

Milligan, ETSU to present inaugural 'Women in Song' choral festival

JOHNSON CITY – The music departments of East Tennessee State University and Milligan College are collaborating to present the inaugural "Women in Song," a two-day festival and concert celebrating female singers from throughout the region.

The festival will be held Friday and Saturday, March 17-18, in the Mary B. Martin Auditorium in Milligan's Seeger Chapel, culminating with a free public concert on March 18 at 7:30 p.m.

"After several successful years collaborating with ETSU to host 'Men in Song,' we are excited to host the first 'Women in Song' festival," said Dr. Noah DeLong, Milligan assistant professor of music. "We have an excellent guest conductor in Eliza Rubenstein, so I am confident that this festival will be a great experience for both singers and audience members alike."

"Ms. Rubenstein is a fantastic choral director from Southern California, as well as a scholar on women composers," said Dr. Matthew Potterton, assistant professor and director of choral activities in the ETSU Department of Music. "Throughout history, women were not given the same rights as men to publish music, but they composed nonetheless. Current musicology studies have shed light on many great women composers that are just now getting the recognition they deserve."

"Ms. Rubenstein has spoken at several choral conferences on this topic, and I'm anxious to have her share stories about some of these under-recognized composers with our students."

Rubenstein is director of choral and vocal activities at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California, as well as artistic director of the international prize-winning Orange County Women's Chorus and the Long Beach Chorale and Chamber Orchestra.

Born in Missouri to a musical family, Rubenstein studied choral conducting at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music before moving to California to earn her master's degree at the University of California-Irvine. She serves on the board of the California American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) as editor of the award-winning Cantate magazine.

Rubenstein, a former animal shelter supervisor who shares her home with a yellow Labrador and a grey cat, is co-author of a book about dog adoption. Among her conference presentations was a seminar titled "Sit, Stay, Sing!: What Choral Conductors Can Learn from Dog Trainers" at the 2006 ACDA western division convention.

Participants will sing in a festival chorus conducted by Rubenstein, performing music by women composers. The program will include "If You Can Walk You Can Dance" by Elizabeth Alexander, "Koowu" by Maryam Khoury and "Sunshine and Cloudless Sky" by Linda Tutas Haugen. Female singers from throughout the region are invited to participate.

In addition, ensembles slated to take part in the festival and perform works exclusively by women composers include the Milligan Women's Chorale, conducted by DeLong; the East

Tennessee Belles of ETSU, conducted by Potterton; Bella Voce, conducted by Jane Morison of the Mountain Empire Children's Choral Academy; Cantemus, conducted by Patty Denmark; and the Greeneville High School Advanced Women's Chorus, conducted by Kathryn E. May.

Registration is \$10, which includes music and dinner on Saturday.

For more information and registration, visit www.etsu.edu/womeninsong. Additional information may also be obtained by calling the ETSU Department of Music at 423-439-4270.

###

MILLIGAN COLLEGE is a Christian liberal arts college in Northeast Tennessee whose vision is to change lives and shape culture through a commitment to servant leadership. The college offers more than 100 majors, minors, pre-professional degrees and concentrations in a variety of fields, along with graduate and adult degree completion programs. To learn more about Milligan College, visit www.milligan.edu or call 800-262-8337.