



presents



♪ **FEATURING GUEST ARTIST ARA LEE JAMES** ♪
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SCAN ME

WELCOME

Welcome to Draw the Circle Wide!

On behalf of the entire choir, we are thrilled to welcome you to our concert which features a talented guest artist and showcases the continued growth of our choir.

We are honored to have Ara Lee James performing with us. An accomplished musician with incredible talent and an impressive repertoire, her presence here tonight is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our choir members. They have been working diligently to bring you an unforgettable performance.

Tonight's program is a culmination of our efforts, on and off the stage, and we are excited to share it with you. Over the past few years, our choir has continued to thrive, and we are beyond proud of what we have accomplished together. We hope that our music will inspire you, lift your spirits, and bring you joy. We thank you for being a part of our circle and for championing us every step of the way.

Thank you for supporting the Portland Lesbian Choir. PLC is delighted to include you in our circle. We hope you enjoy the performance.

Mary McCarty, Artistic Director
Leanne Todd & Rex Addington, Board Presidents

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ARTISTIC TEAM



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: MARY MCCARTY

Mary has cultivated a lifelong passion for music via the choral and instrumental arts, performing on both sides of the baton as a singer, flutist and conductor within a wide range of ensembles taking her from her roots in upstate New York to her adopted home in Oregon. In addition to her work with PLC, Mary also serves as the Associate Conductor for the Portland Gay Men's Chorus. Mary holds a music degree from the State University of New York at Potsdam.



PRINCIPAL ACCOMPANIST: COLIN ALEXSEI SHEPARD

Colin Alexsei Shepard is the music director and conductor at Cedar Hills United Church of Christ. He earned his Masters in Piano Performance at Portland State University, where he was the Graduate Teacher's Assistant for collaborative piano accompanying the PSU Chamber Choir and opera studies program. Colin has accompanied and performed in over 500 recitals specializing in voice and collaborative piano. An ardent opera fan and voice coach, Colin has played piano in recital with MET Grammy-winner Audrey Luna with Portland Concert Opera, and played for masterclasses held by opera legends Lawrence Brownlee, Frederica von Stade, Angela Meade, and Vinson Cole.



CHOREOGRAPHER: BECA RASCH

Beca Rasch is thrilled to be bringing movement to PLC again this term. She has always been enamored with the joy found in dance, and how it can expand the way an audience perceives a piece of music. Beca received her BFA in Musical Theatre from Missouri State University, has performed in regional and professional theatres, and is now the owner and instructor at Firefly Dance. She strives to see beauty in all things, and is honored to be able to share that perspective with you all.

ARTISTIC TEAM — continued



GUEST ARTIST: ARA LEE JAMES

Ara Lee James is a critically acclaimed vocalist, songwriter, and recording artist. Raised in the musical traditions of Southern Appalachia, she has a vocal style that has been said to “realign the molecules of a room.” She is renowned for her captivating stage presence, and her original songs have been covered by artists, wrapped around poems, and arranged for choirs throughout the world. For the last ten years, Ara has toured nationally as a solo artist and with her former duo project, Stand and Sway. Ara also works as a somatic voice coach and is completing a master’s degree in clinical mental health counseling. At the heart of her work, Ara believes that all people have a voice worth hearing and celebrating.



GUITARIST: JAMIE STILLWAY

Hailed by Fretboard Journal as “one of the top fingerstyle guitarists of her generation,” Stillway is widely regarded as a master of her craft who plays like a woman with nothing to prove. She has released seven albums to widespread critical acclaim, including four solo albums of original compositions. Her album, *City Static*, was named by Paste magazine as one of the best albums of the year, and her most recent album, *Lullaby for a Stranger* was released in late 2022 on Portland’s Fluff and Gravy Records. Stillway is also one half of an esoteric flatpicking duo with guitarist Eric Skye, and has been an in-demand guitar instructor and composer for over 20 years, with her unique, minimalist compositions and elegant guitar style which have inspired players all over the globe.

CONCERT CREDITS

STAFF

Mary McCarty, Artistic Director
Colin Shepard, Principal Accompanist
Rebecca Rasch, Choreographer

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Andrea Whittaker, Music Coordinator
Sparky Lindsay, Production Coordinator
Amanda Matteo, Membership

CONCERT CREDITS

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Colin Alexsei Shepard, piano
Kris Klavic, Oboe and Tenor Sax
Jeff Langston, bass
Ward Griffiths, drums

CHOREOGRAPHERS

Beca Rasch
Leticia West

ASL INTERPRETERS

Lauren Hazelett
Gilly Platt

PRODUCTION TEAM

Sparky Lindsay, Production Coordinator
CJ Awalt, Kate Richardson, and Nori LaRue,
Sound Design
Sara Szymanski, Lighting Design
Michael Sanchez, Stage Manager
Tim Bartunek, Stage Hand
Andrea Whittaker, House Manager
Brennan Universe, Ticket Manager
Alec Lugo, Marketing

TASK FORCE LEADS

Equity & Belonging: Leticia West & Rhea Becke
COVID: Naomi Lobell

THE GAY AGENDA

Beca Rasch, Choreographer
Rhiannon Bates
Kristan Burkert
Katie Cooper
Mickey East
Amanda Matteo
Minseon Song
Leanne Todd
Leticia West

GRATITUDES & APPRECIATION

"The Portland Lesbian Choir would like to extend a special thank you to the congregations of Westminster Presbyterian and Ainsworth UCC for their generosity for our rehearsal space this season. Additionally, we are grateful for the support of our sponsors, for excellent assistance from Parkrose HS staff, to PGMC for use of their risers, our hard-working riser crew and all the concert volunteers."

Nancy King, Riser Coordination
Lottie Zorn, Wardrobe
Darci Jones, Volunteer Coordination
Alison Hills and Jules Chavez,
Decorations
Mark Biedermann, Videography

Tim Liszt – LisZt Design (Concert Program)

DRAW THE CIRCLE WIDE — PROGRAM LISTING

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Portland metropolitan area rests on stolen land that is the traditional village sites and seasonal territories of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tualatin, Bands of Chinook, Kalapuya, Molalla and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. The Portland Lesbian Choir honors these diverse and vibrant Indigenous communities which are 70,000 strong, descended from more than 380 Tribes, both local and distant.

We also recognize all of the peoples who labored, often involuntarily or under enslavement, to help build the wealth of this country. This includes, but is not limited to: Black, Asian, and Latine peoples. We honor these communities which continue to resist, survive, and thrive despite the intentional and ongoing attempts of exclusion or harm.

As we continue to deepen our learning, the Portland Lesbian Choir is committed to standing with and offering respectful recognition to the original inhabitants and those who have stewarded this land throughout the generations as well as those who have been enslaved by or immigrated to this country. Beyond reading a statement, we strive to become better allies to and partners with the Indigenous as well as marginalized and oppressed peoples in the area.

We acknowledge the goodness of the earth upon which we gather today. We invite each of you to learn about the peoples who lived, gathered, hunted, and labored on the land you now call home.

GATHER

Words and Music by Karen Mooney
Arranged by Mary McCarty
Alanna Hoyman-Browe, solo

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Words and Music by Andy Ross,
Timothy Nordwind, Damian Kulash,
and Dan Konopka
Arranged by Ash
Jenn Romero, solo

CROWDED TABLE

Music and words by Natalie Hemby, Lori
McKenna, and Brandi Carlile
Arranged by Andrea Ramsey
Sara Blackthorne, solo

WHY?

Music and words by Tracy Chapman
Arranged by Sharon Udoh

REFUGEE

Music and words by Moira Smiley

COME IN FROM THE FIREFLY DARKNESS

Music and words by Amy Benton

PERMISSION TO DANCE

Music and words by Ed Sheeran, Johnny
McDaid, Steve Mac, and Jenna Andrews
Arranged by Roger Emerson
Aly Gray, solo
featuring The Gay Agenda

WONDER

Music and words by morgxn
Arranged by Ash

FINALLY READY

Music and words by Simon Martin, Ramona
Renea, Colin Smith, Billy Porter, and Audrey
Martells
Arranged by Sharon Udoh

INTERMISSION

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY

Music and words by Ara Lee James *

I OFFER THIS

Music and words by Ara Lee James *

NASTY WOMAN

Music and words by Ara Lee James *

Additional lyrics by Beth Wood and Jen Hajj

A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

Music and words by John Lennon and

Paul McCartney *

** Featuring Ara Lee James and Jamie Stillway*

YOUR WORLD

Music by Loah

Words by Georgia Douglas Johnson

Arranged by Ash

Katie Cooper, solo

WAKE YOUR DREAMS

Music and words by Brody Ray

Arranged by Ash

Featuring DeLenn Sandy and Kjrstin Berg

DEEP BLUE

Music and words by Ara Lee James

Additional words by Beth Woods

Arranged by Pax Ressler

Featuring Ara Lee James

ROOM AT THE TABLE

Music and words by Carrie Newcomer

Arranged by Mary McCarty

Featuring Ara Lee James

PLC would like to thank the following grantors for funds received:

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Evan Ingle
Sierra Jesanis
Kai Jordan
Nola Katinsky
Jon Kiehnau
Kristan Knapp
Jennifer Knudsen
Amber Kohlenberg

GALA

PLC is a proud member of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA). GALA leads the North American LGBT choral movement and cultivates the artistic development of 10,000 singers from more than 190 choruses in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. The next GALA Festival is scheduled in Minneapolis, MN from July 10-14 of 2024.

* 1,000 Friends Members

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Miranda Robinson
Jenn Romero
Lindsey Salzer
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Rebecca Stinson*
Aubrey Stitt
McKenzie Thompson
Kelly Thompson-Roberts

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Michelle Tirey
RT Tougas
Sara Tretter
Ellen Weigel
Leticia West
Victoria Wieldt
Max Williker
Pamela Woodrow
LeRoy Younglove
Deanna Ziemer-McGinn
Cindy Zrinyi

* 1,000 Friends Members

DRAW THE CIRCLE WIDE *comments on tonight's music performances*

Gather — We welcome you to our space through sound, dreams, hope, and strength.

All Together Now — This song reflects on our time of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic and how we came out forever changed. We are all together alone in the chrysalis.

Crowded Table — A song from The Highwomen, including Brandi Carlile, has become a PLC favorite. We want to have a crowded table where there is a place by the fire for everyone.

Why? — Tracy Chapman poses complex questions about contradictions we must reflect on as we strive for a world where we all belong.

Refugee — There are over 32 million refugees worldwide. Imagine what the world would look like if there was a safe place for everyone to live.

Come in from the Firefly Darkness — Open up the door, my friend. Wherever you have traveled from, we welcome you in.

Permission to Dance — One way to open our circles is by giving ourselves permission to feel joy and to dance!

Wonder — One of the biggest obstacles to drawing wide circles is opening up our minds and asking critical questions. Do I matter? Does what I say make a difference? Speaking out is a core component of challenging the status quo.

Finally Ready — Another song about joy. Circles can be drawn in so many different ways—including making space in our lives for love.

Your World — We are grateful to Loah for giving us permission to showcase this amazing song with lyrics by poet Georgia Douglas Johnson, “your world is as big as you make it.”

Wake Your Dreams — This piece by Brody Ray is a call to stand up for who you are. Being yourself is the foundation of being able to draw your circles wider.

Deep Blue — We are thrilled to be performing this piece by our guest artist, Ara Lee James. “The fullness of a circle drawn...live with paper walls...let go of the string, you don't have time not to.”

Room at the Table — There is room at the table for everyone. We challenge you to look at where you can make room at your table, where you can widen your circle.

1,000 FRIENDS OF PLC

We at Portland Lesbian Choir are Standing in the Light and you are invited in as we Draw the Circle Wider.

We look back and appreciate the journey of the trailblazers who fought to create and maintain this choir over 36 years ago to sing out the message that gay rights are human rights. We know that the LGBTQ2IA+ community enjoys the rights we have today because of those who came before us. We wish to do the same for those who will come after us in the next 36 years to come. Our choir, which began as a small gathering of women in 1986, has grown to be a choir of 100+ singing each term.

A few short years back, we created 1,000 Friends of PLC which is a sustaining membership support drive. By partnering with hundreds of individuals and businesses to support PLC monthly, we have created a sustainable base which will insure the choir's long-term survival and allow PLC to continue Singing Out for the years to come.

We invite you to Draw Your Circle Wider and increase your impact in the community by becoming a sustaining member of 1,000 Friends of PLC. Thank you!

Susan Hunter
fundraising@plchoir.org

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The PORTLAND LESBIAN CHOIR has been SINGING OUT since 1986.

The Portland Lesbian Choir builds harmony and community through compelling musical performances. We elevate LGBT2QIA+ voices, emphasize equity, and encourage collaboration, growth, and service.

We strive to provide a safe and equitable space that actively embraces people of any relationship/sexual orientation, gender identity, race, age, physical ability, body type, intellectual ability or neurodivergence, cultural identity, religious affiliation, relationship status, financial status, and any other traits that are innate and/or related to cultural oppression. As a non-audition choir, we provide a supportive setting where practicing, performing, and experiencing music is a positive social experience, and builds connection both among members as well as between the choir and its audience.

We welcome new members over the age of 16, and have non-singing opportunities for those not musically inclined or needing a more flexible schedule. If you are interested in joining or have questions, contact us at membership@plchoir.org or go to plchoir.org to sign up to be notified when the next new member opportunity opens in September!

We seek partnerships with the community and with greater NW nonprofits that serve LGBTQ+, BIPOC*, and communities targeted by systemic oppression to build connections through music, service, and collaborative relationships. If you are part of an organization that is interested in becoming a community partner, contact Leanne Todd at president@plchoir.org. For outreach opportunities for PLC to sing at an event, contact outreach@plchoir.org



*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, 2-Spirit, Intersex along with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Both are umbrella terms that encompass those not explicitly named, as our language is always evolving.



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Rhea Becke (2012)
Kristan Burkert (2020)
Tina Calcagno (2012)
Anne Cherry (2021)+
Carol Claassen (2009)
Hope Crombie (2023)
Bridget Deal (2023)
Kathleen "Katie" Drake (2012)
Julie Foster (2018)
Althea Gregory (2015)
Nora Hogan (2023)
Dani Husom (2023)
Toni Jaffe (2018)
Nancy King (2018)
Sara Kurtz (2021)
Karen McCulloch (2018)
Emily McKinstry (2011)
Holly Peterson (2023)
Beca Rasch (2015)
Michaela Richmond (2023)
Aubrey Stitt (2021)
Sara Szymanski (2017)
Leanne Todd (2017)

ALTO

Emily Barnes (2022)
Rachel Carina (2019)
Elena Dupen (2021)+
Mickey East (2018)
Elizabeth Edrington (2017)
Aly Gray (2023)
Kat Hamilton (2018)
Megan Hamilton (2023)
Debbie Helms (2020)
Ingrid HK (2023)
Myra Howard (2019)
Alanna Hoyman-Browe (2018)
Michelle Jenai (2023)
Sahar Jones (2021)
Finn Lambourn (2023)
Naomi Lobell (2021)
Drea Pisani (2023)
Miranda Robinson (2021)
Drew Robinson-Woods (2022)
Lindsey Salzer (2022)
Delenn Sandy (2018)
Kaitlyn Shelton (2023)

Cha Cha Spinrad (2018)
Marcia Stanard (1990)
Melissa Tennyson (2017)
McKenzie Thompson (2023)
Sage Tidwell (2022)
Sara Tretter (2023)
Mary Weaver (2022)

TENOR

Fran Abbott (2023)
Rex Addington (2018)
Kristi Balzer (2023)
Rhiannon Bates (2023)
Sara Blackthorne (2023)
Sarah Clark (2013)
Tessa Draker (2023)
Lindsey Durham (2017)
Sam Fulan (2023)
Kathy Garrett (2000)
Deborah Giillitz (1992)
Cathy Glass (2019)+
Ellie Simon Goldman (2017)
Susan Hunter (2018)
Loree Hyde (2022)
Jessamyne Ivy (2023)
Sierra Jesanis (2023)
Kai Jordan (1992)
Jo Linden (2023)
Amanda Matteo (2018)
Kyre Niemeyer (2019)
Lindsey Norden (2022)*
Carol Pinegar (2015)
Molly Reynolds (2017)
Jenn Romero (2023)
Julie Rosequist (2023)
Alyx Schaefer (2023)
Sheila Smith (1987)
Minseon Song (2023)
De Stewart (2020)
Gracen Tichelaar (2018)
RT Tougas (2023)
Ellen Weigel (2021)
Leticia West (2014)
Susie Winn (2023)
Brooke Winter (2016)*

* - Section Representative

+ - Section Lead

PLC MEMBERS *continued*

BASS

Tauni Arntsen (2016)+
Kjirstin Berg (2023)
Cin Bowman (2012)
Lisa Casey (2020)
Jules Chavez (2023)
Katie Cooper (2023)
Ray Haile (2019)
Nori La Rue (2017)
Sparky Lindsay (1986)
Faye Militante (2012)
CJ Rachko (1986)
Brooke Rencher (2023)
Kathleen Richardson (1986)
Colt Seidman (2023)
Eve Sepulveda (2017)*
Pamela Voltz (2016)
Claudia Walker (2023)
Rhonda Wheeler (2001)

NON-SINGING

Tanya Awabdy (2023)
CJ Awalt (2021)
Becca Cheesman (2023)
Elise Fyhrie (2023)
Libby Garcia-McKinstry (2011)
Keely Helmick (2022)
Alison Hills (2013)
Ray Horvath (2023)
Darci Jones (2023)
Paige Mackmer (2021)
Merryl Mix (2017)
Aarisa Smith (2012)
Brennan Universe (2023)
Charlie Veenkerson (2023)
Andrea Whittaker (2019)
Lottie Zorn (2015)

* - Section Representative

+ - Section Lead




The image is a vertical graphic for Liszt Design. At the top, the company name "liszt design" is written in a white, cursive font against a background of a blue and yellow sky. Below this, the services offered are listed in a dark blue box with gold and white text. The services include Graphic Design, Web Development, Branding, Social Media, Marketing, Publications, and Presentations. At the bottom, there is a tagline "Sweet Music for Your Eyeballs." with a musical note icon, followed by the contact information: "tim@lizstdesign.com" and "503.504.0869".

liszt design

**GRAPHIC DESIGN
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Sweet Music  for Your Eyeballs.

tim@lizstdesign.com
503.504.0869

COMPOSER SPOTLIGHT



TRACY CHAPMAN **Composer of WHY?**

Tracy Chapman is an American singer-songwriter best known for her hit singles “Fast Car” and “Give Me One Reason”. Chapman is an activist who lends her voice and talent to organizations such as Amnesty International, South Africa’s Anti-Apartheid Movement, Pavarotti & Friends for Cambodia and Tibet, AIDS/LifeCycle.



LOAH **Composer of YOUR WORLD**

Loah is a singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who has released 3 EPs of a hypermodern fusion genre she nicknamed “ArtSoul.” Being raised across Kildare and West Africa, Loah seeks to authentically marry all that she is with all that inspires her.



ASH **Arranger of ALL TOGETHER NOW, WONDER, YOUR WORLD, WAKE YOUR DREAMS**

Ash (they/she pronouns) grew up in Portland, OR, where they currently reside. They have a background in both theatre and music, and they are an active composer, choral arranger, music director for choir and theatre, and songwriter.



BRODY RAY **Composer of WAKE YOUR DREAMS**

For singer Brody Ray being seen for who he is has always been the goal. Based in Nashville, TN, Ray was featured on “America’s Got Talent” where he came out as a trans man singing Jordan Smith’s “Stand in the Light.” “Stand in the light and be seen as you are.”



SHARON UDOH Arranger of **WHY?** and **FINALLY READY**

Sharon Udoh is a gay, first-generation Nigerian-American composer, pianist, bandleader, and vocalist. Her work abandons genre and focuses on human complexity, chaos, and connection.



MORGXN Composer of **WONDER**

morgxn is an indie pop singer-songwriter who identifies as non-binary and queer.

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ANNOUNCING PORTLAND LESBIAN CHOIR'S 38th SEASON

FEELING GOOD

Feeling Good will feature music by a wide range of R&B composers and performers and will feature LaRhonda Steele, as our special guest artist. LaRhonda is recognized as one of the region's best rhythm and blues vocalists. *Feeling Good* will also introduce PLC's new a cappella ensemble, Resound.

Saturday, January 27th at 7pm

Sunday, January 28th at 3pm

Parkrose Center for Performing Arts



LOVE WHO YOU LOVE

Join PLC for *Love Who You Love* as we prepare to travel to Minneapolis in July 2024 for the GALA Festival! *Love Who You Love* will celebrate queer performers, arrangers, and love.

Saturday, June 15 at 7pm

Sunday, June 16 at 3pm

Parkrose Center for Performing Arts

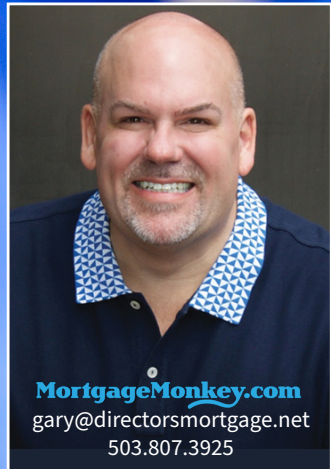


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