

Gay Chorus Groups To Perform in Florida

Lambda Chorale and South Beach Chorus Set Spring Dates for Concerts



by Kevin Hopper

The Lambda Chorale, Gary E. Keating, Artistic Director, South Florida's Gay, Lesbian, and Gay-friendly chorus, will present its Pride Month concert, *Dance, Dance Dance!* June 16th at 8 PM at the Amaturo Theater, Broward Center for the Performing Arts.

Tickets are \$12, \$17, and \$25. Tickets are available by calling the Broward Center Box Office at (954) 462-0222. Tickets may also be purchased by calling 954-565-2620 or through the Chorale Web site at WWW.Lambdachorale.com.

The Lambda Chorale is supported through a grant provided in part by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners and the Broward Cultural Affairs Council and their media sponsors, Hotspots Magazine, *The Express* and TWN.

The concert, *Dance, Dance Dance!*, will keep all audience members entertained. The first half opens with *Parade*, a work by Eric Lane Barnes, which describes the annual Gay Pride Parade. More traditional choral selections; two short classical works, the

Rachmaninoff Ave Maria (in Russian) and *Dirait-On* by Morton Lauridsen, the rousing spiritual, "Daniel, Servant of the Lord," and *Riversong* will follow.

The second half will move you to your feet! Choreographed by Bill Steele and Bill Dahm with production design by Robert Soldo and Assistant Conductor Randy Leonard, this half is loaded with dance hits. Included are *Rock Around the Clock*, "Too Hot to Samba", "The Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" and "Flashdance." And the audience won't be left out as they learn "The Time Warp" from "The Rocky Horror Picture Show."

Appearing with the Chorale will be special guests, The RoughRiders Dance Team. The Rough Riders have won first place at the International Assoc. of Gay and Lesbian Country Western Dance Clubs in 1997, 1998 and 2000, and are looking to make it four in 2001. Howard Cunningham, choreographer, has created a unique style for the RoughRiders by not utilizing solely traditional country western dance movements.

The Chorale will appear this spring at the opening of the new Stonewall Library on May 12, a benefit for the RoughRiders Dance Team on May 5, and at the Stonewall Street Festival on June 24th.

Meanwhile, in South Beach, on May 22nd and 23rd at 8:00 p.m. the South Beach Gay Men's Chorus will present its spring concert, *As Time Goes By... Our History in Song*. This funny and moving evening of theatre looks at how things have changed and have not changed in gay culture.

Starting in the 40's and working its way to the present, this concert includes some of "our people's" most beloved music; "Over the Rainbow", "You're the Top", "You Got to Have Friends", "Dancing Queen" and "Madonna's Material Girl" are just a few of the hits you'll hear sung by this unique choir.

SBGMC Christmas concert was a smashing success. The show packed the house at the Colony Theatre for two-night stand people are still talking about. The boys that made the Christmas Show such a joy are ready to make *As Time Goes By...* an even bigger hit.

Chris Reider, the choir director, has written beautiful chorale arrangements for the show's classic torch songs and its new pop numbers, Andrew Sargent, SBGMC's studly accompanist, will be at the piano, the book for the show is again written by David Sexton, co-owner of South Beach IronWorks and of course the forty fabulous voices from the choir you fell in love with will all be there.

In addition to the usual offering of beautiful singing and campy humor, the choir is thrilled to welcome the talents of two internationally known artists who call South Beach home. Richard Jay-Alexander, director for Bernadette Peters' Carnegie Hall concert and Barbra Streisand's recent New Year's Eve concert, is going to be directing and David Leddick, best-selling author of *My Worst Date* and *Naked Men*, will be performing.

These two fell in love with the choir after seeing the Christmas concert (David Leddick says, "I laughed. I cried. I thought to myself, I've never seen anything like this on South Beach. I knew I wanted to be a part of it.") If you've seen the chorus, you know just how he felt. If you haven't seen the chorus, do so now!

Performances for the SBGMC Spring Concert, *As Time Goes By... Our History in Song* are at the Colony Theatre. Tickets are \$25 with a \$20 discount ticket available to seniors and students. The good seats will go fast, so get your tickets today at their website, <http://www.gaychorus.org>.

Be looking for the posters with a photo by renowned photographer and choir member, David Vance! This is an event you won't want to miss!

Shirley MacLaine on Life, Love and Life Again

By Yale Alexander

If you're looking for jokes about reincarnation or new-agers, stop reading, the title was the last one in this article. I take discussions of spirituality very seriously, as anyone who read my Pride Day piece knows. Yes, I have a sense of humor, and so does Shirley MacLaine. In fact, no one tells better Shirley MacLaine jokes than the lady herself. In fact, during the height of the "new-age" frenzy, she actually supplied the late night comics with punch lines. That said, it was a serious Ms. MacLaine that gave her talk last night at The Broward Center.

The packed audience was treated to a very serious-minded speech, primarily about the value this country's forefathers placed on spirituality, and the role it deserves to play in our lives today. Don't worry, I'll elaborate in a minute. The speech was followed by a much more light-hearted question and answer session. The audience submitted written questions, which were then read to Ms. MacLaine by a local news anchor. The format worked very well. While there were certainly more questions than the allotted time allowed, I doubt the collective attention span of this particular demographic would have been able to handle much more.

I had several ideas on what to expect from the evening, as it was part of The Broward Center's "Unique Lives and Experiences" series of lectures by prominent women. None of them included a talk on how the Pilgrims, and our subsequent American forefathers were firm believers in spirituality, astrology, numerology, etc. Ms. MacLaine referred to a large projection of a One Dollar bill on a screen behind her to point out the significance of the symbols, and the repetitive presence of the number "13". Supposedly, it's a mystical number representing the twelve signs of the zodiac, plus God. Personally, I always thought it just represented the thirteen original colonies. Ms. MacLaine pointed to the significance of three tenets pursued by the Founding Fathers: Spirituality, Philosophy and Science. Theoretically, they are of equal importance, and balance and success cannot be achieved without all three. Ms. MacLaine noted that it took six years to design the original One Dollar bill. In addition, the FF (Founding Fathers) consulted everyone from astrologers to Indians (aka Native Americans) on the design. She then compared the resemblance of the "democracy" of Nature, to the model of our original Democracy. Whew!

If it was a lot for me to take in, I imagine the blue-hairs in the expensive seats were reeling by now.

What it boils down to is that, according to Ms. MacLaine's research and beliefs, the FF were a bunch of neat, misunderstood, mystical and very spiritually oriented guys. They just wanted to find a barn, build a stage, and put on a nice country for everyone to live happily ever after in! Everyone except women, Indians and everyone who wasn't white and Christian. She failed to mention the part about how the Pilgrims basically killed off the very Indians who helped them with the wonderful diseases they brought with them. Unfortunately, the Native American "homeopathy", which Shirley champions, wasn't enough to save them at that point. She didn't mention how spirituality and astrology didn't factor in the Pilgrim ships that sank on the way to the New World, or the many who froze to death, unprepared for the harsh winter. It doesn't seem very spiritual or philosophical to virtually eradicate one entire race of people while kidnapping and enslaving another. What it boils down to for me is a little thing called Manifest Destiny.

Our sacred forefathers believed that it was their divine right to expand this country from one coast until they ran out of land. Look it up.

Now, I'm not complaining. I've traveled quite a bit, though not as much as Ms. MacLaine. She wrote her latest book about walking 500 miles across northern Spain, while evading wild dogs. I'm a bit prissier, so I do appreciate living in the richest and most powerful nation in the world. Yes, we got here the ugly way, but it's not my fault. At least we perfected it in d o o r

plumbing, which they have yet to do in most countries.

Nevertheless, while I can't ignore the violent tendencies of our culture, I applaud her lack of cynicism, however myopic. I happen to agree with her on a lot of things. We both agree that you can't be centered in the Universe, unless you are centered in yourself. I did find her centering exercise a tad amusing, though. I concur with her emphasis of being "connected to your spirituality". She was right on the mark, yet funny at the same time when asked about how to find one's "soulmate". She said, "You usually recognize them when you meet them, but you might not want to. Your true soulmate is a reflection of your own true self, and most people don't want to admit what they're really like."

She also acknowledged the importance of meeting and rejecting your fears. She advised a method of "putting them outside yourself". She claimed she has no fear of death because she realizes that it is only a "transition", and that "nothing truly dies, it just changes form". She has very original and interesting concepts of time and life, too detailed for this space. But conveniently, there is now www.ShirleyMacLaine.com (seriously). With over 17 million (!) hits, it has all the details you care to read about, including a page on "Pet Souls" (again, seriously). According to Ms. M., this will be the subject of her 10th book, as her terrier, Terry, is most certainly an acquaintance from a previous life. I didn't say I disagree with her, you just gotta give her credit for saying it all out loud.

For those of you who scoff without looking at her ideas more carefully, be aware. These ideas are not new. Right or wrong, they have existed literally for centuries. Are our own Judeo-Christian societies and beliefs providing you with the joy and peace you seek? The one thing I certainly share with Ms. MacLaine is the sense of joy and peace that I too discovered through self-awareness, and self-love.

