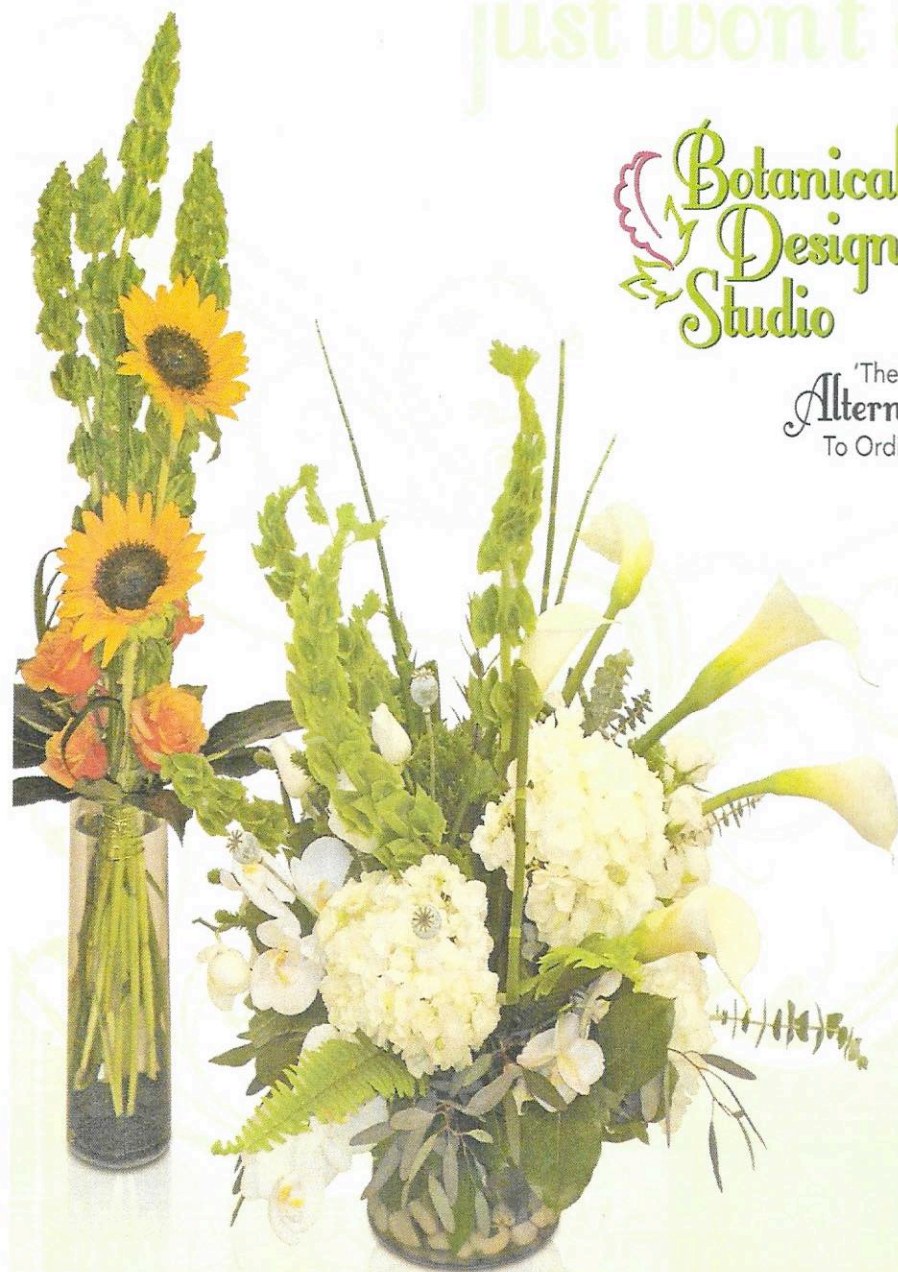


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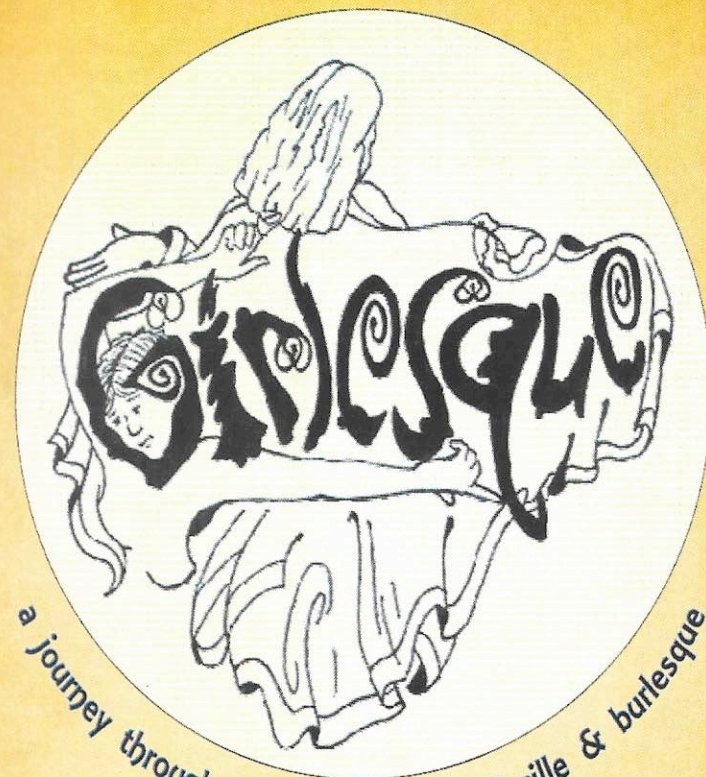
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CHARIS Presents



a journey through the history of vaudeville & burlesque

November 12 & 13, 2010

8:00 p.m.

Tower Grove Abbey

Visit charischorus.org for more info!



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CHARIS

The St. Louis Women's Chorus
presents

Girlesque:

a journey through the history of
vaudeville & burlesque

November 12th
November 13th
8:00 P.M.

Tower Grove Abbey

Kourtney R. Strade, Artistic Director

Chelle Habecker, Accompanist

Tena Polukewich, Sign Language Artist

CHARIS receives financial assistance from the
Regional Arts Commission.





Who We Are

CHARIS is a lesbian chorus open to all who identify as women. We differ in age, size, ethnic background, sexual orientation, and ability, but share a common goal to seek musical excellence, to voice messages of social justice, and to create a fun and supportive place for all women.

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 Center for Divine Love, 3617 Wyoming Ave. If you are interested in membership information or in attending a rehearsal, please visit our website at www.charischorus.org or call (314) 664-9340.

We are accessible to those with disabilities.

Board of Directors

Sharon Spurlock, President

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Allison Benoit, Secretary

Candice Freeman, Treasurer (non-board member)

Members At-Large:

Julie Harmann, Kendra Henry, Kelly Mitchell,

Megan Petra, Lisa Riek, Marge Schmidt

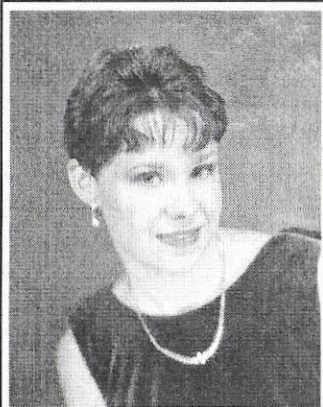
From the Board President Ms. Sharon Spurlock



Welcome to our 18th season opener, "Girlesque." Thank you for spending your evening and your hard earned dollars with CHARIS. You won't be disappointed with the show tonight – it's filled with great music, a few laughs, and lots of gorgeous women! This will be my 17th season "singing with the choir," and it has changed my life. I recently celebrated a milestone birthday, and many of you honored me by making a donation to CHARIS in my name. Thanks to each and every person who shared this important time with me.

It's hard to describe the experience of choral singing. You come together with a big group of people that have different levels of singing experience and talent and work to create one voice, one sound, one message for your audience. The artistic director consistently asks you to do things you are quite sure you cannot; but, time after time, you rise to the occasion. After getting sucked into the million and one tasks that need to get done to sustain the chorus and to put on a "show," you discover you have so many hidden talents that apply to the rest of your life – conflict resolution, team building, listening skills, time management. A 2009 study reports that a large majority of choral singers credit chorus experience as key to their team participation or team leadership abilities and their socialization skills in other areas of their lives. For all the challenges of singing with CHARIS, I have been blessed many times over with amazing friends, opportunities to grow personally and professionally, and the thrill of being a part of a great performance. I welcome anyone who identifies as a woman to come to a CHARIS rehearsal in January 2011 and consider being a part of the magic. You are welcome here.

Sharon Spurlock, President - The St. Louis Women's Chorus



From the Artistic Director Ms. Kourtney R. Strade

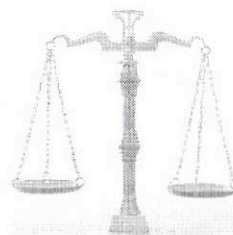
Gypsy Rose Lee once said, in reference to her burlesque act, "I wasn't naked. I was completely covered by a blue spotlight." The female body is sensuous, curvy, and beautiful. Women who are proud of their bodies and their gifts are inspiring and uplifting, and I am honored to spend week after week with strong women who come together to share the beauty of the female voice. We are highlighting the

feminine form through our music, our special guests, and even our set. Even though the women of CHARIS are leaving the striptease to the professional burlesque performers, we will be capturing the essence of the vaudeville and burlesque stages in tonight's concert. Using not only the *musical* talents of our members but also the *acting* and *comedic* ones, we are presenting you a variety show with a tip of the hat to famous vaudevillians/burlesque performers such as Josephine Baker, Abbott and Costello, Mae West, and many more.

The music you will hear tonight is an eclectic mix of historical burlesque repertoire and songs you might hear in a burlesque show of today. We have selections such as "Lydia, the Tattooed Lady," which was Groucho Marx's signature tune after he used it in his 1939 film, *At the Circus*. Groucho himself was a regular in some vaudeville circuits, and his brand of comedy was perfect for the burlesque stage. "I Could Love a Million Girls" (1906) and "Why Did I Kiss That Girl" (1924), among others we will sing, were regularly performed by notable burlesque artists in the genre's heyday. The second half of our show shifts to music used by dancers in the current revival of the burlesque era, often referred to as Neo-Burlesque. Many of today's artists can be seen performing to music like "Girl from Ipanema," "New York State of Mind," and "Vogue" in their acts. Speaking of dancers, we would not want to present a burlesque show without including one of the many local performers, and, as such, we are proud to welcome Sturdy Gurlisque and Venus in Flames to the CHARIS stage tonight. Their unique talents are exactly what the burlesque stage cries out for, and we are thrilled to have them adding a little "heat" to our show.

Kourtney

Loretta K. Haggard, Attorney at Law



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CHARIS:

C HARIS 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.

Twenty-five women attended the first meeting of the chorus held in January 1993. An acting Board of Directors was appointed at that time to organize and direct the activities of the chorus. CHARIS was granted status as a not-for-profit organization by the State of Missouri on September 27, 1993 and received confirmation of its tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) corporation in July 1994.

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. Our performances have benefited the Cathedral Mission Society, The Names Project, Metropolitan Food Pantry Association, Habitat for Humanity, and Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG).

Merry Keller came to CHARIS as Interim Director in 1999 and accepted the position of Artistic Director in January 2000. Many wonderful concerts ensued under her direction. Highlights included "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 debut season, he di-

Through the Years Herstory

rected CHARIS in "Postcards: Journeys of the Heart" at the New City School and "In The Groove" at The Shrewsbury Community Center. CHARIS' 13th season featured the shows, "Fired Up!" at the Missouri History Museum and "Broadway: A CHARIS Cabaret" at the Shrewsbury Community Center.

In January 2006, the chorus officially moved to its new rehearsal space and home at Lafayette Park United Methodist Church. An important factor in this decision was a commitment to greater accessibility. The church's elevator made it possible for those with disabilities to become members of CHARIS, serve on its Board of Directors, or attend other chorus functions.

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.

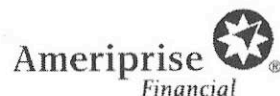
CHARIS' 15th anniversary season began in November 2007 with the Academy Awards tribute - "CHARIS Does Oscar." In April 2008, the chorus invited special guest artist Lisa Koch, a talented singer - songwriter and comedienne, to the stage for "CHARIS On The Couch." In July 2008, CHARIS members took to the 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.

Tonight, as the chorus begins its 18th season, CHARIS flaunts the charm and sass of the performers of yesteryear in a musical tribute to the history of vaudeville and burlesque.

Now it is up to the women of CHARIS and "you," our audience, to continue creating the legacy of CHARIS!



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Artist Biographies

Kourtney R. Strade, M.A.

Kourtney received her Bachelor of Science in Vocal Music Education from Northwest Missouri State University and her Master's degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Missouri -Kansas City, Conservatory of Music. She is currently an instructor of voice for the Community Music School of Webster University and is the director of music at Lafayette Park United Methodist Church. 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.

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*. Kourtney has served as a singing voice consultant for the University of Iowa Voice Clinic, and worked as a clinician in Voice Diagnostics. In her private studio, Ms. Strade has helped many persons strengthen their singing voices following a voice disorder, and several of her students have gone on to become performance scholarship recipients and competition winners.

As an active member in the National Association for Teachers of Singing, the Music Educators National Conference, and a recent consultant for the Choral Journal, the national publication of the American Choral Directors Association, Kourtney is well-respected in the voice field and continues to make her mark as a musician and a specialist in vocal health. Kourtney is excited about continuing to serve as the Artistic Director for CHARIS.

Sturdy Gurlisque

Sturdy Gurlisque is a fire performing phenom who brought her talents to the burlesque scene over four years ago. She has delighted audiences nationally and internationally with her signature brand of "hotness". She has also been involved in the production of many festivals such as Burning Man, Mardi Gras and various other artistically influenced events around the country. Sturdy was recently named one of St. Louis's "Top Five Performers" by Alive Magazine. For more info, visit myspace.com/sturdygurlisque.

Artist Biographies

Chelle Habecker - Accompanist

Chelle holds a Master of Arts in Music from the University of Hawaii, Manoa, with an emphasis in Ethnomusicology. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Music, Piano Performance, and an Associates of Arts in Piano Pedagogy from Spring Arbor University in Michigan. Chelle has been fortunate to have learned piano skills from Beverly Dull, Dzidra Shamuluas, Audrejean Heydenburg, and Paul Lyddon. Chelle has accompanied young musicians at NATS and Solo-Ensemble festivals, performs and accompanies traditional and contemporary Christian music, and is a member of MTNA. This is her fourth season with CHARIS.

Tena Polukewich - Sign Language Artist

Returning for her third concert, Tena is delighted to once again join CHARIS as sign language interpreter for *Girlesque*. For the past few years, she has been interpreting contemporary religious music at a local church and for various artists at the St. Louis Pride Festival. She has combined her passion and degrees in dance and sign language to teach African drums, rhythm and dance to deaf children.

Ro Anderson - Musician

Robin "Ro" Anderson has been singing in and around the St. Louis area for about 25 years, with strong guitar playing and a powerful voice. She is currently performing with Diane Richardson as a duo, and is adding her voice to the MCC choir. This is her second time performing with CHARIS.

Venus in Flames

Venus in Flames is a fire troupe composed of St. Louis' most talented female fire performers. Its members include: Sturdy Gurlisque, Rosy Glow, Scarlett Inferno, and Nova Beau Monde - all of whom have been amazing audiences across the country for years. Their dynamic repertoire includes fire eating, poi, fire breathing, fleshing, hand candles, and even fire hoop! Not limited to just fire, the ladies also perform with glowing LED poi and hoop. For more info, visit venusinflames.info.

CHARIS
The St. Louis Women's Chorus

Soprano I

Kelsi Davis
Dayna Deck
Kendra Henry
Kristen Myers
Allison Rose
Aleksandra Shklyar
Belinda Quimby
Carol Weisman

Soprano II

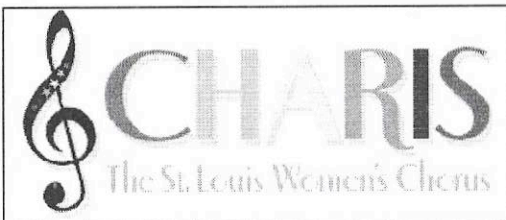
Allison Benoit
Colleen Gilmore
Jessica Girard
Keren Gomez-Guilds
Loretta Haggard
Megan Petra
Kim Powlishta
Diana Stuckey
Karen Shye Woods

Alto I

Penny Frame
Susan McIntosh
Kelly Mitchell
Lisa Riek
Jenna Wells

Alto II

Candice Freeman
LaTish McKinney
Sharon Opp
Sharon Spurlock
Donna Yakel
Dina Young



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Girlesque:

ACT I

I Could Love a Million Girls by Cass M. Freeborn
Additional lyrics by Dina Young

Lydia, the Tattooed Lady by Harold Arlen
Arr. by Jay Althouse

They Didn't Believe Me by Jerome Kern
Arr. by Linda Spevacek
Belinda Quimby, Soloist

If You Knew Susie by B.G. Desylva and J. Meyer
Arr. by SPEBSQSA
Kristen Myers, Lisa Riek, Loretta Haggard, and Sharon Spurlock

CHARIS – The St. Louis Women's Chorus presents:
Sturdy Gurlesque

My Melancholy Baby by George Norton
Arr. by Dot Calvin

You Took Advantage of Me by Richard Rodgers
Arr. by Greg Gilpin
Jessica Girard and Karen Shye, Soloists

Why Did I Kiss That Girl by R. King and R. Henderson
Dina Young, Soloist

Masculine Women! Feminine Men by James V. Monaco
Carol Weisman, Allison Rose, Kelsi Davis,
and Colleen Gilmore, Soloists

****Please enjoy a fifteen minute intermission***

a journey through the history of vaudeville & burlesque

***ACT II**

) CHARIS, The St. Louis Women's Chorus presents:
) **Venus in Flames**

Girl from Ipanema by deMorales, Gimbel and Jobim
Arr. by Steven Milloy

New York State of Mind by Billy Joel
Arr. by Steve Zegree
Kristen Myers, Soloist

Workin' Girl Blues by Hazel Dickens
Arr. by Lynn Wilson

CHARIS - The St. Louis Women's Chorus presents:
Venus in Flames

My Romance by Richard Rodgers
Arr. by Kirby Shaw
Carol Weisman and Al Benoit, Soloists

The Sweetest Illusion by B. Trzetrzelewsha and D. White
Arr. by Steven Milloy

Madonna! Arr. by Annette Blum
Allison Rose, Jenna Wells, and Keren Gomez -Guilds, Soloists

)
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Allison Benoit, R.E. Dix, Kelly Mitchell,
Donna Yakel

Performance Committee: Kelsi Davis, R.E. Dix, LaTish McKinney, Marge Schmidt, Sharon Smith, Dina Young

PR Committee: Julie Harmann, Kendra Henry, Lisa Riek, Dina Young

Box Office Manager: Scott Stevenson

Stage Manager: Elaine Laws

Sound Technician: Mary Anne Tolliver

Lighting Technician: R.E. Dix

Set Designer: R.E. Dix

Set Crew: Penny Frame, Lisa Riek, Joyce Shero-
kow, Sharon Smith, Sharon Spurlock,
Mary Anne Tolliver, Amy Volk

House Manager: Debbie Baker

Advertisement Sales: Kendra Henry

Cover/Poster Design: R.E. Dix (artwork), Kendra Henry (design)

Script Writers: LaTish McKinney, Marge Schmidt,
Dina Young

Grant Writer: Sharon Spurlock

Program Production: Bill Byrd

Rehearsal CDs: Susan McIntosh

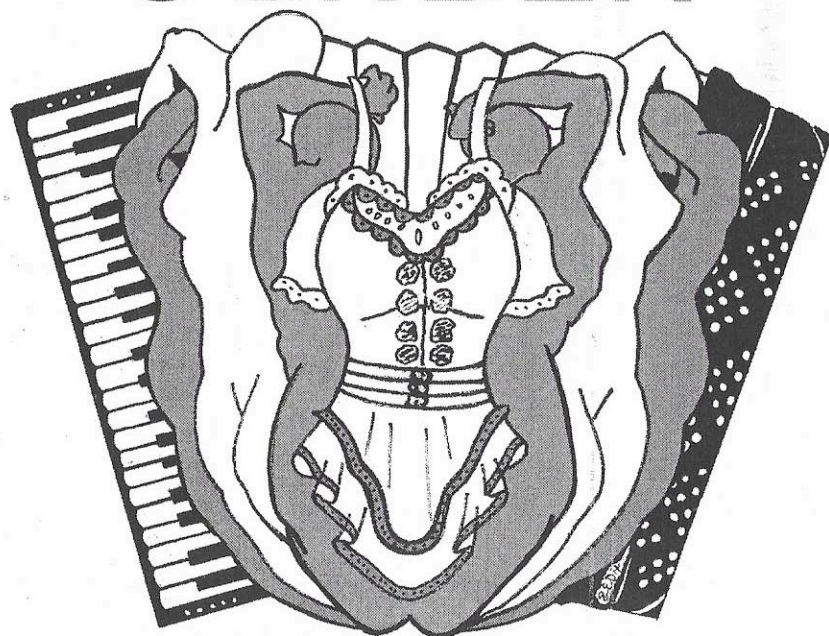
Webmaster: Candice Freeman

Volunteers: Amanda Beneze, Leo & Barb Weis-
man, and all who gave their time to
help make this concert sing!



We sincerely regret any omissions

GENDER



POLKA

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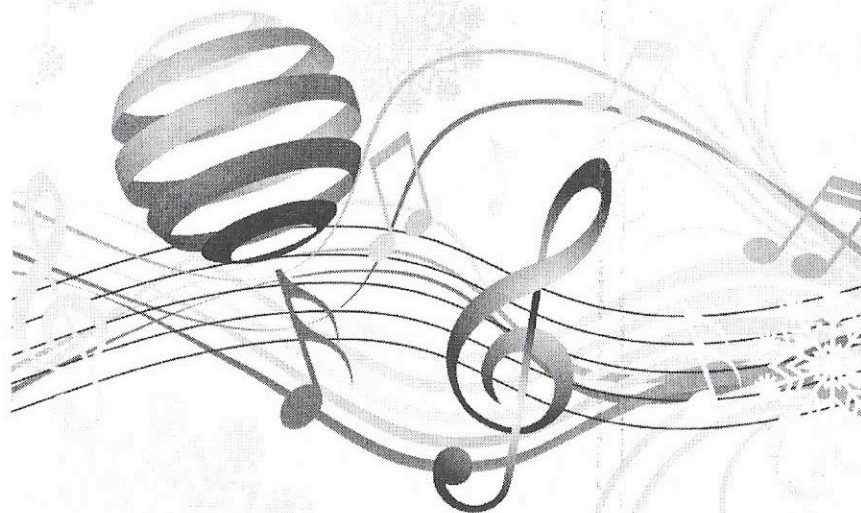
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Trivia Night
January 22, 7p

*The Shrewsbury
Community Center*

GENDER POLKA
April 22 & 23

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Additional Ways to support CHARIS

As a not-for-profit organization, the chorus relies heavily on contributions to help us meet financial obligations and to realize dreams for the future .

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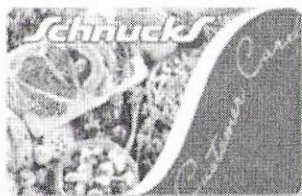
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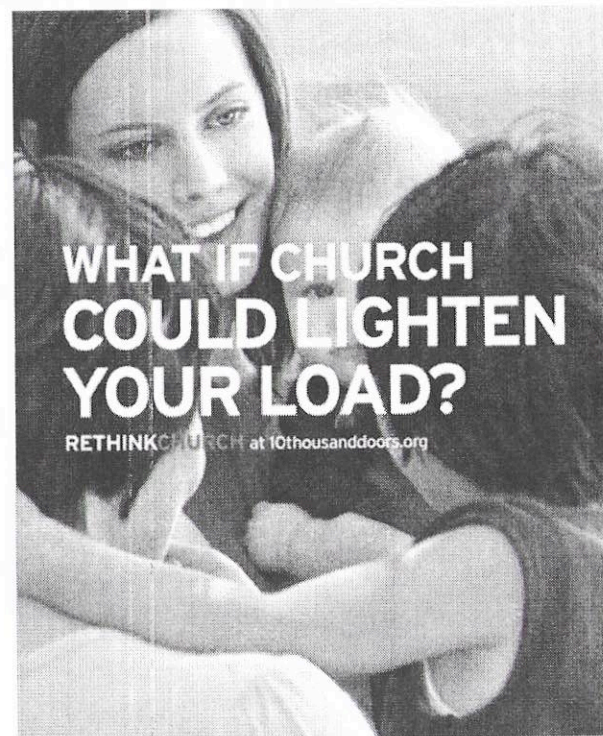
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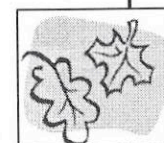


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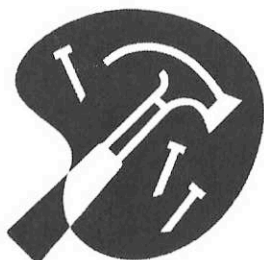


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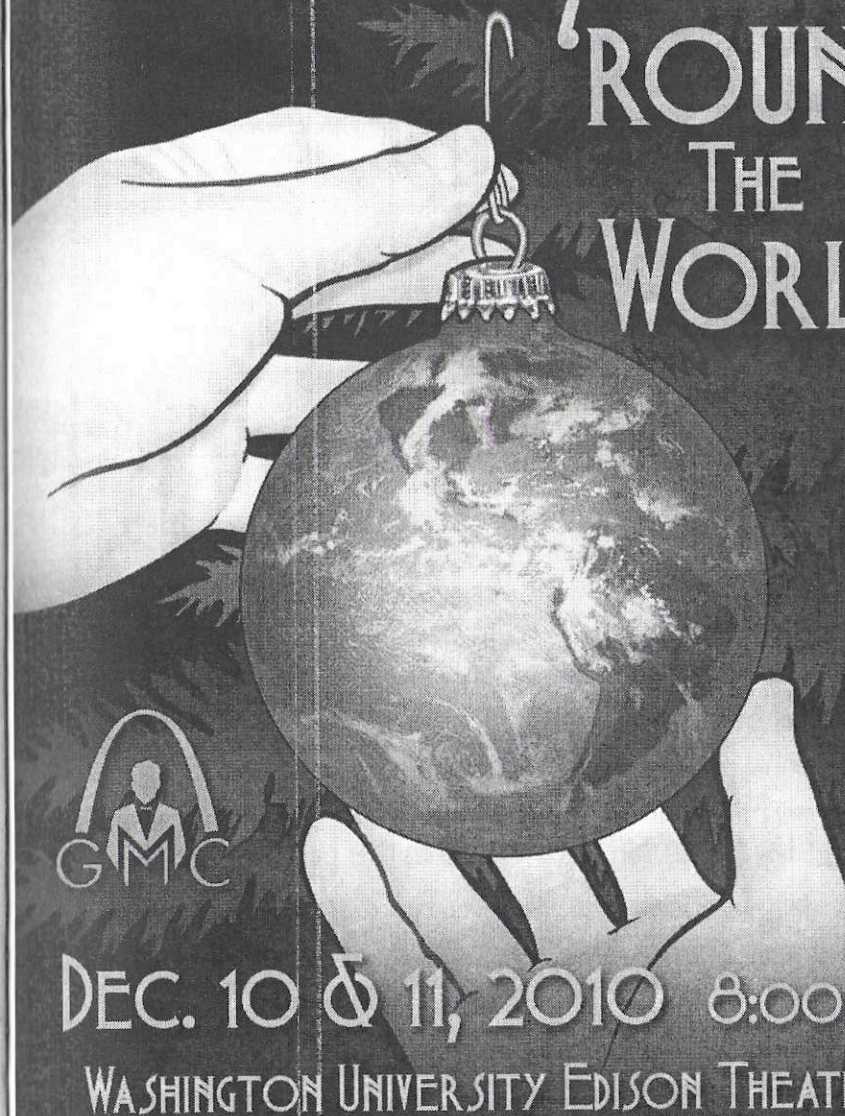
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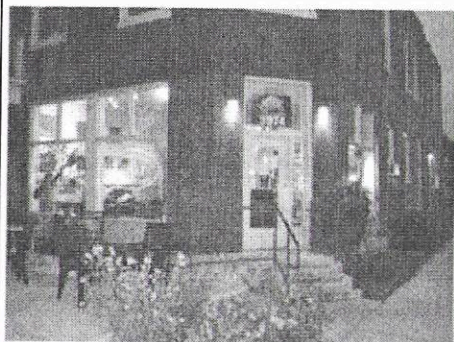
CHARIS expresses thanks to the following people for their gifts & support throughout the 2010-2011 season:

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Therese & Sean McKenna	Dina Young

We are especially grateful to all who donated **in honor of Sharon Spurlock** on her 50th birthday.

We sincerely regret any omissions .

If you would like to make a contribution (including honorariums/memorials), please contact Candice Freeman at charischorus@gmail.com or visit our website at www.charischorus.org.



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