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## CHORAL MUSIC REVIEW

# Women's Voices from Across the State Soar Together

By [Ken Hoover](#)

December 5, 2020 - Raleigh, NC, Charlotte, NC, Chapel Hill, NC:



"Rise Up: Voices United in Song" was a unique collaborative virtual concert featuring three North Carolina women's choruses: The Charlotteans of [UNC Charlotte](#), conducted by [Ginger Wyrick](#), [Meredith College](#) Choirs, conducted by [Shannon Gravelle](#), and [Women's Voices Chorus of Chapel Hill](#), conducted by [Laura Sam](#).

The program was cast as a Zoom webinar with each of the three conductors introducing their group and the music they had chosen for this concert. The virtual concert production was explained in its basics. Each participant (singer) recorded her part individually observing strict tempo and dynamic expression as provided in a guide tape. These recordings were then electronically pieced together and manipulated in all the ways a computer block or avatar can be manipulated, and thus the virtual concert.

The enthusiasm of these fine conductors was palpable as they each described their desire to teach and to share the powerful influence and joy of music.

The Charlotteans introduced the concert with "Be the Change," by Marc Kaplan and Colin Britt. This piece is published in the [Justice Choir Songbook](#), a recent collection intended for public use at rallies, marches, and educational programs. An introductory verse was sung by three lovely solo voices after which the full well-blended chorus completed the uplifting and challenging selection.

"A Path to Each Other," by [Jocelyn Hagen](#) and [Timothy Takach](#), was sung by Women's Voices Chorus demonstrating a well-disciplined handling of the counterpoint of the fugue and balanced dynamics. The piece contrasts building a wall to keep us apart or building a path to bring us together.

The Meredith College Chorus sang next "The Song in the Air," by [Linda Spevacek](#), a spritely piece in a folk-song mode sung with a conveyance of joy. The ten-voice Meredith College Encore! sang the ethereal "When the Earth Stands Still," by [Don MacDonald](#). Rich, warm harmonies and an easily floating melody make this a comforting sunset experience.

"Sweet Child" (from *Snow Angel*), by [Sarah Quartel](#), was presented by Women's Voices Chorus. It is a playful piece with hand drums driving the rhythm and the chorus sailing a gently bouncing melody above. WVC is preparing a complete performance of *Snow Angel* for an up-coming concert.

The Charlotteans took the "stage" for a performance of "Thulele Mama Ya," by Australian composer [Lisa Young](#). Translated, the text basically means "don't worry Mama." Enticing rhythms, clapping hands and a pleading solo melody blended with the full choir.

"I Have Come to Bury Love," by [Remel Derrick](#), was the next selection by Meredith College Chorale.

"Angels of Mercy" was written by Irving Berlin for and dedicated to the American National Red Cross. It was premiered Jan 1, 1940. It is not one of Berlin's great tunes but is a worthy tribute to Clara Barton and the thousands of women who they treated, nursed, and comforted, even close to dangerous battlefields. WVC sang it beautifully as the gentle anthem it is.

"We Shall Be Known" (as sung by the pop duo [MaMuse](#)) written by Karisha Longaker has become a powerfully influential song over the past several years. The combined Meredith College Choirs presented it in a rich full-hearted choral performance.

[Elaine Hagenberg](#)'s "You Do Not Walk Alone" is an awesome song of support and reassurance. The Charlotteans gave it a secure and expressive rendition. Entrances and exits were precise, and intonation was balanced and smooth.

## EVENT INFORMATION

( Sat., Dec. 5, 2020 )

[Women's Voices Chorus: Rise Up: Voices United in Song](#)

Online , Click to join Zoom broadcast.

, <https://womensvoiceschorus.org/>  
-- 7:30 PM

"Rise and Stand" (from *The Justice Choir Songbook*) is by [Arianne Abela](#). If the above is a song of reassurance, this one is a song of commitment. All the choral voices gathered for this concert joined in one massive chorus. It was glorious to see and to hear. Perhaps the time will come soon when we can truly together and vow what we each stand up for.

This program was packed full of musical knowledge shared by the charming and skilled choral directors, inspiring their talented youth eager for the future. We are also grateful for all those who put hours of preparation and care into this project; the piano accompanist who are a key to successful rehearsals and much more. There were soloists and instrumentalists and percussionists who enhanced many of the performances. But most of all, it was the unique ethereal blend of women's voices that made this evening special.



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