



SONG

COMMUNITY

*the divine secrets of the la-la sisterhood*

22 NOVEMBER 08 • ERUUF

WOMAN



Our name is derived from a Judy Grahn poem that reads, in part, a common woman is as common as a common loaf of bread ... and will rise. We are a woman-positive choral community that celebrates all life styles and gender identities. As part of our commitment to musical excellence and social change, we perform music that showcases the integrity and inherent worth and dignity of each of us. We celebrate our heroes and reflect on the personal and political struggles of women and the disenfranchised, and all while honoring creation, creativity, and song.

It's amazing that, through music and the act of singing, so much can be accomplished—for our audience and our performers.

Some chorus members are formally trained musicians with extensive performance experience, but most of us are self-taught singers. We share a love of musical expression and come together to bring our talent, commitment, and enthusiasm to the task of mastering the foundation of the music we perform: melodies, rhythms, and lyrics.

The Chorus's mission is to sing empowering music that highlights the diversity and strength of women's lives and experiences; to share with and educate the community through music; to develop and refine individual and group musical skills through regular rehearsal and performance; to encourage and support discussion, friendship, leadership, and the open exchange of beliefs with each other through regular check-ins, social gatherings, discussions, and rehearsals; to network with other likeminded choruses; and to offer support to these individuals, networks, societies, and organizations.

The Common Woman Chorus: 1983–2008, and still going strong!

## *the divine secrets of the la-la sisterhood*

Sometimes a seed is planted that outlives its gardener, continues to grow, feeds many hungry souls along the way, and gives root to other ideas. Twenty-five years ago, a seed of community was planted by two women who loved music and who had experienced the power of choral singing. Having moved to Durham, North Carolina, from Kansas and Minnesota, respectively, Nancy Agnew and Barbara Anderson, both avid choral singers, sought to bring together women to form a chorus. They didn't know one another but, as fate would have it, the seeds of their ideas were planted at exactly the same time in the form of ads each placed in the now-defunct *Newsletter*, a Triangle feminist publication. The ads reached out to other women interested in a choral group and resulted in Nancy and Barbara contacting one another and meeting with about a dozen interested women on the steps of the Durham YMCA in 1983. From these initial efforts, the Common Woman Chorus grew from the seed of an idea into a community of women.

Tonight, the Common Woman Chorus celebrates the legacy of this growth, honoring the planters of the first idea, the founding mothers who nurtured it and brought it to life, and the gardeners who tend it today. The Chorus is different than its first seedling, yet growing from the same root stock. We continue to sing about the diversity of women's lives. We seek, as always, to address injustice, to highlight triumphs over adversity, to diminish the power of prejudice by laughing at its absurdity. Change is also evident, however. Emphasis on the feminist ideals of the early 1980s has evolved into woman-positive language and values. The political activism of the earlier chorus has given way to more polished performances that serve to address social issues through the message in the music. It is not your mother's chorus, but a fine daughter growing up.

The seed of community is mature and thriving. 1983–2008: A quarter century of women's voices rising in unison. Thank you for celebrating with us!



**DIRECTOR**  
Cindy Bizzell

**ACCOMPANISTS**  
Lorna Collingridge, piano  
Caroline Herbert, flute

**SOPRANO ONE**  
BriAnne Dopart  
Holly Ferguson  
Caroline Herbert  
Amy Johndro  
Sarah Karakitsos  
Erin O'Hara  
Jolene Robinson

**SOPRANO TWO**  
Karen Dold  
Ruth Kravitz  
Linda Oakleaf  
Michelle Reader  
Kim Sage  
Kristen Stinnett  
Jenny Womack

**ALTO ONE**  
Caroline Kearns  
Jane MacNeela  
Nancy Maeder  
Joan McAllister  
Chris Merrill  
Lisa Shupp  
Julia Storm

**ALTO TWO**  
Marty McClelland  
Robin Neville  
Jonah Pierce  
Mary Plyler  
Annette Vinding  
Angela Williams  
Elizabeth Williams

**FORMER DIRECTOR**  
Eleanor Sableski  
(1983–2000)

**FORMER ACCOMPANISTS**  
Abbie Modjeska  
Gail Hafley

**CONCERT CHAIRS**  
Joan McAllister  
Betty Prioux

**RECEPTION  
COORDINATOR**  
Lisa Shupp

**SOUND**  
Darin Beery

## ACT ONE

**COMMON WOMAN** by Maria Beth Elliot and Joan Szymko. Solo by Michelle Reader. Guest pianist Gail Hafley. Featuring former chorus members.

**CELEBRATING THE LA-LA SISTERHOOD** by Joan McAllister (spoken)

**KEEP THE FIRE** by BJ Brown

### **THE SPIRIT OF WOMEN** by Gwyneth Walker

A set of three songs for women's chorus, set unaccompanied. Each song is based on a different traditional American spiritual. Each was commissioned and premiered by a different women's chorus in the United States. And each portrays women of strength and character.

- **SO MANY ANGELS!** Adapted from *Angels Watching Over Me*.  
*Many people feel the presence of angels in their lives. The angels are either operating behind the scenes or are perhaps embodied in the people we encounter in daily life.*
- **WALK THAT VALLEY** Adapted from *Lonesome Valley*.  
Performed by the Chorus Small Group.  
*A song of triumph and growth focusing on the individual encountering times of difficulty alone.*
- **NEVER SIT DOWN!** Adapted from *Sit Down, Sister!* Performed by the Chorus Small Group.  
*The new lyrics focus on the energy and celebration of women experiencing the freedom of equality.*

**A SALUTE TO CHORUS WIDOWS** by Julia Storm (spoken)

**NO RUBY** by Andy Beck

*Inspired by the words of Heinrich Heine (1797–1856)*

**BITTERSWEET TANGO** by Eric Lane Barnes



## ACT TWO

**COMMEMORATIVE SLIDESHOW** by Heather Barnes, Angela Williams and Jenny Womack

**LUX AETERNA** by Michelle Roueché. Performed by the Chorus Small Group. Solo by Sarah Karakitsos.

**AWAY IN A MANGER** Traditional. Arranged by Michael McGlynn. Performed by the Chorus Small Group. Solo by Erin O'Hara.

**THE STRAIGHT WOMAN'S GUIDE TO THE LA-LA SISTERHOOD** by Ruth Kravitz and Jenny Womack

**COMIN' OUT ON CHRISTMAS** Traditional Music. Words by Craig Sturgis. Arranged by Dean X. Johnson.

**ARMS OPEN WIDE** by Sheila Tallmon

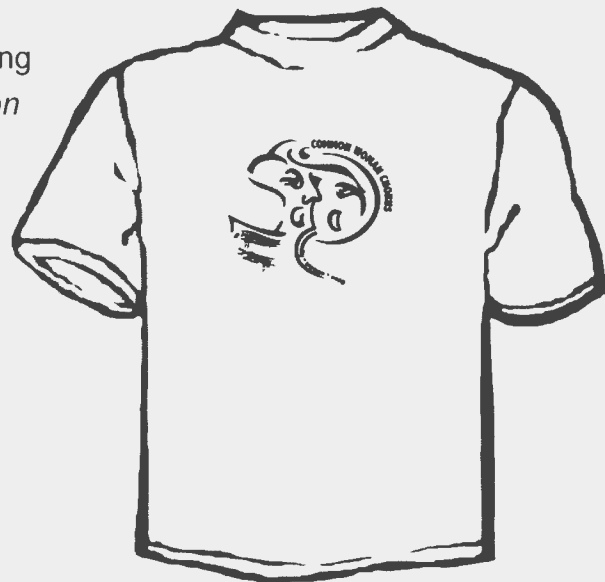
**PEOPLE WILL SAY WE'RE IN LOVE** Music by Richard Rodgers. Words by Oscar Hammerstein II. Arranged by Kirby Shaw. Solo by Erin O'Hara.

**HOW DO I LOVE THEE?** by Nathan Christensen, after Elizabeth Barrett Browning  
*Winner, 1996 Diva Complex Composition Contest*

**THE MUSICAL (RE)EVOLUTION OF THE LA-LAS** by Cindy Bizzell (spoken)

**YOU ARE THE MUSIC** by Joan Szymko  
*Commissioned by the Miami University Choraliers in celebration of 100 years of women's choral singing*

**A SALUTE TO UNSUNG HEROES**  
by Joan McAllister



**25th-Anniversary Commemorative T-shirts with our new logo on the front available now at [www.printfection.com/commonwomanchorus](http://www.printfection.com/commonwomanchorus). Designs are also available on sweat shirts, sleeveless shirts, tank tops, aprons, coasters, mouse pads, and more.**

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McGlynn Associates congratulates the Common Woman Chorus for twenty-five years of musical merry-making.

You continue to mirror our lives, support positive social change, and touch our hearts. You are a joy.

And in the spirit of acknowledging the power of sisterhood, McGlynn Associates is now in collaboration with another woman-owned company called TeachingHorse, offering equine guided experiential learning for personal transformation and professional leadership development.

Go to [www.TeachingHorse.com](http://www.TeachingHorse.com) to learn more about Mare Wisdom, our workshops and individual coaching.

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Cindy Bizzell

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CHORUS  
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*25* SONGS

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SONGS YOU'VE  
NEVER  
FORGOTTEN...  
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The Chorus's first-ever two-disc commemorative CD is ON SALE NOW for just \$15 with tonight's concert ticket or \$22 if ordered from the Chorus website. Please visit [commonwomanchorus.net](http://commonwomanchorus.net) for more information and get your CD now!

Silence IS Violence  
REVOLUTION THRU SONG



FIND YOUR VOICE  
WOMAN POWER







SINGING  
IS  
POWER

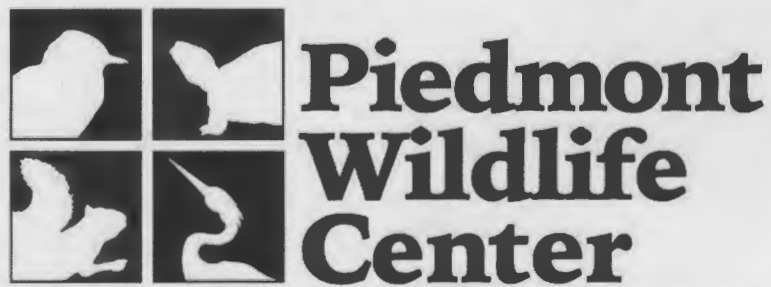


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## JOIN US

The Chorus is a woman-positive choral community committed to musical excellence and social change. We celebrate all life styles and gender identities.

## HOW TO JOIN

The Chorus holds one open rehearsal each semester. Please take the opportunity to try us out during the first open rehearsal of the semester in January 2009.

Performing membership is open to any woman who enjoys choral singing, can match pitch, and can commit to the Chorus's regular rehearsal schedule. Performing members rehearse weekly and learn the music to the satisfaction of the musical director before performing with the group.

Nonperforming members participate in committee and board work that augments, supports, and enhances chorus activities.

## NON-AUDITION POLICY

Performing members' musical skills range from professional musician to untrained shower diva. Auditions are not required for most chorus activities. Our musical director teaches the basic concepts of music and musical performance during rehearsals. She also confirms that performing members know their music to performance standard.

## PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Rehearsals are held on Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9 PM at the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Please contact us at [infocwc@yahoo.com](mailto:infocwc@yahoo.com) to learn more about our next open rehearsal.

## PERFORMANCES

The Chorus typically performs two musical concerts annually. In addition, the chorus accepts a limited number of other community and collaborative engagements such as the NC Pride Festival, joint concerts with area choruses, and so on. Many years, the Chorus also hosts a Valentine's dance.



# SUPPORT US

We sincerely appreciate the help of all who contribute and hope that you will consider donating to the Chorus. All proceeds are used to cover operational and administrative expenses incurred by the Chorus. These include, but are not limited to, rental of rehearsal space, purchase of music, and performance expenses such as set designs, lighting, and sound equipment.

You can support the Chorus through individual or corporate donations. The Chorus is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

## ORGANIZATIONAL DONORS

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Platinum \$1,000+      | Includes 4 tickets, a link and logo on our website, a full-page ad, and acknowledgment on event promotional materials |
| Gold \$750–999         | Includes 4 tickets, a link and logo on our website, and a half-page ad  |
| Silver \$500–749       | Includes 2 tickets, a link and logo on our website, and a quarter-page ad   |
| Bronze \$250–499       | Includes 2 tickets and a business card ad   |
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|                     |                   |
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| Benefactor \$500+   | Partner \$250–499 |
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**All donors at all levels are acknowledged in the Chorus's season program.**



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*Triangle Family Services (TFS) is a local United Way agency helping families and children throughout the Triangle. Established in 1937, it is one of the oldest and most comprehensive nonprofits in the region.*

*Through skilled, compassionate, and confidential care, TFS annually helps more than 5,000 Triangle families and individuals achieve Family Safety, Financial Security, and Sound Mental Health. Our programs include:*

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**25th-Anniversary Commemorative T-shirts with our new logo on the front available now at [www.printfection.com/commonwomanchorus](http://www.printfection.com/commonwomanchorus). Designs are also available on sweat shirts, sleeveless shirts, tank tops, aprons, coasters, mouse pads, and more.**



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Holly Ferguson

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Elizabeth Williams

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COMMON WOMAN CHORUS

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25  
years

community • woman • song



photo by BriAnne Dopart

PROGRAM BY ANGELA L. WILLIAMS