

LUTHER MEMORIAL
CONCERT SERIES
CULTURAL SERIES

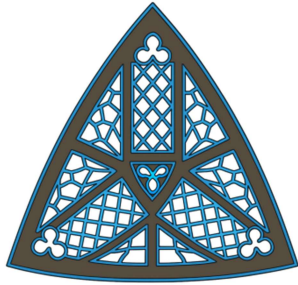
Western New York
Chamber Orchestra
and
Fredonia Chamber Choir

October 26, 2025

3:00 PM

*with Pre-Concert Lecture 2:30 PM -
Laura Rutland— the poetry of John Corigliano (Fern Hill)*





Luther Memorial Concert and Cultural Series presents first-rate experiences to the Erie community through educational lectures, visual and performing arts. Established by Kevin Sadowski (1974-2003) and Charlotte Chaffee to create a non-profit organization as a way to support our community in enrichment and growth. This series has been continued by David Ruler (2003-2005), Erik Meyer (2005-2011), Walt Gaber (2012-2024), and Bryan Timm (2024-present).

“We believe art feeds the Spirit” is the organization’s credo, born from Martin Luther’s theology of music. We extend this credo to amplify all art and educational presentations.

What We Do

LMCCS makes memory experiences of the performing arts and lectures available to the Erie community. All events are free and open to the public and take place in the inspiring architectural setting of Luther Memorial Church. With a focus on uplifting and providing a performance venue for local talent, this series has also included such prestigious national performances such as Virgil Fox, The Concordia College Choir, Paul Manz, Mainstreet Brass, James Jordanare, and Somar Dance Works. The series has been in operation since 1980, and is funded through the generosity of season subscribers and free-will offerings.

“We believe art feeds the spirit”

The Concert/Cultural Series offers members and visitors to Luther Memorial Church a wealth of opportunities to gather in fellowship, experience moving and inspirational performances, and enrich our understanding of the world and community around us.

Support

The series is self-funded through the generosity of individuals, local businesses, free-will offerings, and regional arts grants. All donations to the Luther Memorial Concert Series / Luther Memorial Cultural Series are tax-deductible under

501 (c)3 status.





October 26, 2025

Program

Clair de lune

Claudes Debussy (1862-1918)
(arr. by Glen Cortese)

Pavane pour une infante défunte

Maurice Ravel (1862-1918)
(arr. by Glen Cortese)

Fern Hill (1960)

John Corigliano (b. 1938)

Mezzo Soprano: Ashley Zielesinski
Fredonia Chamber Choir

~Intermission~

Symphony #29 in A Major, K. 201

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andante
- III. Menuetto: Allegretto—Trio
- IV. Allegro con spirit



Glen Cortese

Artistic Director/Conductor

GLEN CORTESE begins his seventh season as

Artistic Director of the Schenectady- Saratoga

Symphony Orchestra, his twentieth season as Artistic Director of the Western

New York Chamber and his third season as Artistic Director of the Catskill

Symphony Orchestra. He completed twelve successful seasons as music director

of the Greeley Philharmonic and was also named music director emeritus of the

Oregon Mozart Players after serving as artistic director for nine seasons. His recent guest engagements have included the Orquestra Reial Cercle Artístic (Barcelona), Symphoria (Syracuse), the Eugene Opera, Madison Lyric Stage, The Three Tenors Concert in Tirana Albania to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the independence of Kososvo, RTSH Radio Orchestra (Albania) Emerald City Opera, Opera Fort Collins, Wolfrap Opera, The Charleston Symphony, the Sapporo Festival Orchestra, the Slovak Radio Orchestra the Sofia Philharmonic, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the Mexico City Philharmonic, Colorado Springs Philharmonic, the Paducah Symphony Orchestra, the Lafayette Symphony, the Billings Symphony, the Lyric Opera of Cleveland, and the Annapolis Symphony. He was resident conductor and artistic administrator of the Florida Philharmonic for the 2001–2002 season and completed twelve seasons at the Manhattan School of Music where he was principal conductor from 1988 to 2000. He has appeared as guest conductor both in the United States and abroad with the Symphonies of New Jersey, Florida Philharmonic, Austin, Mexico City Philharmonic, North Carolina, Colorado Springs, Bangor, Meridian, Queens, New Amsterdam, The New Orleans Philharmonic, the International Chamber Orchestra, the Belarus Sate Philharmonic, Sofia Philharmonic National Romanian Radio Orchestra, Noorhollands Philharmonisch, Orquesta Sinfonica Carlos Chavez, San Francisco Conservatory, Cleveland Institute, and the Altenburg Landeskappele Orchestra. Mr. Cortese covered as assistant conductor to the New York Philharmonic in 1990–92 for Zubin Mehta, Leonard Slatkin, Charles Dutoit, Yuri Temirkanov, Erich Leinsdorf, Zdenek Macal and Cristof Perick. In July of 1993, he was invited by Kurt Masur to guest conduct a reading with the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall.

In August of 1994, Mr. Cortese began his tenure as music director of the East-West International Symphony Orchestra in Altenburg, Germany, a position that he held for seven years. He conducted over fifty concerts and two operas in seven seasons with the orchestra, made up of advanced conservatory students from ten different nations. His work at the Manhattan School of Music included the school's debut performances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and City Center as well as the MSM Orchestra's first performance on "Live from Lincoln Center". He received the honor of "Recording of the Month" in STEREOPHILE magazine for his release of Mahler's Sixth Symphony with the Manhattan School on Titanic Records. His recording of Mahler's Third Symphony with the Manhattan School was called "a remarkable achievement" in the American Record Guide.

In the opera and music theater world he has conducted *Turn of the Screw*, *Beatrice and Benedict*, *Candide*, *Little Women*, *Othello*, *West Side Story*, *Phantom*, *Les Misérables* and *My Fair Lady* in the last several seasons. In 2011 he conducted the world premiere of John Musto's new opera, "The Inspector" at the Wolftrap Opera, and his other opera credits include guest conductor with the Eugene Opera, Florida Grand Opera, New York City Opera, the Cleveland Lyric Opera, the Maryland Opera Studio, the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival Opera Theater, the Manhattan School Opera Theater, and the East West International Opera Theater. Mr. Cortese's credits in the world of dance include performances with the Connecticut Ballet, Joffrey II Ballet, the Elisa Monte Dance Company and the SUNY Purchase Dance Corps. He appeared regularly for five years as conductor for the Erick Hawkins Dance Company at Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the Joyce Theatre and on national tours. He has conducted at numerous summer festivals including Chautauqua, Bowdoin Summer Music Festival, American Dance Festival, The New York Music Institute, Sewanee Music Festival and the Brevard Music Center. He has conducted performances of large collaborative projects including chorus, orchestra and dance at Carnegie Hall, as well as having performed in virtually every major performance venue in New York.

His work in education is extensive, conducting community outreach programs, educational concerts and children's videos on classical music. Mr. Cortese has conducted concerti and solo works with many renowned performers, including Martha Argerich, Ransom Wilson, Sharon Isbin, Ruth Laredo, Nathaniel Rosen, Glenn Dieterow, Silvia McNair, Mignon Dunn and Dawn Upshaw. A strong advocate of new music, he has conducted over 150 premieres and has worked in direct collaboration with composers such as Milton Babbitt, Elliott Carter, John Corigliano, George Crumb, Richard Danielpour, Peter Maxwell Davies, Lukas Foss, Hans Werner Henze, and Ralph Shapey. In June of 1993 through 2000, he was the eight-time recipient of the ASCAP New and Adventuresome Programming Award for his work at the Manhattan School. Mr. Cortese is also an accomplished composer and winner of numerous awards including the Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a two-time winner of the Joseph E. Bearns Prize, and a CAPS Grant from the New York Council on the Arts. He is also the recipient of the Arthur Judson Foundation Award for a Young American Conductor and his discography includes recordings on the Bridge, Titanic, Newport Classics, Phoenix, Owl, CMS and Le Crepuscule du Disc labels.

Ashley Zielezinski

Graduate Student Conductor/
Mezzo Soprano

Ashley Zielezinski, hailing from Buffalo, NY, is a first-year master's student in Music Performance with a focus on Choral Conducting, having recently graduated from SUNY Fredonia with a bachelor's degree in Music Education. Ashley has made appearances with the Hillman Opera, performing in their 2023 production of *Die Fledermaus* as Rosalinde and the 2024 production of *Così fan tutte* as Dorabella. Ashley has participated in other productions at Fredonia, including the Student Opera Theater Association's Grand Night of Singing and the association's Opera Scenes, performing as Avery in *For Want of a Top* as well as Cunegonde in *Candide*. Her concert credits include performing as the soprano soloist in Vivaldi's Gloria with the Western New York Chamber Orchestra and performing with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, singing in the choir for Verdi's Requiem and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. She is proud to have studied voice with James Harrington, and has worked with coaches such as Anne Kissel, Don Marrazzo, and Nathalie Doucet.

Clair De Lune, L. 82

Claudes Debussy (1862-1918)

While others, notably Franz Liszt, were on the forefront of stylistic change during the nineteenth century, it is surely Claude Debussy who forever established entirely new ways of thinking about the fundamental ways of defining and composing music in Western culture. More than anyone, he truly was the father of much of the philosophical basis for the complete turnover in musical art that defined the twentieth century. And, along the way, he composed some of the most original, creative, and dare we say, beautiful music in the repertoire. His name, of course, is indelibly linked with what is popularly called "musical impressionism," but that doesn't really specifically tell you much. What you may say is that he largely worked within a musical style that made little use of so many of the characteristics of a musical tradition that really dominated the concert halls of the 18th and 19th centuries. Most of us are familiar with concepts such as sonata form; development; key relationships; major and minor tonalities, with their respective scales, counterpoint, fugues, and especially "developing" musical ideas in an ongoing linear fashion. As dominant as these procedures were, Debussy saw others ways of creating and working with musical ideas. His specifically French way of looking at things was quite a contrast to the ideas and methods of the German-speaking composers (all names we know so well!) that had dominated concert halls for a couple of centuries. There was opera, to be sure, and Italians had always held sway there, but in abstract music (no words) the Germans were generally king. Along comes Debussy with a refreshing alternative aesthetic.

In a nutshell Debussy was not much interested in systems of musical composition, wherein each part—large or small—had a rational, expected, and traditional relationships to every other part. Rather, he focused upon listening to musical sounds in new ways—considering them just for their intrinsic sound, and not how they might fit into a hierarchy as a mere building block.

He opened up new ways of composing and listening, and the musical world was changed forever.

The universally loved “Claire de lune” is the third movement of a suite for solo piano entitled, Suite bergamasque, which Debussy began composing in 1890, when he was twenty-eight years old. So, it’s a relatively early work, giving us some insight into his development as a composer. When the suite was published in 1905, Debussy had revised it somewhat. Its four movements—after their titles (or original titles)—allude to dances of the distant past, but the more relevant association is with the work of the symbolist poet, Paul Verlaine. Debussy left no doubt that his creative life was heavily influenced by both literature and painting—even expressing some regret for not having become a painter rather than a musician. And while the “impressionism” of painting is clear as a metaphor for much of his musical work, it is basic to understanding his musical psyche to appreciate the influence that the “symbolist” poets—Verlaine, Mallarmé, and others—had in his style. Beginning during his student years Debussy had composed a series of melodies (songs), many of which were set to texts by Verlaine, whose poetry Debussy later used for many of his major compositions. Suite bergamasque takes its name from an allusion in Verlaine’s poem, “Claire de lune,” and, of course, the title of the poem is also the title of the evergreen third movement of Debussy’s suite. The movement has no other meaning than that of a delicate evocation of the idea in the title. Fundamental to the “sound” of French music of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is the delicate blend of orchestra colors that unequivocally suggests “Debussy” and “Ravel” to concert audiences. Arthur Luck—a former member and librarian of the Philadelphia Orchestra—has masterfully recreated that sound in this artful arrangement of the familiar piano work.

—Wm. E. Runyan

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Pavane pour une infante défunte

Maurice Ravel (1862-1918)

Pavane pour une infante defunte (Pavane for a Dead Princess) was commissioned of the 24-year-old Ravel in 1899 as a

somewhat whimsical salon piece for piano and premiered in 1902 by Ricardo Vines to much acclaim. The composer was a bit bewildered by the work's popularity, but nonetheless orchestrated it in 1910 to even greater success. With the Pavane, by contrast, we see his love of older musical forms from the Renaissance, in this case a moderately paced court dance. He chose the title because he was fond of the sonority of the French words ("infante defunte") and the piece was not meant to be a funeral lament for a child. Rather, Ravel hoped to evoke the scene of a young Spanish princess delighting in this stately dance in quiet reverie, as would have been painted by Velazquez in the Spanish court. What the Pavane gives us is Ravel's gift for exquisite melody and his mastery of orchestration. Its perfectly balanced sections between strings, woodwinds and golden glowing brass create a quiescent, inner-splendor; dance-like but meditative. Ravel's cleverness with pizzicato propels the dance along with graceful but slightly shuffling feet; the harp glissandos swoop with the young dancer's lifting arms.

Program Notes by Max Derrickson

**Western New York
Chamber Orchestra**

Artistic Director/ Conductor:	Glen Cortese
Violin 1:	Jonathan Moser Mary Moser Noah Grossbard Charles Johnson Jessica Anthony
Violin 2:	Jenna Noreck Isabella Giraldo Marley Crane Francisco Corthey
Viola:	Josh Corwin Samuel Valentin Jenna Reppenhagen
Cello:	Bryan Eckenrode Jonah Albert Amanda Andrews
Bass:	Anders P. Lewis Jared Reinard
Flute/Piccolo:	Nicole Zenns
Oboe:	Paul Schlossman Christine Ford
Clarinet:	Andrea Runfolo
Bassoon:	Fred Albrecht
French Horn:	Dan Wittmer Katelyn Fridmann
Harp:	Cristen Kalinowski

**Fredonia
Chamber Choir**

Conductor:	Dr. Vernon Huff
Graduate	
Student Conductor:	Ashley Zielezinski
Soprano:	Sara Kidane Emma McLaughlin Hannah Rich Kayla Sorensen Mia Sorgi Miranda Wilcox Ashley Zielezinski
Alto:	Madeline DeJoy Ashlyn Dugdale Meridith McIntyre Kaitlin Owen Margaret Shafer Reganae Walters
Tenor:	Zachary Brudz Jude Chiarella Sean Mahon Zach Formhals Jacob McAvaney
Bass:	Zechariah Beckett Jackson Kelly Dakota Morrison Gunnar Nowicki Adrian Otero Dominic Townsend

Fern Hill (1960)

John Corigliano (b. 1938)

Text for “Fern Hill” by Dylan Thomas

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green
The night above the dingle starry
Time let me hail and climb
Golden in the heydays of his eyes
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
Trail with daisies and barley
Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home
In the sun that is young once only
Time let me play and be
Golden in the mercy of his means
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold
And the Sabbath rang slowly
In the pebbles of the holy streams

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass
And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into the dark

I first encountered Dylan Thomas' work in 1959, my last undergraduate year at Columbia College. It was a revelation. Both the sound and structures of Thomas's words were astonishingly musical. Not by accident, either: "What the words meant was of secondary importance; what matters was the sound of them...these words were as the notes of bells, the sounds of musical instruments," he wrote in his Poetic Manifesto of 1951. I was irresistibly drawn to translate his music into mine.

One poem captivated me: Fern Hill, about the poet's "young and easy" summers at his family's farm of the same name. I wanted to write this work as a gift for my high-school music teacher, Mrs. Bella Tillis, who first encouraged my musical ambitions. She introduced Fern Hill with piano accompanying her (and, once, my) school choir.

Fern Hill is a blithe poem, yet touched by darkness; time finally holds the poet "green and dying," but the poem itself, formally just an BA song extended into a wide arch, sings joyously of youth and its keen perceptions. I set it for mezzo-soprano solo, chorus, and orchestra, aiming to match the forthright lyricism of the text. (The direction "with simplicity" is everywhere in the printed score.)

- John Corigliano



Symphony #29 in A major K. 201

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Mozart was perhaps the most musically gifted individual western civilization has ever produced. Some say he was an angel

sent from heaven to dazzle and entertain us, and to bestow upon us a divine gift of incomparable celestial beauty. Indeed his middle name, Amadeus, means one loved by God. In an attempt to transcend the limits of words, one enthusiastic scholar said, "When the angels sing for God, they sing Bach, but when the angels sing for themselves, they sing Mozart -- and God eavesdrops."

This supernatural metaphor, although appropriate in its hyperbole, may be factually doubtful, but there is no argument against the proposition that if one wanted to demonstrate to a newly arrived friend from another planet why we use the words simplicity, clarity, balance, grace, and symmetry in connection with the classical music of the late 18th Century, one might just introduce that person to the symphony we'll hear tonight.

Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria to ride the rising cultural, social, political, economic, and artistic tsunami created by the Enlightenment. The age into which he was born was highly musical, an age in which his wide-ranging genius could find the stimuli and the support it needed

to develop and to flourish. It was also an age with sufficient wealth and disposable income to remunerate those involved in live art music. Thus, Mozart was the right person in the right place at the right time. To him, music was a fourth dimension, a seamless extension of the natural world, as inevitable and necessary to him as the sea is to the dolphin, or the air to the eagle.

Mozart was the son of Leopold Mozart, himself an accomplished musician who spent most of his life promoting and living off the earnings of his talented children. When Wolfgang was just three years old, he taught himself to play the keyboard by watching his father teach his seven year-old sister, Nannerl. At four, Mozart began to write his own pieces. At six, he taught himself to play the violin. By eight, he was turning out symphonies, and at twelve, he wrote his first full-length opera, twelve!

To give you an idea of the acute quality of his musical ear, how's this? In Rome, during Holy Week, the Papal Choir performed in the Sistine Chapel a sacred piece called the Misereri by Gregorio Allegri, a complex contrapuntal composition. A papal decree forbade its performance anywhere else, and the only existing copy of the work was kept secret and jealously guarded by the Church. Any attempt to reproduce the work in any form was punishable by excommunication, a severe consequence in the 18th Century. A fourteen-year-old Mozart attended the performance of Misereri and then went home and accurately copied down the entire score, note for note. When the Pope found out what Mozart had done, instead of excommunicating him, the Pope rewarded him with the Cross of the Order of the Golden Spur, a high honor in the Catholic Church.

By the time he wrote his twenty-ninth symphony, at the age of 18, Mozart had attained his full maturity as a composer. This symphony is an example of the perfection of style, structure, and musical expression for which he is revered. It is a diamond without a flaw, so much so that I won't venture to defile it with words. It just seems to happen the way an orchid flowers from a bud. Every note and every phrase seems inevitable, yet musicians will tell you it is very difficult to play precisely because it demands from a musician the same degree of artistic excellence with which it was composed. I will say that the fourth movement is an example of "la chasse", or "the hunt", movements of which the 18th Century hunting nobility was enamored. Hence, the characteristic horn calls.

SUNDAY
November 2, 2025
4:00 PM



Fauré's Requiem
In Context

Rev. Jay Mitchell, Presider
Dr. Christopher Petit, Maestro
Cantor Bryan Timm, F.A.I.O., Organ
with
Mercyhurst University Concert Choir
and guests

Join us for a memorable afternoon of ecumenical collaboration among Mercyhurst University, Luther Memorial and the NWPA ELCA Synod as we gather to celebrate those who have come before us.

The afternoon will highlight beautiful music with the artistic liturgical context for which the music was written.

The event is free to the public and open to all – we hope to see you there!



***Luther Memorial Concert and Cultural Series
extends its appreciation to all donors and patrons
who make this free programming possible through
their generous donations and support!***

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Allan Slovenkay***

**If you would like to be a benefactor or part of our programming committee,
please see Cantor Bryan**

Our mission is to have our children grow:



In wisdom (academically), in stature (physically), in favor with God (spiritually), in favor with others (socially) to ensure they become a positive asset to our community and to themselves.

Luther Memorial Academy offers a superior academic education where students are surrounded by a Christian atmosphere. We encourage a child's special interests and abilities and provide a courteous and respectful environment. We offer music, art, physical education, health, Spanish, and library classes.

Our school day begins at 8:15 a.m. and runs until 2:25 p.m. We offer a Before School Program that begins at 7:30 a.m. and an After School Program that ends at 5:30 p.m. Charges do apply.

We encourage you to call our office and set up a personal tour of our school. Shadow days are also welcome if you would like your child to get a feel for our typical school day and meet their future classmates! Call Luther Memorial Academy at **814.454.0106** and set up your tour today!