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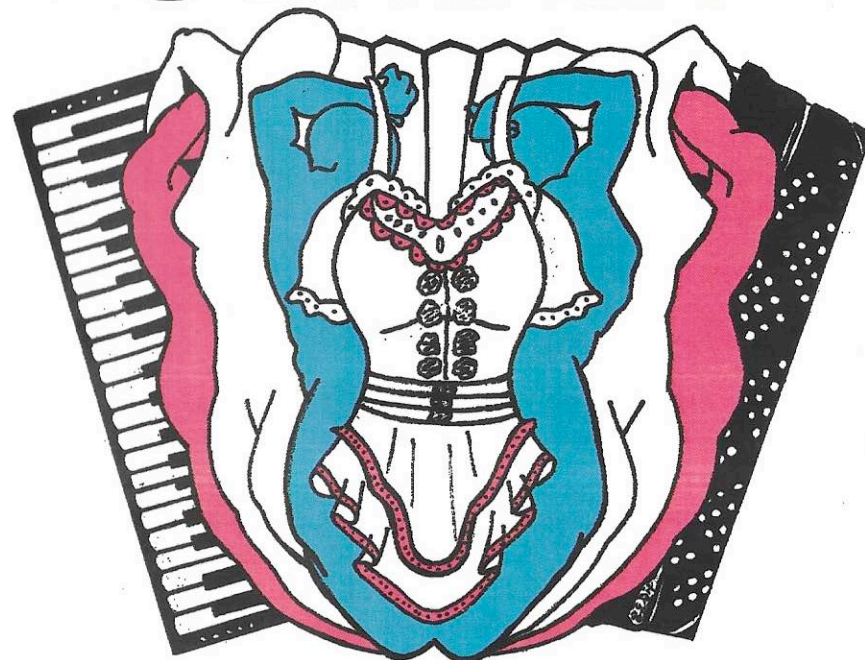
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June 2011
CHARIS
The St Louis Women's Chorus

GENDER



POLKA

June 11, 2011

8:00 P.M.

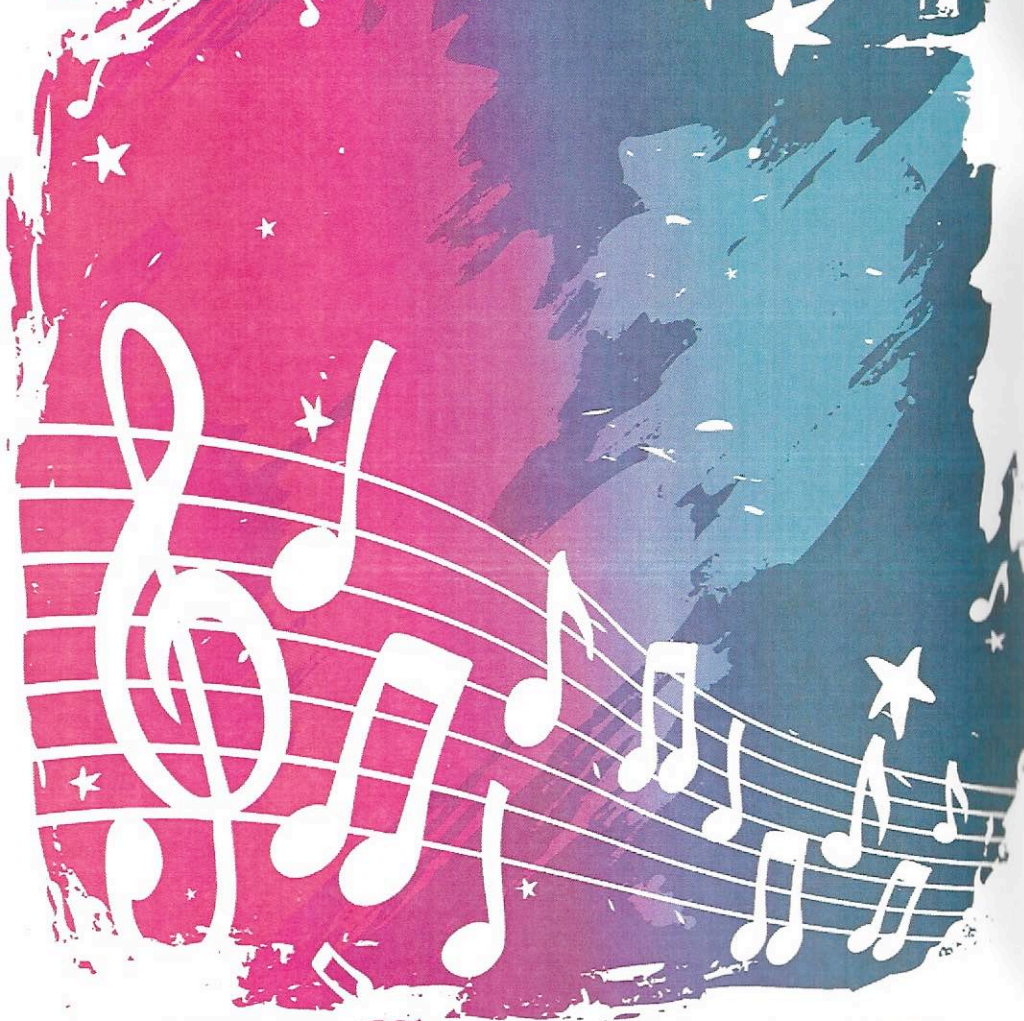
Des Lee Auditorium



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CHARIS

The St. Louis Women's Chorus
presents

GENDER POLKA

*"girls are sugar and spice ...
boys are snakes and snails"*

messages we hear from society to
the questioning of those messages to the
creation of one's own unique
understanding of gender and gender expression

June 11, 2011
8:00 P.M.

Des Lee Auditorium

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.

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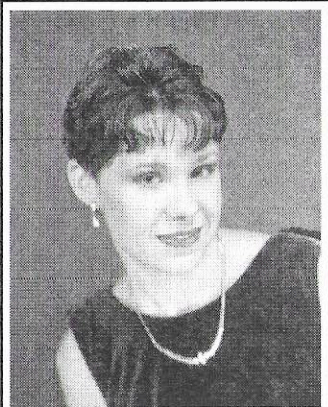
From the Board President Ms. Sharon Spurlock



Thanks to all of you who took a chance and came out to see this quirky but important show. Gender certainly isn't an obvious theme for a performance, but the women of CHARIS embraced the importance of gender several years ago when we were approached by a transgender woman to explore how welcomed she would be at our rehearsals. She has become an important part of our organization and has helped us to address who is welcome in CHARIS in our bylaws, our communications, and in our performances. The definition of a woman and the expectations connected to that label has evolved and continues to change the world around us.

CHARIS is looking to the future as we complete our long range concert planning and set a goal to attend another GALA festival in 2012. We hope you will join us in that effort as a singer, an audience member, a volunteer, and a donor. CHARIS is at a high point musically and organizationally. However, finances continue to be challenging. As funding for the arts decreases, it is critical for the community to advocate for arts programming that touches their hearts and minds. We appreciate your choice to purchase a ticket tonight and hope that we inspire you to support us financially in the future.

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



From the Artistic Director Ms. Kourtney R. Strade

When the chorus brainstorms ideas for concert themes, I am usually left thinking, "Dear God, what have I gotten myself into?!" and *Gender Polka* just left me shaking my head in wonderment at the thought of programming a show around gender issues! Oh sure, there are plenty of songs written that fit the bill, but finding choral arrangements and making some kind of a cohesive unit is a completely different ballgame.

So, I am thrilled at what we have put together for you tonight, and I love the creativity of the composers and lyricists we found! We have borrowed lyrics written by *Artemis Singers*, Chicago's Lesbian Feminist Chorus, for "I Enjoy Being a Dyke," and Kay Eskenazi used a 17th century tune to create her song, "Our Sister Gail (Used to be a Male). I also couldn't resist reprising a number from our last concert (Masculine Women, Feminine Men), and we have added a dash of Hollywood to the arrangement, just to keep it interesting.

What we have for you in this show is a look at society's decree that there are gender expression norms, and the issues that arise when we don't all fit the perfect image of those norms. From the minute we are born, the process of grooming our gender identity begins (were you wrapped in a pink blanket or a blue one?), and Peter Alsop's children song, "It's Only a Wee Wee" illustrates the absurdity of it all. The first stage of our concert is dedicated to childhood and the messages we often receive that, because of our anatomy, we must behave in a certain manner.

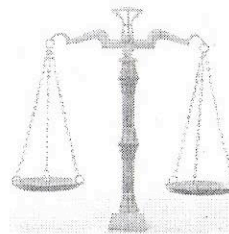
While I could go on for days about the horrors and tragedies of parents and loved ones who are not accepting of their children's gender or sexual orientation expression, it is comforting to know that not every household looks like that. In Lucille Clifton's poems set by Gwyenth Walker in the *My Girls* set, she writes about the strength and individuality of her daughters, and juxtaposes her pride that they not only have grace and poise, but also climb trees and play in the dirt.

The entirety of socialization may not be willing to accept the truth that gender expression is a wide spectrum, but at some point, we owe it to ourselves to accept our personal place along that spectrum. Our children deserve nurturing for who they are, and who they want to become, without fear or shame. I deserve to be able to say, "I Am What I Am," with pride, and so do you.

Thank you for sharing your evening with us for *Gender Polka*. We are delighted to see you here tonight.

Kourtney

Loretta K. Haggard, Attorney at Law



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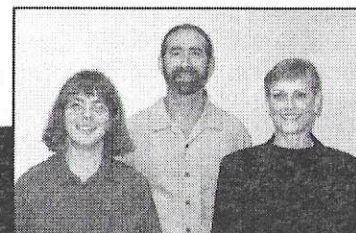
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CHARIS:

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 directed CHARIS in "Postcards: Journeys of the Heart" at the New City School and "In The Groove" at The Shrewsbury Community Center. CHA-

Through the Years Herstory

RIS' 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 closes its 18th season, with exploration of gender from the prescribed "girls are sugar and spice ... Boys are snakes and snails" messages we hear from society to the questioning of those messages to the creation of one's own unique understanding of gender and gender expression.

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

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We've been given a rare opportunity in our fundraising drive for the GALA Choruses Festival in Denver, Colorado in July 2012. Two anonymous donors have posed a fundraising challenge. They will **match** up to **\$1,000** in donor contributions toward GALA Festival.

We've set a goal to send 20 singers to the 2012 Festival. The average cost of a delegate's attendance at the five-day festival will be \$700-\$1,000.

This is where you come in. Any amount you can give (whether it's \$5 or \$500) will help us reach our goal of matching the \$1,000 contribution on the table, allowing us to provide financial assistance to members for the Festival.

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More information on the GALA Choruses Festival can be found at galachoruses.org.

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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.

Kelly Mitchell - Bass

Kelly Mitchell started singing with Charis in 1998. She previously played bass in the Quantum Leap concert at Lafayette United Methodist Church. She has also played with artist, Ro Anderson, and with the worship band, *Out on a Limb*, at Zion United Methodist Church.

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.

Tena Polukewich - Sign Language Artist

Returning for another performance, Tena is delighted to appear as CHARIS' sign language interpreter. 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 - Guitar/Vocals

Ro Anderson has been singing & playing music around Saint Louis for over 20 years. She also teaches, & is part of the worship team at The Connection Church. Also playing music w/ Elisa, Kelly, Paige & Stephanie in some configuration or another whenever possible. She is working on her next cd & this is her 7th performance with CHARIS.

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. A former Alto II singer with CHARIS, Stephanie decided to switch to the instrumental side of the chorus, picking up the sticks for the Quantum Leap concert. When she's not drumming for CHARIS, 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 for to her next adventure.

CHARIS

The St. Louis Women's Chorus

Soprano I

Cassie Coleman
Kathy Duncan
Kristen Myers
Belinda Quimby
Allison Rose
Aleksandra Shklyar
Carol Weisman

Alto I

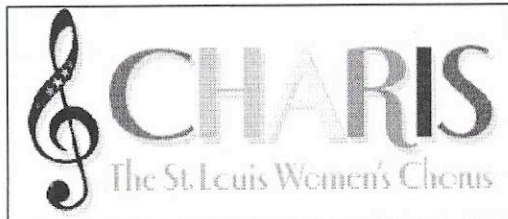
Amy Aldridge
Penny Frame
Meredythe Guilds
Julie Harmann
Kelly Mitchell
Lisa Riek
Jenna Wells

Soprano II

Allison Benoit
Katie Benoit
Colleen Gilmore
Meg Petra
Kim Powlishta
Sharon Smith
Karen Woods
Kristen Wozniak

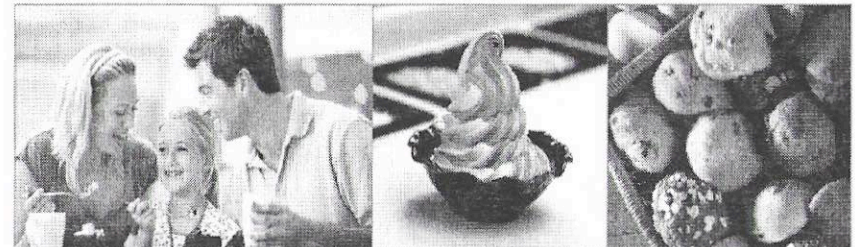
Alto II

Candice Freeman
Sharon Opp
Sharon Spurlock
Donna Yakel
Dina Young



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GENDER POLKA

Part I In The Sandbox

Boy Meets Girl Peter Stone and Carl Reiner
Aric Henson and Kim Gruner

It's Only a Wee Wee Peter Alsop

When I Was a Boy Dar Williams
 arr. Deborah Jue
Ro Anderson and Lisa Riek

On Children Ysaye M. Barnwell

Glad to Have a Friend Like You Carol Hall
 arr. Margaret Vance
Cassie Coleman, Allison Rose, Karen Woods, Megan Petra, Sharon Spurlock

Part II Boys and Girls and....

The Southpaw Judith Viorst
Aric Henson and Kim Gruner

I Enjoy Being a Girl Richard Rodgers
Belinda Quimby, Soprano

I Enjoy Being a Dyke Richard Rodgers
 arr. Ruth Clark and Loraine Edwalds

Tough Little Boys Donald Sampson and Harley Allen
Ro Anderson

Our Sister Gail (Used to be a Male) Pammelia (England, 1609)
 arr. Kay Eskenazi

My Girls Gwyneth Walker

This Morning
 To My Girls
 Sisters

***“girls are sugar and spice ...
 boys are snakes and snails”***

Part III I've Got a Secret

Shame Roger Bourland

Out Here on My Own Michael Gore
 arr. Jeff Funk
Kristen Myers, Jessica Girard, Amy Aldridge

Big Girls Don't Cry Bob Crewe and Bob Gaudio
 arr. Kirby Shaw
*Aleksandra Shklyar, Carol Weisman, Al Benoit,
 Katie Benoit, Julie Harmann, Jenna Wells*

Beautiful Linda Perry
 arr. Mac Huff

Part IV Out of the Box

Gender Polka David Maddux

Masculine Women, Feminine Men James V. Monaco
 arr. Steven Milloy
 ada pted from arr. by Jane Ramseyer Miller

Finally Here Eric Helmuth

Here is Where I Stand Michael Gore
Cassie Coleman and Karen Woods

I Am What I Am Jerry Herman
 arr. Neal Richardson
Premiere performance

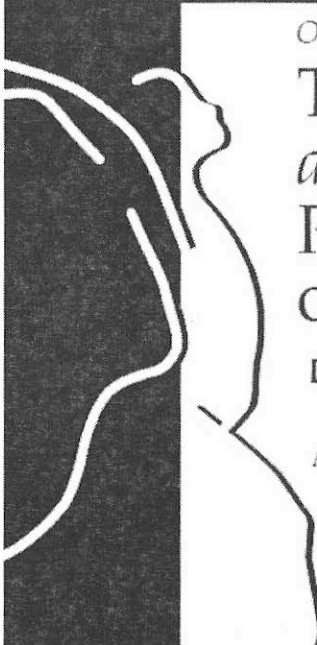
****Please enjoy a fifteen minute intermission***

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Special Acknowledgements

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

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Jessica Girard and Desy Maus

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Set Crew: R. E. Dix, Joyce Sherokow

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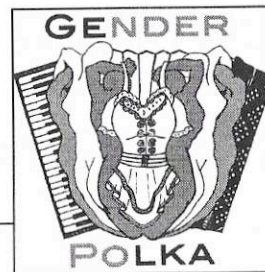
Program Production: Bill Byrd

Rehearsal CDs: Susan Young

Webmaster:s Allison Benoit, Candice Freeman

Volunteers: Amanda Beneze, Leo & Barb Weisman, LaTish McKinney, Sayer Johnston, Mike Nelson, Francie Davies-Sigmund and all who gave their time to help make this concert sing!

We sincerely regret any omissions





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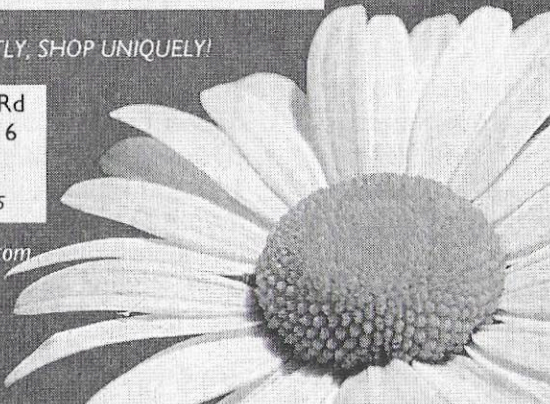
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**Congratulations
to the women of
CHARIS for another fantastic concert!**

Special Congratulations to Ms. Kourtney Strade and the Production Team. You have done another great job of bringing this group of women together and creating a "safe space" to perform!

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To register, just return this form to any staff member at tonight's concert or mail it to: CHARIS, Attn: eScrip Program, P.O. Box 21642, St. Louis, MO 63139. We'll send your new eScrip card to the address listed on the form.

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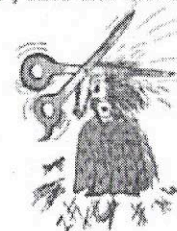
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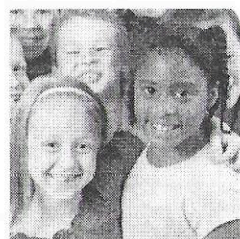
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Become a Member - Be Part of the Fun!

CHARIS is a non-audition chorus. We invite you to visit any Tuesday when we are in rehearsal and see what we are about.

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A sumptuous night of music and decadent treats featuring CHARIS soloists and small groups.

**July 23, 2011
8:00 p.m.**

at Regional Arts Commission - 6128 Delmar Blvd., 63112

Visit charischorus.org for more information or to purchase tickets.

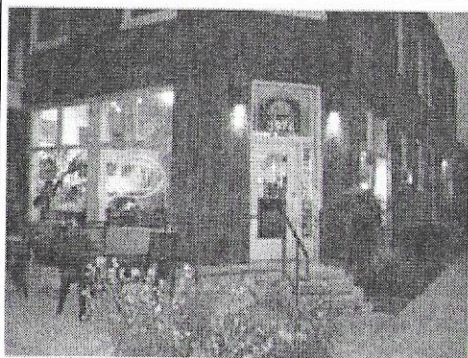
Other Events

Annual Pasta Dinner • October 22, 2011
5:00 p.m., Location TBD

Fall Concert • November 18 & 19, 2011
8:00 p.m., Tower Grove Abbey

CHARIS Trivia Night • March 3, 2012
"Music of the Night"
7:00 p.m., Location TBD

CHARIS - The St. Louis Women's Chorus • www.charischorus.org



3974 Hartford Street
St. Louis, MO 63116
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hartfordcoffee.net

Hartford Coffee Company is proud to support Charis and to be a part of the Tower Grove community.

New Menu Items
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Daily Lunch & Dinner Special
Open Mic Night Every Friday
Live Music Saturday and Sundays
Monthly Local Artist Display
Family Fun Night w/ Celia 1st Wednesday of the Month
(Kids sing-a-long)
Kid's Indoor Play Area
Outdoor Patio
Free WiFi

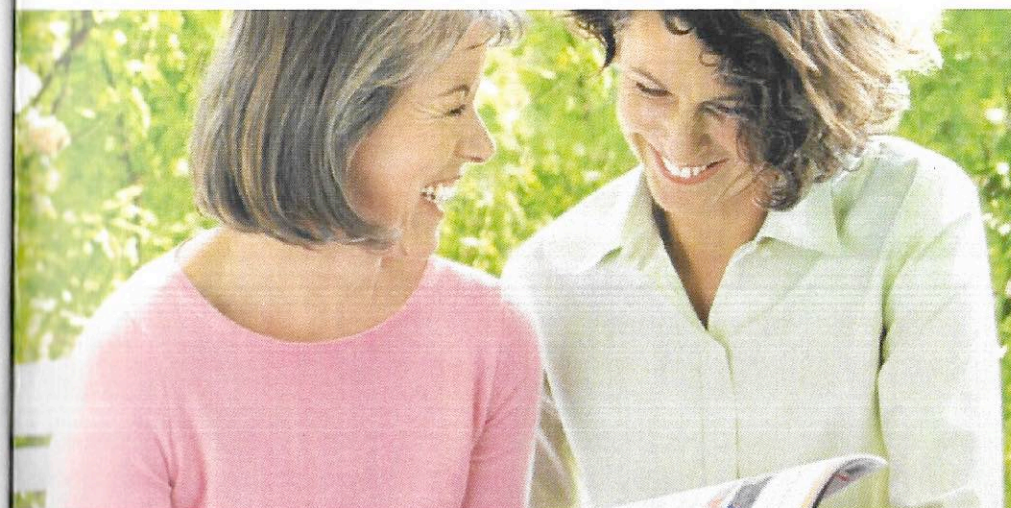
Hours

Monday 6am - 9pm
Tuesday 6am - 9pm
Wednesday 6am - 9pm
Thursday 6am - 9pm
Friday 6am - 10pm
Saturday 7am - 10pm
Sunday 7am - 7pm

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