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Area Singers Take Walk Down Memory Lane With Tribute to the Andrews Sisters

May 19, 2010 — Ann Arbor, Mich. — Three local divas pay homage to “America’s Wartime Sweethearts” the Andrews Sisters, one of the country’s first widely recognized female singing groups of the 1930s and 40s. Known for their close vocal harmonies and upbeat style, this sibling trio lifted the hearts of many during the Great Depression and World War II. Soprano Elizabeth Major and mezzo sopranos Wendy Bloom and Monica Swartout-Bebow become Patty, LaVerne and Maxene Andrews for a weekend with such hits as “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy,” “Hold Tight” and “Apple Blossom Time.” They perform at **Kerrytown Concert House** on **Saturday, June 26 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, June 27 at 4 p.m.** and are joined by pianist and bandleader Pete Ford, drummer Steve Fentriss, announcer Harry Bowen, and others.

The Andrews Sisters sold over 90 million records and were the first all-female group to have a record go platinum. They recorded over 700 songs, 46 of which made it to the top ten Billboard charts. During the 1940s, the sisters made appearances in 17 Hollywood movies and performed for thousands of soldiers on an eight-week USO tour during the war. Swartout-Bebow pointed out that the Andrews Sisters’ optimistic music is accessible, even to today’s audiences. “The joy with which they sang was just contagious,” she said. But while the music may seem easy, the close harmonies and jazz rhythms are actually quite challenging, which demonstrates the Andrews Sisters’ fine musicianship. While Swartout-Bebow, Bloom and Major are not sisters themselves, collaborating in this tribute group was a natural progression for them, having performed together for many years in Kerrytown Concert House’s annual Wine, Women, & Song concerts.

Elizabeth Major, soprano

Soprano Elizabeth Major has appeared as soloist with the Chicago Symphony, the Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor and Illinois Symphonies and sung principal roles with the Lake George Opera Festival, Connecticut, and Minnesota Operas. She has taught on the faculties of the U of M, Albion College and Central Michigan University and is currently on the faculty of Adrian College. Former students are appearing on Broadway in Mamma Mia, Thoroughly Modern Millie, Hairspray, Lion King and others.

Wendy Bloom, mezzo soprano

Mezzo-soprano Wendy Bloom has a diverse artistic background, which includes opera, oratorio, early music, chamber music, choral music, recitals, cabaret and musical theatre. Her concert appearances have included performances with the Baltimore Choral Arts Society, Rackham Symphonic Choir, Saginaw Choral Society, and the Ann Arbor, Columbus, Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Lansing and Toledo Symphonies. As one of the five founders of the Ann Arbor School for the Performing Arts, she has conducted classes for younger singers, beginning adults, and vocal music teachers, in addition to her ongoing work as a highly regarded voice instructor in southeast Michigan. Currently, she is a member of the 10-voice choir at Old Mariner’s Church in downtown Detroit as well as a member of Conspirare, a professional choir in Austin, Texas.

Monica Swartout-Bebow, mezzo soprano

Monica Swartout-Bebow, mezzo soprano, started her career singing jazz and cabaret and continues to appear at club and concert venues in the Midwest region, including Davenport’s in Chicago, the Kerrytown Concert House, and the Toledo Museum of Art. She made her professional operatic debut as Juno in the Detroit Oratorio Society’s production of Händel’s Semele, in which The Detroit News described her as “captivating.” Concert engagements include solo appearances with the Adrian, Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Toledo Symphonies, the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and

the AIMS Orchestra in Graz, Austria. She is currently the private voice teacher in-residence at Huron High School while maintaining a private studio at KCH and in her home.

Tickets are \$30 for seats in rows 1-2, \$20 for rows 3-5, and \$15 for general admission. To reserve tickets, call 734-769-2999 or visit www.kerrytownconcerthouse.com. Kerrytown Concert House is located at 415 N. 4th Ave. in Ann Arbor, Mich.

About Kerrytown Concert House

The Kerrytown Concert House is an arts organization focused on community engagement and bringing fine artists and their audiences together. An intimate 110-seat venue, the Concert House has diverse offerings in a wide range of musical styles, while rotating art exhibits are displayed on the walls of the house. Located in the Kerrytown district of Ann Arbor, Mich., KCH is available to the community, including educators, students and organizations for recitals, meetings and events. In addition, it is home to the internationally acclaimed festival Edgefest, and is a presenter of artists of the highest artistic excellence. Kerrytown Concert House is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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