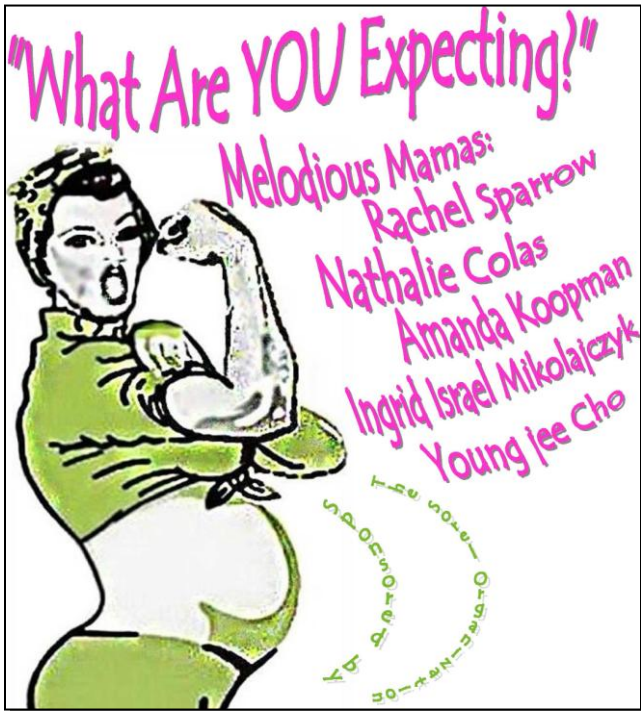


FIVE LOCAL "PREGNANT" PERFORMERS GIVE TWO FREE CONCERTS THIS WEEKEND

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN ARTS & RAISING MONEY FOR CHARITY "NEWBORNS IN NEED"

Saturday, October 8: 3 pm The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (2727 Lake Ave, Wilmette)

Sunday, October 9: 6:30 pm Lutkin Hall at Northwestern University (700 University Pl, Evanston)



Have you ever wondered what four professional singers and a pianist, all with buns-in-the-oven, might perform onstage together? Well, this weekend is your chance. The "Melodious Mamas" are celebrating Motherhood with a song tribute featuring: classical lullabies, silly songs for children, art song birth stories, and even some hilarious versions of musical theater songs that you should NEVER sing while pregnant. Be ready to laugh, cry, and everything in-between; the program reflects the emotions of a hormonal pregnant woman!

Collectively, these "Mamas" have performed all over the world, from Carnegie Hall, to major venues across Europe, South America, and China, and to the Ravina Festival, Chicago Symphony Hall, and Millennium Park. How did they get together, you ask? Rachel Sparrow (soprano, producer) was sitting in a rehearsal for The Ravinia Festival, with two other pregnant singers and friends, (sopranos: Nathalie Colas, and Ingrid Israel Mikolajczyk), and she realized how unique that was. "Let's do a concert together!" She exclaimed. Not a week later, Ingrid went to lunch with pianist and friend Young jee Cho, who told her that she was also pregnant! It was too perfect. Shortly thereafter,

"expecting" adoptive mother, Amanda Koopman, (mezzo-soprano), joined in. Amanda is currently waiting to go pick up her little boy from Thailand. Her baby bump may be invisible, but she is every bit as "expecting" as the rest of the performers. The idea for Melodious Mamas was *born!*

Aside from celebrating motherhood, the concerts also serve a unique purpose to shed light on some issues specific to female singers. There are many factors that add to the fears and anxieties that many women performers have, when considering their career and family life. Due to the impact hormonal changes have upon the voice, the stresses of motherhood, and the amount of travel that singers generally need to do, it is quite uncommon to see a pregnant woman in an audition room or up onstage. Few people know that pregnancy itself can affect the quality of a professional singer's voice. A voice during and post-pregnancy is often altered; sometimes for the better, but sometimes not. Musical notes that used to be easily attained at the top of her vocal range, may not be possible anymore, affecting the types of roles and repertoire that she sings. Obviously, exhaustion during pregnancy, and breathlessness are factors as well, not to mention the issues of body image, and casting directors' views on a singer during auditions.

These singers aim to prove that even during pregnancy, a woman can still sing beautifully and entertain an audience with a first-rate concert experience. To quote their program notes: "We believe that families are important, and that our identities as artists are not lost when we become Mothers; they are enriched."

The main sponsor for these concerts is The Sorel Organization; a NYC Foundation that specifically promotes women in the performing arts. The Evanston Arts Council is also a proud sponsor. And, since three of the five performers are alumni who received their Master's from Northwestern University, the concert is also sponsored in part by The Bienen School of Music, providing a great venue for one of the concerts. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is also providing a venue.

The Melodious Mamas' goal is to raise \$1,000 for the chapter of Newborns in Need located in Orland Park, which serves several hospitals on the south side of Chicago. Newborns in Need offers baby items to those families who need help, and also provides grieving families bereavement clothing & keepsake items for when an unanticipated loss of newborn life may occur. Additional donations that the Melodious Mamas are fortunate to receive will go toward artists reimbursement, programs, publicity & website, venues, recording, and future programming costs for the group. The Melodious Mamas wish to continue giving free concerts once or twice a year, providing family-friendly classical (and fun!) concert experiences and raising money for charities via audience donations. Your generosity at these concerts can help them "start-up" and make that dream a reality. What Are YOU Expecting?

For more information about "What are YOU Expecting?" go to www.rachelsparrow.com

Melodious Mamas Inaugural Concert



Rachel
(Producer)
Soprano
7 months along
1st Child (it's a girl!)



Nathalie
Soprano
7 months along
1st Child
(it's a surprise!)



Ingrid
Soprano
5 months along
1st Child
(it's a surprise!)



Amanda
Mezzo-Soprano
Adopting!
1st Child
(it's a boy!)



Young Jee
Pianist
6 months along
2nd Child
(it's a girl!)



Melodious Mamas