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High Notes

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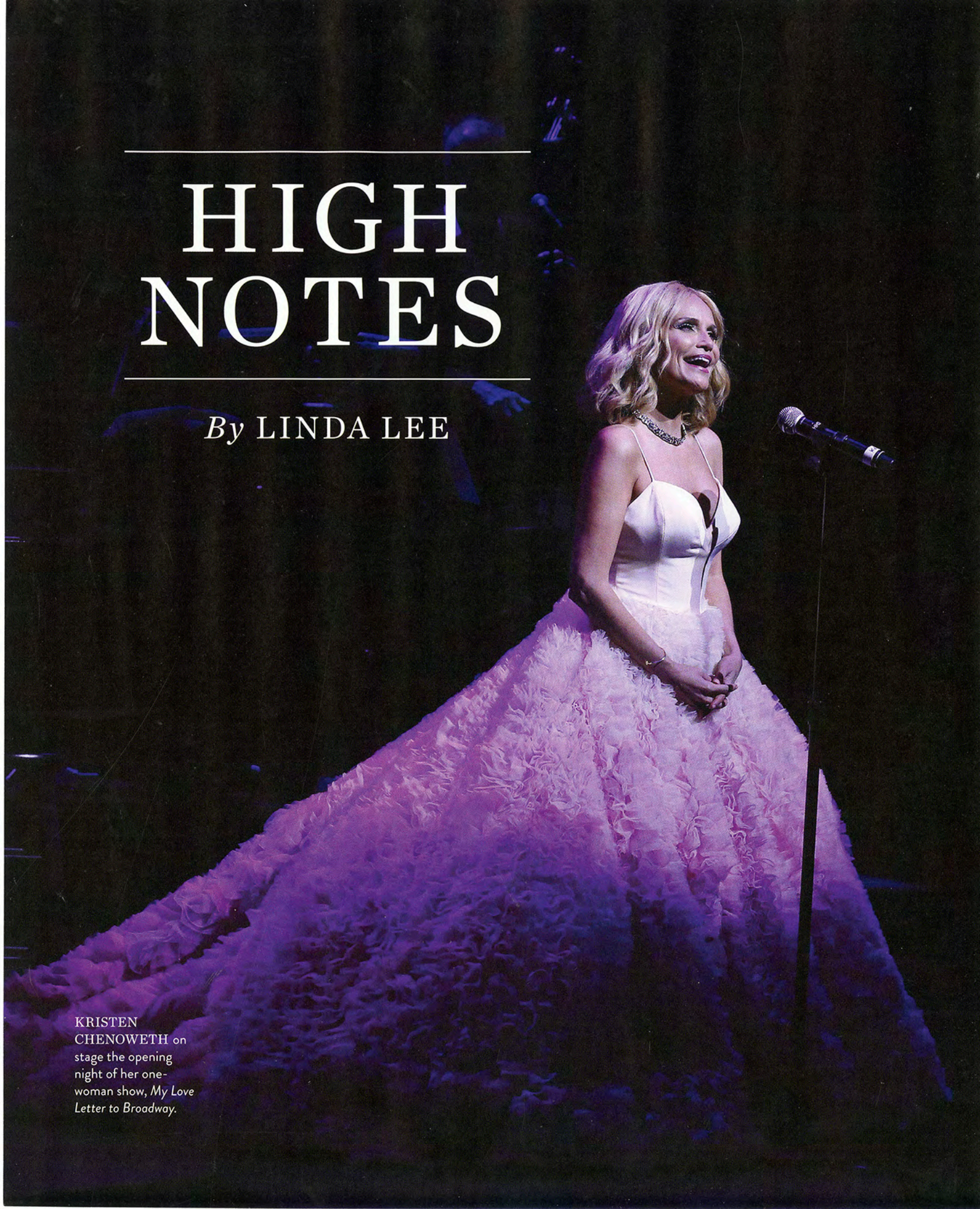
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HIGH NOTES

By LINDA LEE

A photograph of Kristen Chenoweth performing on stage. She is wearing a white, strapless, form-fitting bodice with a large, voluminous, ruffled skirt that cascades down to the floor. She is smiling and looking towards the right side of the frame. A microphone on a stand is positioned to her right. The background is dark, with some blue stage lighting visible.

KRISTEN
CHENOWETH on
stage the opening
night of her one-
woman show, *My Love
Letter to Broadway*.

KRISTEN CHENOWETH graciously pauses for some post-show photos with The Furman Singers, Conductor **Hugh Ferguson Floyd '84**, President Elizabeth Davis and Charles Davis.

(LOWER LEFT) **Mary Mitchell-Campbell '96**, Hugh Ferguson Floyd, and **Seph Stanek '08**

(LOWER RIGHT) Mary Mitchell-Campbell leads a pre-show rehearsal with the Furman Singers.

Paris, London, Moscow, Vienna, Berlin.

These are but a few of the European capitals that have welcomed the Furman Singers during their biennial summer concert tours abroad.

Even still, the Furman Singers hit a high note in November when 16 of its members were selected to perform on Broadway alongside Kristin Chenoweth as part of her one-woman show, *My Love Letter to Broadway*. The show was held at the 1,505-seat Lunt-Fontanne Theatre in New York City.

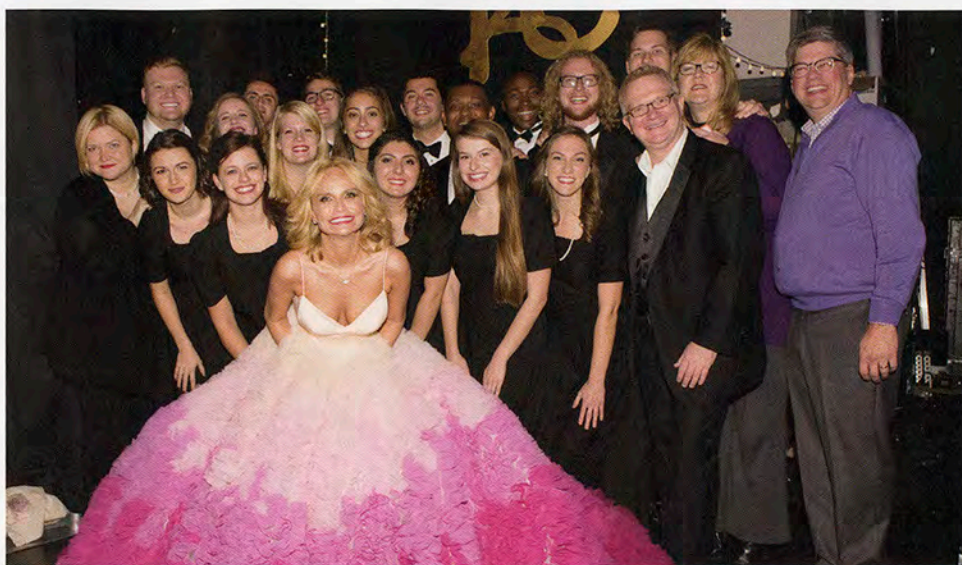
Students sang two numbers—for the grand finales of both acts—with Chenoweth, who won a Tony Award for her portrayal of Sally in the 1999 revival of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, and starred as the witch Glinda in the original Broadway production of *Wicked*.

Recognized as one of America's premier collegiate choirs, the Furman Singers consists of 68 undergraduate students whose repertoire ranges from Renaissance motets to 20th century choral music. The group was founded in 1946 by **DuPre Rhame '24**, who conducted the Singers until 1970. His successor, Bingham Vick Jr., led the choir until 2010.

"The Furman Singers really *are* the university, in a sense," says Furman Professor of Music Hugh Ferguson Floyd, the current director of the group. "We are the ambassadors for the school when we travel, and we are also an integral part of the life of the college."

In 1990, the group was the first choir since 1917 to sing in the 15th century Cathedral of the Assumption inside the Kremlin. In December 2006, the choir's voices rang out with the Boston Pops as part of the Holiday Pops tour under conductor and Furman alumnus **Keith Lockhart '81**.

The invitation to perform with Chenoweth came from Furman music ma-



"The Furman Singers really *are* the university, in a sense."

...jor **Mary-Mitchell Campbell '96**, who is Kristin Chenoweth's music director. "It was a galvanizing experience," says Floyd. "The energy onstage was palpable. The students were literally shaking when they stepped off the stage after the first number."

"Having the opportunity to sing on a Broadway stage with Kristin Chenoweth was not something I could have ever imagined," says **Julia Woodward '17**. "Just by singing next to her I felt like I could conquer the world. Her confidence gave me confidence that I brought back with me to my musical studies at Furman."

The high point of being on Broadway for **Laura Lynn Brickle '19** was when they sang "Upon this Rock" with Chenoweth to a packed house at the end of the first act.

"While the audience was clapping, Kristin turned to us and said, 'Take it in,'" Brickle recalls. "I don't think I will ever forget that moment. I'm eternally grateful to Dr. Floyd, Mary-Mitchell Campbell, and Kristin Chenoweth for making a dream come true for me."

This spring the Furman Singers will take the stage in France, though it may be difficult to top the experience of treading the boards on Broadway. ●