Our 2nd Annual
International Women’s Day Celebration

Dare to Be Powerful

When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.

Audre Lorde

AURORA CHORUS
Joan Szymko, Director
In concert with special guest
KELLY BOSWORTH

First Congregational Church
1126 SW Park Avenue
Portland, Oregon

March 8, 2015
Greetings from the Aurora Chorus Board of Directors

This afternoon Aurora Chorus takes the stage with women in eight different decades of life. We’re delighted, a bit amazed, and proud of our multigenerational community. Our songs tell a variety of stories, but all are a part of this living generation. We don’t mind at all that the gender discrimination related in “What’s Up With That?” doesn’t resonate with our younger singers. That is what so many of us fought for. At the same time, it is haunting that Bernice Johnson Reagon’s setting of Ella Baker’s words from the 1960s still seems so contemporary:

Until the killing of black men, black mother’s sons, is as important as the killing of white men, white mother’s sons, we who believe in freedom cannot rest.

We will be singing about the power of old women (Holly Near’s “1000 Grandmothers”) and about the power of young women (Joan Szymko’s “Malala”). Every one of us can dare to be powerful and change the world.

Some notes about the women whose words and songs we present in this concert:

Audre Lorde (1932–1992), a self-described “black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet,” dedicated both her life and her creative talents to confronting and addressing the injustices of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Toward the end of her life, she took the name Gamba Adisa in an act of flow, energy, journeys, dreams—life itself. Aurora was founded on the belief that music can be a powerful instrument of peace locally, globally, and in the hearts of all who listen and all who sing. In an atmosphere of personal growth and cooperation, Aurora is proud to provide both novice and experienced singers with an unparalleled opportunity to expand and transform a love of singing into an understanding and appreciation of healthy vocal production, choral technique, musical expression and literacy. Led by Director Joan Szymko, Aurora Chorus consists of around 100 singers from the Portland/Vancouver area, presents two full-length concerts each year, and performs at community outreach events throughout the year. Aurora has produced three full-length CD recordings: Full Circle, Solstice, and Baby, It’s Cold Outside. All are for sale in the lobby and through the chorus website. Please visit us online at AuroraChorus.org, your source for future events and information for joining the chorus.

Kristan Burkert
Aurora Chorus Board Chair

Raise Your Voice in Song

Has our concert today moved you to join your voice with others—in four-part harmony? To prepare a concert of inspiring music that will warm your heart as the weather turns cold?

We will be welcoming new singers in September for our winter concert. Rehearsals are Thursday evenings in downtown Portland. As a non-auditioned choir, Aurora Chorus welcomes any woman who shares our love of singing and our mission of inspiring and reflecting the universal yearning for peace. Our singers come from a variety of ages, skill levels, and walks of life.

To find out more, write to info@aurorachorus.org.

Ella Josephine Baker (1903–1986) helped shape the civil rights movement from the 1930s through the 1960s with her ideas and organizing skills. She had the ability to listen to people and to inspire them to organize around issues that would empower their lives. At a time when there were no women in leadership in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Baker served as its executive director. Hundreds of young people became politically active because of her respect and mentoring.

Mrs. Mary Louise Hooper was the source of South African freedom songs that Pete Seeger and four other men recorded with Folkways Records in 1960. From Pete’s liner notes on the record: “Mrs. Hooper, a native of San Francisco, spent several years in South Africa and became closely acquainted with some of the leaders of the African National Congress. When she left that country (at the insistence of the government), her friends gave her a small going away party and made a tape recording of her favorite songs. The harmonies and rhythms for these songs have been learned directly from that tape.”

Aurora Chorus

Since 1992, Aurora Chorus has honored the strength and beauty of women’s lives through the fine art of choral singing. Aurora was founded on the belief that music can be a powerful instrument of peace locally, globally, and in the hearts of all who listen and all who sing. In an atmosphere of personal growth and cooperation, Aurora is proud to provide both novice and experienced singers with an unparalleled opportunity to expand and transform a love of singing into an understanding and appreciation of healthy vocal production, choral technique, musical expression and literacy. Led by Director Joan Szymko, Aurora Chorus consists of around 100 singers from the Portland/Vancouver area, presents two full-length concerts each year, and performs at community outreach events throughout the year. Aurora has produced three full-length CD recordings: Full Circle, Solstice, and Baby, It’s Cold Outside. All are for sale in the lobby and through the chorus website. Please visit us online at AuroraChorus.org, your source for future events and information for joining the chorus.

Save the Date

Let the River Run
Sunday, May 17, 2015

River: The word elicits abundant images and metaphors of flow, energy, journeys, dreams—life itself. Aurora “goes with the flow” in this joint concert with Con Brio, a women’s choir from the Seattle area. Guest conductor Kathleen Hollingsworth leads Aurora in our final concert of the season.

Visit us online at AuroraChorus.org for more details.

Artistic Director

Joan Szymko has conducted community choruses in the Pacific Northwest for over thirty years. When Joan came to Portland in 1993 to take on the leadership of Aurora Chorus, she brought extensive experience with women’s voices, composing and arranging skills, and a wide knowledge of peace and justice repertoire. In subsequent years Joan founded and directed Viriditas Vocal Ensemble, a select women’s choir. With Viriditas she collaborated with Do Jump! Movement Theater. As a resident composer with Do Jump! (1995-2012), she had the opportunity to perform her music with the company at their home theater in Portland and on tour from Broadway to Los Angeles. Joan recently joined the choral faculty at the Portland State University School of Music as director of the Vox Femina women’s choir.

In the last decade, music Joan composed for Aurora Chorus and Viriditas has gained recognition in the larger choral community for providing “opportunities for women’s choruses to stretch beyond the ordinary and the expected to the refreshing and powerful” (The Choral Journal). A renowned and frequently commissioned composer with over 100 choral titles in print publication, her music is sung by a variety of distinguished ensembles across North America and abroad. The American Choral Directors Association recognized Joan’s lasting contribution to the choral arts by selecting her as the recipient of the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission in 2010. She is currently working on a major work for chorus and orchestra, Remembrances, funded by the Oregon Community Foundation’s Creative Heights Initiative, to be premiered by the Eugene Vocal Arts Ensemble in the spring of 2016.
Our guest artist for this concert, Kelly Bosworth, is a folk interpreter and Americana songwriter. Kelly believes in the power of music to bring us together, to heal us when we’re in pain, and to mark our times of joy. Her songs are part celebration and part lamentation, drawing on old folk, country, and acoustic blues music from long before her time for inspiration.

Kelly began writing her own songs after the mysterious loss of her father. In 2011, Mark Bosworth went missing from a Cycle Oregon campsite in southern Oregon. The family believes that the cancer he had battled for several years had returned, and that he became disoriented and lost. It was months before Kelly could find comfort in the music she had shared with her father, but she began writing songs as a way to make peace with the jagged and broken narrative of his disappearance.

The songs that came out of this experience are reflections on loss, longing, and love. They are the product of many evenings spent gathered around a piano with family, around a campfire with friends—in short, of a lifetime of joyful music making.

We are pleased to showcase this budding talent. Kelly released her self-titled debut album in November 2014, performs in Portland with bands Doogan Holler and Kelly and the Bells, and tours nationally as a solo artist.

International Women’s Day

International Women's Day has been observed and celebrated worldwide since the early 1900s, when it was closely aligned with the working women’s movement and the campaign for women’s suffrage. It has grown to become a global day dedicated to women’s rights and world peace, embraced by the United Nations and many governments. It is an official holiday in nearly 30 countries and is widely observed in many others. The theme for International Women’s Day 2015 is “Make it happen.”

She Who Makes Her Meaning Clear

Joan Szymko / text: adaptation of quote by Audre Lorde

Malalà

Joan Szymko / text: adapted from quotes by Malala Yousafzai

speaker: Wendy Thompson

Malibongwe!

Let Women Be Praised!, traditional South African freedom song / arranged by Joan Szymko

What’s Up With That?

Helen Lewis Moore

solist: Tina Izen

How Could Anyone

Libby Roderick / arranged by Joan Szymko

1000 Grandmothers

Holly Near / arranged by J. David Moore

Ella’s Song

Bernice Johnson Reagon / inspired by the life and words of Ella Baker

Call

Joan Szymko / poem by Alla Bozarth

taiko drummers: Jessica Hewett and Keahi Horowitz

I Am Willing

Holly Near / arranged by Steven Milloy

Malibongwe! Translation

It is burned, it is burned.
The pass in the Orange Free State is burned.

Let it be praised, let it be praised.
The name of women should be praised.

Let it be praised, let it be praised.
The name of volunteers should be praised.
**Soprano 1**
Michele Alderson
Phyllis Auger
Margaret Blake
Kristan Burkert
Libby Chow
Linda Cornel
Paulla Dacklin
Karen Fryefield
Terri Grayum**
Kirsten Hays
Christine Hayward+
Frances Hicks
Wendy Howard
Lisa Hughes
Catherine Johnson
Static Kaeder
Lori Kovacevic*
Jane Larson
Zoe Lehr
Meredith Peake
Judi Ranton**

**Soprano 2**
Holly Alexander
Elaine Ball
Natasha Beck
Patricia Cornman-Wilcox**
Julie Earnest
Tina Izen
Robert Jortner
Elizabeth Larsen***
Jaclyn Leeds
Zsuzsa Nemeth
Jennifer Newton
Linda Nichenko
Debbie Paynter
Amanda Perl*
Gwen Porus
Lisa Renard
Regina Sackrider
Sharyn Schneiderman
Wendy Thompson

Mary Anne Thygesen
Rachel Wagner
Hannah Warden
Kimber Warden
Krista Weikel-Delaplane

**Alto 1**
Aurora Alonzo
Micki Barney
Brenda Brischetto
Shannon Bueno
Barbara Cervantes-Gautschi
Kaye Exo
Beth Ferrarini
Barbara Gray
Patti Harelkin
Carolyn Hawes Huden
Marylyn John
Marilyn Lindberg
Gayle Lovejoy**

**Alto 2**
Sara Baker
Chris Bond*
Rachel Brooks
Colleen Cornman-Wilcox**
Lisa Fithian-Barrett
Harmony Griffith
Linda Milone
Gail Murphy
Janet Neuman
Brenda Spicer+
Michele Stemler
Cindy Zrinyi

* Section Manager
** Music Section Leader
++ Harmonizer
+++ Harmonizer Chair

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We are delighted to support choral performance art in Portland that makes a difference!

Aurora, Satori, PGMC, Threshold Choir, Portland Lesbian Choir and PDX VOX (google them!)