



# With One Voice

MIXED CHORUS

A PUBLICATION OF ONE VOICE MIXED CHORUS • SPRING 2004

*Building community  
and creating social  
change by raising  
our voices in song.*

• • •

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**With One Voice**

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## From the Artistic Director: Transgender Voices Blurring the Lines

I CAN'T QUITE REMEMBER the day I became intrigued by the idea of a concert on music and gender. It may have been that evening five years ago when David/Katherine appeared on stage with One Voice to perform the bass solos in PDQ Bach's *Missa Hilarious* dressed in a tight leather skirt and heels.

Perhaps it was the day Jan Michael approached me to say she (on the way to becoming "he") had started taking hormones and needed to move from the alto section to tenor. Or maybe it was eighteen months later when we did yet another range check and he had smoothly transitioned through the baritone range and landed solidly in the bass two section. I approached a voice professor at school that week and asked, "How is this possible? What is happening to his voice?" I received a blank stare in response.

Around this same time Tyler approached me because he was experiencing some serious vocal fatigue and hoarseness as he transitioned with the use of hormones. Why was he experiencing problems when Jan Michael had transitioned fairly easily? I felt frustrated that I could not find resources in the Twin Cities for transgender singers, and that most voice teachers have no experience or skills to work with transitioning singers.

From those beginnings, members of One Voice began working with a panel of leaders and activists in the transgender community to plan "Transgender Voices" – a vocal-centered festival for transgender singers and voice teachers. Out of this festival we will form the Twin Cities' first transgender chorus which will rehearse for several months and join One Voice in concert in June.

Our June concert, entitled "Blurring the Lines: Music and Gender" will feature songs both playful and profound that explore and bend gender identity. Music has long been a home for GLBTQ people to claim themselves as performers, composers, conductors, producers, and everything in between. Concert highlights include *The Gender Polka*, *I Am What I Am*, *William's Doll*, and a new commission by our own Paul Kovacovic. One Voice's signature qualities of vocal excellence and innovation are an exceptional fit for this varied program of thought provoking and fun music.

Join us for both of these events.  
We look forward to seeing you!



# Transgender Voices festival

## SPONSORS

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*Made possible in part  
by funds provided by the  
Metropolitan Regional Arts  
Council (MRAC) from an  
appropriation by the  
Minnesota Legislature.*

*(continued below)*

### Help break new ground exploring the voice!

Join us for "Transgender Voices: A Festival Exploring Singing, Speaking, and Stories" on Saturday, April 24.

Everyone is welcome to this all-day event to be held at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul: transgender, transsexual, cross-dresser, genderqueer, or differently gendered individuals; voice teachers, singers, choral directors; and anyone interested in the importance of voice. Storytellers, poets, spoken word artists, and other performers are also welcome. Thanks to our generous sponsors (see sidebar) registration cost is by donation.

Space is limited so participants are encouraged to register by phone or web. Complete schedule, online registration, and other information available at [www.ovmc.org/transvoices](http://www.ovmc.org/transvoices).

### The Transgender Voices Festival will include:

- Info sessions on the voice, how it works, care of the voice, and changes in range
- A forum for voice teachers to learn more about working with transgender singers
- Individual singing and speaking coaching opportunities
- A vocal clinic and master class exploring many unique aspects of transgender voice
- Dialogues for transgender people about voice experiences, speaking, stories, and singing
- Voice exploration and group singing opportunities
- The formation of the Twin Cities' first Transgender Community Chorus
- Films about voice, music, and transgender experience and community



## Why a transgender vocal festival?

by Max Gries

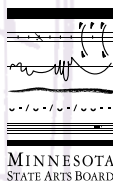
BECAUSE TRANSGENDER VOICES do not always "match" outward gender expression, people are often silenced from speaking or singing, out of fear, shame, or humiliation.

To a transgender person, the pitch of their voice can mean the difference between safely going about their business or facing hatred from a stranger. It can mean the difference between a warm smile and a "have a nice day" from a gas station clerk or a cold "get the hell outta here" look. It can mean the difference between the woman in the restroom panicking and calling security or simply not paying any notice.

Consider how you determine someone's gender when you see the person on the street. First, perhaps, through examining physical qualities. What kind of clothes, hair, body shape, or facial structure do they have? Then maybe you look for gestures and facial expressions. For instance, do they smile a lot? Probably a woman. But if none of those cues work, the next one we count on is voice. Once that person speaks, we think we're sure of their gender.

Of course, part of the time we're wrong. Just because they have a high speaking voice, does that mean they're a woman? And if we encounter a very feminine-looking woman with a baritone singing voice, do we throw out all those other gender cues, and decide 'she' must actually be 'he'? All too often, we do.

Which means that transgender people often stay quiet when they can. It's a learned behavior,



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*Jane Ramsey Miller  
with the Transgender  
Advisory Committee  
for the Transgender  
Voices festival.*

and often a safety mechanism. Kind of like knowing when it's safe or when it's unsafe to walk into the bathroom marked for a specific gender (when you know you don't necessarily "pass" as that gender).

And if you're a singer and you're transgender, good luck finding a safe, comfortable place to sing. Some female-to-male transsexual men can make it work. If they choose to take hormones (testosterone), they go through a typical male adolescence (except it's usually at an older age – sometimes 25, sometimes 35 or 40). First their voices start squeaking, then they gradually lower in pitch. If he's taking testosterone, usually a transman's voice will settle into a traditional male range of bass, baritone, or tenor. But what about voice strain? A lot of these guys say their voice is sore at the end of the day. Or that they don't have the singing stamina they used to, back when they sang soprano. The fact is, they usually don't know how to take care of their quickly changing voice.

Transsexual women, genderqueers, crossdressers, and transgender people who don't take hormones or have surgery (by choice or for financial or health reasons) are all faced with a voice pitch that does not physically change.

In the case of transsexual women, this is because their vocal fold muscles have already

lengthened and thickened during puberty, and they don't change back with the use of estrogen. Often transwomen and crossdressers get tips from the Internet or from friends, or go to voice therapy sessions to learn techniques for speaking more femininely. They learn how to modulate their voice, speaking in less of a monotone. They learn how to raise the pitch at the end of each sentence, how to speak in a breathy, excited way. These shifts in speaking help them move more safely through the world in their chosen gender expression. But what about singing? How can transgender people overcome the societal taboo of singing in the "wrong" register?

Transgender singers face many questions about voice: How might my vocal register change if I choose to take hormones or have vocal surgeries? How do these changes affect different bodies? Will I ever sing in the range I really want to? How can I sing in a voice that doesn't "match" my chosen gender expression? How can I take care of my voice if I go through physical gender transition?

There is a lack of resources, dialogue, and training about voice in both the transgender and vocal communities. With this festival, we hope to begin the conversation. This will be the first event of its kind anywhere, truly on the cutting edge. We hope you can join us!



# Transgender Voices Festival Programming



Debra Davis

## Giving Voice to Transgender Experience: an Introduction

*Debra Davis, Presenter • 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.*

This workshop will be an introduction to gender identity and transgender identity. Basic information about MTF and FTM identities, communities, and concerns will be addressed, and special attention will be given to transgender voice such as how voice affects “passing.”



Beth Zemsky

## Sharing Stories and Experiences of Voice for Transgender People

*Beth Zemsky, Facilitator • 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.*

This dialogue will be specifically for transgender-identified or gender variant people to discuss experiences of voice, especially the meaning voice has had in their lives and in gender transitions or living in the world as differently gendered.



Brian Petty

## The Voice: How it Works and How to Take Care of it

*Brian Petty, Presenter • 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.*

A general introduction to vocal physiology: care of the voice, how the vocal mechanism works, differences in physiology, how the voice typically transitions during adolescence, general transitioning info with use of hormones as an adult, how transgender vocal surgeries may effect the voice.



Anita Kozan

## Vocal Clinic and Master Class

*Anita Kozan and Brian Petty, Presenters • 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.*

Listen and learn while our two clinicians work with several transgender people on singing and speaking in a public session. Learn why some voices transition easily on hormones and other people experience serious vocal problems. Hear about exercises or ideas for working gently with transitioning and new voices, what to watch out for or be careful of. This will be an opportunity to get questions answered that didn't get covered in the session on “The Voice” before lunch.



MJ Gilbert

## Transgender Films

*1:30 – 5:00 p.m.*

A variety of films will be shown, including short films about voice and documentaries such as “Toilet Training,” presenting stories of people who transgress gender norms and the violence, discrimination, and harassment they face when using bathrooms in public spaces, at school, and at work.

## Open Dialogue on Speaking, Stories, and Singing

*1:30 – 5:00 p.m.*

This is a chance to discuss topics that aren't covered in other sessions during the day, or to delve more deeply into subjects that interest you the most.

## Open Forum for Voice Teachers

*Camilla Horne, Facilitator • 3:00 – 4:00 pm.*

This will be a forum for voice teachers to discuss working with transgender people's unique voices and concerns. Issues may include hormone therapy or vocal surgeries, how to care for the voice, and how to best address the concerns of transgender singers.

## Private Voice Coaching Sessions

*Brian Petty and Anita Kozan, Presenters • 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.*

Individual voice coaching sessions (15-20 minutes each) for transgender people who have specific questions or would just like a chance to work with a vocal coach. Can be completely private or open to observers, whatever is preferred by each individual.

## Singing in Your Own Voice

*MJ Gilbert & Jane Ramseyer Miller, Presenters • 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.*

This workshop will include teaching and leading songs, singing, and discussion about the singing voice for transgender people, addressing some of the concerns or discomforts that come up with singing and voice pitch.

## Closing and Transgender Choir Performance

*5:00 – 5:30 p.m.*

A time to wrap up what we learned during the day and to hear the brand new transgender community chorus sing a song learned earlier in the day.

# trans.pose

## a cabaret of transgender voices

*Emceed by Shiney • 8:00 – 10:00 p.m.*

Featuring Venus of All the Pretty Horses, Elijah Rose, MJ Gilbert, West Side Tranny, the new band Running on Empty, and more!

other photos not available at press  
— see [www.ovmc.org/transvoices](http://www.ovmc.org/transvoices)  
for more information

# Want to know more? **Transgender Organizations in the Twin Cities**

## **TMen**

Provides support, community, and socializing for everyone on the transgender spectrum who was assigned female at birth and no longer feels that is complete or accurate. Two meetings and several social events each month. We welcome FTMS, genderqueers, drag kings, intersex people, those questioning their gender, transmen, bois, FTMs who now identify as men, trannyfags, and many other flavors of gender.

[www.tmen.net](http://www.tmen.net) • 612-823-1152

## **City of Lakes Crossgender Community**

Members include crossdressers, transgendered and transsexuals (both male-to-female and female-to-male), often their spouses, and draws crossgendered people from the five-state region and nearby provinces of Canada. CLCC offers a safe way for crossgendered people to get together, accept their different-gendered selves, and express their other or true gender.

[www.clccmn.com](http://www.clccmn.com) • 651-229-3613

## **Minnesota Transgender Health Care Coalition**

A group of trans and allied community organizers working to improve the health care experiences (transition-related and otherwise) of transgender, transsexual, intersexual, genderqueer and other gender variant people in Minnesota.

[MNTransHealth-owner@yahogroups.com](mailto:MNTransHealth-owner@yahogroups.com)

## **Transgender Living Initiative**

This group's mission is to create a confident and self-reliant transgendered population, and a society that accepts and appreciates the presence of trans-people in their midst. Plans include transitional housing, a shelter, and a community center in the future.

[transliving@outfront.org](mailto:transliving@outfront.org) • 612-822-0127

## **genderBLUR**

A collectively-run group committed to recognizing and affirming the complexity of trans, genderqueer, and allied experiences through educational resources, community building, and the arts.

Hosts cabarets and other community events.

[www.genderBLUR.org](http://www.genderBLUR.org) • 612-823-1152

## **PFLAG: Discussion Group for Partners of trans and genderqueer people**

[www.pflagtc.org](http://www.pflagtc.org) • 612-825-1660

## **Youth Support Group**

Gender questioning support group for youth 23 years old and younger. For more info, contact:

*Janet at Face to Face @ 651-772-5602*

*Alex at District 202 @ 612-718-0134.*

## **Tri-Ess Minnesota – Tau Epsilon Mu Chapter**

A Minnesota affiliate of Tri-Ess International, an association of heterosexual crossdressers and their families which seeks to support them and educate the community about crossdressing.

[www.triessmn.com](http://www.triessmn.com) • 612-870-8536

## **Gender Education Center**

A Minnesota non-profit corporation of differently gendered people dedicated to support, advocacy and education. Provides opportunities for business, educational institutions, and other organizations to learn about the transgender community and the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

[www.debradavis.org](http://www.debradavis.org) • 763-424-5445

## **Transgender Health Service**

Program in Human Sexuality, University of Minnesota • The Center for Sexual Health serves the health needs of the transgender community.

[www.med.umn.edu/ufp/phs/tgs.htm](http://www.med.umn.edu/ufp/phs/tgs.htm) • 612-625-1500

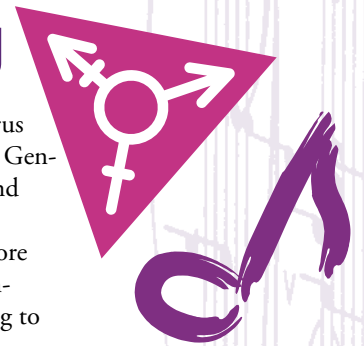
# New Transgender Community Chorus Forming

*Have you always wanted to sing in a choir? **How about a transgender choir?***

One Voice Mixed Chorus is sponsoring a transgender community chorus this spring! This chorus will rehearse for 8 weeks, and then will sing with One Voice in the “Blurring the Lines: Music and Gender” concerts on June 18-20. There will also be chances to perform at the Pride Festival onstage, and other Pride-related events. (*Rehearsals every Thursday, 7:00 – 9:15 p.m., April 29 – June 17.*)

There are no auditions required. The only requirements are a desire to sing with others, to explore and improve your voice, and to self-identify as part of the large and multi-faceted transgender community. Don't worry if you've never considered yourself a singer. If you can carry a tune, if you long to sing, you're welcome to join. We'll work on sounding good as we go along!

The chorus will be directed by Jane Ramseyer Miller with piano accompanist Dorothy Williams. Pre-registration is appreciated, but not absolutely necessary. Call 612-332-1302 or visit [www.ovmc.org/transvoices](http://www.ovmc.org/transvoices) to find out more or to register to be part of the transgender chorus.



## One Voice Welcomes New Co-Chair

COLLEEN WATSON is the CEO and co-founder of Career Professionals Inc., an entry-level job placement firm. Her board experience includes several past presidencies, including: the Augsburg Alumni board, Minnesota Association of Personnel Services, and the West St. Paul/Mendota Heights Rotary Club. She is presently serving on the MN Joint Underwriting Association (MJUA) board for the MN Dept of Commerce as an appointed member and will soon complete a term on the St Anne's Episcopal Church board.

Colleen brings us skills of organizational development, public relations, management, training, sales and networking--to name a few. Her leadership and sales abilities have made

her the top OVMC ticket seller on many occasions. A long-time member and supporter of OVMC, Colleen reports she is "very proud to be a member and excited to be an asset to the chorus as it continues to grow."

Colleen has great plans for the future of our organization: "My vision for One Voice is to be fiscally stable. I would like to have 100k in funds set aside as our beginnings of an endowment plan. I want us to have interest income. I want us to have strong corporate sponsorship relationships that are funded every year."

She is a firm believer in the importance of our role in the community as a visible GLBTQ arts organization: "We all need our heroes and role models. What better way to let the world know that we are here than through song? We make people happy and proud by standing up and joining our voices in perfect harmony. This is the best way to create social change. We are making a huge difference by being out in the community as a GLBTQ chorus."

OPPOSITE  
*Max Gries (right)  
with partner Tyler  
and dog Val*

BELOW  
*Colleen Watson (right)  
with partner Mary  
McDougall*



## Max Gries is Spring Intern with OVMC

MAX GRIES, PRODUCTION MANAGER for the Transgender Voices Festival, is no newcomer to One Voice Mixed Chorus. A singer in the chorus on and off from 1995 to 1999, Max was music leader of the alto section for several seasons and served on the Diversity and Personnel committees.

Max started playing piano at age five and wanted to be a concert pianist – until attending Oberlin Conservatory and spending many solitary hours in practice rooms. Eventually choosing to work with

people, Max is now a passionate community organizer and activist, working in the queer and transgender communities on events such as the "Transgender Voices: Singing, Speaking, and Stories" festival this April 24; the 8th International Conference on Bisexuality in Minneapolis this August; KFAI's "Fresh Fruit" radio show; and regular transgender community cabarets with genderBLUR.

Professionally, Max manages events at Ted Mann Concert Hall and consults as an event planner. Also a student at the U, Max is completing a self-designed degree combining gender studies, journalism, and music. This internship with OVMC on transgender voices is also serving as Max's final degree project. Max was recently awarded an Internship Grant from the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota to work with One Voice Mixed Chorus to produce the Transgender Voices Festival.



# OVation



## One Night on the Heights

**LIVE! In Their First Full-Length Concert! One Night Only! Limited Seating!**

On Saturday evening, May 8, OVation, the awesomely *a cappella* octet of OVMC, will “hit the heights” in their first ever full-length concert. Falcon Heights United Church of Christ will be the stage for this better-than-ever ensemble, who will celebrate their third anniversary offering up twists on concert favorites and several new numbers.

The evening will be heightened by the keyboard craft of OVMC accompanist and award-winning composer Paul Kovacovic. One Voice’s Char Greenwald, who has trained with Stevie Ray’s Improv Company and performed improv and comedy sketches at numerous venues in the Twin Cities, will provide comic relief.

Tickets to this fundraiser for One Voice Mixed Chorus are only \$10. Your ticket is your chance to win one of several marvelous prizes, and once you’re here you can play the “donation for drawing” game. It’s an OVation donation celebration! Music, food, prizes...more fun than the Minnesota State Fair, which is right next door!

This concert is more than just a first for OVation. Paul Kovacovic will debut a piano composition, in which OVation serves as accompaniment. Two new songs were arranged by Jim Slater, bass. And, although the ensemble is three years old, this is the first time the same group of singers has been together for over a year! *That* deserves an ovation!

Put 7:30 PM, Saturday, May 8 on your calendar, buy a ticket for your mom (the next day is her day), support your favorite chorus, and come celebrate with us! You’ve got nothing to hit but the heights that night!

**Saturday  
May 8  
7:30**

(doors open at 6:45)

**Falcon Heights  
United Church of Christ  
1795 Holton Ave  
St. Paul, MN 55113  
(next door to the MN  
State Fair grounds)**

**Tickets \$10**

**612-332-1302**

**[www.ovmc.org](http://www.ovmc.org)**

**OVation is:**

(left to right)

Shelly McVicker

Chris Dart

Robin Keck

Darcy Juhl

Liz McClear

John Sorlien

Molly Keenan

Jim Slater



## Garage Sales Galore

The One Voice Garage Sale will be held on May 14 and 15 at Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis. The church is located in the Seward Neighborhood at 2720 E 22nd Street. If you'd like to donate items, bring them to the church on Monday, May 10 or Thursday, May 13 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Nothing will be turned away!

Nothing left to donate? You can support us financially by buying items at the sale. Our event is held on the same day as the Seward Neighborhood Garage Sale, so if you like to go garage sale-ing, there will be dozens of different sales to attend nearby. Make a day of it!

If you'd like to volunteer to help set up early Friday or Saturday morning or work a shift on Saturday, May 15, please contact One Voice at 612-332-1302 or [info@ovmc.org](mailto:info@ovmc.org).

## Thank You!

The generous sponsorship of American Express, Print Craft, Celestial Synergy, The St. Paul Companies Arts & Diversity Employee Committee, and SuperValu's African-American and GLBT Employee Resource Groups allowed us to perform a groundbreaking community collaboration with the Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir in January in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We thank them for this opportunity! (Thanks to the TCCGC, too – we had a blast!)



### Wish List



- New laptop w/ Windows XP Pro and Pentium III processor or higher
- Plastic containers suitable for storing paper goods
- Plastic/paper tableware
- Printing paper or copying services
- Blank recordable CDs and jewel cases
- Costuming services/fabric

## One Voice Calendar 2004

Put these dates on your calendar and join us!

### April 24 • Transgender Voices

a festival exploring singing, speaking and stories sponsored by One Voice Mixed Chorus  
Metro State University, St. Paul Campus • 700 East 7th Street, St. Paul

### June 7 • QMC Pride Concert

7:00 p.m. • Como Park Pavilion • Lexington Ave, St. Paul

### June 18, 19, 20 • Blurring the Lines: Music and Gender

One Voice Mixed Chorus & the Twin Cities' first transgender community chorus  
8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 3:00 p.m. Sunday  
Sundin Hall • 612-332-1302

### June 28, 29 • Twin Cities Pride Festival

Loring Park, Minneapolis

### July 16 • GALA Send-off Concert

One Voice & Twin City Gay Men's Chorus  
8:00 p.m. • Ted Mann Concert Hall • University of Minnesota

Our calendar often changes – please check the Web site for the most up-to-date information!

[www.ovmc.org](http://www.ovmc.org)

# One Voice on the Weekend!

some snapshots from our recent Saturday rehearsal.



Twice each season, One Voice holds an all-day rehearsal on Saturday, where we can really dig into the music – and the message. In our most recent Saturday rehearsal, we spent time exploring transgender issues (upper left); we also got to work with composer Elizabeth Alexander (above) on her stunning piece, “A Palette to Paint Us As We Are.” And, as always, we just hung around and in general had a good time (left).



got gifts?

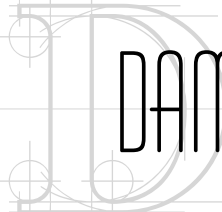
**Enjoy One Voice at home!**

Purchase a copy of *Songs of the Soul*, our first CD. (\$15)

**One Voice Cooks!**


Over 140 tried & true delicious recipes with great stories behind the dishes and people who make up One Voice. (\$20)

To purchase CD, cookbook or concert tickets, contact One Voice at 612-332-1302 or [info@ovmc.org](mailto:info@ovmc.org).


**DAMNED FINE**  
*Design*

Keith J. Campbell  
 graphic designer  
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Gay men's chorus**



Robert Schlidt, Director

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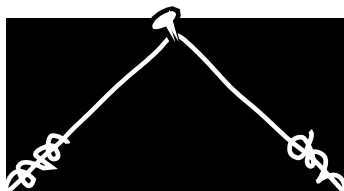
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# Hang out in our yard.

## It's home improvement season.

Got a project? Skip the trip to the burbs and come on over to our yard. We'll be happy to answer your questions about bathrooms, kitchens, decks, paint, tools, oh — and lumber too. At Bennett Lumber, we're widely known for our expert advice, quality products and installation, and free popcorn.



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*The calendar can be found on page 8.*