



CHORAL MUSIC REVIEW

Songs of our Sisters Women's Voices Chorus Presents Greatest Hits Plus a Brand New Piece

By [Karen E. Moorman](#)

January 25, 2014 - Chapel Hill, NC:

Since its modest beginning in 1993, [Women's Voices Chorus](#) has brought unique, often rediscovered music to audiences throughout the Triangle in North Carolina. As part of their mission, WVC also commissions and premieres music compositions with a preference for women composers. "Songs of my Sisters" celebrates 20 years of making music together with a concert of favorites as well as the world premiere of *The Nine Muses* by their director, Dr. [Allan Friedman](#). The concert took place at [University United Methodist Church](#) in Chapel Hill, and the program will be performed again in Durham at [First Presbyterian Church](#) at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 26.

Friedman's *The Nine Muses* is a wonderful piece, filled with lots of variety and good humor. Knowing his singers well, Friedman scored the piece with their abilities and ranges in mind but with just the right level of challenge. It is structured in nine sections (and a prelude), one for each of the Muses, and with a unique musical feel to match the deities' attributes and personalities. The chorus was, in turn, grouped into choirs of nine singers plus a narrator. The audience laughed in all the right places, including Friedman's fun with the common mispronunciation of Calliope and the mysterious yet mischievous Erato's "purr." Ann Harrison, the narrator, offered splendid dramatic readings of the text (also written by Friedman). Everyone sang with great heart.

I would be hard pressed to highlight one favorite. Opening the Prelude, altos sang particularly well and again in "Melpomene," protector of tragedy. Another alto chorale gave a lovely reading of "Urania," protector of celestial objects and stars. Their voices are deep, penetrating and in tune. "Polyhymnia," protector of divine hymns, were, yes, heavenly and "Terpsichore," muse of the dance, set to lively rhythm, was delivered with verve. Friedman's text is well written. Here is a taste of the Prelude:

*Thus, Memory and Thunderbolt/ In flesh and skill combined,
From age to age our names invoked
To spark sweet song and rhyme.*

The first half of the program was dedicated to a selection of favorites: "Welcome Love" by Lana Walter (b.1948); "Herself a Rose, Who Bore the Rose" by Eleanor Daley (b.1955), a piece written for WVC founder Mary Lycan; "O Jesu So Meek," arranged by Linda Metz (b.1952), who was in the audience; *Dickinson Suite* by Jayne Swank (b.1986); "Regina coeli," set by Katherine Dienes (b.1970), and others.

The excellent acoustics at University Methodist Church favor Women's Voices, whose diction and blend are absolutely first rate. But even more important, this chorus radiates sheer joy when they sing, a rare and lovely commodity.

In a recent conversation, Dr. Friedman expressed gratitude for the opportunity to compose *The Nine Muses*, to his singers and to Mary Lycan, the founder of Women's Voices. Looking ahead, Friedman is hopeful that WVC will continue to share the music, and to promote women composers. We wish them the very best.

Mark your calendars for upcoming concerts: March 23 and May 16, 2014.

The *Songs of my Sisters* program will be repeated Sunday, January 26, at 3:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in Durham, at 305 E. Main Street. For details, see the sidebar.

EVENT INFORMATION

Chapel Hill -- (Sat., Jan. 25, 2014)

[Women's Voices Chorus:](#)
["Songs of our Sisters" \(Chapel Hill\)](#)

Adults \$15; Students \$5; Group rates available -- University United Methodist Church , (919)923-8789; contact@womensvoiceschorus.org , <http://www.womensvoiceschorus.org> -- 7:30 PM

Durham -- (Sun., Jan. 26, 2014)

[Women's Voices Chorus:](#)
["Songs of our Sisters" \(Durham\)](#)

Adults \$15; Students \$5; Group rates available -- First Presbyterian Church , (919)923-8789; contact@womensvoiceschorus.org , <http://www.womensvoiceschorus.org> -- 3:00 PM



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