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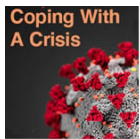
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CHORAL MUSIC REVIEW

Women's Voices Chorus Delights Viewers with Charming Poetry and Awe-Inspiring Singing

By [Ken Hoover](#)

February 6, 2021 - Chapel Hill, NC:



Difficulties of coping with a pandemic or not, dedicated musical groups from all over are finding ways of improving their knowledge and skill as ambassadors of music. [Women's Voices Chorus](#) is one of those groups that is solidifying its reputation as a gem of a local treasure with every performance. Their most recent virtual concert, released as "Angels Among Us," is now available for your pure joy on their [YouTube channel](#).

EVENT INFORMATION

(Sat., Feb. 6, 2021)

[Women's Voices Chorus: Angels Among Us: A Virtual Choral Presentation](#)

Free -- Online ,
<https://womensvoiceschorus.org> --
7:00 PM

While there is nothing that can match the full live chorus feedback of singing together in rehearsal or performance, there are some advantages to preparing a virtual project. The conductor gets to know the individual voice of each choir member and is thus equipped to arrange the blend of voices to their greatest advantage. To the blend of this vocal ensemble is added the highly regarded pianist [Deborah Lee Hollis](#) and various other accompanists as specified. And then to this sonic mix is added a variety of visual images: photos of chorus members, images reflecting the mood of the music and the meaning of the text. This concert, titled "Angels Among Us," put together by the exceptionally gifted artistic director [Laura Sam](#) and members of WVC. is an impressive example of what can be accomplished.

The program opened with "A Path to Each Other" by [Jocelyn Hagen](#) and [Timothy C. Takach](#). The text, a mere twelve words, teaches us that it does not take a lot of words to say something deep and meaningful. Here is that brief poem:

Each word is a stone

We can build a wall

Or a path to each other

In the performance of this piece, Women's Voices Chorus demonstrated a superb choral blend, balanced dynamics, and excellent handling of the counterpoint of the fugue.

The next selection featured the combined sound of three North Carolina women's ensembles: 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 Sam, with Wyrick playing percussion. Together, they performed "Rise and Stand" (from *The Justice Choir Songbook*), with music and lyrics by [Arianne Abela](#). This is a moving song of commitment and dedication. All the choral voices gathered for this concert last December were joined in one massive chorus. It was glorious to see and to hear. Perhaps the time will come not too far off when we can truly sing together and vow what we each stand up for.

The featured work on this virtual concert is *Snow Angel*, a unique mixture of music and spoken word. The music and the lyrics of the choral movements are by [Sarah Quartel](#). The poetic narrations are contributed by Lisa Helps. In this performance, the chorus is joined by pianist Hollis, cellists [Debbie Davis](#), and Jennie Vaughn and Wyrick playing djembe. The narrators were Diane Wold (First Angel,) Olivia Michael (Second Angel,) and Abby Delauney (Third Angel.)

"Prologue" (piano and cello duet and chorus) opens with the piano setting a mystical mood with open fifths. The cello adds an ethereal element with a melody which is wistful and yearning. The chorus joins them with an appeal to open their eyes. The "First Angel" (narration) narrator reads the musings of an aging angel who cannot find her wings.

"Creatures of Light" (chorus, piano) opens with the piano playing bell chords as a background for the chorus, which joins in, singing of the wonders of the creatures of light, the music swells with memories and eventually dies down to the confidence and calmness of a major triad. "Second Angel" (narration) The young narrator finds grace in a solitary red flower growing through a crack in the pavement where her father's garden used to be.

"God will give orders" (chorus, piano) A lovely, lilting melody accompanied by arpeggio chords from the piano bring reassurance of connection with father.

"Sweet Child" (chorus, piano, cello) is the only percussive piece in *Snow Angel*. Pizzicato cello, staccato piano and djembe encourage a choir which is dancing, skipping, or hopping down the pathway of innocent faith. "Third Angel" (chorus, piano) – The narrator tells of a young angel who danced and sang and brought laughter to a sad little girl and realizes the joy it brings to her as well. The narration continues with "First Angel" and the return of the aging angel who now realizes that when the snow melts the impression of the snow angel, though gone, still is there inside.

The final chorus, "Snow Angel" (chorus, piano, cello) returns the opening piano and cello duet. The music and the word move together toward a calm and summing conclusion: "Even though the snow may blow there's not a wind can stop my music. For I know that winter shelters life."

The concert concluded with "Angels of Mercy," one of the hundreds of tunes and lyrics that flew off the cluttered desk of Irving Berlin. It was written for and dedicated to the American National Red Cross. It was premiered Jan 1, 1940, as a tribute to Clara Barton and the thousands of women who treated, nursed, and comforted soldiers, even close to dangerous battlefields. WVC sang it beautifully as the gentle lyrical anthem it is.



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