AURORA CHORUS
SONG for a WINTER’S NIGHT

Joan Szymko, Director
Sunday, December 21, 2008
at 4PM and 7PM
Parkrose High School Auditorium
FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

First, thank you for coming to our concert. Without you, we sing alone.

As a song in our program says, “Because you are listening, you are part of the song.” We are grateful for your company and your support. We are looking at ideas for sharing our music with the community in new ways that promote our values of peace and women’s concerns. We will be exploring some opportunities in the next few months.

We had an opportunity to begin this adventure when we presented a women’s song circle and concert by our friend, singer/songwriter and peace activist, Betsy Rose. The concert was a benefit for No More Victims, and specifically for the financial costs for an injured Iraqi boy treated here in Portland. Keep an eye on the web site and this space in the spring program to learn what we have been able to develop in the months to come.

Our “Bloomin’ Auction”, the third annual auction to support Aurora, is scheduled for February 28th. Please consider coming and/or contributing to the items that will be available. We will have good food and drink, a small Aurora presentation and lots of wonderful auction items.

We are also excited to be presenting “Lunafest,” an evening of films by, for and about women on April 17th at the Hollywood Theater. We hope you will save that date and attend.

Aurora’s financial support comes from ticket sales, our members’ fees, and contributions. We appreciate the fact that you support our music and values by attending our concerts. If you would like to further support Aurora, please use the envelope in your program. Again, thank you for joining us.

Wishing you Light in the dark nights of the year, the joy of good fellowship, and all the best in the new year.

The Aurora Board of Directors

DIRECTOR’S GREETING

Aurora Chorus takes the stage on the longest night of the year with a program that evokes many shades and moods of the season — wild winds, warm fires, hearts aglow with longings for love and peace. The concert you are about to hear is one of the most eclectic programs Aurora has ever presented. We’ll be singing in six languages, in widely varying vocal styles — music that spans centuries and continents. Though all of the music neatly fits our theme of “Song for a Winter Night,” I confess that I selected many pieces in anticipation of celebrating the dawn of a hopeful new era, “with the prayer that.. now and forever, the day breaks and the shadows flee away.”

- Fra Giovanni

Aurora Chorus has made some new friends over the past few months, while preparing our concert: KITKA Women’s Vocal Ensemble, which specializes in Eastern European repertoire, worked with the chorus last October on “Alilo,” a very old traditional song from Georgia. We thank the wonderful trio from KITKA who shared their expertise with us, and we dedicate our performance of “Alilo” to those seeking peaceful resolutions in Georgia.

And, just before Thanksgiving, Aurora presented an old friend, Betsy Rose, in a concert that benefitted a new friend, six-year-old Mustafa Ahmed Abed, brought here from Iraq for medical care. Mustafa was with us, as were his father and friends. We sang together, cried together. Father and son are now back in Iraq, reunited with family. Tonight we dedicate “Cradle of Dawn” to our friends in Fallujah.

“There are no promises that we will see the day the dreams we live for will succeed
But I can promise you, that halfway ‘round the world I’ll hold the light up while you sleep.”

- L. Roderick

All we can do is to be light for ourselves, and to hold that light up for others. For Aurora Chorus, that means celebrating our voices, sharing our songs, and singing in that one common language: love.

Warm wishes for a joyous holiday!
Joan Szymko, Artistic Director
Aurora Chorus
EILEEN SPENCER FUND
FOR AURORA

A singing member of Aurora for 13 years, Eileen Spencer died on October 16, 2008 at age 64. She was passionate about the chorus; in spite of a ten year struggle with cancer, she gave generously of her time and talents. In honor of Eileen's passion that Aurora continue to flourish, the Eileen Spencer Memorial Fund has been established. It will fund scholarships so that more women can sing and cover fees for accompanists and guest artists who enrich practices and concerts.

Checks: Aurora Chorus--Eileen Spencer Fund.

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Betsy Rose
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Thank You Volunteers
Aurora thanks these volunteers and those who volunteered too late for their names to appear in print, for the contribution of their hands, hearts and minds. Our continuing success depends upon your willingness to help.

JOAN ANDREWS-
July 31, 1933-September 27, 2008

Aurora lost a valued member, friend and contributing composer in September with the death of Joan Andrews. Joan sang with the chorus for many years. Under the tutelage of David York, she composed choral music in her later years. Her singular, melodic pieces were performed by Aurora and the David York Ensemble.

At Joan’s memorial service, David declared that she approached her musical creations like Hildegarde of Bingen and Joan Szymko. These women, like Joan Andrews, fully understand and respect the “rules” of composition, but also broke those rules to make their unique musical statements, he said.

Memorial gifts can be made to Heifer International.

Contributed by Kaye Exo
AURORA CHORUS

SINCE 1992, Aurora Chorus has honored the strength and beauty of women's lives through the fine art of choral singing. In Aurora, the beauty and power of music to heal, to inspire, and to reflect a universal yearning for peace blend together in an atmosphere of inclusiveness and respect.

Led by director Joan Szymko, Aurora Chorus consists of over 100 women from the Portland area. Through finely-crafted performances of music, Aurora has become a source of strength and inspiration for our community.

Aurora presents two concerts each season, and also appears at community events. Two full length CDs of the chorus' music Full Circle and Solstice! are for sale in the lobby and through the chorus' website, www.aurorachorus.org, where you can also read about future events and find out how to join the chorus.

Are You Moved...

To Sing with Aurora?
Aurora Chorus welcomes singers of all skill levels from the Portland metropolitan area. We will gladly provide you with information regarding membership, answer your questions, or add your name to our waiting list for next term.

To Help But Maybe Not To Sing?
Aurora Chorus is always looking for volunteers to join our community of strength and inspiration, and to support our vision of “Powerful Women Singing Peace.” We have a place for you here!

To Learn About Sponsorship Opportunities?
Aurora Chorus is looking to expand our reach into the community, and is seeking sponsors who support our vision. Would you like to contribute to the financial health of Aurora?

Please Call 503-AURORA-1 (503-287-6721)
Email info@aurorachorus.org, or
Visit www.aurorachorus.org

IN APPRECIATION

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AURORA CHORUS
SONG FOR A WINTER'S NIGHT
Szymko began composing in the early 1980’s to fill a need for mature, substantive, contemporary pieces for adult treble ensemble. Her music is widely performed and she has had over fifty pieces published. A nationally recognized choral composer, Joan has made a significant contribution to the body of literature for women’s voices. “Joan Szymko... has continued to provide opportunities for women’s choruses to stretch beyond the ordinary and the expected to the refreshing and powerful.” The Choral Journal. A frequently commissioned composer, she has recently written new works for the Wellesley College Choir, Miami University Choraliers, the ACDA Women’s Composition Consortium and other distinctive choruses around the country. Szymko has received awards from the Seattle Arts Commission, Oregon Arts Commission, RACC and she was selected to participate in ASCAP’s prestigious Film Scoring Workshop in 2001. She was recently awarded an Artist Fellowship by the Instituto Sacatar to compose music and will be in residence in Itaparica, Brazil for a six week residency this coming January and February.

Joan founded and directed Viriditas, a select women’s ensemble from 1994-2002. Viriditas is featured on her CD of original works, “Openings” and made critically acclaimed appearances with Do Jump! Movement Theater. Joan has been a resident composer with Do Jump! since 1995, performing her music with the company at their home theater in Portland and on tour, including runs on Broadway, at the Kennedy Center and in Los Angeles.

**ACCOMPANIST**

**SIGNE LUSK** studied piano accompanying at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and then continued her studies in Stuttgart, Germany. Upon returning to the United States, she worked for the Oregon Symphony as the Assistant Publicity Director. Lusk has worked as staff pianist for the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. She was given the Outstanding Music Director Award for her work on “Candide”. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in 1998. She accompanied soprano Debra Wilke in the National Association of Teachers of Singing Artists Award Competition, where she was awarded first place. Lusk has performed in concerts with Metropolitan opera stars Jerome Hines, Nico Castel and John Del Carlo, and she was pianist for National Trumpet Association winner Andre Dubelston. In addition, Lusk has worked for Seattle, Portland and Eugene opera companies. Currently, Lusk is staff pianist at the First Unitarian Church, where she conducts their Nova Choir. She is also staff accompanist for the Pacific International Children’s Choir Festival and the Astoria Music Festival.

**GUEST MUSICIAN**

Aurora has always been fortunate to perform with some of the finest musicians in Portland. Today we welcome ABBY MAGES, an active freelance flautist in Portland.
Chasing the Wild Winds of December
This song describes the joy of children running on the plains of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Baridi Desemba  cold December
Kali Desemba  wild December
Upepo Desemba  December wind
Chapua  run fast
Kilimanjaro  name of tallest mountain on African continent
Rafiki  friends

Vesi Väsyy Lumen Alle (Finnish)

Water Under Snow is Weary
For this piece, composer Wessman used a melody familiar to all Finns, from their national epic poem, Kalevala.

Vesi väsyy lumen alle
Jäiden alle jää le lepohon
Tuulee tuuli, ei torkahda.
Tanssii tuisku tuhat jalka,
Kilo rii ho kuomonkorsi,
Hangen alla ei aavista.

Alilo (Georgian)

Alleluia!
This song was traditionally sung on Christmas Eve by masked carolers who went from house to house greeting the inhabitants with holiday blessings, while receiving drink, treats, and bread in return. Aurora learned this song from KITKA Women’s Vocal Ensemble, who learned it from the vocal trio, Kavkasia.

Alleluia! here, let us sing Alleluia!
May God grant you a fine Christmas and many New Years!

Water under snow is weary
under ice it stretches, sleeping.
Winds are blowing, no rest for them.
Thousand footed flakes are dancing,
and the blizzard boy is whirling.
But it is still where the grass lies,
withered grass stalks are dying,
der snowdrifts, oblivious.

Erdő mellett estvéledtem,
Subám fejem alá tettem,
Összetettem két kezemet,
Úgy kértem jó istenemet:
En istenem, adjál szállást,
Már meguntam a járkálást,
A járkálást, a bujdosást,
Az idegen földön lakást.
Adjon Isten jó éjszakát,
Küldje hozzám szent angyalát.
Bátorítsa szívünk álmat!
Adjon Isten jó éjszakát!

Iraqi Peace Song (Arabic)

This traditional song, known and sung by people from all walks of life in Iraq is one of the songs recorded by Erik Hillstad on his “Lullabies from the Axis of Evil.” Our presentation this evening is based on Hillstad’s version, including an English interpretation and his own music. Just last month, Aurora had the great joy and privilege of singing this piece for six year old Mustafa Ahmed Abed and his father, shortly before they returned home to Iraq. Mustafa had been brought to Portland for medical care by No More Victims. Aurora Chorus presented singer Betsy Rose in a concert to help raise funds for Mustafa’s medical costs.

Literal translation by Wafa Hadad:

Regards to your eye, oh homeland.
A sweet flows liberal and respect.
Moreover, how are your hopes,
how is the palm tree?
How are the decorations, how are the children?
Aurora Chorus
Song for a Winter’s Night
Joan Szymko, director
Signe Lusk, accompanist
Abby Mages, flute

Chapua Kali Desemba *
(Chasing the Wild Winds of December)
solo: Constance LaGue
David Lanz III
text by John Parker

Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind
from “As You Like It”
Joan Szymko
by William Shakespeare

“Water Under Snow Is Weary”
Vesi Väsyy Lumen Alle
(Water Under Snow is Weary)
Harri Wessman
text by Eha Lättemäe

Alilo

Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
Russian Dance from the “Nutcracker Suite”
Peter I. Tchaikovsky
arr. Jeff Funk

“Evening Song”
Esti Dal **
(Evening Song)
Zoltan Kodaly
trad. Hungarian melody

Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening
Gordon Lightfoot
arr. Joan Szymko

“Separation”

Song for a Winter’s Night
solo: Cathryn Heron (4pm)
Judi Ranton (7pm)

Cradle of Dawn

Listening
sopranino recorder: Julie Earnest

The Winter of Listening
Kate Jones
arr. by J. David Moore

Aurora Chorus
December 21, 2008
Iraqi Peace Song  
Solo: Amy Jackson (4pm)
Lauren Eisenberg (7pm)

Rain  
Anonymous
Charles A. Tindley
Arr. Barbara W. Baker

The Storm Is Passing Over  
Solo: Brenda Brischetto (4pm)
Jeanne Hackney (7pm)

“The Song”
Anonymous
Steven Walters
Arr. Joan Szymko

Happy Xmas (No More War)
John Lennon & Yoko Ono

“A Letter to the Most Illustrious the Contessina Allagia Degli Aldobrandeschi”
Written Christmas Eve 1513 by Fra Giovanni

Channukah-Solstice Round / Light is Returning *
Linda Hirschorn/ Charlie Murphy
Arr. Szymko

Readers
Viki Shilaos
Sharon Rose
Annie Herring
Pat Blanco
Andrea Weiner
Jean Wright

CREDITS
Readings
“Water Under Snow Is Weary” by Eha Lättemäe
“Evening Song” by Zoltan Kodaly
“Separation” by W.S. Merwin
“The Winter of Listening” by David Whyte
“The Song” by Naomi Shihab Nye
“Letter from Fra Giovanni”

* Percussion Ensemble
Lauren Eisenberg
Annie Herring
Marylyn John
Roberta Jortner
Gayle Koszegi

** “Esti Dal” small ensemble
Jaime Adams
Kristan Burkert
Annie Herring
Constance LaGue
Nancy Otis
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