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The funding of this project, is financed in part through a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Community development Administration under the provision of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (Pub L. 93-383 42 USC 5301 et seq.) and/or HOME Title II of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, as amended (Public Law 101-625)



presents

# Seasons of Love

*April 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 8pm*

Robert G. Reim Theater

Kirkwood Civic Center

111 South Geyer Road

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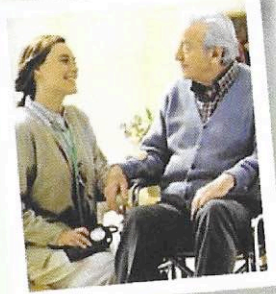
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**Presents**

## **20 Seasons of Love**

**April 12-13, 2013**

**Robert G. Reim Theater**

**Kourtney R. Strade, Artistic Director**

**Chelle Habecker, Accompanist**



## Special Acknowledgements

CHARIS gratefully acknowledges the help and contributions of the following in preparation of this production.

**Producer:** Lena Henry

**Assistant Producer:** Barbara Fuerst

**Performance Committee:** Kourtney Strade, Jenna Wells, Dina Young, Danielle McCartney, Donna Yakel, Colleen Gilmore, LaTish McKinney, Kim Powlishta, Lena Henry

**PR/Marketing Committee:** Allison Benoit, Andrea Compton, Candy Freeman, Jordan Maus, Sharon Spurlock, Joshua Powlishta, Lisa Riek

**Stage Manager:** Brittany Chandler

**Sound Technician:** Mary Ann Tolliver

**Lighting Technician:** Renee Dix

**Set Designer:** Renee Dix

**House Manager:** Desy Maus

**Advertisement Sales:** Cassandra Coleman, Colleen Gilmore, Lisa Riek

**Cover/Poster Design:** Terry Miller

**Program Design:** Andrea Compton

**Photographer:** Mia Ulmer, Birchtree Studio

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**Grant Writer:** Sharon Spurlock

**Webmasters:** Allison Benoit, Candice Freeman

**Volunteers:** Joshua Powlishta (Box Office), Leo and Barb Wiseman (Ushers), Wendy Markum and Bill Byrd (spot lights), Kristen Wozniack (CHARIS information and Demographics)



### Soprano I

Cassie Coleman  
Kelsi Davis  
Hillary Desmond  
Kathy Duncan  
Kendra Henry-Keysacker  
\*Kristen Myers  
Belinda Quimby  
Aleksandra Shklyar  
Peggy Seltzer  
Julie Lynch

### Soprano II

Allison Benoit  
Caitlyn Benoit  
Edna Coleman  
Penny Frame  
Colleen Gilmore  
Jessica Girard  
Loretta Haggard  
Kat Horstman  
Sarah Martin  
Megan Petra  
\*Kim Powlishta  
Sharon Smith  
Christine Winston

### Alto I

Jennie Dent  
Marianne Koch  
Zoanne Leavy  
Elizabeth Levy  
\*Kelly Mitchell  
Leah Patriarco  
Lisa Riek  
Susan Young  
Angel Walker  
Jennafer Wells

### Alto II

Frankie Bonuso  
Charlotte Ellis  
Candy Freeman  
Linda Hughes  
Barbara Kelly-Cox  
Danielle McCartney  
Sharon Opp  
Hannah Petri  
Sharon Spurlock  
Gail Wylie  
Donna Yakel  
\*Dina Young

\* Denotes Section Leader





## Who We Are

CHARIS is a diverse group of women united in our mission to perform music that celebrates and encourages women and the LGBTQ community.

## Membership Information

CHARIS is a non-auditioned chorus that extends an open invitation for membership. Rehearsals are held on Tuesday nights from 7:00-9:30 p.m. at Society for Practical Christianity St. Louis, 3617 Wyoming Ave. If you are interested in membership information or in attending a rehearsal, please visit our Website at [www.charischorus.org](http://www.charischorus.org)

or call (314) 664-9340.

We are accessible to those with disabilities.

## Board of Directors

Lisa Riek, President  
Julie Lynch, Vice President  
Allison Benoit, Secretary  
Candice Freeman, Treasurer

## Members At-Large:

Andrea Compton, Colleen Gilmore, Lenà Henry, Katrina Horstmann, Wendy Markum, Desy Maus, Joshua Powlishta, Brian Shearrer, Sharon Spurlock, Angel Walker, Jennafer Wells

## From the Artistic Director

### Kourtney R. Strade



So many people have poured so much love and hard work into this chorus over the past 20 years. In fact, the number of CHARIS alumnae totals well over 300 women! One of the best parts of producing a milestone anniversary concert such as this is the archive digging-looking through the scrapbooks, giggling at the hairstyles of the '90s, humming tunes we enjoyed singing, and remembering singers who have passed...

Tonight's program features some of our favorite songs from CHARIS' two decades of music making, and I know they are some of your favorites as well. We are so grateful for our audiences, as we would not be celebrating our anniversary were it not for the loyal support of each and every one of you. Together, we have furthered our vision of promoting music that celebrates and encourages women and the LGBTQ community. What started as a small group performing as part of a Gateway Men's Chorus concert has grown to a thriving, independent chorus recognized for musical excellence and the elevation of women's strength.

The companion to retrospection is dreaming! We are already musing of our next twenty years, and the achievements of which we have yet to even fathom. May the music continue to flow from the depths of our beings, and may our message be heard and embraced by our community for many, many decades to come.



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## From Lisa Riek Board President



Preparing for this concert has been an interesting experience (in a good way): we have members who are joining us on stage for the first time, women who started with CHARIS 19-20 years ago and everything in between. No matter what time period a song was performed by CHARIS there was a group of people that had sung it before. They were often surprised at how much they remembered (and in some cases, didn't remember). Songs brought up memories which led to funny stories. We also gathered the chorus together for a viewing of "The Vegans of Provincetown." Those who were in the show (2007) got to reminisce and new singers got acquainted with a piece of CHARIS history.

As I watched this all take place this season, I was reminded of what is so special about this group. It goes beyond singing and performing—constantly stretching ourselves musically. We are a family; a chosen family of strong, caring women. We celebrate each other's joys, support each other through hardships and comfort each other in times of loss. We have built long-lasting friendships and many (including myself) have found our partner/spouse.

I have been a singing member since 2009, joined the Board of Directors in 2010 and I am now beginning my second term as president. It has been a privilege to be part of CHARIS in each role. I encourage those who enjoy singing and identify as a woman to join us during our open rehearsals in August. I also invite you (men and women) to be part of our extended family—as volunteers and committee members—and help us chart the course for our next 20 years. Don't forget we always need loyal, responsive audience members! Thank you.



## Kourtney R. Strade, M.A. —Artistic Director

Kourtney received her Bachelor of Science in Vocal Music Education from Northwest Missouri State University, and her Master's degree in Voice from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Conservatory of Music. Additionally, Kourtney received a Certificate of Vocology from the University of Iowa, and she uses this expertise in her own business, Heartland Healthy Voices, providing vocal health seminars, private voice lessons, and transgender voice training. She is currently an instructor of voice for the Community Music School of Webster University and is the director of music at Peace United Church of Christ.

Ms. Strade is also an accomplished mezzo-soprano and has performed on stages across the United States in opera, oratorio, and recital. Recent roles include Freddie in *The Vegans of Provincetown*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Joan in the monodrama *Jehanne de Lorraine*. Most recently, she was a soloist with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra performing from the works of Mozart and Haydn. She has also served as a singing voice consultant for the University of Iowa Voice Clinic, and worked as a clinician in Voice Diagnostics.

When Kourtney isn't waving her arms in front of the chorus, she can often be found with her partner, Robin, taking the dogs to the park or relaxing at a coffee shop.

## Chelle Habecker—Accompanist

Chelle holds a Master of Arts in Music from the University of Hawaii, Manoa, with an emphasis in Ethnomusicology. She earned her BA in Music, Piano Performance, and an AA in Piano Pedagogy from Spring Arbor University in Michigan. Chelle teaches piano privately and through Community Music School, accompanies musicians at NATS and Solo-Ensemble festivals, and strives to balance her 2nd-shift occupation with her active family! This is Chelle's 4th season playing for CHARIS.

## Glenace L. Humphrey —Sign Language Artist

Glenace is a professional Sign Language Interpreter and is nationally certified. Although she interprets in a plethora of situations and venues, her favorite is Artistic interpreting. Her first concert with CHARIS was the 'Maiden' launch of CHARIS in 1993. She had the honor, privilege and thrill of interpreting for CHARIS, The St. Louis Women's Chorus for thirteen years, until her move to Kansas. She also attended GALA Conferences in Tampa and Miami with CHARIS. She and her husband, Lloyd moved to Hutchinson, KS in 2006 to be closer to her family and their daughter and family in Denver, CO.

CHARIS, **CONGRATULATIONS!** on your 20 years of information and enlightenment through your powerful thought provoking and exciting music! Thanks Tena!



## Stephanie Keysacker - Percussionist

Stephanie Keysacker grew up in a musical family and realized early on that she, too, had a love for playing music. She began playing drums around age 13 but only recently began sharing her talents publicly. When she's not drumming for CHARIS - The St. Louis Women's Chorus, she can be found accompanying local singer/songwriter Ro Anderson at area venues. Musical interests aside, Stephanie enjoys traveling the U.S. and beyond and looks forward to her next adventure with her wife, Kendra.

## Become a Member - Be Part of the Fun!

**CHARIS** is a non-audition chorus. We invite you to visit any Tuesday when we are in rehearsal and see what we are about. Call (314)664-9340 to confirm we are in rehearsal or with any questions about the chorus.

### Singing Membership

- Regular attendance at rehearsals
- Commitment of time and energy to learn your music
- Payment of concert fees
- Responsibility for concert attire
- Participation in decision-making and fundraising

### Non-Singing Membership

- Non-singing members are welcome to join and help with the variety of behind-the-scenes work.
- Board membership
- Ushering at a concert
- Planning or working a fundraiser
- Cataloging music
- Building sets
- Assisting with publicity

## Friends of CHARIS

CHARIS expresses thanks to the following people for their gifts & support throughout the 2012-2013 season:

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Bill & Desy Maus	Mia Ulmer/Birchtree Studio
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Chelle Halbecker	Opera Theater of St Louis
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Joshua Powlishta	The Gateway Men's Chorus
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Kelsi Davis	Timothy Curran

## Get Social with CHARIS!



Support us also by "liking" CHARIS on Facebook at [facebook.com/CHARISchorus](https://facebook.com/CHARISchorus)

and "following" CHARIS on Twitter @CHARISchorus



Once connected, watch for special offers, announcements, and social media promotions.



CHARIS was the realization of the dream of its founders Cindy Sohn and Juliet Jackson. With the guidance and support of the Gateway Men's Chorus (GMC), they organized the Committee to Unite Women Singers in the fall of 1992, with the goal of creating a chorus open to all women, regardless of cultural background or musical experience. CHARIS has always been a non-auditioned chorus.

The chorus made its first public appearance on May 23, 1993 at Trinity Episcopal Church in a fundraiser to benefit Northside AIDS Outreach. Shortly thereafter, CHARIS took the stage with GMC to perform at the latter's Pride Concert in 1993. CHARIS made its solo debut in October 1993 and has subsequently produced two to three solo performances along with community benefits each year.

Chorus highlights include a performance at the "Notes From Home" series at the Sheldon Memorial on January 24, 1995, at which time the chorus recorded "Dream In Color," its first commercially released tape. CHARIS hosted and performed at the 1995 Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA) Leadership Conference for delegates from around the U.S. and a number of foreign countries. In 1996, CHARIS proudly performed in Tampa, Florida at GALA Festival V.

Merry Keller accepted the position of Artistic Director in January 2000. Many wonderful concerts ensued under her direction including "Sing for the Cure," a concert benefiting the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation in June 2001 and CHARIS' tenth anniversary concert, "A Decade of Song," featuring special guest artist Holly Near.

Another era in CHARIS' legacy began in the chorus' 12th season with the leadership of new Artistic Director Aric Henson, former director of GMC's ensemble. During Henson's tenure, he directed CHARIS in "Postcards: Journeys of the Heart", "In The Groove" and "Fired Up!" a history of protest music with special guest artists, Symmetry. The 2006-2007 season was a banner year for the chorus and opened with

"Legends" featuring St. Louis' own legend, Kim Massie as the guest artist. In the spring, CHARIS staged the world premiere performance of "The Vegans of Provincetown," a witty and lesbian-friendly homage to Gilbert and Sullivan.

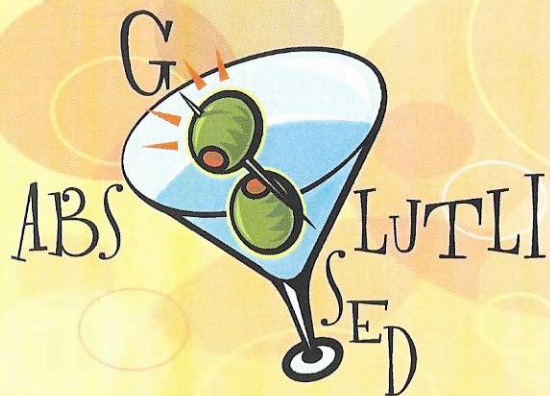
CHARIS' 15th anniversary season began in November 2007 with the Academy Awards tribute - "CHARIS Does Oscar." In April 2008, the chorus invited special guest artist Lisa Koch, a talented singer-songwriter and comedienne, to the stage for "CHARIS On The Couch." In July 2008, CHARIS members took to the stage in Miami and proudly shared their voices with thousands of other LGBT singers at the GALA Festival VIII.

CHARIS' 16th season began with an ending, as Artistic Director Aric Henson brought his tenure to a close. After leading CHARIS in a creative interpretation of "The Four Elements" in the fall of 2008, he handed the baton to our current Artistic Director, Kourtney R. Strade.

Strade officially took the helm in January 2009 and directed CHARIS through a musical journey of LGBT memoirs with "Coming Out" in May 2009. In CHARIS' 17th season, Strade led the chorus into new territory with two musically-challenging offerings — November 2009's "Quantum Leap," a concert of music by women composers over the centuries, and May 2010's "Unplugged," an offering of a cappella numbers.

CHARIS opened our 19th season with "Women Who Rock," a celebration of women in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and took to the stage with "We Can Do It - A USO show." CHARIS performed at our 3rd Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses Festival in Denver CO last July. We began our twentieth anniversary season in November 2012 with "Love of Nature, Nature of Love." We, the women of CHARIS look forward to sharing positive messages about women through song along with you, our audience, as we continue creating the legacy of CHARIS!

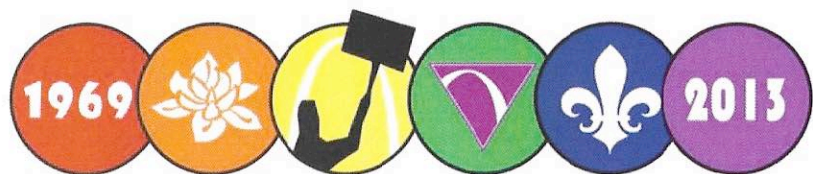




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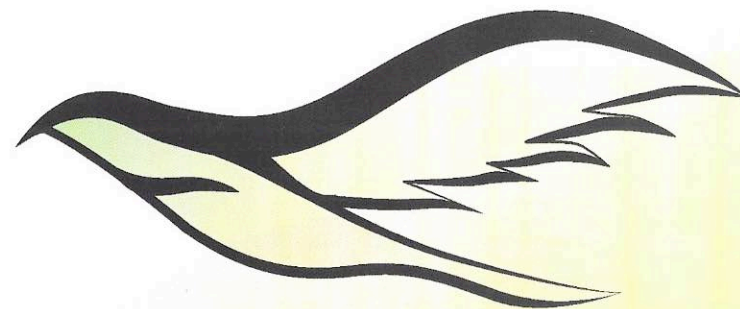
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**Act I****Can't Help Lovin' That Man of Mine**

By Kern/Hammerstein

Performed by: Gateway Men's Chorus

**Fever** (November 2006)By Davenport/Cooley  
Arr. Kirby Shaw**Overture to Marriage of Figaro** (April 2010)By W.A. Mozart  
Arr. Howard Cable**Harriet Tubman**  
(September 1994)By Walter Robinson  
Arr. John Coates, Jr.**My Love Walks in Velvet** (November 2004)By Gwyneth Walker  
Performed by: Cassandra Coleman, Loretta Haggard, Julie Lynch, Megan Petra, Sharon Spurlock, Jennafer Wells**One Fine Day**  
(May 2009)

By Gerry Goffin and Carole King, Arr. Deke Sharon

Performed by: Allison Benoit, Kelsi Davis, Colleen Gilmore, Linda Hughes, Hannah Petri, Aleksandra Shklyar

**Love-Eyes Medley**  
(October 1993)

Arr. David Wright

Performed by: Kristen Myers, Lisa Riek, Dina Young, Susan Young

**The Stove** (January 1995)  
By Zae Munn**Would You Harbor Me?** (April 2000)By Ysaye M Barnwell  
Arr. Merry Keller*Soloists:* Allison Benoit, Caitlyn Benoit, Cassandra Coleman**Kiss the Girl**  
(September 1994)By Ashman/Menken  
Arr. Steve Milloy**Vegans of Provincetown Medley**  
(April 2007)

By Gilbert/Sullivan and Dina Young, Kathy Morris, Sonja Furiya

*Vegan King:* Sharon Spurlock  
*Sappho:* Susan Young  
*Burger Queen:* Terri Velasco  
*Mabel:* Belinda Quimby  
*Freddie:* Kourtney Strade**Act II****Comin' Into My Years**  
(March 1997)By Betsy Rose  
Arr. J. David Moore**Sing For the Cure medley** (June 2001)By Friedman/Gallina  
Arr. Kourtney Strade*Soloists:* Cassandra Coleman, Allison Benoit, Linda Hughes, Lisa Riek**Miss Celie's Blues**  
(November 2001)From "The Color Purple"  
By Quincy Jones/Rod Temperton  
Arr. J. David Moore**Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy** (November 2006)

By Raye/Prince

Performed by: Kristen Myers, Belinda Quimby, Kendra Henry-Keysacker

**Love Like Breathing**  
(November 2012)

By Goldrich/Heisler

**Closer to Fine**  
(November 2009)

By Emily Saliers

**For Good** (April 2006)By Stephen Schwartz  
Arr. Mac Huff*Soloists:* Marianne Koch, Megan Petra**I Dream in Color**  
(September 1994)By Lang/Peiken  
Arr. Milloy/Strade**Circle of Life**  
(November 2012)By John/Rice/Zimmer/Lebo M  
Arr. Steve Milloy*Soloists:* Kristen Myers, Leah Patriarcho

Dates in parentheses denote the first time CHARIS performed the song.



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After months of thinking and talking about it, I was finally attending my first rehearsal with CHARIS! I was a terrified bundle of nerves and wasn't quite sure what to expect. I am a transwoman and I had zero experience with any type of women's space at that point in my life. I wasn't sure I could be comfortable in such a space. I also had self-doubts about whether I could sing in the female range. In the end my need to sing in the appropriate voice was greater than my concerns.

I sat with the Alto 2 section (the lowest voice) as I wasn't certain which part I was capable of singing, but I was certain it was on the low end. Once I started getting settled in, I began to experience this wonderful thing called sisterhood that had seemed so elusive to me before. I tried singing a solo not too long after. Strangely enough, that song was "Seasons of Love", which is the title of our 20th anniversary concert.

The chorus as a whole has helped me become more secure not only in my own identity as a woman, but as a person in general. I truly cannot fathom what my life would be like without having been in CHARIS all these years! For me, CHARIS has been more than just an opportunity to sing again. It has been a positive, life-changing experience!

I want to thank everyone I have had the honor of singing with and for, the artistic directors and accompanists, as well as all those who work behind the scenes allowing us to produce the beautiful music you hear onstage!

- Caitlyn Benoit (Soprano II)

One of my favorite memories comes from an impromptu performance in the late 1990s at Our World Too, a gay bookstore owned by Bill Cordes. In those days the bookstore was the first place to go when you were coming out. You could find all sorts of gay and lesbian books that no one else carried and you could get a copy of "The Lesbian and Gay News-Telegraph," the predecessor of the Vital Voice. All the LGBT groups had posters up at Our World Too. That's where I saw the announcement for open rehearsals that brought me into the chorus. Bill offered the basement of the store as a meeting place for support groups and for the community's gay hotline. He was a gentle man who knew how to put people at ease, especially during that first anxious trip to Our World Too.

Bill asked CHARIS to sing at the store sometime, just for fun. One afternoon about 20 CHARIS members serenaded Bill and his customers with some CHARIS standards, including "Everything Possible," a lullaby that affirms every child's right to become who they are meant to be. The words, in part, go like this: "You can be anybody that you want to be. You can love whomever you will. You can travel any country where your heart leads and know that I will love you still. ....and the only measure of your words and your deeds is the love you leave behind when you're gone." We'd sung this song many times, but that day, as we sang, I looked up and saw Bill with tears rolling down his face. It moved me to see how we could touch him with our gesture of gratitude for all he had done for CHARIS and the community. It was a very special moment for me, and one I will never forget. - Dina Young (Alto II)

Dearest, sweetest, most beloved Women of CHARIS,

I first walked over the threshold to meet you nearly 20 years ago, only a few months after your founding birthday. It was a choice that changed my life. We've sung together at weddings and at funerals. Together we've had medical procedures, babies, divorces, promotions, big news, scandals, and near misses. We celebrated in Tampa, danced in Miami, and rejoiced in Denver. We have marched, collaborated, advocated, laughed, socialized, and snacked (we enjoy our snacks). And through it all, we sang.

I apologize for that horrible choreography I put you through! I'm sorry for my occasional crabbiness, my pregnancy hormones (twice), and the countless times I messed up my singing part. You patiently held my hand through everything. Indeed, you have seen me through some of the darkest days of my life. One rehearsal in particular I remember well. I showed up that night, broken and despairing, and could not sing a note due to my uncontrollable sobbing. One by one, like angels, you put your hands on my shoulder, sang to me and let me cry. The women of CHARIS can hold you up to the light and heal you. Thank you, dear ones, for singing me through the past 20 years. I have been changed for the better, because I knew you.

With love and song,

- Julie Lynch (Soprano I)



A favorite memory of mine was singing "Finally Here". The concert was "Coming Out" (May 2009). This was my first concert with CHARIS and the chorus' first concert under the direction of Kourtney Strade. I connected with this piece from the start. I liked the music...the harmony...the message. I was newly out and dating my first girlfriend after years of wondering why I couldn't find someone I wanted to share my life with. I was moved by phrases such as: "Holding her skin to skin, feel her gentle and strong. When you love from deep within, it can never be wrong." "Rest your head on her shoulder. Let her arms hold you fast. What you once only dreamed of has come true at last." "It's alright. Hold her tight. Love is finally here."

As we approached the end of the song, Kourtney's eyes began to fill up. Consequently, so did ours. It was a special moment for us as a group. When I met up with family and friends after the show, I was told by my mom, sister, cousin and friend that "Finally Here" made them all cry. A reminder of the power of music -- how it can touch hearts, open minds and help us better understand each other. Upon hearing this song, they realized what this all meant to me personally. How happy I was to know myself better, to have a wonderful woman in my life and to be a member of CHARIS. My chance at a full life, complete with someone to love was finally here.

- Lisa Riek (Alto I)





**Quickie Menu**  
(15 Minutes or Less)

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## TABOO TOPICS

- 4.07 Immigration
- 4.14 Mental Illness
- 4.21 Pornography
- 4.28 Inequality

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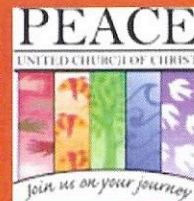
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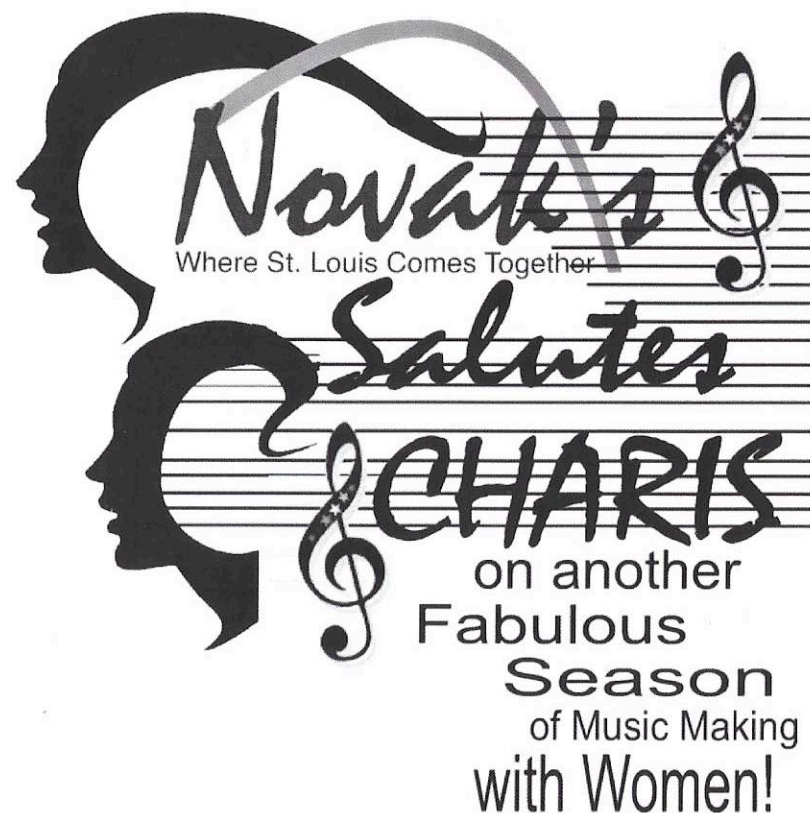
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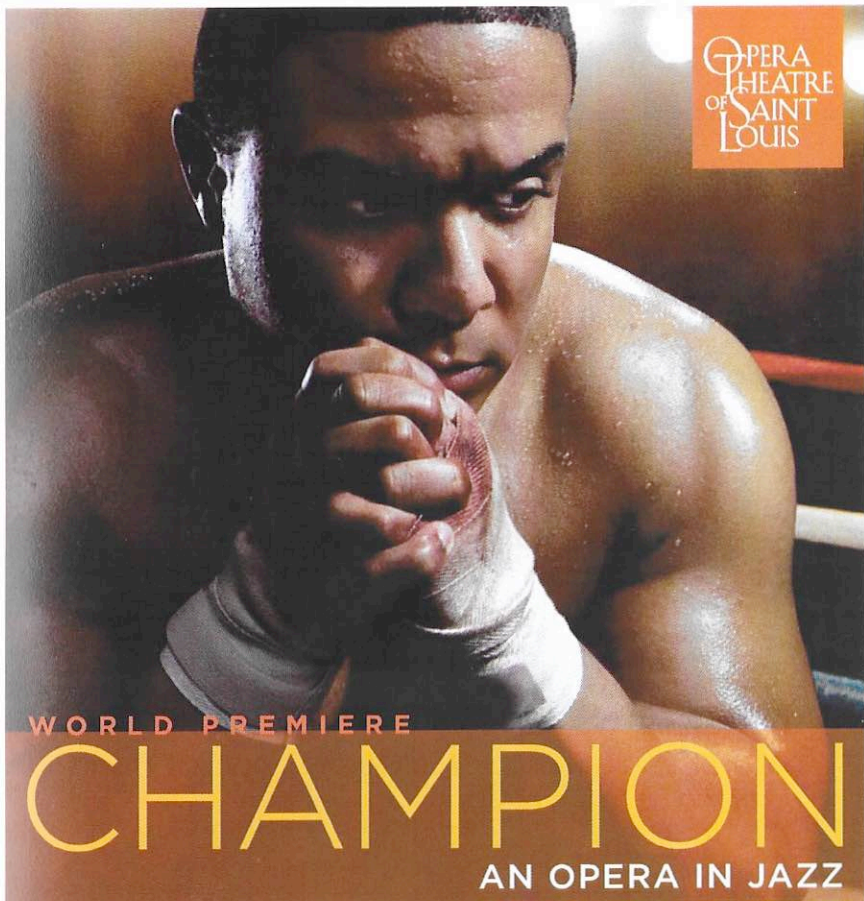
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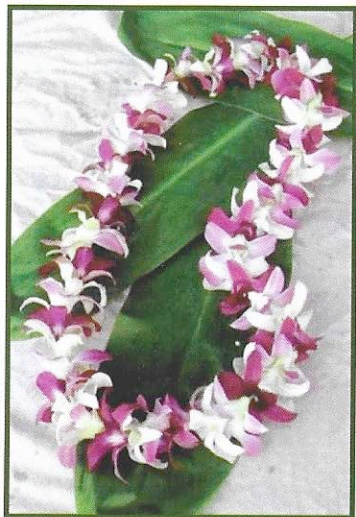
*CHARIS has come a long way!*

### *Heartfelt Thanks*

*Cindy, Juliet, Merry, Aric, Kourtney,  
Chelle, Glenace, Tena, others,  
And our beloved sisters in song  
For a fabulous 20 years.*

*You have all changed our lives  
"For Good."*

*Love, Colleen & Loretta*



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