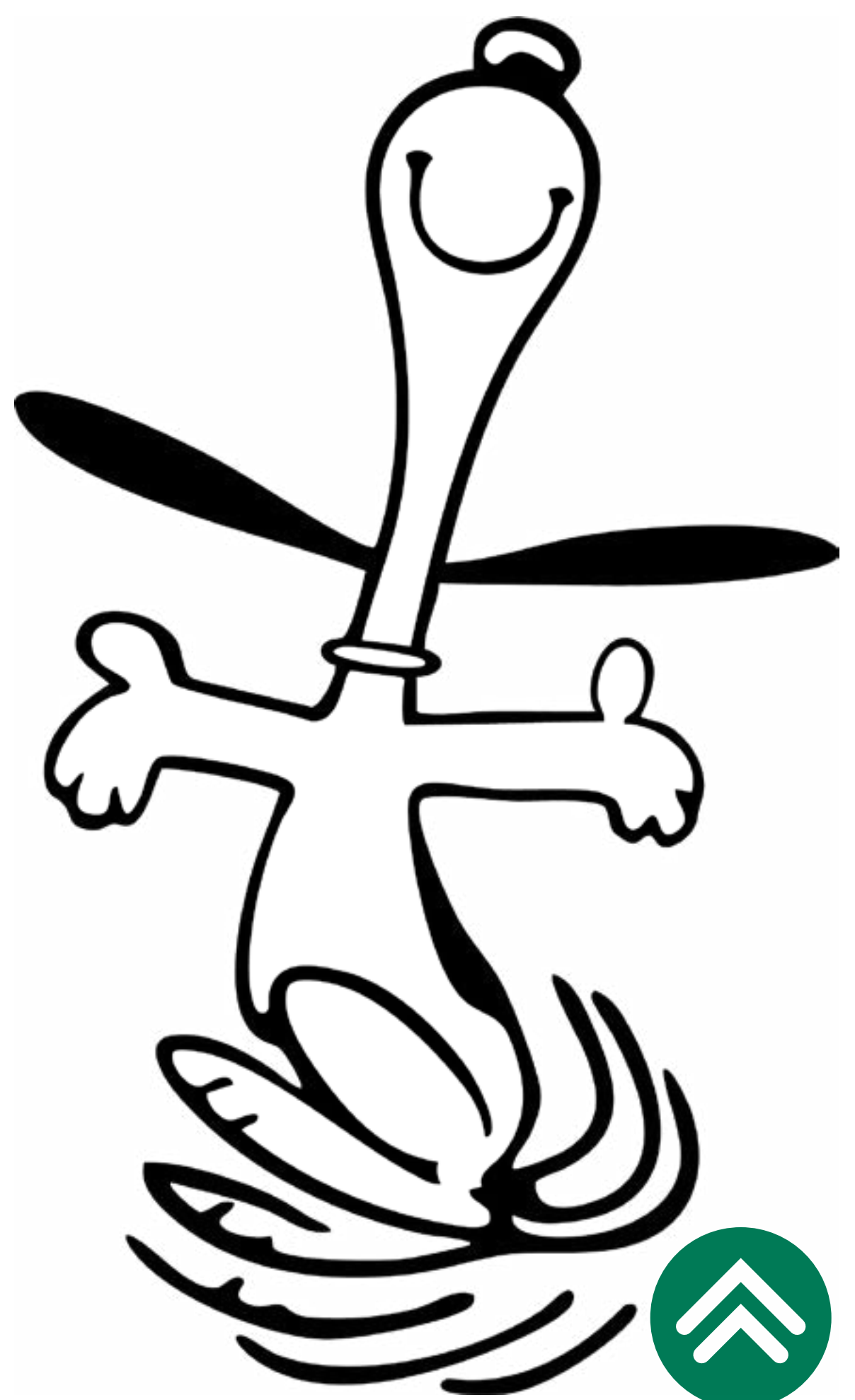
Celebrate Giving Tuesday early this year!

Donate today to support WCO's  
Youth Education Programs and  
Madison Youth Choirs

**Text "SNOOPY"**  
**to 53555**



**DONATE**





# Program

## **“A Charlie Brown Overture”**

Ben Ferris

## **“O Tannenbaum”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Traditional; arr. Vince Guaraldi / Ben Ferris

## **“What Child Is This”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Traditional; arr. Vince Guaraldi / Jason Kutz

## **“My Little Drum”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Vince Guaraldi arr. Ben Ferris

(ft. Madison Youth Choirs)

## **“Linus and Lucy”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Vince Guaraldi; arr. Ben Ferris

## **“Christmas Time Is Here”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Vince Guaraldi & Lee Mendelson;

arr. Ben Ferris

(ft. Madison Youth Choirs)

## **“Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Traditional; arr. Vince Guaraldi

(ft. Madison Youth Choirs)

## **“Christmas Is Coming”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Vince Guaraldi; arr. Ben Ferris

## **“Skating”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Vince Guaraldi; arr. Jason Kutz

## **“Für Elise”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Ludwig van Beethoven; arr. Jason Kutz

## **“The Christmas Song”**

from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Mel Torre & Robert Wells arr. Jason Kutz

## **“Snow Blown Rag”**

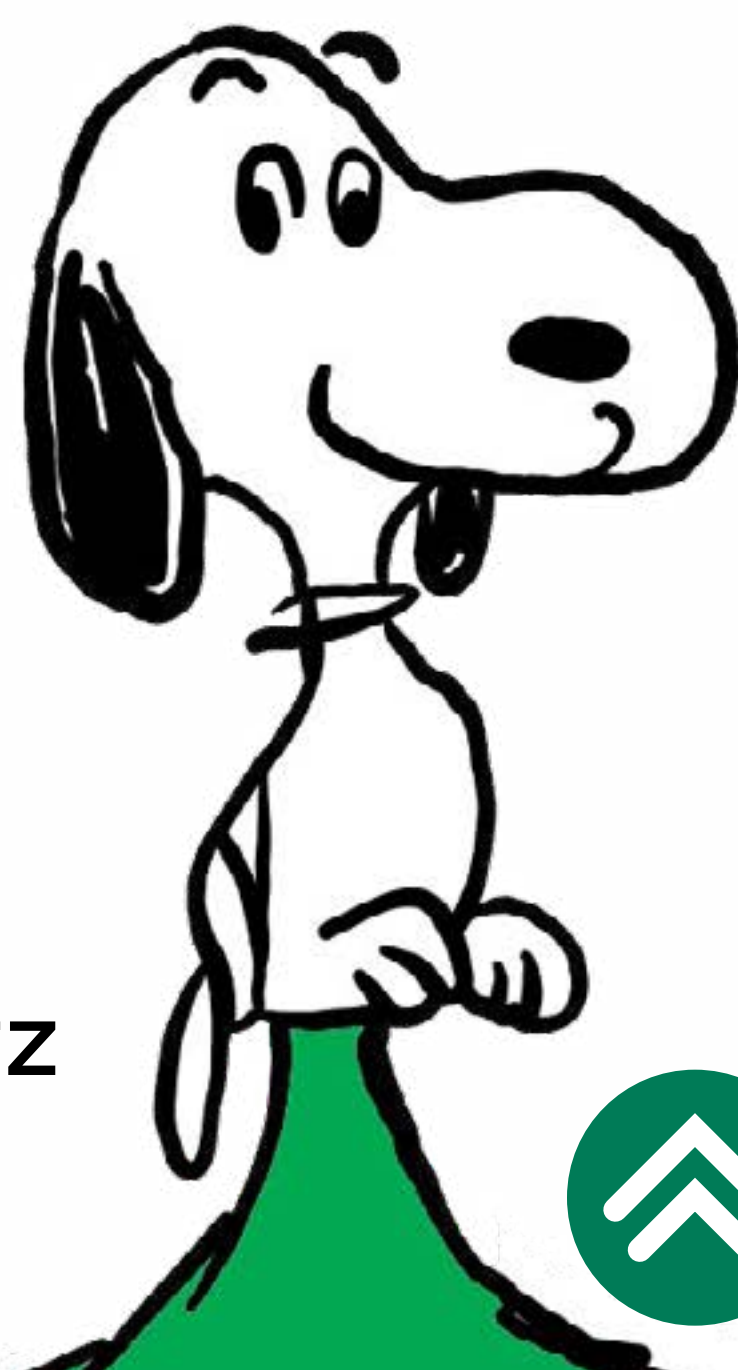
Jason Kutz

## **“Bitter Cold Medicine”**

Jason Kutz; arr. Ben Ferris

## **“Slay Ride”**

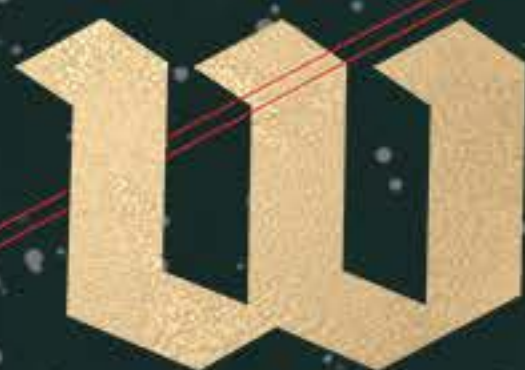
Leroy Anderson arr. Jason Kutz





# Purchase Merch

## Find Us In The Lobby



WISCONSIN  
CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRA





## About the WCO

**No other arts organization in Wisconsin performs free for more people each year.**

Founded in 1960, the orchestra is built on a foundation of quality musicianship with top-tier musicians. As a smaller ensemble, we're able to showcase music at an intimate level, providing attendees with a unique experience. Under the direction of Maestro Andrew Sewell, we make classical music accessible to our community from concert halls to Madison's Capitol Square, reaching over 250,000 music lovers annually.

We are driven in our mission to strengthen communities through innovative, high-quality artistic experiences that entertain, inspire, and unite diverse audiences. And we're passionate about creating a sustainable future through our strategic plan.

Our core artistic programs include the four-decade tradition of Concerts on the Square®, the Masterworks Series at the Overture Center for the Arts, annual performances of Handel's Messiah, educational programming and concerts for families and children that serve nearly 2000 youth each year and performing with local arts groups like Madison Ballet. In 2023, the WCO launched the Composer Collective series with a five-year, five-album project titled Musical Landscapes in Color with the goal of expanding the orchestral canon to include new works by living composers of color.



**wcoconcerts.org**



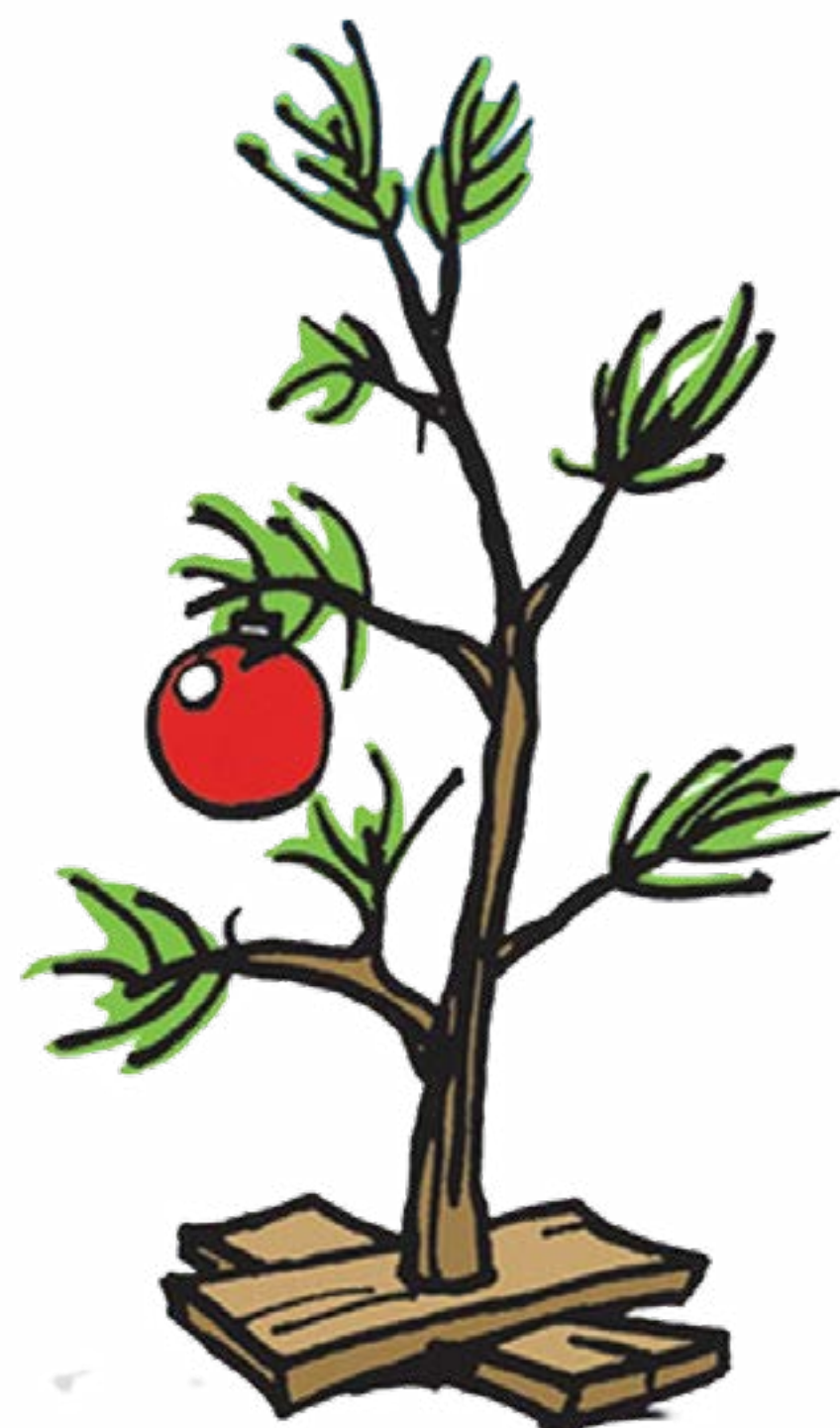
**@wisconsinchamberorchestra**



**@wisconsinchamberorchestra**







## WCO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul Higginbotham, Chair

Matt Gerding, Vice Chair

Jon Anderson, Secretary

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Amy Fields

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Dr. Jun Lee

Susan Lipp

Sawyer Meierdirk

Tom Neujahr

Harry Peterson

Melissa Turczyn

Ken Yuska

## WCO STAFF

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Cayla Minear, Director of Development

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Alix Lawrence, Marketing & Brand Manager

Britney Sinclair, Community Engagement  
& Education Manager

Luci Randall, Marketing & Audience  
Engagement Associate

Kristen Diederichs, Music Librarian

John Kraniak, Development Associate







# CYBER WEEKEND

Tickets on sale now through December 1

## 25% Off Tickets

All WCO Masterworks Concerts  
& Madison Ballet's *The Nutcracker*

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## About Mr. Chair

**Joyful. Fearless. Unpredictable.**

Mr. Chair is an innovative piano trio composed of Jason Kutz (piano), Ben Ferris (bass), and Mike Koszewski (drums). Based in Madison, the trio collaborates with singers, dancers, orchestras, string ensembles, poets and visual artists to pioneer exciting and distinct projects, showcasing their versatile style and interests in improvisational music.

Mr. Chair independently released two acclaimed studio albums of original music, *Nebulebula* (2019) and *Better Days* (2023) in collaboration with trombonist Mark Hetzler and guitarist José Guzmán. In 2022, Mr. Chair produced *Sirena* with Guzmán, singer Leslie Damaso, violinist Janice Lee, and saxophonist Jon Irabagon. Mr. Chair's newest collaboration is *Spectaculous*, an orchestral hip hop album with singer and poet Dequadray White. The debut single from *Spectaculous* "Tempo" has garnered over 11,000 views on YouTube and +500,000 plays on Instagram and Spotify.

In December 2024, Mr. Chair launched a new project featuring their rendition of Vince Guaraldi's *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, selling out multiple venues in the greater Madison area. The holiday project evolves in 2025 with a concert at the iconic *Ravinia Festival* and an expanded performance at Madison's Orpheum Theatre featuring the string section of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra.

Mr. Chair's eclectic projects are united by a fearless exploration of musical storytelling, creative independence, technical precision and dynamic, energizing performances.



[mrchairmusic.com](https://mrchairmusic.com)



[@mrchairmusic](https://www.instagram.com/mrchairmusic)



[@mrchairmusic](https://www.facebook.com/mrchairmusic)





# Jason Kutz

## PIANO, MR. CHAIR

Jason Kutz is a musician based in Madison, WI, playing, performing, teaching, and composing all styles of music. He is rooted in contemporary music and improvisation, often combining acoustic and classical piano styles with electronic synthesis. He studied recording technology and music business at UW-Oshkosh and completed his Master's in Piano Performance at UW-Madison.



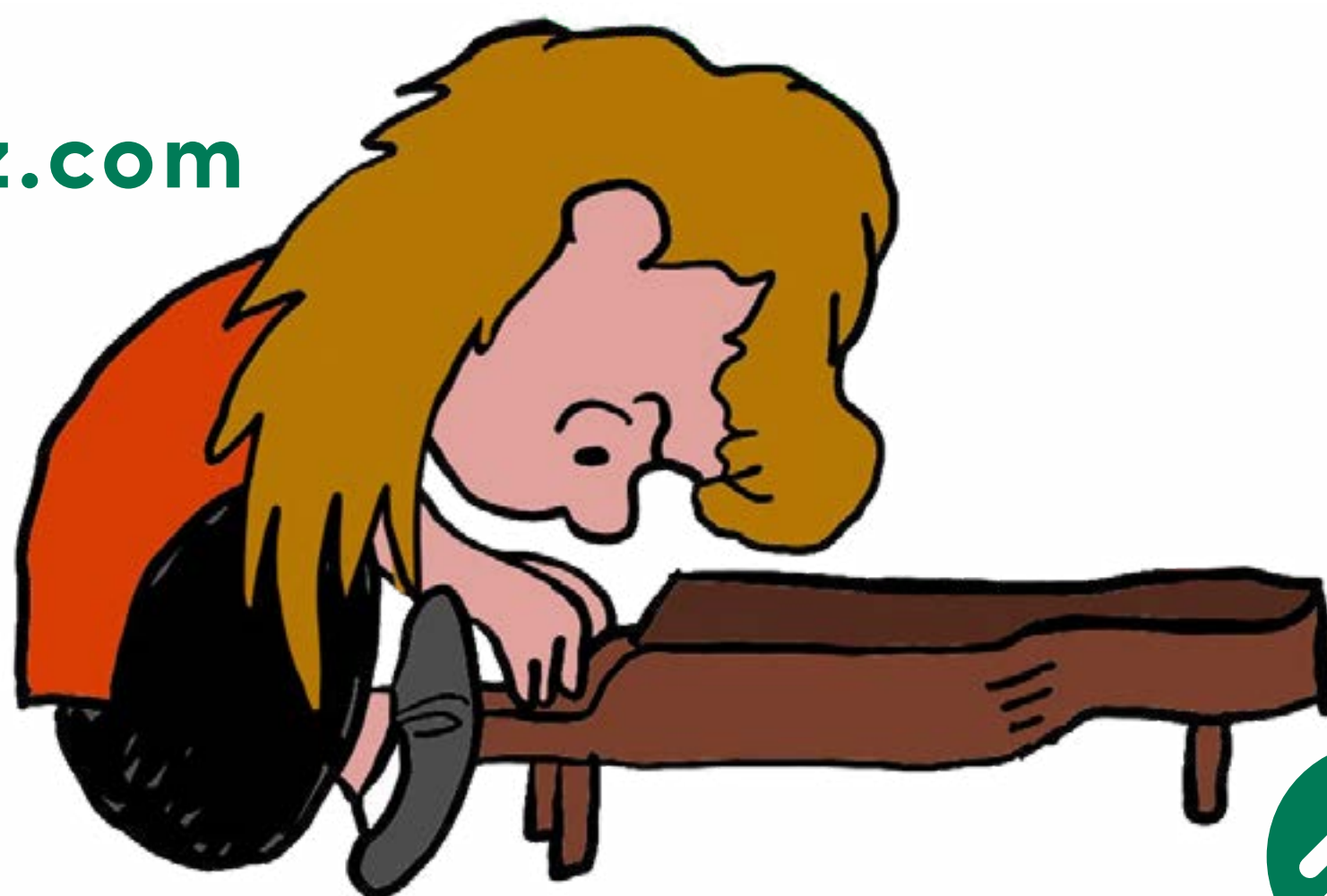
In 2018 and 2019 Kutz was commissioned by Dr. Stephen Meyers, Vilas Distinguished Professor of Geoscience at UW-Madison, to write two pieces of science-inspired music. He was also commissioned by the Wisconsin Academy for Arts, Letters & Sciences in 2022. This work was inspired by Bruce Crownover's prints from *The Last Glacier*, and the final piece was a music video that accompanied an animation of Crownover's work entitled *Melody for a Melting Glacier*.

When not performing in Mr. Chair, he is drawn towards free improvisation. He founded the Wonderporium - an electronic, ambiance-making trio that features multi-instrumentalist Noah Gilfillan, tubist Tom Curry, and dozens of synthesizers and pedals. He also performs in a free improvisation duo with saxophonist Jon Irabagon, showcasing their mutual appreciation for music chaotic and beautiful.

You may also find him as orchestra member, graphic designer, or soloist with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Caroga Arts Collective, or in other classical/crossover music organizations.



[jasonkutz.com](http://jasonkutz.com)





# Ben Ferris

## BASS, MR. CHAIR

Ben Ferris is a bassist, composer, and educator from Madison, WI. Ben performs regularly in the midwest, especially with the Ben Ferris Trio, a creative music ensemble that focuses on new compositions by musicians in the band.

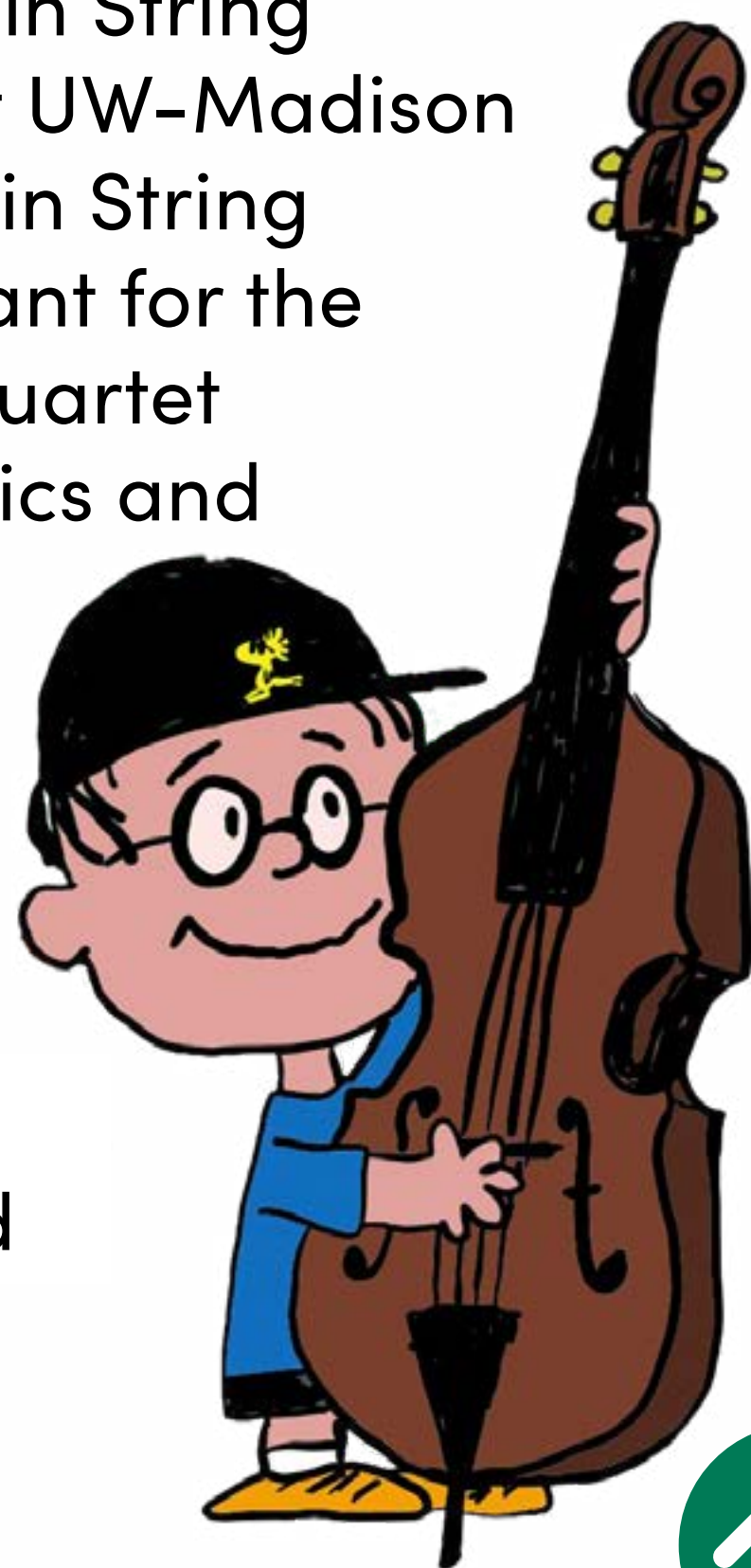


The Ben Ferris Quintet released their debut album, *Home* in 2016 featuring original compositions by Ben and other ensemble members. He also leads the Ben Ferris Octet, a group that plays a diverse selection of jazz repertoire. Ben competed as a finalist in the 2017 International Society of Bassists Jazz Performance competition.

Ben is a founding member of Mr Chair, a contemporary ensemble of electronic trombone (Mark Hetzler), keyboard (Jason Kutz), percussion (Mike Koszewski) and electronic upright bass. As a sideman Ben performs with Darren Sterud, Nuggernaut (jazz-funk), The Jon Hoel Trio (original compositions with saxophone led trio), Gabe Burdulis Band (Nashville based original pop/rock music), as well as a number of performances in the classical, jazz, rock and contemporary music scenes.

A student of NEA Jazz Master Richard Davis, he graduated with a music-education degree from UW-Madison. He recently completed a Masters Degree in String Performance with Peter Dominguez at UW-Madison where he is currently pursuing a DMA in String Performance. Ben is the project assistant for the Bridge Ensemble, a combined string quartet and jazz quartet that travels to do clinics and performances in public schools.

As an educator, Ben teaches a studio of bass students, and has taught K-12 general music, songwriting, strings and jazz ensembles in public schools for seven years. He is on the board of directors and faculty for the Richard Davis Foundation for Young Bassists.



[bferrisbass.com](http://bferrisbass.com)





# Mike Koszewski

## DRUMS, MR. CHAIR

Mike Koszewski is an experienced musician from Madison, WI with a diverse background in the percussive arts. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin – Madison percussion studio, Mike performed, taught, and lectured throughout the midwest and east coast with the ensemble Clocks in Motion. With that group he championed the music of iconic composers such as Steve Reich, Iannis Xenakis, John Cage, and Charles Wuorinen while also commissioning and premiering dozens of new works.

Highlights of his work with this ensemble include residencies and performances at Interlochen Arts Academy, University of Michigan, Ohio University, Baldwin Wallace University, Casper College, Queensboro College, and College of William and Mary. In recent years he has performed with Oakwood Chamber Players, LunArt Festival, the Madison Symphony Orchestra Concert Organ series, and Dubuque Symphony Orchestra.

Mike is also a versatile drum kit player and pit orchestra musician, performing with Four Seasons Theater, Forward Theater Company, Capital City Theatre, and Children's Theater of Madison. He is a member of the experimental jazz/rock combo Lovely Socialite and the Ben Ferris Octet, and is well-regarded as a session/freelance musician in Madison and beyond.



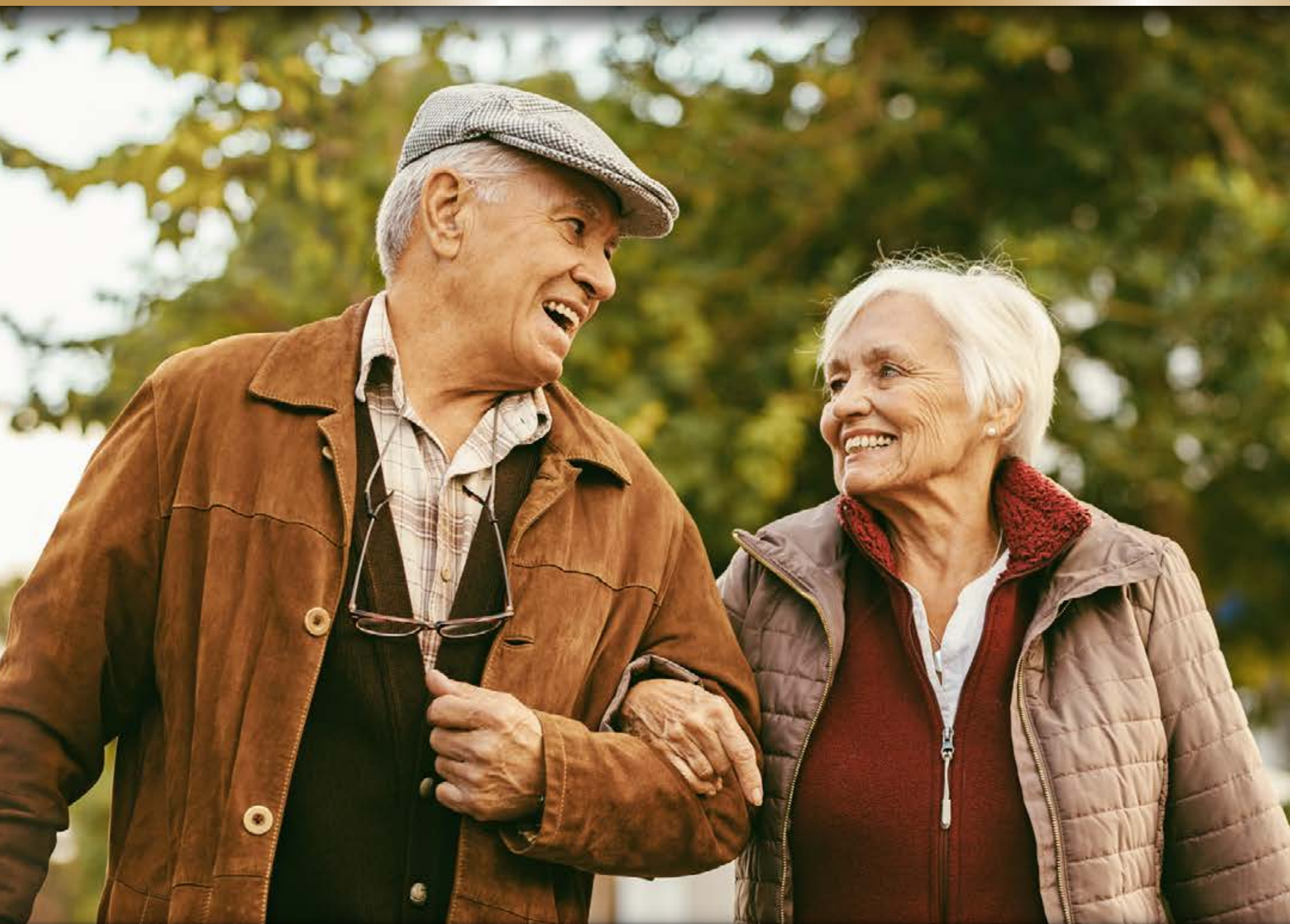
@mikekoszewski





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## About Madison Youth Choirs

Madison Youth Choirs (MYC) is dedicated to inspiring youth with a choral experience that fosters creativity, reflection, and the exploration of diverse ideas. MYC welcomes singers of all abilities, and annually serves hundreds of young people, ages 7-18, through a wide variety of choral programs in our community. Cultivating a comprehensive music education philosophy that inspires a spirit of inquiry and leading students to become “expert noticers,” MYC creates accessible, meaningful opportunities for youth to thrive in the arts and beyond.

MYC co-led the development of the Madison Youth Arts Center (MYArts), an accessible, affordable home for dozens of youth arts education programs in our community. MYArts opened in May 2021 and serves as the permanent home for MYC and Children’s Theater of Madison.



[madisonyouthchoirs.org](https://madisonyouthchoirs.org)



[@mycchoirs](https://www.instagram.com/mycchoirs)



[@madisonyouthchoirs](https://www.facebook.com/madisonyouthchoirs)







## MYC TEACHING STAFF

Kevin Blakeslee\*

Eliav Goldman

Calli Ingebritsen

Margaret Jenks

Marie McManama

Chris Powers

Marcia Russell

Margaret Stansfield

Randal Swiggum



Michael Ross\*, Artistic Director

Lynn Hembel, Executive Director

Nicole Sparacino, Development Director

Ian Disjardin, Operations Manager

Katie Paape, Renae Rodefeld, Operations Assistants

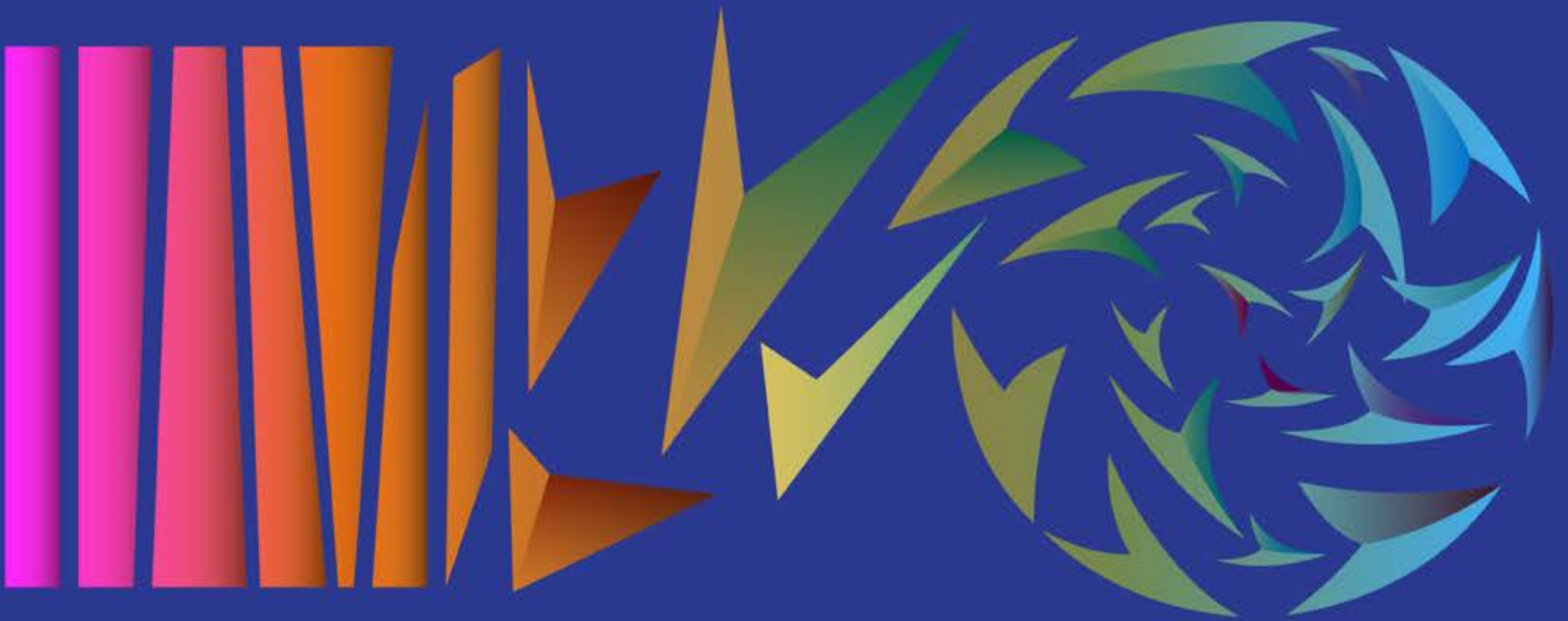
Lisa Kjenvet, Conductor Emerita

*\*prepared singers for this concert*





# IN OTHER WORDS



DEC 13, 7PM / DEC 14, 3PM / 7:30PM  
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[madisonyouthchoirs.org](http://madisonyouthchoirs.org)

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YOUTH  
CHOIRS**



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## Stage Design Sponsor

A huge thank you to The Bounty for the scene they set on the stage tonight!

### THE MINDS BEHIND THE DESIGN

J Henley, Creative Director & Founder

Molly Schrott, Partner

Joey Stocklein, Partner

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# Concerts & CUISINE THE GALA

**April 26 at 5:00 PM**  
**Madison Marriott West**

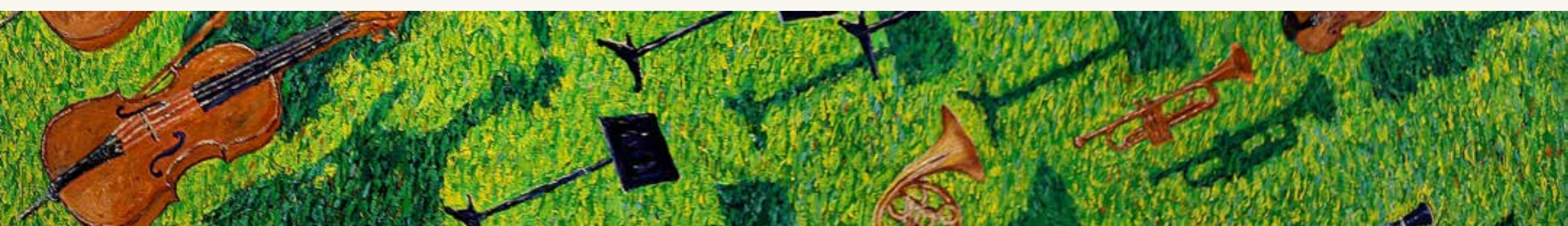
Get ready for the ultimate culinary showdown at Concerts & Cuisine hosted by the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. Immerse yourself in Madison's most exciting culinary celebration of the year in support of Concerts on the Square®, the soundtrack of Madison summer.

*A special thank you to our co-chairs Susan and Jonathan Lipp.*

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**MORE INFO**





Ja' Malik, Artistic Director

MADISON BALLET PRESENTS



RE:DISCOVER

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## **SUPER STRINGS**

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## **YOUNG ARTIST CONCERTO COMPETITION**

YACC is an annual competition in which Wisconsin’s young instrumentalists compete for scholarships and the opportunity to perform for thousands on Capitol Square.

## **FAMILY SERIES**

Free to attend, Family Series is an engaging exploration of music for all ages. Teaching musical concepts like melody and dynamics, kiddos are free to move and shake while experiencing the sounds of live orchestral music.

## **SIDE BY SIDE**

We partner with Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras to provide students with mentoring in professional musicianship, instrument sectionals, and to play a performance alongside the top tier musicians of the WCO led by Music Director Andrew Sewell.

## **YOUTH CONCERT**

Bringing in students from all over Dane County, we perform a concert for ages K-8 providing a study guide to teachers that allows them to incorporate the art of orchestral music into their curriculum. They get to meet Wisconsin learning standards in their classroom while exposing students to music—it’s a win, win.

**LEARN MORE**





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## help the music play

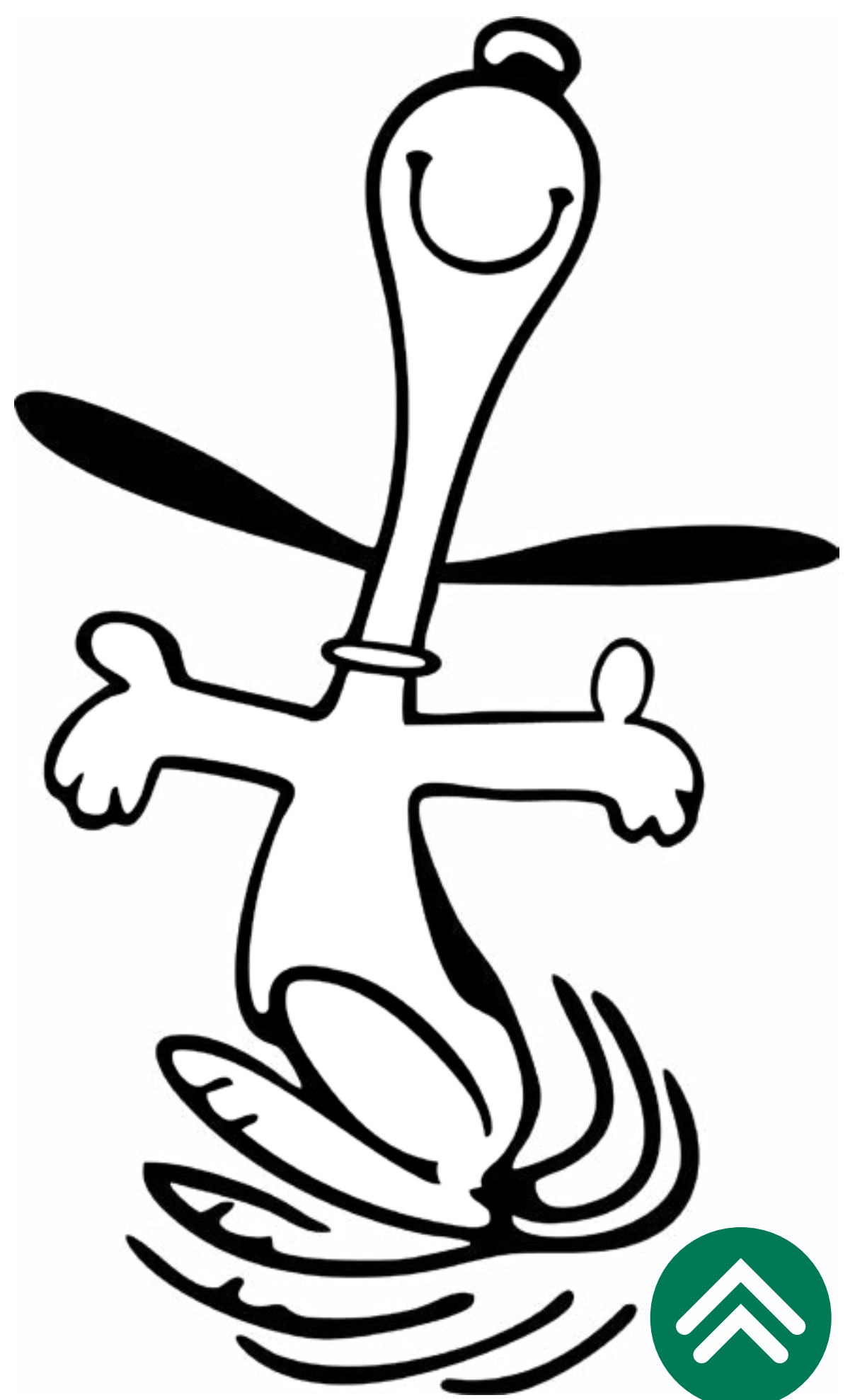
Celebrate Giving Tuesday early this year!

Donate today to support WCO's  
Youth Education Programs and  
Madison Youth Choirs

Text "SNOOPY"  
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**DONATE**





# Partners Program

The Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra's Partners Program celebrates the direct support of a core WCO musician by a generous WCO donor. Together, true patrons of the arts and our incredible musicians ally to make the best of classical music possible for our community. Please join us in thanking these remarkable individuals for their contributions.



Suzanne Beia, Concertmaster  
**Susan & Jonathan Lipp**



Leanne Kelso, Assistant Concertmaster  
Tim Kamps, Violin  
**Jun & Sandy Lee**



Karl Lavine, Principal Cello  
**Diane Ballweg**



Diedre Buckley, Viola  
**Tom Neujahr  
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# Happy Holidays



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**mr.  
chair**

**MADISON  
YOUTH  
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