 János Zsigmond
Unitarian High School
The American
Choir Tour 2025

Singing The Dream



Transylvanian High School Choir Tour

Sunday, 13 April

10:00 - Choral Worship Service

River Road Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
6301 River Rd, Bethesda, MD 20817

17:00 - Music at Dusk (a 45-minute concert)

Arlington Unitarian Universalist Church
4444 Arlington Blvd, Arlington, VA 22204

Wednesday, 16 April

18:30 - Main Concert: An Evening of Music

Main Line Unitarian Church
816 S Valley Forge Rd, Devon, PA 19333

Friday, 18 April

18:00 - Main Concert: An Evening of Music

Beacon Unitarian Universalist
Congregation in Summit, NJ
4 Waldron Ave, Summit, NJ 07901

Sunday, 20 April

09:30 and 11:00 - Choral Worship Easter Service

Beacon Unitarian Universalist
Congregation in Summit, NJ
4 Waldron Ave, Summit, NJ 07901

Monday, 21 April

12:00 - Choral Worship Flower Communion Service

Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway, New York, NY 10027

Tuesday, 22 April

19:00 - Main Concert: An Evening of Music

First Unitarian Congregational Society
in Brooklyn
48 Monroe Pl, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Wednesday, 23 April

18:30 - Main Concert: An Evening of Music

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at
Shelter Rock
48 Shelter Rock Rd, Manhasset, NY 11030

Friday, 25 April

18:00 - Joyful Singing at Dinner

King's Chapel, Boston
58 Tremont St, Boston, MA 02108

Saturday, 26 April

19:00 - Main Concert: An Evening of Music

First Parish in Concord
20 Lexington Rd, Concord, MA 01742

Sunday, 27 April

10:00 - Choral Worship Service

First Parish in Concord
20 Lexington Rd, Concord, MA 01742



ABOUT US



Transylvania is renowned not only for its stunning landscapes and diverse cultural heritage, but also for its remarkable legacy of religious tolerance and progressive thinking. In 1568, under the leadership of Prince János Zsigmond and Bishop Dávid Ferenc, Transylvania became the first state in Europe to issue the Proclamation of Religious Freedom at the Diet of Torda, boldly declaring freedom of conscience and worship at a time when religious wars devastated much of the continent of Europe. It was during this extraordinary period that Unitarianism was formally born as a recognized faith, advocating reason, tolerance, and individual conscience in spiritual matters. Prince János Zsigmond's visionary commitment to religious freedom transformed Transylvania into a beacon of enlightenment, setting a groundbreaking example for the wider world. In honor of his influential legacy and unwavering advocacy for religious liberty, our school proudly bears his name, continuing to foster ideals of openness, understanding, and progressive education.



ABOUT US

The János Zsigmond Unitarian High School is the oldest educational institution in Transylvania, founded in 1557. Having been a beacon of progressive teaching for centuries, it embodies academic excellence and activities that help youth develop a healthy image of the world and life itself. Its choir is not a professional one, but their enthusiasm and energy makes up for that! During the pandemic, we made the realization that it would be great to, once again, break out from our local concerts, and 22 years since this choir performed on the East Coast, we decided to come back to our longtime partners and friends, to spend together evenings and mornings of singing, cultural conversations, and enjoying a partnership that seems so needed in times of isolationism. We are a team of 40 high school students, accompanied by five chaperons. We look forward to spending time together!



REPERTOIRE

Az Isten áldása szálljon erre házra

(May God's blessing fall upon this house)

– Hazám, hazám, édes hazám

(My Homeland, My Homeland, My Sweet Homeland)

– Folk songs from Moldavia

Performed by Petra Bakó, Lili László, Dóra Sallai

These traditional Hungarian folk songs come from the Moldavian Csángó community, reflecting both spiritual devotion and deep love for their homeland. Their heartfelt message and simple melody warmly invite listeners into the Hungarian folk heritage.



Zoltán Gárdonyi – Énekeljetek az Úrnak
(Sing to the Lord)

Zoltán Gárdonyi, a prominent Hungarian composer whose work was influenced by the great Zoltán Kodály, composed this joyful piece, inspired by biblical psalms. Its uplifting melody encourages everyone to share in singing praises with vibrant enthusiasm.

REPERTOIRE

Nicolae Ursu – Lino, Leano – de doi

Romanian composer Nicolae Ursu arranged these two lively traditional melodies into an energetic choral piece, reminiscent of village dance festivities. The playful rhythms and spirited call-and-response style celebrate Romania's folk traditions. The songs were included due to the fact that they are a cultural part of our current living space.

Lajos Bárdos – Tiszai dallamok (Tunes of the Tisza)

Hungarian composer Lajos Bárdos combined three charming folk melodies from the Tisza River region into this vibrant medley. Each tune captures glimpses of village life, with the addition of a sweet and passionate love story.

Lajos Bárdos – Dana-dana

Dana-dana is an exuberant choral dance arrangement by Lajos Bárdos, blending playful lyrics from Transylvanian regions with traditional melodies from the Bácska (a Vajdaság area). Its joyful rhythm creates an infectious, celebratory atmosphere.

Misztrál – Gyöngyöt az embernek (Pearl to people)

This lyrical Hungarian song speaks of hope, love, and human dignity. With its flowing melody and poetic lyrics, it feels like offering a pearl — a gentle gift to humanity, carrying a message that speaks straight to the soul.

REPERTOIRE

Árpád Balázs – Bodzavirág (Elderflower)

Solo: Anna Gündisch

Bodzavirág (meaning “elderflower”) by Árpád Balázs is a beloved Hungarian choir song that charmed international audiences in the Oscar-winning short film Sing, where it's performed by a children's choir. With a gentle melody and poetic lyrics by poet Ágnes Nemes Nagy, this heartwarming piece evokes the simple joys of childhood and the cherished tradition of communal singing.

János Karai – Ugrótánc (Jumping Dance)

Ugrótánc (meaning “jumping dance”), composed by János Karai, is an upbeat choral piece that captures the spirit of a lively Hungarian folk dance. Set to a playful poem by the beloved Hungarian poet Sándor Weöres, its cheerful rhythms channel the joy of a village celebration and might even have you tapping your toes.

Folk dance and folk song compilation

The first part of our concert will end on the notes of Hungarian folk music with authentic traditional accompaniment and a surprise dance. This short compilation presents three authentic melodies from the Mezőség area, which originate from Magyarszovát, a region inhabited mostly by Unitarians.

...



REPERTOIRE

Folk dance and folk song compilation

...
The first melody, „Én az éjjel nem aludtam egy órát” (“I didn’t sleep for an hour last night”), reflects the emotional performance style typical of Mezőség. The second melody, „Édesanyám mondta nekem” (“My mother told me”), is also an old folk song, which evokes the relationship between a mother and her child, as well as general life lessons. The third melody is a thick-string dance melody, which is a characteristic piece of Magyarországi dance music. The special sound of the thick-string violin master play gives dynamics and strength to the melody, which reflects the vibrant world of the Mezőség dances.

Magyarországi-area “csujogatások” (traditional yells and calls) are an essential part of Mezőség dances and singing traditions. These short, interesting shouts not only enhance the momentum of the dance and music, but often carry humorous, sarcastic, or even wise messages. They enhance the atmosphere of the dance hall, creating a genuine connection between the dancers and the musicians.

These three melodies paint an authentic picture of the traditional celebrations and ways of entertainment of long-ago village life.

 **15-minute intermission** 

REPERTOIRE

Bruno Coulais – Vois sur ton chemin (Look to Your Path)

This gentle French song comes from the beloved film *The Chorus* (*Les Choristes*), where it served as a theme of hope for a children's choir. Its title means "Look to Your Path," and its gentle melody carries a universal message about guiding children toward a brighter future.

Chick Corea – En Aranjuez con tu amor / Spain (In Aranjuez with Your Love / Spain)

Solo: Nóra Tasnádi

Chick Corea's lively jazz classic *Spain* famously begins with the melody from Joaquín Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* – second movement; the beautiful Spanish guitar masterpiece is also known in Spanish as *En Aranjuez con tu amor*. This unique blend of soulful Spanish romance and upbeat jazz rhythms showcases the way music can joyfully bridge cultures and genres.



REPERTOIRE

Woody Guthrie – Deportee

Solo: Nóra Tasnádi and Zsolt Bak



Deportee (Plane Wreck at Los Gatos) is a poignant American folk song that Woody Guthrie wrote after a 1948 plane crash had killed a group of Mexican farm workers who were being deported home. Guthrie's lyrics protest

against the way the victims were only referred to as "deportees" in news reports, giving a human face to immigrants and reminding us of our shared humanity.

Domenico Modugno – Nel blu, dipinto di blu (In the Blue, Painted Blue, aka Volare)

This joyful Italian song — better known as Volare — became a global hit after Domenico Modugno introduced it in 1958, even winning the first-ever Grammy Awards for both Song and Record of the Year. Its title means "In the blue, painted blue", and with its famous, soaring chorus ("Volare, oh oh!"), it has become an unofficial anthem of Italian zest for life that everyone can hum along to, even without speaking a word of Italian.

REPERTOIRE

Pete Seeger – My Rainbow Race

Solo: Nóra Tasnádi and Zsolt Bakó

Pete Seeger, a beloved American folk singer and Unitarian Universalist, wrote My Rainbow Race in the early 1970s as a hopeful anthem about caring for our one world. Its simple, uplifting message of unity has resonated across the globe – it was even sung by thousands in Norway as a symbol of peace and solidarity after the terrorist attacks in 2011.

Antonín Dvořák – Going Home

Antonín Dvořák, a Czech composer, wrote this melody while living in the United States and immersing himself in African American spiritual music. One of his students later added English lyrics to turn it into the song Going Home, and its soulful simplicity has led many to mistake it for an old folk spiritual about longing for home. The choir performs the Paul Langford arrangement.

Tamás Cseh – Budapest

Solo: Nóra Tasnádi, Borbála Csete, Júlia Bakó and Zsolt Bakó

Tamás Cseh's Budapest is a soulful Hungarian classic about the 1956 Hungarian freedom fights, reflecting on whether to leave home for the wider world or stay in the city you call home. With a deeply meaningful message for today's world, this nostalgic song ultimately answers "we will stay," capturing a bittersweet pride and deep connection to Budapest that still resonates with Hungarians today. Arrangement by Ödön Ördög.

REPERTOIRE



Ederlezi – Balkan Roma folk song

Ederlezi is a cherished Roma folk song from the Balkans that celebrates the return of spring. Its message of springtime renewal and hope has transcended language – the song is sung in many Balkan countries each year during the St. George's Day festivities. Arrangement by Ödön Ördög.

Jazz Canon – Dum de Dum

This playful song is just what it sounds like – a musical canon (like a round) given a jazzy twist, complete with a catchy “dum de dum” chorus. The singers toss the melody back and forth with cheerful scat singing, turning a classical form into a toe-tapping groove that's sure to make you smile.

REPERTOIRE

Huddie W. Ledbetter – Bring Me Little Water, Silvy

Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter, a legendary African American folk-blues musician, learned this song from an uncle who would sing it as a call for water to his wife, Sylvie, while plowing the fields. Its easy call-and-response style and rhythmic energy have kept Bring Me Little Water, Silvy alive as a favorite folk song that people love to clap and sing along to.



U2 – One

Solo: Nóra Tasnádi

Irish rock band U2's song One (1991) quickly became one of their most iconic modern classics. Its emotional lyrics about coming together and supporting one another have made it a powerful anthem of unity and hope at concerts and charity events around the world. Arrangement by Ödön Ördög, in combination with the well-known Hungarian folk song from Jobbágytelke, entitled Erdőerdő de magas a teteje (Forest, forest, with its canopy so high).

REPERTOIRE

Coldplay – Fix You

British rock band Coldplay wrote Fix You as a deeply emotional anthem about finding hope and healing after experiencing loss. Its heartfelt lyrics and uplifting melody have touched listeners worldwide, offering comfort during challenging times. Arrangement by Ödön Ördög.

Jean Sibelius – Finlandia (This is My Song)

Originally composed as a protest against Russian censorship, Sibelius' tone poem Finlandia became a powerful symbol of Finnish national pride and independence. Its stirring melody can be found in the UU hymnal and continues to inspire listeners globally, representing courage and resilience.

Arrangement by Blake Morgan.

Carolyn McDade – Spirit of Life

Spirit of Life, by American composer Carolyn McDade, is a simple yet profound song cherished within many communities for its universal message of compassion and renewal. While also being an international UU hymn, its gentle melody encourages listeners to connect deeply with one another and celebrate life's shared journey.



STAFF

Conductor

Ödön Ördög

Piano accompaniment

Tímea Ördög

Zither accompaniment

Hunor Fekete

Folk dancers

Ákos Furu & Borbála Csete

Ákos Szilágyi & Petra Bakó

Dávid Lótei & Dóra Sallai

Balázs Gündisch & Lili László



STAFF

Ödön Ördög is a graduate of Romania's National Music Academy and is a music teacher at the Unitarian High School of Kolozsvár, Transylvania. He has led multiple choir tours already (the last one being in Istanbul, Turkey) and has conducted international choir groups as well in Italy. His energy and enthusiasm shows from the face of singers at every performance!



Ördög Tímea is a graduate of Romania's National Music Academy, a music teacher at the Unitarian High School of Kolozsvár, Transylvania, a singer and player of multiple musical instruments. She co-leads the choir from the piano and darbuka, while also helping with the organizing and logistics.

STAFF

Hunor Fekete is a graduate of the Popular Arts School of Transylvania and a music teacher at various schools in Transylvania. He plays multiple traditional musical instruments, most notably the zyther and the pipe, which will also be part of the performance.



Rev. Zsolt Solymosi is a religion teacher and the Deputy Principal at the Unitarian High School. Having been the organizer of the 2003 High School Choir Tour, he brings tremendous experience from the field of organizing and logistics. A lover of traveling, he drove all the way from

Kolozsvár to Magadan, Siberia, in remembrance of his grandfather's Soviet imprisonment. He is responsible for the organization and logistics of the choir tour.

STAFF



Rev. Zsolt Elekes is the school chaplain of the Unitarian High School. Being also the International Relations Officer of the Hungarian Unitarian Church and a graduate of two seminaries (one in Kolozsvár and one in Chicago, IL), he is trying to build bridges between communities of different cultural backgrounds. He is responsible for the organization and logistics of the choir tour.



MAGYAR
UNITÁRIUS
EGYHÁZ



Asociația "Pro János Zsigmond"



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
FUNDING
PROGRAM

CONCERT LOCATIONS

13TH OF APRIL:

RIVER ROAD UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH,
BETHESDA, MD

13TH OF APRIL:

ARLINGTON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH,
ARLINGTON, VA

14TH OF APRIL:

EMBASSY OF HUNGARY IN WASHINGTON D.C.

16TH OF APRIL:

MAIN LINE UNITARIAN CHURCH, DEVON, PA

18TH AND 20TH OF APRIL:

BEACON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
IN SUMMIT, NJ

21ST OF APRIL:

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK, NY

22ND OF APRIL:

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN
BROOKLYN, NY

23RD OF APRIL:

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION AT
SHELTER ROCK, NY

25TH OF APRIL:

KING'S CHAPEL, BOSTON, MA

26TH AND 27TH OF APRIL:

FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD, MA




PHOTO GALLERY



James Longmire
Unitarian High School
The American
Choir Tour 2025





János Zsigmond
Unitarian High School
The American
Choir Tour 2025

Singing The Dream



Digital version