

OUR GENEROUS DONORS

SUPPORTING IN-SCHOOL WORKSHOPS, CONCERTS, AND THE ELLEN C. BRUNER PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM

(July 1, 2024 – January 18, 2025)

Maestro's Circle - \$2,500+

Phil Bruner
Mahtomedi Area Educational Foundation
(in-kind services)

Concert Master Circle - \$500 - \$999

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Joe & Julie McGraw | Rhiannon & Scott O'Connor

Patron - \$250 - \$499

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Julie & Joe Molitor | Ben & Carolyn Opps
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Celia Wirth Computer Services (in-kind services)

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WILDWOOD
ARTIST
SERIES



Simple Gifts
Music with

BILLY MCLAUGHLIN

presents

The Young and the Rest...

Saturday, January 25, 2025

Chautauqua Fine Arts Center
8000 75th Street North, Mahtomedi, Minnesota

The Wildwood Artist Series is a committee of the
Mahtomedi Area Educational Foundation (MAEF)



ABOUT THE WILDWOOD ARTIST SERIES



The Wildwood Artist Series, a committee of Mahtomedi Area Education Foundation (MAEF), enhances the education of Mahtomedi

Public School students by collaborating with our music faculty to provide impactful performing arts experiences.

Recently we asked our teachers for their “wish lists” for the students at our schools...

To see the wish lists and make a tax-deductible donation, please scan the QR code below.



WILDWOOD ARTIST SERIES VOLUNTEERS

David Bennett	Member at Large
Staci Bennett	MHS Band/Choir Liaison
Julie Conzemius	Music faculty representative
Donna Ernster	Member at Large
Roxanne Hardy	Member at Large
Liz Kasper	Graphic Designer
Julie Molitor	Committee Chair
Rhiannon O'Connor	Ticket Chair and Promotions
Rob Pontious	Music faculty representative
Tony Vosooney	Treasurer
Celia Wirth	Website

To learn more, contact Julie at info.wildwoodartistseries@gmail.com.



THE ELLEN C. BRUNER PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Ellie Bruner founded the Wildwood Artist Series in 1990. Under her leadership, WAS initiated the Wildwood Artist Series Professional Performing Artist Residency Program which funds extended residencies by professional performing artists (clinicians, composers, arrangers and artists of various cultural backgrounds) to work closely with students in the Mahtomedi school district. With your generous support, WAS is currently able to offer one residency per year that rotates around the four schools. Ultimately, we would like to be able to provide a variety of residency experiences for each student throughout their school career. Here is the list of talented individuals who have enriched our music programs thus far:

IN-SCHOOL ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

2016-2017	Ross Sutter at Wildwood Elementary
2017-2018	J.D. Steele at OH Anderson Elementary
2018-2019	Dr. Scott Agster with Mahtomedi Middle and High School Bands
2019-2020	Kyle Pederson with Mahtomedi Middle And High School Choirs
2020-2021	James Hersch at Wildwood Elementary
2021-2022	Peter Mayer at OH Anderson Elementary
2022-2023	Sowah Mensah at Mahtomedi Middle
2024-2025	Songwriting with James Hersch – Wildwood Elementary School

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Billy McLaughlin, Acoustic Guitar



Known for his harp-like guitar playing technique he calls “finger tapping,” McLaughlin is an American original – an international performing and recording artist who has achieved Billboard’s Top-Ten Chart. Several years ago, the award-winning guitar virtuoso began struggling to play his own music. Searching in vain through countless therapies, he was

finally diagnosed with a yet-to-be-cured neuromuscular disorder called Focal Dystonia. After enduring the loss of all he ever dreamed of, McLaughlin did what for many would be unthinkable — if not impossible — he taught himself to play left-handed. His remarkable story is captured in two award winning documentary films: *Changing Keys: Billy McLaughlin and the Mysteries of Dystonia* and two-time Emmy Award winning *Starry Night – Billy McLaughlin with Orchestra Nova* which aired on PBS stations. His triumphant comeback concert was also filmed by WWE camera-crew volunteers who captured Billy’s historic return for a DVD titled *Coming Back Alive*. Billy currently serves as the Ambassador of Awareness for the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation and is a founding member of the American Brain Foundation. See more at his website: billymclaughlin.com.



Billy Oehrlein, Percussion

Billy sings and plays drums and ornamental percussive instruments. He started playing drums at age six and graduated to a professional musician. He has performed regionally and nationally in the US, and in Europe. Billy toured with WHEELS for several years sharing

stages with Randy Travis, Alabama, The Oak Ridge Boys, Marie Osmond, Juice Newton, and made regular appearances at the WE FEST country music festival. Billy has done numerous recording sessions and performed regularly with national recording artists Tina and the B-Sides, Billy McLaughlin, and most recently Jeff Arundel.



Carin Vagle, Vocals

Carin Vagle is a vocalist and visual artist living in Minneapolis. She is a founding member of Sofia music group and a vocalist at St Joan of Arc church in South Minneapolis. Her singing and visual work takes you on a journey of soul cleansing and heart-felt sacred story.



Laura MacKenzie, Flutes, Whistles, Concertina, Bagpipes

Laura has been recognized as a master folk artist and has received numerous honors and performing arts awards for her participation and dedication in this realm of music, including being selected for the original *Cherish the Ladies* series,

featuring noted women in Irish music in America. More recently, Laura was awarded both Bush Foundation and McKnight performing arts fellowships. Laura performs and teaches on an array of wind-powered instruments, including wooden flutes, whistles, concertina, Scottish smallpipes, Border greatpipes, French cornemuse, medieval greatpipes, gemshorn and voice. In addition to solo performance, Laura’s ensembles include *Brass Lassie*, *Ross & MacKenzie*, *Northern Gael*, *Willow Brae* (harp and winds) and her duo with Dáithí Sproule. Laura’s recordings can be purchased at her website: lauramackenzie.com



Karen Paurus, Vocals

Karen Vieno Paurus has performed locally, nationally and internationally since 1986 with such local bands as *Holiday Ranch* and *BUG!*. Her first solo CD, “*Passion, Prayer and Poison*” is available on iTunes, CD Baby and other online stores. Paurus

has also performed regularly as the featured musical guest in the Fitzgerald Theater’s productions of “*Stage Sessions*” in 2006-07. She was also a featured musical guest on the Fitzgerald Theater’s “*Talking Volumes*” series. She’s appeared with Colleen Kruse at the *Historic Pantages*, and wrote the score for the sold-out *Bryant-Lake Bowl Theatre’s* productions of “*Thirty Days in Frogtown.*” Paurus has performed/recorded with Billy McLaughlin, Willie Wisely, Stuart Davis, Peter Mayer, Dan Schwartz, Jeff Arundel and others. She has also performed live on “*A Prairie Home Companion,*” MPR, Cities 97, KBEM, Radio K, and various stations around the nation.



Amy Courts, Vocals, Melodica

Singer-songwriter Amy Courts has been performing live since she was a small girl touring with her family in Denver, CO. After graduating college in 2003, she spent eight years in Nashville, TN where she independently released two critically acclaimed pop and alternative folk

albums. After moving to Minneapolis with her family in 2011, Amy continued with her solo work while also leading worship and playing with various local bands. She joined *Simple Gifts* in 2014, and two years later released her third album with her husband Paul as the duo *Fireworks on Ferris Wheels*. She is currently pursuing her Master of Divinity at Luther Seminary and serving as the pastoral intern at Oak Grove Lutheran Church in Richfield.

WORKSHOP WITH STUDENTS

This past Tuesday on January 21, musician Billy McLaughlin, music director of SimpleGifts, led an exciting workshop for Mahtomedi Middle and High School students. Collaborating with music faculty Julie Conzemius and Chad Garrels, the workshop focused on vocal techniques and mastering three-part harmony arrangements inspired by SimpleGifts' unique repertoire.

Students also experienced demonstrations by SimpleGifts vocalists Carin Vagle, Amy Courts, and Karen Paurus, offering a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the artistry of their harmonies.

To make a tax-deductible donation to support more experiences like these for our students, visit wildwoodartistseries.com or scan the QR code below.



The Chautauqua Fine Arts Center provides access for people with disabilities. A ramp is available to the left side of the lobby. Public restrooms are located off the lobby in either direction. Beverages and food are limited to the lobby or high school commons and may not be brought into the Center. Fire codes prohibit seating in the aisles. Our buildings and grounds are smoke free.

WELCOME!

Dear Valued Patrons,

For over 33 years, the Wildwood Artist Series has been a cherished part of our community, founded by Ellie Bruner, passionate Mahtomedi Public Schools music faculty, and dedicated community members. Together, we have brought diverse, high-quality, family-friendly performances to our audiences, **fostering a deep appreciation for the performing arts.**

Over the years, WAS has held over 200 concerts and other musical performances, which amount to **over 42,000 individual joyful experiences shared** - moments made possible by the tireless efforts of our volunteers and the unwavering support of our community. Many of these treasured memories were created with and for students, especially through our hallmark Professional Performing Artist Residency Program.

After much reflection, we have made the difficult decision that this will be the final season of the Wildwood Artist Series concert performances. Challenging economic conditions and the growth of other entertainment venues have impacted our ability to continue offering affordable, local events. While we are saddened to close this chapter, we are thrilled to announce that **Ellie's vision lives on.** Thanks to your continued generosity, as a committee of MAEF **we will continue supporting music education** with the Professional Artist Residency Program and other initiatives in our schools. In addition, we plan to **continue to offer special concerts** which support our focus on providing impactful performing arts experiences for students.

Your donations will directly benefit the music program, funding essential needs that extend beyond the regular budget. **Your support ensures that the legacy of arts appreciation continues to thrive in our schools and community.**

Thank you for joining us this evening. Enjoy the show, and know that your presence here is a vital part of the Wildwood Artist Series story.

With sincere gratitude,
Julie Molitor

On behalf of the Wildwood Artist Series Committee