

Singers honor their mentor

By Lee Hill

(Herald staff writer)

The varied repertoire of the new vocal group the Savridi Singers reflects the philosophy of their mentor.

Polyna Savridi, born in New York City of Greek descent, was a soprano with the Metropolitan Opera for several years and later taught at Columbia University. In 1963, she came to the University of Calgary's department of music, where her enthusiasm for teaching was reflected by the high esteem in which she was held by her students.

Shortly before her death of

cancer in 1980, Savridi discussed plans for an all-female vocal group that would embody her teaching ideas. A memorial fund was started to help form the group.

Savridi's dream is beginning to materialize and Calgarians will be able to share it at a concert this weekend.

"She wanted to share with the world her love of music and this would be continued through the teaching of performers as well as the training of teachers," says Lee Dowan, the group's director and a Savridi student for seven years.

Six music students form the nucleus of the group, says Do-

wan, while the other nine members are local singers. They will be accompanied by a small rhythm section for a portion of their two-hour concert.

"Our focus is pure variety," says Dowan. "It's a kaleidoscope of musical styles beginning with madrigals from the 1600s, more familiar work like Handel and Brahms, some contemporary numbers, jazz and musical theatre pieces." Polyna was very eclectic: she believed in music for the world, says Dowan.

The singers plan another performance in December at Mount Royal College and will be auditioning for 10 more singers in the New Year.

Those interested in the legacy of one of Calgary's finest music teachers can hear the Savridi Singers at 7 p.m. Sunday at the Boris Roubakine Hall at the University of Calgary. Tickets are \$6 at BASS, or \$7 at the door. For more information, call Dowan at 288-1078.