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# Summer Sundays

PRESENTS

## *Broadway in Love*

From Cautionary Tales to Happily Ever Afters

June 29, 2025 | 3:00 p.m.  
Bethany Lutheran Church  
76 W Crystal Lake Ave

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### **“Tonight at Eight”** FROM *She Loves Me* (1963)

by Jerry Bock (music) & Sheldon Harnick (lyrics)

Aaron Knodle, tenor | Ayesha Chetty, piano

Based on the 1937 play *Parfumerie* by Hungarian playwright Miklós László, *She Loves Me*, is “set in the 1930s in Budapest. The plot revolves around people who work in Maraczek’s Parfumerie, principally the constantly squabbling sales clerk Amalia Balash and the manager Georg Nowack. It is soon revealed that they are anonymous romantic pen pals who agree to meet one night at the Café Imperiale, though neither knows the other’s identity. In “Tonight at Eight,” Georg anxiously awaits their first face to face meeting.” – Richard Walters

### **“When Words Fail”** FROM *Shrek the Musical* (2008)

by Jeanine Tesori (music) & D. Lindsay-Abaire (lyrics)

Aaron Knodle, tenor | Ayesha Chetty, piano

*Shrek the Musical* is based on the 2001 DreamWorks Animation film *Shrek*, along with elements of its sequels: *Shrek 2*, *Shrek Forever After*, and William Steig's 1990 book *Shrek!*. The plot revolves around an embittered ogre named Shrek who, when he finds his swamp overrun with fairy tale creatures, reluctantly teams up with Donkey and makes a deal with an oppressive ruler, Lord Farquaad, to rescue Princess Fiona, with whom Shrek eventually falls in love with, in order to regain control of his (Shrek’s) swamp. “When Words Fail” features Shrek, who is finally beginning to come out of his caustic, protective shell, trying to find the (literal) words to explain his feelings for and to Fiona.

## **“Finishing the Hat” FROM *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984)**

by Stephen Sondheim (music & lyrics)

Aaron Knodle, tenor | Ayesha Chetty, piano

Inspired by George Seurat’s famous painting, “A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte,” which resides in the Art Institute of Chicago, *Sunday in the Park with George* “is an intimate and personal musical concerned with the creative process itself, its obsessions, consequences, and rewards.” In “Finishing the Hat,” George expresses the inner conflict between his undaunted, driving commitment to his work as an artist and his love for the woman he ultimately loses because of his inability to see beyond his painting. – Richard Walters

## **“Take Me to the World” FROM *Evening Primrose* (1966)**

by Stephen Sondheim (music & lyrics)

Ayesha Chetty, soprano | Aaron Knodle, tenor & piano

“Evening Primrose” is a lesser known work by Stephen Sondheim, and was the 9th episode of the TV series *ABC Stage 67*. The premise of the story is that there are people living in a department store who believe that if they try to leave they will be “taken” by the Dark Men. “Take Me to the World” is a duet between Charles, a poet who’s recently taken refuge in the department store, and Ella, a young woman who’s lived in the department store since she got separated from her mother there at the age of 6. In the song, “Ella persuades a reluctant Charles to leave the hidden, safe existence in the store...but their plans are overheard and the Dark Men pursue them as they attempt to escape. Ella and Charles are [ultimately] caught and as punishment turned into mannequins.” – Richard Walters

## **“Not a Day Goes By” FROM *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981)**

by Stephen Sondheim (music & lyrics)

Ayesha Chetty, soprano | Aaron Knodle, piano

*Merrily We Roll Along* is based on the 1934 play of the same name by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart. The plot revolves around Frank Shepard, a famous songwriter and eventual film producer. The show is told backwards across 20 years, detailing (in reverse) Frank’s rise from a penniless dreamy-eyed composer to a wealthy film-producing sell-out, and what he lost to get there. Sung by Beth, Frank’s first wife, who is divorcing him for his infidelity, “Not a Day Goes By” expresses Beth’s mixed feelings for Frank that she cannot escape all while they are engaged in a custody battle over their son.

## **“The Glamorous Life” FROM *A Little Night Music* (1973)**

by Stephen Sondheim (music & lyrics)

Ayesha Chetty, soprano | Aaron Knodle, piano

*A Little Night Music* was inspired by the 1955 Ingmar Bergman film *Smiles of a Summer Night* and revolves around the romantic lives of several couples. In the original Broadway production “The Glamorous Life” was an ensemble number, but it was rewritten as a solo for the 1977 screen version of the musical. In the solo version of the song (heard today), Frederika, neglected by her actress mother, tries to reconcile her feelings of missing her mother, while convincing herself that having a parent who leads a glamorous life is far more exciting than having an ordinary one.

## **“Could I Leave You?” FROM *Follies* (1971)**

by Stephen Sondheim (music & lyrics)

Ayesha Chetty, soprano | Aaron Knodle, piano

*Follies* centers on a crumbling Broadway theater, now scheduled for demolition, previously home to a musical revue (based on the *Ziegfeld Follies*). The musical follows a reunion of the Weismann Girls who performed during the interwar period. Several of the former showgirls perform their old numbers, often accompanied by the ghosts of their younger selves. The music in the show offers a pastiche of 1920s and 1930s musical styles, purposefully evoking a nostalgic tone. “Could I Leave You?” follows a tense moment with Phyllis and her husband Ben over their unhappy marriage. The song features Phyllis considering Ben’s request for a divorce, recalling different aspects of their failing marriage.

## **“For Good” FROM *Wicked* (2003)**

by Stephen Schwartz (music & lyrics)

Ayesha Chetty, soprano | Nichole Nordschow, soprano | Aaron Knodle, piano

*Wicked* or, more fully, *Wicked: The Untold Story of the Witches of Oz* is loosely adapted from Gregor Maguire’s 1995 novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, which in turn is based on L. Frank Baum’s 1900 novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (and its 1939 film adaption). The musical *Wicked* explores the complex friendship between Elphaba (who becomes the Wicked Witch of the West) and Galinda (who becomes Glinda, the Good Witch of the North). Their relationship is complicated, tested by their contrasting personalities, conflicting viewpoints, shared love interest, reactions to the corrupt rule of the Wizard of Oz, and ultimately, Elphaba’s tragic fall. Occurring during a tearful “goodbye”, “For Good” addresses the relationship between two close friends and the impact they have had on each other.

## **“Much More” FROM *The Fantasticks* (1960)**

by Harvey Schmidt (music) & Tom Jones (lyrics)

Nichole Nordschow, soprano | Aaron Knodle, piano

*The Fantasticks* tells an allegorical story, loosely based on the 1894 play *The Romancers* (*Les Romanesques*) by Edmond Rostand, concerning two neighboring fathers who trick their children, Luisa and Matt, into falling in love by pretending to feud. The song “Much More” features Luisa fantasizing about the experiences she wants to have in her life.

## **“Burn” FROM *Hamilton: An American Musical* (2015)**

by Lin-Manuel Miranda (music & lyrics)

Nichole Nordschow, soprano | Aaron Knodle, piano

*Hamilton* is based on the 2004 biography *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow. The musical covers the life of American Founding Father Alexander Hamilton, his involvement in the American Revolution, and the early political history of the United States. In a desperate attempt to save his political career, Hamilton publishes an affair (that is actually historically infamous) he had in the Reynolds Pamphlet, which destroys his own reputation as well as his relationship with Eliza, his spouse. The song “Burn” features Eliza, in brokenhearted retaliation, burning all the letters Hamilton ever wrote to her.

## **“What I Did for Love” FROM *A Chorus Line* (1975)**

by Marvin Hamlisch (music) & Edward Kleban (lyrics)

Nichole Nordschow, soprano | Aaron Knodle, piano

*A Chorus Line* is centered on 17 Broadway dancers auditioning for 8 spots in a (literal) chorus line. The musical provides glimpses into the personalities of the performers (and the choreographer), as they describe the events that have shaped their lives and their decisions to become dancers. “What I Did for Love” occurs during the penultimate scene of the production where one of the auditioning dancers suffers a career-ending injury and the remaining dancers are asked what they would do if they could no longer dance. Diana (one of the auditionees), in reply, sings her response, which considers loss philosophically coupled with an undefeated optimism.

## **“Maria” FROM *West Side Story* (1957)**

by Leonard Bernstein (music) & Stephen Sondheim (lyrics)

Sean Watland, tenor | Ayesha Chetty, piano

*West Side Story* is “loosely based on William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Gangs rule the streets of the west side of New York City in the 1950s, before the area was revitalized with the construction of Lincoln Center in the 1960s.” Two rival gangs center the story. The Jets (who are Americans) are in a hate-filled rivalry with The Sharks (who are Puerto Ricans). Tony, a former Jet, meets Maria, a sister of one of the Sharks. Upon their meeting they instantly fall in love and, after a dance, Tony sings of his new love in “Maria.” – Richard Walters

## **“Not While I’m Around” FROM *Sweeney Todd* (1979)**

by Stephen Sondheim (music & lyrics)

Sean Watland, tenor | Ayesha Chetty, piano

*Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* or, more simply, *Sweeney Todd* is based on Christopher Bond’s 1970 play *Sweeney Todd*, which in turn is based on a character that appeared in the story *The String of Pearls* in 1846–47 in a Victorian-era print magazine known as “penny dreadfuls.” Bond and subsequently Sondheim introduced a, not previously existent, backstory and motivation for the (infamous) murderous barber in their interpretations. In “Not While I’m Around,” the “simple Tobias (Toby) senses Todd’s evil and naively pledges to protect Mrs. Lovett [from Todd], who is maternally affectionate [towards] the boy.” – Richard Walters

## **“If I Didn’t Believe in You” FROM *The Last Five Years* (2001)**

by Jason Robert Brown (music & lyrics)

Sean Watland, tenor | Ayesha Chetty, piano

Inspired by Jason Robert Brown’s own failed marriage with Theresa O’Neill, *The Last Five Years* explores the five-year relationship between Jamie, a rising novelist, and Cathy, a struggling actress. In the musical, Jamie’s story is told in chronological order (starting just after the couple have first met) and Cathy’s story is told in reverse chronological order (beginning at the end of their marriage). The characters do not directly interact except for a song in the middle of the show when their story timelines intersect. In “If I Didn’t Believe in You” Jamie is fighting with Cathy accusing her of being unsupportive of his career because hers is failing. Despite harsh words, Jamie promises Cathy that he still believes in her.

**Thank you for joining us today! *Musicking* is a collective process that involves everyone!**

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The entirety of today's free-will donation will be directly donated to **Youth and Family Center of McHenry County (YFC)**. YFC, located in the city of McHenry, is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides a range of services for youth and families in McHenry County, including youth programs, adult education, bicultural support, and community gardening.



There are baskets to place your free-will donation in as you leave the sanctuary today, but you can also donate electronically. Scan the **above** QR code and be sure to choose "Summer Sundays Freewill Offering" as the selected fund.

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Please, come back and join us for more **Summer Sundays 2025!**

- August 3 @ 3:00 p.m. – Crystal Keys Trio in Concert
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**A huge thank-you goes out to...**

- The staff and volunteers at Bethany Lutheran Church!
  - Clara Solak (lights, sound, PowerPoint)!
  - Today's performing artists as well as their friends, family, and partners!
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A special note goes out to **The Bethany Arts Series** for underwriting today's artists!

Thank you for your unwavering support of the arts!

If you would like to learn more about The Bethany Arts Series or become a sponsor, please scan the **below** QR code or check out Bethany Lutheran Church's website.



If you have questions about The Bethany Arts Series or want to get on their mailing list, please reach out to Cynara Pierzina ([cynara.pierzina@gmail.com](mailto:cynara.pierzina@gmail.com)).

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"Art is a nation's most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves and to others the inner vision which guides us as a nation. And where there is no vision, the people perish."

– Lyndon Johnson, on signing into existence the National Endowment on the Arts

## Meet today's artists

**Dr. Ayesha Chetty** is a social scientist whose primary research interests lie at the intersection of race, gender, and culture. She currently works as a researcher at M+R, doing audience research and message testing for a range of progressive nonprofits around the U.S., and is the collaborative pianist at Bethany Lutheran Church. Ayesha holds a PhD in sociology from the University of Cincinnati and is a classically trained pianist and singer holding an Associate and Licentiate in piano performance from Trinity College London.

**Dr. Aaron Knodle** is Director of Worship & Music at Bethany Lutheran Church where he plays the church's Clarence Agnes Carlson Memorial organ, and conducts the Bethany Choir and Bell Canto Ringers. Aaron has degrees in organ performance, music education, sacred music, and choral conducting from Luther College, Boston University, and the University of Cincinnati – College-Conservatory of Music.

**Nichole Nordschow** has a BA from Luther College where she studied Vocal Performance, and pursued her MM at Florida State University where she studied Opera performance. Currently, she is working for the TJX Companies as a retail store manager and performs lullabies nightly for her two-year-old son.

**Sean Watland** is a Chicago-based tenor. He has a BME from Valparaiso University and an MM in Choral Conducting from Boston University (2017). Sean sings with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, the Grant Park Music Festival Chorus, and is in the Schola at Episcopal Church of the Atonement. Sean has sung as a soloist with the Bach Institute at Valparaiso, the William Ferris Chorale, the Boston Choral Ensemble, and with Marsh Chapel at Boston University—including as a soloist on their recording of James Kallenberg's *Most Sacred Body*.