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 fundraising events

See page 3.

Explore inner space with...
Spirit, I Am
ONE NIGHT ONLY!
Saturday
March 8, 2008
8 PM

See page 1

The official newsletter of Vox Femina Los Angeles is published three times yearly. Contributors: Suzy Brown, Donna Burroughs, Laurie Fox, Jeni Rodriguez, Cris Scaglione, Carol Scherfenberg, Jennifer Snow. Vox Femina Los Angeles: 3341 Caroline Avenue, Culver City, CA 90232 Phone: 310-922-0025 Email: vfla@voxfeminala.org Website: www.voxfeminala.org

Looking Forward to
Spirit, I Am
 March 8, 2008, Wilshire United Methodist Church

“Spirit I Am” expresses the vital reality that all human beings are spiritual beings – and that a life fully lived is a life of saying, “yes, I am” to the spirit, the joy, the wonder, and the challenges of existence. The feelings will emerge through ancient, modern, and just-now-born music from cultures across the globe. With moods ranging from exultation to pleading, from lamentation to laughter, “Spirit, I Am” invites you to join in and say, “Yes!”

We are grateful to Lutherans Concerned, a Christian ministry which affirms God’s love for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, for their generosity in sponsoring “Spirit, I Am” and the Shower of Stoles exhibit (see separate article).

During “Spirit, I Am” Vox will premiere two new commissions, including one by Australian composer Sarah Hopkins. Dr. Iris S. Levine, Artistic Director, says “We are thrilled that Sarah Hopkins enthusiastically agreed to compose a piece for Vox – her first commission for a U.S. chorus!”

Those who remember Vox’s riveting performance of Hopkins’ “Past Life Melodies” will be as excited by “Many Lives, Many Songs” – an adventure in music, incorporating “whirlies,”

instruments created by the composer. Other concert selections will invite you into the heart of creation;



Photo: Kawaboori Photography

explore the echoes of the ancient mother goddess; celebrate the beauty of women and the spirituality of the body; and sing the prayers, memories, sorrows, and rejoicing of women from around the world.

Sarah Hopkins writes that her new piece is “dedicated to the upliftment and liberation of all beings” – a sentiment that is at the very heart of “Spirit, I Am.” Iris and the women of Vox hope that you will find yourself honored in our celebration of the spiritual



Photo: Michele I. Edwards, ©2002

core of life. We look forward to sharing this special evening with you!

Get your tickets now!
www.voxfeminala.org
 or 310-922-0025.
\$25 in advance; \$30 at the door.

Stoles Bear Powerful Witness

As part of this spiritual musical experience, Vox is proud to host a portion of the Shower of Stoles, an extraordinary collection of over a thousand liturgical stoles and other sacred items representing the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people of faith. These religious leaders have served in 27 denominations and faith traditions, from six countries on three continents.

continued on page 2

PROFILES

GET TO KNOW MEMBERS OF THE VOX FEMINA LOS ANGELES FAMILY

In each issue, we introduce you to some of the faces you've seen smiling at you from the risers! Our singers, staff and volunteers come from widely diverse backgrounds, but we all share one thing in common — making the world a better place through music!

— Meet second soprano

ALYSSA COSSEY



Alyssa Cossey majored in music at Cal Poly Pomona, studying Music Theatre and Music Education. At Cal Poly she studied with Iris, and thus is one of the few choir members to address her as “Dr. Levine”. After graduating in 2006 she decided to audition for Vox in our tenth season.

In her “Pre-Vox days”, she performed in musicals from “The Music Man” to “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying” and has done staging and choreography for many performing ensembles, including Vox. Though relatively new to the group, she is

also one of our singing representatives on the Board of Directors.

Her Vox experience has been “a wonderful opportunity to meet, get to know, and sing with women who come from all walks of life”, and like so many of us she feels like she has gained a family. She adds “there really is nothing like singing with these amazing women”.

Alyssa is a first year choir teacher at a junior high and high school in the “Far East” (San Dimas, California). When asked about outside interests, she replied, “Who has the time?”

— Meet first soprano

JENNIFER SNOW



Jennifer Snow stumbled across some Vox Femina concert flyers while cleaning out some filing cabinets at work. She thought the repertoire looked “incredibly interesting and creative” and has found that impression to be absolutely true since joining the group in September. She’s been especially impressed with the “sense of community” and the high musical caliber of the group. Describing her musical background as “eccentric” – she’s a self-taught pianist and plays a variety of Renaissance instruments as well – she came

to vocal music through watching “Amadeus” and deciding to become a coloratura in high school. Years of wailing through the Queen of Night’s vengeance aria in the backyard, plus some genuine vocal training and tons of choral experience, have produced a soaring soprano to add to Vox Femina’s ranks. Jennifer holds a PhD in Religion from Columbia University, and works for Progressive Christians Uniting, creating resources for churches in peace and justice issues, including LGBT inclusion.

continued from page 1

Founder Martha Juillerat worked for years as a closeted Presbyterian minister in rural Missouri. When faced with the threat of being defrocked by the church after coming out in 1995, she chose to set aside her ordination. She began the Shower of Stoles Project to bear witness to the lives and voices of LGBT people of faith who have been silenced by the church.

The Shower of Stoles was first displayed at the 1996 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Our own Laurie Fox was there, and tells us, “The Assembly refused to give us any space to display the collection. Undaunted, we decided to display the stoles by wearing them. The stoles were fully present in the meetings in a silent witness to the LGBT individuals they represented. They were much more visible than if they had been displayed in a room.” In 2006, Martha Juillerat retired and gave the

Shower of Stoles to the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force’s Institute for Welcoming Resources.

We feel very privileged to show part of the collection as a visible reflection of “Spirit, I Am.”

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Holly Near Helps Vox Femina LA with Fundraising

On January 13, 2008, Vox Femina joined with life-long activist and musician, Holly Near, to celebrate the power of women to make change in the world. The afternoon combined passion, politics and music in the trademark Vox style. Vox Femina performed songs from “Spirit, I Am” – their upcoming concert of music born of the spiritual lives of women. The crowd was moved to tears at “what i want,” a song based on a yearning, beautiful poem by Canadian poet Pat Lowther, which was found after her death at the hands of her husband.

Holly Near performed songs that came from her time in Chile, in the Philippines, and visiting the troops during the Viet Nam war – and the whole choir joined in with “I Am Willing,” a call to faith in the future.

Holly’s lifetime of peace and justice work is chronicled in her music – but it’s in hearing the stories behind the songs that “the famous name” comes to life. Holly recounted her first political challenge when as a Broadway performer, she heard about the students shot at Kent State but was too frightened to join in the protest suggested by her fellow actors. As she noted, moral awakening doesn’t happen all at once, and political courage doesn’t come from nowhere. It’s an ongoing journey, and there is always another chance to grow, to evolve, and to be open to the light of change.

This is the second time that our wonderful friend, Holly Near, has given of herself to support Vox Femina’s musical journey.



Holly singing with Vox Femina LA members at Neighborhood Unitarian Church



Event Sponsors Marsha Naify (l) and Kathleen Mirante (r) with Holly



Holly with Board members Lee Werbel (event chair), Bettie Teel and Gabriella Yanuzzi (Board co-chairs)

Photos: Anne-Marie Hughes

Thank you, Holly! And thanks to Lee Werbel, event chair, our other Board members, and volunteers who helped make the event a delight for all. We also want to express our special gratitude to Event Sponsors Kathleen Mirante, Marsha Naify, and Bennett Wright.

Vox Fundraising Fiesta

Vox Femina Los Angeles to Tour MEXICO!

Vox Femina Los Angeles is thrilled to be traveling on our first tour. In July, 2008 we’re going to MEXICO! We have an exciting itinerary planned, meeting with local women’s organizations, conducting a workshop with a Mexico City orphanage, and performing at some amazing venues. We also have a long road ahead before achieving our fundraising goals and need your help. Please support our efforts by donating to the group or to a specific singer at: www.voxfeminala.org/store/donate-tour.htm. Or, join us at one of our tour fundraisers during the year. The events below are only two of many we have planned, so check the website often for fun ways to join the Vox fiesta! Remember, all donations are tax-deductible.

Vox Vagina Monologues

The women of Vox will don their acting caps to produce (and star in) “The Vagina Monologues,” by Eve Ensler, this spring! Vox is participating in the tenth anniversary of the V-Day campaign, a global movement to end violence against women and girls. Thousands of productions have taken place in all 50 states and countries all over the world in the past decade. Proceeds from the play will be split between V-Day and Vox’s tour fund. We’ll also auction off some exquisite items and experiences during this event, so watch your inbox and listen for further details at our March concert.

“Death by Karaoke”

Come down and party with us at Vox’s second Karaoke Night. We had so much fun the first time, we’re doing it again. Join us for “Death by Karaoke” (dates forthcoming). This time there’s no cover, and for a mere \$5 per song, you can request that one of our lovely Voxies sing a song of your choice. Additionally, if there’s a particular singer you wish to roast, pay \$10, pick a song from the book and put her on the spot. It should be an evening to remember!