



**common woman chorus**  
**HERE TOGETHER SINGING**



**CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF COMMUNITY AND SONG**

**7 pm • Saturday • 4 May 2013 • United Church of Chapel Hill**

## THE COMMON WOMAN CHORUS

is a non-auditioned progressive voice and vibrant musical community based in the Triangle area of NC. Since 1983, the uncommon women of the Chorus have provided musical and theatrical productions that highlight the diversity and strength of our everyday lives and experiences while celebrating the local and global events that inspire and inform us. We are so pleased to celebrate this anniversary with you!

### COMMON WOMAN CHORUS

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Cindy Bizzell

ACCOMPANIST: Kate Lewis

CONCERT CHAIRS: Joan McAllister  
Cara Valenti

HOUSE MANAGER: Jonah Pierce

SOUND: Ed Flowers

PERFORMERS: SOPRANO ONE: Melissa

Bailey • Angela N. Cardoso • Caroline

Herbert • Sarah Karakitsos • Barrett

Mardre • Charlotte Morgan • Betty Prioux.

SOPRANO TWO: Karen Dold • Ruth Kravitz

Shelly Lyons • Erin Roma • Kim Sage

Kristen Stinnett • Jenny Womack.

ALTO ONE: Chris Durost • Lucy Harris

Rebecca Longley • Jane Mac Neela • Joan

McAllister • Brandi Melvin-Scammell

Debbie Reilly • Lisa Shupp • Suzanne

Tyler • Cara Valenti. ALTO TWO: Melinda

Campbell • Beth Hoke • Marty

McClelland • Carol Ryner • Judi Smith

Angela Williams • Sallie Wintz.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: PRESIDENT: Gretchen

Aycock. VICE PRESIDENT: Angela Williams.

SECRETARY: Em Stecker. TREASURER: Debbie

Reilly. AT-LARGE MEMBERS: Melissa Bailey

Beth Hoke • Shelly Lyons • Ruth Kravitz

Marty McClelland • Cara Valenti

#### ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Eleanor Sableski (1983–2000)

Cindy Bizzell (2001–2013)

Kristen Stinnett (2013–)

#### ACCOMPANISTS

Gail Hafley • Abbie Modjeska

Lorna Collingridge • Kimberly Leggett

Nancy Whelan • Kate Lewis

#### COMMON WOMAN CHORUS

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DURHAM, NC 27717

COMMONWOMANCHORUS.NET

501(c)(3) non-profit

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NC Certification No. 5585586-1

## ACT ONE

**SHE WHO MAKES HER MEANING CLEAR (GAMBA ADISA)** (SSAA A CAPPELLA w/DIV.) Music by Joan Szymko. Text by Audre Lorde. Kate Lewis on claves.

NOTES FROM THE COMPOSER: When Dr. Catherine Roma, director of MUSE: Cincinnati Women's Choir, asked me to compose a new work . . . I turned to an inspiring quote by writer/activist Audre Lorde, self described as a *black feminist lesbian mother poet*: "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."

Lorde, who succumbed to breast cancer, "spent the end of her life on the Caribbean island of St. Croix and there, before her death, in an African naming ceremony, took the name *Gamba Adisa*, which means "Warrior, She Who Makes Her Meaning Clear."  
—Joan Szymko

Audre Lorde saw herself "in relational dialogue with the rest of the world. Lorde explained that her work owed much to her ancestors, to the love and support of women, and to African and African American artists, and she insisted in her poetry and prose that without community, coalition across differences, and freedom from all oppression, there is no true liberation at all.

—Ann E. Reuman, from *The Oxford Companion to African American Literature*

**WELCOME** Creative Director Cindy Bizzell

**LETTER TO OUR FOUNDING MOTHERS** Jenny Womack

**WADE IN THE WATER** (SSAA A CAPPELLA) Traditional. Guest conductor Cara Valenti. Audience participation encouraged!

The verses in this traditional Negro spiritual refer to the Israelites' escape out of Egypt and to John 5:4: "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepping in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."

**LETTER TO STRAIGHT SINGERS** Jenny Womack

**WHERE THERE IS LIGHT IN THE SOUL** (SSAA A CAPPELLA) Music by Elizabeth Alexander. Text based on a Chinese proverb.

**WOULD YOU HARBOR ME?** (SSAA A CAPPELLA) Music and text by Dr. Ysaye Barnwell of Sweet Honey in the Rock.

**TO BE STRONG** (SSA WITH PIANO) Music and text by Laura Berkson. Arranged by J. David Moore. Solo by Suzanne Tyler.

**SOMEBODY TO LOVE** (SSA WITH PIANO) Music and text by Freddie Mercury. Original *GLEE* arrangement by Adam Anders and Tim David adapted for publication by Roger Emerson. Guest conductor Kristen Stinnett. Solos by Angela N. Cardoso and Sarah Karakitsos.

## ACT TWO

**LETTER FROM A NEW CHORUS MEMBER** Angela N. Cardoso

**IF YOU CAN WALK YOU CAN DANCE (IF YOU CAN DANCE YOU CAN SING)** (SSAA A CAPPELLA) Music by Elizabeth Alexander. Text based on a Zimbabwean proverb. Guest conductor Cara Valenti. Solos by Beth Hoke and Barrett Mardre. Kristen Stinnett on claves. Audience participation encouraged!

**LETTER FROM A RETIRING CHORUS MEMBER** Joan McAllister

**A SMALL BUT FATEFUL VICTORY** (SSAA A CAPPELLA) Music by Roger Bourland. Text by Francisco X. Alarcón. From Alarcón Madrigals, Book 1.

**LETTER TO ALL SINGERS** Jenny Womack

**TO SING IS TO FLY** (SSAA WITH PIANO) Music by Gwyneth Walker. Text by Joan Baez.

**NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER:** When I set poetry to music, I focus on the central images in the poem. To me, poetry is not words. It is the images that words create. And thus, with the musical setting, it is important that the images in the poetry translate into musical imagery. Often, the accompaniment is the central means of creating the imagery. The world of the poem may be established within the opening measures of the accompaniment. The vocal lines, while also participating in the musical imagery, have a primary function of conveying the words.—Gwyneth Walker

Here, Walker's musical interpretation captures the triumphant spirit of song in flight.

**WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN** (SSAA A CAPPELLA WITH DIV.) Traditional Appalachian music. Text by Cathy Winter, Betsy Rose, and Marcia Taylor. Arranged by J. David Moore.

**LETTER TO CHORUS ARTISTIC DIRECTORS** Angela Williams

**OVER THE RAINBOW** (SSAB A CAPPELLA WITH UKELELE) Music by Harold Arlen. Text by E. Y. Harburg. Arranged by Andy Beck. Solos by Melissa Bailey, Angela N. Cardoso, Lisa Shupp, and Kristen Stinnett. Featuring the Ukeladies: Beth Hoke, Carol Ryner, and Cara Valenti. As performed by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole.

**LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY** Cindy Bizzell

**PRESENTATION BY GALA CHORUSES** John Quillin, artistic director of Charlotte Gay Men's Chorus

**BRIGHT MORNING STARS ARE RISING** (SSAA A CAPPELLA WITH DIV.) Traditional. Arranged by Paul Siskind.



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### THE CHORUS IS SELLING RAFFLE TICKETS

1 ticket \$10 • 3 tickets \$25

Enter now for a chance to win a two-night stay at Harrah's Cherokee hotel, a body-working session from Alex Hamer, an orchid from Orchid Gallery, a wine basket from Wine 101, and more!

**DRAWING WILL BE HELD TONIGHT!**



## COMMON WOMAN CHORUS

ENTERTAIN. INSPIRE. ENLIGHTEN. ENGAGE. ENRICH. ENJOY. So much can be achieved through the joyful act of making music.

Our musical community was formed by a small group of women in 1983 as a non-auditioned feminist chorus and has evolved into a woman-positive choral community that celebrates all life styles and gender identities. We are committed to musical excellence and social change and perform music that showcases the integrity and inherent worth of each of us. Our mission is to engender creative community by singing and showcasing "music that matters." Toward that end, we sing empowering music that highlights the diversity and strength of women's lives and experiences; share with and educate the community through music; develop and refine individual and group musical skills through regular rehearsal and performance; encourage and support discussion, friendship, leadership, and the open exchange of beliefs with each other through regular check-ins, social gatherings, discussions, and rehearsals; network with other likeminded choruses; and support networks, societies, and organizations that further this mission.

Some of our singers are formally trained musicians with extensive performance experience, but most of us are self-taught singers who share a love of musical expression. We come together as a community to bring our talent, commitment, and enthusiasm to the task of creating the art that we perform—the melodies, rhythms, and lyrics that bring hope and insight and moments of soaring clarity into a world that can all-too-easily numb us into discordant indifference.

Our repertoire is as diverse as we are. We organize two main concerts a year around themes that run the gamut from serious to sublime to just plain silly. Concerts include numbers sung by the whole chorus, by smaller groups within the chorus, solos, duets, and whatever musical additions our members have to offer. We often showcase and/or raise funds for non-profits at our events, host dances, sometimes enhance our concerts with skits and cabaret performances, and have been known to include some well-known personalities in our mix. Chorus milestones include

- premiering composer Diane Benjamin's "Where I Live: A Breast Cancer Oratorio" at our *Raising Our Voices: A Breast Cancer Benefit* concert, which raised over \$9,000 to fund publication of *The Breast Cancer Resource Directory of NC*, which is distributed free of charge to anyone diagnosed with the disease in North Carolina.
- taking the stage with the Triangle Gay Men's Chorus to premiere "Sing for the Cure" in our state
- celebrating marriage equality at our *Love and Marriage* concert, where local religious leaders from the NC Religious Coalition for Marriage Equality read their Declaration of Faith, which they had recently presented to the NC General Assembly
- journeying to the Sister Singers Network conference in Chicago, where our performance garnered the first standing ovation of the evening
- hosting a peace and justice concert that featured the work of Code Pink
- presenting a visual and musical celebration of our (s)heroes to conference-goers at the Women and Creativity conference sponsored by The Sallie Bingham Center for Women's Art and Culture at Duke University
- inspiring residents of battered women's shelters with affirming songs such as Libby Roderick's "How Could Anyone?"
- hosting dances with The Ruby Slipper Dance Asylum to raise funds for Lovers in Exile, a non-profit organization that supports LGBT couples who have been separated by our country's non-inclusive domestic immigration policies
- hosting creativity concerts that showcased the work of local artists and writers
- reducing our audience to uncontrollable giggles with *Menopause: A Menstrual Show*
- celebrating the season with our popular *Homo for the Holidays* concert

Hey, we've been around for 30 years now and our music library is filled with inspiring music. Isn't it time you add your voice to our mix?