STEP BY STEP
6th Annual International Women’s Day CONCERT CELEBRATION

MARCH 3, 4:00pm
First Congregational Church
Greetings from our Board Chair

Thank you for joining Aurora Chorus and our guest artists for our 6th annual International Women’s Day (IWD) concert. We’re excited to share our program with you in recognition of a day when people around the globe celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Like last year’s chorus, today’s IWD chorus is multi-generational and includes a group of young singers from ages 13 through 18. Their presence enhances our singing experience exponentially!

This year our IWD concert is focused on ways that women have taken steps to change the world for the better. In addition to adding our voices to challenge the issues that women face globally, we’re taking the opportunity to honor several women in Oregon whose lives embody the values of IWD: justice, dignity, hope, equality, collaboration, tenacity, appreciation, respect, empathy, and forgiveness. These women are featured in our program, on our website, and on our Facebook page. They are examples of how women are making our communities and our state better through compassionate leadership in social services, the arts, religion, government, and business. It is our intention to continue the practice of honoring women who deserve recognition in future IWD concerts. We are grateful to the many donors who make this possible.

If you’re a returning audience member we thank you for your on-going support. If you’re a former Aurora singer we invite you to sing with us again. And, if you’re new to our audience, we thank you for supporting us and hope you’ll become a regular audience member (or singer!).

Thank you and enjoy the show!
Lynn Greenwood
Board Chair

Aurora Chorus Board of Directors
Lynn Greenwood, President / Kristan Burkert, Treasurer / Lori Kovacevic, Secretary
Colleen Cornman-Wilcox / Lisa Fithian-Barrett
Jaclyn Leeds, Executive Director, ex officio / Joan Szymko, Artistic Director, ex officio

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 and compassionate voice in an increasingly conflicted world. 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. Comprised of singers from the Portland/Vancouver metro area, the chorus presents three full-length concerts each season. The Aurora Outreach Ensemble also performs at community events throughout the year.
Artistic Director

JOAN SZYMKO

Joan Szymko has conducted choruses in the Pacific Northwest for nearly forty years. In 1993 she left Seattle for Portland to take on the leadership of Aurora Chorus. Soon after, she founded Viriditas, a select women’s ensemble (1994-2002), and began 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 (2013-15). As a visiting artist, she workshops her music with choirs in a variety of educational and festival settings across the country and abroad. This 2018-19 season is Joan’s 25th Anniversary as Artistic Director of Aurora Chorus.

Composing for choir is a natural outgrowth of Joan Szymko’s creativity as a conductor. Her passion for the singing voice, an embodied approach to sound, a dedication to craft and an insistence on quality texts—all relate to her work as a conductor and are reflected in her choral compositions. With a catalog of over 100 published choral works her music is performed by ensembles across North America and abroad. Since 2003, Joan’s music has been presented 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.

Joan Szymko has been commissioned by all manner of choral ensemble: professional and community choirs, university and high school programs, select children’s choirs, LGBT choruses and church choirs. Upcoming premieres include “Words,” a piece on the topic of bullying for the 2019 Chorus America onsortium; also the GALA Choruses Cathy Roma Commission “Lifting as We Climb,” a 3-mvt work with narration, to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment granting women suffrage.

Accompanist

KIRA WHITING

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 musical 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 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.

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION

Text **STEPBystEP** to **44-321**

or visit aurorachorus.org

Every dollar counts.
Your support helps Aurora to thrive.
Thank you.

Help us celebrate Joan Szymko’s 25th Anniversary as Aurora’s Artistic Director and pick up one of the few remaining copies of the limited release CD “EVERYTHING SHE TOUCHES.”

This two-disc set features 25 of the original works she composed expressly for Aurora Chorus over 25 years, including “Always Coming Home,” “Here,” “It Takes a Village,” “Malala,” and many more!

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.”

Aurora Outreach Ensemble

This enthusiastic 20 voice ensemble is ready to sing at your upcoming banquet, party, fundraiser, or other special event. For more information about booking and availability, contact ed@aurorachorus.org.
SINGERS

SOPRANO I
Michele Alderson
Phyllis Auger
Rebecca Blair
Kristan Burkert
Sabine Colie
Abrianna Coons
Paulla Dacklin
Io Dennerlein Manson
Jae Douglas+
Ellen Drumheller
Karla Fitzwater
Kirsten Hays
Christine Hayward+
Wendy Howard
Kristin Judge
Lynn Mendoza-Khan*
Annika Kron
Lydia Pickard*
Gloria Preston
Nesta Quigley
Judith Ranton
Susan Rinker**
Gyorgyi Santa
Heidi Sickert
Bethany Soule
Faire Soule-Reeves
Seleena Stultz
Francine Talla
Stacy Watts
Ann Wilson
Lisa Wood

SOPRANO II
Rachel Baldwin
Elaine Ball
Haley Bibbee
Cheyenne Chapman
Bethany Cloose*
Talia Connelly
Caroline Cooper
Patricia Cornman-Wilcox**
Jeanna Craig
Judith Don
Betsy Dowell
Julie Earnest
Frances Hicks
Robert Jortner
Static Kaeder
Lori Kovacevic
Lisa Kron*
Jaclyn Leeds
Marlena Maestas
Deanna Nelson
Zsuzsa Nemeth
Nanette Niski+
Debbie Paynter
Amanda Perl
Gwen Porus
Jane Robson
Wendy Saville
Stephanie Singer
Mary Anne Thygesen
Connie Weiss
Melissa Williams
Wendy Leigh White

ALTO I
Jennifer Ardahan
Nicole Behnke
Shannon Buono**
Cathy Cartwright-Chow
Angela Childers
Cindy Christensen
Marilyn Cover
Megan Davis
Claire Dennerlein
Kay Exo
Barbara Gray
Patti Harelkin
Christine Torgerson

ALTO II
Heather Alexander
Colleen Cornman-Wilcox
Margot Faegre
Lisa Fithian-Barrett
Sharayaha Guy*
Annie Johnston
Jenne Kinsley
Terri Lewis
Gaia Mather+
Virginia Mather
LouAnn Pearson
Debby Pollack
Colleen Scovill*
Brenda Spicer
Carol Timper

* Music Section Leader
** Section Manager
+ Harmonizer

Aurora Coordinating Team (ACT)

Chorus Coordinator: Lisa Fithian-Barrett
Treasurer: Michele Alderson
Membership: Wendy Miller
Concert Coordinator: Jill Sanders
Librarian: Frances Hicks
Retreat Manager: Cathy Cartwright-Chow
Scholarships: Chris Hayward

Member-at-Large: Debbie Pollack
Harmonizer Chair: Nanette Niski
Administrative Asst: Marie Shier
Artistic Director: Joan Szymko
Executive Director: Jaclyn Leeds
Scribe: Judy Soule
STEP BY STEP

AURORA CHORUS
6th ANNUAL
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY CONCERT CELEBRATION

STAND & SWAY
Beth Wood & Ara Lee James
with percussionist, Steven Skolnik

AURORA CHORUS
Joan Szymko, conductor
Kira Whiting, accompanist

Coming Into My Years  Betsy Rose, arr. Joan Szymko
A Prayer for Christine Blasey Ford  Rabbi Tamara Cohen
  reader: Jane Robson
HER  Gracie Coates & Rachel Ruggles
Nothing Short of Grace  Joan Szymko
  west coast premiere
I Know a Woman  Jasper Lepak
  reader: Kristan Burkert
O Sister  Kathleen Allan / text: D.Allen
  (Keep Me Steady Through the Storm)
Ja Sam Tvoj Svjedok  Joan Szymko
  (I Am Your Witness)

narrators:
  Heidi Sickert as witness to Sabiha Husic (Bosnia-Herzegovina)
  Cathy Cartwright-Chow as witness to Suzan Aref Maroof (Iraq)
  Wendy Saville as witness to Lilia Aguilar Gil (Mexico)
Step By Step  
traditional Irish melody, arr. Szymko  
text: preamble to the constitution  
of the American Miners Union

Rise  
Arianne Abela

What I Will Be (excerpt)  
Amber Tamblyn  
reader: Lisa Kron

The Climb  
Jessi Alexander and Jon Mabe  
arr. Mark Brymer

PERFORMANCE CREDITS

Coming Into My Years  
“grey haired women” ensemble
Elaine Ball, Kristan Burkert, Cindy Christensen, Patricia Cornman-Wilcox  
Jae Douglas, Kaye Exo, Chris Hayward, Frances Hicks, Marylyn John  
Peggy McComb, LouAnn Pearethree, Susan Rinker; Wendy Saville  
Stephanie Singer, Sharyl Swope, Connie Weiss, Ann Wilson

The Climb  
ensemble
Sabine Colie, Io Dennerlein Manson, Annika Kron  
Nesta Quigley, Faire Soule-Reeves, Seleena Stultz

Step By Step  
readers
Donna Lieberman, Francine Talla  
Lynn Mendoza-Khan, Lisa Wood  
Heather Alexander, Lydia Pickard
Patricia Cornman-Wilcox has had a lifelong personal and professional interest in social justice. She has been active in many organizations including the Names Project Memorial Quilt where she helped organize Quilt Displays throughout the U.S. and in Washington D.C., Aurora Chorus where she has been both a singer and board member, the Walk of Heroines at PSU and the Clothes Closet for children in foster care. Patricia is a leader in her church, Bridgeport UCC. She worked at PSU in the Adult Education program and in 2003 she completed a two-year Certificate for Instructional Design and was hired as an Instructional Designer for courses at PSU and the OHSU Nursing School. Today Patricia stays involved organizing local protests against ICE's illegal arrests of immigrants and supporting SOAR immigration legal services.

Throughout her career, Marilyn Cover has been a driving force and fierce advocate for the importance of civics education. She has helped build outstanding civics education in Oregon and throughout the United States. Marilyn developed the innovative Street Law program at NW School of Law at Lewis and Clark College. The program sends law students into high school classrooms to teach practical applications of the law. She was the founding Executive Director of the Classroom Law Project [CLP] that provides classroom instruction, teacher training, mock trials, and courtroom visits for Oregon students of all ages. Marilyn developed this program by engaging stakeholders across disciplines and helping them work together for the common good of building future generations of active community members. The CLP has been instrumental in supporting Oregon high school students' participation in the annual “We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution” competition. Oregon high schools often receive top honors in this national competition.

Governor Kate Brown has said of Marilyn, “…she embodies the spirit of giving to the next generation, making sure that students have all the tools they need for self-determination and principled engagement in their communities”.
City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty moved to Oregon because it had things she was looking for—the ability to be close to the water and mountains, and a place where she felt like she could really make a difference. Since arriving, Hardesty has definitely made a difference in Oregon. In addition to her work with the Portland NAACP and many other boards and commissions and serving as a state representative, Hardesty was recently sworn in as a city commissioner becoming the first African-American woman to serve on the Portland City Council. With Hardesty, the Council also reached another historic milestone. For the first time, the council is majority women, which Mayor Ted Wheeler called a “historic moment.” In her role as commissioner Hardesty is committed to building a livable and sustainable city with all Portlanders and for all Portlanders, through transparency, accountability, and opportunity.

Bev Herrin (d. 2018) was a fierce and dedicated advocate for people with developmental disabilities. She was a champion in many of Oregon’s systems change initiatives that shifted services from institutions to the community. She helped design and manage the residential and employment services and government policies that make Oregon a precedent setting state so that people who experience even the most severe disabilities can live and work in the community. Outside of work Bev led an active life where she engaged in skydiving, climbing Mt Hood, rock climbing at Smith Rocks, Yosemite and Squamish Chief in British Columbia. She was a music fan and traveled from Maine to California, Seattle to Miami plus music based cruises in the Caribbean and the Mexican Riviera. As we remember Bev, we honor a full life of service, fun, and family.
Completing 16 years of leadership of the Community of Welcoming Congregations (CWC), **Rev. Tara Wilkins** is a courageous social justice warrior at work in our state and beyond. She brings faith communities together with LGBTQ activists to work for civil rights, marriage equality, and justice issues of many kinds.

Tara has grown the CWC from a handful of Portland-area congregations to over 100 throughout Oregon and SW Washington. In early years, she was a solo voice traveling the state; now local congregations and clergy speak out with welcome for the LGBTQ folks in their communities. Tara has been a leading voice at a national level as part of Human Rights Campaign’s Religion & Faith program and the Institute for Welcoming Resources through the National LGBTQ Task Force.

Rev. Tara has helped change the political landscape for LGBTQ concerns. During her tenure, CWC also hosted the first national interfaith Trans Conference in the nation. We celebrate her courage, strategic skill, and loving spirit.

**Cheryl Perrin** has been one of Oregon’s most influential women leaders of the past 40 years, playing a key role in Oregon’s environmental leadership, its progress on human rights, and its economic growth. She has been honored as Oregon’s Woman of the Year; winner of the Lucille Hart Award, and the Basic Rights Oregon Outstanding Citizen, and also received the Multnomah County Human Rights award for her tireless commitment to civil rights. She has served on numerous boards and commissions over the years, including Commissioner for the Port of Portland. Perrin was a senior executive officer with Fred Meyer, Inc. for 23 years, and in that role provided progressive leadership for Oregon’s business community. She is very proud of her 4 daughters and 9 granddaughters. Perhaps, in part, because of this, she is a clear and loud voice for women’s issues, especially for an end to discrimination in the workplace.
Among her many accomplishments, Ellen Wolfson founded the eight-member Chicamarimba band, an all-women band that has been entertaining audiences throughout the Pacific Northwest for the past 19 years. An accomplished musician and counselor, Ellen is a model of selfless love, generosity, and energetic compassion. Her friends and family regard her as a living, breathing 911 system, serving as a round-the-clock advocate for those in need of healthcare, education, immigration assistance, housing, or straight talk.

As a valued member of the Clackamas Community College faculty, Ellen directed the counseling department and coordinated the international student program. She enriches our lives and inspires us to work for a more compassionate world.
SAVE THE DATES

April 26, 7:30 pm
EARTH DAY IN MUSIC AND SONG

Join the Aurora Outreach Ensemble in celebrating our remarkable planet. The program includes instrumental and vocal performances, meditative singing, poetry, and candle lighting.

Eliot Chapel at 12th and Salmon

May 19, 4:00 pm
LOOK OUT!

Aurora sings of the critical state of humanity’s relationship with Earth. We sing to honor our Mother, to grow awareness and to hold on to hope for future generations. Featuring the West Coast premiere of Szymko’s setting of Wendell Berry’s poem “Look Out.”

ALSO FEATURING
a special collaboration with Humanis chamber choir. Humanis is an accomplished SATB ensemble whose mission is to bring joy and gather community while giving voice to the voiceless.

First Congregational UCC, 1126 SW Park Ave.