

CHORUS NOTES

WINTER CONCERT

This fall the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus is celebrating our tenth season of making music. The chorus Music Committee has chosen repertoire that reflects singers' favorites, taken from a survey of chorus members at the end of last season. Some of the selections may surprise you! It's been interesting and fun to re-learn old songs, adding a new approach, a new meaning, a new dynamic. In the spring, we'll be performing four commissioned pieces — our favorite "Rainsong" from 2001, as well as "Memorial I" from 2004, and two newly commissioned works: "The Summer Day", music for chorus and strings by Libby Larsen, poetry by Mary Oliver, and a new work by Diane Benjamin.

This winter we'll be singing a few pieces from our first two years... "Arirang", a Korean folksong; "Mahk Jchi", a native piece arranged by Ulali; and a challenging piece by Diane Benjamin, "Remembering", that pays tribute to Kanzeon, the Japanese goddess who listens to the cries of the world. You will hear "Sleep" by Eric Whitacre; "Sky Dances" by Durham and Brown; as well as one of our all time favorites, Gwyneth Walker's "Sisters". We've resurrected one of our own arrangements from our very first year, Zap Mama's "Guzaphela" which will feature soloist Shirley Jones. Also featured will be soprano Cathy Howe on the song "Goin' Home" overlaid with Margaret Dryburgh's arrangement of Dvorak's "Largo". One of the most significant experiences for the GRWC was performing the "Where I Live", a Breast Cancer Oratorio, in 2001 — we will revisit the oratorio by presenting the song "Somebody". This collection of music has touched hundreds of people in the past decade, and touches our hearts in all the right places. Please join us for a commemorative season, and a wonderful evening of song on December 10, at Fountain Street Church, 7pm.

CLIP & SAVE

Schuler Books-Saturday, November 19, 2005 at 3:00 p.m.

2660 28th St. SW, Grand Rapids, MI

Free Public Performance



GRWC Winter Concert and Silent Auction

Saturday, December 10, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.

Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI

Donations at the door

ANNUAL RETREAT

Saturday, September 24, and Sunday, September 25, marked the dates for the GRWC Annual Retreat at the Khardomah Lodge in Grand Haven. What an action-packed weekend it was! Over 24 hours crammed with sectionals, rehearsals, food, and fun. We tried to wrap our tongues around foreign language pieces (brought new meaning to the term "tongue-tied"), pounded out rhythms, and heard the right notes to all of our songs for this half of the season at least once.

The Annual No Talent, Talent Show was a blast as usual, with everything from interpretive dance to guest appearances by Tweety Bird and the Fashionistas to a few things we can't mention out loud due to fear of repercussion. We had a little more excitement than usual this year when certain members who shall remain nameless tried to set the lodge on fire with Sunday's lunch. Luckily, we have other members who remained cool, calm, and collected, took care of the problem, and are now the core of our new Fire Brigade.

We also got a lot of business done at our Annual Meeting, where we recruited committee members, voted on new board members, learned about the Sister Singer Network festival next June, and approved our annual budget. It was a thrill to see so many members decide to join the efforts of the chorus through our board, committees, and small action groups. If you'd like to get in on all of this fun but do not wish to join us as a singing member, contact Gabrielle at 452-3466 for information on how to be a non-singing member of the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus!

The Grand Rapids Women's Chorus would like to announce the establishment of the

Grand Rapids Women's Chorus Memorial Fund

This fund has been created for the purpose of commissioning new works for women's chorus. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation in honor of your loved one, that person will be added to the Memorial Fund and recognized in all concert programs and on the website. Notifications will be made to family members as requested by the donor.

For more information, contact us at info@grwc.org

CALIFORNIA HERE WE COME !

The Women's Chorus will bring a piece of Grand Rapids to California this summer when it performs at San Diego State University's Aztec Center, in June 2006.

Since we are a former co-host of the Sister Singer Network Festival held here in Grand Rapids in May 2001, the San Diego Women's Chorus is excited to host us in their city this time around in celebration of the Sister Singer Network's 25th birthday.

Grand Rapids will be represented along with Sistrum of Lansing, Artemis Singers of Chicago, Aurora Chorus of Portland OR, Calliope of Minneapolis, Central Pennsylvania Women's Chorus from Harrisburg PA, Common Woman Chorus of Durham NC, Crescendo from Tampa Bay FL, Juneau Pride Chorus from Juneau Alaska, MUSE - Cincinnati's Women's Choir, Rochester Women's Community Chorus, Rochester NY, Sound Circle of Jamestown Colorado, Windsong of Cleveland, Orange County Chorus of Orange County CA, a few other California choruses along with, of course, the San Diego Women's Chorus.

It seems fitting that this festival takes place during the GRWC's 10th birthday season and SSN's 25th birthday season, as one of the many things we are excited about is giving our own "gifts" to this network of women's choruses; the four new pieces commissioned since its 20th birthday at the 2001 festival here in Grand Rapids.

In addition, Lori Tennenhouse and Dr. Cathy Roma of MUSE have been jointly working on commissioning a new song by Venezuelan composer Josefina Benedetti. Efforts from the festival here in Michigan helped SSN commission this new piece whose premiere performance will be by the mass chorus at this festival. Each attending singer will have an opportunity to participate, and it is looking like the largest mass chorus in the history of the network's festivals may premiere it.

Exchanging repertoire and ideas, and building skills are among the benefits we enjoy from our membership with SSN, and it is consistent with the educational intent of the GRWC's mission. Most of the singers will attend workshops offered on a variety of topics and from such educators as Rhiannon, Margie Adams, and others. Attending this festival not only helps us share new ideas with our community as a chorus, but also benefits the growth of the women in our community when our singers learn skills ranging from vocal enhancement, to improved sight-reading, to reading a balance sheet.

We are excited to bring our piece of Grand Rapids to other parts of the country. Thanks as always for sharing our vision through your support of our music.

10 YEAR FUNDER...OR, 10 YEAR WONDER!

We want to thank all of you who have been helping to support the work and mission of Grand Rapids Women's Chorus over the past decade. It is hard to believe 10 years have passed already since 11 women joined voices in September 1995 for the first rehearsal of this group, which now numbers 42 singers.

Our first decade has seen much growth and our incorporation into a 501c3 non-profit organization.

Our first ten years birthed 4 new pieces of music into the world through commissioning with such talented women composers as Libby Larsen, Ysaye Barnwell, Diane Benjamin and Marjan Helms.

Over the past 10 years the GRWC has been active in bringing some special events to our community. Many of you will remember the performance of Diane Benjamin's Breast Cancer Oratorio benefiting Gilda's Club of Grand Rapids and Reeling and Healing of Michigan, and the wonderful music from around the country during the Sister Singer's Festival we hosted at St. Cecilia's in 2001. The chorus also brought Giwayen Mata from Atlanta, Georgia, here to Grand Rapids for the "Echoes of Africa" concert. This black history month event featured African drumming, dance and vocal workshops for local choruses, Girl Scouts of Michigan Trails, and Girls Inc.

Some of you reading this have been to every one of our concerts this decade. You have bought all of our CD's! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! But, regardless of whether you are a ten-year groupie or a first time supporter, we hope you will continue to come out and support us for 10 more years. We promise to continue to make every effort to provide an entertaining, educational and enjoyable experience for you, our members, and this community.

Our ten year anniversary makes this a special year. In addition to our regular activities we are working to ensure that all of our singers can experience the Sister Singer Network's 25th year festival in San Diego in June of this year (see accompanying article). Though many of our singers are able to pay their own expenses and take time off for this event, others cannot. Funds raised this year will allow every singer to be part of the trip to San Diego.

The chorus recently activated a group of singers, affectionately dubbed "The Stevie Funders", and equipped them with tasks and ideas to help raise funds for the chorus to continue its work for another decade in our community. Why the Stevie Wonder theme? We're all about music, of course – and all about continuing to grow our audience. "You are the Sunshine of Our Life" and hopefully "that's why we'll always be around"...

If you have ever wanted to give the chorus a gift.... what better time than our 10th birthday?

Please use the enclosed self-addressed envelope for your tax-deductible donation.

Holiday Music Shopping?



The GRWC and GOLDENROD MUSIC can help!

Now you can share the music you love with the people you love
AND help the chorus you love with a simple quick click.

All you have to do is...

**Purchase ANY CD or DVD, cassette, or anything else
ON-LINE via the GRWC website link to Goldenrod Music
and earn money for the chorus!**

From Cris Williamson's new "Real Deal" CD, to the new Beatles tribute "This Bird Has Flown" or the "Power of Women 2006 calendar", buying your holiday music and gifts online via this link helps the chorus raise funds with no additional cost to you.

Like you, Goldenrod Music believes in our music and our mission and wants to help us succeed, so they have helped us set up this link. In addition to music, you can also purchase books, calendars, videos, DVDs, song-books and all kinds of music-related items that will help us with each purchase.

You know you'd be buying this stuff from somewhere right?
Save precious time, click and buy from the link, and help the GRWC!

www.grwc.org

THE GRAND RAPIDS WOMEN'S CHORUS

Artistic Director
Lori Tennenhouse

Small Ensemble Director
Martha VanderEyk

Pianist
Toni Gould

Percussionist
Sue Brown

ASL Interpreter
Lois Van Broekhoven

Sopranos
Brenda Baker
Nancy Court
Liz DeBraber
Cathy Howe
Lynne Homeyer
Theresa Huyge
Carol Kountz
Betty Kingston
Wendy Kuenzel Kapolka
Hilary Mol
Jeanne Welch

Altos
Gabrielle Calkins
Brenda Canales
Donna Clark
Linell Crampton
Erin Dreyer
Ann Erhardt
Megan Grimm
Lynn Mack
Chris Sales
Pam Sandberg
Anne Thompson

Tenors
Cheryl Beatty
Sue Brown
Pam Carlson
Sara Homeyer
Shirley Jones
Molly Kehoe
Sheryl Mase
Nadine Miller
Janice Scalza

Basses
Elaine Dalcher
Cathajane Galante
Leslie Kohn
Jennifer Robinson
Janet Thering
Linda Troyer
Connie Winter-Troutwine
Paula Wurm

SALUTE!!

Each spring the expenses of the annual concert are offset by the advertising. The chorus would like to thank our loyal advertisers and ask that you patronize their businesses/services. They include:

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Debbie Wheeler, Realtor, Westdale Company
North Kent Guidance Services
Julie Gottlieb, ACSW, Therapy Center
Annita List, ACSW, Diversity Counseling and Therapy Center



Director - Lori Tennenhouse

A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Our annual Winter Concert has included a silent auction for the last 7 years, and this year we are whipping up another evening with music, food, and tables full of wonderful goods and services! What more could one ask for on a chilly December evening??

This winning recipe starts with our singers, who love the festive atmosphere, as they perform the first real concert of the year! Now add to the mix a dedicated group of chorus members and volunteers who work year-round on the Auction.

The Auction is being chaired this year by Darla Wortley. This is the first time the position has been filled by a volunteer who is not a singer with the chorus. Darla has helped to stir this pot for nearly five years! We were lucky to be able to add Connie Brown to the mix this year. Connie is doing much of the database work AND providing a new luxury for us - space where we can inventory and store the auction items! Two other non-singer committee members, Cathy Huston and Katia Marshal, add their organizational skills to this recipe.

Now stir in about a half dozen singers who are part of the committee who meet and plan, meet and plan, meet and plan. Add the most important ingredient: All the items, gift certificates, and art donated by our generous community.

Last-minute seasoning comes from the numerous volunteers who take on jobs the night of the event and by singers who provided the cookies and drinks to thank our guests.

We think we've blended this recipe into a winner! Please join us on December 10 and give it a try!

OVATIONS BY JANET THERING

For the past ten years, Lori Tennenhouse has directed, nurtured, and inspired the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus. The following is an interview with Lori by Janet Thering, an original member of the Chorus and a ten year member of its bass section.

Why did you form the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus?

I wanted to explore a repertoire by women composers and arrangers. I also wanted to sing non-sacred (secular) music that reflected social justice themes. Originally we had no intention of performing.

What has surprised you about your experience with the GRWC?

I am always surprised that people with a music background find me a good director. My techniques are unconventional and I am totally winging it. I am surprised at what a good sound we produce with only two hours of weekly rehearsals added to the fact that about 50 per cent of our members do not read music and have had no training in choral music.

I am also surprised by people's desires and motivation in the Chorus; that they are willing to take the time to learn the music and languages with all of their other commitments to families, jobs, and the community.

How has the GRWC affected you as a person?

It has made me realize that you can become what you visualize. If you think of yourself as a choral director - you're a choral director. It's very empowering. It's all about desire, a powerful desire, and it's about what is real to you.

What do you look for in your selection of music?

Music for mature women's voices, written in four parts, that challenge the lower as well as the higher voices. This is difficult to find because a lot of the music in our range is written in two or three parts for children in Youth or Treble Choirs.

We (the Music Committee) look for music from other cultures that has poetic value. We look for music that is meaningful to women such as the Breast Cancer Oratorio "Where I Live".

How has the GRWC changed over ten years?

We have developed a dedicated core of members with a board of directors, non-profit status, and an organized structure that is committee-based. We are very much a member-sustained organization. In the beginning, I found the music, made the posters, rented the venue, called the radio stations.

I think the GRWC itself has become an important social group to it's members with new people coming and going and old members returning... some staying, some revolving through.

We have developed a larger, loyal audience that has come to expect a certain energy and emotion from us. We now have a core commitment to commissioning work which seemed impossible when we started.

What were some of your earliest musical influence and memories?

Growing up I loved folk, blues, and soul music ... The Staple Singers, Stevie Wonder, The Fifth Dimension, Laura Nero, Bonnie Raitt, Joni Mitchell ... I'm from Detroit, and Motown Music was always playing on the radio.

My brother was into jazz and took me to jazz clubs when I was 11 or 12. I played flute in the high school band and picked up the String Bass during my senior year so I could play in the orchestra. I also played guitar, wrote songs, and performed in school and community theatre. Later in life I played with the New England Women's String Symphony in Boston, rock and roll bands in Ann Arbor, and several rock and jazz bands in Grand Rapids.

Is there a point while directing when the music transcends you?

The experience of standing in front of people who are making beautiful sounds is transforming. Performing at concerts the women have so much energy. People are so tuned in, ready to respond, and open to creating this group experience. It is electrifying to me and very addicting! It keeps me motivated.

What is next for you and the GRWC?

I would like to do more collaborating--with other choruses, with writers, with visual artists. I'd like to increase community involvement and do music that has an impact on community issues. I'd like to continue to expand the library of repertoire for women choruses by commissioning new works.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Yes. I hope the Chorus continues to enrich and touch lives in as much a positive way as it has mine.



CHORUS NOTES AUTUMN 2005

Grand Rapids Women's Chorus
PO Box 68486
Grand Rapids, MI 49516

News from the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus

Visit our website at:
www.grwc.org

-Mission Statement-



The Grand Rapids Women's Chorus is dedicated to singing culturally diverse music that promotes appreciation of women composers and arrangers.

Established for the education, enjoyment and enrichment of its members and its audience, the organization seeks to create and inspire meaningful experience through musical expression.

We welcome your comments, suggestions, compliments, questions, letters and tax deductible donations.
Please feel free to contact us.

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