THE CONCORD COMMUNITY OF CHOIRS PRESENTS

Circle Me Sisters

THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF AURORA CHORUS
JOAN SZYMKO, DIRECTOR • SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH • 4:00 PM & 7:00 PM
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS: NANCIE COLLIE & KATHLEEN FALLON OF "MOTHERLODE," TERRI GRATUM & GWEN THOMAS, KATE SULLIVAN, JUDY ROSE & ASHIRA
Welcome to Our Community
by Anne Rutherford, Council President

My heart feels very full as I think of this Aurora concert and all it represents. As one of the people lucky enough to be at the very first Aurora rehearsal, it's incredible to me that we are five years old. Aurora feels reborn every concert term with the joy and energy of new members, and at the same time feels ancient, as old as the sense of community that results from people coming together to support one other in a common purpose.

This connection continues way beyond current participation in Aurora, and so does what we discover about ourselves in this atmosphere that nourishes creativity and growth. As president of the Concord Community of Choirs, I believe our organization provides the opportunity to discover the riches of self and one another as part of a community creating excellent music in the search for peace. (Or, seeking peace as we create excellent music. It's much easier to address global conflict than to work through your feelings about the person two down from you in rehearsal who is rustling her music too loudly. Grin.)

It is wonderful to celebrate five years of Aurora's presence in the world, and to marvel at and appreciate every single person who has been a part of creating and sustaining this phenomenon. Thank you to those who sing, those who listen, those who direct, those who compose, those who accompany. We are so glad you are with us to celebrate Aurora's fifth year and look forward to 5? 50? 500!!! more. We're applauding for all of us today. Enjoy!

Concord Community of Choirs

DIRECTORS
David York, Artistic Director, Director Concord Choir, Chrysalis
Concert Choir; Joan Szymko, Director Aurora, Viriditas Vocal Ensemble;
Ray Elliott, Director satori; Laura Frizzell, Director Chrysalis
Celebration Singers; Steve Peter, Director coro uomo

VOLUNTEER & STAFF SUPPORT
Jenna Scott, Librarian; Gail Murphy, Bulk Mail Coordinator;
Cheri Smith, art director, Sherrie Van Hine, Voice Mail Coordinator

COUNCIL
Anne Rutherford, President, Aurora; Denise Andersen, Concord;
Christina Blount, Concord; Hari Dass Khalsa, satori;
Jay Marmaduke, Aurora; Ron Marshall, satori;
Gail Murphy, Viriditas; Lark Ryan, Concord;
Gwen Shusterman, Chrysalis parent; Cheri Smith, Aurora;
Kristen Van Kranenburgh, Viriditas

OUR MISSION
To produce quality choral music as an instrument of peace for our audience and ourselves, through a community of choirs. Our goal is to instill concord and an awareness of one world in an ever-expanding audience.

A CONSORTIUM OF CHOIRS DEDICATED TO AFFIRMING PEACE THROUGH MUSIC.

Concord Choir
Peace through Music
DAVID YORK, DIRECTOR
Semi-professional chamber ensemble. Members are auditioned every spring.

Aurora Chorus
women in harmony for peace
JOAN SZYMKO, DIRECTOR
Multi-level, 140-voice women's chorus. Meets Thursday evenings at Whitaker Middle School. Open enrollment as space is available.

satori men's chorus
men singing peace
RAY ELLIOTT, DIRECTOR
Multi-level men's chorus. Meets Wednesday evenings at Hosford Middle School. Call to register.

Chrysalis Children's Choirs
young voice, open minds, joyful hearts
DAVID YORK & LAURA FRIZZELL, DIRECTORS
Chrysalis Concert Choir, directed by David York, is an auditioned choir for treble singers, ages 10 to 15, with previous musical experience.
Chrysalis Celebration Singers, directed by Laura Frizzell, welcomes singers ages 7 to 10, regardless of musical training. Rehearsals are Thursday afternoons at Hosford Middle School.

Viriditas
the greening power of song
JOAN SZYMKO, DIRECTOR

CORO UOMO THE HARMONY OF MAN
STEVE PETER, DIRECTOR
An auditioned men's ensemble. Primary repertoire is new and rarely heard men's choral music. coro uomo will premiere at November's First Thursday Concert.

Ashira - A network of community-based choirs who meet monthly. Performances are in the nature of outreach. Led by trained conductors, groups range in size from 12 to 50.

CALL 721-0262 TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION.
CONCORD COMMUNITY OF CHOIRS
1996-97 TENTH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

MARCH
“A Gallery of German Masterpieces”
Concord Choir
March 6, 8pm
Portland Art Museum*

APRIL
“The Naked Circle”
Viriditas Vocal Ensemble
April 3, 8pm
Portland Art Museum*

“Spring Concert”
coro uomo
April 19, 8pm
location tba

MAY
“Nippon: The Floating Kingdom”
Concord Choir & Koto Ensemble
May 1, 8pm
Portland Art Museum*

“Boys to Men”
satori
May 17, 8pm
location tba

“Fiesta” fund raiser & party
All Choirs & Community
May 30, eve. time tba
Melody Ballroom

JUNE
“Chrysalis Unplugged”
Chrysalis Concert Choir
June 5, 8pm
Portland Art Museum*

“We All... Every One of Us”
Aurora Chorus
June 21, 8pm
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

If you would like to receive information about the Concord Community of Choirs and our 1996-97 season, sign the mailing list in the lobby.

WE DO NOT SELL OR TRADE OUR MAILING LIST

Ticket sales account for only a portion of the substantial costs for producing a program. We gratefully acknowledge all who have donated goods and services that enable our programs to be realized. Please add your support with a tax-deductible financial contribution to:

Concord Community of Choirs
P.O. Box 2636
Portland, OR 97208-2636
From the Director: Joan Szymko

For five years Aurora Chorus has been a watering ground for women who need to sing. Some of us have sung in choruses our whole lives. Others come to Aurora after a long dry spell. Some have never before sung in a group. Whatever our experience or reasons for participating, every Thursday night we gather together and we tap the waters that Audre Lorde describes and we return to you – our families, friends and community – with our souls refreshed.

After our most recent concert, the mother of a chorus member made the observation that what she witnessed was clearly “a loving organism” at work on stage. What a powerful affirmation of our mission to combine our love of choral singing with the desire to create community in a climate of mutual respect and peace. This aspect of Aurora as “loving organism” – as a strong, nurturing, affirming, presence in the lives of those women who participate – and to all of those who listen – this is what I wanted to affirm as Aurora celebrates her Fifth Anniversary with Circle Me Sisters. So, I have joyfully programmed a concert that is an unabashed celebration of Aurora herself: of the power of women assembled to affect change in ourselves and in our world. You’ll hear some favorites from past concerts, some powerful new material and some wonderful guest artists.

I thank all of you for your presence here today and for the support that so many of you lend the women of Aurora. I am especially thinking of Alia Bozarth, who graciously allowed me to set her poem, “Call.” She could not be here for today’s premiere performance and I send her my appreciation for her powerful voice. I extend my personal love and thanks in particular to David York, founding director of Aurora Chorus, for his vision, unfailing support, and for his big, big heart. And of course, my love and thanks to all the women of Aurora, present and past for trusting me with their tender souls.

Blessings to all.

Artists' Biographies

Joan Szymko has been leading community choruses in the Pacific Northwest for fifteen years. She is a native of Chicago, and a graduate of the University of Illinois. Since the fall of 1993 Aurora has benefited from her musicality, humor, intensity, and uplifting concert programming.

Joan’s numerous choral compositions and arrangements for women’s voices have been performed by many choruses across the country. Today, Aurora Chorus will premiere her most recent choral work, “Call,” written especially for this anniversary celebration. Joan is pleased to be featured as a composer with Santa Barbara Music Publishing.

Joan is the founding director of Viriditas Vocal Ensemble, Concord Community’s women’s chamber ensemble – featured performers in a “held over” presentation of Do Jump at the Echo Theatre. They will be singing Joan’s composition, “Openings.” She also directs the Portland State University Community Chorus.

Alia Bozarth is a poet, priest, soul care counselor and author of 21 books and audio tapes on grief, healing, poetry, love, spirituality, feminism and philosophy. “Call” was written on the eve of her history-making ordination as one of the Philadelphia Eleven, the first women to become Episcopal priests in 1974. “Call” is in Alia’s autobiography, Womanpriest (revised edition LuraMedia 1988), and in the poetry and painting book, Stars In Your Bones: Emerging Signposts On Our Spiritual Journeys (Bozarth, Barkley and Hawthorne, North Star Press of St. Cloud 1990), and on her audio tape, Water Women. (The books and audio tape will be available for purchase after the performance.)

Nan Collie and Kathleen Fallon have been singing together for 16 years. They first arrived on the Portland scene with the trio “Bittersweet” and have since entertained west coast audiences as members of the group “Motherlode.” Both are dynamic singer/songwriters who weave humor, heart and passion into their music and touch the lives of many.

Terri Grayum and Gwen Thomas first blended their musical talents in the fall of 1995, beginning a journey that has taken them to folk festivals, concerts and benefits all over the Pacific NW. Accomplished songwriters, guitarists and vocalists – their musical styles, humor and heartfelt songs create a dynamic energy onstage. Gwen and Terri are collaborating on new songs and plan to have a CD completed by 1998.

Judy A. Rose has lent her skills to Aurora as Assistant Conductor and Accompanist. She has also been involved with satori, Chrysals and Concord Choir. She is an active musical director, singer and songwriter. Judy is currently the Music Specialist at the Franciscan Montessori Earth School in Portland.

Kate Sullivan, a native Oregonian, has a 17-year music career, travelling the nation. She performs with two groups, Kate Sullivan & Co. a six-member rock, rhythm and blues band, and Loose Winmin a 5-6 piece band of women. Her solo performances are heartfelt and moving.
Program Notes

Carolyn McDade, composer of Open Chant, writes in the introduction to her songbook "Sister, Carry On"...

I will advocate for songs as long as I live - for poems and all manner of our "stirrings in the dust" - all the ways we have of disrobing into life without fear of betrayal or retribution for claiming our space and strength, all the ways we spontaneously invite our hearts to listen and 'find voice'...

Aurora begins with strength and a spirit of celebration with Sing Songs of Jubilation, a vocal adaptation of an instrumental work by Baroque composer Johann Pachelbel. We then heartily welcome you with a favorite from the Love Will Guide Us concert, Song for Judith, which reminds us that in our loneliness it's best to remember that "we all have stormy weather - the sun shines when we're together." During a stormy health crisis, Bernice Johnson Reagon (of Sweet Honey in the Rock) wrote Mae Francis for her sister, Mae Declue, reaching out for her hand for strength when both sisters were in need. At the beginning of each concert term, returning Aurora members extend a hand to new members by serenading them with Betsy Rose's Welcome to the Circle (Betsy was Aurora's first guest artist - the Bread and Roses concert). It is a ritual that reminds us that although we come from different places and with different life experiences, Aurora is still a place where all of us belong. Honoring our differences is what Stand Up is all about. Featured guest, Judy Rose wrote this song for the "Stand Up Portland" event a few summers back and Aurora helped her sing it again in Ancestor's Breath. Judy is very dear to Aurora as a past assistant director and a frequent accompanist for the chorus.

Rhythms We Harvest from Our Souls is a favorite Aurora concert. The name of this concert comes from the song Somos Tejedoras which means - "we are the weaving women." (Perhaps some of you recall the beautiful dance created by Aurora member Rita Marquez that opened this concert.) During the chant portion of this song - "tejiendo mujeres bailando" which translates as "the weaving women are dancing" - we will weave some of our own stories into the texture of the chant.

We welcome Terri Grayum & Gwen Thomas, a silvery voiced Portland duo, to lead us in Gwen's Garden Song, a soothing reminder that when we sow love, we will reap it as well. American poet Sara Teasdale (1884-1933) wisely advises us to "Spend all you have for loveliness" in her poem "Barter" which is the text for Life Has Loveliness to Sell. She suggests beauty and grace, children and nature as but of few of the wonders to hold in awe and to cherish - another is "one white singing hour of peace." We welcome members of Ashira (Concord Community of Choirs newest member chorus) to the stage to sing Don Eaton's moving acclamation - Peace Is A 'Come.

Many Ashira members are Aurora alums, but we wanted to provide an opportunity for all past Aurora members to sing with us and so invite all alumni to join us on stage for May the Love We're Sharing, a song which David York shared at the very first Aurora rehearsal. There has always been a steady flow of women in and out of Aurora, and always a solid core, with membership holding steady at about 120-140 singers each concert term. Aurora is shaped by every woman who has sung a part and many women have taken something of Aurora with them on their personal journeys. We truly are a River of Birds, with wings to fly.

Many Aurorans got their wings during Dreamers, a 1994 Solstice extravaganza that was the creation of David York, Judith Barrington and Robin Lane. Singer/songwriter Kate Sullivan was the "stranger" who came along to sing a song about a dream. Kate joins us again to Sing About Love with all of you. Please join in! David and Judith composed some memorable poetry and music for this show, particularly our beautiful namesake song, Aurora with which we'll end today's concert.

Our next two songs speak of change and healing, pain and struggle. Against the Wind, defiant and empowering, has become a very popular anthem to those women in Ireland who are beckoning the winds of change regarding women's rights. The Northwest-grown group Motherlode, has always been a good source of down to earth songs about the many challenges that face us - be it human rights or personal growth. Motherlode's Kathleen Fallon and Nan Collie, will lead Aurora in singing about the miracle of love in Nan's song, Magic.

Magic is alive and well in Aurora, and most times we feel it simply by coming together in a circle of song. The music is the spark that brings us together, but we ourselves are a fire that burns brightly; a nurturing, empowering, enlightening presence for many who come to sing. Circle Me, Sisters is a tribute to that fire.

Aurora means "dawn" and in Call we "wake to move in fire," singing a new work by Joan Szymko - a setting of powerful poem by Alla Bozarth chosen especially for this anniversary concert. The women of Aurora embrace the "call" to "make all things new" because like the dawn, Aurora Chorus is about possibility, opportunity and the joy of new beginnings - be it on a musical, personal, or community journey. Peace be.

CALL

There is a new sound of roaring voices in the deep and light shattered rushes in the heavens; the mountains are coming alive, the fire-kindled mountains, moving again to reshape the earth.

It is we sleeping women, waking up in a darkened world, cutting the chains from off our bodies with our teeth, stretching our lives over the slow earth, seeing, moving, breathing in the vigor that commands us to make all things new.

It has been said that while the women sleep, the earth shall sleep. But listen! We are waking up and rising, and soon our sister will know her strength. The earth-moving day is here. We women wake to move in fire. The earth shall be remade.

- Alla Bozarth, 1974

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Circle Me Sisters

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Open Chant

Sing Songs of Jubilation

Song for Judith

Welcome to the Circle

Mae Francis

Sister

Stand Up

Against the Wind

Somos Tejedoras

Garden Song

Life Has Loveliness to Sell

Peace Is A 'Come

May the Love We’re Sharing

River of Birds

Sing About Love

Magic

Circle Me Sisters

Call

Aurora

(excerpt from “Dreamers”)

Carolyn McDade
arranged by Joan Szymko

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)
Gigue from Partitia No. VI in Bb major.
Edited, text & arrangement by Allan Petker

Judy Collins
arranged Szymko

Betsy Rose
arranged by David York

Bernice Johnson Reagon

Cris Williamson
arranged by Phyllis Safman

Judy A. Rose

Maire Brennan & T. Jarvis
arranged by Szymko

Rhiannon

poem by Monica Lozano

Gwen Thomas
choral arrangement by Szymko

Mary Lynn Lightfoot

poem by Sara Teasdale

Don Eaton

anonymous

Oregon Women’s
Land Community

Kate Sullivan

Nan Collie

Linda Allen
arranged Szymko

Joan Szymko
poem by Alla Bozarth

David York
poetry by Judith Barrington
Aurora Chorus: women in harmony for peace

SOPRANO 1
Michele Alderson
Debra Arriéve
Marilyn Ayers*
Claudine Blake
Pamela Burrell
Barbara Cabot
Karen Casciato
Anne Dall*
Bae Emerson*
Christine Hayward
Margaret Imlie
Kathleen Judge
Susan Kaeeler
Jo Lyndon
Nancy McFarlane
Kirsten Meyer
Heather Michel*
Kersti Petit-Kekel
Debbie Pinney
Helen Richardson
Ellen Roberts*
Judy Sapon-Borson
Jenna Scott
Lesley Sepetoski
Cheri Smith
Lisa Stone
Robin Sutherland
Janet Trinkle
Sonya Weidin*
Mary Jo Wiesfeld*
Jennifer Yocum

SOPRANO 2
Natasha Beck*
Barbara Bonnema
Christine Brown
Patricia Chupman

Alto 1
Judy Brodky
Karen Chase
Kelly Childress
Gaia Davies
Lois Dikes*
Mauria Doherty
Ann Dudley
Joanna Dumais-Clark
Margot Fugere
Alyse Finlayson

Alto 2
Kathleen Fisher
Karl Fitzwater
Lori Flowers
Judie Franklin
Peggy Friedi-Yee
Leslie Gardiner
Jennifer Gates
Katie Gordon
Carol Hazzard
Merrill Hendin
Jeanne Henry*
Ann Hunsworth
Georgie Hustead
Susan Hyde
Sue Jensen*
Kathy Kelley
Denise Kossover-Wechter
Dorothy Krogh
Linda Larsen-Wheatley*
Joan Logan
Arla Melum
Karen Milton
Janet Ploss
Anne Rutherford
Kate Schuyler
Beth Schwartz
JudiSoloway*
Karen Scott
Beverly Starr
MaryAnne Stowell
Kat Strieby
Cindy Trelstad*
Carol Walker*
Fran Weick
Marc Williams*
Carleen Wroblasky
Joni Young*
Adele Zimmerman*

OUTREACH
Kathleen Fisher
Ann Huntwork
Georgia Pinkel
Ellen Roberts*

CONCERT PRODUCTION
Colleen Keys, chair
Chris Brown
Carol Hazzard
Marylynn Johnson
Leslie Gardiner
Atk Strieby
Mauria Doherty
Caroline Kasten
Jennifer Yocum

PROGRAM
Coordinator – Jeanne Hackney
Design/Production – Cheri Smith
Illustration – Meg Ferguson

CONCERT COMMITTEES & Volunteers

DIVERSITY
Judy Brodky
Lori Flowers
Judie Franklin
Leslie Gardiner
Ann Huntwork
Linda Jo Rasmussen
Ellen Soloway*

HARMONIZERS
Joan Andrews*
Kaye Exo
Jennifer Gates
Maria Hazilla
Lathy Kelley
Megan Smith*
Eileen Spencer
Carol Wright

OUTREACH
Kathleen Fisher
Ann Huntwork
Georgia Pinkel
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SPECIAL THANKS

Diversity
Joan Andrews
Riki Byrd
Judith Sapon-Borson
Anne Bates
Dan Brown
Kate Campbell
Ron Carpenter
Karen Chase
Leslie Congleton
Anne Dall
Deanna Fitzpatrick
Sally Horsh
Susan Hopkins
Twila Johnson
Michael Jordon
Sharon Klin
Fay Malloy
Heather Michel
ellen Morrison

Circle Me Sisters Production

Audio Recording
Gene Balcomb

Stage Direction
Robin Lane

Flowers
Bloomingstalk

Video Recording
Gary Locker

Special Thanks

Denise Anderson
Anne Bates
Dan Brown
Kate Campbell
Ron Carpenter
Karen Chase
Leslie Congleton
Anne Dall
Deanna Fitzpatrick
Sally Horsh
Susan Hopkins
Twila Johnson
Michael Jordon
Sharon Klin
Fay Malloy
Heather Michel
ellen Morrison

And all others who volunteered after the press deadline.
Aurora Perspectives

David York: Aurora's founding director

Aurora is a phenomenon. I’d love to claim having envisioned its current success from the moment of its inception. But truthfully, the birth of Aurora is more accurately an example of what can happen when you respond to a calling. In short, something was ready to be born, and I said, “Yes.”

After years of having turned away a plethora of qualified women who wanted to sing with Concord Choir, it had become obvious there was a need for a women’s choir also dedicated to affirming peace through music. Concord Choir’s Board of Directors worked with me to develop a model for a new program that would include music education among its priorities. We agreed that a minimum of 20 singers would be needed in order to continue.

At the first rehearsal over 45 women showed up. Within six months we had to relocate in order to accommodate the 100+ singers who met each week. The world wanted Aurora and we gave her breath.

Her name? Once the decision to form a women’s chorus had been made, my antenna for “the name” stayed on alert. I suppose it didn’t happen that way.

My partner and I were watching “Impromptu” – an historical fiction movie about Chopin, Liszt, and the outrageous female novelist of the nineteenth century whose pen name was George Sand. Come to find out, “George’s” birth name was Aurora! I nudged Chris and said, “Perfect!” THAT was the spirit I wanted to embody with this new chorus – fiery, strong, creative, unapologetically masculine AND feminine, honest, and most of all, passionate.

Our muse has always guided us. When it was time for me to shift my attentions elsewhere and momentum in Aurora was gathering, the perfect conductor found her way. Enter, Joan Szymko.

Serendipitously, a piece Joan had composed entitled “This We Know” was among the pieces planned for our next concert. I had heard the piece and observed Joan’s extraordinary musical leadership at a National Conference of Gay and Lesbian Choruses some years earlier. She made a dazzling impression. When I learned that she was – how shall we say – “hanging out” on Vashon Island (near Seattle) and conducting a small church choir to make ends meet, I promptly began courting her to come to Portland; first for the concert (honest, I didn’t PLAN to invite her to conduct her piece on the program) then for the major move to become Aurora’s director. Fortunately for all of us, her muse must have had us in mind. Joan relocated and now we’re “living happily ever after.”

The moral of the story? Listen to what your heart is saying, and hold one another up in that belief.

Anne Rutherford: charter member

It AMAZES me to be celebrating Aurora’s 5th anniversary. Half of me is incredulous that it is FIVE YEARS (the very first rehearsal seems like last month), the other half is astounded that it is ONLY five years (it feels like we’ve been doing this forever!)

It’s hard to imagine a world without Aurora in it.

Wher I think of “the early days,” I think of David York. Aurora was absolutely ready to be born, and David was the midwife! For several years I’d been looking for a place to sing, but every situation in town required previous experience or church affiliation, and I had neither.

I’d seen the blurb that Aurora was forming in Concord Choir’s program for “Return of the Light” and decided to give it a try. Our very first rehearsal was on a wintry Thursday night in an upper room at St. Rose Church in NE Portland. I learned later David had been hoping for at least 20 people to make it “a go.” Forty of us showed up that first night, and you know the story ever since. I was nervous! Would I have to sing in front of people? Would I be expected to know something? Before even introducing himself, David started us singing in THREE PARTS, which I thought was purely magical. I felt something in my chest relax and thoroughly enjoyed the rest of rehearsal. I was hooked!

There was something very tender and magnificent about those first months, the first year or so. It’s as if David created an opportunity for something and whoosh! Aurora swept in like a wave and claimed the space. It was exhilarating, challenging, exhausting, inspiring. We were all constantly amazed at ourselves. The first music we learned included “Nigra Sum” by Pablo Casals. I couldn’t believe I was eligible to try to sing this! I’d just come out of a difficult break-up and was in a very low period in my life, and I remember walking to work in the spring that first year humming my part. The scent of flowers was just coming out and it felt like the top of my head was opening up. I felt so encouraged that this was accessible to me, that someone believed that I could do this. David initiated and stoked that feeling, but we all carried it for one another, as we do still.

Aurora is a place where, in our best selves, we decide we can do whatever we want to do, and hold one another up in that belief.

And as Aurora changes, it both expands and stays constant. One of David’s most brilliant moves was engaging Joan Szymko to be Aurora’s director when it was time for him to move on. She was able to build on the spirit that existed and take us to astounding (and occasionally dizzying!) musical heights. With
Joan's leadership Aurora spread her wings and soared. And through all of it, I think of the faces and voices and spirits of the literally hundreds of women who have been and are still a part of Aurora. So many conversations in the hall at break, quiet walks on retreat, shoulders to lean on (literally!) during a long tech rehearsal. So many individual facets to the spirit that is Aurora, and those winking light and dark, sharing pleasure and sometimes pain. Aurora is such a necessary expression of spirit in the world. I am so glad to be one of her many, the many who make up the one.

Nancy McFarlane: joined Aurora fall ’92, Ashira founding member

I started to sing with Aurora and loved it for the fun of singing. There have been two periods of time when I had a scheduling conflict with Thursday evenings and went on leave. It was during one of those times, when I had an idea. Wouldn’t it be fun to get together with other Aurora alumni and sing just for the fun of it with no memorization and no performance pressure. First I talked to a handful of other former Aurorans and they thought it sounded like fun. So I talked to David York, and then... Ashira was conceived and born (all within nine months!)

Ashira, in Hebrew, means “I will sing.” The first chapter, Accordia, means harmonious union of sounds or harmony of relations. The chapter is comprised of non-Aurorans as well as post Aurorans. Now there are five chapters singing throughout the Portland area. We sing for the fun of singing, performing occasionally. Most recently we sang at ZooLights, with music and only brief conversation about what we were going to wear. We wore whatever we wanted so we would be warm!

Jennifer Yocum: joined Aurora May ‘96

Last Christmas, I bought a ticket to see a friend of mine sing in a concert. “This’ll be nice,” I thought, “a few women singing with some kids. Maybe we’ll even do a carol or two.” A tide of women in black, purple and magenta flooded the sanctuary singing a solstice round, “When the winter comes we gather together...” The women kept coming and coming. There seemed to be no end to their numbers or to the music they were singing. My jaw dropped... this was amazing. Songs started and ended under the spell of this musical alchemist (Director Joan Szymko). She seemed not to conduct so much as to play this many-voiced instrument. That day, I heard a call as real as any of the notes sung during the program. It was like being woken up to a dream I didn’t even know I had. I had to become a part of this chorus. That day, I signed a waiting list and held my breath until I could join with these women. Months later, I received a call from the membership committee and was invited to audition for Aurora. The audition doesn’t call for much musicianship. Instead, the first night of Aurora rehearsal tested my ability to make my dreams come true. How does one cope with a ready-made family of 140 women all seeking to adopt you?

In my second season with Aurora, this dream is still new and renewing. Much to my surprise I am a section leader, a member of the production committee and people are already forgetting I wasn’t around for this concert or that retreat. When asked what Aurora means to me, I still don’t know what to say, except that I think I’m waking up and the reality is even better than my dream.

Looking for a place to sing?

As an outreach component of the Concord Community of Choirs, Ashira is a network of community-based choruses who meet on a monthly basis in homes throughout the region.

Our common text is a songbook of tried and true hits accumulated from a decade of singing for peace. Gatherings are led by folks who’ve completed a series of conducting seminars tailored especially for novice conductors and led by Artistic Director, David York. Annual dues of $25 help offset the cost of training for conductors, publicity, and operations.

Groups, ranging in size from 12 to 50 people, define their own vocal configuration and priorities. Since Ashira’s inception in June 1996, five chapters have formed:

Accordia (SW) – the charter chapter, for women only, meets in the Sylvan area. Host: Larry Anne Garlock Directors: Joan Peters & Carol Walker Meets: 2nd Sun. eve

Hataama (NE) – for women interested in incorporating ritual and dance with music. Host: Helen Richardson Director: Ellen Morrison Meets: 3rd Wed. eve

Calliope (NE) – for women with sight reading ability and extensive choral experience. Host: Teresa Culp Director: Mary McCarty Meets: 1st Sun. eve


Lively Tykes (NW) – NEW CHAPTER for 3 to 7-year-olds and their families. Host: Community Church of Cedar Hills Directors: David York & Linda Jo Rasmussen Meets: 1st Sat. morning

Representatives will be available in the lobby after the Aurora performances to answer any questions you may have about singing with or leading an Ashira chapter. You may also request information by calling the Concord Community of Choirs at 721-0262.
**MUSIC INSTRUCTION**

**Doug Ferguson**

Individual and group classes in recorder, dulcimer, African marimba, tin whistle, Celtic harp. Adults or children, beginner through advanced levels.

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Openings
CONCORD CHOIR, VIRIDITAS VOCAL ENSEMBLE,
CORO UOMO, CHRYSALIS CONCERT CHOIR

November 6, 1996
All four choirs performing individually, then together
in a premiere by Joan Szymko.

Concord Choir
DAVID YORK, director

Ceremony of Carols – December 5, 1996
Gregorian Chant for Christmas Day
Ave Maria – by Tomas Luis da Victoria
Mary's Song – a premiere by David York
Magnificat – by Arvo Pärt
Ceremony of Carols – by Benjamin Britten
featuring harpist Elaine Seeley

A Gallery of German Masterpieces –
March 6, 1997
Jauchzet dem Herren – by Heinrich Schütz
3 Motets, Opus 109 – by Johannes Brahms
Os Justi – by Anton Bruckner
Singet dem Herrn – by Johann Sebastian Bach

Nippon: The Floating Kingdom – May 1, 1997
Helwia 1A Thousand Cranes – by Eva Noda
Yomo No Umi – with the Portland Koto Ensemble
Akatomba – traditional Japanese Folksong
AND...the Premiere of a commission by Yoko Nakatani

Viriditas Vocal Ensemble
JOAN SZYMKO, director

The Naked Circle – April 3, 1997
Join Viriditas Vocal Ensemble for a joyous musical
journey into the realm of letting go. Featuring music
by Hildegard of Bingen, Lasso, Le jeune, Lou Harrison
and the premiere of a new composition, Naked Circle,
by director Joan Szymko.

coro uomo
STEVE PETER, director

Now We Begin – February 6, 1997
A chorus of men singing new works and rarely
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Chrysalis Concert Choir
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Chrysalis Unplugged – June 5, 1997
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Chrysalis Concert Choir
coro uomo
Viriditas Vocal Ensemble

December 5
CEREMONY OF CAROLS
Concord Choir
with harpist Elaine Seeley

February 6
NOW WE BEGIN
coro uomo

March 6
A GALLERY OF GERMAN MASTERPIECES
Concord Choir

April 3
THE NAKED CIRCLE
Viriditas Vocal Ensemble

May 1
NIPPON: THE FLOATING KINGDOM
Concord Choir
with Portland Koto Ensemble

June 5
CHRYSALIS UNPLUGGED
Chrysalis Concert Choir

DIRECTORS: DAVID YORK—CONCORD CHOIR & CHRYSALIS CONCERT CHOIR
JOAN SZYMKO—VIRIDITAS VOCAL ENSEMBLE
STEVE PETER—CORO UOMO

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