

WomEnchant Chorus

Laura Thomas, Music Director; Tannis Beamer, Accompanist

WomEnchant is a choir of women from a wide variety of backgrounds and musical experience. Our common thread is the desire to sing music that celebrates our lives, calls for peace and justice, and demonstrates the power of sisterhood and song. We welcome all women who want to learn and sing music that gives voice to our experiences and our commitment to making positive changes in the world.

Since our beginning in 1994, WomEnchant has participated in many events centered around women's equality, peace, anti-violence and social justice. We have performed at benefits for shelters, International Women's Day concerts, Take Back the Night rallies, V-day anti-violence events, the Stephen Lewis Foundation World AIDS Awareness Day and performances for women's centers and social service agencies. Our appearances also include services and events celebrating and supporting Earth Day and environmental concerns.

In 2007, the WomEnchant drumming group was formed to give women the opportunity to learn about and perform on hand drums. Some of the drummers come from within the choir, while others belong only to the drummer's circle. The WomEnchant Drummers perform with the choir and on their own.

To accommodate women from both the Hamilton and Niagara areas, we rehearse in Grimsby on Monday nights from September to May. For information about performances and membership please email us at: womenchant@yahoo.ca

Laura Thomas

WomEnchant's Artistic Director, Laura Thomas, is a conductor, arranger, composer, percussionist and teacher. In addition to her position with WomEnchant, she is also Music Director of the Dundas Valley Orchestra, Associate Conductor of the Niagara Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of the Niagara Youth Orchestra. She was, for six years, Artistic Director of Niagara's Choralis Camerata. She has appeared as a guest conductor with many ensembles including the Huronia Symphony, the Etobicoke Philharmonic and the North York Concert Orchestra.

Ms. Thomas holds a master's degree in conducting from New York's prestigious Bard College, where she studied with Harold Farberman. She is also a graduate of Hamilton's Mohawk College and McMaster University, where she studied percussion and composition. Since 1985, she has been the Principal Percussionist with the Niagara Symphony Orchestra. As well, she is a member of Niagara's popular eclectic folk quintet BroadBand and performs regularly with her Vintage Jazz ensembles.

In her work with WomEnchant and BroadBand, Ms. Thomas has found the opportunity to combine music and activism. Both ensembles perform for a wide variety of social justice events and causes and have raised thousands of dollars through benefit concerts.

Tannis Beamer

Tannis Beamer attended the University of Guelph where she majored in Applied Human Nutrition as well as completing a minor in music. She has also completed her Grade 10 Piano through the Royal Conservatory of Music and has taught private piano lessons in the Niagara Region for over 10 years. She runs a thriving studio of 35 students and composes solo works for piano.

Tannis found that her love of music drove her to explore the connection between health and music which resulted in her completing over 60 hours in training as a Soundwork Practitioner with Gary Diggins (Director of the Canadian Association of Sound Practitioners).

This is Tannis' third year as accompanist with WomEnchant Chorus and her second year with WomEnchant Drummers.

"Women at the Heart"

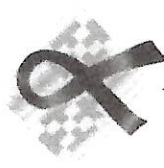
World AIDS Day Observance and Benefit Concert

PROGRAMME

Monday, December 2nd, 2013

St. Andrew's United Church
92 Main Street, Port Dalhousie

Proceeds donated to:



the
Stephen Lewis
FOUNDATION

GREETINGS FROM ST. ANDREW'S

As Chair of Church Council, I am pleased and proud to open our doors to help with the World AIDS Day commitment.

At St. Andrew's, we are committed to our Mission Statement, from which we "support the goal of a world community with peace, justice, equity and compassion for all".

Thanks to all in attendance this year for your generous support of this fight against AIDS. We ARE making a difference in the mortality rate among the citizens of Africa affected by this terrible disease.

Blessings to you all,
Victoria England,
Chair, St. Andrew's Church Council

WOMEN AT THE HEART by Sue Jackson
"Something changes in me when I witness someone's courage."
(Holly Near "Change of Heart")

"*Women at the Heart*" connects us in a particular way:
We who have gathered tonight in this circle of care come from the hosting community of St Andrews in Port Dalhousie the drummers and singers of WomEnchant, members and supporters of the Stephen Lewis Foundation, participants in *Grandmothers to Grandmothers*, and friends who have come to listen and learn.

Our bodies are physically present in this space and time;
but there are others who are also present –
for whom we are the visible witness.

We gather around the women at the heart of our circle
those who have born the burden of suffering and resistance
to HIV AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

It is their courage and struggle that have drawn us here.

They took on the nursing of children and grandchildren and each other;
They bear the heartache of suffering and death;
They struggle and sacrifice to find resources for survival;
They are training themselves in order to adopt new roles.
And we who are here tonight are aware of their strength and persistence;
Their courage has changed us and we respond with our love and help.

This night, as we gather in solidarity with **Women at the Heart**
and each other, we ask:

May our drums witness to the heartbeat of life
and reflect the energy it takes to turn statistics of dying and death
into stories of resistance and hope;

May our songs express the spirit of life-giving, creative power to act
that the women we celebrate have discovered within themselves; and
May our hospitality and the gifts we share draw us into a joyous sisterhood!

"Women at the Heart"

Programme

6:30	Penny Auction, Book & Bake Sale	Lower Hall
7:20	Penny Auction Closes	
7:30	Performance by WomEnchant Chorus	Sanctuary
8:30	Refreshments & Auction Results	Lower Hall

THANK YOU

St. Andrew's United Church, Council, Members and Staff;
Individuals who donated items for the Penny Auction, Book and Bake Sales,
Refreshments;

Cindy Werner, the administrative assistant of St. Andrew's for graciously taking on the task of being our very helpful contact person for the event;
Jackie Szymanski for producing the tickets and programme.

Scott Rosts of Niagara This Week, The Standard, The Grimsby News, Niagara at Large, and other

media for providing us with the much needed publicity for the event;

WomEnchant Chorus ~ for its partnership with St Andrew's United Church to produce this annual fundraiser for the work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation; for their passions and dedication to service in multiple roles in making this a most enjoyable evening;

Our brothers and sisters in Africa are the beneficiaries of your grace.

Namaste

-the divine in us rejoices in the light of the divine in you-