

CHORUS NOTES

NEWS FROM THE GRWC

We're hitting the last warm days of summer and heading directly into fall, which can only mean one thing – the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus is back in season! We've been up to quite a lot since the last time you heard from us, including another fantastic Spring Concert, a special appearance at the National Women's Music Festival, and another rousing retreat.

We had the pleasure of performing at St. Cecilia's on May 17 of this year in our annual Spring Concert. It was wonderful to see so many of you there! For those of you who couldn't attend, you missed our debut of "Earthbeat," a song we commissioned from Minnesota artist Jannika Vandervelde, featuring poetry from our own Leslie Kohn. "Earthbeat" was a real challenge for us, as it incorporated quite a lot of movement. Nothing's more humorous than watching 35+ "musicians" become arrhythmic during rehearsals because they have to sing and move at the same time! However, through plenty of hard work and a spirit of fun and growth we learned the music and the movements and had a wonderful time presenting it at St. Cecilia's. As usual, the performance also featured plenty of other culturally and socially diverse pieces, and many of us had a chance to meet the composer afterward at the reception.

Even though we normally plan to take the summers off, the past three have been changed by opportunities we just couldn't seem to pass up. There was the Sister Singers' Network festival in '01 and the GALA conference in Cincinnati in '02. This year, it was the National Women's Music festival at Kent State in Ohio. This year marked the first time the NWMF has ever invited women's choruses to take the stage during the annual conference. GRWC, along with Indianapolis Women's Chorus and SheWho, had the honor of performing on the inaugural women's chorus stage on Friday, June 6. Needless to say, it was an exhilarating performance for us!

Now, as our new season starts to pick up speed, we look forward to several exciting performance and collaboration opportunities. This issue includes information on: our annual retreat, a couple of special collaboration opportunities, and this season's performance schedule. Welcome to the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus's 2003-2004 season!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Nov. 8, 3 pm- Schuler Books, 2660 28th St. SE, GR
- Dec. 6, 7 pm-Winter Concert & Silent Auction, Trinity United Methodist Church, 1100 Lake Dr. SE, GR
- Feb. 7 & 8-Workshop & Joint Concert featuring Giwayen Mata ,(time & location announced at a later date)
- May 8, 8 pm- St. Cecilia Music Society, 24 Ransom NE, GR

GIWAYEN MATA

The chorus is currently involved in a project that will bring a group of performers from the Atlanta, Georgia area to Grand Rapids for a February 2004 Black History Month event. If all goes as planned, Giwayen Mata, an award-winning, dynamic, soul-stirring, all-sistah dance, percussion, and vocal ensemble will teach two student workshops and perform a concert in collaboration with us. We hope this Black History Month event will create an opportunity to experience African culture as presented by strong African-American women artists and provide an empowering educational experience for local women and girls.

The weekend will begin on Friday evening, Feb. 6th with Giwayen Mata teaching workshops to high school and community choruses. Saturday night's concert would feature the GRWC along with Giwayen Mata's performance, "Echoes of Africa". Monday afternoon, February 9th would be set aside for Giwayen Mata to do after school workshops with Girls Inc., and Girl Scouts of Michigan Trails at the YWCA Center for Women.

Giwayen Mata's mission is to celebrate the lives of women and uplift communities and the planet, while perpetuating the cultures of the Afrikan Diaspora through the study, creation, teaching, and presentation of artistic media including dances, rhythms, songs, poetry, and prose. Founded by Omelika Kuumba, Zuri Sami Ra Maati Jordan, and eight other women of color, Giwayen Mata has been dedicated to the perpetuation of Afrikan culture since 1993. The name Giwayen Mata means, "Elephant Leaders of Women" in the West Afrikan Hausa language. To fulfill this name, Giwayen Mata has moved and wooed audiences from New York to Texas, at the 1996 Olympic opening and closing ceremonies, and at venues throughout the southeast with entertainment that is empowering, enlightening, and educational. Giwayen Mata's members are trained in sign language, ballet, jazz, modern, hip-hop, Afrikan and Caribbean dance and rhythms, production and stage-managing, studio percussion, and background vocals—skills utilized in the company's work and to enhance the work of other artists. The membership includes sistahs in various stages of womanhood from the US and abroad with a combined experience of more than thirty years as teachers and performers.



This project was initiated as part of the chorus's mission and strategic plan, which includes building bridges within the community, and seeking to be a multi-racial ensemble that crosses class, cultural, and economic boundaries, promoting social justice through high quality performance of culturally diverse choral music. We need help to make this project a reality. Perhaps you or someone you know would be interested in building similar kinds of bridges with us in the community. You could consider underwriting the Friday night or Monday morning workshops. Or, work on a team to make this event a huge success. Can you volunteer to help with this event? Please contact us with your ideas and suggestions at info@grwc.org or call us at 616-459-2655. Many in the Chorus have experienced the energy and excitement of Giwayen Mata, and we look forward to giving this gift to our community. Please mark February 7th on your calendar now and look for more information in the mail and on our website.

We need help to make the Giwayen Mata Black History Month project a reality. Perhaps you or someone you know would be interested in building similar kinds of bridges with us in the community. You could consider underwriting the Friday night or Monday after-school workshops. Or work on a team to make this event a huge success. Can you volunteer to help with this event? Please contact us with your ideas and suggestions at info@grwc.org or call us at 616-459-2655.

Consider donating at the following levels.....

DIAMOND \$3000

- Exclusive* sponsorship and credit for underwriting your choice of either the Friday night or Monday after-school workshops (*shared with the chorus)
- "Special Time" set aside for your organization to interact with Giwayen Mata
- 6 slots to participate in the event you sponsor/underwrite
- Full page ad in the Saturday night event concert program
- 12 reception -included tickets for the Saturday night event
- 10 tickets for the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus Spring Concert and Reception
- Featured in advertising and promotions planned for the December GRWC concert and Silent Auction
- Full-page ad in GRWC spring concert program
- Free ad in GRWC spring newsletter
- Link to GRWC website and Giwayen Mata event
- "Weaving Memories" and "Where I Live" concert Cd's from the GRWC

GOLD \$1500

- Full page ad in Saturday night event concert program
- 8 reception-included tickets for the Saturday night event
- 8 tickets for the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus Spring Concert and Reception
- Featured in advertising and promotions planned for the December GRWC concert and Silent Auction
- Full page ad in GRWC spring concert program
- Free ad in GRWC spring newsletter
- Link to GRWC website and Giwayen Mata event
- "Weaving Memories" and "Where I Live" concert Cd's from the GRWC

IVORY \$750

- ½ page ad in Saturday night event concert program
- 6 reception-included tickets for Saturday night event
- 6 tickets for Grand Rapids Women's Chorus Spring Concert and Reception
- Featured in advertising and promotions planned for the December GRWC concert and Silent Auction
- ½ page ad in GRWC spring concert program
- Free ad in GRWC spring newsletter
- Link to GRWC website and Giwayen Mata event
- "Weaving Memories" and "Where I Live" concert Cd's from the GRWC

STONE \$500

- Mention in Saturday night event concert program
- 4 reception- included tickets for Saturday night event
- 4 tickets for Grand Rapids Women's Chorus Spring Concert and Reception
- Choice of GRWC concert CD

REED \$200

- Mention in Saturday night event concert program
- 4 tickets to attend Saturday night performance
- 2 tickets for Grand Rapids Women's Chorus Spring Concert and Reception
- Choice of GRWC concert CD

SPECIAL CATEGORY

Buy a minimum of 50 tickets for the Saturday night event and receive a 50% discount. Great idea for fund-raising!

OUR GENEROUS DONORS FROM LAST SEASON**Eighth Note Club (\$1-99)**

Cathy Amodeo
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 Teresa Thome

Half Note Club (\$250-499)

Ann K Erhardt

Whole Note Club (500+)

Maybe this year!

We thank you for your thoughtful support!

THE GRAND RAPIDS WOMEN'S CHORUS

Artistic Director
Lori Tennenhouse

Assistant Director
Luann Cayedito

Small Ensemble Director
Martha VanderEyck

Pianist
Jean Gardner

Percussionist
Sue Brown

ASL Interpreter
Lois Van Broekhoven

Sopranos
Nancy Court
Colleen Cusick
Liz DeBraber
Rosemary Fritz
Cathy Howe
Theresa Huyge
Wendy Kuenzel Kapolka
Carol Kountz
Kate Noone
Kris Stougaard
Martha VanderEyck

Altos
Gabrielle Calkins
Brenda Canales
Luann Cayedito
Donna Clark
Rose Conlin
Erin Dreyer
Megan Grimm
Crystal Knoll
Ashima Saigal
Pam Sandberg
Suzanne Stevens

Tenors
Cheryl Beatty
Connie Bellows
Pam Carlson
Paula DeYoung
Sheryl Mase
Nadine Miller
Karie Poole
Jennifer Robinson
Janice Scalza

Basses
Kris Badra
Sue Brown
Elaine Dalcher
Cathajane Galante
Leslie Kohn
Cathy Marashi
Janet Thering
Linda Troyer
Connie Winter-Troutwine

3RD ANNUAL RETREAT

Saturday, September 27, and Sunday, October 28 marked the dates for the 3rd Annual Retreat at Khardomah lodge in Grand Haven. And what a great weekend it was! Over 24 hours packed with sectionals, rehearsals, food, fun, and wonderful weather! Outside, it was a great weekend to be on the beach with sunny skies and a brisk breeze. Inside, the lodge was abuzz with activity. We learned the pronunciations for our foreign language pieces, pounded out rhythms, and heard the right notes for each part on all of our songs for this half of the season at least once! We had a lot of fun at our 2nd Annual No Talent, Talent Show, which highlighted everything from marching band impressions to handwriting samples to a few things we can't mention out loud without fear of repercussion. We also got a little business done at our Annual Meeting, where we recruited committee members, voted on new board members, and approved our annual budget. We were sad to bid Nadine Miller farewell from the board, but also happy to welcome new members Sue Brown and Jennifer Robinson, and to have Janice Scalza and Cheryl Beatty renew their terms. If you wish you could be a part of the action but do not wish to join us as a singing member, contact Gabrielle at 452-3466 for information on how to be a non-singing member of the Grand Rapids Women's chorus!

buy the
Compact
Disc

Diane Benjamin's
"Where I Live"
a Breast Cancer Oratorio
\$16.00

**Proceeds Benefit Gilda's Club Grand Rapids and
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the
Grand Rapids
WOMEN'S
CHORUS

The "Where I Live" breast cancer oratorio CD features String Players from the GR Symphony and Narrations by Community Cancer Survivors. It is a beautiful testament for anyone whose life has been touched by cancer.

NEW SONGS FOR WOMEN'S VOICES

The chorus has been honored with a donation from the Amos Fund (founded by the family of Sara and Charles Homeyer) to commission a new work for women's voices. I met with Ysaye Barnwell of Sweet Honey in the Rock this summer, and she has agreed to compose a song for us! We are currently in the process of procuring permission to use the text of an Audre Lorde poem as lyrics for that piece. We hope to have the completed work by April, and will premier the piece in December 2004, at our Winter concert.

Having Dr. Barnwell compose a piece for us is especially exciting, as we have really enjoyed singing her music over the years. Judging by our audience's enthusiastic responses to "Wanting Memories," "On Children," and "Breaths," it is evident that she has many fans here.

Dr. Barnwell has composed and arranged music on more than 14 recordings on labels including Flying Fish, EarthBeat!/Warner, Music For Little People and Rykodisc/Palm Pictures, Sony Classical. She has worked as a commissioned composer on numerous and varied projects including Sesame Street, Dance Alloy of Pittsburgh, David Rousseve's Reality Dance Company, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Women's Philharmonic of San Francisco, Redwood Cultural Work, The New Spirituals Project, The Steel Festival of Bethlehem, PA, The Plymouth Music Series and numerous choirs. For twenty years now, Barnwell has conducted THE WORKSHOP: Building a Vocal Community - Singing In the African American Tradition where throughout the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Australia she has utilized African and African American history, values, cultural and vocal traditions. She has worked with singers and non-singers alike.



Commissioning new music is one of the chorus's ongoing priorities, and is part of our five-year strategic plan. In addition to increasing the volume of interesting and meaningful choral music for mature women's voices, it empowers and supports contemporary women composers to continue their creative work.

It's also very empowering for choral members to be involved in making a work come to life for the first time, and to work with a composer on an original project. The chorus has commissioned "Rainsong" by Marjan Helms, and "Earthbeat" by Janika Vandervelde in the past few years. Audience response to these commissions has been fantastic!

If you would like to help us commission new music, I urge you to consider making a donation of \$1000 or more to the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus Commissioning Fund so that we can accomplish our goal of commissioning every two years. Your name or organization will be listed on the piece of music as "commissioned by _____ for the Gr. Rapids Women's Chorus", and copyrighted as such. Of course you will be recognized in our Spring Program and other correspondence as a benefactor. Help us help others create beautiful music! Lori Tennenhouse



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Now you can share the music you love with the people you love
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**Purchase ANY CD or DVD, cassette, or anything else
ON-LINE via the GRWC website link to Goldenrod Music
and earn money for the chorus!**

From the brand new release from Joan Armatrading, "Lover's Speak", to the GRWC's "Weaving Memories" or "Where I Live" CD's to the Sweet Honey in the Rock's 30th Anniversary CD, buying your music and gifts on-line via this link helps the chorus raise funds with no additional cost to you.

Like you, Goldenrod Music believes in our music and our mission and wants to help us succeed, so they have helped us set up this link. In addition to music, you can also purchase books, calendars, videos, DVD's, song-books and all kinds of music related items that will help us with each purchase.

You know you'd be buying this stuff from somewhere right?
Save precious time, click and buy from the link, and help the GRWC!

www.grwc.org

Grand Rapids Women's Chorus
PO Box 68486
Grand Rapids, MI 49516

Phone: 616-459-2655

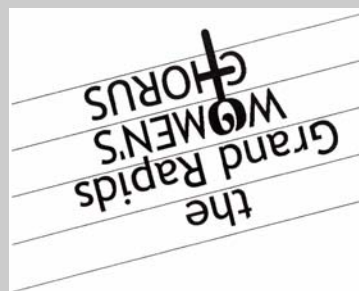
Email: info@grwc.org

We welcome your comments, suggestions, compliments, questions, letters and tax deductible donations. Please feel free to contact us.

Established for the education, enjoyment and enrichment of its members and its audience, the organization seeks to create and inspire meaningful experience through musical expression.

The Grand Rapids Women's Chorus is dedicated to singing culturally diverse music that promotes appreciation of women composers and arrangers.

-Mission Statement-



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Grand Rapids Women's Chorus
PO Box 68486
Grand Rapids, MI 49516

News from the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus

Visit our website at:
www.grwc.org