

# Singing a message of peace and unity

A cappella group Women of the World performs March 11 at the Liberty Theatre

By CATE GABLE

## The Power of Music

Although the world seems unusually divisive these days, peer just below the surface of the mainstream media storm and one can see lots of indicators of hope. One of these is surely the a cappella group Women of the World. These women from Japan, Italy, India and the United States/Haiti will be bringing fresh faces and vibrant voices to the Liberty Theatre for a concert at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 11. (Note that they will also perform at the Raymond Theatre in Raymond, Washington, on March 19.)

This international quartet of women, singing together since 2008, feel strongly about their purpose in the world. Of course, they are focused on their music, but it seems their songs are only a vehicle for something more profound. As they say, “By connecting with our diverse community, we are building a movement. We, as Women of the World, believe in the power of music. We believe in our bond as a family of musicians. We believe in peace.” Though their music is often light-hearted, upbeat and full of lively rhythms, they are serious about what they’re doing.

Women of the World is composed of Ayumi Ueda of Japan, Annette Philip of India, Débo Rày of the U.S./Haiti, Giorgia Renosto of Italy and Patrick Simard of Canada on percussion. Between them they have 26 different languages, and they bring their diverse cultures, tastes, sounds and backgrounds to the stage in a unique and exciting way.

As the reigning National A Cappella Champions,



## WOMEN OF THE WORLD

**7:30 P.M. SATURDAY, MARCH 11**

**Liberty Theatre**

**1203 Commercial St., Astoria**

**503-325-5922, ext. 55**

**libertyastoria.org**

**\$15 to \$35**

**2 P.M. SUNDAY, MARCH 19**

**Raymond Theatre**

**323 Third St., Raymond, Washington**

**360-875-5207**

**sundayafternoonlive.org**

**\$12 in advance, \$15 at the door**

Women of the World have come together from across the globe. Their collaborative approach to music allows each of them to excel in the strengths of their own cultures and individuals skills, at the same time that they explore and celebrate

the differences in their musical traditions. Their goal is to put a spotlight on the daily lives of women all over the world.

## In the Beginning

The group’s founder, Ueda, a Berklee College of

Women of the World is made up of, from left, Débo Rày of the U.S./Haiti, Ayumi Ueda of Japan, Annette Philip of India, Giorgia Renosto of Italy, and Patrick Simard of Canada on percussion (not pictured).

Music alumna from Japan, had the spark of an idea. She says “When I was a child I was always interested in different cultures and music. I was interested in everything that was happening outside of Japan. I kept asking myself, ‘What’s happening in the world? What’s important to other people? What makes them laugh?’

“My father was an event coordinator, and I had the chance to meet a lot of different people. So this idea of creating a music group was in my mind for a long time. Then I found Berklee College of Music in Boston, and I started going to concerts at school. I printed up a

business card and if I heard some musician I liked, I’d say, ‘Oh, I want to sing with that person.’ Then I’d ask, ‘Would you like to join me?’ and give them my card. We started as a student recital project.”

Ueda wanted to create a multicultural ensemble that not only crossed boundaries musically but one that was also committed to the practice of peace in their daily interactions. She gathered a multicultural group of women around her, and they found that the four of them together could produce magic. “Sometimes we sing folk songs, and sometimes we create our own songs

together,” she says.

Because they all came to their own music from different countries and differing backgrounds, they are natural pioneers. They are constantly searching for new genres to explore. The group has performed in Bulgarian, Cuban, Ladino, Brazilian, Turkish, African, Haitian, Indian, Italian and Japanese music — just to name a few of the languages and styles.

In many ways, the ensemble is a microcosm of the world. For the first half of their show, they wear traditional costumes from their own countries in a visual display of their world-wide reach. The cross-pollination of genres, rhythms and global sounds is borderless and spirited. Their magic on stage allows both for individual voices to stand out as well as to blend in a musical message of unity.

When asked what Ueda most likes about touring, she says, “It’s amazing to see the different scenery wherever we go. And the people are amazing too. We are so touched, we’re overwhelmed by how welcoming the communities are. We love to interact with our audiences.” As part of their performance, the audience will have a chance to ask questions and talk with group members during the show.

Proof of the fun they catalyze is certainly apparent on their Facebook page. One of the posts by member Giorgia Renosto — from Torino, Italy — is a family recipe for Tiramisù, which means “pick me up!”

As Renosto tells us, “There are many legends around this delicious Italian dessert. The Piedmontese version

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