

Midwinter celebration of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival

**Artemis Singers presents "Wanting the Music: A Choral Musical of the Michigan Festival" Jan. 28 & 29, 2017, on Chicago's Northwest side**

CHICAGO—Artemis Singers, [www.artemissingers.org](http://www.artemissingers.org), Chicago's Lesbian Feminist chorus, will present "Wanting the Music: A Choral Musical of the Michigan Festival," Saturday, Jan. 28, and Sunday, Jan. 29, 2017.

The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival was a woman-only event held in the woods of Michigan for just one week every year from 1976 through 2015. Its conscious celebration of lesbian and feminist ideals made it a magnet for women around the world, particularly women from the Midwest. As such, it played a significant role in the lives of many lesbians in Chicago.

Artemis Singers will not only sing songs performed at the festival over the years, but will recreate some of the festival spirit by following the lives of a few fictional women through those festival years, encouraging the audience to remember how the festival reflected and shaped lives.

The musical comedy format connects songs from festival artists, including Cris Williamson, Ferron, Melissa Ferrick and Toshi Reagon, with an original story and songs by Artemis Singers members Allison Downing and Loraine Edwalds.

"Having the festival end in 2015 was a deeply emotional experience for women who are part of the lesbian community," explains Edwalds, who attended the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival for 27 years. "With this performance, we honor the musicians who formed the heart of the festival community over the years."

MichFest, as it came to be known in recent years, was unusual in its ability to welcome new artists and genres while continuing to love the performers who formed women's music in the 1970s. The story in the musical celebrates not only those musicians, but also the thousands of women who created workshops, worked on crew, performed rituals, and fell in and out of love.

"Our lives changed so much in the years that we had Michigan," Edwalds recalled. "How lesbians are accepted, how they're able to have children, the expectations they have for their relationships are very different now than when the festival started. I hope by creating this fictional story we can remind women of all we've been through."

Several Artemis Singers members and composers from other feminist choruses created the arrangements of iconic festival songs. Rachel Alexander, lead carpenter for MichFest for many years, arranged Nedra Johnson's "August Moon," a song written specifically about the festival in 2014.

Vendors who participated in the festival over the years will have booths in the balcony that people can visit before and after the January 2017 show. There will also be a wall where concert attendees can share their memories of the festival, which will be shared on the Artemis Singers website after the performances complete.

Artemis Singers will perform at 7:00 p.m. Saturday, January 28, 2017, and at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, January 29 at the Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 N. Knox Ave., Chicago. This venue on the northwest side of the city is accessible by public transportation and has plenty of free parking on-site. The Fifth Province bar on-site will be open down the hall from the performance on Saturday night, where audience members can obtain food and drink. The building is accessible. The concert will take place in the auditorium.

Tickets for "Wanting the Music" are a suggested donation of \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door for adults. Tickets for seniors age 65 and older and for children age 12 and younger are a suggested donation of \$15.

To purchase tickets, go to <http://artemiswantingthemusic.brownpapertickets.com/> For additional concert information, directions to the venue, or to volunteer to be a part of the event, email [info@artemissingers.org](mailto:info@artemissingers.org) or call 773-764-4465.

Artemis Singers is a community chorus that performs only music written or arranged by women. Membership is open to all women singers. As part of its educational mission as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, Artemis Singers provides creative opportunities for women interested in learning every aspect of choral, and now theatrical, production: musical accompaniment, vocal instruction, songwriting and arranging, choral directing, choreography, performance sound and lighting, artistic direction and stage management.

Founded in 1980, Artemis Singers is comprised of women with diverse backgrounds who are dedicated to effecting positive change in cultural attitudes towards lesbians and women artists. Performances highlight historical, political and personal events important to women.

Artemis Singers is on Facebook and Twitter.

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