



Chorus Notes

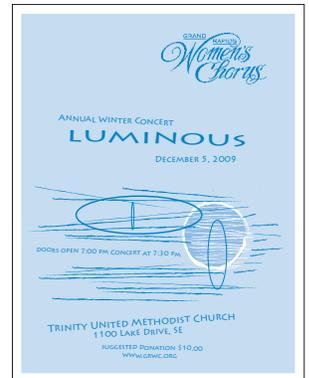
Presenting *Luminous* Winter Concert

Mark your calendars! The Grand Rapids Women's Chorus annual "not a holiday" performance and reception will be Saturday, December 5 at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1100 Lake Drive SE in Grand Rapids. This winter event is always our first public showcase of music rehearsed since September, and proceeds help defray costs for sheet music, commissioned pieces, and the work of our accompanists.

Look forward to our usual smorgasbord of songs such as those in Macedonian and French, as well as love songs of both the human and feline variety! Delight in our version of Leonard Cohen's cold and broken "Hallelujah" (known to many of us as "that song from *Shrek*"), our jazzy take on the spiritual "Ain't No Grave Can Hold My Body Down", and a luminous, wonderful rendition of "Canticle To The Spirit", a twelfth century prayer written by mystic Hildegard of Bingen.

We will be performing the poignant "Rosa Sat", written by Amy Dixon-Kolar and arranged for the Cincinnati Women's Chorus by J. David Moore, as well as "I Am Willing" by revolutionary singer songwriter Holly Near.

Join us at the reception following the concert to chat and enjoy our lovingly handcrafted hors d'oeuvres and cookies. Doors open at 7PM. Concert begins at 7:30. Suggested donation - \$10. Trinity United Methodist Church is located across from Mangiamo's restaurant in midtown Grand Rapids.



High on Holly Near *Inspiration & perspiration*

by Lynne Homeyer

I'd heard the name Holly Near back in the 1970's. My first year with the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus we sang "Sky Dances," which I loved, but I didn't know of any Holly Near albums, or anything more than her name and the fact that these women I love to sing with love her music. I just went along to the October 23rd concert at Lansing Community College Dart Auditorium.

I was not prepared for the pure, sweet, powerful determination of Holly Near and the accompanying duo, emma's revolution. Not prepared to find that what we used to call "protest songs," songs written from the world of social activists for the purpose of saying, "We don't agree" and "We need a better system" and "Isn't this bizarre?", was not merely alive and well but still beautiful. Celebrated. Well received at well-attended concerts.

I didn't know that years before kd lang, the Indigo Girls, and Melissa Etheridge, Holly Near was a co-conspirator, favorite aunt, and hero to many who have led the struggles for social change in the U.S. and the world. That she's spent her life showing up, as an ally, a witness, a writer and a performer, documenting human struggle, despair, love, and triumph in her songs.

The Friday night concert at Lansing's Dart Auditorium was a glorious good time. I can't adequately describe the magic of those three voices together, Holly Near, 60, and the two women who are emma's revolution, younger and -



continued on page 5

GRAND RAPIDS
Women's Chorus

MEMBERSHIP

Artistic Director

Lori Tennenhouse

Accompanist

Blithe Brouwers

Director, Small Ensemble

Martha VanderEyck

Associate Directors

Brenda Baker

Blithe Brouwers

Percussionist

Barb Pitcher

Soprano

Brenda Baker (section leader)

Janet Bradley

Kristin Bauer

Nancy Court

Liz DeBraber

Gabrielle Groot

Lynne Homeyer

Wendy Kuenzel Kapolka

Hilary Mol

Martha VanderEyck*

Alto

Elise Brown

Gabrielle Calkins

Janet Carter

Donna Clark

Beth Jenkins

Bethany Joy Lange

Lynn Weaver (section leader)

Toni Perrine

Chris Sales

Pam Sandberg

Kyla Sisson

Tenor

Cheryl Beatty*

Vicky Bourget

Sharon Burtrum

DeDe Esque

Ann Erhardt

Denise Joseph

Sheryl Mase

Nadine Miller

Janice Scalza* (section leader)

Carol Wilson

Bass

Cathajane Galante (section leader)

Sara Homeyer

Leslie Kohn*

Barb Pitcher

Karie Poole

Janet Thering*

Linda Troyer

Ida Vandunk

Connie Winter-Troutwine

Sue Wood

Paula Wurm

GRWC Board

Chair - Gabrielle Calkins

Secretary - Linda Troyer

Vice Chair - Janice Scalza

Treasurer - Cheryl Beatty

Ann Erhardt, C.J. Galante, Barb Pitcher,

Lori Tennenhouse, Chris Sales

*denotes charter members

Calendar of Events - Make a Date with the GRWC

December 5 - GRWC Winter Concert 7:30

New Location! Trinity United Methodist Church

1100 Lake Drive SE Grand Rapids

\$10 Suggested Donation

December 11 - "Musical Arts for Justice in the Community" MAJIC series

Bethlehem Lutheran Church - 7PM

250 Commerce SW Grand Rapids

Proceeds - GR Coalition to End Homelessness

\$10 Suggested Donation

January 30 - Saugatuck Center for the Arts

400 Culver Street 7:30 Mainstage

Saugatuck, Michigan 49453

Concert Performance \$15 at door

March 13 - Euchre Party Fundraiser! 7PM

Casino Club of Grand Rapids

3260 Salerno Dr NE

\$20 donation to GRWC

May 22 - GRWC 14th Annual Spring Concert

St. Cecilia Music Center 8PM

24 Ransom N.E. Grand Rapids

\$15 Admission



Euchre Fundraising Party!!

Saturday

March 13, 2010 - 7PM

(doors open at 6:30)

Casino Club of Grand Rapids

3260 Salerno N.E.

*Basic knowledge of game needed (quick tutorials provided!)

*Partners selected randomly

*Tournament rules provided

*1st 2nd 3rd Place prizes awarded

*Cash bar and Snacks

Admission - \$20/person donation to the GRWC

Kibbitzers Welcome!

Help send the GRWC

to the Sister Singers Network Festival in July!



GRWC: "Not Just a Choir"

On Being New - by Bethany Joy Lange



I had no idea, really, what I was getting into when I said, "Yes."

I have been in choral groups almost nonstop since middle school, but nothing like the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus. I auditioned just two weeks before the first rehearsal of the year and was invited to join the alto section the day after my audition. It felt a little like love at first sight - it all went so quickly, and I didn't know if I could trust my gut or if I needed to back off my intuition and engage my rationality a bit more. For approximately 24 hours I vacillated about joining the choir...not because I didn't think it would be a good fit, but because I was a little afraid of getting into something I would care too deeply about. Eventually I came to the mind-heart conclusion that there was no such thing as caring too much when it was a good fit. I, unreservedly, said, "Yes."

On one hand, I was merely joining a choral group. On another, I was stepping into a wholly new world of harmony. This harmony happens musically - to be sure, the GRWC takes musicianship seriously - but of even greater importance to me is the harmony that happens as we chorus members join together from our diverse faiths, cultures and life journeys. We co-create a harmonious community by emphasizing our shared vision and singing our values into activism.

At the first rehearsal I'd felt as though I was walking into a family reunion - perhaps of new in-laws or something. I knew I belonged, but I wasn't sure what to expect or quite where my place was. It was clear that this group of women wasn't "just a choir". There was a buzz of feisty passion & enthusiasm in the room. By the end of the first rehearsal I confess I had a bit of a crush on the whole group. Not long after this was the fall choral retreat. The new members were initiated, inundat-

ed, and wholly embraced into the life and mission of the chorus. I was smitten!

I come from a strong faith tradition and all but one other choir I've been in have been with churches or faith based schools. Singing with a group has always been a deeply worshipful experience for me and has been a key element in my faith engagement and development. Singing with the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus is the first time I've been able to sing from the same depth of values, passion and engagement without being bound strictly to the religious music of a particular faith tradition. It has been liberating and exhilarating for me to sing with a spiritually diverse group of dedicated, truth-seeking women. I'm learning that there is a vast array of music out there that speaks to and through the human experience. Some of this music is written by powerful women. Some of this music is from strong communities who have railed against deep injustice. Some of this music is in Macedonian or Slovakian or Hebrew or Zulu or French...

As I reflect on life choices, I often wonder, "what if I said "No" instead?" With regard to joining the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus, I wouldn't have known what I was missing. I was already a member of a different choral group and would have stayed with it. I would have continued to be engaged in my ever-deepening quest for diversity, peace, justice, community. I would be content, perhaps slightly less busy, and that would be fine. I wouldn't know that there was an amazing group of women rehearsing on Monday nights just 5 minutes from my home. I wouldn't know that there are remarkable women composers out there writing vital music. I wouldn't have a taste of the depth and breadth of non-religious or other-religious music and how powerful, relevant and transformational it can be as we sing our way into a future of greater peace and justice. I wouldn't have experienced how "merely joining a choral group" would become the forum I didn't realize I needed, where I could be a woman, singing, and therein transform the world.

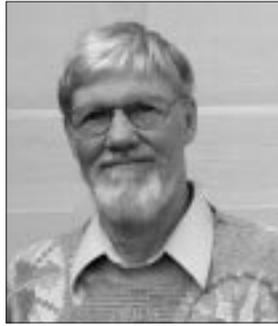
Support Staff

by Janet Thering

Bob Hardin makes the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus look good and it's no easy job. As "official" photographer, Bob hauls over \$4,000 in gear to every concert, snaps a variety of shots, edits, and posts the photos on line for viewing and purchase. His ability to work in an unassuming, discreet way without disruptions or fanfare is greatly appreciated.

A self described radical, Bob appreciates the political views offered in the music of the GRWC and volunteers his time to enjoy the company and friendship of like-minded people. His other interests include theater, ham radio, marine aquariums, and Cowboy Action Shooting (1860-1890 reenactments). Bob is a Computer Science instructor at Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo Valley Community College as well as a part-time photographer.

The GRWC enjoys Bob and values his expertise and support. To view or purchase his work, contact him at www.BobsMagicLens.com using the Gallery/GRWC prompts. You're sure to smile!



"There is nothing greater than the joy of composing something oneself then listening to it."



**Clara Schuman
(diary 1846)**

Gracias!

The GRWC greatly appreciates the local businesses and individuals who advertised in last season's Spring Concert program. Your support makes the program possible and helps offset the costs of our "after glow" reception. Join the GRWC in thanking these businesses and services by shopping locally.

Achievement Resources LLC
Actors Theatre
Double Dee Repair
Cottage Bar
Grand Rapids Singing Telegram
Bob Hardin (photography)
Harmony n' Health
Harmony Travel
Julie Gottlieb A.C.S.W.
Martha VanderEyck (Vocal coach)
Morgan and Morgan CPAS
North Kent Guidance Services LLC
Neighborhood Network
Octagon House
One Trick Pony
Presto Print, Inc.
Spirit Dreams
Thornapple Veterinary Medical Center
Treadstone Mortgage Company
Yoga Tapestry

Grace Notes!

- Thanks to Sasko Gjorgjevsk for pronunciation help on the Macedonian folk song "Tatkovina".
- We love our volunteers! For volunteer opportunities with the GRWC contact www.grwc.org.
- Thanks to Jaye VanLenten for the 4 drawer file cabinet (great addition to the GRWC music library!)
- The Cell Phone Recycling projects continues! Last season's count-273! For info on donating, contact recyclephones@grwc.org.
- Interested in auditioning? E-mail info@grwc.org or phone (616) 459-2655.
- The GRWC greatly appreciates Fountain Street Church and the gratis use of its choir room for Monday night rehearsals.
- The December 5 Winter Concert will not feature an auction this year.

Holly Near from page 1

OK - hipper. They sang about the disappearance of South American young men, strip mining, poverty, sexism, and the imperative of providing our children with food, shelter, safety, and education. And they sang Sky Dances, a poem about the sheer beauty and mystery of the earth. And as they sang their amazing harmonies and lyrics of love, irony, and challenge, the music leaped out at us, seeking to make us allies in their many causes, which to me can be simmered down into the eternal feminine rally cry: "Let's take care of each other!"

A tough act to follow, yet the next day Holly Near led a 3-hour workshop commissioned by and for Sistrum, the Lansing Women's Chorus and attended by the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus as well as the general public. We sang, of course, and Holly had inspiration for us about the mechanics of singing. I believe that what we also brought away from the

workshop was a new understanding of how this fun, shared activity becomes far more. It becomes a force for positive change in the world, and that we have a responsibility to that force. "You can't co-opt another culture's songs unless you're willing to understand where the song comes from, to sing it seriously from out of that understanding," she told us, which helped us figure out how to present not just the celebration, but the struggle in "Rosa Sat," a song about overcoming racism. "How would you react to a barbershop quartet singing a lesbian love song?" she challenged. Thanks, Holly, for your music. For asking your questions, and for helping us learn to ask our own as we sing.

**Participation at the Holly Near Workshop on October 24 by the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus was generously underwritten by the Amos Foundation.*

Sharp#Fact: The song "Happy Birthday" is not in the public domain. The medley was written by two kindergarten teachers (sisters Patty and Mildred Hill) from Kentucky in 1893. It was set to the tune of "Good Morning to All" and copyrighted by the Summy Company in 1935. Time-Warner bought the rights in 1998. A single use in film or television costs about \$10,000.

You're invited! Be a fan of the GRWC on Facebook!

This issue of *Chorus Notes* brought to you by Lynne Homeyer, Bethany Joy Lange, Leslie Kohn, Chris Sales, Linda Troyer, Gabrielle Calkins and Janet Thering (editor).



Visit Goldenrod Music - your only online source of the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus new CD "*Celebrating Time Together*"

via the  link

at www.grwc.org or (517) 484-1712

Remember, anything you buy, anytime, from Goldenrod's extensive catalog of music and music merchandise returns a percentage of that purchase to the chorus.

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM:

The Grand Rapids Women's Chorus (616) 459-2655
Spirit Dreams • 1430 Lake Drive SE (616) 456-9889

Grand Rapids Women's Chorus

PO Box 68486

Grand Rapids, MI 49516

Phone: (616) 459-2655

Email: info@grwc.org

Visit our website

at

www.grwc.org

~ Mission Statement ~



The Grand Rapids Women's Chorus is dedicated to singing music that celebrates and honors the diversity of women's lives. Drawing on music from many cultures, the Chorus strives to educate and inspire its community to promote justice, peace, and equality.

We welcome your comments, suggestions, compliments, questions, letters and tax deductible donations.

Please feel free to contact us.

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