AURORA CHORUS PRESENTS

SISTERS, YOU KEEP ME FIGHTING

5th Annual INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY Concert Celebration
MARCH 4th • 4pm

with special guest artists,

Beth Wood
and
Ara Lee
Greetings from the Board

Now, more than ever, we need each other. We need to sing and hear songs of resistance, persistence, and courage. Thank you for joining us as we present this special multi-generational concert in honor of International Women’s Day. Aurora welcomes young daughters, nieces, and granddaughters of singers this term; we also recently celebrated a singer’s 89th birthday. This span of eight decades on the risers today is testament to the abiding strength of women’s voices. One is never too young or too old to be heard. We singers have also delighted in Joan’s conducting mentorship of 8th grader Irie Page. As students valiantly fight for change throughout our country, Irie exemplifies the courage and tenacity embodied by our youngest generation. And, who better to serve as a role model than Joan.

Today we will join our guest artists in singing their piece “Nasty Woman,” an ode to powerful women that went viral on YouTube. Singer-songwriter Ara Lee sings like a woman with something to say, in a voice that makes you stop and listen. Crediting Nina Simone and Rumi among her influences, Ara is equally comfortable with stripped down acoustic-driven folk and her signature soulful, tribal grooves. Beth Wood is a modern-day troubadour and believer in the power of song. In her twenty years as a full-time touring artist, Beth has released ten independent albums and one book of poetry with album #11 and book #2 in the works. Her exceptional musicianship, crafty songwriting, powerhouse voice and commanding stage presence leave no doubt about her purpose: to spread the joy she experiences through music and reflect the world around her through the prism of her thoughtful, watchful poet’s eye.

Thank you for joining Aurora today in this celebration of women’s enduring spirit. Sisters, you keep me fighting.
With immense gratitude,
Jaclyn Leeds, Board Chair

Aurora Board

Jaclyn Leeds, President Colleen Cornman-Wilcox Judi Ranton
Kristan Burkert, Treasurer Lisa Fithian-Barrett Joan Szymko, ex officio
Lynn Greenwood, Secretary Lori Kovacevic

About Aurora Chorus

Aurora Chorus was founded in 1992 on the belief that music is a powerful instrument of peace—locally, globally, and within the hearts of all who sing and all who listen. We honor the strength, beauty and diversity of women’s lives through the fine art of choral singing. As a community of women empowered by song, our mission is to be a clear, compassionate voice in an increasingly conflicted world. Comprised of singers from the Portland/Vancouver metro area, the chorus presents three full-length concerts each season and performs at community outreach events throughout the year. Aurora Chorus offers novice and experienced singers alike the opportunity to grow in a nurturing, inclusive atmosphere where healthy vocal production, solid choral technique and a diverse and compelling repertoire support Aurora’s mission.
Our Director

Joan Szymko has conducted choruses in the Pacific Northwest for over thirty years. She left Seattle for Portland in 1993 to take on the leadership of Aurora Chorus. She soon founded Viriditas, a select women’s ensemble, (1994-2002) and enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with Do Jump! Movement Theater (1994-2012) as a performer, music director and resident composer. She recently served on the choral music faculty at Portland State University as director of Vox Femina (2013-15). As a visiting artist, Joan Szymko workshops her music with choirs in a variety of educational settings across the country and abroad.

Composing for choir is a natural outgrowth of Joan Szymko’s creativity as a conductor. Joan’s dedication to craft and artistry and her insistence on quality texts are renowned. Her catalog of over 100 published choral works is performed by ensembles across North America and abroad. Since 2003, her music has been performed at every National Conference of the American Choral Directors Association. In 2010 the ACDA recognized Szymko’s lasting impact on the choral arts in America by selecting her as the recipient of the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission. Szymko’s Shadow and Light, an Alzheimer’s Journey, a major new work for chorus and orchestra, was commissioned by Eugene Vocal Arts and given a successful premiere in April 2016.

Our Accompanist

Currently based in Portland, Oregon, collaborative pianist Kira Whiting graduated from Manhattan School of Music in May 2014, with a Master’s in Classical Accompanying with a Vocal Emphasis. Ms. Whiting has participated in master classes with Thomas Quasthoff, Martin Katz, Thomas Hampson, Craig Rutenberg, and Roger Vignoles.

She has performed several art song recitals in Scandinavia, including a program of American art songs with Norwegian soprano Margrethe Fredheim for a balcony concert at the Oslo Opera House. Ms. Whiting was a semi-finalist in collaboration with Dashon Burton, Bass-Baritone, at the Wigmore Hall International Art Song Competition 2015 in London, UK.
Sing With Us!
Aurora Chorus welcomes women of all ages at all skill levels who seek artistic expression in an empowering singing environment. Directed by renowned choral composer Joan Szymko, Aurora provides women with an outstanding opportunity to grow vocally, but also — and just as importantly — to sing words that allow the heart to soar, to grieve, to celebrate and to communicate to our audience our hopes for a more compassionate world.

Join us for cookies and conversation after the show downstairs in the reception area.
Guest artist recordings and merchandise also available.

Concert Credits
Production Coordinator – Patti Harelkin
Stage Manager – Robin Lane
Assistant Stage Manager – Sara Steege
Front of House – Lesley Sepetoski

Sound & Lights – Showdrape Inc. Cassie, Yalchin & staff
Sound Recording – Rod Everson
Videographer – Joshua Sales
Tickets – Dixie and Mark Larsen
Concert Graphic Design – Joan Szymko

Special Thanks
PSU Music Dept., Cara and staff at First Congregational Church
Starbucks on SW 9th & Taylor for ongoing support
All of our amazing volunteers – thank you!

The Eileen Spencer Scholarship Fund
The Eileen Spencer Scholarship Fund was established in memory of Eileen Spencer, a devoted chorus member for nearly 15 years. The fund assists chorus members with participation fees when financial challenges arise. We invite you to support Aurora singers by making a contribution to Aurora Chorus earmarked “Spencer Fund.”
## The Singers

### Soprano 1
- Susan Abe
- Michele Alderson
- Magdalena Alonzo
- Phyllis Auger
- Margaret Blake
- Kristan Burkert
- Shannon Chaffin
- Sabine Colie
- Libby Clow
- Joyce Follingstad
- Katherine Hays
- Kirsten Hays
- Christine Hayward
- Frances Hicks
- Wendy Howard
- Annika Kron
- Lori Kovacevic
- Zoe Lehr
- Irie Page
- Meredith Peake
- Judi Ranton
- Susan Rinker
- Courtney Seablom
- Heidi Sickert/Rianda
- Bethany Soule
- Faire Soule-Reeves
- Stacy Watts
- Ann Wilson

### Soprano 2
- Rachel Baldwin
- Elaine Ball
- Natasha Beck
- Cheyenne
- Chapman
- Bethany Clouse
- Tacy Clow
- Patricia
- Cornman-Wilcox
- Judith Don
- Betsy Dowell
- Julie Earnest
- Ruth Flores
- Lynn Greenwood
- Alyna Izen
- Tina Izen
- Static Kaeder
- Lisa Kron
- Jaclyn Leedes
- Ruth McCabe
- Zsuzsa Nemeth
- Nannette Niski
- Debbie Paynter
- Gwen Porus
- Regina Sackrider
- Mary Anne Thygesen
- Krista Weikel

### Alto 1
- Aurora Alonzo
- Shannon Buono
- Cindy Christensen
- Claire Dennerlein
- Beth Ferrarini
- Barbara Gray
- Patti Harelkin
- Kanna Hudson
- Roberta Hunte
- Marylyn John
- Kristin Judge
- Allyson Knapper
- Donna Lieberman
- Marilyn Lindberg
- Michelle Lum
- Bunny Marechal
- Kim Martin
- Peggy McComb
- Patricia McKinney
- Wendy Miller
- Rachel Plotinsky
- Jackie Rose
- Judy Soule
- Sharyl Swope
- Carol Walker

### Alto 2
- Margaret Brown
- Colleen Cornman-Wilcox
- Margot Faegre
- Lisa Fithian-Barrett
- Sharayaha Guy
- Terri Lewis
- Sparky Lindsay
- Virginia Malone
- Gaia Mather
- Linda Milone
- Claudia Nadine
- Janet Neuman
- LouAnn Peartree
- Jill Sanders
- Michele Stemler
- Carol Timper
- Cindy Zrinyi

+ Harmonizers
++ Harmonizer Chair
** Harmonizer Chair
* Section Managers
A Aurora Coordinating Team

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*Aurora Outreach Ensemble is available to sing at your upcoming banquet, party, fundraiser, or other special event.*

For more information about booking, contact admin@aurorachorus.org.
Sisters, You Keep Me Fighting

Joan Szymko, Director
Kira Whiting, Accompanist

SPECIAL GUESTS
Beth Wood and Ara Lee

AURORA CHORUS

I Will Be Your Standing Stone  Melanie DeMore

Strong Woman Song  based on a Cree Sweat Lodge song, “Owl Song”

adapted and sung by the Native Sisterhood incarcerated at Kingston Prison for Women (P.4.W.) in Ontario, CA. (more info below)

Testimony  Ferron, arr. Joan Szymko
solo: Sharayaha Guy

Our Ways of Knowing  Colleen Fulmer
trio: Lisa Kron, Courtney Seablom, and Susan Rinker.
flute: Julie Earnest

We All Come from the Goddess  Starhawk, arr. Szymko

Reading  I Met God
speaker: Claire Dennerlein  Richelle Nicole

Queen of Diamonds  Connie Cohen

Reading  You are a power
speaker: Margot Faegre  Nayyirah Waheed

Roar  Katy Perry, Lukasz Gottwald, Max Martin & Henry Walker
arr. Deke Sharon
About the Strong Woman Song

Yvonne Johnson, Chair of the Native Sisterhood at P.4.W. in the early 1990's, states: “It was created out of a old Cree sweat lodge song called the owl song. It is Cree made by a Cree woman that was imprisoned in P.4.W. prison for women. Said woman committee suicide while still with in prison. The song became like a Anthem for the Native Sisterhood there. When the prison was closed the song was carried out and given to the peoples with the knowledge that where it came from should be carried on... It is a song made by the Native Sisterhood, for the Sisterhood and for all woman to become and stay strong, to stay alive against all the odds... Yes the song is a healing song, and song of universality in it's use. All good. Just give respect to it's creator, to that in which and where it came from. It was said the song is for all who need it and can call upon it... The 'words' to the song itself (are) a release of your spirit self through voice and heat beat driven, no words.”
Selected Lyrics & Translations

**Testimony**
There's godlike / And warlike  
And strong like only some show  
And there's sad like / And madlike  
And had like we know  

But by my life be I spirit  
And by my heart be I woman  
And by my eyes be I open  
And by my hands be I whole  

They say slowly / Brings the least shock  
But no matter how slow I walk  
There are traces / Empty spaces  
And doors and doors of locks  

But by my life be I spirit…  

You young ones / You’re the next ones  
And I hope you choose it well  
Though you try hard / You may fall prey  
To the jaded jewel  

But by your lives be you spirit…  

There are waters / Hidden from us  
In the maze we find them still  
We’ll take you to them  
You take your young ones  
May they take their own in turn  

But by our lives be we spirit  
And by our hearts be we women  
And by our eyes be we open  
And by our hands be we whole  


**Our Ways of Knowing**

The moon is just born and growing,  
and she is my Mother.  
I am a Maiden, my energies flow;  
as I play I know.  

The moon is now full and glowing,  
I call her ‘Beloved.’”  
I am a Mother, see my child grow;  
through my body I know.  

The moon is waning and going,  
she is my Sister.  
I am a Crone, my wisdom has grown;  
many paths do I know.  

**We All Come from the Goddess**

We all come from the Goddess  
and to her we shall return,  
like a drop of rain flowing to the ocean.  

We all come from the Maiden  
and to her we shall return,  
like the budding flowers blooming in the springtime.  

We all come from the Mother  
and to her we shall return,  
like a grain of wheat falling to the reaper’s scythe.  

We all come from the Wise One  
and to her we shall return,  
like waning moon shining on the winter snow.
Queen of Diamonds
There is no vessel or container
deep enough I swear
That could hold the grief the women
of the world have had to bear.
Our families torn by every hunger,
violence greed and war,
All the rape and abuse
wounding to the core.
Like the sacred ground we walk upon
that sustains our very life,
Stripped and scarred and poisoned,
anguish cuts us like a knife.

But our cries have all been silenced
and we've been kept apart,
and taught that we don't really know
and not to trust our heart.
If I could only harness
the power of that pain
I'd rise a hundred feet or more
wrapped in robes of scarlet flame.
And I would pledge allegiance
to that woman in my heart;
No longer would I hold her down
or crush her precious spark.
I'd be the Queen of Diamonds
and you'd be the Queen of Souls,
And together we would heal this earth
and make the planet whole.

Oh can you just imagine
what a vision it would be
If every woman broke the chains
and set her spirit free?
Oh, can you just imagine
what a vision it will be
When every woman finds a way
to set her spirit free.

Malibongwe! translation:
It is burned, it is burned.
It is burnt, It is burnt.
The pass in the Orange Free State
is burned.

Let it be praised, let it be praised.
The names of women should be praised
The names of volunteers should be praised.

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 sisters will know their
strength.
The earth-moving day is here.
We women wake to move in fire.
The earth shall be remade.

From Womanpriest: A Personal Odyssey,
first edition Paulist Press 1978;
revised edition Luramedia 1988,
distributed by Alla Bozarthat Wisdom
House;
and Stars in Your Bones:
Emerging Signposts on Our Spiritual
Journeys by Alla Bozarth, Julia Barkley
and Terri Hawthorne, North Star Press
of St. Cloud 1990; and the audiocassette,
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Name your favorite song from International Women's Day and I will donate 10% of the cost of our work together to Aurora Chorus.

Jaclyn Leeds, Esq.
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(603) 305–7983
lawwithjaclyn.com
SAVE THE DATES!

MAY 20 / 4pm
love is love is love is love

Aurora’s season finale features collaborations with special guests:

Bridging Voices
BVS Women’s Choir (from Brooklyn, NY)
Cascade (of PGMC)
Portland Lesbian Choir
Transpose

- tickets available at aurorachorus.org -

APRIL 21 / 6–10 pm
Aurora Spring Sock Hop

Dancing, desserts, drinks and fun for the whole family. Bring your favorite song requests for DJ Lauren Silvas.

Bridgeport UCC
621 Northeast 76th Avenue
Portland, OR 97213

- RSVP at aurorachorus.org -